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THE DRAMATIC SATIRE OF KARL KRAUS AND JOHANN NESTROY :
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

* * *

being a thesis presented by

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to the University of St. Andrews
in application for the Degree of Bachelor in Philosophy

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that the thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree. The research was carried out in Vienna (May 1963 to July 1963) and Munich (September 1963 to April 1965).

I certify that during a period of more than twenty-four months Miss Mary A. C. Snell has been engaged upon the study of the subject-matter of the present dissertation, and that, while not devoting her whole time thereto, she has completed an adequate course of study to my satisfaction as her Adviser.

I further certify that she has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance 50 (St. Andrews) and Ordinance 61; and that she is qualified to submit the accompanying dissertation for the Degree of Bachelor of Philosophy.

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	i
I. SATIRE AND THE SATIRIST	1
II. JOHANN NESTROY	
1. The Satirical Playwright	35
2. Parody, Travesty and Burlesque	68
III. KARL KRAUS	
1. <u>Die Fackel</u>	96
2. The Satirical Dramatist	106
3. Karl Kraus as a Nestroy critic	143
IV. SATIRE IN TONE, MIME AND GESTURE	
1. The Actor Johann Nestroy	167
2. The Reader Karl Kraus	207
V. THE APHORISM	228
VI. CONCLUSION	244
APPENDICES	255
LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED	267

INTRODUCTION

The incentive to my study of satire was the wish to work on an aspect of German drama of contemporary significance and to which comparatively little research has already been directed, and indeed the apparent lack of detailed and up-to-date theoretical work on the often ill-reputed realm of satire presents itself both as a problem and as a challenge to the student hunting for secondary literature. The difficulties in the material itself likewise present a challenge, for the extreme variety in form and approach among satirical writers leads to the complication that the study of a single satirist does not justify one in formulating theories on satire in general, and conversely that generalized theories often do not apply to the satirist in question. One answer to this difficulty is to study two satirists. Here there must be sufficient common ground to merit a comparison and enough discrepancy to include two different poles of the satirical mind. My interest in Johann Nestroy (who, despite his local popularity among Viennese students, seems to have escaped much attention in Britain) led me on to Karl Kraus, who until recent years hardly appeared to have penetrated these shores at all. Considering Kraus's standing as a German stylist alone, this is a remarkable fact indeed.

The points of contact between the two men, including Kraus's part in the Nestroy revival, their similarities and dissimilarities, together with the comparative neglect of them in Britain, provided a subject which was as fascinating as it was worth-while. My interest in the theatre led me furthermore to a study of Nestroy's acting technique (Kraus provides a convenient parallel with his Vorlesungen), and this proved to be such a vital and immediate form of satirical expression that, while it is not strictly literature, it has formed the focus of my work.

The University of St. Andrews accepted me as a Research Student for the Degree of Bachelor of Philosophy as from 1 May, 1963, and I matriculated as an external part-time student for the two academic sessions 1963-64 and 1964-65.

I have consciously endeavoured to take my material from original sources rather than from annotations or secondary literature. This involved study of Bäuerle's Theaterzeitung and several other older publications which are difficult to find outside Vienna. Here I would like to take the opportunity of thanking the Austrian Institute in London for granting me a scholarship for the session 1962-63, thus enabling me to spend one year in Vienna and greatly facilitating my work. Where possible the Kraus references are also taken directly from Die Fackel; here warm thanks are due to the Editor of the Kösel-Verlag,

Munich, Herr Friedrich Pfäfflin, for his friendly co-operation and help, above all for placing the entire Fackel at my disposal alongside several valuable books and manuscripts. Where aphorisms and shorter poems are concerned, which are scattered throughout Die Fackel, I have referred for convenience to the two anthologies of the Kösel-Verlag, Beim Wort genommen (aphorisms) and Worte in Versen (poems). I have modernized the old spelling forms throughout, mainly to achieve some degree of consistency with Otto Rommel's modernized forms in his fifteen-volume edition of Nestroy's works, from which the Nestroy quotations are where possible taken.¹ I would also like to thank Frau Gertrud Jahn for valuable information from her personal acquaintance with Karl Kraus, also for the use of her library and the original Kraus gramophone records. The help of Herr Oberbibliotheksrat Dr. Karl Gladt and Herr Oberbibliotheksrat Dr. Paul Schick of the Vienna Stadtbibliothek also proved invaluable; above all the opportunity of using the library's microfilm of Professor Karl Jaray's Fackel catalogue² must be mentioned with gratitude; likewise the assistance of the Vienna Nationalbibliothek and the Bavarian Staatsbibliothek. Finally, my especial thanks are due to my supervisor, Mr. Peter Branscombe, for his abundant good advice and encouragement, his much-needed patience and - not the least consideration - his humour.

Munich, April 1965.

Mary A.C. Snell.

1. The Bavarian Staatsbibliothek is only in possession of the 1924 12-volume edition. This I have used for Chapter II, section 2, on Nestroy's "Parody, Travesty and Burlesque".
2. I have adopted Prof. Jaray's usage of giving the first number of each group where several occur together, e.g. Nos. 349-350 runs No. 349. Kraus is also inconsistent in indicating the date of each issue. I have thus indicated Mitte Mai, Ende Juni, November, etc., unless the occasion warrants otherwise, by the name of the month.

CHAPTER I

* *

*

I. SATIRE AND THE SATIRIST

"Der Unterschied"

Sie schienen schwer den Unterschied zu fassen,
und aller Zwist war doch im Zweierlei:
Ich gab mein Herz dahin im Hassen,
sie wußten nicht, was Liebe sei. ¹

Of all branches of literature surely none has been prey to more sceptical and probably more negative treatment by critic and reading public alike than satire. The satirist, as the iconoclast who seeks to wrench open those stale and corrupt institutions into which society has with time comfortably settled itself, and as the eagle-eyed chastiser who hurls abuse, however subtly, upon those very faults which men do their best to conceal, is not likely to be viewed with very great favour or understanding by his fellow creatures, least of all by his contemporaries, for whom his scathing words are in fact intended. George Meredith, for instance, once stated: "The satirist is a moral agent, often a social scavenger, working on a storage of bile."²

1. Karl Kraus, Worte in Versen (Munich, 1959), p. 455.

2. "Essay on the Idea of Comedy and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit", in Miscellaneous Prose, vol. 23 of The Works of George Meredith (London, 1910), p. 43.

Oscar Wilde expressed himself even more vehemently: "Satire, always as sterile as it is shameful and as impotent as it is insolent, paid them that usual homage which mediocrity pays to genius - doing, here as always, infinite harm to the public, blinding them to what is beautiful, teaching them that irreverence which is the source of all vileness and narrowness of life, but harming the artist not at all, rather confirming him in the perfect rightness of his work and ambition."³ Moreover, if satire in general is unpopular, the individual satirist exposes himself to a far more intense personal hatred among his contemporaries, particularly among those, of course, whom he has singled out for direct individual attacks. On reading Die Fackel, for example, one is tempted to suppose that Karl Kraus went out of his way to antagonize not only such institutions as the Press but also individuals with whom he had once been on friendly terms.⁴ It is clear that Kraus made himself enemies, and even to-day the Press is often noticeably reserved in its judgement of him.⁵ It thus comes as a distinct challenge to anyone prejudiced against satire to read Kraus's words in "Der Unterschied", quoted above. He not only rejects the normal conception of satire, but even goes so far as to connect it with the greatest of all Christian virtues - love. He moreover

3. The English Renaissance of Art, cit. David Worcester, The Art of Satire (New York, 1960), p. 146.

4. See ch. III, sect. 2, pp. 132-6 below.

5. Paul Noack, "Der Fackel-Kraus und die Kritik" in the Münchener Merkur, Munich, 21 June, 1964, with comments on other writers.

indicates that special polarity of the satirical mind, his own in particular, a mind which hovers between the extremes of love and hate; whilst he may be searching for the absolutes of purity and justice, his material is the corrupt, and behind any weird comic mask which his works may present to the public there may lurk grim tragedy. In this contrast between material and ultimate aim lies the essential difference between the satirist and other writers: the tragic dramatist takes a potentially tragic theme and makes it end unhappily, the lyric poet is inspired by a certain idea and clothes it in his own poetic idiom, the satirist looks at the world and the people around him, is disgusted by their corruption and gives vent to the inner tension this disgust produces by declaring war on them. Whether his attacks are direct or veiled in the comic idiom their meaning is painfully clear. The reading public takes him at his face value and their reaction is naturally abhorrence. This, says Kraus, is where they are wrong, for if only people were clear-sighted and selfless enough to recognize their own failings and the ills of their age they would see that satire actually looks beyond the evils it attacks to the ideal of goodness from which reality has long since departed. Because the satirist's eye is clear-sighted enough to recognize evil, he must needs hate it and those who are responsible for it. Blindness, stupidity and weakness are preliminaries of wrong-doing and evil, and so he hates them too, but this does not exclude the possibility that he may suffer in doing so for the thousands of victims who bear the consequences of the vices of their

age.⁶ These possible discrepancies and paradoxes can easily result in complete misunderstanding, and it often remains for posterity to view the satirist in perspective and offer a fairer judgement.

Apart from this the satirist is one of the least stereotyped of writers, partly because his works depend essentially upon contemporary social and ethical conditions and partly because the force of his own personality plays a decisive part in his career, even if, as was the case with Nestroy, this personality was that of the actor on the stage rather than that of the man in everyday life. Very often, in fact, the vindictive personality known to the public presents a direct contrast to the man of private life.⁷ It is moreover essential, to gain reasonably clear insight into satirical writing, to have detailed knowledge and an impartial judgement of the historical events and conditions which led up to it, as well as some understanding for the discrepancies which the work may present. There is therefore little wonder that practically every satirist is handed down to successive generations surrounded by a cloud of unanswered questions, uncorrected prejudices and unenlightened misunderstandings, whether these be positive or negative, and that in consequence he has been a victim of comparative neglect in the history of literature.

The word "satire" (Lat. satira) referred originally to a poetic

6. See ch. III, sect. 2, p. 122 below.

7. See ch. II, sect. 1, p. 40 below.

medley, particularly a poem aimed at the prevalent vices and follies of the time, which were, in fact, in the later stages of the Roman Empire, inescapable. A variant of the word was satura, meaning "full, replete", thus "satire" is, etymologically speaking, connected with "saturate" and "satiare". The word "satire" first entered the English language in 1509 (N.E.D.), and was then still applied merely to a verse form, namely, to the decasyllabic couplet, and implied a certain roughness of versification and rudeness of manner, to which Joseph Hall in writing "satyr" felt himself bound.⁸ In the course of time the epithet "satirical" became applied to prose as well as verse compositions which ridiculed vices and follies and lampooned either individuals or communities. The linguistic weapons the satirist has employed to make his meaning clear and his sting deadly include all the variants of irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, punning, metaphor, personification and simile which his imagination may conjure up, for satire is especially closely bound up with language, so that for the modern reader sarcasm and bitterness as well as linguistic astuteness have become hall-marks of satirical writing. Satire has actually little to do with either tragedy or comedy in the classical sense, but the institutions and vices it attacks involve so much suffering, tyranny and injustice that, if the satire succeeds, we are bound to recognize the tragedy of a world which exists on such vices; on the other hand, by virtue of such stylistic

8. See David Worcester, op. cit., p. 4.

properties as irony and exaggeration, the satirist offends the innate sense of proportion of his audience, and the ultimate effect may well be comic. Thus the study of satire is a study of method on the one hand, bound up with a careful and unbiassed search into the creative mind of the satirist on the other.

Sigismund von Radecki ascribes the rarity of great satirists to this heightened control of language, which naturally constitutes a point of contact between the apparently conflicting ugliness of his material and the creative mind behind the satirical works:

"Von allen Dichtern ist der satirische zwar nicht der größte - Homer, Vergil und Dante waren keine Satiriker -, wohl aber der seltenste. Nichts häufiger als der kleine Satiriker, welcher den sozialen Auftrag erfüllt, uns dort zu kratzen, wo es uns juckt; nichts seltener jedoch als der große Satiriker, weil er die stärkste Sprachintensität voraussetzt; muß er doch, kraft der höchsten, die niederste Sprache gestalten, kraft der reinsten, die gemeinste Sprache geistig bewältigen; in ihm wird der Ekel schöpferisch. So ist er stets ein Doppeldichter: Lyriker und Hundefänger der räudigsten Tonfälle in einem. Diesen Kontrast überwindet er durch die *Vis comica* seines Lachens. So sind denn, im Gegensatz zu der Vielzahl genialer Poeten, die genialen Satiriker an der Hand abzuzählen: Aristophanes, Petronius, Juvenal, Rabelais, Cervantes, Swift, Gogol, Karl Kraus." ⁹

While this list is surely not absolutely justified (why, for example, should Gogol be included while Voltaire is omitted?), the fact remains that the great satirist is a rare phenomenon, and rarer still is the satirist who may be praised, not only for stylistic brilliance, but also for actual beauty of language which may extend to the lyrical.

9. "Karl Kraus und die Sprache" in Wie ich glaube (Cologne, 1953), p. 11.

The satirist, as the counterpole of the romantic and the mystic, as the poet to whom it may be said:

"Wird dir der letzte Dreck zur Dichtung,
hat's mit dem Dichter keine Lebensnot",¹⁰

as the reasoner and the destroyer, might well be thought also to be the counterpole of the lyricist. Indeed, Kraus himself records in Die Fackel Wagner's remark that: "Der verstorbene Hebbel bezeichnete mir einmal im Gespräche die eigentümliche Gemeinheit des Wiener Komikers Nestroy damit, daß eine Rose, wenn dieser daran gerochen haben würde, jedenfalls stinken müßte."¹¹ In actual fact both Kraus and Nestroy show very marked lyrical qualities, and Kraus even describes satire as a kind of lyric poetry: "Die Satire ist so recht die Lyrik des Hindernisses, reich entschädigt dafür, daß sie das Hindernis der Lyrik ist. Und wie hat sie beides zusammen: vom Ideal das ganze Ideal und dazu die Ferne! Sie ist nie polemisch, immer schöpferisch, während die falsche Lyrik nur Jasagerei ist, schnöde Berufung der schon vorhandenen Welt. Wie ist sie die wahre Symbolik, die aus den Zeichen einer gefundenen Häßlichkeit auf eine verlorene Schönheit schließt und kleine Sinnbilder für den Begriff der Welt setzt!"¹² Kraus is referring to an "ideal satire" (which indicates that he is as capable of being idealistic in his

10. Karl Kraus, Traumstück (Vienna, 1922), p. 22.

11. "Nestroy-Feier", Die Fackel, No. 351, June 1912, p. 31. Hebbel's Judith as well as Wagner's Tannhäuser and Lohengrin had been parodied by Nestroy. See ch. II, sect. 2, pp. 87-91 below.

12. "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", in Die Fackel, No. 349, May 1912, pp. 10-11. See also ch. III, sect. 3, p. 147 below.

aesthetic judgements as he is of being realistic in his judgements on the world around him), and not the kind of cheap mud-slinging popularly correlated with satire. Kraus is generally extreme in his judgements, and many of his pronouncements lay themselves open to dispute,¹³ but it is important to note that satire may well be combined with lyricism.¹⁴ Despite Kraus's praise in "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" for the poetic language to be found in the old Possen, his own lyrical tendencies are far more apparent than those of Nestroy, who simply used extravagant language - certainly at the same time lyrical - to attain a desired effect. Kraus was a serious lyric poet as well as a satirist, and many of his poems have nothing to do with satire.¹⁵ He was furthermore an adept and sensitive translator, or more exactly, a Nachdichter, not only of comic writings, but also of tragedies. His adaptations of the existing German translations of a number of Shakespeare's plays and particularly his free renderings of Shakespeare's sonnets bear testimony to the poetic tendencies in Kraus, which are frequently underrated.¹⁶

It is by no means incidental that Kraus, both as lyricist and

13. Cf. ch. III, sect. 3, p. 145 below.

14. See ch. III, sect. 2, p. 129 below.

15. E.g. "Jugend" in Die Fackel, No. 462, October 1917, pp. 180-184, and "Todesfurcht" in Die Fackel, No. 577, November 1921, pp. 67-68. Cf. ch. IV, sect. 2, pp. 221-2 below.

16. Kraus's Shakespeare adaptations were published as follows: Timon von Athen (Vienna, 1930); Shakespeares Dramen (vol. 1: König Lear, Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung, Ein Wintermärchen; vol. 2: Macbeth, Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor, Troilus und Cressida) (Vienna, 1934-35); Shakespeares Sonette, Nachdichtungen (Vienna, 1933).

satirist, made such a profound and thorough study of language. Certainly, the examination of any writer must involve an awareness of his relation with the linguistic idiom in which he writes, just as the study of a painter must involve his particular perception of form and colour, but the nature and quality of a satirical work depends directly as in no other branch of literature on the relation of its author to language. A lyric poem may excel through the rarity of perception, the fineness of feeling or depth of imagination which illuminate the language, but in satire it is the fine nuances of expression which may make or mar the effect the writer seeks to produce in order to propagate that violent horror at the distortion and wrong which he perceives. For the lyricist language is a means of expression, for the satirist it is a weapon. The prerequisite for a proper use of this weapon, however, is an unusually heightened clarity of vision which enables the satirist's sharp and searching eye to penetrate beneath that false surface of things which misleads his fellows. He is induced to give expression to his horror at what he sees either in order to release the inner tension that horror produces, resulting in a spontaneous and often vicious outburst, of which Nestroy's stage extempores may serve as an example,¹⁷ or else because he ponders over the evil behind events and conditions (which his fellow-men generally accept without doing anything about it), and then expresses his thoughts in writing. This second type of satire, exemplified

17. See chap. IV, sect. 1, pp. 196-198 below.

by Kraus's "Das Ehrenkreuz",¹⁸ is a deliberate, premeditated attack, and the author is aware of the opposition which he is likely to arouse. The proportion of spontaneous horror and premeditation varies, and the greater the degree of deliberate thought, the greater the degree of moral courage that is demanded from the satirist. For courage is a quality which popular opinion may sometimes attribute to the satirist, and it is certainly an element which seems to pervade every number of Die Fackel. Is the satirist really courageous, though, we may ask, or is he merely hard-headed and aggressive? The foregoing discussion of the qualities needed in a satirist would appear to contradict the notion that a satirist is a mere hard-headed aggressor. However, real courage demands the overcoming of fear, an element which the casual reader will find in neither Die Fackel nor in Nestroy's Possen - not, that is, as a direct expression of the author himself. Yet both Kraus and Nestroy knew fear: Nestroy admitted his fear, for example, at the thought of death and his obsession with the idea of being buried alive, and we may sometimes read reflections of this fear in his plays;¹⁹ and of Karl Kraus Otto Soyka wrote: "Kraus, der persönlich so ängstlich war, der beim Überschreiten jeder Straßenkreuzung typische Angst verriet . . . Kraus, der selbst ein Gedicht "Todesfurcht" nannte, leugnet auch nicht,

18. Die Fackel, No. 272, February 1909, pp. 2-5; see ch. IV, sect. 2, pp. 220-221 below.

19. See, for example, Der Schützling I, 6.

sie zu haben."²⁰ Kraus himself touches upon this subject in two numbers of Die Fackel: "Ich kann nicht leugnen, ich habe zuweilen Furcht gehabt; aber die Furcht hat mich nie gehindert, auch mit Gefahr meines Lebens etwas zu tun, was ich mit Gründen wollte. Und dieses errungene Gefühl der bewußten, gesammelten Stärke wird endlich zur größeren Festigkeit als die natürliche Furchtlosigkeit."²¹ This courage, generally interpreted by the reader of satirical works as an almost audacious fearlessness, need by no means extend to private life: "Denn der Mut des Schriftstellers hat sich am Schreibtisch zu bewähren, er besteht eben und ausschließlich darin, daß die literarische Tat, deren Unterlassung durch die gefährliche Drohung erzwungen werden sollte, ihr zum Trotz, ohne Rücksicht auf sie, ja ohne Bewußtsein um sie, verrichtet wird: - beim Betreten der Straße, wo seine leibliche Person in Betracht und Gefahr kommt, kann er der größte Feigling sein."²² Thus we see yet another discrepancy in the figure of the satirist: the existence of a morbid and often childish fear in the personality beside an almost phenomenal rashness of expression in the works. Both the fear and the apparent aggressiveness frequently spring from physical deformities. Feinberg, in his psychological study of the satirist, examines this

20. "Begegnung mit Karl Kraus", Schau, October 1953, cit. Paul Schick, "Der Satiriker und der Tod", Festschrift zum hundertjährigen Bestehen der Wiener Stadtbibliothek (Vienna, 1956), pp. 200-201.

21. "Der Satiriker", Die Fackel, No. 912, August 1935, p. 1.

22. "Die Affäre Harden", Die Fackel, No. 601. November 1922, pp. 45-46.

point, mentioning that Pope suffered all his life from being an undersized hunchback, Byron suffered from a club-foot, Gogol from an oversized nose and that Mark Twain was a continual victim of an alarmingly large quantity of physical complaints.²³ Feinberg also points to the vanity and pride inherent in the artist, maintaining that seventy-one per cent of the satirists as against thirty-six per cent of the general public are inordinately vain and that eighty-six per cent of the satirists as against forty-seven per cent of the general public are inordinately proud.²⁴ These figures, difficult as it would be to prove their validity, tempt one to formulate the theory that the satirist seeks to assert himself and to make up for physical defects by ridiculing the world around him. His laughter is, then, as defensive as it is assumed to be aggressive, it is a kind of "protective laughter": Gogol, for example, was so ugly and unprepossessing as a boy that only his devastating sarcasm prevented him from becoming the butt of his classmates' ridicule. Karl Kraus suffered from a deformity of the spine, and the son of one of the victims of his satire gives us an interesting description of his outward appearance: "Karl Kraus war ein verwachsenes, kleines Männchen, mit schönen dunklen Augen und einem durchgeistigten Gesicht, aber von gnomen-

23. Leonard Feinberg, The Satirist, his Temperament, Motivation and Influence (Iowa, 1963), p. 113.

24. Op. cit., p. 13, quoted from W.A. Pannenberg, Satiric writers: Character and Temperament (1953).

hafter Erscheinung."²⁵ In his youth Kraus wanted to go on the stage,²⁶ and his unusually vindictive attitude might well be psychologically explained as the result of complexes arising from physical deformity and frustrated vanity. Whilst Nestroy suffered from no physical defects, he was in private life of an extreme shyness and awkwardness, and his caustic sarcasm and volubility on the stage might be interpreted as the result of a flight from the limitations of the real self.²⁷ Of course, the personalities of Kraus and Nestroy cannot be explained away as simply as that, but a certain dissatisfaction with the ordinary self can be detected in both men. This dissatisfaction often results in a feeling of insecurity (generally expressed in the satirist by bitter attacks on the weaknesses of other people) similar to the feeling of ^achild which is alone in the dark. Indeed, the satirist is not lacking in child-like qualities, for the sophisticated command of language and the mature courage to speak alone to the hostile mass are often accompanied by an almost naive directness of approach and frankness of expression. Radecki even maintains that this is a necessary component of the satirist's approach: "Der Satiriker muß seinen Blick freihalten, wie jenes Kind, welches als einziges sah, daß der Kaiser keine Kleider hatte, und niemand

25. Hans Habe, "Ich stelle mich", Bild-Telegraf, 3 September, 1954, No. 128, p. 4. Hans Habe was the son of Imre Bekessy, see ch. III, sect. 2, p. 135 below.

26. See ch. IV, sect. 2, p. 207 below.

27. See ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 180 below.

konnte das so gelingen wie einem Juden, dessen Volk doch seit zwei Jahrtausenden Zuschauer der Weltgeschichte ist." ²⁸

What part, if any, did Kraus's "Jewishness" play in his life and works? Besides him and perhaps Heine there is no outstanding Jewish satirist, though race and birthright are not always of the vast importance often attached to them. A writer deals with the world he knows, and whilst parentage and upbringing must play a part in forming his perception of that world, their contribution is easily overrated. Certainly, Kraus had a generous share of that special kind of brilliance we are apt to associate with Jews; similarly that undeniable chip on the shoulder to which Jews are prone, simply because the world looks askance at them for being Jews, is as discernible as that inferiority complex due to physical deformity. Generally such a chip on the shoulder finds expression in petty antagonism, but in Kraus's case this is justified as long as it is not merely personal and subjective, but a mirror of that horror he felt at the corruption and evil in the early years of this century. In this respect Kraus is superior to Heine, who was too obsessed by a personal and subjective grudge at the world which made him a Jew. This becomes evident in Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen where he hurls abuse at the Germany of feather-beds and beer-drinkers and philistinism, showing a distaste which is too personal to be effective. The horror Kraus depicts in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, on the other

28. Op. cit., p. 12.

hand, caused the doom of a whole nation.

It is generally assumed that the satirist makes his appearance at the end of a civilisation when corruption and decadence are rife, as the epithets "saturate" and "satiare", with which the word "satire" is connected, might also indicate. Karl Kraus, towards the end of "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", supports this assumption: "Der satirische Künstler steht am Ende einer Entwicklung, die sich der Kunst versagt. Er ist ihr Produkt und ihr hoffnungsloses Gegenteil. Er organisiert die Flucht des Geistes vor der Menschheit, or ist die Rückwärtskonzentrierung. Nach ihm die Sintflut."²⁹ It is certainly true that laxness and degeneracy are more predominant at the end of a civilisation than when men are struggling to build a world with their bare hands; moreover, it is easier to gain an objective view of events and conditions when one can compare them with parallels in the past, following the cycles of development in one's own age. It is, however, not quite as simple as that. Certainly people like Aristophanes and Juvenal lived in corrupt times towards the end of their civilisations. But surely any form of evil or blindness is a subject for satire whenever it appears. George Orwell in his Animal Farm has written a very convincing and terrifying satire on a totalitarian state, calling to mind Soviet Russia, though Communism thrives on the idea that it is a new form of society for the future. And did not Geoffrey Chaucer in the Prologue to his Canterbury

29. Op. cit., p. 23.

Tales throw scorn on the dubious sex life of the Wife of Bath and the unscrupulousness of the Pardoner? And even if we accept Kraus' assertion, and add that the Sintflut which followed him was the Second World War, how are we to account for the fact that the post-war world is just as corrupt as Vienna was in his time, and how are we to explain that despite our laxness and corruptness we still have not produced a satirist to compare with Kraus? However, it is certainly true that over-civilisation produces degeneracy, which in turn tends to produce the satirist, who will always find material as long as there is evil around him. Kraus actually understood degeneracy and downfall in a very special way: for him man's downfall lies in the destruction of the mind and the blinding of the spirit, and degeneracy is the vain attempt to fill that mental void with material luxuries. In the essay "Apokalypse" (which introduces the book Untergang der Welt durch schwarze Magie) Kraus clearly formulates this thought: "Der wahre Weltuntergang ist die Vernichtung des Geistes, der andere hängt von dem gleichgültigen Versuch ab, ob nach Vernichtung des Geistes noch eine Welt bestehen kann."³⁰ The counterpole of this destruction of the mind is the Ursprung, the origin of things, from which civilisation has gradually led man away. This Ursprung means for Kraus what nature meant for Rousseau: it has little to do with time, but is rather concerned with the origin of values against which he judges the times. This kind of origin, the

30. Die Fackel, No. 261, October 1908, p. 7.

consciousness of the simple unspoiled beginnings and the epitome of the true and the genuine, also forms for Kraus the ultimate goal of the satirist's strivings. This essentially positive ideal runs like a bright thread through his lyric poems and his satirical criticism.³¹ Here we are presented with yet another paradox in the figure of the satirist: the writer who is popularly linked with the extremes of sophistication and debauchery merely uses them as a foil for a positive ideal which he need not necessarily have clearly formulated in his own mind, for he himself is too busy examining the wreckage in the world around him to form his ideals in words.

If, then, satire does not exclude lyrical elements, and if the satirist is a kind of frustrated idealist, what is the difference between the satirist and the romantic poet? The essential difference is his earthbound nature, a characteristic which in nearly all other literary geniuses is of minor importance. This quality enables the satirist to laugh, for the more an artist is removed from reality, the less he is able to laugh. The mystic, for example, must be the least earthbound of creatures, and he is the counterpole of the satirist. Paul Schick points to the difference between the mystic and the satirist in the following way: the mystic "löst sich in der Ekstase von dieser Welt mit ihren

31. See "Mein Widerspruch", Worte in Versen, p. 488, and "Zwei Läufer", Worte in Versen, p. 12. Cf. Werner Kraft, Karl Kraus, Beiträge zum Verständnis seines Werkes (Salzburg, 1956), p. 22. See also Joachim Stephan, Satire und Sprache, zu dem Werk von Karl Kraus (Munich, 1964), p. 75, who correlates this Ursprung with Kraus's study of language: "Der Weg zum Ursprung kann, da alles Sprache ist, nur über die Sprache gehen, und er ist eigentlich der Weg zur Sprache."

Mängeln und Übeln", the satirist "löst sie (die Welt) in seinem ganz diesseitigen Gelächter auf".³² The polarity lies between ecstasy and laughter. It was Robert Musil who said: "Mystiker lachen nicht",³³ and similarly one might say: "Satiriker schwärmen nicht". Similarly that pious devotion which characterizes most lyric poets is foreign to the satirist's dissective mind. He must always be in control of himself and of his material and must be consciously aware of the relationship he bears to it. If the satirist is so bound to this world, what is his attitude to a life after death? Karl Kraus believed in the indomitable power of the mind: "Er pflegte zu sagen, er wolle immer leben, er glaube nicht daran, daß er sterben müsse. Der Geist müsse die Macht haben, den Tod zu verhindern."³⁴ Of course, any artist feels the urge to immortalize himself, and sees eternal life for him in his works, but for Kraus there was a particularly vital union between the mind and the word, and the living power of the word meant for him redemption from the evils of his contemporary world ("Das Leben löst sich von dem Fluch der Zeit")³⁵ and eternal life, for Kraus made the Dream tell the poet:

"Du bleibst am Leben, das im Tod vergeht,
du lebst im Wort und stirbst an einer Silbe."³⁶

33. Schick, op. cit., p. 212.

33. Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, posthumous fragments, ed. Adolf Frise (Hamburg, 1952), p. 1632, cit. Schick, op. cit., p. 212.

34. Helene Kamm, National-Zeitung, Basle, 22 April, 1944, cit. Schick, op. cit., p. 215.

35. "Landschaft", Worte in Versen, p. 108.

36. Traumstück, p. 22.

Satire is commonly associated with laughter, and is often viewed as a type of comedy, though there could surely be no work which contains so much horror as Die letzten Tage der Menschheit and there could surely be no greater tragedy for mankind than a world war. However, there is as much polarity in the material of satire as there is in the mind of the satirist. If satire is ridicule, then it must certainly be associated with laughter, but it is not a question of good-natured pleasantry. Karl Kraus wrote of the comedian Knaack:³⁷ "Es war die Art des großen Komikers Knaack: Mit Scherz Entsetzen treiben."³⁸ Precisely this is the nature of comedy in satire. Like the writer of comedy the satirist depicts the inadequacy in human nature. In naive comedy this inadequacy is shown in such a way that the audience is moved to laughter, and there it stops. The satirist goes much further: completely devoid of all pity, he ruthlessly unmasks human failings, often distorting the picture into a caricature to underline his point, and the object of his own derision may also become for the audience an object of derision, so the ensuing laughter may be cruel. Any private feelings of pity we may have are not in accordance with the satirist's intention. A more humane comic dramatist like Molière retains this feeling of pity for his

37. Wilhelm Knaack was a contemporary of Nestroy, greatly admired by Kraus. His parts in Nestroy's plays included Hosea (Judith und Holofernes), Hr. v. Wichtig or Hr. v. Wolkenfeld (Schlimme Püben) and the shepherd in Tannhäuser. A Knaack-Album was compiled (Vienna, 1862) from which Kraus reproduced a photograph by Hermann Klee of Knaack as Baptist in Die Fackel (No. 834, May 1930, p. 34), where pictures normally seldom appeared.

38. Beim Wort genommen (Munich, 1955), p. 155.

characters; in the figure of his misanthropist there is even a tragic element. Kraus's treatment would have been far more deadly. A favourite method in satire of dealing with characters suffering from pride, for example, is to strip them of their shell of dignity or position either by exaggerating their dignity into bombast or else by bringing them down to the level of, and thus comparing them with, modest or even ridiculous objects. This is reflected in the language by the use of exaggeration and understatement, according to the context, garnished with similes and metaphors.

What exactly is responsible for the fact that, while satire and comedy are related, free and uninhibited laughter is impossible with such deadly and deliberate satire as we meet in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit? While the subject itself is grim, a sense of humour can be and often is preserved in war-time as a source of strength. We may still laugh at certain scenes and characters in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit,³⁹ though not in the same way as we laugh at Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Scholarship is richer in theoretical works on comedy and humour than it is on satire as such,⁴⁰ and one of the more stimulating definitions of laughter was made by Kant: "Das Lachen ist ein Affekt aus der plötzlichen Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts."⁴¹ This tension may be the result of a series of events or, in verbal comedy, of phrases containing paradoxes, contradictions and

39. See ch. III, sect. 2, p. 126 below.

40. See Otto Rommel, "Die wissenschaftlichen Bemühungen um die Analyse des Komischen", in Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift, II, 1943, pp. 161-195.

41. Kritik der Urteilskraft (Inselausgabe, Leipzig, 1924), vol. VI, p. 213, cit. Emil Staiger, Grundbegriffe der Poetik (Zürich, 1963), p. 194

extremes, all ending up by those phrases or events being turned back on themselves or broken off by an outside agent. The tension is broken, and the audience is induced to laugh. In satire all these elements, including the "gespannte Erwartung", are present, but as the satirist aims at revealing vice and folly, the tension, instead of resolving itself into a final cadence - or, in fact, into nothing - leads to the disclosure of thoughts and circumstances at which one cannot laugh. The satirist uses the comic, if at all, as a means of leading his audience along part of the way to his sinister goal. With Nestroy, of course, the matter is somewhat different. Certainly he reveals the weaknesses and follies in human nature and the falsehood of the society of his time - indeed his well-known saying: "Ich glaube von jedem Menschen das Schlechteste, selbst von mir, und ich hab' mich noch selten getäuscht"⁴² is hardly likely at first sight to arouse uninhibited laughter. It is a sentence which is often held against Nestroy, though one must never forget that Nestroy's maxims were designed to produce an effect in the theatre, not to be written down and examined, and surely not to be given that vast ethical importance which is sometimes attached to them. Nestroy wrote his plays to entertain, and thus he preserves that Heiterkeit behind all his apparent cynicism, and his plays have a far more pleasing effect on his audiences than do the tormented utterances of most satirists. With Nestroy the comic has the upper hand over the satirical and the end-effect is positive. This may be due to the

42. Die beiden Nachtwandler, I, 16.

way in which many of his characters, including the ones he acted himself, turn their irony against themselves, revealing a humorous effect entirely lacking with Karl Kraus, who takes himself and his satirical mission in deadly earnest. Paul Noack describes Kraus as "diesen humorlosesten aller Satiriker",⁴³ and blames Kraus's devotees for defending both his kindly human qualities and his sense of humour. Certainly, if we connect humour with cabaret pleasantries and horse-laughter, Kraus has none, but as humour is a notoriously difficult and elusive component of the human character, one should not dismiss Kraus as easily as that. Humour is in any case rooted in a feeling of humane tolerance towards the world and oneself, and laughs with the world rather than at it. This quality is lacking in Kraus. However, a sense of humour must also be a sense of proportion together with a mature and essentially positive attitude to life; anything which clashes with that sense of proportion (such as the image of the dignified and illustrious gentleman slipping on the banana-skin) makes us laugh. The most highly developed sense of humour must enable a man to laugh at himself in the same way, neither taking himself too seriously nor making himself the centre of his world. The man who is able to recognize and smile at his own deficiencies finally appears as a less comic figure to his fellow-men than the serious-minded individual who is blinded to his

43. Paul Noack, "Der Fackel-Kraus und die Kritik", in the Münchener Merkur, 21 June, 1964.

own faults. Although Kraus was not given to self-irony and although he was often unnecessarily extreme in his pronouncements,⁴⁴ he was anything but blind. In fact he saw all failings (possibly his own included) so clearly that he was appalled by them, and the tension was resolved, not in laughter, but in that empörtes Herz which was the mainspring of his satire. Kraus sees the proportion not in things and events as they appear to most people but in things as he maintains them actually to be.⁴⁵ Rommel concludes that humour is specifically a quality of northern nations,⁴⁶ whereas wit is the prerogative of the Latin peoples such as the French and the Italians. This would mean that the English, the Scandinavians and the Germans were humorous people, a fact which the general lack of comedies in German literature, and the distinct lack of humour with which Rommel's theorists have analyzed humour, would question. In an essay in Die Fackel on "die Humorlosigkeit der deutschen Literatur", however, Kraus maintains: "Nebst den scharfen Spuren, die er bei Lichtenberg und bei Busch hinterließ, dürfte der deutsche Humor, jener, der nicht von der eigenen Belustigung lebt - der Humor der Sprache, nicht der des 'Stoffes' - ganz auf Nestroy aufgegangen sein."⁴⁷ That Kraus felt himself qualified to discuss humour and moreover to read comic plays in public, indicates that he

44. See ch. III, sect. 3, pp.145-146 below.

45. Cf. "Das Ehrenkreuz". See fn. 18, p. 10 above, and ch. IV, sect. 2, p. 221 below.

46. Rommel, op. cit., p. 193.

47. "Von Humor und Lyrik", Die Fackel, No. 577, November 1921, pp. 51-52

did not doubt his own sense of humour, and indeed, Kraus had enough humour to recognize and transcend human failings, but his satirical mind made him see through them, mock them and make war on them. It is thus a vicious, apparently humourless face which is presented to and misunderstood by the public. In general, however, satire is not a companion of humour, for while humour tolerates, satire attacks, while humour is kindly, satire is aggressive, while humour sees both sides of a question, satire involves opposition and rejection, and hence taking sides.

Wit, however, is an essential component of satire, and demands qualities more suited to the satirical mind than those demanded by humour - a sharp intellect, a masterly command of language and a feeling not only for all the shades of meaning, rhythm and sound a word or combination of words may have in accepted usage, but also a sense for all the various suggestive qualities a word could have if used in unconventional ways. Wit, as an acute verbal dexterity intending either to hurt or to provoke immediate reaction, whether it be laughter or direct opposition, is obviously a fitting medium for satire. Just how the satirical approach uses wit is best shown by a detailed analysis of such language. To this end I would like to leave Nestroy and Kraus temporarily on one side and quote the post-war author Heinrich Böll. The opening of his short story "Nicht nur zur Weihnachtszeit"⁴⁸ struck

48. In Dr Murkes gesammeltes Schweigen und andere Satiren (Cologne, 1960), pp. 43-44.

my attention particularly for sheer linguistic dexterity. I will quote here the entire first paragraph, dividing it into sections which deserve special attention:

"In unserer Verwandtschaft machen sich Verfallserscheinungen bemerkbar, die man eine Zeitlang stillschweigend zu übergehen sich bemühte, deren Gefahr ins Auge zu blicken man nun aber entschlossen ist. Noch wage ich nicht, das Wort Zusammenbruch anzuwenden, aber die beunruhigenden Tatsachen häufen sich derart, daß sie eine Gefahr bedeuten und mich zwingen, von Dingen zu berichten, die den Ohren der Zeitgenossen zwar befremdend klingen werden, deren Realität aber niemand bestreiten kann. (1) Schimmelpilze der Zersetzung haben sich unter der ebenso dicken wie harten Kruste der Anständigkeit eingenistet, Kolonien tödlicher Schmarotzer, die das Ende der Unbescholtenheit einer ganzen Sippe ankündigen. (2) Heute müssen wir es bedauern, die Stimme unseres Veters Franz überhört zu haben, der schon früh begann, auf die schrecklichen Folgen aufmerksam zu machen, die ein 'an sich' harmloses Ereignis haben werde. Dieses Ereignis selbst war so geringfügig, daß uns das Ausmaß der Folgen nun erschreckt. Franz hat schon früh gewarnt. Leider genoß er zu wenig Reputation. Er hat einen Beruf erwählt, der in unserer gesamten Verwandtschaft bisher nicht vorgekommen ist, auch nicht hätte vorkommen dürfen: er ist Boxer geworden. (3) Schon in seiner Jugend schwermütig und von einer Frömmigkeit, die immer als 'inbrünstiges Getue' bezeichnet wurde, ging er früh auf Bahnen, die meinem Onkel Franz, - diesem herzenguten Menschen - Kummer bereiteten. Er liebte es, sich der Schulpflicht in einem Ausmaß zu entziehen, das nicht mehr als normal bezeichnet werden kann. (4) Er traf sich mit fragwürdigen Kumpanen in abgelagerten Parks und dichten Gebüsch vorstädtischen Charakters. Dort übten sie die harten Regeln des Faustkampfes, ohne sich bekümmert darum zu zeigen, daß das humanistische Erbe vernachlässigt wurde. Diese Burschen zeigten schon früh die Untugenden ihrer Generation, von der sich ja inzwischen herausgestellt hat, daß sie nichts taugt. Die orregenden Geisteskämpfe früherer Jahrhunderte interessierten sie nicht, zu sehr waren sie mit den fragwürdigen Aufregungen ihres eigenen Jahrhunderts beschäftigt. (5) Zunächst schien mir, Franzens Frömmigkeit stehe im Gegensatz zu diesen regelmäßigen Übungen in passiver und aktiver Brutalität. Doch heute beginne ich manches zu ahnen. Ich werde darauf zurückkommen müssen. (6)

Franz also war es, der schon frühzeitig warnte, der sich von der Teilnahme an gewissen Feiern ausschloß, das Ganze als Getue und Unfug bezeichnete, sich vor allem später weigerte, an Maßnahmen teilzunehmen, die zur Erhaltung dessen, was er Unfug nannte, sich als erforderlich erwiesen. Doch - wie gesagt - besaß er zu wenig Reputation, um in der Verwandtschaft Gehör zu finden. (7)"

These seven "sections", whilst pointing to the various steps in the development of the introduction, also conveniently demonstrate different elements of the light satirical style. The main characteristics of section 1 are exaggerated formality, even preciosity, and bombast in vocabulary and syntax. The extreme stiffness of the interwoven relative clauses combined with the piling up of such words as Verfallserscheinungen, Gefahr and Zusammenbruch strike a mock ominous note in the reader's mind and produce a kind of reaction which says: "How disturbing! What can these tragic circumstances be?" Section 2 develops this theme, the ominous abstract words resolving themselves into high-flown and extremely vivid metaphors of a type in which Nestroy himself excelled: Schimmelpilze der Zersetzung, Kolonien tödlicher Schmarotzer are forceful phrases in rhythm and sound and in their unusual thought-combinations, and find a very fitting resolution in the high-sounding phrase Ende der Unbescholtenheit einer ganzen Sippe ankündigen. It is like a musical theme with the chords rising in a crescendo towards a climax. There is also in this section a nasty little dig at the world of respectability in the phrase ebenso dicken wie harten Kruste der Anständigkeit, of a type which Karl Kraus developed, though in a crueller and more scornful fashion. With section 3 our curiosity is, however, not yet satisfied, and we are still not yet informed as to the nature of these disquieting circumstances. Instead a new idea is introduced, and vague allusions are made to a character and his attitude - about which the reader (to his annoyance) knows nothing. This rather taunting presupposition of

knowledge in a person (be it a character or the reader himself) who is in complete ignorance of the subject referred to, is another weapon of the satirical mind. Furthermore, the high-flown phrases have given way to short sentences and monosyllables which for a time seem to beg the question entirely. Yet these monosyllables resolve themselves into a superb - anticlimax: "Er ist Boxer geworden." This is a miniature example of Kant's "Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts." The reader's curiosity is, however, far from satisfied: we still want to know the connection between Franz's being a boxer and the disquieting circumstances referred to - or is there nothing more to be said?

Section 4 deals with yet another aspect, Franz's youth. Linguistically there are two points which deserve mention. The dubious "Vetter Franz" is not to be confused with the kindly "Onkel Franz", whose name is invariably followed throughout the story by the phrase dieser herzensgute Mensch. This does more than invoke a kind of humoristic charm in the story; it implies the injustice of a world which can allow these "tragic events" to happen to a person who is the incarnation of goodness and kindness, whereas swindlers and rogues flourish in their thousands. Moreover, the force of the outward circumstances becomes so great that Uncle Franz - "dieser herzensgute Mensch" - finally resorts to methods of deception and intrigue, so that one begins to wonder if he deserves the epithet after all. This gives the story a neat and effective ironical twist. Secondly, Böll also reverts in section 4 to that formal and precious phraseology to describe a very simple happening. Normally one

would say in Umgangssprache: "Franz schwänzte". Böll prefers to maintain: "Er liebte es, sich der Schulpflicht in einem Ausmaß zu entziehen, das nicht mehr als normal bezeichnet werden kann." This severely pedantic tone is continued in section 5. Nasty little boys are described as fragwürdige Kumpanen, boxing is referred to as Faustkampf (as opposed to Geisteskampf) and Latin and Greek become das humanistische Erbe. This use of grandiloquent and carefully selected words, especially to describe everyday matters, again recalls Nestroy. The last sentence of this section demonstrates another stylistic trick: die erregenden Geisteskämpfe früherer Jahrhunderte are balanced against die fragwürdigen Aufregungen ihres eigenen Jahrhunderts. There are clear echoes in sound here, whereas there is a direct contrast in meaning. Section 6 reverts to that exasperating trick of playing on the reader's ignorance, or making vague allusions to unclarified statements as in section 3. The formal bombast of the first sentences returns in section 7, only to resolve itself again in the very last sentence into simple syntax and the repetition of phrases which have already been used. It is in effect an anticlimax, and the reader's curiosity is still unsatisfied. Formality and stiffness by the side of monosyllables, words with a potent suggestive power, grandiloquent expressions for unimportant happenings, the skilled use of climax and anticlimax, the constant playing on the reader's curiosity, the "echo effect" produced by repetition of set phrases, apparently illogical juxtaposition - these are a few of the tricks of the witty writer.

Another favourite and important trick is the Wortspiel or pun, fashionable in Elizabethan times and without which Shakespeare's comedies would be unthinkable. Nestroy's puns are particularly rich and resourceful and in this field he has even been described as "shakespearean".⁴⁹ The art of parody also depends upon playing with the vocabulary of the original text and imitating characteristics of the style of the author in question.⁵⁰

A further characteristic of satire is its "untranslatability". This is particularly true of both Kraus and Nestroy, partly because of their use of dialect, which is so much an expression of the people who speak it that it sounds ridiculous when translated into a foreign language. At best one may translate it into a dialect of the foreign language, but then it is completely devoid of its original local colour. One may alternatively "adapt" or "transplant" plays into a foreign locality. The play best known as Einen Jux will er sich machen has been a victim of this dangerous practice. Originally it was a comedy by John Oxenford called A Day Well Spent, but in transplanting it to Viennese soil Nestroy imbued it with so much vigour and wit that the fact that the actual plot was taken from John Oxenford assumes secondary importance; in fact his venture was so successful that most of the spectators who applaud Einen Jux are ignorant of and uninterested in the English original. Thornton Wilder's attempt to adapt Nestroy's play,

49. Cf. ch. II, sect. 1, p. 63 below.

50. Cf. ch. II, sect. 2, pp. 68-69 below.

however, in the form of a farce now entitled The Matchmaker,⁵¹ has failed because Wilder has emptied his original of its vigour and Viennese wit and has offered nothing to replace it. For Nestroy's couplets are substituted ~~by~~ four rather tedious monologues, the zest for fun and adventure as a dominant note gives way to a tasteless adulation of money, and Wilder has himself introduced his central character, Dolly Lewin, the match-maker, modelled on Frosine from Molière's L'Avare. Wilder has sought to replace the linguistic brilliance of Nestroy's play by writing a problematic character-comedy. Whether he has succeeded in writing good theatre is a matter of personal opinion, but his play certainly lacks the power to delight audiences as Nestroy's Einen Jux has done, and the translation of Wilder's farce back into German under the title Die Heiratsvermittlerin⁵² bears no more than a shallow formal resemblance to the original Jux. Kraus also makes a free use of dialect, but even when he writes in Standard German he would not be easy to translate. For one thing his satire is especially rooted in the events of the time at which it was written as well as in Viennese local personalities and problems. He has the habit of referring glibly to names which would mean nothing either to a foreigner or to later generations, so the whole effect would be lost in a translation. One of the many good examples of this in Die Fackel is his discussion of the degeneration

51. Wilder originally called his play The Merchant of Yonkers, but later re-adapted and retitled it.

52. Hans Sahl, Die Heiratsvermittlerin (Hamburg, 1957).

of the Viennese operetta:

"Ihre Entartung ins Volkssängerische, ihre neue Tendenz, dem niedrigsten Nachtlokalpatriotismus zu schmeicheln, und die Welt als einen großen Guglhupf⁵³ aufzufassen mit der Wienerstadt als dem einzigen Weinberl⁵⁴ darin, ihre Anbiederung an den Stefansturm, auf dessen Spitze Herr Gabor Steiner⁵⁵ gedacht wird ...: diese ganze Entwicklung der Operette ins Walzerische und Drahrerische⁵⁶ würde ihre Satire in einer musikalischen Burleske verdienen..."⁵⁷

How would one translate either Guglhupf or Weinberl into English? Who would understand either the Viennese attachment to their "altes Steffl" or the reference to Gabor Steiner? Such references, which occur again in Die Fackel, date Kraus considerably, despite his conviction that his creative spirit would live on after his death. Moreover both he and Nestroy are resourceful in coining words: later in the article quoted above Kraus speaks of the "Verknödclung"⁵⁸ der Operette", for example, which would present as much of a problem to the translator as Nestroy's "venividivizisch",⁵⁹ although this latter word is a reference to an internationally known phrase.

53. Dialect: Napfkuchen. The Guglhupf is considered as something especially Viennese, and can be used to symbolise Viennese home life: cf. Häuptling Abendwind, sc. 3, Artur: "Ich habe in einem Strauch hier Weinberln entdeckt, welche mich meine Phantasie allsogleich, verschwistert mit Zibeben, im Innern eines Guglhupfs erblicken ließ." (Zibeben or Ziweben are raisins made from white grapes.)

54. Dialect: Weinbeerchen, Rosine.

55. Impresario, theatre director and popular figure in Viennese light entertainment. See Arbeiter-Zeitung, 9 March, 1958, p. 11, Peter Herz, "Der Vergnügungsmacher von Wien".

56. Drahrer, dialect: Nachtschwärmer, Lebemann.

57. In "Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne", Die Fackel, No. 270, January 1909, pp. 12-13.

58. Knödcl, dialect: Kloß, implying something hard, soggy, unimaginative.

59. Kampl, III, 14.

However, Kraus is equally untranslatable in his serious works which do not abound in local references, and here the reason lies in the nature and structure of his language, for Kraus's language is of such individuality, concentration, inventiveness and fineness that it is almost as difficult to paraphrase as it would be to translate, and one finds that a paraphrase is not only of double the length but invariably of half the clarity of the original. It seems that the only way to do justice to Kraus's style is to quote him, but here again one is involved in the difficulty of where to begin and where to end, for both phrase and sentence are so inextricably bound up with each other and each thought is so dependent on the preceding thought for its justification and on the following one for its consummation, that their uprooting from the context seems to damage both the idea and the sentence structure. Kraus, as the master of language, defies all mauling by less skilled hands. Even his readers must be prepared for a struggle to understand him or to appreciate him. Thus the qualities which determine Kraus's linguistic excellence may prove to be the ones, combined with a distinct datedness of material, which will limit the circle of his readers and admirers.

* * *

The apparently irreconcilable extremes of love and hate, the vile and the noble, the tragic and the comic, laughter and despair, vanity and a feeling of inferiority, frustrated idealism and undecivable

realism, courage and fear, naiveté and sophistication - these are all components of that complicated phenomenon, the satirical paradox. Any study of satire must vary with the satirist in question, and one must always beware of falling back on basic theories such as exist in the fields of tragedy, lyricism, or even criticism. After all, there was never a satirical movement or school: the satirist stands alone as personality and writer in his age, generally in direct opposition to it. What makes the good satirist live is perhaps this extreme individuality of opinion and expression, combined with the fact that, even if he was shunned by his contemporaries, posterity can often prove that he was right. No age likes to be shown its failings, still less to be told that it is doomed to destruction. Thus a satirist is hated or ignored by his contemporaries, at the most he is admired from a distance, except, of course, by fanatical devotees he may have around him. In any case the feelings are generally unhealthy, prejudiced and unbalanced. For this reason his age cannot view him and his works in perspective, and he cannot approach or help his age. Kraus twice quotes, in significant places, a sentence by Kierkegaard which thus seems to assume an especial meaning for him personally: "Ein einzelner Mensch kann einer Zeit nicht helfen oder sie retten, er kann nur ausdrücken, daß sie untergeht."⁶⁰ This is precisely what Kraus did, and now, some four

60. Sören Kierkegaard, Die Tagebücher (1834-1855), tr. Theodor Haecker (Munich, 1949), p. 332. Kraus places this sentence at the head of his introduction to his drama Die Unüberwindlichen, and quotes it in Die Fackel, No. 777, January 1928, p. 16, where it occupies a place at the end of the last page.

decades after his death, justice is beginning to be done, if somewhat sceptically, to him and his work, the aim and paradox of which he most potently sums up himself:

"Der Satiriker geißelt die Schwächen"

Was so der Pöbel Satire heißt,
ist: wenn an des stärkern Geistes Schwächen
die Schwäche sich will mit der Frechheit rächen,
sich entschädigt der inferiore Geist.

Und doch besteht die Schwäche der Stärke
vor aller machtlosen Stärke der Schwachen,
und vergeht ihnen niemals auch das Lachen,
so vergeht doch der Lacher vor dem Werke. 61

61. Die Fackel, No. 472, November 1917, p. 18.

CHAPTER II

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II. JOHANN NESTROY

1. The Satirical Playwright

Schlicht: Mit der Satire? Mit dem ominösen Zauberstab, der die besten Freund' in Feind' verwandelt?

Julius: Was fällt dir ein?! Die Menschen lachen gerne.

Schlicht: Das wohl, wenn aber einer nach dem andern merkt, daß er bei die Satiren über sich selber gelacht hat, das bildet eine Masse, die einem's bitter nachträgt.

Julius: Ich bau' auf mein nicht unbedeutendes Talent im Karikaturenzeichnen.

Schlicht: Das is noch das Allerverfehlteste. In der Karikatur liegt zuviel Wirkliches, und die Menschheit will nur recht poetisch aufgefaßt sein, ein klarer Beweis, wie prosaisch sie is. Das is grad wie ein selbstfabrizierter Baron, der kann's nicht oft g'nug hören, wenn man "Euer Hochfreiherrlichen Gnaden" sagt. Während's den echten Kavalier ennuyiert, wenn man ihm mit der ganzen Litanei von Titeln kommt.

(Mein Freund, Prologue, Scene 7)

Nestroy's satire was an alien element in the long-established tradition of the Viennese popular theatre. For the audiences who went to see the Zauberstücke, the Volksmärchen and the Stegreifburlesken as opposed to the classical drama, the theatre meant entertainment, and comedy meant laughter of a special kind: this was not the critical laughter of satire, but was an expression of harmless, rollicking mirth

produced by the physical or linguistic high jinks on the stage. This type of comedy, brought to a climax by Raimund, was given the name of G'spaß and represents the point at which Nestroy turned from the popular tradition, for he replaced the naive, somewhat empty G'spaß by the lash of satire.

Certainly there are still elements of the old tradition in his plays, and on looking back over the history of the Altwiener Volkstheater one sees how Nestroy developed in it and from it, and then outgrew it. The comic type of the uncouth, dumm-schlau fellow such as Melchior (Einen Jux will er sich machen) and Cajetan Balsam (Eine Wohnung ist zu vermieten) is a descendant of the stock type created by the actor Bernardon in the old Stegreifburleske.¹ Similarly the dramatic Völkemärchen, made famous by Karl Friedrich Hensler (1759-1825), contain a number of stock figures which we sometimes see developed by Nestroy; one of these is the figure of Kasperl, the cowardly, greedy, loutish and drunken page who follows his master only with very great reluctance, another is Thaddädl,² generally an apprentice in the inn where Kasperl's master is staying, and there is usually a quarrel between the two servants over a love-affair with some peasant wench. A third figure was Staberl, who represented the naive comedy of

1. This can be traced back to the days of Stranitzky (1676-1726) and Prehauser (1699-1769). Bernardon was in reality Josef, Freiherr von Kurz; he acted from 1737 to 1770.

2. Created by the actor Anton Hasenhut.

clumsiness and inadequacy amidst the efficient and high-minded bourgeois souls around him. Later this naive, clumsy type of comic part was to fall to Nestroy's fellow actor, Wenzel Scholz.³ The bare plot of these old Volksmärchen was, as it came to be with Nestroy, of minor importance, and the theme was fairly stereotyped - that, for example, of the ghost which at last finds rest through the intervention of some noble knight, generally the master of Kasperl. The element of music and magic in Nestroy's plays also stems from this old tradition, of which the Singspiel was an important branch. Here the name of Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812), best known for his libretto of Mozart's Die Zauberflöte, deserves mention as the author of a number of Zauberpossen, Lokalpossen and Ritterstücke. The Lokalposse also finds a development in Nestroy's plays, many of which take place in Vienna and are comprehensible in the finest details only to Viennese or those who know Vienna extraordinarily well. This old popular theatre really flourished, appealing to all sections of society, and found a home in no less than three theatres: in 1781 the actor Karl Marinelli had built the Theater in der Leopoldstadt for the express purpose of reincarnating the Volkskomödie after it had been banished from the court stage. The Theater an der Wien was added in 1786 and then followed the Theater in der Josefstadt in 1788; these last two theatres are in use to this day. Their playwrights were often actors or amateur writers, and the important thing

3. See ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 192 below.

for them was not dramatic literature, but a text suitable for the purpose, a tradition with which Nestroy conforms perfectly.

Beyond these external or formal similarities, however, the resemblance ceases. The language, expression and ethical content of Nestroy's plays branched out in a completely new direction which at first more than perplexed his contemporaries. Before examining the nature of Nestroy's comedy it is interesting to see how those contemporaries compared him with the traditional writers, of whom Raimund was the favourite. Another playwright then held in high esteem was Adolf Bäuerle (1786-1859), the editor of the Wiener Theaterzeitung,⁴ and one even meets articles placing Bäuerle, Raimund and Nestroy on an equal plane. Nestroy's enemy, Moritz Gottlieb Saphir,⁵ writing on 20 November, 1843, in his paper Der Humorist, even ventured to place Bäuerle higher than Nestroy at a time when the latter was producing his best plays,⁶ and when he was enjoying widespread popularity. In the Theaterzeitung itself an article had appeared on 6 May, 1842, discussing the position of Bäuerle, Raimund and Nestroy in turn against the old popular tradition:

"Bäuerle emanzipierte sie⁷ zuerst von dem platten, kindischen Geschwätz des Thaddädl's: sein naiver Witz, seine launige Phantasie

4. The Theaterzeitung is quoted more extensively in ch. IV, sect. 1, pp. 174-176 below. See also fn. 11. p. 174 below.

5. Cf. p. 62 below.

6. E.g. Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt (1841), Einen Jux will er sich machen (1842).

7. I.e. die Volksbühne.

bevölkerten sie mit Gestalten ohne stereotypen Zwang, mit komischen Figuren, voller Wirklichkeit und Charakter.

"Raimund, ein liebenswürdiger, poetischer Geist, aber minder jovial und gesund, mehr träumerisch, aphoristisch und skizzenhaft, durchnebelte sie mit dem Mondschein der Spekulation und des Individualismus, er versuchte, Geist und Masse bald zu scheiden, bald zu vereinen, daher das Molkige, Ungeklärte seiner Dichtungen, die, bei schönen und genialen Einzelheiten, doch auch teilweise ein unnatürliches, hyperhumoristisches Element in die Posse brachten.

"Nestroy, sein Nachfolger, unterwarf die an Raimundschen Nervenleiden kränkelnde, von einem poetischen Sonnambulismus gequälte Wiener Volksbühne einer Gewaltkur, die zwar eine starke Krise zur Folge hatte, aber im Wesentlichen doch ihren Zweck erreichte. Durch derb materielle Gegengifte trieb er allmählich den durch Raimund ihr eingepflanzten Idealismus heraus. Er griff tief in den Vorrat menschlicher Gewohnheiten, Torheiten und Begierden, oft bis in den Schutt der Fundamente hinab, da seine satirische Indifferenz sich nicht selten in Kontrasten gefiel. Aus seinen Bildern stellt sich eine freilich nicht immer tröstliche aber doch immer siegende Wahrheit des idealentkleideten Menschenalltagslebens heraus, wozu sein sprudelnder, sarkastischer Witz durch eine Masse treffender, oft sehr geistreicher Beziehungen, Anklang und Interesse erkämpfte." ⁸

Bauerle has since dwindled into oblivion, but it has grown into a popular error to speak of "Raimund and Nestroy" in the same breath, in a similar way as one speaks of "Haydn and Mozart". Apart from the fact that they were both primarily actors who wrote plays, the two men were radically different. Nestroy was the son of a lawyer, born in the centre of Vienna, began to study law at Vienna University, but abandoned this in favour of the stage. Raimund was the son of a turner, born in the suburb of Mariahilf and was as a boy apprenticed to a confectioner; his first knowledge of the theatre was gained by selling

sweetmeats during the intervals. Raimund is in his works gentle and noble, in his private life hot-tempered and ill-natured. Nestroy was shy, reserved and clumsy to the point of embarrassment as a person, venomous and fiery on the stage.

It was this venom and fire which Nestroy proceeded to inject into the Viennese popular comedy, which through the pen of the public favourite Raimund had become a hazy world of dream and fantasy. It is true that Nestroy began his career by writing Zauberstücke: apart from minor pieces and quodlibets his first plays were Die Verbannung aus dem Zauberreiche oder Dreißig Jahre aus dem Leben eines Lumpen, Zauberspiel (1828), Der Tod am Hochzeitstage oder Mann, Frau, Kind, Zauberspiel (1829), Magische Eilwagenreise durch die Komödienwelt, Schaugemälde mit Quodlibet (1830), Der konfuse Zauberer oder Treue und Flatterhaftigkeit, Zauberspiel (1832), Die Zauberreise in die Ritterzeit oder Die Übermütigen, Zauberposse (1832), Genius, Schuster und Markkörn oder Die Pyramiden der Verzauberung, Zauberposse (1832), Der Zauberer Februar oder Die Überraschungen, Lokales Zauberspiel (1833), Der böse Geist Lumpazivagabundus oder Das liederliche Kleeblatt, Zauberposse (1833). Apart from these there were the first parodies, but here there were also supernatural elements, such as in the Cinderella story, Nagerl und Handschuh, or in Robert der Teuxel.⁹ One sees that the themes of Nestroy's plays at least were in conformance with the popular

9. See ch. II, sect. 2, pp. 75-76 below.

tradition of the time, though the Zauberspiel belongs solely to Nestroy's youth, to his dramatic apprenticeship. Apart from Lumpazivagabundus and Der konfuse Zauberer these early plays have since been forgotten by the general public, and even Der konfuse Zauberer experienced a temporary incarnation only through Karl Kraus's adaptation. Lumpazivagabundus itself gained popularity mainly by Nestroy's startling rendering of the cobbler's mate Knieriem,¹⁰ and not by virtue of its literary content, which was at this time in any case of minor importance. After 1834 Nestroy abandoned the Zauberspiel for a more realistic type of Posse; these early plays are important in that they represent a testing-ground for Nestroy's creative and literary talent, as well as the point where Nestroy was closest to the tradition from which he later diverged. For it is important for a satirist to be able to address his audiences in the conventions they understand; only by using the vocabulary, symbols and properties familiar to them can he speak directly with them, and by thus revealing the intimacies and weaknesses which he sees in their world, he appears to reject it. The satirist is therefore not a revolutionary in the sense of the Dadaists or the early Impressionists who rejected the old conventions entirely and apparently introduced new methods of expression from nowhere; he must be fully acquainted with the stereotype convention, and must break it down actually by using it and speaking in its idiom.

10. See ch. IV, sect. 1, pp. 183-186 below.

Lumpazivagabundus represents a turning point in Nestroy's writing. Certainly it is a Zauberspiel, but the earthy, realistic element introduced in the three figures Knieriem, Zwirn and Leim came as a shock for the audiences used to the gentle idealism of Raimund. This was the element which Nestroy was to develop: he portrayed men, not as they wanted to be, but as he saw them in reality, even if the picture frequently resembled a caricature. Neither did he portray men merely as they appeared on the surface, but he exposed the weaknesses he saw below the surface, even though these new "truths" seemed revolutionary and distasteful to the settled, comfort-loving bourgeois mind. The form in which he expressed these ideas was basically that of the old popular tradition, and the genre he used was comedy. It is this tension and contrast between form and basic content which produce the satire.

Where Karl Kraus openly declared war¹¹ upon the corrupt elements of the contemporary society, however, we have no direct battle-cry from Nestroy. On the contrary, the words he puts into the mouth of the poet Leicht in his parody Weder Lorbeerbaum noch Bettelstab: "Bis zum Lorbeer versteig' ich mich nicht. G'fallen sollen meine Sachen, unterhalten, lachen sollen die Leut', und mir soll die G'schicht' a Geld tragen, daß ich auch lach', das ist der ganze Zweck. G'spaßige Sachen schreiben und damit nach dem Lorbeer trachten^{wollen}, das is a Mischung

11. See ch. III, sect. 1, p. 96 below.

von Dummheit und Arroganz, das ist grad so, als wenn einer Zwetschkenkrampus¹² macht und gibt sich für einen Rivalen von Casanova aus" (I,12) - such words are popularly interpreted as Nestroy's own views on his own work. Obviously Nestroy needed to please in that he was dependent for his livelihood on his audiences, and he needed to write plays which would fill the theatre. Moreover he had to write not merely plays but also parts which would fit in with the actors available, including, of course, himself. As his was the drastic technique of caricature, of suggestive mime and extreme volubility,¹³ the parts he wrote for himself had to allow him free rein on this score.

There was yet another element besides the audiences and the actors which influenced the final version of nearly all Nestroy's plays. This was the censorship. Karl Glossy describes how this was first introduced with the noble intention of keeping public entertainment on the narrow path of respectability,¹⁴ evolving the constantly repeated formulas "Ehrbarkeit und Modestie zu beachten", "alles Skandalöse und Unsaubere zu verhüten".¹⁵ Unfortunately the audiences were sometimes neither respectable nor modest, for we read in 1747 that the kleines Schauspiel of the suburbs was patronized by "Dienstboten und solchen

12. Dial. Zwetschken: Pflaume; Krampus: Knecht Ruprecht, Teufel (It. grampa: claw). A Zwetschkenkrampus was a devil made of dried plums; hence an ugly man.

13. See ch. IV, sect. 1, pp. 178-80 below.

14. Zur Geschichte der Wiener Theaterzensur, printed from the Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft, Vienna, 1896, p. 2.

15. Ibid., p. 10.

gemeinen Leuten, welche weder Zeit noch Geld zur Frequentierung deren ordinari Komödien und Opern haben".¹⁶ Maria Theresa approved of the censorship and it grew into an established concern. In 1760 Heinrich von Engelschall, a disciple of the Gottsched school, submitted a plea that no word be spoken by an actor on the stage which had not been contained in the written text approved by the censor; that is, stage extempores should be forbidden. In 1769 the position was finally reached where extemporized comedies had disappeared from the repertoire. The value and justice of a censorship naturally depends upon the character and outlook of the censors concerned. Such an element is also likely to lose its original point with the passing of years and is liable to grow rigid or corrupt. For Nestroy the censorship became a real enemy, and the only play of his left untouched by the censor's blue pencil was the product of the revolutionary weeks of 1848, Freiheit in Krähwinkel. Der alte Mann mit der jungen Frau, written in the next year, even "disappeared" while it was being examined and the company could not perform it. Quite apart from the written texts, Nestroy was frequently in trouble with the police for his daring stage extempores, for which he was fined or even sent to prison.¹⁷

Freiheit in Krähwinkel is the most extreme example of Nestroy's

16. Ibid., p. 8. Quoted from Bericht des Bürgermeisters und Rathes der Stadt Wien an die Regierung vom 11. Dezember, 1747 (Vienna Stadtarchiv).

17. See ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 198 below.

satire, and as a political satire on the totalitarian state it is the most serious of Nestroy's plays. The satirized use of the word "freedom", officially regarded in Krähwinkel as an unwanted evil, is the bitterest and most blatant way in which Nestroy joins the fight for the freedom of the individual and the freedom of the press. Nestroy puns on the word continually, using it even in the most harmless contexts:

"Klaus: ¹⁸ Ich werd' a bisserl mit trinken, im Übrigen, trinken's ungeniert fort.

Nachtwächter: Wir werden so frei sein.

Klaus: So frei sein? So ruchlose Ausdruck' sollten Sie nicht gebrauchen, ich bin vom Amt, und wir lieben das nicht, daß der Mensch frei is."

(I,2)

The satire here lies in the fact that the stereotyped and almost meaningless social formula "wir sind so frei" is correlated with the idea of liberty, the ideal for which mankind has been striving throughout its history. Secondly, the idea of bureaucracy is ridiculed in Nestroy's words as the enemy of freedom:

"Klaus: Herr Nachtwächter, frotzeln ¹⁹ Sie mich nicht, Sie sind ja selbst Beamter.

Nachtwächter: Ich tu' meine Schuldigkeit, deswegen bin ich aber doch ein freisinniger Mensch.

Klaus: Als solcher sind Sie uns bereits denunziert, wir wissen, daß Sie auswärtige Blätter lesen, sogar österreichische."

(I,3)

Here the concept of the Beamter as the man bound by oath and duty to

18. The mistrusted spy.

19. Dial. necken, zum Besten halten.

be loyal to his superiors and the state whatever it might involve, is satirized, as is also the element of foreign and hostile propaganda. Klaus's last sentence refers to the censorship of the press which had for Nestroy topical significance; but the political situation of to-day, with a world split into two diametrically opposed political and economic systems, gives the words actuality in the twentieth century. A political satire of this kind can only endure if it contains elements which will also have a topical significance for later generations.²⁰

It is also noteworthy that Krähwinkel has no students, indicating that Nestroy sees the privilege of freedom embodied in a university. Furthermore, Austria (whose lack of freedom Nestroy was attacking) is ironically depicted in the play as the golden land of liberty. Finally, Freiheit in Krähwinkel contains much unadulterated and direct criticism which in most Nestroy plays is veiled by linguistic conceits or takes the form of a witty philosophizing on mankind in general, leaving the audience to interpret it as they wish. Here, however, individuals are directly attacked: among these is Nestroy's old enemy, the censor: "Ein Zensor ist ein menschgewordener Bleistift oder ein Bleistiftgewordener Mensch, ein fleischgewordener Strich über die Erzeugnisse des Geistes, ein Krokodil, das an den Ufern des Ideenstromes lagert und den darin schwimmenden Literaten die Köpfe abbeißt" (I,14); and "Die

20. Cf. ch. III, sect. 2, p. 141 below.

Zensur ist die jüngere von zwei schändlichen Schwestern, die ältere heißt Inquisition. Die Zensur ist das lebendige Geständnis der Großen, daß sie nur verdummte Sklaven treten, aber keine freien Völker regieren können. Die Zensur ist etwas, was tief unter dem Henker steht, denn derselbe Aufklärungsstrahl, der vor sechzig Jahren dem Henker zur Ehrllichkeit verholfen, hat der Zensur in neuester Zeit das Brandmal der Verachtung aufgedrückt" (I,14). This is the tone of direct attack which Karl Kraus was later to adopt, but it is not typical of Nestroy's plays. It was an extreme to which he resorted when history gave him a brief opportunity for unlimited freedom of expression.

In general the plot in Nestroy's plays is incidental, and there is not the direct intention to lampoon abstract faults or immoralities. No one would maintain, for instance, that Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt was a satire on dishonesty. There is certainly a dark and complicated story embedded in the plot, but the general atmosphere is too gay, too much emphasis is placed on baking the Guglhupf and playing practical tricks for us to take the subject of theft and swindle very seriously. Moreover, Gigl, like many of Nestroy's young men, is too weak a character for us to trouble much about his future. What is it, then, which constitutes the satire? A very important element was the acting itself, together with the pantomimic effects, the improvisation and the suggestive power which resulted from it, and it was in this way that Nestroy communicated most directly with the Viennese.²¹ If we limit ourselves

21. See ch. IV, sect.1 below.

to the text alone, we must come to the conclusion that the satire in Nestroy's plays generally lies in the linguistic expression itself, and it is in the language, not in the plot or characterisation even, that Nestroy is original.

The best examples for a study of this are the so-called Auftrittsmonologe. During the course of the first act the main character, generally played by Nestroy himself, enters and introduces himself in the form of a song. He then proceeds to hold a monologue upon his own trade or profession or, as is the case with Eberhard Ultra in Freiheit in Krähwinkel, on a subject which is very important to him. This monologue also contains Nestroy's philosophy on life in general, which Nestroy deals with in the idiom and vocabulary of the subject of the monologue concerned. A good example to discuss is the Auftrittsmonolog of Schnoferl in Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt (I,5):

"Mein Räsionieren überm Ehestand is etwas fabelhaft, denn es hat sehr viel Fuchsendweinbeerartiges an sich." This first sentence includes a favourite linguistic trick of Nestroy's, namely, the coinage of words. Some of the innumerable examples in his plays are: venividivizisch (KampL, III,14), Kreuztausendbombenkartätschenelement²² (Zwölf Mädchen in Uniform, 9) and jaagdhundkaschulierende²³ (Einen Jux^{I,10}). Such a practice

22. Kartätschen, dial.: kartaschen = Pferdebürste (Czech. kartač, brush). Cf. ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 203 below.

23. Kaschulieren, dial.: schmeicheln (Fr. cajoler, caress).

is likewise echoed in Nestroy's open letter to M.G. Saphir which was published in the Wiener Theaterzeitung on 18 February 1849, where he calls his enemy "Sie lächerlicher Vorkunstrichterstuhlherabdioloutovor-nichtenwoller". In this case the combination of a long clause in a single word, which is naturally spoken more rapidly than the normal sentence, with the perplexing pile-up of syllables, is intended to confuse and humiliate, thus placing the listener at a disadvantage. This same perplexing explosion effect is produced by the longswear-word in Zwölf Mädchen. Venividivizisch, an epithet applied to the method of attack of the lovers of a rich heiress, is simply a witty word-play on Julius Caesar's method of attack on barbarian countries. Schnoferl's coinage, however, is neither a mere allusion nor an attempt to crush the listener, it merely aims at confusing him and arousing his curiosity. The problem lies in the fact that "Fuchsendweinbeerartiges" seems to bear little logical connection to Schnoferl's philosophizing on marriage. The connecting word is, however, "fabelhaft", for Schnoferl continues with the following ingenious mixed metaphor: "Meine Junggesellschaft ist nicht als staubige Distl auf der rohen Pußta des Weiberhasses emporgeschossen, o nein, sie ist als düsterer Efeu dem Garten der Liebe entkeimt; für mich war die Liebe kein buntes Gemälde in heitrer Farbenpracht, sondern eine in der Druckerei des Schicksals verpatzte Lithographie, grau in grau, schwarz in schwarz, dunkel in schmutzig verwischt." This is an instance of Nestroy's poetic satire:²⁴ the poetry

24. Cf. ch. I, p. 7 above, and ch. III, sect. 3, p. 147 below.

lies in the metaphors chosen, generally fairly conventional symbols when considered separately, but the random conglomeration of the metaphorical turns of phrase, the abstract, the concrete, the everyday, the far-fetched, the imaginative, the lyrical, nature, art, love, printing, and so forth, results in^a tension in the reader's mind, and the complete incongruity of the symbols disturbs one's sense of proportion. It is, however, far from nonsensical, on the contrary, each metaphor is extremely well-chosen. It is the combined effect which is comic. This sentence is a typical example of Nestroy in his most inventive mood. But immediately the atmosphere changes, and Schnoferl, with true academic precision, proceeds to analyze the story of his romantic life: "Die pragmatische Geschichte meines Herzens zerfällt in drei miserable Kapitel: Zwecklose Träumereien, abbreunte Versuche und wertlose Triumphe." There is here a further tension produced by the crescendo effect of "Träumereien", "Versuche" and "Triumphe" as taken at their normal surface value, combined with the contradictory negative and anticlimactic effect of the preceding adjectives. Up to this point Schnoferl has shown himself in complete mastery of the rich language he has been using, but here he becomes embarrassed, stumbles over his words and in his incapacity becomes comic:²⁵ "Wenn der Mensch nie diejenige erringt, wo er eigentlich - wo es der Müh wert, wo - ich kann mich nicht ausdrücken, mag mich

25. Cf. ch. IV, sect. 2 (on Shakespeare's clowns), p. 191 below.

eigentlich nicht ausdrücken - wenn der Mensch nicht Baumkraxler²⁶ genug war, um die wahren süßen Früchte am Lebensbaum zu erreichen, wenn - ich find' nicht die gehörigen Worte, das heißt, ich findet s', aber grad die ghörigen täten sich nicht g'hören - mit einem Wort ... "

Here Schnoferl is a victim of his own linguistic method. He tries to revert to the slick metaphors of the opening sentence, but fails, he loses himself in hopeless complications, and the "one word" which is to sum up the situation is "der Mensch verfallt nach einigen Desperationsparoxysmen in eine ruhige Sarkasmus-Languissance, wo man über alles räsoniert und andererseits wieder alles akzeptabel find't." With these verbal flourishes one might well have expected a grand climax to the speech; but precisely this would have turned it into ranting declamation and would have spoilt the comic effect. The comedy here is one of anti-climax and provides a fitting example of Kant's "Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts": the reason for Schnoferl's poetic and philosophical outpouring, indeed for his presence on the stage at all, is: "Heut wird eine Verlobung gefeiert in diesem Haus - diese Witwe - noch eh' sie zum erstenmal - und dann fast ununterbrochen - und jetzt, wo sie zum zweitenmal - und auch in Zukunft immer - ich will nix ver-raten, was man ohnedies bald mit Händen greifen wird. - Man kommt, ich glaub', sie selbst." The anti-climax consists not only in the vagueness of the phraseology, where beforehand Schnoferl was precise, but also in the triteness of the content, a type of verbal gaucherie which by virtue of

26. Dial. Baumkletterer (kraxeln = klettern).

its contrast with the virtuosity preceding it has the effect of an intentional coup de théâtre.

Apart from the richness of the imagery and the vocabulary, the use of foreign words is here striking, e.g. the Desperationsparoxysmen and the Sarkasmus-Languissance. The Viennese still have a predilection for French words, and Nestroy, by using them in a glorious superabundance, sometimes for the most trifling subjects, satirizes this. Sometimes the foreign words are piled one upon the other, as in the following sentence from Glück, Mißbrauch und Rückkehr: "Sie finden sich nicht in diese Lebensweise, diese Dinners, diese Dejeuners, diese Soupers languissant, diese Reunions ennuyant, die Agrements bizarres, die Piknik schofle, das können Sie alles nicht mit Anstand mitmachen, denn Ihnen fehlt es an Ton" (III,6). This is a caricature of the speech of affected social snobs, brought about merely by exaggeration. In this last example the speaker, Blasius Rohr, is as much ridiculed as the individuals who generally express themselves in such a manner, for he is a singularly unintelligent and uncouth young man who himself has little experience of the fashionable world.

Schnoferl belongs to Nestroy's so-called "geistreiche Raisonneurs", the witty philosophizers, if not philosophers, who, in language as sophisticated and involved as the speech quoted, express their original views on life. These are the characters who make an original and lavish use of foreign words, for such a practice presupposes a command of language such as they have at their disposal. There are also the characters who are fond of aping the fashionable speech; one of these,

also in Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt, is the dandified uncle, Herr von Kauz, who insists on calling Frau von Erbsenstein "Nièce", not being satisfied with the German form of the word. Kauz is also fond of employing another favourite Viennese word-form, the South German diminutive suffix -l and -erl. Together with the extremely formal or affected loan-word, they form an unusual combination. Kauz's garden is, for example, "einen prächtigen Garten mit Hutschen,²⁷ Kegelstatt, Saletteln,²⁸ Bosketteln und allem möglichen...wir werden uns prächtig divertieren" (II,10). This mixture of foreign words, diminutives and dialect can produce an incongruously comic effect. Not only the cultivated world in Vienna uses these high-sounding foreign words, but also the servants, especially if they want to put on an act. For example Christopherl in Einen Jux, when he wants to go and see the old housekeeper, remarks: "Ich retirier' mich zu der Frau Gertrud hinein" (I,15). This mingling of opposites, whether it be in the linguistic forms of the sentence itself or the disproportionateness of subject and mode of expression, is, as has already been established,²⁹ a primary feature of witty, and often of satirical language. In Vienna the people, the accents and the vocabulary are particularly varied; cultured people employ dialect and the less cultured also resort to foreign words, and the result is an extremely rich and easily exaggerated language which lends

27. Dial. Schaukel.

28. Gartenhäuschen (It. saletta).

29. Cf. ch. I, pp. 27-28 above.

itself to burlesque.

An unmistakable echo of this is Carl Merz and Helmut Qualtinger's satirical monologue on the Viennese mentality, the one-man comedy Der Herr Karl. Karl, in many respects a descendant of Nestroy's Hausmeistergestalten, is in his broadest dialect recounting the story of his life. He has just reached the point where he is taking a Sunday outing with his mistress: "Im Sommer, wanns haaß war, ham ma das Essen ins Papierl packt, san zum Donaukanäu abi...i hab ma's Hemd auszogn, sie war in der Kombinesch...schön war s'net...aber i hab da vor Kurzn mei zweite Gattin gesegn...de fesche Billetteurin...i kann Ihna sagn...de hat ausg'schaut!: schiach...fett...ungustiös."³⁰ The subject and atmosphere differ, of course, from Nestroy's, but the chatty and rambling monologue with the attention to detail and the mixture of opposites is obvious: on the one hand the dialect slang, then the diminutive (Papierl), on the other hand the French words, as well as the use of the more formal Gattin as opposed to the everyday Frau. The two poles are expressed in the climax effect "schiach...fett...ungustiös", for schiach is extreme slang whereas ungustiös is affectedly precious. The important point as regards the wit of the language is that both Nestroy and Qualtinger are talking within the idiom of their character, but, through heightened use of the idiosyncrasies of that idiom, they make

30. Carl Merz and Helmut Qualtinger, Der Herr Karl (Munich, 1962), p. 27. The play was first performed in the Kleines Theater der Josefstadt im Konzerthaus in Vienna on 30 November 1961 with Qualtinger playing Herr Karl.

it amusing.

Another linguistic trick of Nestroy's is the pun, and in this field he has been compared to Shakespeare. Again the Auftrittsmonologe provide ample hunting-ground. The pun demands the exploitation, not only of all the nuances and suggestive powers which a word has, but also of those which it could have. This demands a linguistic resourcefulness at which Nestroy shows himself extraordinarily adept. His most inventive Auftrittsmonolog is surely that of the carpenter Peter Span in Der Unbedeutende, in which the various possible meanings of any word connected with carpentry are explored: Zimmermann, Zimmer, Holzacker, Zirkel, Winkel and so forth. The end of the monologue, for example, presents an ingenious series of improvised variations on the "Zirkel" theme: "Der gesellschaftliche Zirkel unterscheidet sich vom mathematischen wesentlich dadurch, daß der mathematische einen einzigen Mittelpunkt hat, der akkurat mitten im Zirkel liegt - der gesellschaftliche Zirkel jedoch hat in der Mitte nur den scheinbaren Mittelpunkt, den Kaffeetisch, währenddem der eigentliche Mittelpunkt, um den sich die Peripherie der Unterhaltung dreht, meistens außerhalb des Zirkels liegt, weil gewöhnlich nur die Abwesenden ausgerichtet werden. Aber halt! ... Die Zirkelbetrachtungen führen einem zu leicht vom Runden auf das, was zu rund is, und in das mag ich jetzt nicht eingehen, ich geh' lieber in was Viereckiges ein, in meine Haustüre, und kugl' mich in mein längliches Bett" (I,13). Here there is a distinct tone of criticism, not in the form of direct attack as in Freiheit in Krähwinkel, but in the indirect

allusion through the mathematical terminology. What Nestroy is criticizing is gossip, but he is doing it in the most subtle and refined manner. Again, it is a feature of his inventiveness in word-play to make his characters discuss things in terms of their particular profession, as Peter Span here discusses social life.

Word-play must necessarily involve repetition of the word concerned, as, for example, the Auftrittsmonolog of Weinberl in Einen Jux, a discussion on human "Handlungen", which are generally of a dubious nature, and the "Handlungen" in business, the Großhandlungen. This means that in the first few lines Handlung is mentioned no less than eleven times in various connections. Repetition is not only a method of exploring possibilities, however, it also provides a means of caricature. Nestroy's characters are generally fairly distinct types: he makes no such tiresome problems as subconscious complexes, dilemmas or character development out of the figures with which he peoples the stage. His characters have life through the language they speak and the turns of phrase they use. Herr von Gundelhuber, for example, in Eine Wohnung ist zu vermieten, imparts a self-assured, worldly-wise and adroit impression mainly because he is too voluble. Actually he is, behind the volubility, unwise and even unintelligent, but on the surface he seems most convincing. He also has a knack of choosing words, and Nestroy has employed an effective trick in making him repeat the phrases of which he is very proud: "...denn sie ist ein Mädel, aufgewachsen unter den Flügeln der Mutter, unter der Obhut des Vaters, zu jeglichem Guten angeeifert durch das täglich vor

Augen habende Beispiel der Eltern", referring, of course, to his elder daughter Amalie. Gundelhuber brings forward these words like a trump card whenever he desires to praise his daughter, much to the embarrassment of those around him. It grows into an idiosyncrasy, very suitable for caricature. Similarly the habit of the elderly Knöpfel (Das Mädchen aus der Vorstadt) of interlarding his speech with "Oder wie, oder was" is taken up by Nestroy and exaggerated into a caricature; how successful this is in portraying a curious old man depends on the actor concerned.

Nestroy's characters are seldom rogues. Some notable examples do occur in the Volksstücke, for example, Puffmann in Der Unbedeutende, August von Zollfeld in Der Schützling and Julius Fink in Mein Freund. Crime of a serious nature is too dark a subject for the Posse. Nestroy is concerned with making fun of the faults and failings of the normal run of people; one favourite subject of his is the chase after money as in Der Zerrissene and Kampl. Not merely the human love of riches, but the hypocrisy, deceit, treachery and malice which accompany it form the butt of Nestroy's criticism. Most of his millionaires are surrounded by dull friends eyeing their purse, and even Herr von Lips (Der Zerrissene) himself is aware of the never-ending stock of friends around him.

Nestroy's satirical technique seldom takes the form of a direct attack as it does in Freiheit in Krähwinkel. If he wants to show society that it is false, arrogant, mean, corrupt, lazy or greedy, he does not express this in so many words, as Karl Kraus was to do in Die Fackel, nor does he actually attack any of his characters for possessing these faults. He simply shows several characters who share these failings, and because

the language of the characters rather than their actions is the important vehicle of expression, he makes the characters express themselves in such a way that we both laugh at them and recognize their weaknesses. Nestroy thus presents a mirror, often caricatured, certainly, and in this mirror the individual may recognize himself. This is the explanation of satirical technique which Nestroy puts into the mouth of one of his own figures.³¹ Moreover he seldom lampoons individuals: his attacks on Saphir and Wiest, provoked in any case by previous insults by his two enemies, were either extempores or, as in the case of his open letter to Saphir of 18 February 1849, outside the realm of the theatre. It is in this indirect, apparently harmless and anonymous mirror technique that the "sting of truth" on normal human faults and failings is hidden. This mirror-technique is also used in Merz and Qualtinger's Der Herr Karl. Karl is the type of Viennese who "lives and lets live", and who has spent his life as an apparently loyal subject to each régime as it has come along, be it that of Hitler, the Russians or the Americans. Characteristics emerge which the Viennese themselves are loath to acknowledge, and the authors received infuriated letters protesting that the Viennese citizen is not in reality like Herr Karl. Hereupon the authors composed and published a letter written to themselves by "der Herr Karl" joining in the attack and agreeing to the objections, thereby supporting most wittily the truth behind the original characterization.

31. See quotation, p. 35 above.

The members of the public had felt themselves personally insulted in the figure of Herr Karl, and were the first to accuse the authors of slander. Karl is, however, not an individual, but a definite type, and in the type lies the strength of the satirist.

That Nestroy works with types is immediately seen by the names which he gives his characters.³² These generally contain an allusion to the main quality or state in the character which Nestroy wishes to emphasize. This may be the extreme wealth of a character, which, for a rich man, must be borne in mind to the exclusion of all else, and so the capitalists are called Baron von Massengold (Der Unbedeutende) or Herr von Goldfuchs (Zu ebener Erde und erster Stock). Occasionally these rich gentlemen are at the same time good and generous, as in Eulenspiegel, and they are given an attractive name such as Nelkenstein. Sometimes the names indicate special characteristics which Nestroy caricatures. This is generally achieved through metaphor; weakness of character is indicated by wax, for example, something which is soft and can melt at the slightest opportunity, hence Willibald Wachs (Freiheit in Krähwinkel) and Herr von Wachsweiß (Zu ebener Erde). Similarly the gossip is indicated as such by the presence of the word in his name, hence Tratschmiedl (Tritschtratsch). Very often Nestroy's tradesmen or working characters are called after some aspect of their trade or profession, frequently in the diminutive form. Schnoferl (Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt), for example,

32. See Appendix A, pp. 255-257 below.

is a diminutive form for the dialect word meaning to "snoop round", Weinberl (Einen Jux) is the dialect form for "raisin", for Weinberl works in a grocer's shop. Similarly the writing clerk in Die Papiere des Teufels is called Federl, the baker in Eisenbahnheiraten Kipfl and the Gastwirt in Lumpazivagabundus Strudl.³³ Sometimes the names are combinations of ordinary High German forms, such as Gluthammer, the locksmith in Der Zerrissene; sometimes they are dialect forms, for example the gardener's boy in Der Talisman is called Plutzerkern, dialect for Kürbissame, or pumpkin seed. Very often a small and insignificant object is selected as a name, as in the case of Weinberl. This smallness, or even a diminutive form, forms an incongruous contrast with the large man it designates, and the effect is comic. Where the name indicates a character falling or something directly unpleasant one may maintain that Nestroy is criticizing directly, and the effect is, as with Kraus's Herr von Dreckwitz in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (II,14), one of a bitter kind of satire. More often than not, however, Nestroy's resourcefulness in naming his characters is merely a reflection of his inventive use of language.

It is clear that Nestroy's satirical technique may be summed up in a single word: his wit. It is Nestroy's inventive, plastic and unusual

33. The -l ending of the surname is common South German, as in Brandl, Hötzl, Pörtl and so forth.

juggling with language forms that constitutes his originality and individuality. Whether he takes a cliché and twists it into unusual shapes, whether he takes a word and exploits all its possibilities, whether he invents metaphors or caricatures idiosyncrasies through repetition, he shows a linguistic virtuosity which for the audiences of his time was quite revolutionary. The effect is a baffling one: one is left bewildered and astounded before the tirade of words of his geistreiche Raisonneurs and one is equally astonished at the uncouth wisdom behind his dumm-schlaue Burschen. It is also with the instrument of language that Nestroy lashes at the faults and failings he sees in society, especially in the rich. This is frequently done in the form of aphorisms,³⁴ which contain Nestroy's most pointed criticisms of humanity in general.

It is clear that we have departed a long way from the naive G'spaß of the old tradition. Nestroy's audiences were unacquainted with the phenomenon of wit until he introduced them to it. In fact, he makes Blasius state directly in Weder Lorbeerbaum noch Bettelstab, a parody of Holtei's sentimental Drei Winter eines deutschen Dichters, that: "Ein G'spaß soll niemals witzig sein, sondern so gewiß sentimental gutmütig, daß man mit'n halbeten G'sicht lachen und mit der andern Hälfte weinen kann" (I,2), and this was precisely what Raimund had offered the Viennese. The harmless G'spaß was obviously much more comfortable to listen to than

34. See ch. V, pp. 233-238 below.

Nestroy's often biting witticisms, and for a long time his style was not popular. In the early 1830s there were controversies as to whether Nestroy was of a higher quality than Raimund, and in November 1834 Jeitteles, better known under his pseudonym Seidlitz,³⁵ who was to become Nestroy's bitter enemy, even placed Lumpazivagabundus higher than Der Verschwender, praising Nestroy as the "modernen Geist".³⁶ However, Nestroy's style was to make him enemies: M.G. Saphir, for example, in his paper Der Humorist, used to attack Nestroy; Franz Wiest,³⁷ who imitated Saphir's witticisms, followed his example, and travelling Literaten, who would stop in Vienna for a few days to gather the theatre scandal, even started a campaign against Nestroy. Josef Kehrein, for example, placed Bäuerle higher than Nestroy, whose plays, "...Zu ebener und erster Stock Erde/einigemmaßen ausgenommen, entbehren allerwahrhaft komische Laune, ^{aber} sind/dagegen reich an Krähwinklereien, Albernheiten, Gemeinheiten und mehr beklagens- als belachenswerten Dummheiten."³⁸

Howover, most of Nestroy's opponents have long since disappeared from history, except in the stage extempores in which Nestroy mocked them, and there are other contemporary opinions which help to disprove their validity. Fürst Schwarzenberg, for example, wrote: "Er (Nestroy) dünkt

35. Journalist and writer (1814-1857). Rommel gives his Christian name as Ignaz, Wurzbach as Julius.

36. See Otto Rommel, Johann Nestroy. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Wiener Volkskomödie, vol. XV of works (Vienna, 1930), hereafter referred to as R.XV, p. 197.

37. See ch. IV, sect. 1, pp. 197-198 below.

38. Die dramatische Poesie der Deutschen : Versuch einer Entwicklung derselben von der ältesten Zeit bis zur Gegenwart (Leipzig, 1840), cit. R.XV, p. 581.

mich weit über Raimund zu stehen, dessen ^{zünpferliche} krankhafte/Sentimentalität nicht mit der Volksnatur zusammenpaßt! Raimund paßt für den eigentlichen Mittelstand, er ist ein philosophischer, aber weinerlicher Hanswurst, in Nestroy aber lebt ein wirklich shakespearscher Geist, Humor und Witz." 39.

Can any direct comparison be drawn between Nestroy and Shakespeare? The Viennese satirist possesses none of that breadth of vision, polarity of style or dramatic skill of the English dramatist, and the limitedness of Nestroy's field makes any point of contact small, and I would not place him so near to Shakespeare as does Karl Kraus in his lecture "Nestroy und die Nachwelt".⁴⁰ He does, however, show a penetrating knowledge and understanding of the human kind and in many respects his geistreiche Raisonners and his dumm-schlaue Burschen bear a marked resemblance to Shakespeare's clowns. Most important, however, is the punning or word-play, and here Nestroy might even be placed near Shakespeare. His puns are more thorough, more conscious, more concentrated and more stinging than Shakespeare's; Nestroy's geistreiche Raisonners give the impression of being professional punners. For the Elizabethans punning was almost second nature, and Shakespeare's come more naturally than Nestroy's, they do not have so many linguistic flourishes, and there is more tolerance and humour about them. Finally, where Nestroy's puns dazzle the senses, Shakespeare's perplex, they are

39. Fürst Friedrich Schwarzenberg, Wanderbuch eines verabschiedeten Lanzknechtes (printed as MS., Vienna 1844-1848), cit. R.XV, p. 198.

40. See ch. III, sect. 3, pp. 143-149 below.

less showy and more subtle. One of the innumerable examples of this is a small conversation from Twelfth Night between Viola and the Clown:

Viola: Save thee friend, and thy music: dost thou live by thy tabor?

Clown: No, sir, I live by the church.

Viola: Art thou a churchman?

Clown: No such matter, sir: I do live by the church, for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

Viola: So thou mayst say, the king lies by a beggar, if a beggar dwell near him: or, the church stands by thy tabor, if thy tabor stand by the church."

(III,1)

Whereas Nestroy coins words and phrases, uses grand French words, and garnishes his speech with a welter of images, Shakespeare, unless the character concerned normally speaks in a flourishing manner, works with the more hidden possibilities in less striking words. Naturally this varies with the example in question, but I would conclude that as a rule Nestroy's characters have made a conscious and striking art of punning, for Shakespeare's characters it is second nature.

The fact that Nestroy works with Viennese dialect and with the Viennese mentality must necessarily limit his appeal; Shakespeare, of course, works with a far wider range of human kind, he portrays types, situations, dilemmas and sufferings which are not limited to a certain time and place. Within his limits Nestroy may, as Fürst Schwarzenberg stated, have a "Shakespearscher Geist" in that he echoes some of the qualities one meets in Shakespeare, but the comparison may go no further. Indeed, Nestroy's canvas is Vienna and the Viennese, and outside Vienna

or for those unacquainted with Vienna he meets with little acclaim. For foreigners there is the almost unsurmountable problem of his "un-translatability": the essentially Viennese properties such as the Guglhupf and the Kipfel would lose their significance in a foreign tongue, the punning would be lost, the coined words would present great difficulties, and the printed text would need detailed and tedious annotations explaining the suggestive qualities the original word possessed. Even where translation is not required, in Germany, for example, Nestroy is not appreciated. Herbert Jhering, a Berlin journalist and critic, has published a collection of reviews of notable performances in and around Berlin during the early decades of this century.⁴¹ These offer an interesting foil to the theatre reviews and performances in Vienna. We meet in the Jhering reviews the following remarks: "Elisabeth Bergner hat kein Gehör und kann nicht singen. Wie bringt sie Couplets zum Erfolg? Indem sie auf ihre stimmlichen und musikalischen Mängel hinweist. ...Es ist die Wirkung: 'Nein, wie reizend in Hosen; wie entzückend, sie ist unmusikalisch und singt doch; wie himmlisch, sie kann sogar Wiener Dialekt.'"⁴² And "...Erstens ist Nestroy den berlinischen Zungen und Ohren ziemlich fremd. Warum wurde nicht hier, im Berliner Osten, eine berlinische Posse gespielt?"⁴³

41. Herbert Jhering, Von Reinhardt bis Brecht, vier Jahrzehnte Theater und Film (Berlin, 1961).

42. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 169. Review of Einen Jux, 2 January 1926. Elisabeth Bergner played Christopherl.

43. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 195. Review of Der Talisman, Rose-Theater, 28 September 1931.

Nestroy's appeal is limited, therefore, to those who appreciate the mentality he reflects and who are familiar with the world he depicts. Furthermore, much of the effect of his plays was lost with the passing of the actor Nestroy, for it was in the stage performance, not in the written text, that he came into his own. His plots are also of secondary importance, and his characters lack depth. It is obvious, therefore, that he has been widely condemned and misunderstood; Nestroy is not a suitable victim for the theorist. Neither can he be hailed as a great prophetic satirist like Karl Kraus; Nestroy's aim was to amuse and to attract audiences. Despite all this, however, Nestroy occupies a place in Viennese literature which has not been equalled. Into a popular tradition which had grown lame and nebulous he injected new life, in the deceptive gaiety of a couplet or the linguistic juggling of a monologue he twisted a stereotype language into a new shape, at the same time philosophizing upon the sad failings of mankind. Many of these philosophic sentences have since been collected in the form of aphorisms,⁴⁴ and Nestroy is known for these "geflügelte Worte"⁴⁵ almost as well as he is known for his plays. Nestroy's satire is a caricature which yet shows human kind in its true perspective, his language is wit which amuses and stings at the same time, his subjects are a stock collection of millionaires, paupers, snobs and Hausknechte, geistreiche Raisonneurs and

44. Cf. ch. V, pp.233-238 below.

45. Cf. Leopold Rosner, introduction to Johann Nestroy - Werke (2 vols., Leipzig, no date), p. vii.

languishing young heroines, and yet by exploiting and exposing their stereotype natures and by exaggerating their idiosyncrasies, he has created a type of "Nestroy-character" which no one has since been able to imitate. His vehicle of expression was the harmless Posse into which he managed to instil a vigour which shocked both contemporaries and later generations. Nowadays he has been accepted back into the respectable theatre-going world and his reputation seems established. During his life-time Nestroy was thought of as an actor rather than a playwright, and people troubled little about his significance for posterity. One exception was Fürst Friedrich Schwarzenberg, who prophesied for Nestroy an even greater future than he has yet attained, but seems to be gradually achieving; Nestroy, said Fürst Schwarzenberg, is "ein echter Volksdichter, und ich bin überzeugt, daß die Zukunft mein Urteil bestätigen und ihm einen ausgezeichneten Platz unter den dramatischen Notabilitäten Deutschlands anweisen wird."⁴⁶

46. Wanderbuch eines verabschiedeten Landknechtes, cit. Otto Forst de Battaglia, Johann Nestroy, Abschätzer der Menschen. Magier des Wortes (Leipzig, 1932), p. 56. N.B.: Rommel quotes "Lanzknechtes" (cf. p. 63, fn. 39 above), Forst de Battaglia "Landsknechtes".

2. Parody, Travesty and Burlesque

"Der Rüpel Gerechtigkeit, durch einen Wehschrei der Kreatur für einen Augenblick aus dem Schnarchen gerissen, sagt 'Lektimoasch' und drehte ihn mir zu. Wenn aber der Hakkreuzler, bei dem man sich's in Favoriten richtet und an welchem ein weiterer konsonantischer Rülpsler genügte, um vollends Kurzschluß herzustellen zwischen Nam' und Art, im Wahne lebt, mich aufreizen zu können durch seine salomonarchistische Urteilsfällung zu einem Akte der Gerechtigkeit, die er außer Acht ließ, so soll er sich diese Hoffnung, deren Fruchtatreibung nicht einmal vor einem österreichischen Richter strafbar wäre, aus dem Kopfe schlagen: Er wird mich nicht dazu überlisten, ihn durch Zerschmetterung auf die Nachwelt zu bringen. Was Amalie Waporek vor ihren Schwestern im Geschlechte, die sich zur Ehe prostituieren und denen zwei Schweißfüße des legitimen Gatten jenen großen Fuß ersetzen müssen, auf dem man einen Lebenswandel führt, an verbrecherischem Tatbestande voraus hat, ist nur dieses, daß sie es unternahm, einer Welt, in der es auf 'barsch' keinen Reim gibt, die süßliche Maske niederzureißen, hinter der er sich findet." 47

The above passage is a parody of the style of Karl Kraus. This means that the author has taken Kraus's stylistic peculiarities, has imitated, exaggerated, concentrated and highlighted them, only, in this case, to make the meaning completely nonsensical. Kraus's language is generally difficult to analyse and comprehend, and out of the difficulty Robert Neumann has made an impossibility. The Krausian characteristics are clear: the complicated sentence structure, the allusions to Vienna, the finer points of which would be clear only to a Viennese (Favoriten

47. Robert Neumann, "Prozess Waporek" in Mit fremden Federn (Berlin, 1960), vol. 1, p. 153.

is the tenth district of Vienna), the nonchalant use of names, apparently presuming that they are generally known (Amalie Waporek), the sonorous phrases, the coinage of words and curious word combinations ('salomonar-chistische Urteilsfällung'), the strange metaphors ('Schweißfüße des legitimen Gatten'), the references to sexual morality in the Krausian manner, as in Das Ehrenkreuz ("die sich zur Ehe prostituieren"), the reference to the use of language ("in der es auf 'barsch' keinen Reim gibt"), the use of words such as Schnarchen and konsonantischer Rülpsen in strange contexts - in short, in a glorious hotch-potch of Krausian terminology and a conglomeration of allusions and phrases such as are scattered all over Kraus's work, Neumann writes utter nonsense. This does not mean that Kraus's style is nonsense, although it is certainly difficult; it simply means that Neumann has imitated and reproduced Kraus in a nonsensical manner. Such an imitation of form and style on a ridiculous plane is the essence of parody.

Here we must draw a careful distinction between parody and travesty. In his book The Art of Satire David Worcester discusses satire under the headings of invective, burlesque and irony. While this approach is surely far from comprehensive, Worcester has made some apt remarks on the difference between parody and travesty. Burlesque, he says, is like a distorting mirror;⁴⁸ it reproduces an object in a mimetic way. This is undoubtedly true. He then distinguishes low burlesque, which dimini-

48. Op. cit., p. 44.

shes and degrades an object, from high burlesque which holds its victim against standards which are too high for him. The former resembles the drolling antics of the clown, the imitation is purely superficial, interpreting something which might be noble and dignified at its face value, and reproducing it to make it ridiculous. This, says Worcester, is travesty. Parody, on the other hand, is high burlesque, which gives expression to trivial themes in an elevated manner. This I would accept with qualification as a description of the different types of burlesque rather than a definition. The French form of the word which has made its way into the English language came originally from the Italian burlesco, a variant of burla meaning "mockery", therefore an imitation which was hostile in intention. Nowadays this hostile approach is somewhat toned down, for the word "burlesque" calls to mind an imitation arousing, or seeking to arouse laughter. An example of this is the picture of the small boy imitating the movements of a guardsman on parade; he does not intend to arouse hostile mockery, he merely finds the guardsman's military demeanour funny, because it is for him quite unnatural. Both the words "parody" and "travesty", however, have assumed that flavour of hostility, although this actually need not be the case. The word "travesty" is likewise of Latin origin: it is an assimilation of trans and vestire, and thus means "to change the clothes of, disguise". Parody comes from the Greek paroidia, an assimilation of para and oide (song, ode), thus meaning a "song beside another song". Neither word has etymologically a hostile sense, and indeed parody need not be hostile:

where the characteristics of an object are merely reproduced there need not be hostility; it is where the faults and weaknesses of the object are exposed, in fact, where the parodist is intentionally and obviously criticizing, that hostility is engendered. For example, the eighteenth-century parodist John Philips was a worshipper of Milton; inscribed on his tomb in Westminster Abbey are the words: "a second Milton". This did not prevent him, however, from writing his Splendid Shilling parodying Milton's style. Good parody presupposes a fair number of qualities: it presupposes a detailed knowledge of and feeling for the author and style to be parodied, the poetic gifts and craftsmanship needed (in the case of literature) for creative work, it presupposes a crystal-clear understanding capable of criticism (and here we must remember that the genuinely critical mind is as capable of positive veneration as it is of negative rejection) and, finally, the parodist must possess a certain sense of humour to make his work amuse at all. It is this humour, moreover, which prevents his work from being mere polemic mud-slinging.

It is not necessarily true that the external form of parody must be elevated, though this is generally the case. One can parody, for example, a popular singer, by exaggerating his expressions of false emotions or any of his private idiosyncrasies, fondly known as "gimmicks", so as to make them ridiculous. To prove this we may take another example of a parody of Kraus: in October 1933 Kraus published in Die Fackel a short poem intending, perhaps, to explain his silence at the coming of Hitler:

"Man frage nicht, was all die Zeit ich machte.
Ich bleibe stumm;
und sage nicht, warum.
Und Stille gibt es, da die Erde krachte.
Kein Wort, das traf;
man spricht nur aus dem Schlaf.
Und träumt von einer Sonne, welche lachte.
Es geht vorbei;
nachher war's einerlei.
Das Wort entschlief, als jene Welt erwachte." 49

In the next number of Die Fackel, which did not appear until the middle of July, 1934, a poem is printed which had first appeared in the Neue Deutsche Blätter in Prague on 15 November, 1933:

"W i r fragen ihn, was all die Zeit er machte.
Und bleibt e r stumm,
so sagen w i r, warum
er schweigsam wurde, da die Erde krachte:
Er floh im Schlaf
nur weil s e i n Wort nicht traf!
Die Fackel starb. Die Sonne Hitlers lachte.
Karl Kraus? Vorbei!
Uns ist's nicht einerlei,
daß er entschlief, als Barbarei erwachte."

This is one of the several "parodies" of Kraus's poem. The form of the original is not mannered or elevated, on the contrary, it is remarkably simple. Neither is it clear whether the writer really wanted to mock Kraus for being so cowardly, or whether it was a sincere appeal for him to speak. The line "Karl Kraus? Vorbei!" is as hostile as the reader cares to interpret it. What is important for our discussion is that the parodist has taken the exact form of Kraus's poem, has even repeated some of the original phrases, but has twisted them to suit his own

49. See ch. III, sect. 1, p. 104 below.

purpose. This is an example, in fact, of a "song beside another song". A similar example of the same thing appears in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit during the meeting of the two amateur poets Hofrat i.P. Dlauhobetzky von Dlauhobetz and Hofrat i.P. Tibetanzl (II,13). Dlauhobetz reads out to his friend a poem he has just written for the midday paper. It is called "Wanderers Schlachtlied" and runs:

"Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh,
Über allen Wipfeln spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch.
Der Hindenburg schlafet im Walde,
Warte nur balde
Fällt Warschau auch."

Tibetanzl replies that he has composed an almost identical poem entitled "Beim Bäckern" which runs:

"Über allen Kipfeln⁵⁰ ist Ruh,
Beim Weißbäckern spürest du
Kaum einen Rauch.
Die Bäcker schlafen im Walde
Warte nur balde
Hast nix im Bauch."

Kraus has no intention of lampooning Goethe, nor, in fact, have the two Hofräte. They are merely using a model which would be immediately recognizable to all their readers to show how witty they can be - or else to make a protest. For this is more than mere music-hall joke-making: the second poem refers to the acute shortage of bread and semi-starvation of innocent people during the First World War. It is not Goethe who is being mocked at, but the situation which is being

50. Dial. Hörnchen.

abhorred. Secondly, it is not the "poets" who are doing the satirizing, but Kraus himself, for he makes the scene into a tasteless discussion of who has parodied whom (Tibetanzl: Sonst glaubt man am End, ich hab dich paradiert!), and whose poem will appear in which newspaper. The apparent lack of realisation of the horror of what they are talking about, the general facetiousness and flippancy of tone make the Hofräte themselves the objects of hostile mockery.

The original poem is given yet another form in Act III, Scene 4, during the meeting of two philosophy students in Jena. One recites the U-Boot-Gedicht:

"Unter allen Wassern ist - "U".
Von Englands Flotte spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch...
Mein Schiff ward versenkt, daß es knallte.
Warte mir, balde,
R-U-hst du auch!"

Again, the crudity and tastelessness of the parody pours scorn, not on Goethe, but on the people who are able to consider it funny. The gravity of the circumstances which brought it about instils a definite feeling of nausea and horror into the reader: it is an example of what Kraus himself called: "Mit Scherz Entsetzen treiben".⁵¹

The essential thing to notice in all these examples is that the form of the poem is what is parodied; whether it is an elevated form or not is not of first importance, but it must be rigid and recognizable, like a mould into which alien material is poured. This is also the case with parodies in music, dancing or painting; the external form is given an alien content.

51. See ch. I, p. 19 above.

Travesty is the exact counterpart. Here the subject is taken and recast in a completely different form. If the subject is given a more elevated form than the original one, it is ennobled; or else, if a trivial subject, which does not bear being ennobled, is given a form ridiculously high-flown for it, we are inclined to laugh at the form rather than at the subject, and it borders on parody. When in Nestroy's plays, for example, ridiculous words are coupled in the quodlibets with the dramatic music of serious opera, our attention does not dwell on the meaningless words, but on the high-flown form which is being imitated - and the result is a parody. Thus travesty must consist in dragging a high-flown subject down to a lower level, and in this sense, Worcester is right in saying that to travesty something is to treat it in an absurdly trivial manner.

The example of travesty for discussion is Nestroy's Judith und Holofernes, the only one of his plays which Nestroy calls a travesty - both Tannhäuser and Lohengrin he calls parodies.

During the course of his career Nestroy wrote ten parodies; in 1832 he wrote three, Der gefühlvolle Kerkermeister oder Adelheid, die verfolgte Witib, Nagerl und Handschuh oder Die Schicksale der Familie Maxenpfutsch, and Zempe, der Tagdieb, oder die Braut von Gips; Robert der Teuxel appeared in the following year, then in 1835 Weder Lorbeerbaum noch Bettelstab; there was then a gap until 1839 when Die verhängnisvolle Faschingsnacht appeared, then after a much longer gap Martha oder Die Mischmonder/Markt-Mägde-Mietung was performed in 1848; Judith und

Holofernes followed in 1849, then the two Wagner parodies Tannhäuser and Lohengrin stand alone at the end in 1857 and 1859 respectively. These dates form an interesting pattern. The only plays which Nestroy wrote before 1832 were (with the exception of Der Einsilbige oder Ein dummer Diener seines Herrn, a Posse written in 1829) Zauberspiele, thus still resting in the old tradition, and a few dramatic quodlibets. He then wrote three parodies immediately one after the other in 1832, so the parody forms the testing material, so to speak, for his satirical claws. During the period of maturity, when his best and best-known plays appeared (for example, Einem Jux will er sich machen, 1842, Der Zerri-sene, 1844, Der Unbedeutende, 1846) not a single parody was written, and finally his three best parodies were produced during the last stage of his career.

There is also a clear pattern in the development of the kind of material he selects for his parodies. Der gefühlvolle Kerkermeister is a parody of the ballet Adelheid von Frankreich by L. Henry and, as Nestroy himself describes it "eine gesprochene und gesungene Parodie eines getanzten Dramas". It has more to do with spectacle than with language, though the improbabilities and exaggerations which Nestroy represents on the stage are as provocative as his later "verbal" weapons. Nagerl und Handschuh represents yet another version of the Cinderella theme, a subject already well known to the Viennese from Nicolo Isouard's Cendrillon, which had been performed in Vienna since 1810, and Rossini's Cenerentola which they had been hearing since 1817. Zampa turns yet

again to opera, and parodies Duveyrier-Mélesville's text to Hérold's three-act opera Zampa ou la fiancée de marbre, a somewhat superficial variation on the Don Juan motif. Robert der Teuxel - still in the operatic sphere - parodies Meyerbeer's Robert le diable (the text was by Eugène Scribe), a subject which Johann Schickh had already parodied as Robert der Wauwau. The early parodies are therefore exclusively adaptations of ballet or opera, and not until he wrote Weder Lorbeerbaum noch Bettelstab did Nestroy turn to drama for his subject. The original was Karl von Holtei's Lorbeerbaum und Bettelstab, a play which the author himself took extremely seriously. It is somewhat ironical that Holtei's high pretensions were doomed to oblivion and that most people do not even know of his connection with Nestroy's work. Die verhängnisvolle Faschingsnacht turns to another Holtei play, his Trauerspiel in Berlin. This time Holtei made violent objections, maintaining that Nestroy had reduced his moving picture of the lower classes with their "edle Natur" into something sentimental and ridiculous. Nestroy does not even call his play a parody at all, but a Posse mit Gesang, and again, few people connect it with Holtei. It was produced on 13 April, 1839, and met with great success. Martha again turns to opera; the material comes from Friedrich von Flotow's semi-comic opera Martha, which had been produced with great success on 25 September, 1847, but Nestroy's parody has never met with much popularity since it was first produced on 25 January, 1848.

It is interesting to note that Nestroy's opera-parodies up to this point belong to his less successful plays, and that the slightly more successful Verhängnisvolle Faschingsnacht and Weder Lorbeerbaum noch

Bettelstab are not generally thought of at once as parodies - not, that is, in the same manner in which Judith und Holofernes is considered. For this reason no more space will be devoted to these early parodies, and instead Judith und Holofernes will be dealt with in some detail as Nestroy's outstanding example of a parody of a tragedy, and Tannhäuser as a parody of an opera. It is important here that the originals of the parodies were sensational enough for the public to treat them as a yard-stick against which it could judge Nestroy's plays, and that they did not dwindle into being a mere source of an amusing work by Nestroy.

Hebbel's Judith is a fairly conventional form of tragedy on a historical - here biblical - theme with the usual five-act construction. The form of Nestroy's Judith und Holofernes hardly differs from that of any of his other Possen, except that not many of them up to this point are one-acters. There is the opening chorus (as, for example, there is the "Chor der Marktleute" in Die verhängnisvolle Faschingsnacht and the opening chorus of boys and girls in Eulenspiegel), there is the Auftritts-
lied and Auftrittsmonolog, as usual reserved for the character Nestroy himself played, here Joab, and there is the never-failing Viennese dialect. The subject and setting are unusual for a Nestroy play, but the tone is typical, and in the discrepancy between setting and tone lies the sting of the travesty. Hebbel's play furthermore undergoes a drastic shortening in Nestroy's hands, so that five long acts are

reduced to twenty-four short scenes. Just what he shortened, what he changed, what he omitted entirely and what he left intact forms the mainspring of a discussion of his parodistic technique.

To omit something in a case like this means to reject it as superfluous, to shorten something means to criticize it as being too long-winded. Thus it comes about that Nestroy uses only the bare bones of Hebbel's plot, and a great deal of soul-searching and ranting, soliloquizing and philosophizing is ruthlessly cut out or, what is perhaps even more scathing, dismissed in a word. Hebbel's Ephraim does not appear at all in Nestroy's play and thus the whole of Hebbel's Act II is deleted, Judith's confession of Manasses' impotency being inserted into the scene of "Judith's" meeting with Holofernes. Similarly Hebbel's Act III, Scene 1, depicting Judith's inner conflict during her fast, is omitted, and Acts IV and V are greatly condensed - the two meetings between Judith and Holofernes are welded into one, and the dramatic tension which Hebbel sought to produce is lost. It is unlikely, however, that the audiences noticed the scenes which were omitted so much as the parts which were cut down to a few words. One good example of this is Holofernes' opening monologue, which with Hebbel lasts some forty lines,⁵² and the essence of which Nestroy expresses as follows: "Ich bin der Glanzpunkt der Natur, noch hab ich keine Schlacht verloren, ich bin die Jungfrau unter Feldherrn. Ich möcht mich einmal mit mir

52. Reclam-edition.

selbst zusammenhetzen, nur um zu sehen, wer der Stärkere is, ich oder ich. - Wer kommt dort in assyrischer Hoflivree? Ein langweiliger Bote von meinem faden Herrn und König" (Scene 3). Noticeable here is the simplicity of the language - as against Hebbel's ranting tones - combined with the exaggerated idea, which has been retained. This is therefore an example of the principle of travesty, namely that the content is ridiculed by the changing of the form. Very often this "form" is the Viennese dialect: for example, the following passage by Hebbel:

Ein Hauptmann: Gesandte eines Königs bitten um Gehör.

Holofernes: Welches Königs?

Hauptmann: Verzeih. Man kann die Namen all der Könige, die sich vor dir demütigen, unmöglich behalten.

(Act I)

is retouched by Nestroy:

Achior: Es sind Abgesandte von einem König draußen; sie lassen bitten um ein bisserl a Audienz.

Holofernes: Von was für einem König?

Achior: Der Teuxel kann sich die Namen alle merken.

(Scene 8)

Not only is Hebbel's dignified tone reduced to flippancy (partly through the use of the dialect diminutive bisserl, the anachronistic use of Audienz and the slangy tone of Achior's last sentence, heightened by the use of the dialect form Teuxel), but the sense of awe and fear which the captain's answer should produce in the audience is lost entirely. Dialect, which is essentially local, is combined with anachronism when the subject is as distant in time and place as Judith is from Vienna. The effect may either be, by the use of slang, directly derogatory, or

if more sophisticated and aristocratic turns of phrase are used in strange contexts it may be mocking. An example of the latter is Nestroy's:

Holofernes: Wie heißt Sein Prinzipal?

Der Gesandte: Er ist mit Dero Erlaubnis so frei, König von Mesopotamien zu sein.

(Scene 9)

The form of address Er and Sein for social inferiors, the use of the Viennese Prinzipal (meaning "master"), the archaic Dero and the conventional phrase "Er ist so frei" in an entirely alien setting produces an effect of comic incongruity which generally makes the situation ridiculous. In Holofernes' answer, however, the tone is entirely changed: "Er is also ein damischer⁵³ Gesandter, nämlich ein mesopotamischer?" The use of the derogatory and punning damisch is again incongruous, and forms yet another contrast. With this constant use of opposites (formal stiffness and slang, high-sounding foreign words in curious contexts, anachronism) Nestroy is playing with the reactions of his spectator,⁵⁴ and thus produces tensions which cause laughter. There are many other examples of the Viennese dialect and idiom in the play: apart from the spelling and syntactical differences from Standard German, dialect forms (Stummerl - Sc. 18) and words with local colour (Strudelteige - Sc. 9) and direct references to Vienna (Holofernes: "Mit so einem Helden hat ers noch nie zu tun ghabt, da is in ganz Wien, will ich sagen, in ganz Assyrien keiner, der mir's Wasser reicht" - Sc. 9) change the whole flavour of the play.

53. Dial. ungeheuer, groß.

54. Cf. ch. I, p. 28 above.

The world of tragedy is elevated, distant and dignified, dialect is familiar and everyday, and because of this its use drags the subject, not to the plane of the familiar, for the theme does not fit into the world of the familiar, but to the ridiculous.

One important basic change in Nestroy's travesty is the picture of the Jew. In tragedy the dramatist aims to convince through verisimilitude and thus tries to reproduce the atmosphere of the time and place he is depicting. The story of Judith comes from the Old Testament, hence Hebbel's Jews are the Chosen Race destined for the Promised Land of Canaan, they are at the same time the sinners who desert the Lord God, incurring the wrath of the prophets, they are the long-suffering people walking in the darkness of bondage and captivity. Comedy aims to amuse through incongruity and exaggeration, and one of its tools is improbability. Thus Nestroy depicts in his much garbled world of the Old Testament story the Jews as they were known in his day, and even of these we have a none too flattering caricature: his Jews are money-loving (Hosea: "Wir schießen zusamm unser Geld und kaufen alles auf, was is Eßbares in der Stadt; wenn dann wird kommen die Hungersnot, profitieren wir dreihundert Perzent" - Sc. 10), they are cowardly ("Unsere Leut / Sind gar gscheit / Habn zum Kriegführn ka Freud" - Sc. 14), they are superstitious in their blind belief that the words of the dumb man Daniel must be true, thus leading to the stoning of Heman. Nestroy therefore mocks Jewish religious beliefs, customs and phraseology; Hebbel, as we see in Judith's "fasting scene" and her refusal to eat the food Holofernes offers her,

respects them. Nestroy moreover makes the picture of the Jews all the more comic through their language: his Jews use the particular German word order which is mimicked to this day, for example:

Assad: Mir habn s' eingeschrieben als Korporal, jetzt geh' ich mir kaufen ein'n Sabel.

Ammon: Assad, du wirst opfern dein Leben, laß ab von der Kämpferei!

Assad: Wer sagt denn, daß werd' ich kämpfen? Der Sabel gehört zum Exerzieren.

(Scene 11)

Here again it is the element of incongruity between the language and the outlook of the Jews (which are essentially those in caricature of the modern Jew), and the Biblical background and events, combined with the element of ridicule which Nestroy throws upon his Jews, which make up the comedy. Hebbel was trying to convince his audience that his Jews were worth saving, thus justifying Judith's nobility of spirit; with Nestroy the situation becomes ludicrous.

If Nestroy omits and shortens, he also enlarges. Here there is another element of caricature. The best example of this occurs in Holofernes' tent:

Holofernes: Was macht die Ebräerin?

Der Hauptmann: Oh, sie ist schön. Aber sie ist auch spröde!

Holofernes: Hast du sie versucht? - Du wagtest das, und wußtest, daß sie mir wohlgefällt? Nimm das, Hund! (Er haut ihn nieder). Schafft ihn weg und führt mir das Weib her.

(Hebbel, Judith, Act V)

When Judith is shown into the tent she shrinks back at the sight of the blood, and Holofernes orders fresh carpets to be brought. In Nestroy's parallel three servants are killed:

Holofernes: Chalkol! Wie hat dir die Hebräermaid gefallen,
die durch unser Lager zog?

Chalkol: O unendlich! Bei ihrem Anblick fuhr mir's durchs
Herz wie -

Holofernes: So vielleicht? (Durchbohrt ihn mit dem Schwerte).

Chalkol: Ah! (Stürzt zusammen und stirbt).

Holofernes: Ich werd' dir's austreiben, auf Mädeln schaun, die
deinem Feldherrn in die Augen stechen! Teuvel noch einmal!
(Zu Zepho) Man fange sie und gebe zehn gefangne Juden frei
- und noch was drauf.

Zepho: Wozu, Herr? Wir fangen sie auch so.

Holofernes: Willst du mich zu einer Schmutzerei verleiten?
Stirb! (Ersticht ihn).

Zepho: Ah! (Sinkt zu Boden und stirbt).

Holofernes: Nun, Idun, was sagst du? Ist die Hebräerin nicht
reizend, backschieerlich, schön?

Idun (beiseite): Jetzt leg' ich mir ein Bildl ein⁵⁵ bei ihm.
(Laut) Schön? Hm - ich hab sie eigentlich gar nicht angeschaut.

Holofernes: So wenig Ehrfurcht hast du vor dem Geschmack deines
Herrn? Stirb, Elender! (Ersticht ihn).

Idun: Ah! (Sinkt zu Boden und stirbt).

Holofernes: Ich werd' euch Mores lernen - zwar nein - denen lern
ich nix mehr.

(Scene 22)

Just before Judith is ushered in Holofernes says: "Aha, kennimus nos!
Laß aber erst 's Zelt ordentlich zusammenräumen, überall liegn Erstochene
herum - nur keine Schlamperei!" (Scene 23). Nestroy has here trebled
Hebbel's effect, but he has caricatured it, and not intensified it. A
noticeable comic element here is the exact repetition of the action,
which has the effect of a kind of grim refrain, but the situation is too

55. Dial. sich einschmeicheln.

ludicrous for us to be affected by the possible grimness. The epithets Schlamperei and ordentlich zusammenräumen are again incongruous with the idea of human slaughter, and so yet another "comic contrast" is effected.

Occasionally Nestroy reproduces Hebbel's sentences almost exactly.

For example:

Samaja (of Daniel): Ich will ihn in eine Kammer einschließen,
ich will ihm ein blankes Messer in die Hand drücken, ich will
ihm in die Seele reden, bis er vollbringt, was ich im Namen
der Natur und als ihr Prophet voraus verkündigt habe.

(Hebbel, Act III)

reads in Nestroy's version:

Hosea: Da sperr' ich ihn in ein Zimmer, wo gar kein Möbel is als
ein großer Nagel an der Wand; da geb' ich ihm dann einen Strick
zum Spielen, vielleicht, daß ihn die Einsamkeit auf einen
zweckmäßigen Gedanken bringt.

(Scene 20)

While the tone and wording of the two versions differ, Nestroy has reproduced exactly the rhythm and crescendo of Hebbel's speech. And so Nestroy treats Hebbel's material in three ways: by reducing or omitting, by enlarging, and by reproducing. He alters the tone by changing tragic declamation into dialect, and by the extensive use of anachronism.

The main difference in the two plays, however, is the treatment of the heroine. For Hebbel Judith possessed elements of tragic greatness: to save her people she was willing to sacrifice herself to a man she feared and hated, she was, in fact, the embodiment of self-conquest and self-sacrifice. Hebbel justifies her long description of the wedding night as part of the exposition of character, for only a woman, he maintains, who was on the point of surrendering herself to a man would

be capable of doing what Judith did. Nestroy overlooks such dramatur-
gical finesses and sees only how the play lends itself to travesty, for
some elements, when not dramatically justified, are in themselves
ridiculous: Holofernes' overweening pride and almost impossible
physical strength, Judith's wedding night, then the final murder of
Holofernes in his bed, together with the strongly sexual element perva-
ding the play - and out of these Nestroy has made pure farce. The
sexual element he has made ridiculous by eliminating the heroine
altogether and replacing her by her identical brother, Joab. This means
that the meeting between "Judith" and Holofernes with its strongly
sexual flavour takes place between two men - something which is certainly
in questionable taste. One must also bear in mind that the tall, thin
and dynamic Nestroy played the part of Joab-Judith, whereas Holofernes
was rendered by the short, fat, phlegmatic Scholz. The caricature is
therefore driven to an extreme. Joab is the only Jew who does not speak
in the Jewish idiom: he is the genuine and typical Nestroy product, and
his Auftrittsmonolog is linguistically no different from Nestroy's other
ones.

It is in the final scene that the farce reaches its climax, and we
have all the elements of low comedy: disguise, violent movement, "murder",
sex, incongruities and farcical language. "Judith" always talks in
rhyme and the jingling doggerel with which "she" relates the story of
her wedding night throws ridicule upon the whole affair. Again this
borders on the tasteless, but by virtue of that tastelessness, Hebbel's
parallel scenes are brought to scorn.

There is certainly no doubt that Nestroy's travesty is a withering treatment of the original drama. The tragedy has been reduced to farce, the declamations to doggerel and dialect, and "nobility of soul" to a crude sexuality. Nestroy's travesty has harmed Judith not merely because it offers more entertainment, but because the weaknesses of Hebbel's tragedy have been magnified and developed in such a way that the original shrinks before Nestroy's distortion of it, and to this day Judith has not gained popularity.⁵⁶ Ludwig Speidel even stated: "Aristophanes hat den Euripides nicht bitterer gezüchtigt, Molière die Preziösen nicht schärfer gehechelt, als Nestroy der Hebbelschen Gestalt des Holofernes zugesetzt. - Fast jedes Wort, welches Nestroys Holofernes spricht, ist vernichtend für den Holofernes Hebbels,"⁵⁷ a remark which might be extended to the figure of Judith, to the portrayal of the Jews, indeed, to Hebbel's tragic concept itself.

If Judith und Holofernes is a "Travestie mit Gesang", Tamnhäuser (first produced on 31 October 1857) and Lohengrin (première on 1 April 1859) are both named "musikalisch-dramatische Parodien". So for his last two parodies Nestroy turned back to opera, and it must be remembered that a study of his text only forms half of the parody as a whole, for the musical element is equally important. Both works appeared anonymously, and in the case of Tamnhäuser Nestroy's name was mentioned

56. Jhering records no performance of Judith in Berlin 1924-1932.

57. Ludwig Speidel, Schriften, vol. 1, Persönlichkeiten (Berlin, 1910), p. 130. See ch. IV, sect. 1, fn. 22, p. 179, below.

neither on the theatre bill nor in the printed version, though it is quite obvious from the style who wrote the play. Of the two works Tannhäuser best suits discussion; Lohengrin remains too close to the original in action and score to be a real parody, nothing is placed "on its head" and it makes somewhat flat reading. The text of Tannhäuser, on the other hand, quite apart from Wagner's original work, makes a delightful mimicry of grand opera.

Nestroy did not parody Wagner directly, but used the text of a Breslau doctor, Dr. H. Wollheim, who had written a parody as a sketch for the students of the Burschenschaft Silesia. This was a great success, and was therefore printed in 1854.

The success of Nestroy's Tannhäuser must have been partly due to the excellent cast. Tannhäuser was played by Karl Treumann, Landgraf Purzel by Nestroy and even the small part of the shepherd was played by Wilhelm Knaack.⁵⁸

The formal difference between Judith und Holofernes and Tannhäuser is immediately clear: whereas the language, form and setting of Hebbel's Judith are altered, in Tannhäuser they are left almost identical. The "operatic form" remains, and even in the bald text we see how Nestroy's songs are divided into musical "numbers" with the headings "Arie", "Duett", "Quintett", "Rezitativ", "Ensemble" and so forth. Moreover, during the grand scene in the Wartburg when the Sängerkrieg takes place,

58. See ch. I, fn. 37, p. 19 above.

characters such as Figaro and Robert le diable appear and sing parts of arias from their respective operas, and the first four lines of the aria "Das Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön" are reproduced exactly. Alongside these figures, however, appear characters like the King of Hearts and the Queen of Spades, which immediately lend the high operatic tone a farcical air. This intermingling is also indicated in the stage directions:

"Scene: Großer Saal. Die Ausschmückung desselben bilden Embleme von Gitarren, Harfen, Zithern, Klarinetten, Drehorgeln, Dudelsäcke, Tschinellen usw. Rechts vom Publikum eine Erhöhung, auf welcher ein aufrechtstehendes Piano den Thron bildet. Eine große Zugharmonika bildet die Tribüne für die Gäste. Die Damen setzen sich auf kleine Trommeln, die Preisrichter und Sänger auf Pauken."

This is a mixture between parody and travesty: on the one hand there is the grand hall as a background, on the other the exaggeration in the décor and the ludicrousness of the piano, drums and kettle-drums providing seating-accommodation. It is this ludicrousness which drags the tone down, just as the disguise of Joab lowers the tone of Judith und Holofernes, thus verging on low burlesque.

The language, however, is that of a parody rather than of a travesty. Whereas Judith und Holofernes is written in dialect, Tannhäuser is written in High German and retains Wagner's metrical forms, and generally the high-flown linguistic forms as well, though he often interlards his speeches with incongruous remarks. For example, on seeing Tannhäuser in the hunting scene Purzel remarks:

"Der längst Vermisste weilt hier in der Stille.
Es klopft mein Herz; wo hab' ich meine Brille?"

The first line is a parody of the literary tone; the first half of the

second line is a parody of the conventional mannerisms of serious opera, and the anachronistic, everyday tone of the last phrase is an intentional comic incongruity. Purzel then asks Tannhäuser:

"Von wannen lautet Deines Passes Karte?"

This is pure parody, for the high-flown form is retained for an incongruous and anachronistic content. Similarly in Tannhäuser's lament:

"Und kann ich's vor ihr zu erscheinen wagen
Im selben Kleid, das bei der Venus ich getragen?"

the style remains that of high literature, due to the formal word-order of the first line and the absence of the auxiliary in the second. The content is incongruous, however, because such a lament is generally made by a woman and not a man, and because such a banal thought is out of place in the context.

Similarly the music parodies rather than travesties the original. Mention must be made here of the value of Karl Binder's original score for Nestroy's Tannhäuser, without which one gains a most imperfect impression of the parody as an entire unit. Nestroy called his work a "Zukunftssosse mit vergangener Musik und gegenwärtigen Gruppierungen", which in itself makes a mockery of Wagner's then very progressive and modern musical compositions ("Zukunftsmusik"). It is suggesting that they are passé before they are fully known. We may gain a very vague impression of the music through Nestroy's stage directions, as, for example, at the beginning of Act I, scene 3 (No. 4, Melodram):

"Das Orchester, welches bei den letzten Worten in furchtbaren Akkorden akkompagnierte, geht in eine sanfte idyllische Schäfermusik über."

This is the general tone of dramatic opera music, and is hence parody. Where yodler music, ländler and bagpipes are used, which essentially belong to popular music, the level of the burlesque is lowered. Pure parody must retain the high-flown form, whether this be through grand language, the trappings of grand opera (the dramatic accompaniments of thunder and lightning are also used here) or serious musical forms, no matter how much these are exaggerated and caricatured. It is quality that is important and not proportion. Where the trappings of farce and popular entertainment are used, however, it ceases to be pure parody, unless, of course, the lampooned original was on the farcical and popular plane.

A word must be added on the names Nestroy gives to his characters. Whereas in Judith und Holofernes the original names are retained, here they are caricatured: Wolfram von Eschenbach becomes Wolfram Dreschenbach, Walter von der Vogelweide Walter Finkenschlag, and the goddess Venus, whilst retaining her name, becomes the proprietress of a Delikatessenkeller. Similarly in Lohengrin Heinrich der Vogler becomes Hans der Gerechte, Mark- and Gaugraf von Vogelsingen, and Friedrich von Telramund becomes Ritter Mordigall von Wetterschlund. The significance of Nestroy's names is shown in Appendix A (pp. 255-257).

Die schlimmen Buben is described by Nestroy as a "Burleske in einem Akt". If we have agreed that parody and travesty are both forms of burlesque, how does Nestroy's one-acter agree with the thoughts already formulated on the subject? The answer is that it does not

actually fit in well at all, because both Judith und Holofernes and Tannhäuser were modelled on a set pattern, the one adapting the content to an alien form, the other retaining the original form while introducing unfamiliar and incongruous elements into the content. Die schlimmen Buben does not seek to mock an artistic form or set literary material, but it is rather a high-spirited mock imitation of real life: in the distorting mirror of burlesque, we see a day in a country school when inspectors pay an official visit. Any invective is concealed behind the comedy in the play and is directed against the Austrian educational system of the day. This play, more than any other Nestroy play, resembles the antics of mischievous clowns, for so may the schoolboys be described. There is no obvious personal bitterness expressed in the play, and the only aspect which at first sight must be taken seriously is the fun made of self-important and over-serious people - of whom pedagogues are in popular opinion an excellent example. The satire lies, however, in the unmistakable "sting of truth" which characterizes most of Nestroy's plays,⁵⁹ though here it is often combined with the tone of light-hearted mischievousness.

In his book O du mein Österreich, a humorous portrayal of the Austrian national characteristics, Hans Weigel heads a chapter on the artistic life of Vienna "Kunst ist das Leben, heiter ist der Ernst" and

59. Cf. ch. II, sect 1, p. 58 above.

another "Blau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie". This is exactly the tone of Die schlimmen Buben. All forms of gravity, anything which has dignity or position, is ridiculed: the "examiner" Wolkenfeld, because he is too deaf to hear that the candidates are giving nonsensical answers to his questions, and because it becomes increasingly apparent that he would not be able to recognize the correct answer even if he were given it; the teacher Wampl is ridiculed, because of his inability to teach, because of his cringing attitude to the Wirtschaftsintendanten and authority in general, and because of his wish only to retain his position; Herr von Wichtig is ridiculed because of his blind belief that his nasty, lazy, tale-telling son is, as Wampl tells him, the best in the class and because, as his name indicates, he takes himself too seriously. The sting lies in the fact that those who by rights should be restrained and educated by the authorities, the schoolboys, in fact, have throughout the play the upper hand. Their ringleader, Willibald Schnabel, the lazy and impertinent "problem child", possesses an uncannily sophisticated wisdom and a nimbleness of thought of which none of the "authorities" are capable. The attitude of cold and scornful mockery he casts upon his elders is summed up in the picture of Willibald nonchalantly munching Kollatschen⁶⁰ while the rest of his class is being "examined" - he then offers one of these to his pal Christoph Ries in exchange for his "Denkpfennig" (the medal Ries has "won"), and this Ries

60. A type of pastry puff popular in Vienna.

considers a fine bargain. For Willibald the words "Blau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie" have a special significance: when asked by Wampl to define certain phenomena, such as the earth, the moon and man, Willibald gives answers which would shock the conventional theorist, but demonstrate an uncanny truth in their unconventionality. The most startling example of this is his definition of man:

Der Mensch ist allerdings ein Säugetier, denn er saugt sehr viel Flüssigkeiten in sich, das Männchen^{6er und} Wein, und das Weibchen Kaffee. Der Mensch ist aber auch ein Fisch, denn er tut oft Unglaubliches mit kaltem Blute, und hat auch Schuppen, die ihm zwar plötzlich, aber gewöhnlich zu spät von den Augen fallen. Der Mensch ist ferner auch ein Wurm, denn er krümmt sich häufig in den Staub, und kommt auf diese Art vorwärts. Der Mensch ist nicht minder ein Amphibium, welches auf dem Land und im Wasser zu Hause ist, denn mancher, der schon recht im Wasser ist, zieht sich noch ganz nobel auf's Land hinaus. Der Mensch ist endlich auch ein Federvieh, denn gar mancher zeigt, wie er a Feder in die Hand nimmt, daß er a Vieh ist.

(Scene 10)

The ordinary theory that man is a mammal Willibald throws overboard completely, at the same time, however, stating some unhappy and revealing truths about human nature.

The type of burlesque in Die schlimmen Buben has little to do with burlesque as a literary form; rather is it, to use a more modern form of the word "burlesque", a "skit" on school life. What prevents it from becoming facetious and superficial is the deeper meaning and criticism behind the façade of pranks and ridicule, and the unusually biting witticisms uttered by Willibald. These reflect in an uncanny way the image of Nestroy himself, that of the Possendichter, the unruly and impertinent schoolboy in the realm of literature and art, who dares not

merely to contradict the greater masters of tragedy and opera and make fun of them by producing bonmots and couplets and characters which brilliantly out-talk the tragic heroes, but even dares to desecrate the great works by distorting them into parody. And yet Nestroy has had the last word. Whether he has taken a ready-made drama by Hebbel and made it into a Posse or whether he has made the Posse into an opera like Tannhäuser, whether he has written a skit on the school-room or transplanted French plots into Vienna, Nestroy has drawn a caricature, but one which often contains more truth than the cardboard original. Like Willibald Nestroy made a mockery of the world around him; he amused it while lashing out at it. It is somehow fitting that the part Nestroy played when he last stood on the stage was that of Willibald, a sixty-two-year-old schoolboy mocking the world, two and a half months before his death.

III. KARL KRAUS

1. Die Fackel

"In einer Zeit, da Österreich noch vor der von radikaler Seite gewünschten Lösung an akuter Langeweile zugrunde zu gehen droht, in Tagen, die diesem Lande politische und soziale Wirrungen aller Art gebracht haben, einer Öffentlichkeit gegenüber, die // zwischen Unentwegtheit und Apathie ihr phrasenreiches oder völlig gedankenloses Auskommen findet, unternimmt es der Herausgeber dieser Blätter, der glossierend bisher und an wenig sichtbarer Stelle abseits gestanden, einen Kampfruf auszustoßen. ...Das politische Programm dieser Zeitung scheint somit dürftig; kein tönendes "Was wir bringen", aber ein ehrliches "Was wir umbringen" hat sie sich als Leitwort gewählt. Was hier geplant wird, ist nichts als eine Trockenlegung des weiten Phrasensumpfes, den andere immerzu national abgrenzen möchten. ...So möge denn die Fackel einem Lande leuchten, in welchem - anders als in jenem Reiche Karls V. - die Sonne niemals aufgeht."¹

These are the opening lines of a small red brochure which caused a sensation when it appeared in Vienna in April 1899, and which was the first number of what proved to be one of the most controversial periodicals of this century.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the first appearance of Die Fackel Robert Scheu wrote an article on Karl Kraus, in which he recalls the effect it produced in 1899: "Und es kam-- Eines Tages,

1. Die Fackel, No. 1, April 1899, pp. 1-3.

soweit das Auge reicht, alles - rot. Einen solchen Tag hat Wien nicht wieder erlebt. War das ein Geraune, ein Geflüster, ein Hautrieseln! Auf den Straßen, auf der Tramway, im Stadtpark, alle Menschen lesend aus einem roten Heft... Es war narrenhaft. Das Broschürchen, ursprünglich bestimmt, in einigen hundert Exemplaren in die Provinz zu flattern, mußte in wenigen Tagen in Zehntausenden von Exemplaren nachgedruckt werden."² On 2 April 1899 the Arbeiter-Zeitung published a small article commenting on the first number of Die Fackel, and we notice its awareness of Kraus's seriousness - and of his deadliness - and the article points to Kraus's wit as his main weapon:

"Sein Stil ist förmlich besät von Witzen; man muß sorgsam aufschauen, um von den hingestreuten Pointen nur keine zu übersehen. Aber es sind doch keine Späße und Scherze, schon deshalb nicht, weil Kraus nicht schreibt, um zu gefallen, sondern um zu mißfallen: nicht das Publikum zu ergötzen, sondern den Gegner ins lebendige Fleisch zu treffen, ist der Zweck seiner losen Blätter. Der Witz ist der charakterloseste Geselle, wenn er nicht im Charakter wurzelt; deshalb wohl haben die frivolen Witzbolde in Wien immer so reichen Anklang gefunden. Kraus ist ein ernsterer Spötter: sein Hohn wurzelt in dem Drange nach Wahrheit und Unabhängigkeit, und der erste, den er ans Kreuz seines Witzes nagelt, ist gerade ein solcher flacher Witzling, der für Geld über alles Witze macht."³

While Die Fackel does not belong strictly to "dramatic satire", it forms the life-work of Karl Kraus, and, while it is neither possible nor relevant here to consider everything Kraus published in it, it is far too important an element in his life to ignore. Furthermore it contains some useful articles on the theatre, on Kraus's Vorlesungen and

2. Die Fackel, No. 277, 31 March, 1909, p. 2. In "Karl Kraus. Zum 10. Jahrestage des Erscheinens der Fackel, (1899-1909)", pp. 1-24.

3. P. 5.

on the general cultural life in Vienna at the time, as well as providing a fruitful hunting-ground for material on Kraus's satirical work altogether. For he published not only his own articles and, up to 1911, those of his fellow-contributors, including Strindberg and Wedekind, but also extracts from the daily press which attacked him, letters sent to him by readers, the announcements of coming Vorlesungen, and comments on current events. Nearly all Kraus's works were published in Die Fackel or by the Fackel-Verlag.

Kraus's intention in writing Die Fackel is made clear in the opening paragraph: he is declaring war upon the dull apathy of contemporary Vienna, expressed in the use of empty, conventional and meaningless phrases, the "Phrasensumpf" as he calls it, the main vehicle of which is the press. And so Kraus's life became a life-long battle against the journalists, a fight against the abuse of language by means of the masterly use of language. Kraus has the reputation of standing alone in his views and of holding opinions which are too one-sided and extreme to be acceptable. This last-mentioned objection is sometimes justified,⁴ but many of his observations are echoes of remarks already made. The only difference is that Kraus complained in a more aggressive and sensational manner than did his contemporaries. An interesting parallel to Kraus's attacks on the press, for example, is a lament made by Kierkegaard in his diary as early as 1849:

4. Cf. ch. III, sect. 3, p. 144 below.

"Daß die Presse mit dabei ist, macht das Böse zu einer furchtbaren Macht. Daß ein einziger Mensch jeden achten Tag oder jeden Tag in einem Nu 40 000 oder 50 000 Menschen dazu bringen kann, dasselbe zu sagen und zu denken - das ist entsetzlich. Und die Schuldigen kann man niemals persönlich fassen; und die Tausende, die er gegen einen hetzt, sind in gewissem Sinn unschuldig. Wehe, ^{wehe} wehe über die Tagespresse! Käme Christus heute in die Welt: so wahr ich lebe, er nähme sich zum Ziel nicht die Hohenpriester - sondern die Journalisten." ⁵

There were likewise a number of complaints about apathy and dullness in the theatre world, ⁶ but again, Kraus attacked more vigorously and his call resounded longer. His attacks on the press have resounded for so long, in fact, that ill feelings are still cherished against him. ⁷ Of the many articles Kraus published in Die Fackel attacking the press, one may be quoted as an illustration of the scathing tones Kraus employed. It is entitled "Die Sonntagshumoristen":

"Wien windet sich noch immer unter dem Humor, der ihm am Sonntag von der Neuen Freien Presse angetan wird. "Wie vor tausend Jahren die Hunnen unter ihrem König Etzel sich einen Namen gemacht..." ⁸ so müssen sich auch die Sonntagshumoristen unter ihrem König Herzl

5. Op. cit., p. 335.

6. Cf. Schlögl, quoted ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 169 below, and Uhl, quoted p. 202. Schlögl was writing in 1883, Uhl in the first years of this century.

7. Cf. ch. I, p. 2, fn. 5 above.

8. Theodor Herzl was the chief editor of the Neue Freie Presse, to which Kraus had once contributed. In 1899 Kraus was offered the old position of Daniel Spitzer, which involved controlling the Feuilleton and thereby the literary side of the paper. Such a position offered a young writer a comfortable existence and promising future, if only he conformed with the paper's requirements. However, Kraus rejected the offer and founded Die Fackel where (No. 5, May 1899, p. 11) in an essay "Ich und die Neue Freie Presse" he made his attitude clear: "Es gibt zwei schöne Dinge auf der Welt: der Neuen Freien Presse angehören oder sie verachten. Ich habe nie einen Augenblick geschwankt, wie ich zu wählen hätte." That not all critics of the Neue Freie Presse were beneath contempt, however, is shown by the work of Ludwig Speidel (cf. ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 179, fn. 22 below).

einen Namen machen, indem sie erbarmungslos ihres fürchterlichen Amtes walten, und es zuwegebringen, daß niemals wieder ein Wiener es wagt, einen Redakteur der Neuen Freien Presse 'auch nur scheel anzusehen'. Kurz: Pardon wird nicht gegeben."⁹

The withering quality of these lines is expressed, linguistically, in two points. One is the word-play of Herzl and Etzel; in comparing the editor with the barbarian chief Attila (emphasizing on the one hand, mockingly, his "kingship", on the other, more seriously, his primitive outlook) he is making a mockery of editor, newspaper and the "tribe" of journalists. The single metaphor has therefore a highly evocative quality. The second arrow with which Kraus attacks Herzl is an extension of the original metaphor of kingship: in the words "Pardon wird nicht gegeben" Kraus aims a blow at the supreme and abused freedom of the press which has resulted in a dangerous authority on the part of the journalists and apathetic acceptance on the part of the public.

The moral and cultural decadence of Vienna forms a frequent subject of Kraus's satire. Kraus works on this subject from the presupposition that culture, the theatre in particular, had undergone a rapid degeneration since the Vormärz. At the beginning of this century Nestroy was, of course, known in Vienna, but he was not esteemed highly, and to praise him to the extent to which Kraus praised him¹⁰ was most revolutionary. Here Kraus generally kills two birds with one stone: in articles

9. No. 57, October 1900, pp. 12-13.

10. See ch. III, sect. 3, pp. 146-147 below.

criticizing contemporary theatre he praises that of Nestroy, and in articles dedicated to Nestroy he attacks contemporary theatre, as, for example, in the article "Theateraffären":

"Unser Geistesleben mit dem des Vormärz zu vergleichen, ist eine so beispiellose Gemeinheit gegen den Vormärz, daß nur die ethische Verwahrlosung, die vierhundert Vorstellungen der Lustigen Witwe bewirkt haben, solchen Anwurf entschuldigen kann. Den modernen Kulissenaffären gegenüber glaube man sich, wagt einer jener Ironiker zu versichern, 'in die Zeiten des Café Stierböck¹¹ versetzt, wo Nestroy und seine Komiker, die lange Pfeife schmauchend, die größte Sensation machten, wenn sie direkt aus dem Carltheater mit der noch warmen Kunde vom neuesten Zerwürfnis der Demoiselle X. mit ihrem bisherigen Verehrer aufwarteten'. Ja, schämen wir uns! In den Zeiten, da uns ein Buchbinder¹² die Vorstadtpossen schreibt, benehmen wir uns noch so, wie anno Nestroy! ... Und ich weiß, daß die Hausknechte seines Zeitalters mehr Kultur hatten als heute die Hofräte, und mehr Weisheit als heute die Philosophen."¹³

This merciless vigour with which Kraus lampoons the Vienna of his time is sustained throughout all the thirty-six years of Die Fackel like an acid antidote to the sickly cultural atmosphere around him. Not only has theatre, especially the popular theatre, declined, says Kraus, but also operetta, and his ideas on the subject he expresses in a number of articles, the tone and approach of which are similar to those of the passage just quoted.¹⁴ Sometimes the tone of these articles was so strong

11. There is no mention of this café in Hans Penner's "Alt-Wiener Gast- und Vergnügungsstätten" (MS. Vienna, Stadtbibliothek). Connected with Nestroy were: "Der goldene Metzger", "Das goldene Lamm", "Die Tigerhöhle" and "Der grüne Jäger".

12. Bernhard Ludwig Buchbinder (1849-1922), actor, then journalist, wrote novels and plays. His last play before Kraus wrote the article in 1908 was Das Wäschermädel (1905), to which he may be alluding.

13. No. 245, February 1908, p. 15.

14. See also, for example, No. 57, Oct. 1900, pp. 2-3 on stage satire, and No. 239, Dec. 1907, pp. 39-40, "Eine Musik- und Theaterausstellung".

and provocative that Kraus had to face serious consequences. For example, in the first number of Die Fackel he wrote an article on contemporary cultural conditions entitled "Die Vertreibung aus dem Paradiese" containing the following words:

"Seitdem die bodenwüchsige Vorstadtposse verblichen ist, müssen wir das Wiener Theater einem regelrechten Spekulantentum preisgegeben sehen. Journalistische Schmarotzer, die eben erst aus dem Kehricht der öffentlichen Meinung emporgetaucht sind, Operettenwucherer und Kulissiers, die, wenn schon nicht dem Gerichtssaal, so doch der Gerichtssaalrubrik entsprungen sind, tummeln sich auf der Szene, die einst Nestroy und einem herrlich verwienerten Offenbach gehört hat." 15

In Die Fackel (No. 5, p. 1), published shortly afterwards, in the middle of May, we read that Karl Kraus as a result of an article on "die fast groteske Verkommenheit unserer Theaterzustände . . . überfallen und blutig geschlagen [sei]", and there is little doubt that this is the article alluded to. Certainly the tone is bordering on the scurrilous: the use of the words Spekulantentum, Schmarotzer, Kehricht and Operettenwucherer show that Kraus was not shy of being provocative. Furthermore the phrases he constructs are so forceful and his sentences so rhythmical that they are easily retained in the memory of the reader, more easily, in fact, than the insipid phrases of the people he attacked. It is therefore not surprising that Die Fackel immediately won him both sworn admirers and sworn enemies.

15. April 1899, p. 15.

Kraus could, however, be as positive in his opinions as he could be negative; the criticism that Kraus views life in the extremes of good and bad, excellent and despicable, is certainly warranted. This is seen not only in his adulation of Nestroy and his contempt for the theatre of his time, but also in his admiration for the operettas of Offenbach and Strauß as opposed to products such as Lehar's Lustige Witwe: "Man bedenke, daß die Armut Johann Strauß'scher Walzer nicht bühnenfremder war als die Kitschigkeit ihrer Nachahmungen. ... Wir mögen es glauben, daß die Zeit noch kommen wird, in der der Freudengenius eines Offenbach an die Seite Mozarts tritt."¹⁶ The difference Kraus sees lies in Armut and Freudengenius on the one hand and falseness and Kitschigkeit on the other. The apathetic emptiness of his age is responsible for the fact that this genuine Freudengenius - with which people so fondly connect Vienna - has degenerated and died. It is an example of the departure from the Ursprung which Kraus constantly laments and which he sees expressed in the joy in living and grace that he connects with the Vormärz. Just as Nestroy parodied the mannerisms and the false emotionalism of the Italian opera of his time, so Kraus pours scorn on the theatrical activities of his contemporaries.

16. From "Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne", No. 270, January 1909, p. 7.

Die Fackel appeared fairly regularly up to the dawn of the Hitler era with its accompanying anti-Semitism. Number 888, which appeared in October 1933, consisted merely of four pages containing Kraus's obituary of Adolf Loos and the short poem, "Man frage nicht, was all die Zeit ich machte", quoted on page 72 above, and cost the paltry sum of twenty Groschen.¹⁷ Number 889 did not appear until the middle of July 1934. In that same month there appeared a copious volume (Numbers 890-905) containing the 313-page long essay "Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint". The last numbers (917-922) of Die Fackel appeared in February 1936 shortly before Kraus's death on 29 June.

It is clear that this has been merely a glimpse into what appeared in Die Fackel over the thirty-six years of its existence; the articles on Nestroy will, however, be examined more closely in Chapter III, Section 3.¹⁸ Other references are made elsewhere as is necessary to the context, and anything further would be irrelevant to our discussion. As Die Fackel was the instrument, apart from the Vorlesungen, with which Kraus spoke to the public, it is important to have established what kind of material he presented and how he presented it. His subject was

17. The price of Die Fackel varied with the size of its content.

18. Pp. 143-166 below.

the sickness and weakness of his time, his tool was a language so powerful that it seemed to gouge out the sceptic and diseased aspects of Viennese life and outlook, to the intense discomfort of his victims. In return Kraus was attacked and spurned by the many enemies he made, ignored or detested by the press, and feared by most of those who felt the lash of his satire. And yet Kraus did not intend to be a scurrilous rogue: where he saw evil and falsehood, especially where it was the cause of suffering, he exposed and lampooned it ruthlessly. Of particular interest is the concentration, the directness, the vigour and the rhythm of his language. The nature of Kraus's relationship to language will be discussed under "The Aphorism",¹⁹ but one must also emphasize here, as Kraus emphasized in the opening lines of the first number of Die Fackel, that its justification lay in the greatly needed attacks it made on corruption and abuse, especially in the field of language. Kraus belonged essentially in Vienna, which he hated for what it was and loved for what it could be and once had been. He attempted to bring an age to its senses while those around him were content to resign themselves to their fate. His Dienst am Wort and the mission he felt in him to pillory the evils of a corrupt society meant for him the justification of his existence.

19. Ch. V, pp. 238-242 below.

2. The Satirical Dramatist

Die Aufführung des Dramas, dessen Umfang nach irdischem Zeitmaß etwa zehn Abende umfassen würde, ist einem Marstheater zgedacht. Theatergänger dieser Welt vermöchten ihm nicht standzuhalten. Denn es ist Blut von ihrem Blute und der Inhalt ist von dem Inhalt der unwirklichen, undenkbaren, keinem wachen Sinn erreichbaren, keiner Erinnerung zugänglichen und nur in blutigem Traum verwahrten Jahre, da Operettenfiguren die Tragödie der Menschheit spielten. Die Handlung, in hundert Szenen und Höllen führend, ist unmöglich, zerklüftet, heldenlos wie jene. Der Humor ist nur der Selbstvorwurf eines, der nicht wahnsinnig würde bei dem Gedanken, mit heilem Hirn die Zeugenschaft dieser Zeitdinge bestanden zu haben. Außer ihm, der die Schmach solchen Anteils einer Nachwelt preisgibt, hat kein anderer ein Recht auf diesen Humor. Die Mitwelt, die geduldet hat, daß die Dinge geschehen, die hier aufgeschrieben sind, stelle das Recht, zu lachen, hinter die Pflicht, zu weinen. Die unwahrscheinlichsten Taten, die hier gemeldet werden, sind wirklich geschehen; ich habe gemalt, was sie nur taten. Die unwahrscheinlichsten Gespräche, die hier geführt werden, sind wörtlich gesprochen worden; die grellsten Erfindungen sind Zitate.

(Vorwort: Die letzten Tage der Menschheit.)

As the First World War represented for Karl Kraus the extreme of inhumanity and horror to which mankind had sunk, so Die letzten Tage der Menschheit presents an extreme in Kraus's satirical writings. It must be one of the most terrifying satirical works which have ever come into existence, for the satirist himself has passed beyond the stage of throwing mere ridicule upon his subject, he has lost that well-balanced common sense which enables him to see clearly while the world is weltering in the mire of corruption and folly - here he is himself tormented and overwhelmed by the immediacy and the horror of what he is describing, and

the whole work, even the farcically "comic" scenes, assumes an air of grim and deadly earnestness.

The vast breadth of the material, the incredible variety of the treatment and the inexhaustible possibilities for discussion which Die letzten Tage der Menschheit offers would require a work of several volumes to do justice to it. It is the satire upon which Kraus's reputation mainly rests to-day, and whereas his difficult discourses on language and ethics are known only to an élite of admirers, Die letzten Tage der Menschheit has remained as a literary monument to him.

The work is indeed monumental, and of this Kraus himself was more than conscious, as he indicates in his foreword, the beginning of which is quoted above. Quite apart from the length of the play, the number of its characters, the number of towns and countries it portrays apart from the central pivot, Vienna, Kraus delves deep into all sections of the populace, from the Emperor to the prostitute, from the journalist to the starving soldier. His style ranges from the uncanny lyricism of the epilogue to dialect and official jargons of all descriptions. Kraus obviously wanted to leave no stone unturned and no fool, tyrant, egoist or sadist unpunished by his satirical pen. The work hovers grimly between the real, the tragic and the grotesque. Had the First World War never taken place, Kraus would have surely been denounced for conceiving such monstrous ideas and for portraying mankind in an impossibly cruel and pessimistic manner. This is the conventional objection against the

satirist, for generally his readers do not sense the full horror of what he is portraying. No-one denies the horror of a World War, but time can gloss over anything which is uncomfortable to remember, and mankind soon forgets. Karl Kraus sees to it that the First World War in all its appalling grotesqueness shall be remembered to the last painful details, even by the generations who did not experience it.

Die letzten Tage der Menschheit is a tragedy in five acts with a prologue and an epilogue. There is, as Kraus states, no hero, but the subject of the play is mankind in the depths of its stupidity and misery. Quite apart from the content, the length of the play and the variety of the settings present a problem for the dramatist. There is a danger for such a vast work to develop into a sprawling conglomeration of scenes and characters and for the action to become as formless as the reality which it is portraying. This is definitely not so with Die letzten Tage der Menschheit; on the contrary, there is such a clear pattern in the construction that it seems amazing that Karl Kraus did not begin writing the play long after the war was over, and could build up his dramatic torso while viewing events in retrospect and thus in better proportion.¹ This dramatic pattern replaces what would normally be the plot-structure, and evolving from this is a distinct ebb and flow in the satirical treatment which lends this immense work an artistic shape. Karl Kraus makes

1. The first draft was composed between 1915 and 1917, the final version between 1920 and 1921.

his world intelligible by dividing it into clearly defined categories: of these the "mass" crowding the streets of Vienna is perhaps the most imposing. This mass is far from impersonal and still less anonymous, even if the individuals are seldom given proper names. The name and personality of each figure lies in the single designation which Kraus uses to allude to it. Appendix A.2 (pp. 257-259) shows, for example, a few ways in which Kraus achieves the various effects. Either his characters conform to conventional types such as ein Gebildeter, ein Wiener (I,1), or else Kraus emphasizes certain characteristics or events connected with the character. Sometimes this produces a comic effect (Eine Dame mit leichtem Anflug von Schnurrbart - I,1) or horror (Eine Bettlerin mit einem Holzbein und einem Armstumpf - V,30). With this subtle trick of identifying his characters entirely by the element needed for his purpose, be it a personal idiosyncrasy or an occurrence, Kraus gives his figures life and personality. This "mass" is further subdivided into the sufferers, such as the beggars and starving women, the well-meaning bourgeois fools (the Abonntenen der Neuen Freien Presse), and those who are or desire to be socially and intellectually "superior", such as the lady who recites Heine. These types are projected into and developed in the remaining groups of characters: the suffering of the starving masses at home is small when compared with that of the soldiers on the front or in hospital, whether they are trampled to death by brutal officers (IV,38) or whether they are groaning on their stretchers (V,52). The well-meaning fool of the street and Kaffeehaus becomes an extremely dangerous fool when he is given authority or placed behind a desk. These

dangerous fools form the main butt of Kraus's satire, for they are often responsible for augmenting suffering, and they appear in numerous forms throughout the play. Sometimes they are disguised as journalists, sometimes as petty officials, sometimes as members of the general staff, but most terrifying are those in a position of authority, such as the judges, the officers or the generals. Finally, there are the élite, who are distinguished from the mass and the fools in that they are given names; sometimes these are genuine historical figures such as Wilhelm II and Hindenburg, alongside those characters of whom Kraus did not approve, such as Hofmannsthal and Friedjung. Some characters are designated by names of exaggerated length (see Appendix A.2, vii), often their title is emphasized, and sometimes members of the élite class are designated, not by their actual name, but by their position, such as in Café Pucher² (Vorspiel, 2) the Ministerpräsident and the Direktor der Kabinettskanzlei. Then, as a background for these types is the genuine crowd, the audiences in theatre and lecture-hall, the troops marching by and the onlookers in the streets.

The actual setting of the play carries this pattern further (see Appendix B). Die letzten Tage der Menschheit progresses in cycles of rhythmically recurring scenes, and this regularity forms an important element in the dramatic construction.

2. Kraus was a frequent guest himself of Café Pucher.

The prologue and each of the five acts opens with a mass-scene at the Sirk-Ecke³ of the Ringstraße in Vienna, and every scene conforms to a definite pattern. The first words are invariably those of the newspaper-seller calling out the latest news:

Prologue: "Extraausgabe - ! Ermordung des Thronfolgers! Da Tāta vahaftet!"

Act I: "Extraausgabe - ! Beidee Berichtee! . . . Kroßer Sick bei Schaabaaz!"

Act II: "Extraausgabe - !...Kroße Sick der Deitschen in Galizien!"

Act III: "Extraausgabe - ! Venedig bombardiert! Schwere Niederlage der Italiēna!"

Act IV: "Extraausgabe - ! Varnichtete Niederlage der Italiēna!"

Act V: "Der Aabend, Aachtuhrblaad! . . . Friedensversuche der Eenteentee!"

These sentences fulfil a double purpose: bearing in mind Kraus's antipathy against the press, they act as a kind of sardonic trumpet alarm announcing each act, and they at the same time remind the audience or reader that the war is progressing by the difference in news presented. These first scenes all consist of a hotch-potch of actions and fragmentary conversations and minor sensations, the main satirical effect of which lies in the fact that events of the utmost horror or importance are dismissed through trivial remarks or incidental allusions. The skilful interweaving of self-satisfaction, despair, farce, hollowness and suffering set the tone for the scenes which follow, and these introductory crowd-scenes may well be considered as secondary prologues

3. Then a corner of the Kärntner Straße.

to the individual acts - each one of which is as long as a full-length play. Apart from this a historical "frame" is given to the whole work by the sinister similarity of Scene 10 of the Prologue and Act V, Scene 52. The former is set on the Vienna Südbahnhof and portrays the official reception of the bodies of the murdered Crown Prince and his Consort. The latter is set on the Vienna Nordbahnhof and portrays the official reception of the wounded soldiers returning from the front. Parts of these scenes are exactly identical: the characters taking part are the same, the scene is both times set "im fahlen Morgenlicht", and against this the grim contrast between the sarcophagi, candles and liveried footmen of the prologue and the stretchers and functionaries of the final act. The scenes then proceed either identically or in an ironic contrast. For example, Nepalleck's opening words in the prologue scene are: "Es ist das Furchtbarste, Durchlaucht ist ganz trübsinnig und durch Unwohlsein verhindert, der höchsten Trauerfeier persönlich beizuwohnen. ... Rechts der schönste,⁴ der mit Chrysanthenen auf dem Sarg Ihrer seligen Hoheit der durchlauchtigsten Frau Herzogin, ist von seiner Durchlaucht." The other scene opens with a voice calling, "Aufpassen, daß sich die Angehörigen nicht verdrängen." The unctuous ceremoniousness of the one speech and the gruff heartlessness of the second are a grim comment upon the official views of each ceremony. However, after this opening two gentlemen introduce themselves in both

4. Kranz, presumably.

scenes with the same words:

Zawadil: Spielvogel.

Spielvogel: Zawadil.

Beide (zugleich sprechend): Ein trüber Morgen. Schon um 6 Uhr waren wir zur Stelle, um die Anordnungen zu treffen.

and in both scenes Hofrat and Hofrätin Schwarz-Gelber remark: "Wir haben es uns nicht nehmen lassen wollen, persönlich zu erscheinen."

Sometimes remarks are identical save for one single word, in which there lies a sardonic contrast as, for example, the final comments of the journalist to his colleague:

(Prologue, 10): "Schreiben Sie, wie sie beten!"

(V, 52): "Schreiben Sie, wie sie lauschen!"

The "sie" refers, of course, to the onlookers, in the first scene obediently falling in with the general atmosphere and in the second listening with greedy curiosity.

This interplay of repetition and contrast lends a potent suggestive force and produces an almost grotesque effect, especially when one bears in mind that the death of the Austrian Crown Prince heralded the war and that the return of the invalid soldiers represented its burial rites; yet both scenes are peopled by marionettes using exactly the same phrases.

Another pair of "frame-scenes" is Act I, Scene 9 and Act V, Scene 23, occurring, therefore, within the larger and more important frame-scenes on the stations; and whereas the station-scenes represent events of some importance, the other two scenes, which portray a schoolmaster

instructing his class in a Volksschule, merely provide a comment on the situations. In both these scenes we see the conscientious teacher Zehetbauer repeating his political drill before a not too intelligent and somewhat unruly class of boys. Though the first of these two scenes takes place near the beginning of the war and the second near the end, the terminology is in both cases similar and equally stupid; the only difference is, in fact, that there are only six shabbily dressed and underfed survivors out of the original class of fifteen.

The remaining scenes of Die letzten Tage der Menschheit fall easily into various groups (see Appendix B). By far the largest group is that containing the "conversation-scene", where the dialogue as a form of comment is more important than the action. Very often these scenes take the form of chance meetings in the street or inside or in front of specified buildings. Occasionally they are centred round a particular event, such as Act I, Scene 8, where the central point is the changing of the Café Westminster to Café Westmünster in accordance with the anti-English stipulations. Generally these scenes consist mainly of conversations, however, be it in the street, in a café, in a park or in private houses, though Kraus very seldom sets his scenes in a home.⁵

Die letzten Tage der Menschheit takes place essentially in a public atmosphere where stupidity and corruption are laid bare for all to see,

5. See Appendix B.3 f., p. 261below.

save in the privacy of the office where the official and journalist are left unguarded. The excess of conversation does indeed tend to make the play somewhat tedious, especially as the conversations are generally long and rambling. The most important of this type of scene is the discussion between the Nörgler and the Optimist, who between them provide a comment on the current situation. These are echoed by similar conversation scenes between the Abyonnent and the Patriot, and together the two pairs of speakers provide a running commentary on the political situation and the action of the war in general. The Nörgler is obviously intended to represent Kraus himself, for in the long speeches which he puts into the Nörgler's mouth, especially during the very lengthy monologue in Act V, Scene 54 (Der Nörgler am Schreibtisch), are clearly incorporated the views of Kraus the writer, satirist and prophet:

Ich habe alles reiflich erwogen. Ich habe die Tragödie, die in die Szenen der zerfallenden Menschheit zerfällt, auf mich genommen, damit sie der Geist höre, der sich der Opfer erbarmt, und hätte er selbst für alle Zukunft der Verbindung mit einem Menschenohr entsagt. Er empfangen den Grundton dieser Zeit, das Echo meines blutigen Wahnsinns, durch den ich mitschuldig bin an diesen Geräuschen. Es lasse es als Erlösung gelten!

Other scenes are set in enclosed public places, such as theatres, churches, meeting-halls or railway stations. The cinema and lecture-hall scenes generally provide an opportunity for us to bear witness to the emptiness of public performers such as bad actresses (II,24) and bad poets (III,35) and the stupidity of public lecturers (III,11), all of which for Kraus are dangerous. The public meanwhile applaud or sit meekly listening.

The church scenes in the play are significant; apart from the scene in the Vatican (I,27) they all follow in succession from III,15 to III,19. The Vatican scene is endowed with a special satirical quality. It is a monologue spoken by "die Stimme des betenden Benedikt's", a clear reference to the then Pope, Benedict XV (1914-1922). It is a prayer lamenting the fact that "die schönsten Gegenden Europas, dieses Gartens der Welt, sind mit Lachen und Ruinen besät". The next scene is set in the editor's office of a newspaper house, and we hear "die Stimme des diktierenden Benedikt's", this time a reference to Moritz Benedikt, the publisher of the Neue Freie Presse. He is dictating an article on the fact that the crews of wrecked submarines are providing a plentiful diet for the fishes in the South Seas. This is an example of Kraus's trick of contrast through repetition: the voice of the speaker is similar, the name is identical, and the speeches are intoned, the one in religious jargon, the other in journalistic jargon, both with pious solemnity; the contrast between the Pope and the newspaperman, the feeble voice of humanity behind the conventions of prayer and the horror behind the glib speech of journalistic clichés, is hidden, and is therefore all the more effective. The church scenes in Act III illustrate another of Kraus's tricks, intensification through repetition. Scenes 15 to 17 portray three dull and useless but pedantic sermons from three different Protestant churches, followed eventually (Scene 18) by an equally futile scene in a Roman Catholic pilgrimage church where the sacristan is

proudly displaying the newest gift to the church: a rosary consisting of shrapnel. The scene then moves to a mosque in Constantinople, but the tone is not religious, on the contrary, it is the vulgar tone of tourists making fun, in Berlin dialect, of all around them. Here again we have repetition (Scenes 15 to 18) suddenly rounded off by an almost sadistically blatant contrast, while the actual religious background is retained.

Kraus had an unusual relationship to the church. In about 1912 he became a Roman Catholic though, according to Sigmund von Radecki,⁶ no-one realized this until he announced his withdrawal from the church in 1922. The immediate cause of this last step was his shock on witnessing the Hofmannsthal plays (Das große Salzburger Welttheater and Jedermann) being performed in church during the Salzburg Festival. He expresses his disgust in the poem "Bunte Begebenheiten"⁷ in a satirical language which is both penetrating and, in a grim way, amusing. Kraus was shocked by what he thought was the profanation of sacred ground by the presence of "Hochwürden die Preßkanaille", by the stress on the tourist trade, the personal glorification of Hofmannsthal, the producer Max Reinhardt and the prominent personalities, all of which was tolerated "damit Ehre sei / Gott in der Höhe der Preise". On 24 September 1922,

6. "Karl Kraus und die Kirche" in the chapter "Erinnerungen an Karl Kraus" from Wie ich glaube, pp. 35-36. Radecki erroneously places Kraus's withdrawal from the church in 1920.

7. Printed in Die Fackel, No. 622, June 1923, pp. 65-67.

before a reading of Nestroy's Der Talisman, Kraus gave a talk, "Vom großen Welttheaterschwindel", in which he clearly stated: "Ich weiß ja nicht, ob eine Kirche noch geschändet werden kann, die während eines Weltkriegs, der als internationales Gaunerstück sicherlich nur der Prolog im großen Welttheater war, das Walten der giftigen Gase gesegnet und nach ihm die Muttergottes mit der Kriegsmedaille dekoriert hat,"⁸ meaning, of course, that humanity fell by weapons which the church had blessed. The result of this was the rejection, not of religion as such, but of the worldly institution of the Church, and Kraus ends his "Bunte Begebenheiten" with the words:

"...entschloß sich der liebe Gott, eben hier auf der Stelle auszutreten."

which Kraus immediately proceeded to do himself. However, Die letzten Tage der Menschheit was written during the years when Kraus still professed the Roman Catholic faith, and he nonetheless mocks the external trappings of the church. On the other hand he obviously sides with the poor and the suffering throughout the work, and in the final words of the play, spoken by the voice of God from above, "Ich habe es nicht gewollt,"⁹ he expresses the belief that the war was the fault of mankind itself, for the God of love and goodness could never have wished it. The answer to the problem was given by Kraus himself several years after

8. Die Fackel, No. 601, November 1922, p. 2.

9. Cf. ending of Faust I.

he had left the Church: "Man kann ja auch Christ bleiben, ohne in der Kirche zu sein."¹⁰

The boundless stupidity of officialdom meanders like a sluggish stream through Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, providing a foil for the suffering Kraus depicts in battle and on the streets. Numerous scenes are set "in der Redaktion" and reporters and photographers throng the scene like a mass of leeches. Similar in tone is the voice of "Ein Generalstäbler am Telephon" which is heard three times at regular intervals (II,16; III,22; V,13) during the play. The first two of these scenes open identically with the same tone of utter nonchalance, boredom and heartlessness: "Servus, also hast den Bericht über Przemysl fertig? - Noch nicht? - Ah, bist nicht ausgeschlafen - Geh, schau dazu, sonst kommst wieder zum Mullattieren zu spät," after which the words of the second report intentionally contradict those of the first. This use of the telephone is another clever trick: Kraus imitates exactly the nonchalant tone of a bored official as he can be only on the telephone, for in an ordinary conversation the presence of the second party in the room adds some life to the atmosphere and some variations to the tone. With the telephone, however, the reactions of the second person are not easily detectable, and a definite air of impersonality is imparted. Thus the tone of impersonal boredom, which is at the best of times

10. Radecki, op. cit., p. 36.

unpleasantly clear, is heightened. Secondly, the reader or spectator himself is outside the conversation and cannot hear the answers of the second party. The dramatist must therefore imply them, either by "repetition" of them ("Ah, bist nicht ausgeschlafen") or by skilled transitions between the remarks of the audible speaker. Interlarded with ejaculations and fragments such as "Was, hast wieder alles vergessen? . . . Wie, man kann nicht - Was? . . . No also, gut..." the telephone conversation, if properly used, can become a most realistic and amusing theatrical trick.

Sometimes Kraus makes bureaucracy amusing, but only when it does not immediately cause suffering or damage. Such a scene is Act IV, Scene 17, which consists of an official's monologue to a client in front of him; he is reading out to him the official regulations for those desirous of paying a visit to the country, the length, incomprehensibility and bombast of which causes the unfortunate client to take to flight and abandon his trip to the country altogether.

Where human suffering takes second place to the keeping up of appearances and the blind fulfilment of "duty", however, the tone is different. Such a scene takes place in the operating theatre of the Weimar Frauenklinik (IV,8) where a patient is forcibly operated upon to provide a spectacle for the Prinz zu Lippe. Even more grotesque are the scenes in the law-courts such as Act IV, Scene 30, where the judge Zagorski, in the normal cold-blooded legal jargon, reads out the death

sentence on eleven delinquents. The stupidity of these grandiose words appals the reader, but the speech is greeted with:

Ein Offizier: Gratuliere. Das war saftig. Spürt ma halt gleich, daß du ein Advokat bist. Du, wieviel Todesurteil hast eigentlich schon hinter dir?

Zagorski: Das is akkurat das hundertste - also das heißt das hundertzehnte -

Die Offiziere: Gratulieren! Jubiläum! Ja warum sagst das nicht?

Zagorski: Danke, danke! Und jeder Exekution hab ich persönlich beigewohnt, das kann ich mit Stolz sagen. Und wie oft hab ich noch bei den Exekutionen fremder Todesurteile assistiert!

2. Offizier: Geh. Da überanstrengst dich aber! Nimmst es zu gewissenhaft!

Zagorski: Ja, das is ein aufreibender Dienst!

The satire here lies in the contrast between subject and form, but whereas in the passage quoted from Heinrich Böll¹¹ an elevated form is used for trivial subjects, here something as serious as a death sentence is treated first as a jubilee and then as a daily routine.

In the foreground of the satire is, however, the war itself, and nothing is more poignant than Kraus's scenes on the front. While the commentaries between the Nörgler and the Optimist extend over pages, the front scenes are generally short and of the utmost baldness. In contrast to the conversation-scenes, therefore, it is the action or the background which is important, and the significance of the dialogue lies

11. See ch. I, p. 25 above.

in the scarcity of words, for only those who have time and leisure can afford to be extravagant with language.

The front-scenes of the first act show a macabre humour: there is, for example, the meeting between Wilhelm II and the poet Ganghofer, who enters yodelling merrily:

Hollodriehoh
Jetzt bin ich an der Front,
Hollodriehoh,
Dös bin i schon gewohnt.
Bin ein Naturbursch, wie
Man selten einen findt,
Leider schon zu alt
Zum Soldatenkind. (I,23)

Ganghofer then proceeds to introduce himself in a way which is Kraus's nearest approach to Nestroy's Auftrittslied, and the ensuing scene, where the Emperor offers him tea and biscuits for his mid-day meal with the constantly repeated command, "Essen Sie doch, Ganghofer, essen Sie doch", with eager press photographers hovering in the background, might verge on the Posse - but for the sound of shots in the background. By the fourth act, however, all humour has disappeared and we witness brutality, starvation and cold. The starkest example of brutality in the officers is the scene in the Carpathians (IV,38) where a sick soldier is trampled to death:

Hiller: Was is'n los? 'raus mit dem Mistvieh! . . . Ach die Drecksau verstellt sich ja bloß, trampelt ihn doch in den Hintern! Willst du laufen, du Schwein! Ist denn das Aas noch nicht verreckt?!

The next scene depicts the same officer Hiller dictating in an official

letter to the soldier's father that his son had received the best medical treatment and that in him they had lost "einen tüchtigen Soldaten und guten Kamaraden, dessen Verlust wir schmerzlich betrauern" (IV,39). Again, it is the contrast between reality and pose which constitutes the satirical criticism. Sometimes this contrast is contained within the scene itself. Two of the most effective scenes of this type are the shortest and hence may be quoted in full:

Act IV, Scene 13:-

Spital neben einem Divisionskommando. Man hört die Regimentsmusik lustige Weisen spielen.

Ein Schwerverwundeter (wimmert): Nicht spielen - nicht spielen!

Ein Wärter: Stad sein! Das is die Tafelmusik vom Exzellenzherrn Feldmarschalleutnant von Fabini! Die wird er euretwegen net aufhören lassen, was glaubts denn?!

(Die Tür geht auf. Man hört Gesang: Ja so ein Räuscherl is mir lieber als wiare Krankheit, wiara Fieber.)

Act V, Scene 51:-

Baracke in Sibirien. Ergraute Männer, ganz unterernährt, barfüßig, in zerfetzten Uniformen, kauern auf der Erde, starren aus hohlen Augen ins Weite. Einige schlafen, einige schreiben.

Ein österreichischer Hauptmann (tritt ein und ruft): Ihr Schweine!

(Sie erheben sich und leisten die Ehrenbezeigung. Während ein Teil Habtacht steht, exerzieren die andern mit Schaufeln und machen Gewehrgriffe.)

To depict sheer horror is to go beyond the bounds of the purely satirical, yet the satirical tone is preserved in both these scenes by two single sentences: in the first, "Das is die Tafelmusik vom Exzellenzherrn Feldmarschalleutnant von Fabini", and in the second, "Sie leisten

die Ehrenbezeugung". The satire lies in the incongruity between the courtly formality of the long title and the words Tafelmusik and Ehrenbezeugung and the background against which they are set. On a different plane and with the absence of suffering this element of incongruity produces a comic effect, but here the words Tafelmusik and Exzellenzherrn Feldmarschalleutnant contain such a sarcastic note of criticism that even the satire is of a grim nature.

On the other hand there are scenes where our laughter is not mingled with or stifled by horror, and one may here ask of what nature exactly the humour in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit can be. Kraus himself treats this humour most seriously, and does not even connect it with laughter: "Der Humor ist nur der Selbstvorwurf eines, der nicht wahn-sinnig wurde bei dem Gedanken, mit heilem Hirn die Zeugenschaft dieser Zeitdinge bestanden zu haben. Außer ihm...hat kein anderer ein Recht auf diesen Humor. Die Mitwelt, die geduldet hat, daß die Dinge geschehen, die hier aufgeschrieben sind, stelle das Recht, zu lachen, hinter die Pflicht, zu weinen." (Cf. p. 106 above). Humour is therefore the result of a self-reproach, a mere reaction of one who consciously witnesses horror and realizes how grotesque it is. It is the extreme upsetting of the proportion of things which creates this humour, and it does not necessarily mean that the things concerned are funny, for the other people (who only laugh at things they consider funny), apart from the author, have no right to this humour. Thus the picture of Ganghofer

yodelling on the front and eating biscuits during his meeting with the Emperor may by its incongruity and originality be amusing; but only the person who can see beyond this superficial crust to the futility of the whole situation and the wretchedness which the war brings has a right to laugh. The pregnancy of Kraus's remark lies in the fact that once one has reached this point one can laugh no longer. For Kraus there was no essential difference between wit and humour, "denn beide stammen ja aus dem gleichen Kontrast-Erlebnis, nur daß der eine mehr ein Blitz, der andere mehr ein Wetterleuchten ist. Witz war ihm die höchste Aktualisierung des Humors. Nichts war ihm daher peinlicher, als bloß mechanischer Kombinationswitz, oder jenes Verwecheln von Gutgelauntsein mit Humor, das für die deutsche Geisteslage so typisch ist."¹² In war-time only those who are privileged and well-fed can be "gutgelaunt" and this type of easy-going attitude demands complete obliviousness of suffering. Kraus depicts such people enjoying themselves in night-clubs and on hotel terraces, and the very contrast between their empty laughter and the misery on the front repulses the reader. Humour is for Kraus not an unencumbered state of mind which can smile indulgently at folly and vice, on the contrary, Kraus was an unusually intolerant person, and where anything offended him he would lash out at it wildly. For this reason he has frequently been accused

12. Sigismund von Radecki, op. cit., p. 23.

of having no humour.¹³ It depends, of course, upon what one personally understands by humour whether one agrees with this or not. When Kraus's profound love of language is borne in mind it is clear that all his thoughts were inextricable from their linguistic expression,¹⁴ hence wit, which in literature is rooted in the use of language, and humour, which is a state of mind, meant for him the same thing. One good example of this in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit is the brief scene "Tanzunterhaltung in Hasenpoth" (III,12) which runs as follows:

Herr: Fräilen.

Dame: Was mäinen Se.

Herr: Se tanzen nich.

Dame: Näin.

Herr: Warum.

Dame: Tanz ich, so schwitz ich. Schwitz ich, so stink ich.
Tanz ich nicht, schwitz ich nicht, stink ich nicht.

This is one of the few scenes in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit which we may be permitted to find amusing without looking beyond the surface of things to a hidden evil behind. The humour lies in the selection of the subject of conversation, which begins quite conventionally, then takes a most unusual and incongruous turn. The wit lies firstly in the spelling of the North German speech, in the monosyllabic baldness of the conversation, but above all in the final speech: there

13. Cf. Ch. I, p. 22 above.

14. Cf. Ch. V, p. 239 below.

is a steady linguistic crescendo to "stink ich", and then, after this unusual climax the Baltic lady, with perplexing logic, brings her premises to an irrefutable conclusion.

Kraus had described satire in 1912 in "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" as "die Lyrik des Hindernisses", and one may well ask if there is any poetic quality at all in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. The tone of the work is nearly all realistic. Only at the end of the fifth act and in the epilogue is the pattern of events elevated to a supernatural plane. Apart from this, however, poetry is sometimes put into the mouth of the Nörgler, who, it must be remembered, is a self-portrait of Kraus himself. During the scene on the Südbahnhof, the Nörgler recites the poem "Du großer Gott der Großen und der Kleinen", for example, which contains the lines:

"Ist selbstvergossenes Blut nur ein Rubin,
ein falscher Diamant die echte Träne,
ein Putz, den sich die Judasfratze borgt?"

(Prologue, 10)

Not only do the rich metaphors have a poetic quality, but the words, spoken before the war is under way, are also of a prophetic nature. In Act V, Scene 28 the Nörgler is shown reciting a poem in a Vienna lecture hall, and the words and idea are an echo of the first poem:

"Du großer Gott, laß mich nicht Zeuge sein!
Hilf mir hinab ins Unbewusste.
Daß ich nicht sehen muß, wie sie mit Wein
zur Not ersetzen ihre Blutverluste."

This is clearly an allusion to Kraus himself reading his poems in lecture-halls: whereas the prophet foretelling the destruction of

mankind at the beginning of the war saw the impending horror with open eyes, the Nörgler has at the end the one desire for a narcosis which may deaden him to what he has experienced. The words are echoed, the ideas are reversed. In the actual poems themselves there is no element of satire whatever; this is introduced after the poems are over. In the scene on the Südbahnhof the last words of the Nörgler's poem:

"Nimm ihr eigenes Blut
und traure über sie mit Gottes Träne!"

melt dramatically into the organ music which accompanies the mourning ceremonies for the dead Crown Prince. This atmosphere is shattered, however, by the words of the pressman:

"Wo ist Szomory? Wir brauchen die Stimmung!"

followed by:

"Schreiben Sie, wie sie beten."

Similarly the Nörgler's poetic climax in the Vienna lecture of Act V, Scene 28:

"Du großer Gott, raff mich aus dem Gewühl!
Führ mich durch diese blutigen Räume!
Verwandle mir die Nacht zu dem Gefühl,
daß ich von deinem jüngsten Tage träume!"

is crudely disturbed by the remark which follows it:

Ein Zuhörer (zu seiner Gattin): - Also du mußt nämlich wissen,
er hat einmal in die Presse kommen wollen. -

The satire lies not only in the stark contrast between two diametrically opposed elements, resulting in the element of ridicule, but also in the fact that Kraus's much detested press is responsible for this contrast.

The press is generally present in scenes of extreme gravity, acting as a mocking, satirical foil to the situation. Similarly the Nörgler's final monologue (V,54) is preceded by the scene:

Eine menschenleere Gasse. Es dunkelt. Plötzlich stürzen von allen Seiten Gestalten herbei, jede mit einem Stoß bedruckten Papiers, atemlos, Korybanten und Mänaden, rasen die Gasse auf und ab, toben, scheinen einen Mord auszurufen. Die Schreie sind unverständlich. Manche scheinen die Meldung förmlich hervorzustöhnen. Es klingt, als würde das Weh der Menschheit aus einem tiefen Ziehbrunnen geschöpft.

- asgabe - ! strasgabää - ! xtrasgawee! PeideePerichte - !
Brichtee - ! strausgabe - ! Extraskawee - ! richte - !
eestrabee - ! abee - ! bee - !

(Sie verschwinden. Die Gasse ist leer.)

This short scene is an example, not merely of poetry followed by satire, but of poetic satire. The setting, the solitude, the darkness broken suddenly by the rushing and screaming of corybants and maenads has an unearthly quality which mingles strangely with the ironic word-fragments of the newspaper-seller, which yet have a grotesque poetic element in this context.

The supernatural elements do not come to the fore until the very end. Act V, Scene 55 represents a drunken orgy with musical accompaniment and speeches amongst the corps officers in their military headquarters, until suddenly the scene gives way to a series of apparitions from the war following in rapid succession; these are all very brief and portray a single picture, for example:

Sterbende am Drahtverhau vor Przemysl.
(Die Erscheinung verschwindet.)

Nahkampf und Ausputzen in einem Graben.
(Die Erscheinung verschwindet.)

Ein Schulzimmer, in das eine Fliegerbombe fällt.
(Die Erscheinung verschwindet.)

Following this the play is written entirely in verse. The poetry evolves as a result of a crescendo in intensity and horror which transcends mere earthly satire. The epilogue, entitled "Die letzte Nacht", is peopled entirely by ghost-like figures flitting rapidly over the stage, a dying soldier declaring, "Ich sterbe für kein Vaterland!", gas-masks, fleeing generals, war-reporters, hyenas with human faces, then a mere succession of voices culminating in the final climax, the voice of God: "Ich habe es nicht gewollt," after which follows blackness and void. The epilogue is certainly a form of poetic satire, though of a very grim nature; for Kraus this is the expression of an extreme state for which normal language no longer suffices.

Die letzten Tage der Menschheit boasts no conventional hero, no conventional plot, character development or dramatic unity and yet, despite its vastness, it remains a coherent and carefully constructed entity. It progresses in a series of repeated cycles which gradually increase in intensity. Glancing at Appendix B, one notices the artistry and rhythmical regularity which which Kraus has built up his play, how, for example, the scenes set in public buildings generally occur in the middle of the acts, how the street-scenes occur after short intervals and are spread from the beginning to the end of the acts. It is also noteworthy that the scenes between the Nörgler and the Optimist increase in number as the play progresses, thus, as the situation becomes more hopeless, the Nörgler's (Kraus's) voice becomes intenser. Sometimes

scenes with great similarity follow consecutively, thus intensifying the effect, as in the church scenes in Act III, sometimes a scene forms a sequel to the one preceding (Act IV, 38,39). In any case the basic construction of the work lies in the re-echoing of the cycle represented by each act; this does not mean exact repetition, of course, but regeneration similar to the annual cycle of Nature, eventually culminating in the surrealist comment formed by the epilogue.

None of Kraus's other plays bears comparison with Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Of these two, Traumstück (1922) and Traumtheater (1924) resemble mere literary caprices of a few pages, and the remaining two, Literatur oder Man wird doch da sehn (1921) and the "Nachkriegsdrama" Die Unüberwindlichen (1927) are reflections of personal animosities of Kraus himself and are of questionable literary value.

Literatur oder Man wird doch da sehn is the unfortunate result of a particularly painful and futile episode. Franz Werfel was in his youth one of Kraus's most ardent and impassioned admirers. Werfel's publisher, Kurt Wolff, who was personally involved in the Werfel-Kraus episode, describes how "er gehörte zu den 'Besessenen', und mir, dem 25-jährigen, gefiel der Überschwang, der begeisterte Rauschzustand des 22-jährigen Dichters".¹⁵ This almost unhealthy devotion was later to

15. Autoren, Bücher, Abenteuer (Berlin, 1964), p. 77.

16 / develop into the opposite extreme of bitter hatred. The cause of this reversal of feeling was a poem "Elysisches, Melancholie an Kurt Wolff" which Kraus published in Die Fackel in 1916.¹⁶ This poem contained the word "dorten", and in a letter from the front on 25 November 1916, Werfel reproached Kraus for violating the German language by using such a form. Language was for Kraus a very sensitive subject, and this reproach he interpreted as a personal attack, whereas it was surely little more than foolish youthful audacity on Werfel's part. However, the quibble assumed giant proportions culminating in Werfel's Spiegelmensch. Eine Magische Trilogie. Kurt Wolff, who had meantime published several of Kraus's works and was on friendly terms with him, foolishly accepted the play and it was published in 1920. The third part of the play (Scene 3), contains an unusually tasteless attack on Kraus:

Spiegelmensch: . . . Was soll ich nun in den nächsten Tagen der Beschäftigungslosigkeit beginnen? Halt! Ich will unter die Propheten gehn, natürlich unter die größeren Propheten!! - Das Erste ist, ich gründe...eine Zeitschrift und nenne sie: Die Leuchte? Nein! Der Kerzenstumpf? Nein! Die Fackel? Ja! . . . Ich will den Stadtklatsch zu einem kosmischen Ereignis machen . . . - Ich will mit Kalauer und Pathos so trefflich jonglieren, daß jeder, der bei der einen Zeile konstatiert, ich sei ein spaßiger Denunziant und Fürzefänger, bei der nächsten zugeben muß, daß ich doch der leibhaftige Jesaja bin...Mein leider allzu abhängiger Charakter hat ein großes Talent auch zum akustischen Spiegel.

Kurz und gut, weil ich zwar den Menschen aus den Augen, doch nicht in die Augen sehen kann, will ich ihnen lieber gleich in den Hintern schauen, ob dort ihr Ethos in Ordnung ist - - "17

16. No. 443, November 1916, pp. 26-27.

17. Kurt Wolff (op. cit., p. 95) maintains that he tried vainly to persuade Werfel to cut this passage. Kraus quotes it in the printed edition of his operetta, alongside Werfel's enthusiastic remarks about him in 1913.

This last sentence is as provocative as it is vulgar, and Kraus's reply was Literatur oder Man wird doch da sehn, Magische Operette in zwei Teilen (1921). A great work of art could hardly result from such circumstances. Kraus's "magic operetta" was a means of revenge and as such it cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of the situation from which it arose. As an independent work of art it is of small significance. It is of interest in that it provides an example of rather cheap personal invective in dramatic form.

Werfel, the author of Spiegelmensch, appears in the operetta as the young poet Johann Wolfgang, clearly a sarcastic parallel with Goethe, to whose Faust there are numerous rather tasteless allusions:

Harald Brüller
(stürmt auf Chloe Goldenberg zu, drückt ihr die Hand mit einem:)

All right!

(und stürmt davon. Sie sinkt mit einem Schrei zurück und muß
abermals gelobt werden.)

Die Mänaden

Gott wie dynamisch!

Der Sohn

Sie ist die erste nicht.

This ends the first act, and the cheapness of the situation, bearing in mind that Chloe is "refreshed" with absinthe, is a vulgar parallel with Mephistopheles' meaningful words, "Sie ist die erste nicht," directed at Gretchen's tragic fate.¹⁸

18. Cf. Faust I: Trüber Tag. Feld (prose scene, about line 4410).

Literatur is a somewhat muddled series of dialogues with constant allusions to literary works and figures and the phraseology of the psychologists, whom Kraus disliked, not to mention the press, which Kraus detested. The conversation satirizes the usual meaningless high-flown conversation of would-be intellectuals. The best aspects of the work are firstly the witty "Lied von der Presse"¹⁹ and secondly Kraus's caricatures of meaningless academic abstractions;

2. Månade: Es ist gewalttätige Monumentalität des Stils, der aber schon durch auflösende Harmonien wie von fernem Sphärenklang der Erfüllung durchzittert ist. (Part I, p. 32)

In such a "literary" discussion Spiegelmensch is compared directly with Faust; names, such as Kurt Wolff and the Neue Rundschau,²⁰ are bandied about and clichés, whether psychological, journalistic or intellectual, form an intentionally confusing conglomeration. The climax of the futility and senselessness of the whole affair comes with the arrival of the Waschzettel, who, describing Spiegelmensch as a play "gesäugt an den Brüsten Calderonscher Mystik, Molièrescher Komik, Aristophanischer Drastik und Werfelscher Tiefe" (Part II, p. 71) proceeds to compose a eulogy to his own poetic qualities in a mass of incomprehensible abstractions. It is Kraus's comment upon the whole Werfel-episode that the most high-sounding literary language is produced by a laundry list,

19. See ch. IV, sect. 2, pp. 217-218 below.

20. Both on page 14. The second reference runs, "Er hat Aussicht, Lektor zu wern bei Kurt Wolff." This was Werfel's post when he introduced Wolff to Karl Kraus.

echoing Werfel's literary conceits and Schillerian turns of phrase in Spiegelmensch.

Where Literatur oder Man wird doch da sehn is a comment, Die Unüberwindlichen is a portrayal of events which at the time were scandals, but which have since sunk into oblivion. Posterity has with some justification shown little interest in the play, for without knowledge of these events the play has little meaning. One was the scandal which developed in 1925 and 1926 around the figure of the blackmailer Imre Bekessy, head editor of Die Stunde.²¹ There was a major court case on the subject and Kraus was instrumental in providing much of the evidence against Bekessy. His motto demanding Bekessy's exile from Vienna, "Hinaus aus Wien mit dem Schuft", closed almost all of his Vorlesungen, and is echoed in Die Unüberwindlichen (Act I, p. 20), where Bekessy is given the name of Barkassy, the editor of the Pfeife. The second event was the open firing of the Vienna police on the populace on 17 July 1927, causing innumerable deaths. The victim of Kraus's accusations was this time Johann Schober, the President of the Police, whom Kraus tried to send to court. Schober refused to go, and there began a bitter fight between him and Kraus. This is naturally reflected in Die Fackel: one of the more entertaining attacks took the form of a "Schober Liederkrantz" in mock celebration of the centenary of Franz Schubert's death in 1928. This consists of parodies on texts by Offenbach and Nestroy making a

21. See ch. I, fn. 25, p. 13 above.

mockery of Schober. The most significant one for our discussion is the parody of Joab's Auftrittslied from Judith und Holofernes (Scene 14):

Angriffe von allen Seiten - wann ist man endlich gewillt,
Zuzugeben, daß er immer nur seine Pflicht hat erfüllt,
Man darf doch, was da g'schehn ist, nicht übertreiben,
Und wer am Ring spazieren ging, hat sich's selbst zuzuschreiben.
Und bezüglich der Begünstigung ist er ein reiner Tor;
Konkrete amtliche Anzeigen lagen nicht vor.
Was will ich denn haben? Er erfüllt seine Pflicht,
No und zur Klage zwingen kann ich ihn nicht.

[: Die Polizei is gar gscheit,
Sie sorgt für Sicherheit,
Hat aufs Bezirksg'richt ka Schneid' :]²²

These events are all reproduced in Die Unüberwindlichen. Schober is given the name of Wacker, the President of the Police, who insists, as Schober did, that he has during the whole of his life done nothing but his duty, even if it involved a street massacre. This attitude is summed up in the Schoberlied which Wacker sings at the beginning of Act IV.²³ The street massacre for which Kraus found Schober responsible is also depicted in Act IV by the descriptions of Hinsichtl and Rücksichtl, who temporarily fall out of their rôles as bureaucrats to tell the truth. Not all of the happenings in Die Unüberwindlichen correspond with reality; for example, Bekessy never returned to Vienna, but ended his days in Budapest.

The best aspect of this play is again the language. Whereas in Literatur literary and critical jargon is caricatured, here it is the

22. Die Fackel, No. 781, June 1928, p. 114.

23. See ch. IV, sect. 2, pp. 217-218 below.

jargon of bureaucracy, for which the following sentence may serve as an example: "Durch die Kenntnis der englischen Sprache, die ich mir damals anzueignen beziehungsweise zu vervollkommen in der Lage war, war ich später bekanntlich auch zum Bundeskanzleramt ausersehen, welches nicht mehr innezuhaben ich dessen gegenwärtigem Inhaber nicht verzeihen kann" (Act II, p. 46). There are even turns of phrase in the first part of the play which recall Nestroy: "Fallotai: Wir haben kraft der uns innewohnenden Berufung hiezu das tausendfältige Leben gezeigt und schwellende Frauenarme dem Dunstkreis der Phraseologie entrissen" (Act I, p. 24), and "Barkassy: . . . sogar Forda, meine rechte Hand, hat gebundene Hände" (Act I, p. 26).²⁴ Similarly, the Chorus of Editors reminds one of Nestroy's opening choruses, and the names Schufterle (a contributor to the Pfeife), Hinsichtl and Rücksichtl (officials working for Wacker), are reminiscent of Pfiffspitz (editor of the Krähwinkler Zeitung), Willibald Wachs and Sigmund Siegl (likewise officials) in Nestroy's Freiheit in Krähwinkel. The settings of the first two acts, in the office of the Pfeife and in Wacker's office, also have parallels in Freiheit in Krähwinkel (I, 11-15).

The first two acts are a caricature on bureaucracy shaded by the grim undertones of Barkassy's blackmail and the general corruption in Vienna. The beginning of the third act preserves this spirit of

24. See ch. II, sect. 1, p. 55 above.

caricature in the figure of the millionaire Camillioni,²⁵ but as the play nears its end any attempt at comedy or humour disappears. The phantoms of blackmail (Act III) and street-massacres (Act IV) make it as impossible for the reader to laugh as the ugly events of the war do in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. The final act, "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht", despite the rather forced festive atmosphere and the unctuously self-satisfied speeches, perhaps even because of them, grows into a mockery on Christmas festivities and provokes disgust, not laughter.

It is difficult to know where to place Die Unüberwindlichen or how to evaluate it. Certainly it is dated, the appeal is limited and it is not a pleasant play to read. At first it caused a sensation. Jhering records impressions of the first performance in Dresden, which was a success,²⁶ and of a performance in Berlin.²⁷ In both reviews the play is referred to as a comedy: "Der Sturm des Gelächters, der von den Rängen zum Parket herunter-fegte, der Orkan des Beifalls, der über alle Aktschlüsse niederging, waren Beweis genug: Das Publikum will nicht im beschaulichen Winkel bleiben. Es will teilnehmen an der Gestaltung der

25. A satirical reference to Camillo Castiglioni, Italian financier and profiteer in post-war inflationary period Vienna, who aided, and was abetted and blackmailed by, the press baron Bekessy.

26. Jhering, op. cit., pp. 410-412, review of 6 May 1929.

27. Ibid., pp. 439-441, review of 21 October 1929.

Zeit."²⁸ Certainly the virtuosity of the language and the caricature of officialdom would provoke laughter, but surely the criticism of people who were then alive coupled with extortion and mass-murder has little to do with the comic.

Kraus does not seem to consider the play as a comedy either. The motto is the sentence by Kierkegaard: "Ein einzelner Mensch kann einer Zeit nicht helfen oder sie retten, er kann nur ausdrücken, daß sie untergeht,"²⁹ and in his foreword Kraus makes it clear that his subject is corruption and decay. Moreover this Nachkriegsdrama is a continuation of Die letzten Tage der Menschheit; the one shows corruption in war where "Phrasen stehen auf zwei Beinen - Menschen behielten nur eines",³⁰ the other shows corruption in peacetime. In both cases Kraus produces at the most the macabre grin of the grotesque.

The two short one-act plays Traumstück (written Christmas 1922) and Traumtheater (1924) may be considered together as two uses of the dream-technique on the stage. An interesting ancestor of the two plays might be Strindberg's Ein Traumspiel (1902),³¹ but whereas the hazy atmosphere and the lack of logical development is taken further in Strindberg's play, Kraus's figures are quite distinct and consistent.

28. Jhering, op. cit., pp. 439-440.

29. Cf. ch. I, pp. 33-34 above.

30. Foreword to Die letzten Tage der Menschheit.

31. Leipzig, 1919 (Insel), tr. into German by Pauline Kläiber-Gottschau.

Both his plays centre round the poet, namely himself, both portray the poet's dream. Traumstück is a lyrical aftermath to Die letzten Tage der Menschheit: in a semi-somnambulant trance he sees phantoms appearing before him similar to those in the epilogue of his war-drama, the inevitable journalist, a tubercular child still suffering the effects of undernourishment, psycho-analysis. During this poetic trance we are given a sudden nightmare jerk with the words:

Dichter: Was klopft das Herz vor ungewisser Zeitung?

Geräusch: Ich bin ein Tropfen aus der Wasserleitung.

(Eine Zeitung erscheint.)

It is difficult to understand what Kraus intended with these two lines; there is an absurd contrast between subject and style form which reminds one of scenes from Nestroy's parody Tannhäuser,³² but the images chosen are a somewhat cheap insertion in an otherwise pleasing little work.

The one excuse could, of course, be that newspapers are themselves vulgar elements in our daily lives. The best part of the play is the Dream's speech to the poet (pp. 21-22) where Kraus touches upon the immortality of the satirical poet.³³

Whereas Traumstück is written entirely in verse, Traumtheater is a mixture of verse and prose. It is a somewhat shallow piece of writing, again representing a poet's dream, and again the poet's waking state at

32. Cf. ch. II, sect. 2, p. 89 above.

33. Cf. ch. I, p.18 above.

the beginning and end form a frame to the piece. The "dream" takes place alternately in the Garderobe, the actress's dressing-room and the wings, where first the poet, then an elderly admirer (Der alte Esel) and finally a young fan pay court to the actress. This is at the most a satirical comment in a pleasing form upon the false adulation lavished upon the acting profession, but it has neither the force nor the colour of the majority of Kraus's works.

Apart from Die letzten Tage der Menschheit Kraus's dramatic satire is not of lasting quality, and it is significant that I have been able to find no satisfactory secondary literature on them whatever. Literatur oder Man wird doch da sehn is merely a tasteless answer on a tasteless attack and its highly personal colour limits its interest. It is undoubtedly one of Kraus's weakest works. Sigismund von Radecki describes Die Unüberwindlichen as "sein großartiges Stück",³⁴ and it is true that the subject was at one time sensational, but I can see no positive dramatic message in it and it lacks that aesthetic quality which, even if it is expressed in the grotesque and macabre, is needed to lift a work of art out of a dated frame. Traumstück and Traumtheater are too slight and, in comparison with most of Kraus's work, too colourless to have much degree of permanency.

34. Op. cit., p. 39.

These faults are, however, more than made up for in the monumental work Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. While the length and the unrelenting horror of the subject would render a proper performance impossible, Kraus has imparted the atmosphere and the terror of that time to a generation which has survived even a Second World War. His scenes become actual to us, not because of their mere documentary value, but because we become aware of what untold suffering all wars must bring, and fifty years after Kraus wrote his scenes his words are as dramatically intense and as alive as on the day when they were still news.

3. Karl Kraus as a Nestroy Critic

Während draußen die Schuster für die idealsten Güter kämpften, hat er die Schneider Couplets singen lassen. Er hat die Welt nur in Kleinwerbetreibende und Hausherrn eingeteilt, in Heraufgekommene und Heruntergekommene, in vazierende Hausknechte und Partikuliers. ... Wir werden seiner Botschaft den Glauben nicht deshalb versagen, weil sie ein Couplet war. Nicht einmal deshalb, weil er in der Geschwindigkeit auch dem Hörer etwas zuliebe gesungen, weil er mit Verachtung der Bedürfnisse des Publikums sie befriedigt hat, um ungehindert empordenken zu können. Oder weil er sein Dynamit in Watte wickelte und seine Welt erst sprengte, nachdem er sie in der Überzeugung befestigt hatte, daß sie die beste der Welten sei, und weil er die Gemütlichkeit zuerst einseifte, wenn's ans Halsabschneiden ging, und sonst nicht weiter inkommodieren wollte.¹

The fiftieth anniversary of Nestroy's death, when Karl Kraus read to the Viennese public his Gedenkrede "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" for the first time, marked the turning-point in the Nestroy Renaissance, and it is no exaggeration to say that Kraus rediscovered Nestroy. Since Nestroy died on 25 May 1862, only a successful "Nestroy festival" in 1881, originally intended to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, and the first edition of his works in 1890-1891 by Vinzenz Chiavacci and Ludwig Ganghofer had been able to honour his memory, and though his Possen were performed at the beginning of this century, Nestroy was in bad repute.

1. "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", Die Fackel, No. 349, May 1912, pp. 3-5.

Karl Kraus had been familiar with the works of Nestroy from his youth, and the fruits of his reading and his thinking are scattered throughout Die Fackel.² "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", first held on 2 May 1912 in the Großer Musikvereinsaal in Vienna, then printed in the next number of Die Fackel as well as separately by the Fackel-Verlag, is the tribute for which Kraus is best known. It is also, through the richness and depth of the language and the sophisticated penetration of the content, a small work of art in itself. The essay opens, like most of Kraus's works, with criticism and reproach: he attacks the world for its incapacity to recognize and honour genius, he criticizes scholarship and scholars (that "Pesthauch der Intelligenz" [p. 37]) for their lack of understanding and penetration,³ and mankind for remaining as it was when Nestroy mocked at it. This double tone of eulogy, when speaking of Nestroy, and scathing criticism, when discussing contemporary scholars, critics, actors and theatres, pervades the whole of "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" and is echoed in most of the articles in Die Fackel which have anything to do with Nestroy. Criticism of the wrong-doer and the fool was one of the methods Kraus employed to defend those he admired, and this balancing of the black against the white necessarily led to unusually extreme opinions. In my opinion this is one of the weaknesses

2. See Appendix C, pp. 264-5 below.

3. See p. 153 below.

of "Nestroy und die Nachwelt": Nestroy is compared with and deemed superior to Heine, Hofmannsthal and Shaw, all of whom Kraus disliked; he is then compared with and considered as laudable as Shakespeare and Wedekind, whom Kraus admired. One's sense of proportion in reading these highly subjective views is certainly blurred, especially as Kraus presents his points with such energy that one is tempted to surrender. Wit Kraus rightly considers as the soul of Nestroy's art: "Sein Eigentlichstes war der Witz, der der Bühnenwirkung widerstrebt, dieser planen Einmaligkeit, der es genügen muß, das Stoffliche des Witzes an den Mann zu bringen, und die im rhythmischen Wurf das Ziel vor dem Gedanken trifft." (p. 6). Heine is described as the man "dessen Witz mit der Welt läuft, der sie dort traf, wo sie gekitzelt sein wollte" (p. 3), and both he and Shaw are connected with that false lyricism which Kraus so detested as "nur Jasagerei, schnöde Berufung der schon vorhandenen Welt. ...Die falsche Lyrik, welche die großen Dinge voraussetzt, und die falsche Ironie, welche die großen Dinge negiert, haben nur ein Gesicht, und von der einsamen Träne Heines zum gemeinsamen Lachen des Herrn Shaw führt nur eine Falte" (pp. 10-11). Hofmannsthal is described as the "zeitgenössische Umdichter...der ehrwürdigen Kadavern das Fell abzieht, um fragwürdige Leichen darin zu bestatten, und der sich in seinem ernstesten Berufe gegen einen Vergleich mit einem Possendichter wohl verwahren würde. Wie alle besseren Leser reduziert Herr v. Hofmannsthal das Werk auf den Stoff. Nestroy bezieht den Stoff von dort, wo^{er} kaum mehr als Stoff war, erfindet das Gefundene..." (p. 7). Wedekind, on the

other hand, is Nestroy's linguistic continuation ("sprachsatirischer Nachkommenschaft", p. 9), and Nestroy's "sprachverbuhlte Humor" (p. 7) is only comparable to Shakespeare's. There is always more than a grain of truth in what Kraus says, but he is too inclined to express extreme and startling views, which one knows are coloured by prejudice, without giving adequate and impartial reasoning, for us to take him at his word in every case.

Apart from this, "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" contains some excellent ideas expressed in Kraus's skilled and concentrated, if difficult, language. In fact, it was for his linguistic artistry and virtuosity that Kraus mainly extolled Nestroy, and "language as a vehicle for satire" may be considered as the foundation stone upon which this essay is constructed. For Kraus Nestroy was one of the few German writers, and the only comedy-writer, who exploited the possibilities of the German tongue: "Nestroy ist der erste deutsche Satiriker, in dem sich die Sprache Gedanken macht über die Dinge. Er erlöst die Sprache vom Starrkrampf, und sie wirft ihm für jede Redensart einen Gedanken ab" (p. 12). Besides "elasticizing" the language, Nestroy's wit is for Kraus the ideal expression and combination of ingenuity, humour,⁴ and, in the best sense of the word, pathos: "Nestroy's Witz hat immer die Gravität, die noch die besseren Zeiten des Pathos gekannt hat. Er rollt wie der jedes

4. See ch. III, sect. 2, pp. 125-126 above.

wahren Satirikers die lange Bahn entlang, dorthin wo die Musen stehen, um alle neun zu treffen. Der Raisonneur Nestroy ist der *raisonnierende Katalog aller Weltgefühle*" (pp. 11-12). This is a reiteration of Kraus's view that satire is not the exact opposite of poetry, as popular opinion erroneously believes it to be, but is even an important branch of poetry, sometimes verging on the sublime.⁵ Kraus considered the words of Titus Feuerfuchs in *Der Talisman*: "Nein, er betreibt ein stilles, abgeschiedenes Geschäft, bei dem die Ruhe das einzige Geschäft ist; er liegt von höherer Macht gefesselt, und doch ist er frei und unabhängig, denn er ist der Verweser seiner selbst - er ist tot" (II, 17)^{5a} to incorporate the best of Nestroy's imagination, linguistic precision and pathos.

Nestroy is of equal value for Kraus for the ethical content of his works. The fact that Nestroy was a "Spaßmacher" (p. 4) whose message was a couplet (p. 4) is not to his disadvantage in the least, and the fact that he borrowed the material for his plays is irrelevant. The originality of his plays lies in the expression and not the material: "Er nahm die Schablone, die als Schablone geboren war, um seinen Inhalt zu verstecken, der nicht Schablone werden konnte" (p. 5). Moreover, Nestroy's "content" did not limit itself to the mere plot, but reached only full expression on the stage. Kraus applies to Nestroy the same phrase he used for his own writings, that his plays are "geschriebene

5. See ch. I, p. 7 above.

5a. See p. 254a below.

Schauspielkunst".⁶ In this connection Kraus turns to Nestroy the actor, and states quite clearly that without him his plays cannot be the same: "Mit Nestroys Leib mußte die Theaterform seines Geistes absterben, und die Schablone seiner Beweglichkeit, die wir noch da und dort in virtuoser Haltung auftauchen sehen, ist ein angemessenes Kostüm. In seinen Possen bleibt die Hauptrolle unbesetzt, solange nicht dem Adepten seiner Schminke auch das Erbe seines satirischen Geistes zufällt" (p. 8).

The reasons for Kraus's admiration for Nestroy clearly emerge from "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", apart from those he defines himself elsewhere and which have here been discussed. Kraus saw in the Fossendichter the representative of the art of the Vormärz and that old Vienna when "das Leben adelig war und die Kunst von guten Eltern, da selbst der Schwachsinn noch Grazie und die Lumperei Stil hatte";⁷ moreover he saw in Nestroy the realisation of some of his own ideals. In this sense Nestroy was for him the mirror of part of his own self, especially in the virtuosity and plasticity of language. For Kraus the word had personal life, and where it had long since perished in the clichés of the journalists of his time, with Nestroy it was abounding in vigour. Furthermore Nestroy incorporated within the limits of his material that polarity of the satirist which lies between lyricism and mockery. Again, Nestroy

6. See ch. IV, sect. 2, p. 207 below.

7. Die Fackel, No. 239, December 1907, p. 40. In ~~Übertragung der~~ "Eine ~~historische~~ ~~theatergeschichtliche~~ Musik- und Theaterausstellung".

represented for Kraus something positive, a yard-stick against which he could measure the minuteness of those people for whom he found only negative criticism, the actors, the journalists, the scholars of his time.

These assertions are confirmed when we study the other articles on Nestroy in Die Fackel. One of Kraus's favourite satirical pastimes was holding contemporary theatres and actors up to ridicule. He expresses his views in two pungent aphorisms on the subject: "Die neue Schauspielkunst: Dilettanten ohne Lampenfieber,"⁸ and "Früher waren die Dekorationen von Pappe und die Schauspieler echt. Jetzt sind die Dekorationen über jeden Zweifel erhaben und die Schauspieler von Pappe."⁹ Kraus's opinions on the actors of his time were as always extreme, and especially those performing in Nestroy plays were exposed to the lash of his tongue. An actor he admired was the Volksschauspieler Alexander Girardi (1850-1918), whom Kraus calls in "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" the "Ursprung und Vollendung eines volkstümlichen Typus".^(p.8) Even Girardi was not the model portrayer of the Nestroy rôles, however, and Kraus considered the only perfect part for Girardi in a Nestroy play to be that of Sebastian Faden in Die beiden Nachtwandler: "...die einzige Girardi-Rolle, die Nestroy geschrieben hat und die eine gemeine und leere, also keineswegs

8. Beim Wort genommen, p. 100.

9. Ibid., p. 103.

vormärzliche Epoche ihm nicht zu spielen erlaubt."¹⁰ Apart from Girardi Kraus had a poor opinion of most of the actors of his time, including the popular Burgschauspieler Josef Kainz (1858-1910), who also took to playing rôles from the old popular theatre. Kraus used to compare Kainz unfavourably with Girardi,¹¹ and in a highly amusing sarcastic article entitled "Nestroy-Kenner" in which he discussed bad reviews of a bad "ladies only" production of Lumpazivagabundus, Kraus makes short work of reviewers, ladies and performance alike, adding a postscript which clearly indicates his view of Kainz's acting: "Als Kainz den Zwirn spielte, mußte sich Nestroy im Grab umdrehen. Nun darf er diese Aufgabe beruhigt dem armen Kainz überlassen."¹²

Kraus expresses his disgust at the Nestroy performances in general even more openly. In the article "Nestroy und das Burgtheater", for

10. Die Fackel, No. 445, January 1917, p. 95. Jhering gives the following description of Girardi's acting: "Humor und Trauer, Spaß und Schmerz gingen in eine einheitliche, hundert Variationen zugängliche Tonmelodie ein, die sich mit ihren subtilsten Schattierungen bis zur höchsten Galerie übertrug." (Vol. 3, p. 258, from "Der Fall Niese", 3 May 1932, in which Girardi is compared with Hansi Niese, the bad Viennese actress, who played the part of Knieriem in the performance of Lumpazivagabundus mentioned above). And again: "So einfach und graziös und schlicht und delikat sang nur einer: Alexander Girardi" (Vol. 3, p. 371, from "Der Kongress tanzt", 24 October 1931). Girardi's most celebrated part was Valentin in Raimund's Der Verschwender.

11. See, for example, "Girardi und Kainz", Die Fackel, No. 254, May 1908, pp. 4-6. Kainz is described as "einen der unglücklichsten Schauspieler" (p. 4), though he was generally well-known and respected for the variety of parts he played, both tragic and comic, and for the electrifying effect of his speech. There is a bust of him in the Burgtheater.

12. Die Fackel, No. 632, October 1923, p. 131.

example, Kraus talks of the "Untalent und dickster Humorlosigkeit" of a production of Lumpazivagabundus, remarking cryptically that he managed "mich so weit zu beherrschen, daß ich bloß in jeden sich irgendwann regenden Applaus hineingezischt habe".¹³ This particular article contains especially severe criticism of the Burgtheater. Similarly in the article "Von Nestroy-Bühnen" he attacks bad reviews of a bad garbling of Nestroy in the Theater in der Josefstadt.¹⁴ Just as harshly does he treat the Viennese themselves for their neglect and misunderstanding of Nestroy: the reputation of Nestroy in Vienna at the time, as Kraus saw it, is depicted vividly and in detail in a comment on the exhibition "Wien und die Wiener" of 1928. This article, because of its contemporary significance, is worth quoting extensively:

Solange die Ausstellung "Wien und die Wiener" bloß die Entwicklung der Wiener Presse und nicht auch die durch sie bedingte Rückentwicklung der künstlerischen Empfänglichkeit zur Anschauung bringt, ist ihr Bild unvollständig. Es fehlen Dokumente über die Stellung der Wiener zu ihrem größten Dichter. Diese Dokumente hätten zu betreffen: die Tatsache, daß der Versuch, ihm endlich ein Monument in Wien zu setzen, eine Komiteeangelegenheit bleibt,¹⁵ die sich keiner offiziellen und publizistischen Förderung erfreuen darf; die völlige Nichtbeachtung des eigentlichen Denkmals, das er ~~in~~ sich selbst und ihm in seinem Sinne ein opfermutiger Verlag in der großen historisch-kritischen Gesamtausgabe¹⁶ errichtet hat: auch durch

13. Die Fackel, No. 676, January 1925, pp. 3-4.

14. Die Fackel, No. 717, March 1926, pp. 40-42.

15. In 1929 - the following year - Oskar Tiede's statue of Nestroy was erected in front of the Carltheater. It shows Nestroy in the part of Blasius Rohr in Glück, Mißbrauch und Rückkehr. After the destruction of the Carltheater it was handed over to the Reinhardt-Seminar.

16. Clearly the (now standard) Rommel-Brukner 15-vol. edition. The publishing firm referred to must be the Schroll-Verlag; the edition was completed in 1930.

solche Wiener, die Bücher kaufen und lesen; das geringe Interesse für die Bearbeitungen, denen selbst die Bestimmung des Ertrages für wohltätige Zwecke zu keiner zweiten Auflage verhelfen konnte; die Sympathie des Publikums für die Veranstaltungen Nestroys durch das Burgtheater; die geringe Teilnahme an den Darbietungen des Theaters der Dichtung,¹⁷ durch die seiner Geistesgestalt die Ehre wird, die ihr gebührt; der Umstand, daß es nötig ist, für eines der anmutigsten Humorwerke der deutschen Sprache zu werben, um mit seinen Hörern den kleinsten Saal zu füllen, und daß er voraussichtlich nicht gelingen wird.¹⁸

Kraus wrote these words sixteen years after he read "Nestroy und die Nachwelt"; certainly he may be lamenting more than is strictly necessary, for his Nestroy readings were popular and well-attended, but this article gives us some impression of the attitudes and circumstances which Kraus was fighting against in the Vienna of his time.

If Kraus tears to shreds the contemporary actors and performances, he also lashes out at the scholars and historians. In an aphorism he declared: "Ein Hausknecht bei Nestroy wird mit der Last des Lebens fertig und wirft die Langeweile zur Tür hinaus. Er ist handfester als ein Professor der Philosophie."¹⁹ If Kraus reproached actors for their lack of talent, critics for their lack of knowledge and their inability to use language, and the general public for their lack of interest, he blamed the scholars for their tediousness and their stupidity. In

17. See ch. IV, sect. 2, p. 208 below.

18. Die Fackel, No. 781, June 1928, p. 48.

19. Beim Wort genommen, p. 128. Cf. ch. III, sect. 1, p. 101 above.

"Nestroy und die Nachwelt" he gives them the delightful name of "Wissenschaftlhuber",²⁰ (p. 17) and at one point he states quite bluntly that the German literary historians of the time are "die dümsten Menschen der Erde".²¹ One of these unfortunate gentlemen was Moritz Necker, the first biographer of Nestroy. His work, described as a "biographisch-kritische Skizze" was published in the twelfth volume of the 1891 Chiavacci-Ganghofer edition of Nestroy's works.²² Necker may therefore be considered as a pioneer in Nestroy research, despite the inaccuracies of his work. In the article "Nestroy-Feier"²³ of 1912 Kraus pours scorn upon Necker, quoting his mistakes; for example, according to Necker Nestroy was a sober realist and a friend of enlightenment, of public opinion and progress, whereas Kraus maintains that we have no evidence for this.²⁴ Kraus also quotes Necker's remark: "Unsere Darstellung wird hinlänglich Gelegenheit haben, zu zeigen, daß Nestroy sittlicher Ernst und edles künstlerisches Streben keineswegs mangelten,"²⁵ though the material examined in Chapter II, Section 1 above would certainly not seem to support this. Kraus also reproduces one of Necker's false

20. Wissenschaftlhuber: the effect lies in the familiarizing South German diminutive -l (cf. Bildl), plus a very common and bourgeois South German proper name.

21. Die Fackel, No. 405, February 1915, p. 3.

22. Pp. 91-128.

23. Die Fackel, No. 351, June 1912, pp. 28-47.

24. Ibid., p. 30.

25. Ibid., p. 29.

quotations: "Richard Wagner sprach in seiner Entrüstung über Nestroys Parodien das böse Wort: 'Wo Nestroy nur hinriecht, dort stinkt es schon.'" Kraus here corrects Necker, maintaining: "Indes, auch das weiß er nicht, denn das Wort ist von Hebbel, wird nur von Wagner mitgeteilt und lautet anders: 'Der verstorbene Hebbel bezeichnete mir einmal im Gespräche die eigentliche Gemeinheit des Wiener Komikers Nestroy damit, daß eine Rose, wenn dieser daran gerochen haben würde, jedenfalls stinken müßte.'"²⁶ It was certainly laudable of Kraus to point out and correct such errors, though one must not forget that Necker's work was a pioneer effort and he had not the material to work on which scholars have nowadays. As a pioneer he is considerably underrated and Kraus frequently adopts a tone which is perhaps too scathing.

Another of the scholars he attacked was the historian Friedjung.²⁷ In one article in Die Fackel Kraus sarcastically discusses a talk given by Friedjung on Nestroy: "Herr Friedjung, der immer so deutlich spricht, daß seine Flattheit noch in der letzten Bank verständlich ist, gibt mit sonorer Stimme den Inhalt der Freiheit in Krähwinkel."²⁸ Kraus then attacks Friedjung for describing Nestroy's satire as "einen Spaß", for,

26. Die Fackel, No. 351, June 1912, p. 31.

27. Heinrich Friedjung (1851-1920) was of Jewish descent. He concentrated on German national history. Among his works is Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus 1884-1914. He is depicted satirically in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (I, 6).

28. No. 343, March 1912, p. 30.

he maintains, the play is a reflection of Nestroy's constant fight with the police - expressed earlier in innumerable extempores - and shows Nestroy's rebellious nature. Freiheit in Krähwinkel was the one Nestroy play which the censors did not have the chance to touch, and here Kraus is right, for no other play is so extreme in content and expression among all Nestroy's works.²⁹ If he was to satisfy the censorship he had to content himself with veiling his remarks (as Kraus remarks: "sein Dynamit in Watte wickelte")³⁰ or with venting his feelings in daring extempores. Bearing in mind the political background of the time, Freiheit in Krähwinkel is the most biting play Nestroy wrote. In the next number of Die Fackel Kraus again attacks Friedjung, this time mocking him, not only for his misunderstanding of Nestroy, but also for quoting a line from the political comedy Lady und Schneider which did not even exist.³¹ In commending Kraus for his much-needed work in correcting the errors and misunderstandings of Nestroy which entirely distorted Nestroy's reputation in the early years of this century, one might point out that not even Kraus himself was completely infallible.³²

The more venomous his criticism of the Nestroy garblers, the more ardently he praises Nestroy, whom he describes as "den tiefsten satirischen Denker, den die Deutschen nach Lichtenberg gehabt haben", beside

29. See ch. II, sect. 1, pp. 44-47 above.

30. "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", p. 5. Cf. p. 143 above.

31. No. 345, March 1912, p. 40.

32. Cf. ch. IV, sect. 2, p. 226, fn. 27 below.

whom the contemporary playwright Bernhard Buchbinder³³ was a mere "szenischen Handlungsgehilfen" - and "in seiner Nähe den Namen Heine zu nennen, empfinde ich als Blasphemie. ...Wie hat dieser außerordentliche Geist auf der Bühne geschaltet? Er stellte sich an die Rampe einer gleichgültigen französischen Possenhandlung und ließ an ihr seine Lichter aufflammen. ...Philosophischer Witz, aphoristisch erhöhter Humor - ich kann mir nicht denken, daß selbst das aufnahmefähigere Publikum des Schauspielers Nestroy auf der Höhe gestanden hat, die von einem Erfassen solcher Geistigkeit vorausgesetzt wird."³⁴ If the satirist Kraus can tear to shreds, the admirer Kraus can enthuse to the point of ecstasy.

Comments on Nestroy's plays, the Nestroy productions of the time and current criticisms are scattered throughout Die Fackel. However, there do appear longer articles devoted to Nestroy, and while they have been referred to above as the relevant topic arose, it would be worth while recapitulating their titles, dates and content, thus giving a clear impression of Kraus's main strategic tactics in his battle for Nestroy's immortality. The first and most important tribute was "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" in May 1912. In the following number of Die Fackel, No. 351 of 28 June 1912, appeared his comment on the Nestroy celebrations, "Nestroy-Feier" (pp. 26-47). This includes his attack on Moritz Necker

33. See ch. III, sect. 1, p. 101 fn. 12 above.

34. Die Fackel, No. 254, May 1908, p. 6. Note that these words were written before 1912 and "Nestroy und die Nachwelt".

and a general discussion of how Nestroy is misunderstood by critics, press and producers alike. He then prints several bad press reviews of his Nestroy readings, which, while they acknowledge the high quality of Kraus's reading powers, are written in precisely that bombastic and meaningless journalese jargon which Kraus spent a lifetime fighting.³⁵ The next article of outstanding importance is the collection of reviews by Bernhard Gutt of Nestroy's performances in Prague in 1844. These were sent to Kraus by Paul Trabesinger, a Prague reader of Die Fackel, and in them we have the most penetrating, vivid and finely drawn picture of Nestroy's acting technique which any contemporary has offered us.³⁶ Their discovery and publication marked a definite step forward in Nestroy research. Under the title "Ein zeitgenössischer Kritiker Nestroys", they appear in No. 657 of Die Fackel in August 1924 (pp. 100-120). "Nestroy und das Burgtheater", a long attack on the Burgtheater Nestroy-interpretations of Kraus's time, then appeared in January 1925, in No. 676 of Die Fackel (pp. 1-40). Finally, "Von Nestroy-Bühnen" (Die Fackel, No. 717, March 1926, pp. 40-42) may be mentioned as a further attack on the theatres and critics prone to garbling Nestroy's works. For Kraus Die Fackel was the battlefield on which he waged war against stupidity, ignorance and error in defence of the "greatest German satirist since Lichtenberg".

35. These reviews are reproduced in part in ch. IV, sect. 2, pp. 212-213 below.

36. See. ch. IV, sect. 1, pp. ~~212-213~~¹⁷⁶⁻¹⁸⁴ below.

Kraus was just as active in examining Nestroy's texts as he was in defending them, and he even went so far as to adapt two of Nestroy's more obscure plays, Der konfuse Zauberer oder Treue und Flatterhaftigkeit and Die beiden Nachtwandler oder Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige. They are both early plays, the one being written in 1832, the other in 1836.

In the case of Der konfuse Zauberer the "adaptation" merely involved fairly superficial textual changes and insertions from Nestroy's earlier Zauberspiel of 1829, Der Tod am Hochzeitstage oder Man, Frau, Kind, and the structure was hardly affected. Apart from changes made to Schmafu's couplet (II,3) and the quodlibet between Schmafu and Konfusius (II,4), which is considerably shortened, the real change begins in Act III, Scene 8. Kraus has namely combined III,8 with the monologue of III,9 to form a single scene, then he divides Nestroy's III,9-12 so that they become III,8-16. Here begins the major insertion from Der Tod am Hochzeitstage: with the stage direction "Verwandlung: Einfaches, unordentliches Zimmer" at the beginning of Scene 11 and the introduction of Madame Comifo, Amalie's mother, a really new element is introduced, though both Scene 10 and Scene 11 are inserted. The singing teacher, Madame Klang (who appears in IV,1), is likewise added. He has then divided Nestroy's last act, Act III, into two separate acts, the break coming after Scene 14. Scene 15 is then cut and instead there is a conversation between Peppi and Madame Klang. Nestroy's II,18 (Kraus's IV,4) has been altered

and some passages have been inserted. Following this, Nestroy's III, 20-25 and Kraus's parallel IV, 6-11 are, except for three minor alterations, almost identical. One of these changes, however, deserves mention: Kraus cuts Nestroy's chorus in Act III, Scene 24:

Es siegte die Treue,
Bald kehrt er zurück...

and inserts instead the first stanza of the original score:

☐: Seht, aus himmlischer Ferne
Leuchten freundliche Sterne,
☐: strahlen mit heiterem Blick
Euch Freude und Wonne und Glück. :/ :/

The changes made are so slight that one wonders if the adaptation was really worth while. However, when Kraus gave the first reading of his version of Der konfuse Zauberer in the Kleiner Musikvereinsaal on 13 January 1925³⁷ he wrote an essay in the programme explaining why he had made the above changes:

Dadurch ist es, freilich mit einer Teilung in vier statt drei Akte, ermöglicht worden, die Episoden der Familie des Kunstreiters Comifo ... in ihrer ganzen Kostbarkeit eines gewendeten Schiller- und Clavigo-Pathos zu erhalten. ...Das Quodlibet-Duett wurde textlich nur zum Teil verwendet und da es in der Partitur bloß als Fragment vorkommt, nach Angabe des Vortragenden musikalisch fortgesetzt, dem im Übrigen - vor allem an dem merkwürdigen Kuplet des Schmafu - erfüllt wurde, daß sie fast Ton für Ton mit der eigenen akustischen Vorstellung dieser versunkenen Welt der Liebenswürdigkeit übereinstimmt. Jenes Kuplet ist mit Zusatzstrophen versehen worden, die wie immer bloß der eigenen hörenden und lesenden Publizität des Verfassers

37. Kraus gave a second reading in the Mittlerer Konzerthausaal on 8 February 1925.

vorbehalten sind und, als eine wenngleich stilgerechte Veränderung der zensurgedrungenen unblutigeren Aktualität der Nestroywelt, in einer Ausgabe der Bearbeitung höchstens als deren Anhang Platz finden dürften, wie sie ja auch kaum dem Mund eines Schauspielers anvertraut werden könnten.³⁸

The adaptation of Die beiden Nachtwandler, which Kraus completed in 1920, five years before he worked on Der konfuse Zauberer, contains far more radical alterations. The most important change is the end of the play itself. Kraus omits all Nestroy's scenes after Faden's disgrace in Act II, Scene 20. This means that all the scenes outside Frau Schnittling's cottage, including the one where Fabian Strick also sleep-walks, are cut. It also means that there is only one sleep-walker in the play, and that Kraus has therefore had to use Nestroy's sub-title, "Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige", as his main title. In order to give the play the necessary happy ending, Kraus has added a final scene (Scene 18) in his version, still in the palace; this consists of the first short speeches in Nestroy's II,26 (that is, the first eight lines) plus Howart's statement from II,28: "Du bist als Nachtwandler zufällig mein Retter geworden, dafür gebe ich dir nun das Häuschen wieder, was du heute übermütig schon verschmäht" adapted into "Er soll das Häuschen haben, das er heute so übermütig verschmäht hat." Kraus has then added a final

38. The whole of this essay is reprinted in the Lanyi edition of Kraus's adaptation (Vienna, 1925) as a Nachwort, pp. I-IV. The edition also contains the exact textual alterations and references to insertions from Der Tod am Hochzeitstage (Schroll).

comment by Wathfield: "Hoffentlich genügt's ihm!" He has omitted Wathfield's offer of an additional "kleines Kapital" which Nestroy had included.

This alteration has involved a few further minor changes: it means that Geyer's attempt to arrest Howart and Wathfield (II,26) is omitted, as well as the short musical finale. Kraus did not seem able to sacrifice the sentence: "Wir legen uns jetzt schlafen, morgen früh fangen wir zum arbeiten an, und wenn wir einen Strick fertig haben, so hängen wir uns alle zwei dran auf" (II,23) and he has inserted it into I,16 in the following form: "Faden: Weißt was, morgen fangen wir zu arbeiten an, und wenn wir einen Strick fertig haben, so hängen wir uns alle zwei dran auf." With Nestroy the despair comes after Faden's fall, with Kraus after the first sleep-walking and after Babette has left him. The last main alteration does not come from the cut in the second act; Kraus has added to Faden's short monologue in I,26 (Kraus's I,25) the Auftrittslied of the clerk Federl from Act I, Scene 3 of Die Papiere des Teufels, "Wem a traurige Wirklichkeit nur is beschert." Apart from this the dialogue and songs have generally been shortened.

In the case of Die beiden Nachtwandler Kraus's adaptation is more justified. Most of the dialogue which he has cut can be dispensed with without any great loss, and the insertion of Federl's song is a definite asset, for it also takes the place of several smaller and less interesting couplets (for Strick and Hannerl) and a trio and quodlibet which Kraus

has shortened or omitted entirely. In his introduction Kraus justifies his insertion as follows: "Statt der Gesänge des Strick, der Hannerl etc. hat ein Lied, das in der Posse Papiere des Teufels der Schreiber Federl singt und das freilich auch als Gedicht und Gedanke - es weist der Armut das Glück der Vorstellung zu - von einer rührenden Schönheit ist, einen Platz gefunden, der ihm die Handlung wie der Charakter des Faden mühelos zu gewähren schien."³⁹ This may be true, but the fact remains that even with its new place in Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige Federl's song is not guaranteed an escape from oblivion, for Kraus's adaptation has not survived his death in public popularity. Kraus also described Nestroy's final scenes as superfluous and the sleep-walking of Fabian Strick as a "rein possenhafter Einfall"; it is certainly true that the sudden conversion of Strick into a sleep-walker at the very end of the play does have a farcical effect, and that the introduction of a completely new element in the last few scenes is a flaw in dramatic construction, unless it is essential for the dramatic effect. This is not the case here, and the omission of the episode is no loss. On the other hand, however, Kraus's play falls extraordinarily flat: after the grand dramatic effect of Howart's speech "Übermütiger Tor...", the music and the movement of the servants who are disguised as Furies, one either has to complete the effect and end the play on the

39. Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige (Vienna, 1920), p. 5.

climax of resounding chords - or else the audience must be given time to accustom itself again to the new atmosphere and circumstances. This is the justification of Nestroy's scenes 21 to 28. Kraus's final scene in the palace falls between the two stools of the short dramatic close and the need for a happy ending, and forms a distinct anticlimax. Kraus uses such short scenes to great effect in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, but the treatment, atmosphere and construction of his play is totally different from that of Nestroy's Posse.

Kraus described his adaptation as a "Säuberung", and apart from the single objection just raised, his work in both plays is reasonably justified and, to a limited extent, an improvement. However, especially in the case of Der konfuse Zauberer, the alterations are not so extensive that they make much difference. Kraus has rather shortened the texts, welded elements from other Nestroy plays into them and thus sought to make them more suitable for reading aloud. Unfortunately, however, the final comment must be that in doing so he has by no means saved them from neglect: since Kraus's death both the originals and the adaptations have remained a concern of Kraus and Nestroy students only. The Nestroy-loving public is hardly aware of their existence.

Kraus valued Die beiden Nachtwandler especially. He describes the work as "eines der wertvollsten und verschollensten Nestroy-Texte",⁴⁰

40. Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige, p. 6.

and elsewhere remarks: "Die Wiener Volksbühne hat kein Drama, das sich dieser Posse vergleichen könnte. Sie ist deshalb seit 1836 - mit Ausnahme der Darstellung im Carltheater-Zyklus von 1881 - nicht aufgeführt worden."⁴¹ In the same article Kraus talks of the "menschlichen Niedrigkeiten" he sees in the love episodes, comparing the climax, the grandiose banquet-scene, to that in Shakespeare's Timon of Athens. Elsewhere, with reference to Die beiden Nachtwandler, Kraus writes on the special type of humour he sees in Nestroy's works.⁴² It was in order to preserve these qualities that Kraus undertook his adaptation in 1920. The work was not only read by Kraus himself, but in No. 864 of Die Fackel⁴³ we read of the first performance of Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige as a radio play (Radio Wien) on 4 October 1931. Karl Kraus directed the production and read the part of Sebastian Faden, eleven years after the completion of the adaptation, and nearly a century after the first performance of the original work.

"Während draußen die Schuster für die idealsten Güter kämpften, hat er die Schneider Couplets singen lassen."⁴³ Among these "idealsten

41. Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige, p. 4. Also in Die Fackel, No. 445, January 1917, p. 95, therefore written before the adaptation.

42. Die Fackel, No. 405, February 1915, pp. 3-4. See ch. III, sect. 2, p. 125 above.

43. "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", p. 3. See p. 143 above.

Güter" for which Nestroy and his contemporaries were fighting was the freedom of the press. Several decades later Karl Kraus fought with equal animosity and determination against the liberties which the men of the press took with their freedom. Karl Kraus avenged Nestroy to a large extent by attacking the results of a privilege for which Nestroy himself had fought. This time, however, the journalists were not entirely at fault and Kraus's work was not entirely critical and destructive.

We must pay a tribute to Kraus for the key-part he played in the rediscovery of Nestroy. Not only did he show the inherent value of Nestroy's works by reading them aloud to the public, but he also shed further light on Nestroy's art by understanding the essence of that art in a world where it had been misunderstood and neglected. His "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" is one of the most finely expressed and penetrating tributes to Nestroy which has been paid. If Kraus is somewhat extreme in his admiration and unconventional in the comparisons which he draws between Nestroy and other writers, we may forgive him in so far as any battle for a hero's fame demands unlimited ardour. The work which Kraus began as a critic needed to be brought to a consummation by a detailed revision of Nestroy's works. This was effected by Otto Rommel and Fritz Brukner in their fifteen-volume edition, the "historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe" of Nestroy's plays. Kraus's work also consisted in attacking all those, whether they were actors, critics, scholars or theatre directors, who in his opinion ruined and garbled Nestroy's plays

through ignorance, stupidity or lack of talent; and finally he showed us in his own work - in the articles he wrote on Nestroy, the readings he gave of Nestroy and in his own adaptations of Nestroy -- how he thought Vienna's satirist should be treated, interpreted and understood.

CHAPTER IV

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IV. SATIRE IN TONE, MIME AND GESTURE

1. The Actor Johann Nestroy

In Österreich werden wenig große Stücke geschrieben, und das kommt nicht daher, daß Österreichs Klima dem Theater ungünstig wäre, im Gegenteil: der Schauspieler, das Spielen ist hier besonders wichtig. Man schreibt keine großen, sondern brauchbare Stücke. Man schreibt vor allem Rollen.

In der großen Auseinandersetzung zwischen Werk und Wiedergabe, zwischen Was und Wie, dominiert in Österreich das Wie. Die Interpreten sind nicht Diener des Werks, das Werk dient vielmehr ihnen als Anlaß, oft nur als Vorwand, sich zu präsentieren. Anderswo werden Kunstwerke produziert und von den Interpreten reproduziert, ¹ In Österreich produzieren sich vor allem die Interpreten.

These lines do not only point out a specific characteristic of the Austrian creative mind, but they also sum up Nestroy's particular importance both as writer and actor. His life was an ironic series of paradoxes: as a young man originally destined for the bar, then induced by fortune to become an actor rather than a singer, but somehow managing to combine the two, he is, despite everything, best known nowadays for the plays which he wrote simply in order to provide himself and his company with something to perform. In this point the life of Karl Kraus shows a

1. Hans Weigel, "Johann Nestroy oder die Flucht in die Vorstadt", in Flucht vor der Größe, Beiträge zur Erkenntnis und Selbsterkenntnis Österreichs (Vienna, 1960), p. 75.

curious parallel. Kraus wanted in his youth to be an actor, was compelled to abandon the idea² and took to writing; like Nestroy he managed to combine the two arts, not by acting as such, but by reading aloud in public from his own works and from those of other writers, including Shakespeare, Raimund and - Nestroy. In the following section the actor Nestroy and the "actor"-interpreter Karl Kraus will be discussed; how they as interpreters could express or even create satire. The attempt to recreate how an actor fascinated his audiences, to demonstrate in which particular factor his greatness lay, is a stimulating if exasperating occupation. For acting is an essentially ephemeral art, and before the time of films and tape-recorders this was especially true. Without the actual presence of the actor, the audience, the theatre and the special atmosphere created by each individual performance, we can gain little more than a vague idea of how he acted. In Nestroy's case we must rely on contemporary reports, theatre reviews, as well as pictures, which naturally tended to reflect the personal impression of the artist concerned and are thus unreliable sources for research. With Karl Kraus we are slightly more fortunate. Kraus has been recorded on gramophone records and a film strip with sound track was made of his readings,³ though both sound recording and filming were then in their infancy, photographs are in existence and friends and acquaintances of Kraus are

2. See ch. IV, sect. 2, p. 207 below.

3. See ch. IV, sect. 2, pp. 209, fn.6 and 215, fn.13 below.

still alive to give first-hand descriptions. All the same the picture is incomplete and is dependent on subjective reactions and tastes - and to a certain extent on our imagination.

What was the attitude of the Vienna of Nestroy's time to the theatre - meaning, of course, not dramatic literature but the full-blooded acting on the stage itself? Friedrich Schlögl wrote in 1883: "Wir klagen heute über mangelnden Theaterbesuch, über Apathie des Publikums gegenüber den Volksbühnen - damals gab es beinahe in jeder Familie einen eingefleischten Theater-Narren, wofür freilich die Entschuldigung gelten muß, daß für die lebenslustige und etwas heißblütige Race des Wienertums, bei dem Darniederlegen alles politischen und geistigen Lebens, das Theater eben der einzige Zufluchtsort für Zerstreuung und Anregung war."⁴ This theatre was to a large extent the Viennese popular comedy, brought to a climax by Raimund, though the Italian opera seria was equally important in Vienna's cultural life. In his autobiography Friedrich Uhl describes the scene: "Schauspiel und Oper standen in Wien zu gleicher Zeit in voller Blüte. Man spielte am besten und sang am schönsten in Wien in den Jahren vor 1848; was man darstellte, was man vortrug, war den Hörern fast Nebensache. So ist es immer in Zeiten des Niederganges des öffentlichen Geistes gewesen; da

4. Vom Wiener Volkstheater: Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen (Vienna and Teschen, 1884), p. 5. This work first appeared as a suite of feuilletons in the Deutsche Zeitung in the summer of 1883. Schlögl (1821-1892) was a writer and Feuilletonist known especially for his portrayals of Viennese life.

hatten die reproduzierenden Künstler ihre schönsten Tage. Schauspieler und Sänger schritten einher, wie Könige dieser Welt es nicht tun." ⁵

Elsewhere Uhl depicts the contrast between the Italian opera, the prerogative of fashionable social circles, and the Volksbühne: "Einen größeren Kontrast als jenen, der während der italienischen Saison in Wien zwischen dem Opernhause und der Bühne in der Leopoldstadt bestand, kann man sich nicht vorstellen. Dort das Ausländische, hier das örtlich Städtische, dort die dem Wohlklang der Stimme, der italienischen Melodie und der Unnatur des damaligen musikalischen Dramas ausschließlich geweihten Stätte, hier in dem alten, finsternen, unbequemen Hause der wienerische Humor und Scherz, der in gerader Linie von der improvisierten Komödie und dem Hanswurst abstammte. ...Die Volksbühne hielt der italienischen Oper den Spiegel vor und zeigte im Zerrbilde die Einseitigkeit und Manieriertheit der welschen Oper in Wort, Gesang und Spiel." ⁶

This, then, was the background against which Nestroy lived and worked, a time when the populace wasted little attention on the genre of what they were offered in the theatre as long as they were diverted, a time when actors were kings, a period of contrast between the sensuous Italian opera and the full-blooded comedy of Vienna - the end, one must

5. Aus meinem Leben (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1908), p. 52. Uhl (1825-1906), the father-in-law of August Strindberg, was a writer and critic. He was for a long time chief editor of the Wiener Zeitung and wrote for Der Botschafter on Nestroy. See p. 202 below.

6. Uhl, op. cit., p. 106.

not forget, of a tradition. But this is going a step too far. In his youth Nestroy did not entertain the thought of satirical acting. In the contrasting world of serious opera and popular comedy, he hankered after the former. Nestroy possessed an excellent bass voice and made his stage début at the age of twenty-one as Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte. After that his engagements included acting parts, both serious and comic, as well as major parts in serious opera, such as Pizarro and Fernando in Fidelio, Figaro in Il Barbieri di Sevilla and Le Nozze di Figaro, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte, Don Giovanni, and Kaspar in Der Freischütz. His parts in serious drama included Gesler in Wilhelm Tell, Burleigh and Paulet in Maria Stuart, Lionel in Die Jungfrau von Orleans, the ghost in Hamlet, the porter in Macbeth, Just in Minna von Barnhelm and Gottschalk in Das Käthchen von Heilbronn. In fact, before becoming finally established in Vienna he had played or sung no less than 450 parts. Nestroy was also given comic parts in the non-classical repertoire. One of these was the part of Sansquartier in the Berlin actor Louis Angely's adaptation of a French vaudeville, Sieben Mädchen in Uniform. This part he created on 28 December 1827, when he was playing in Graz under the director Stöger.⁷ The Sansquartier of Angely's play was colourless and uninteresting, and Schlögl recounts an entertaining anecdote which shows Nestroy's reluctance to accept comic rôles:

7. Pseudonym for Johann August Althaller (1791-1865). At this time he directed the theatres both in Graz and Preßburg.

Mein lieber Freund Walter, der in seiner Jugend mit Nestroy in Lemberg, Preßburg und Graz als Schauspieler engagiert war, und der seine letzten Tage als Garderobe-Inspector im Wiedner Theater beschloß, schilderte mir wiederholt das "komische Ereignis" in seiner drastisch eintönigen Weise. Nestroy kam nämlich eines Vormittags zu Walter aufs Zimmer, warf ein Manuskript wütend auf den Tisch und rief: "Jetzt is's nimmer zum Aushalten, was der Direktor mit mir treibt." - "Was ist geschehen?" frug der Andere. - "A neuche Roll' hab' i kriegt, schon wieder so a malefiz-komische, mit der i aber gar nix anz'fangen weiß." - "Wie heißt sie?" - "Ein g'wissen Sansquartier soll i spielen; a verruckt's dumm's Stück is's, was nix machen wird!" Und der Erzürnte lief mit der Rolle ingrimmig davon. Nachmittags, während der Piquetstunde, erheiterte sich plötzlich Nestroy's Antlitz und er raunte Walter in die Ohren: "Grad is m'r was eing'fallen, i weiß schon, was i tu! Da wird si anschau'n! I mach aus dem verfluchten Kerl, den i spiel'n soll, ein' alten versoffenen ... Deutschmeister, nachher hab i g'wiß a Ruah!" Und er hielt Wort. In derbst grotesker Maske und karikiertor Ausführung gab er den undefinierbaren "Charakter", und das Publikum, anfänglich stutzig, lohnte alsbald das Wagnis mit frenetischem Beifall.⁸

It was precisely that "verruckt's, dumm's Stück, was nix machen wird", which was to change character under Nestroy's hands and become, if not a masterpiece, at least an entertaining comedy. Moreover, his interest turned from serious opera to the extent that he even rebelled against it: "Auch die italienische Oper war dem Manne, der in seiner Jugend sich als Sänger bewährt und in dem Sarastro vertieft hatte, herzlich zuwider. In viele seiner Stücke legte er Gesangsquodlibets ein, welche die italienische Gesangsmanier grausam verspotteten. Nestroy brachte Wien dahin,

8. Schlögl, op. cit., pp. 149-150 (not p. 148 as quoted by Rommel in Die Altwiener Volkskomödie, p. 968). Nestroy's adaptation is entitled Zwölf Mädchen in Uniform. The number of girls depended on the size of the company, and at one time rose to 27 (R.XV, p. 260). Sansquartier became one of Nestroy's major rôles, and he played it altogether 256 times.

daß es über die Triller der sterbenden Helden zu lachen begann."⁹

We have already established the fact that comedy, especially satirical comedy, presupposes sharp contrasts, be it in language, idea or interpretation. The basic comic types on the stage are the tall and thin and the short and fat. Such physical contrasts are to be found in Shakespeare's comic scenes: Falstaff, the large, corpulent, half-drunk knight beside his small, thin page, the delicate Fairy Queen Titania beside the rough Bottom with his ridiculous ass's head, and so forth. Such a physical contrast which leads to the ridiculous is the most primitive example of inducing laughter by offending the spectator's sense of order and proportion. In the Theater an der Wien this contrast was admirably furnished by the figure of the tall thin Nestroy against the short fat Scholz. Uhl describes the contrast in the following way: "War Johann Nestroy die hohe, schlanke, magere Erscheinung, das zersetzende Element, konnte Wenzel Scholz, der kleine, gedrungene, dicke Komiker mit dem großen Kopfe und den roten Wangen als Bild des Wieners bajuvarischer Abstammung gelten, des gutmütigen und behäbigen, etwas schwer beweglichen, seßhaften Wiener Bürgers aus der Vorstadt. Quecksilber und Blei nebeneinander; so glänzten, so gaben sich die beiden."¹⁰

Scholz was already in the company of the Theater an der Wien before

9. Uhl, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
10. Uhl, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

Nestroy joined it in 1831, and the public acclaimed him long before Nestroy was heard of. The Wiener Theaterzeitung¹¹ of January 1832 reviews Scholz with far more exuberance than the newcomer Nestroy; for example, on 14 January 1832 it speaks of "das unwiderstehliche Spiel des unerschöpflichen Scholz" (p. 39) and on 9 February F.C. Weidmann, in reviewing the performance on 4 February of Die schwarze Frau, writes: "Herr Scholz ergötzte abermals durch seine unerschöpfliche Laune, seine trockene und doch so wirksame Komik im höchsten Grade. Der wackere Komiker ward, wie gewöhnlich, mit dem lautesten Beifall ausgezeichnet, die Wiederholung seiner Couplets, durch die komischen Varianten, welche er vorbringt, so allgemein beliebt geworden, wurde stürmisch verlangt. ... Herr Nestroy erschien in der Rolle des Viertelmeisters und führte sie ganz zweckmäßig durch" (p. 115).

However, Nestroy's recognition was not to be long in coming. On 7 February his own parody Der gefühlvolle Kerkermeister¹² was performed and on 15 February we read the following review in the Theaterzeitung: "Herr Nestroy (Dalkopatschi) befriedigte heute ganz besonders, indem er durch vorzüglich launichtes Spiel sein Talent zur Komik hinlänglich zeigte, besonders launicht war sein Liedchen im 3. Akte nachdem Adelheid

11. The Wiener Theaterzeitung, then in its 25th year, was edited by Adolf Bäuerle (1786-1859), himself the author of about 70 plays (Lokalpossen, Zauberpossen and parodies). From 1809 to 1828 Bäuerle was secretary of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt.

12. See ch. II, sect. 2, p. 76 above.

seinen, ihr gemachten, Liebesantrag mit Verachtung verschmäht; er mußte dasselbe dreimal wiederholen und der hierauf erfolgte lärmende Beifall dürfte diesen braven Komiker wohl hinlänglich zeigen, wie sehr sein eifriges Bemühen die Gunst des Publikums gänzlich zu erreichen auch ganz anerkannt ward" (p. 131).

This was only a beginning: gradually the Nestroy reviews in the Theaterzeitung grow more and more enthusiastic; especially as Nestroy had more to offer than mere acting. Not only did his Possen contain songs and couplets in which Nestroy could make use of his fine voice, but also dances were introduced. The field of acting which suited Nestroy best was already recognized in 1832 when the reviewer of Nagerl und Handschuh (première 24 March) maintained: "Hr Nestroy gab den Ramsamperl, scheint vielmehr sein eigentliches Fach hier verkannt zu haben. Hr Nestroy entwickelt eine äußerst wirksame Komik in durchaus chargierten und karikierten Rollen,¹³ und gerade von dieser Form entfernt sich der Charakter des Ramsamperl vor allen in dieser Parodie vortretenden am meisten. ...Er ging in seine eigentliche Sphäre im karikierten Pas de Trois über" (27 March 1832, p. 245). Nestroy's popularity grew so rapidly that on 28 June of the same year he was described as the "beliebte Komiker Nestroy" (p. 514), and on 1 October we read: "Überhaupt gewinnt dieser fleißige und unermüdete Schauspieler mit jedem Tage mehr in der

13. I.e. parts demanding excessive physical energy, "loaded" with possibilities for exaggerated interpretation (chargiert), and those portraying extreme individual types, requiring caricature in mask, mime and diction (cf. Ali Hatschi, pp.181-2, and Gevatter, p.182 below).

Gunst des Publikums." (p.782).

The critical phraseology of the Theaterzeitung reviews is, however, stereotyped, and it is fortunate for posterity that it has not to rely on them alone for an impression of Nestroy's acting. By far the most vivid, detailed and sensitive criticism of Nestroy on the stage was written by the editor of the Prague paper Bohemia, ein Unterhaltungsblatt, a gentleman named Bernhard Gutt. His reviews of Nestroy's Gastspiele in Prague in 1844 were sent as a curiosity to Karl Kraus by a Prague reader of Die Fackel named Paul Trabesinger, and appeared in Die Fackel in August 1924 - exactly eighty years after their first publication - under the title "Ein zeitgenössischer Kritiker Nestroys".¹⁴ It may have been Gutt's descriptions which made Kraus so favourably disposed to the critics of Nestroy's time, for Gutt, in his plastic and concentrated style, gives us an extraordinarily vivid impression of the individual characteristics of Nestroy's acting technique. Gutt recognizes his tendency to caricature, but justifies it by the obvious control in technique and the conviction which Nestroy puts into his interpretation: "Nestroy's ganze Erscheinung ist, wenn man will, eine übertriebene, aber die Linie, auf die er sich gestellt hat, hält er streng und folgerichtig inne, nicht einem einzigen Effekte zu Liebe geht er darüber hinaus; er

14. No. 657, August 1924, pp. 100-120. Gutt (1812-1849), writer and critic, editor of Bohemia and for a short time of the Deutsche Zeitung aus Böhmen and author of a number of Novellen, was greatly esteemed as an unusually sensitive and witty writer, whose early death at the age of 37 robbed him of a possible literary reputation.

hat einen Ton der inneren, frischen Überzeugung, den man für objektive Wahrheit leicht hinnehmen kann."¹⁵

Other reviewers also referred to Nestroy's power of caricature, to which many of his spectators could not at first accustom themselves. The Wiener Zeitung wrote, for example, in 1862: "[Nestroy ist der größte Karikaturist,] den wir je gesehen haben. Es bedurfte für jeden einige Zeit, sich an diese zuerst abstoßende Weise zu gewöhnen, an diese seltsame Mischung von Bonhomie, Satire und rücksichtslosester Keckheit. Aber niemand widerstand seinem unbeschreiblichen Ausdruck von Unbefangenheit in seinen Zügen, wenn er den gewagtesten Dingen eine mit dem stehenden "Na ja!" eingeleitete harmlose Deutung gab."¹⁶ These "gewagtesten Dinge", often expressed indirectly through allusions and ambiguities, provoked shocked indignation in many of Nestroy's spectators and met with even Gutt's disapproval: "Hier muß ich aber nun die ernstliche Einrede gegen die schmutzigen Zweideutigkeiten tun, durch welche namentlich in diesem Stücke die Bühne entwürdigt wird. Es werden Sachen gesagt, Anspielungen gewagt, die selbst ein Mann nicht ohne Empörung hören kann. Man braucht nichts weniger als prude zu sein, um sich gegen einen so abscheulichen Mißbrauch aufzulehnen."¹⁷ This leaning towards the

15. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 102, published Bohemia, 14 July 1844, No. 84; refers to Nestroy's Gastspiel of 11 July as Nebel in Liebesgeschichten und Heiratssachen.

16. No. 123, cit. R.XV, p. 330.

17. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 114, appeared Bohemia, No. 91, 30 July 1844.

lascivious was most clearly expressed in Nestroy's extempores.¹⁸ What physical features did Nestroy possess in order to convey this impression of caricature and to put over these evocative allusions to his audience? Nestroy is known for his tall, thin figure, "die er nach Umständen bald verlängerte, bald einknickte, etwas vorgebeugt, eckig in jeder Bewegung, dabei unerhört ausdrucksvoll in der Mimik der Arme, Beine, Schultern, das Publikum durch seine schlotternden Bewegungen und mittels frappanten Wechsels zwischen Schwerfälligkeit und Beweglichkeit überraschend und förmlich elektrisierend, runde, große, schwarz glänzende, von starken Brauen beschattete Augen, die gerne den Ausdruck neugierigen Verwundertheits annahmen."¹⁹ Nestroy's bright dark eyes (called by Uhl his "Tollkirschenaugen")²⁰ and the elasticity of his facial expression gave particular force to Nestroy's mime, which has been described by a number of critics. Ludwig Speidel, for example, writes as follows: "Beinahe beredter noch als seine Dialektik war sein stummes Spiel, mit welchem er alle Voraussetzungen des Zensors²¹ durchkreuzte. Durch ein Aufzucken der Stirn und der Augenbrauen, verbunden mit einem Niedorzucken der Oberlippe und des Kinns - ein Mienenspiel, das sich nicht schildern läßt - gab er seiner Rolle einen Zusatz von Gedankenstrichen, aus welchen sich

18. See p. 196 below.

19. R.XV, pp. 185-186.

20. Uhl, op. cit., p. 109.

21. See ch. II, sect. 1, pp. 43-44 above.

noch ganz anderes heraushören ließ, als was wirklich gesprochen wurde, und da, wo die Darsteller der einstigen italienischen Kunstkomödie mit Worten improvisiert hatten, improvisierte er noch weit drastischer durch - Schweigen."²² In describing Nestroy's performance as Schnoferl in Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt Gutt points to the hilarious effect such power of mimicry can produce: "Sein stummes Spiel, nachdem er mit seiner Liebeserklärung an Frau von Erbsenstein jämmerlich durchgefallen, war so drastisch, daß selbst die auf der Bühne Beschäftigten vor Lachen kaum ihre Rolle sprechen konnten,"²³ and again: "Mit dem bloßen Blicke, mit der stummen Miene erzielt Herr Nestroy Effekte, die andern beim Aufgebote aller Kräfte unerreicht bleiben."²⁴

Equally striking, however, was the breath-taking power of Nestroy's speech, the rapidity of the diction and the sting of the wit. Schlögl gives a vivid description in his Vom Wiener Volkstheater:

Da ergoß sich urplötzlich über die Stadt der spezifischen Sorglosigkeit und "Gemütlichkeit" ein Schwefelregen von infernalischem Witz, eine Sturmflut ätzender Lauge brauste heran, ein Wirbelwind dialektischer Bravouraden erfaßte sie, ein glühender Lavastrom von unbarmherzigen Controversen und teuflischen Einfällen wälzte sich verheerend über den erst kürzlich kunstvoll angelegten und mühselig gepflegten Blumengarten sinnigster Empfindung und romantischer Träumerei, ein Hagelwetter von verblüffenden Gedanken und pessimistischster Logik prasselte auf sie nieder und das aus seinem Taumel leichter Anregung und

22. R.XV, p. 186. Speidel (1830-1906), was a highly esteemed Feuilletonist and theatre critic of the Neue Freie Presse.

23. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 104; appeared Bohemia 16 July 1844, No. 85.

24. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 102, see fn. 15, p. 177 above.

Vergnügung aufgescheuchte Wien riß Augen und Ohren auf und - lachte zu der überraschenden Wendung, ja, es jubelte laut, und der "Mephisto des Volksstückes", der (literarische) "Abgesandte der Hölle", wie ein frommgläubiges Poetchen ihn nennen könnte, schmunzelte sardonisch und rieb sich boshaft die Hände.²⁵

This overwhelming, electrifying effect which Nestroy had on the stage presented a direct contrast to the Nestroy of private life, who was shy, quiet, modest, rather gauche and of great kindheartedness.²⁶ Director Carl himself once remarked of him: "Nestroy ist erst Nestroy, wenn er die Feder ergreift oder aus den Kulissen tritt, ansonst ist er - ein armes Hascherl!"²⁷

This does not mean, though, that Nestroy always played in an electrifying, exaggerated fashion: Gutt's criticism of his performance as Weinberl seems to come in direct contrast to the descriptions already quoted: "Seine Komik besteht nicht in einem abenteuerlichen, gewaltsam auf das Zwerchfell hinarbeitenden Gebärdenspiele, sondern sie geht aus dem Bewußtsein der Situation und ihrem Erfordernisse hervor. ...Die schwunghafte Laune, die kaum erschütterliche Geistesgegenwart, die Rührigkeit Weinberl's gab Hr Nestroy mit einem Aplomb, der den Zuschauer mit fortriß, ihn nicht zur Besinnung kommen ließ."²⁸

25. Schlögl, op. cit., p. 145.

26. Cf. Uhl, op. cit., p. 109.

27. Schlögl, op. cit., p. 153. Hascherl: dial., poor fellow (MHG haeschen, sob).

28. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 108 (appeared Bohemia, No. 88, 23 July 1844), referring to the performance of Einen Jux on 19 July.

On 30 July 1844, in No. 91 of Bohemia, Gutt draws a direct contrast between Nestroy's performances on 27 July as Sansquartier in Dreizehn Mädchen in Uniform²⁹ and Tratschmiedl in Tritschtratsch. Whereas Sansquartier is not to be brought out of his sluggish placidity, the main characteristic of Tratschmiedl is: "...die unbegreifliche Zungenfertigkeit, mit welcher Hr Nestroy Satz an Satz knüpft, fast ohne Atem zu holen. ...Wäre übrigens Volubilität der Zunge der einzige Vorzug der Rolle, so hätte sie keinen anderen Wert, als den eines gelungenen Kunststückes, das Herrn Nestroy sobald keiner nachmacht, eine Art Jonglerie mit Worten. Aber bis in die kleinsten Beugungen der Stimme spricht uns ein bestimmter Charakter an, der des neuigkeitssüchtigen, mißwollenden und schadenfrohen Schwätzers, und das hebt die Leistung auf einmal auf dramatischem Boden."³⁰

Not only was Nestroy capable - as any good actor should be - of portraying two diametrically opposed characters in immediate succession, but he also exploited the trick of mingling extremes of human types and figures in a single person through the masterly use of his body. Gutt's description of his appearance in the Posse Bär und Bassa as Ali Hatschi serves to illustrate this: "Der unendlich lange, dünne Leib, die weiten

29. Cf. fn. 8, p. 172 above.

30. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 113.

Puffhosen bis ans Knie, der glatte, runde, den Gipspagoden ähnliche Kopf, die gespreizten, automatischen Bewegungen, das leere, albern-freudliche Lächeln, eine gewisse kindische, täppische Gutmütigkeit bildeten ein so unwiderstehlich komisches Ensemble, daß das Publikum in der 1. Szene Hrn Nestroys über den bloßen Anblick nicht aus dem Lachen kam." ³¹

The opposites here are the basic contrasting forms of the jagged, pointed and hard with the round and flexible, the automatic with the human qualities, the "grown-up" quality suggested by Nestroy's tall stature and the ridiculous childishness of manner. This senile childishness was also echoed in the figure of the Gevatter in Hinüber-Herüber, where Nestroy added to the effect by excessive use of make-up: "Das Gesicht, mit Schminke überdeckt, spielte in verschiedenen Farben und war so hässlich und anwidernnd als möglich; Miene, Sprache und Haltung trugen das Gepräge halbvertierter geistiger Beschränkung." ³² When one compares this picture with the impression gained by the sophisticated monologues of Nestroy's geistreiche Raisonneurs, one realizes the polarity of his acting powers, limited to the realm of the comic, certainly, but a comedy which stretched from the ugly, pathetic and therefore half tragic helplessness of the Gevatter to the high jinks of Weinber^{en}l in Ein Jux will er sich machen.

31. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 112, appeared Bohemia, No. 90, 28 July 1844. Bär und Bassa (performed together with Nestroys Hinüber-Herüber on 25 July) was a one-act Posse adapted from the French by J.A. von Seyfried.

32. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 111; see fn. 13, p. 175 above.

Artistic technique is never static; whilst much time and space is devoted to the technical development of creative artists such as poets and composers, however, it is often overlooked that interpretative artists such as singers and actors likewise develop, even change, their mode of presentation over the years. This must be due mainly to that ephemeral nature of the interpretative arts, for before the days of cameras and tape recorders the only instrument for "recording" the impression an actor made was the most subjective and unreliable faculty of memory. A study of Nestroy's acting career, however, bearing in mind that we are relying entirely on the memory of contemporary witnesses, permits us to distinguish three distinct phases of development. This is best done by studying Nestroy's differing interpretations of the same rôle over the three decades of his career in Vienna. One of his Lebensrollen was the part of Knieriem in Lumpazivagabundus, which between the première in April 1833 and his death in 1862 he played 258 times. Bernhard Gutt again offers us invaluable material in his reviews of Nestroy's Prague Gastspiel in 1844. On 2 August in Bohemia (No. 92) he comments upon the change he has detected in Nestroy's rendering of Knieriem, and offers a comparison between earlier impressions and the Knieriem of 1844:

In Hrn Nestroys schauspielerischer Laufbahn glaube ich zwei verschiedene Perioden zu erkennen. Die erste ist die der maßlosen Kraft. Alles ging ins Kolossale, alles war auf die unmittelbare schlagende Wirkung berechnet. Die Maske, bis über die Grenze der Charge, bis zur Fratze getrieben, hat kaum mehr ein menschliches Aussehen; der moralische und ästhetische Boden fehlt mehrenteils;

die Negation ist durchgängig vorschlagend und der Dialog eine Reihe glänzender aber gemüthloser, bitterer Sarkasmen. Bei aller Uniform im Äußeren und Unerquicklichkeit im Innern machte in diesen Leistungen sich ~~eine~~ ungeheure ursprüngliche Kraft geltend, es war eine jeden Widerstand niederwerfende Komik; ...Als die drastischste Gestalt dieser Reihe ist der ^{Schüler} Knieriem in Lumpazivagabundus zu nennen. Die ganze Art stand so auf der Grenze der Möglichkeit, daß ein Fortschreiten in dieser Richtung nicht mehr tunlich war. 33

And of Knieriem Gutt had remarked: "In dieser Rolle zeigte sich am deutlichsten die Entwicklung, welche Nestroys eminentes Talent genommen hat." 34 The difference which Gutt had noted lay in a marked toning down and a more humane approach:

Sonst gab er diese Rolle mit der kolossalsten Komik, mit einer alle Schranken durch brechenden Energie; aber es fehlte ihr der menschliche Boden, es war die abstrakte Liederlichkeit, die in sich kein Vermögen hatte, sich aus dem tiefen Sumpfe der Gemeinheit zu erheben. Jetzt hat Nestroy hie und da die Farben gemildert, ohne die Rolle umzugestalten; was ihr aber ein ganz neues Ansehen gibt, ist der von Anfang bis zu Ende durchklingende Ton einer gewissen Biederkeit, die selbst in dem wütesten Leben nicht untergeht. Hiedurch hat er den Charakter für die Wirklichkeit gerettet und den Punkt gewonnen, an dem er seine spätere Besserung, der Zuschauer seine Teilnahme knüpfen kann. Die komische Kraft hat durch diese Vermenschlichung nicht verloren, sondern gewonnen, denn unser Widerwille tut nicht mehr, wie sonst, gegen jeden drastischen Effekt Einsprache. Die Szenen des dritten Aktes, welche sonst einen Eindruck machten, der an Ekel grenzte, gewannen jetzt durch den Ton einer unüberwindlichen Bonhomie ein Interesse ganz anderer Art. Auch bot Herr Nestroy weniger äußere Mittel auf als sonst, was besonders in der Rauschszene des genannten Aktes der Fall war: aber die erzielte Wirkung war dennoch intensiver, weil wahrer. Herrn Nestroys Komik strömt nicht mehr so überschäumend dahin als sonst, aber sie hat sich ausgetieft und ist eben darum mächtiger geworden. 35

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33. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 115; appeared Bohemia, No. 92, 2 August 1844.
34. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 114; appeared Bohemia, No. 91, 30 July 1844.
35. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 114; appeared ibid.

Two other witnesses of Nestroy's Knieriem may here be quoted, to indicate, above all, the difficulty of forming an opinion when one has to rely on subjective reports. Friedrich Schlögl claims to have attended the première of Lumpazivagabundus on 11 April 1833, and yet his description of Nestroy runs as follows:

Welche Zeichnung lieferte er mit dieser Charge! Jeder Blick, jede Achselbewegung, jedes Zucken mit den Augenwimpern, jede Geste, jeder Schritt, jeder Ton und jedes Wort war abgelauscht, die unscheinbarste Nuance abgeguckt dem Vorbilde, das allerdings nur in den muffigsten Schenken zu finden. Die Zimmerlichen nannten diese Figur, die seitdem weltberühmt wurde, gemein; sie übersahen die kunstvolle Totalität der Schöpfung und stießen sich an einzelnen allzu genauen Details, die ihnen shocking dünkten. "Man riecht ja den Schnaps!" rief damals Einer, verhielt sich die Nase, und verließ empört das Haus. Es könnte dies als ein Triumph des Schauspielers gelten, der die Illusion so vollendet zuwege brachte. "Zu gemein!"³⁶

But this surely does not tally with the Aristophenian, mephistophelian Ur-Knieriem of Gutt's description - it is rather the realistic Knieriem of the second period and would correspond to Gutt's impression of "intensiver, weil wahrer" effect of the Rauschszene. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that Schlögl was writing in 1833, that the passing of years may have dimmed clear-cut memories to one general impression - also, as the reader of his Viennese sketches may agree, he frequently sacrifices precision to vividness and charm.

The second critic I would like to quote in this context is Anton Langer (born 1824), who, in reviewing the guest performance of the Berlin

36. Schlögl, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

actor Friedrich Beckmann as Knieriem in the Wiener Theaterzeitung of 8 August 1846, described him as "einen ruhigen, politisierenden, schnapsenden Berliner Handwerksburschen", and missed "das Kecke[der Darstellung Nestroys], das Zerrbild der ungeschlachten Gemeinheit, der liederlichen Trunkenheit, welches Nestroy hinstellte."³⁷ Although Langer was writing in 1846, this is essentially a description of the exaggerated style of the earlier period, and not a realistic Knieriem - though it is possible that Langer had not accustomed himself to the recent change in Nestroy's style. On the one hand, therefore, we have Schlögl's description of a realistic Knieriem which is supposed to refer to an earlier period, and on the other Langer's description of an exaggerated Knieriem which was written in the second period. However, it is clear that a definite development took place, if only from the variety within these passages quoted, and I would trust Gutt's impression rather than Schlögl's, not merely because of his gifts of acute observation, but simply because his impressions were only a few days old when he wrote his reviews.

Gutt then develops his point by referring to other rôles played by Nestroy, and makes a secondary distinction within the style of this period:

In zwei Arten äußert sich diese zweite Periode; die Satire kommt in ihrem Träger, dem Possenhelden, zum Bewußtsein, oder sie springt unbeabsichtigt und desto wirksamer heraus. Als Beleg für ersteres

37. R.XV, pp. 187-188.

möchte ich den Titus Feuerfuchs im Talisman, für zweites den Natzi im Eugenspiegel nennen. Wie aus dem ersten Abschnitte in den zweiten etwa Blasius Rohr (im Geheimnisse des grauen Hauses) hinüberleitete, so aus dem zweiten in den dritten Schnoferl (im Mädl aus der Vorstadt). Nestroy hat nun festen, positiven Boden gefunden, für das Resultat seiner Handlung statt der zersetzenden Säure ein ethisches Moment, für seine Charakteristik statt der Fratze die Gesetze der Ästhetik. Das zwecklos Hässliche, das Gemeine, das diabolisch Nichtige liegt hinter ihm; er hat die Höhe des dichterischen Schaffens errungen. Noch durchblickt er mit ebenso scharfem Blicke die Seite der Negation, aber er steht nicht mehr in ihr, sondern über ihr, er hat sie mit der Wirklichkeit ausgeglichen; mit einem Worte, das lebenskräftige Prinzip dieser dritten Stufe ist der Humor. Die alte Kraft übt er jetzt mit einer Milde und Reife, im Dienste so wahrhaft dichterischer Zwecke, daß er für seine früheren Sünden vollauf Genugtuung gibt. ³⁸

As further examples of this humorous style Gutt mentions Einen Jux (Nestroy played Weinberl) and Herr von Lips in Der Zerrissene.

The type of "ungezügelter Kraft" Gutt associates with the early stage of Nestroy's career, of course, is only to be expected of youth, especially when the person concerned is of such a dynamic talent as Nestroy was. The simmering down of these dynamic powers and a shift to realism is likewise to be expected with maturity, and it is interesting that Gutt points to humour - a word never mentioned in connection with the early period - as the key-word for the newest stage of development. Whilst one must be hesitant to put rigid dates as labels on any form of artistic development, which is by nature gradual, Nestroy's early development may for convenience be dated from 1832 to 1838, ³⁹ thus giving Nestroy time to develop

38. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 116; appeared Bohemia, No. 92, 2 August 1844. Das Geheimnis des grauen Hauses is the sub-title of Glück, Mißbrauch und Rückkehr.

39. See. R.XV, p. 187.

into the stage of the geistreiche Raisonneurs of 1841 (Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt) and 1842 (Einen Jux), and of these Gutt considered Herr von Lips in Der Zerrissene (première 9 April 1844) the most mature product. The year 1844 formed the high-water mark of the second stage, for out of this maturity emerges humour and humaneness.⁴⁰ These are qualities which are not normally connected with the typical satirist. We hear far more about the diabolical side of their nature, which is either a feature of youth in general or else a product of later years when the satirist in particular gives vent to the cynicism and bitterness which disillusion and disappointment have bestowed on him. This state of mind is incompatible with humour.

It is interesting to compare the Wiener Theaterzeitung reviews of this period - whose stereotype "critics' phrases" are particularly striking when compared with Gutt's illuminating observations - and see in how far they tally with Gutt's impressions. The word Humor is used to describe the première of Die verhängnisvolle Faschingsnacht in the Theater in der Leopoldstadt on 15 January 1842,⁴¹ though it is doubtful whether the critic used his epithets with such precision and care as Gutt was wont to do. Similarly mention is made of "der Laune und dem Humor, mit welchen Hr Nestroy alle seine Rollen spielt."⁴² On 19 August 1842 under the

40. Cf. ch. I, p. 22 above.

41. Theaterzeitung, 17 January 1842, p. 66.

42. 31 January 1842, p. 122.

"foreign correspondents" section of the Theaterzeitung we read of Nestroy's guest performance as Tratschmiedl in Tritschtratsch on 11 August: "... und immer wieder war seine originelle, weil in ihren Umrissen groteske Komik, die Quelle allgemeiner Heiterkeit und unauslöschlichen Gelächters. Neben dieser Ader des Späßes und ausgelassener Lustigkeit pulsiert aber in Nestroys theatralischer Persönlichkeit, wie gesagt, auch noch jene andere der Satire: mit schwunglosen, treffenden Witze geißelt, persifliert und karikiert er die Schwächen und Laster, albernen Konvenienzen, Torheiten, Angewöhnungen und Verkehrtheiten der Gesellschaft und Zeit..."⁴³

The key-words here are grotesk, Spaß and Satire (as that writer explains the word). The Spaß is naive comedy as reflected in the harmless G'spaß⁴⁴ which Raimund brought to a climax, and from which Nestroy departed in his early days. For his contemporaries satire was a new and uncomfortable element which Nestroy had introduced, and so the writer thought it worth mentioning. If we have the element of demonic caricature in Nestroy's early phase, developing into a toned-down, "humanised" technique characterized by humour, "grotesque" is an epithet applicable to the acting of his later years. Professor Margret Dietrich in her book Das moderne Drama discusses the nature of the grotesque, and places it as a theatrical form with the tragic rather than with the comic. Both the

43. "Prager-Briefe", p. 884. Cf. ch. II, sect. 1, pp. 60-61 above.

44. See ch. II, sect. 1, p. 36 above.

tragic and the grotesque manifest the helplessness of humanity and the apparent chaos of the world, yet they differ in so far as tragic art "vom Haltunggewinnen im Sichfassen dem Fassungslosen gegenüber zeugt" and grotesque art is the "Explosion unerträglicher Spannungen".⁴⁵ It is certainly a very important element of tragedy that characters aim at control and mastery either of themselves or of the world around them and perish in this very attempt; it is human inadequacy, in fact, treated in a different manner than in comedy. The grotesque is too often correlated with comedy for us to separate the two entirely, and certainly the phrase "Explosion unerträglicher Spannungen" reminds us directly of Kant's "Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in Nichts", though Kant's tension results in a "befreiendes Lachen", whereas the tension produced by the grotesque generally results in horror or pity. I prefer to consider the grotesque element in the theatre as a kind of misformed child of the union between the tragic and the comic, but without either the noble nature of tragedy or the cheerful and liberating aspect of comedy. Instead we have a discordant blending of the unbearable pathos of the tragic and the exaggerated abnormality and inadequacy of the comic.

An example of Nestroy's grotesque rôles is that of the Gevatter in Hinüber-Herüber, and the first object that presents itself to the mind's

45. Margret Dietrich, Das moderne Drama (Stuttgart, 1963), p. 554.

eye on reading Gutt's description (quoted on page 182 above) of Nestroy playing this part (also his description of Ali Hatschi quoted on pages 181-2), must surely be the figure of the clown. In fact, Shakespeare's clowns, commonly connected most intimately with the grotesque, fall into just those two categories which Nestroy combined both in his creative writing and his acting: Shakespeare's clowns consist, namely of the "professional comedians" such as the court fools Touchstone and Feste, those who play with words and have such a command of language that they can juggle with it as a clown juggles with quoits. The result is a language reverberating with word-play and wit, to which the utterances of Nestroy's geistreiche Raisonneurs may be compared. The second group, represented by characters such as Bottom, Dogberry and Dull, are those with whom words play, who are mastered by the language they speak, and whose mistakes or unintentional punning amuse without their wish or knowledge. This second group borders on the grotesque; indeed, Bottom with his ass's head is one of the triter examples of the grotesque in Shakespeare's plays. As a dramatist Nestroy stands far below Shakespeare, though one of the Shakespearean qualities which cannot be denied him is his word-play and use of comic language.⁴⁶ Indeed, one could divide Nestroy's comic characters in a similar way: the Gevatter and Ali Hatschi (though Nestroy did not write Bär und Bassa, his interpretation of the part was memorable) represent those characters who are controlled by their

46. See ch. II, sect. 1, pp. 63-64 above.

surroundings; generally, however, such parts were left to Scholz. They were the parts of stupidity and uncouthness, and this was just the impression Scholz gave on the stage: "...in seinen kniegebohrten, immer zu kurzen Hosen, dem Frack, dessen Schöße über dem massigen Hintern verräterisch auseinanderklafften, der schäbigen Perücke, unter der sein natürliches Haar hervorquoll, wirkte ^[er] in seinem pflegmatischen Humor wie die Inkarnation dieser naiven Komik gehemmter Fleischlichkeit,"⁴⁷ and in Bohemia, in a review of a guest performance by Scholz on 27 September 1844, he is described in a similar way: "Die kurze, gedrungene, fast halslose Gestalt, die tölpische Haltung, die wie aus Holz geschnitzte, lächerliche Miene, das verdächtige Rot, welches von der Nasespitze aus kreisförmig über das Gesicht ausstrahlte, der fast bis auf die Augen herabgehende Haarwuchs, vor allem aber der zuversichtliche dummdreiste Ausdruck des Gesichtes, bildeten ein komisches Ensemble, das unwiderstehlich zum Lachen reizte."⁴⁸ So Nestroy played Scholz's mental as well as his physical counterpart, the characters who juggled with words, who managed to make their audiences helpless and dazed through the torrent of their words, instead of being victims of the audience's laughter. These are the characters for whom Nestroy is best known: Willibald (Die schlimmen Buben), Johann (Zu ebener Erde), Schnoferl (Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt), Weinberl (Einen Jux), who, even if they do not master the

47. Rommel, Die Altwiener Volkskomödie, p. 965.

48. No. 117, 29 September, 1844.

situations in which they find themselves, are resourceful and ingenious enough to guide themselves and others out of difficulties. Characters such as Peter Span (Der Unbedeutende), Schlicht (Mein Freund) and Kempl who really do control circumstances, who are without illusions about the world yet not embittered, are the most mature and sophisticated of the type.⁴⁹ There is certainly a "type" which Nestroy played which approaches the comedy of the Scholz rôles. These characters do not seem to be aware of their inadequacy, like the Scholz parts, but this is not due to the "cluelessness" of naive comedy. This type is exemplified by Gundelhuber (Eine Wohnung) and Lorenz (Die verhängnisvolle Taschingsnacht), characters who are perfectly conscious of their actions, and are as wordy as the geistreiche Raisonneurs, but are comic because they overestimate their own importance and take themselves too seriously, and are thus victims of the spectator's laughter.

We have thus travelled a long way from the droll G'spaß of Raimund. The first departure was the dynamic high spirits of Nestroy's early days, then developing into the style of maturity for which he is best known. During the last years of his acting career Nestroy returned to the exaggerated style of caricature of his youth, but the dynamic quality found expression in the grotesque and parodistic. Unfortunately Gutt died in 1849, and we have no really good critic of these last years. M.G. Saphir writes, however, in the Humorist on 30 November 1855 that: "Das

49. See Rommel, Die Altwiener Volkskomödie, p. 971.

Parodistische...fährt wie ein Sprühregen aus allen seinen Poren, jedes Wort ist eine Illustration der Parodie, jede Bewegung ein drastischer Kommentar des Parodierten." ⁵⁰ And in the Fremdenblatt (No. 300, 1860) we read: "Nestroy ward in dieser Periode das Urbild eingefleischter, schonungsloser Satire. Der Sarkasmus, der umso wirkungsvoller ist, je bauchiger er sich in die Narrenjacke hüllt und je gespreizter er auf dem Sokkus umherstolziert, fand an ihm einen Repräsentanten, der weder einen Vorgänger nachahmte, noch einen Nachfolger zu scheuen hat." ⁵¹ It is true that Nestroy wrote his best parodies at this time: Judith und Holofernes was written in 1849, Tannhäuser in 1857 and Lohengrin in 1859. ⁵²

One very important feature of Nestroy's acting was his extempores. Nestroy was a master of improvisation. The written text was interlarded on the stage with spontaneous impromptu remarks or gestures so pungent that they frequently caused Nestroy trouble with the censorship. However, the unexpected and electrifying effect of these extempores made every Nestroy production seem unique, and anecdotes on the subject have been handed down like folk-legends in Viennese theatrical history. Reports often clash, contemporary descriptions are often vague, and one must take care in selecting examples - half of which may be pure fiction. One

50. Cit. R.XV, pp. 328-329.

51. Cit. R.XV, p. 329.

52. See ch. II, sect. 2, pp. 78-91 above.

example, quoted by Leopold Rosner in the Wiener Tagblatt of 6 December 1890, shows the degree of tastelessness to which Nestroy had apparently sunk in his last years. He was playing in the Posse Karnevalsabenteuer im Schlossergassel: "...als von einer etwas korpulent gedachten und dementsprechend besetzten Frauengestalt auf der Bühne gesagt wurde: 'Sie ist die gute Stund' selbst!' extemporierte [er]: 'Da muß man schon sagen: gute anderthalb Stund.'" And he accompanied this extempore with a "vielsagenden Geste".⁵³ The extempore lay actually in the gesture itself (the words occur in the printed text), and this was what shocked Rosner, for Nestroy traced with his finger through the air the contours of a large female bosom. Rosner was likewise shocked by parts of Tannhäuser: "Wer ihm beispielsweise als Landgraf Purzel in dem Augenblicke sah, wie Norma mit ihren Kindern eintrat, während der alte gebrechliche Orovist hinterdrein humpelte, wird mich verstehen."⁵⁴ The respectable Rosner does not explain details of Nestroy's lascivious gestures, but it is clear that they formed part and parcel of the performances of the last years.

Such extempores continued to the end of Nestroy's career, for Anton Bettelheim wrote in the Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung in 1900 of Nestroy's performances of Pan in Offenbach's Daphnis und Chloe which he saw in March 1862, describing the profound impression made on him "von der Geste

53. Cit. R.XV, p. 334.

54. Cit. R.XV, p. 335.

faunischer Lüsternheit, mit dem Pan ^{das Liebespaar} Daphnis und Chloe belauschte".⁵⁵

Bettelheim was born on 18 November 1851 and was therefore only a ten-year-old child at the time, upon whom anything in the sexual sphere might well make a deep impact. There is also a water-colour of Nestroy playing the part of Pan, showing him garlanded but otherwise half-naked, complete with horns and cloven feet, his lips pursed and the forefinger of his right hand pointing exaggeratedly and in a not too attractive fashion.⁵⁶

One must not forget, however, that the second half of the nineteenth century was an unusually prudish age. What was rather distasteful about Nestroy's exhibitions of lust on the stage during the last years of his life, however, was the fact that he was an ageing man, and the type of sexuality he was offering frequently belongs to the more unpleasant side of oncoming senility.

Another type of stage improvisation was the political extempore. Nestroy was a public personality in the last decades of his life and a loyal patriot, from whom the theatre-going public demanded comment on the political events of the time, just as we expect some kind of comment on political affairs by our newspaper cartoonists. One famous political extempore was directed against the Prussians, against whom Nestroy was especially embittered because they had deserted Austria in 1859. There

55. Cit. R.XV, p. 335.

56. The water-colour was painted in 1860, and is the property of the Städtische Sammlungen in Vienna. It is reproduced R.XV, facing p. 720.

are a number of reports of the occasion on 17 January 1862 during the performance of Orpheus in der Unterwelt when Jupiter (Nestroy) took the crown out of the hands of Merkur who was about to place it on his head, with the words: "Die setz' ich mir selber auf." This was a mocking and daring allusion to the ceremonial of the recent Prussian coronation on 18 October 1861, and Nestroy was fined for it. During the next performance he took his revenge: there was an atmosphere of excited tension in the theatre as Jupiter's coronation approached, but at the appropriate place Nestroy, wiping his mouth pointedly with his hand, merely mumbled: "Ich hab' mir's was kosten lassen."⁵⁷

This was not the only time that Nestroy was in trouble with the police for his extempores. They were a good means of avenging the insults of his personal enemies as well as the censor, and a means of which Nestroy made ample use. Unfortunately the victims of the extempores had the habit of avenging themselves in return, for Nestroy was frequently either fined or even sent to prison. The best-known example of such an occasion was the so-called Affäre Wiest. Franz Anton Wiest was a journalist of small talent and a small mind who took to writing in the same type of "witty" style as Saphir. In 1847, the

57. See R.XV, pp. 396-397. Rommel quotes the Pester Lloyd, No. 18, 1863, the Süddeutsche Post, No. 47, 1862 and, among others, Leopold Rosner in the Neues Wiener Tagblatt, 7 December 1901, as recording the incident.

year of his death, he even published a work on the subject Geist, Witz und Satire. The clash with Nestroy came when Wiest held up Nestroy's play Zu ebener Erde und erster Stock to ridicule. Nestroy was reading his article in a coffee-house shortly before a performance of the play. He said not a word and dressed himself for the play as usual, but with obvious agitation. In the first act he played his part of Johann as normal, but during the second act when he was arranging the card-tables, he suddenly said: "An dem Tisch wird Whist gespielt - 's ist merkwürdig, daß das geistreichste in England erfundene Spiel den gleichen Namen mit dem dümmsten Menschen von Wien hat." At this the audience violently hissed their disapproval, and Nestroy was arrested and imprisoned for slander for three days. He remarked cryptically in a letter of 17 January 1836: "Zwei Tage muß ich sitzen wegen Extemporieren in Mädchen in Uniform, dann, damit wir nicht aus der Übung kommen, drei Tage wegen Hund Wiest."⁵⁸

The decline in Nestroy's acting during the last years of his life may be due to other reasons, including a weakening of the dynamic physical powers which had played such a great part in his earlier successes. Another factor may have been the type of play put on. From 1853 onwards the Theater in der Leopoldstadt devoted an increasing number

58. R.VII, p. 161. "Brief aus dem Kerker", 17 January 1836.

of evenings to one-act plays. In 1859 there were 218 of these evenings, and Friedrich Kaiser refers to the splitting up of the repertoire to a "dramatisches Bröckelwerk".⁵⁹ In addition to this the local Possen grew more and more infrequent and works were imported from outside. From 1856 to 1860 the French bluette and the Berlin Posse reigned supreme, and there was an ever-growing interest in Offenbach. The presence of the one-acters on the programme was even welcome to Nestroy, for he did not feel physically able to tackle anything longer; indeed his last plays, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Frühere Verhältnisse and Hauptling Abendwind, were all comparatively short. The introduction of the Berlin Possen must have been due in part to the introduction of two actors from North Germany into the company, who were actually to become rivals of Nestroy. One of these was Beckmann, the Berlin actor already mentioned for his interpretation of Knieriem. The other, the Hamburg-born Karl Treumann, represented a real threat to Nestroy's supreme kingship of the stage. Treumann, originally a tenor singer, was a most attractive combination of youthful grace, harmless burlesque and lovable jesting, and he was an elegant dancer. Rommel compares the three diametrically opposed styles of Nestroy, Scholz and Treumann in an interesting way: Nestroy "stachelte und unterwarf, peitschte auf und knechtete, seine

59. R.XV, p. 307. Kaiser (1814-1874) was for some time under contract to write plays for the Theater in der Leopoldstadt.

unerhörte komische Kraft lag in beständigem Kampfe mit den Hemmungen und Widerständen, welche sich gegen die desillusionierende Tendenz seines Spottes, seines Hohnes erhoben"; Scholz "erweckte noch immer jenes gesunde, zwerchfellerschütternde, aus vollblütiger Vitalität elementar aufquellende Lachen"; Treumann "amüsierte", [seine Parodistik] "kitzelte", "tänzelte leichtesten Fußes über die Oberfläche eines hamlosen Lebemansdaseins".⁶⁰ It cannot be denied that Treumann was an asset to the ensemble, for he provided a necessary counterpart to Scholz and Nestroy, neither did he actually rob Nestroy of parts, for he took over the parts which Director Carl had played before his death in 1854. But Treumann did not really fit into the old Posse, his success lay in his acting of Offenbach's operettas, and because Treumann found favour with the public, these gradually ousted the older form of Posse. Nestroy for his part was in dealings of private or business life off the stage too gentle and kind to rebel. In fact, a kind of phlegmatic calm was said to pervade even his acting during those last years, embodied in such parts as Häuptling Abendwind der Sanfte.⁶¹

One quality which was of definite advantage to Nestroy as an actor was his phenomenal memory. He had a repertoire of 879 parts, of which he learnt 450 between 1822 and 1832, the remaining 429 between 1832 and 1862. His physical agility and his bass-baritone voice - of which

60. R.XV, pp. 312-313.

61. Cf. Forst de Battaglia, op. cit., p. 80.

Bernhard Gutt also makes special mention⁶² - also made great contributions to his success. Both memory and physical powers had declined by 1860, the body had lost its elasticity although "das Wort floß ihm noch von der Lippe so scharf wie ein Dolch, der aus der Hand des Waffenschmiedes kommt", as Friedrich Uhl maintained.⁶³ However, with the stiffening of the limbs the pantomimic clown-effect was gone and Nestroy was no longer the same.

One cannot study the theatre life of Nestroy's time without casting a glance at the rôle played by the audience - which was far greater then than it is to-day. Here Uhl gives an interesting description. The Viennese love of the theatre and the "eingefleischten Theater-Narren" have already been mentioned.⁶⁴ The theatre took the place in popular life that theatre, cinema and television to-day share between them. Aided by Bäuerle's Theaterzeitung, which Uhl calls "das Organ der Wiener Plaudersucht jener Tage", and L.A. Frankl's Sonntagsblätter,⁶⁵ Vienna lived and talked theatre. And once they were in the auditorium the

62. Die Fackel, No. 657, p. 116; appeared Bohemia, No. 93, 4 August, 1844.

63. See R.XV, p. 351.

64. See p. 169 above.

65. Uhl, op. cit., p. 111. Other papers were Der Sammler and Der Wanderer, similar in type to the Theaterzeitung, but less copious. Der Beobachter was the political organ of the Staatskanzlei, read only by those connected officially with political matters. The Sonntagsblätter was beside the Theaterzeitung of most significance. Ludwig August Frankl (1810-1894) was a lyricist and journalist, Professor of Aesthetics and Director of the Wiener Musikverein.

Viennese used it as a safety valve for their seething opinions, and the theatre became a kind of "Forum of Vienna". Uhl writes: "Einzig und allein hier durfte die Gesellschaft Wiens, als Körper vereinigt, offen und frei ihre Meinung äußern, ihren Willen kundgeben, Lob und Tadel ungestraft austheilen. Im Theater allein konnte das Volk die Souveranität der Gedankenfreiheit üben; da hatte es gelernt, sich zu fühlen, da machte es von dem Rechte der Selbstbestimmung Gebrauch."⁶⁶

And Uhl describes most entertainingly what the atmosphere was like:

Die ersten Vorstellungen im Carl-Theater fanden, gleich jenen in der italienischen Oper, vor einem gespannten, kampfbereiten Publikum statt. Wien hatte damals Zeit und Lust, wochenlang darüber zu sinnieren und zu raten, welcher Art die Couplets in einem neuen Nestroyschen Stücke sein würden, und ob das Stück, welches Scholz zu seinem Benefize wählte, dem Untergang geweiht sei. ...Man kann sich heute in Wien, wo oft in Theatersachen Gleichgültigkeit und Blasiertheit den Ton angeben, wo die Claque, die damals noch vollständig unbekannt war, sich eingenistet hat, schwer einen Begriff machen, wie sich ein Erfolg im Carltheater zu den Zeiten von Nestroy und Scholz darstellte, und wodurch ein Durchfall sich zu erkennen gab. Jeder Witz Nestroys wurde aufgefangen und hin und her geworfen wie eine glänzende Kugel, er flog von Mund zu Mund; die Strophen der Couplets wurden bejubelt und zahllose Hervorrufe lohnten den Darsteller und Dichter; aber welches Pfeifen und Zischen, welches Pochen mit Stöcken und Füßen, welches Geschrei, welcher Skandal, wenn das Stück dem Publikum nicht mundete! Der Tumult begann oft bereits im 1. Akte und hielt sich bis zum Schluß auf der Höhe des Unschönen und Rohen. Es ist geradezu unbegreiflich, wie die Darsteller jener Zeit die Kraft gewinnen konnten, derartigen Stürmen zu widerstehen, und mit der Rede, so oft für Augenblicke Ruhe eintrat, fortzufahren. Es gehörte eben zum Metier, zu den Künsten, welche ein Schauspieler gelernt haben mußte.⁶⁷

Such an incident is amusingly described by Frankl, to whom the actor Louis Grois once recounted how, when he was playing with Nestroy in just such

66. Uhl, op. cit., p. 111.

67. Ibid., pp. 110-111.

an unsuccessful performance, he heard Nestroy grind his teeth and say: "Kanonen, Kanonen! Zusammenkartätschen⁶⁸ diese Kanaille da unten!" But at the same time "machte er wie ein rasender Stier, dem es zwischen den Hörnen brennt, seine lustigen Sprünge weiter und erschütterte die Zuschauer zum unsterblichen Gelächter."⁶⁹

"Pan ist tot!" Nestroys satirisch spielender Mund ist verstummt, sein dunkles, leuchtendes Auge sprüht nicht mehr elektrische Witzfunken, sein Körper verrenkt sich nicht mehr zum satirischen Can-Can, zum Gliederspiel des grotesken Tanzes seiner Worte," wrote Friedrich Uhl in Der Botschafter (No. 149) after Nestroy's death in 1862. With him Vienna lost more than their favourite actor - so convinced were they that one could not play Nestroy Fossen without Nestroy acting in them that for years the texts lay buried in theatre archives, and only a dozen of them appeared in print. So it seemed as if Nestroy would suffer the fate of most actors: the list of those who have retained some meaning for posterity is very short, and even the best-known of those, like Molière and Shakespeare, owe the fact that people remember them as actors to the fame of their plays. Not until 1881 was any

68. Dial. kartaschen = Pferdebürste (Czech. kartač = Bürste), hence the meaning here would be in HG zusammenhauen.

69. R.XV, p. 195.

public interest in Nestroy shown, when, to celebrate the centenary of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, a "Nestroy week" was put on, that year also being the eightieth anniversary of Nestroy's birth. This was such a success that it was extended to a cycle of twenty-two plays performed on forty-eight evenings. Since then Nestroy's plays have formed part of the repertoire of Vienna theatres. In 1891 Vinzenz Chiavacci and Ludwig Ganghofer edited a collection of Nestroy's works. The real Nestroy-Renaissance did not come, however, until the fiftieth anniversary of his death, in 1912, when Karl Kraus gave his famous lecture "Nestroy und die Nachwelt", and Kraus it was, in fact, who instigated a new interest in the Possendichter. Not only did he publish articles in Die Fackel on Nestroy,⁷⁰ but he adapted two Nestroy plays⁷¹ and above all paid tribute to the spirit of Nestroy in his Nestroy readings, and Otto Rommel closes Volume XV of his complete Nestroy works with a tribute to Karl Kraus: "In diesen Vorlesungen lebt Nestroy, während die meisten Aufführungen von Nestroy leben."⁷² Similarly Otto Forst de Battaglia writes: "Ich möchte aber schon hier, gleich zu Beginn, hervorheben, wieviel Anregung ich durch die Schriften Karl

70. See ch. III, sect. 3, pp. 156-157 above.

71. See ch. III, sect. 3, pp. 158-164 above.

72. R.XV, p. 357.

Kraus' empfangen habe, von denen jede Beschäftigung mit Nestroy ausgehen muß." 73

However, a real Nestroy renaissance is not possible, because, as the material studied in this chapter must show, the written texts we know are only a shadow of the real Nestroy. His parts were created for the actors he knew, and it has not yet been possible for any company to produce a whole group of actors comparable in type to those round Nestroy. Moreover, the theatrical milieu is quite different nowadays and Nestroy has not the topical significance he had in his life-time. People are no longer "shocked" or "astonished" at the vigour, the boldness, the caricature or the force of his satire; rather are his plays treated as somewhat charming drawing-room pieces. The performances of the Burgtheater (Einen Jux will er sich machen, Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt) and the Akademietheater (Der Talisman) in Vienna and of the Residenztheater (Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt) in Munich, to cite a few of the many examples of recent Nestroy productions, may be delightful entertainment with charming luxurious touches in costume and décor (something which the financial situation of Nestroy's company did not allow)

73. Op. cit., preface, p. 7.

but they would certainly not correspond to the reviews of Nestroy's time. Above all the personality of the actor himself is sadly lacking: the torrent of language, the potent suggestive quality lying behind the finest nuance of expression, the bending and straightening of the long thin body, the Tollkirschenaugen, the dynamic effect of pauses and silence, the rapid movements and above all the never-failing talent for improvisation which led to his extempores. These are aspects of Nestroy which we have not as yet been able to recreate, and only in the very unlikely event of an actor coming into existence who is comparable to Nestroy will we ever be able to do so. It is in this way that Nestroy has the last word after all, for while the playwright's texts are available to the scholar for dissection and the dramatic theorist for possible disapproval, the technique of the actor defies all such activities, a situation which would surely have pleased Nestroy. In the final sentence of "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" Karl Kraus sums up the situation most aptly: the spirit of Nestroy, he says, "steht eingekeilt zwischen den Dickwänsten aller Berufe, hält Monologe und - lacht metaphysisch." 74

74. P. 23.

2. The Reader Karl Kraus

"Der Vorleser"

Ich muß sie alle vereinen,
die ich einzeln nicht gelten lasse.
Aus tausend, die jeder was meinen,
mach' ich eine fühlende Masse.

Ob der oder jener mich lobe,
ist für die Wirkung egal.
Schimpft alle in der Garderobe,
ihr war't mir doch wehrlos im Saal!¹

Johann Nestroy was an actor who wrote plays and yet spoke to the world on the stage and through his parts. Karl Kraus was a writer, and his main message was conveyed to the world by means of the written word. However, Kraus himself observed: "Wenn ich vortrage, so ist es nicht gespielte Literatur. Aber was ich schreibe, ist geschriebene Schauspielkunst."² This indicates Kraus's consciousness of the dramatic quality of his writings and of the importance the theatrical element played for him as a public personality.

In his youth Kraus wanted to be an actor, but failed in a trial performance in Vienna, where he played Franz Moor in Schiller's Die Räuber, together with none other than Max Reinhardt as Spiegelberg. It

1. Die Fackel, No. 472, November 1917, p. 23.

2. Beim Wort genommen, p. 284.

is a matter for speculation what part this failure played in antagonizing him against contemporary theatres and a number of contemporary actors,³ and against Max Reinhardt himself. Acquaintances of Kraus maintain generally that it played no part at all, that the theatre of the time was in the state of decay he describes, that the style of Max Reinhardt was genuinely repugnant to him; however, the episode might have subconsciously influenced his attitude, combined with the fact that Kraus's physical appearance would surely not have enabled him to play the parts one might wish for an actor of dynamic personality and egocentric character.⁴ The theatre poster of this performance was even reproduced in one of the later numbers of Die Fackel.⁵

That Kraus had some talent for the stage could no longer be denied when he started his Vorlesungen. Kraus founded the so-called "Theater der Dichtung", one-man theatre, with one man sitting at a table on a platform reading, nothing more. It is interesting to note that Helmut Qualtinger has successfully repeated this very process by reading extracts from Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, on radio and television as well as in small theatres and halls. Kraus himself gave over 700 readings, of which 200 were devoted exclusively to his own works and 302 to works not his own, though towards the end of his life his own works

3. See ch. III, sect. 3, p. 150 above.

4. See ch. I, pp. 12-13 above.

5. No. 912, August 1935, p. 48.

seemed to give way to those of other writers, for of the last 200 evenings he devoted only 26 to his own writings. He read not only in Austria, but also in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland, as well as in Paris, and his texts were taken from Shakespeare and Goethe to Hauptmann, from Brecht and Wedekind to Raimund, Nestroy and Offenbach.

We can still hear from people who witnessed these evenings what a dynamic effect Kraus had upon his audience. There are also gramophone records and a film strip in existence which convey a more concrete impression of Kraus as a reader.⁶ One of the most detailed and vivid descriptions of a Kraus Vorlesung was "Ein Karl-Kraus-Abend" by Karin Michaelis, first published in the Kopenhagener Zeitung on 14 November 1911. Kraus reprinted it in Die Fackel, and despite the stylistic flourishes and the tone of over-exuberance which lend the article a distinctly uncritical air, the description is so intriguing that it deserves to be quoted fairly extensively:

Karl Kraus ist die Skorpionengeißel, die über das heitere, frivole Wien und Österreich, ja über die Grenze nach Deutschland hinein geschwungen wird. Die Fackel heißt die kleine Zeitschrift, die er herausgibt, in der Hauptsache selbst schreibt und die in ihrem blutroten Umschlag nichts als Feuerbrunst ist. Der glühendste Fanatiker ist er, zügellos in seinem Zorn, nicht Freund von Feind unterscheidend, blind hervorstürmend gegen alles, was sein haarfeines Rechtsgefühl verletzt....

Karl Kraus, she continues, is a man
...der nicht empört ist, nein, Seelenqualen leidet über all die Grausamkeiten, die rings in der wohlgeordneten Gesellschaft geübt

6. The film was made in 1934 by Professor Karl Jaray. It is now in the possession of the Stadtbibliothek, Vienna.

werden. ...Er ist ein Bruder für jeden leidenden Menschen. Und so tief fühlt er mit, daß sich sein ganzes Wesen krümmt, und er findet für seinen Schmerz als einzige Auslösung jene blutige Ironie, die die Menschen zum Stehenbleiben und Nachdenken nötigt....

Der Saal ist bis zum letzten Platze voll. Die Jugend hat ihn gefüllt. Eine gährende, schöne Jugend. ...Die Jugend ist so schön in ihrer flammenden, gläubigen Idealität. Und was tuts, ob diese Ideale im Lauf der Zeit verblassen? Sie haben gelebt. Alle Lichter sind verlöscht. Nur da oben auf dem grün bekleideten Tisch leuchten zwei vereinzelt Kerzen. Sie funkeln unheimlich.

Nun kommt Kraus. Jung, mit langen, unbeherrschten Gliedern, scheu wie eine Fledermaus eilt er an den Tisch, verschanzt sich bang hinter ihm, kreuzt die Beine, streicht sich über die Stirn, putzt sich die Nase, sammelt sich wie ein Raubtier zum Sprunge, lauscht, wartet, öffnet den Mund wie zum Biß, klappt ihn wieder zu, wartet - -

Ein unendlich sanftes, unendlich trauriges Lächeln bebzt über sein Gesicht. Eine flüchtige, vornehme, scheue Freude schmilzt alle Strenge in diesem jungen, geistvollen, verbitterten Antlitz. Seine nervösen Hände fahren über die mitgebrachten Arbeiten. Er fängt an, hart, nachdrücklich, energisch, bezwingend, durch Überzeugung bezwingend. Hätte er chinesisch oder persisch gesprochen, man wäre mit der gleichen Spannung gefolgt. Seine eigene innere Glut wirkt wie der Funke der vorbeirasenden Lokomotive auf die sommerdürre Prärie umher: alles flammt auf, während er spricht. ...

Fünf Viertelstunden lang schwingt er die Fuchtel des Worts, bald ist seine Stimme heiser von stillem Grimm, bald klingt sie melodisch, als flechte er die Strophe eines Volksliedes ein, bald steigert sie sich zu brüllendem Ungewitter, worin man kaum Wort von Schrei unterscheiden kann, bald durchschneidet sie die Luft wie Hiebe blitzender Waffen.

Die blauen Augen sehen durch die Brillen... Bald blitzt sein Kinderlächeln auf, bald ist er wieder die unerbittliche Geißel.

Er macht eine Pause und eilt hinaus. Eilt, flüchtet - sein Schatten zeichnet sich riesengroß auf der Hinterwand des Saales - und verschwindet hinter einem Vorhang. Man applaudiert, man ruft, man jubelt. Er muß wieder hervor. Es wirkt schmerzhaft, wie wenn ein gestürzter Akrobat sich vor dem Publikum zeigen muß, um es zu beruhigen - dann mag er hinter der Szene zusammenbrechen. 7

~~Karin Michaelis then describes further~~

7. No. 336, 23 November 1911, pp. 43-46. Karin Michaelis is describing the Vorlesung of 6 November 1911, held in the Beethoven-Saal.

Karin Michaelis then describes further the audience's enthusiasm and finally remarks that there appeared nothing in the press the following morning, for "Karl Kraus hat die Jugend zum Freund und die ganze Presse zum Feind".⁸ It is interesting that the authoress of the article indicates the inner pain which releases that "blutige Ironie" in Kraus, and does not condemn him as a scurrilous aggressor; and it was invariably this recognition which led to any understanding of Kraus's art. Noteworthy is also the number of young people who attended Kraus's readings, and Karin Michaelis points out their idealistic enthusiasm -- so they were not a blasé and superior type of youth, merely out for a sophisticated evening's entertainment given by a man with a startling reputation. Of Kraus himself one may note the shy, nervous movements she describes (bearing in mind that some of this may have been done for effect) and the sudden contrasts between gentle kindness (of which both Kraus and Nestroy were capable) and that aggressive anger more commonly associated with the satirist and with Karl Kraus in particular.

The permanent state of open war between Kraus and the press clearly explains the fact that the press would not often devote their columns to a successful evening he had given. This was, however, not always the case and sometimes we are able to read press opinions, which Karl Kraus reprints in Die Fackel. One of these occasions was the Nestroy Festival

8. P. 46.

in May 1912, and the reviews that Kraus publishes are positive in the extreme. In referring to the reading of 23 May 1911 a writer in the Wiener Mittagszeitung gives the following description:

Eine subjektiv durchgeistigte Vollendung der Technik läßt alle Register spielen, so oft Gefühl und Nerv das Kommando geben. Vom bitter-melancholischen Sarkasmus bis zum schmetternden Zorn. Wie gespenstisch tauchen Einzelheiten auf, die an bekannte lebende und tote Meister der Vortragskunst gemahnen. Am ehesten nähert sich zumal sein greinend-vergnügter Nestroy-Ton der Urwüchsigkeit Girardis. Nicht im Sinn der Imitation, sondern in dem einer geistigen Verwandtschaft der Anschauung. Wenn er liest, scheint die Welt für ihn versunken. Hinter dem Lesetisch, von dem eine einsame Lampe in den verdunkelten Saal blitzt, zuckt in geisterhaftem Spiel, in einem Hexentanz der Vergeistigung sein Antlitz. In der gestaltenden Symphonie seiner Miene, seiner Deklamation lebt sein geschriebenes Wort neu und oft weitaus stärker auf. Neben der Lust auch das Leid der Zeugung, neben der höhnischen Lache der heilige Zorn....⁹

In reading these lines one grows increasingly aware of what Kraus was attacking in the press. The reviewer, in his wish to describe the vividness of Kraus's reading, resorts to a number of bombastic clichés which tell us very little. In fact, in comparing these phrases with the force and concentration of Kraus's own prose, one is inclined to wonder if Kraus is not intentionally lampooning the journalists merely by publishing their articles without comment. The last two sentences of the extract embody precisely those stylistic faults which Kraus was constantly attacking: "Dieser stets berauschte Dionysier künstlerischer

9. Die Fackel, No. 351, June 1912, p. 51, from the Mittagszeitung of 25 May 1912.

Zeugungsorgien erlebt im Lesen nochmals das Lebendigwerden der Form, ihre Befreiung aus den Schlacken des Zweifels. Und der Hörer erlebt dies mit, und mehr noch, er fühlt den Atem eines Stils, der von der strahlenden Kraft, der großen Gebärde und dem klaren Pathos deutscher Prosa meisterlich zu zeugen weiß, erst jetzt voll und bezwingend." The only positive reaction we can have to such sentences is the recognition that at least the writer saw some value behind Kraus's reading technique. Equally positive in tone is the article in the Reichspost of 4 May, commenting on "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" and the reading which followed, though the content seems otherwise equally meaningless: "Der Gedenkrede ließ Kraus einige gut gewählte Kostproben aus Nestroys Werken folgen - in diesem Raume und mit diesen Mitteln ein unerhörtes Wagnis, das natürlich nur bei jenem Teil der Zuhörerschaft voll gelingen konnte, der über hinlängliche Situationskenntnis verfügte. Wer nestroyfest war, der durfte an diesen Ausschnitten seine helle Freude haben und die beredte Interpretationskunst des Vortragenden bewundern. Der Abend wurde mit eigenen, die Applauslust des Publikums herausfordernden Gaben aus Kraus' eigener Werkstatt beschlossen."¹⁰ The most interesting feature of this comment is that a good proportion of the audience were not apparently familiar with the works of Nestroy read to them.¹¹ This is

10. Die Fackel, No. 351, June 1912, p. 49.

11. These included couplets, monologues and scenes from Höllenangst, Die Papiere des Teufels, Tritschtratsch, Einen Jux and Lumpazivagabundus.

a further reminder of the fact that Karl Kraus with his "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" instigated the real Nestroy renaissance.

Another review of the Nestroy Festival quoted by Kraus in Die Fackel, this time from Ton und Wort of 15 May 1912, does, however, give some indication of the individual features of Kraus's reading style, here with reference to the couplets: "Ganz herrlich traf Kraus die Rezitation Nestroyscher Couplets; er wendete dafür eine Art Sprechgesang an, der seine Vortragsgewalt von einer neuen erstaunlichen Seite beweist." ¹²

The interesting word here is Sprechgesang, for it is precisely the epithet one might apply to the performance on the records of Kraus still in existence. The gramophone ^{record} is perhaps a somewhat unconventional source for research work, and yet in this case it has preserved for posterity Karl Kraus's voice, and, while the impression we have of him is by necessity incomplete, this fragment is more reliable than press reviews or highly subjective descriptions. As Kraus lived at enmity with the press and most other official organisations of his time, only private people ventured to record him. People present at these Kraus readings still recall the electric effect he had upon his audiences, and indeed, the pictures from Professor Jaray's film strip, showing Kraus striking an attitude, recoiling, leaning forward, gesticulating or grimacing, may

12. No. 351, p. 47.

verify such an assertion. The gramophone records were made late in 1930,¹³ and in recent years there were naturally only very few of these in circulation. The general public had to content itself with the renderings of Heinrich Fischer and Helmut Qualtinger.¹⁴ It is also irritating that one side of the original Kraus records is "wasted" in that it is not devoted to Kraus,¹⁵ and that we are hence deprived of more of his renderings than strictly necessary. It is also regrettable that none of the Nestroy renderings have survived in recordings. Furthermore one must bear in mind that the technical imperfections of the records may reflect on the general impression of the rendering. In making a long-playing record of these earlier amateur attempts together with the sound-track of Professor Jaray's film, the Austrian "Preiser-records" were therefore meeting an urgent need. This long-playing record has just appeared on the market. It begins with a short speech on Karl Kraus by Alfred Polgar which first appeared in the Prager Tagblatt and

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13. The records were made in Berlin by "Die neue Truppe". Nos. 141/142, November 1930, consisted of "Das Schoberlied" and "Das Lied von der Presse", Nos. 143/144 of "Die Raben", "Todesfurcht", "Jugend", "Bunte Begebenheiten" and "Das Ehrenkreuz", December, 1930.
14. Heinrich Fischer has recorded, for example, Das Wort als Waffe, (epigrams, aphorisms, glosses), Deutsche Grammophon, 43011 LPMS, and Humor des Geistes. Der Traum ein Wiener Leben (glosses), Munich, Kösel.LPK 6009, and Helmut Qualtinger Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (selection), Electrola LW 9.
15. Frau Gertrud Jahn informed me that the technicians worked strictly to rule when Kraus recorded his songs - despite his own willingness to continue "over-time", and record some more items. The second side of the last record is therefore missing.

was then, on 8 January 1952, read for the Vienna Stadtbibliothek.

Following this we hear the voice of Karl Kraus reading the following works:

"Das Lied von der Presse" from Literatur oder Man wird doch da
sehn, Part II.

"Das Ehrenkreuz" from Die Fackel, No. 272, February 1909, pp. 2-5.

"Bunte Begebenheiten" from Die Fackel, No. 622, June 1923, pp. 65-67.

"Jugend", from Die Fackel, No. 462, October 1917, pp. 180-182.

"Das Schoberlied" from Die Unüberwindlichen, Act IV.

"Weg damit!" from Die Fackel, No. 743, December 1926, p. 4.

"Zum ewigen Frieden" from Die Fackel, No. 474, May 1918, pp. 159-160.

"Reklamefahrten zur Hölle" from Die Fackel, No. 577, November 1921,
pp. 96-98.

"Todesfurcht" from Die Fackel, No. 577, November 1921, pp. 67-68.

"Die Raben" from Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, Act V, Scene 55.

These works offer a wide variety of possibilities for the reader, which Kraus exploited to the full. They may conveniently be considered in pairs. Firstly there are the two songs "Das Lied von der Presse" and "Das Schoberlied" where the musical element must be considered alongside the linguistic. The key-word here is that Sprechgesang mentioned in the article quoted on page 214 above. This is also the technique generally used to render the couplets of Nestroy's Possen in modern performances, and from the recordings of these two songs we can gain a closer impression of Kraus's renderings of Nestroy than from all the other material available. Kraus, like Nestroy, frequently inserted songs into his dramatic works, but whereas with Nestroy Adolf Müller's lilting overtures

and songs set a tone of carefree jollity, and form a kind of musical intermezzo, often in the form of sheer high jinks, Kraus's songs veil a much more serious and biting comment behind their short, snappy phrases and bright, metallic tones. The language of both songs reproduced on the record is of a highly charged and deceptive simplicity. Important is the constant repetition of rhyme and assonance which creates an urgent, insistent effect. In the "Schoberlied" the constant rhyming on and exaggerated emphasis of the word Pflicht (nicht, G'schicht, erbicht, Sicht, vernicht', einbricht, and so on, alongside the repetition of Pflicht in every second line) forms the main linguistic idiosyncrasy of the poem,¹⁶ just as the variations on the slogan of the press, "man bringt",¹⁷ form the climax of each stanza in "Das Lied von der Presse". These often repeated key-words are every time given a special stress and are articulated with especial clarity. Furthermore Kraus makes use of the satirist's trick of twisting set phrases or stereotyped clichés to make both them and the object of his scorn ridiculous, for example:

"Im Anfang war die Presse
und dann erschien die Welt."

and again:

"Die Welt war es zufrieden,
die auf die Presse kam,
weil schließlich doch hienieden,
Notiz man von ihr nahm."

16. "Das Schoberlied" was translated into French, with the repeated rhyming on devoir (see Die Fackel, No. 838, September 1930, p. 138).

17. Cf. Die Fackel, No. 1, April 1899, p. 1.

By twisting the biblical quotation and the journalistic phrase, Kraus has broken down the stereotyped to create a tension springing from contrast and surprise. Finally, Kraus's language is so concentrated that it has to be examined several times if each nuance of his craftsmanship is to be savoured to the full; for the audiences listening to Kraus this was naturally impossible, and the virtuosity of the language must have been overwhelming. When reciting these songs Kraus even heightens the intense concentration: his diction is of an intentionally exaggerated clarity, his voice, somewhere between singing and speaking (as mentioned above), veritably vibrates with energy, and each song contains a finely shaded variety of tone. His ability as an actor is revealed in the mock-reverent tones of:

"weil Dank sie für die Toten
uns bringt!"

as contrasted with the energetic indignation behind:

"Kommt her, Gelehrte, Denker,
komm, was das sagt und singt,
daß hoch hinauf der Henker
euch bringt."

Henker is, of course, strongly emphasized as, in the next and last stanza, is Hölle, Schwefel and Teufel. Similarly "Das Schoberlied" is recited in a tone of conscientious and apologetic earnestness, to change abruptly in the last two lines into a tone of brusque uncouthness:

"Doch vors G'richt geh' ich nicht,
das ist nicht meine Pflicht."

The piano accompaniment (by Otto Janowitz) is equally vigorous, the key

is a lively major and the clipped, staccato chords heighten the already electric intensity.

The second item on the programme is "Das Ehrenkreuz", an account of two ridiculous situations in which the law involved itself: how on the one hand a girl was sent to court for falsely admitting to prostitution (as a joke, as it turned out) because she had "gegenüber dem Detektiv eine soziale Stellung angemaßt, die ihr nicht zukam", and how a prostitute was summonsed for wearing a military order in a brothel. The order had been given to her by a customer as payment for her services, and though she meant no harm, she aroused annoyance among the clients. This may be coupled with the other lengthy portion of satirical prose, "Reklamefahrten zur Hölle". This appears in Die Fackel as a cutting from the Basler Nachrichten advertising a train-trip to the battlefields of Verdun and Metz for the modest price of 117 Swiss francs, including good food and first-class accommodation. Kraus then adds his personal comment. Here he not only ridicules the clichés of journalesque; far more important are his tones of furious indignation that a journey to a place where soldiers had once been butchered should be advertised in this way. Both these passages are therefore direct attacks, the one on the Austrian legal system, the other on the press. Both passages are read at lightning speed (while the repeated sounds in the two songs demanded deliberate emphasis) and the listener is left confused by the ingenious torrent of language.

language.¹⁸ Despite the speed the diction is strikingly clear; also the unusual variety of intonation is worthy of note. The sentences are usually lengthy and contain Kraus's "intensifying repetition", used partly in mock imitation of stereotyped clichés and partly to underline the satire. The best example of this is the sentence in "Das Ehrenkreuz": "Sie würde sich also einen unsittlichen Lebenswandel armaßen, den sie nicht deshalb führt, weil sie dazu befugt ist, sondern den sie führt, wiewohl sie dazu nicht befugt ist, während sie in Wahrheit bloß befugt ist, einen unsittlichen Lebenswandel zu führen, den zu führen sie befugt ist." This is read particularly fast, on a comparatively even register and through this technique the highly confusing repetition of "führt" and "befugt" is made particularly effective. Sometimes Kraus breaks the rapid flow of the language with a pause and a phrase spoken in a different tone of voice and with greater emphasis, such as the suggestively mocking "Nichts scheint einem Detektiv bedenklicher als ein Mädchen" and the imitative tones of the two girls in court who ". . . auf die Frage des Richters, was sie sich dabei gedacht habe, die Antwort gab: 'Nichts.'" In the final sentence of "Das Ehrenkreuz" Kraus abandons his mocking judicious tone and his breath-taking reading pace and shouts slowly, with furious indignation and emphatic seriousness: "Denn die Justiz

18. This may also be due to the technical needs of record-making at the time.

ist eine Hure, die sich nicht blitzen läßt und selbst von der Armut den Schandlohn einhebt!"

The tension of "Reklamefahrten zur Hölle" is provided by the grotesque contrast between the jargon of the advertisement (which resembles both a television advertisement for some new bargain article and a cinema preview of a horror film) and the appalling nature of what is actually offered. The actual advertisement is read in mock imitation of the advertiser, with emphasis upon the excellent value the trip offers for the price required, but it becomes increasingly apparent that Kraus the critic is reading and that his anger is rising with every sentence. There is more variety of tone here than in "Das Ehrenkreuz" and the more conscious acting which in the last section develops into sincere indignation makes Kraus's rasping voice rise to shouting pitch. The pace is then slower, the language more highly charged, until finally the voice almost seems to break with the emotion of venomous fury.

The two poems "Jugend" and "Todesfurcht" represent the other end of the scale, Kraus as a lyric poet, and do not therefore strictly belong to the present discussion of Kraus as a dramatic satirist. He does not excel in this field as he does in the more vicious and mocking satire, and is too influenced by the pathos which characterized the reading of poetry at the time. The over-acting which may suit satirical language is here unappetizing. As a poem "Jugend" is a fine

expression of the vigour and ecstatic confusion of youth, but to hear the rasping voice of an ageing man reading it seems out of place. A similar criticism might hold good for "Todesfurcht". Though one senses more immediacy and urgency in the reading, however, the tones of exaggerated sincerity do not fascinate one as do the readings discussed so far.

Two other important poems recorded here are "Die Raben" and "Bunte Begebenheiten". "Die Raben" is the song of the ravens, the final victors in the war, sung as they circle over the mound of unburied and decaying bodies on Monte Gabriele. This is an example of direct acting, for Kraus is speaking with the voice of the ravens as they savour their delicate fare, and the poem is read as a kind of incantation, slowly, savouring every word. Especially striking is Kraus's distinctly rolled r, and his highly nasalized syllables. The poem gives him an excellent opportunity to exploit these r-sounds, and the effect is an imitation of the ravens cawing. Combined with the ugly long a, it occurs in the rhyming syllable of almost every verse, providing an intensely onomatopoeic effect heightened by the bitter satirical undercurrents of the content, as in the stanza:

"Waren Generale Raben,
schnarrts von Phrasen dort im Saale.¹⁹
Draußen sind sie unbegraben,
da sind Raben Generale!"

19. Refers to the generals' banqueting hall. The song comes at the end of the scene: "Liebesmahl bei einem Korpskommando".

"Bunte Begebenheiten",²⁰ as well as the other two poems on the record, "Weg damit!" and "Zum ewigen Frieden" would, despite their interesting content, add no new points to a discussion of Kraus's powers as a reader, for the highly-charged satirical tone remains. Kraus's interpretative technique ranges on the record from the lilting mock imitation of "Das Schoberlied" and "Das Lied von der Presse" to the deliberate incantation of "Die Raben", which seems to delight in a sardonic and sadistic emphasizing of horror. Similarly the lyricism of "Jugend" forms a counterpole to the unfeigned anger of "Reklamefahrten zur Hölle", and the mocking judicious cadences of "Das Ehrenkreuz".

Kraus often expressed a personal opinion on the subject of his Vorlesungen. "Der Vorleser", quoted as a heading for this section, shows that he aimed at uniting the thousand individual beings in front of him into a "fühlende Masse"; this faculty of feeling should transcend and grow out of the faculty of thinking - not real thinking (denken), but the cherishing of shallow opinions (meinen).²¹ This swarm of individual entities irritated Kraus; as he once expressed it in his own words, "Im Theater muß man so sitzen, daß man das Publikum

20. The contemporary significance of this poem is discussed in ch. III, sect. 2, pp. 117-118 above.

21. See p. 207 above.

als eine schwarze Masse sieht. Dann kann es einen so wenig anhaben wie dem Schauspieler. Nichts ist störender als die Individualitäten der Menge unterscheiden zu können." ²² His distaste for "das Publikum" is again described most entertainingly in two aphorisms, later published in Pro domo et mundo: "Ich hätte Lampenfieber, wenn ich mit jedem einzelnen von den Leuten sprechen müßte, vor denen ich spreche", ²³ and: "Ich kann nicht mehr unter dem Publikum sitzen. Diese Gemeinschaft des Genießens und Intimität des Begreifens, dieses Erraten der Gaben und Verlangen der Zugaben, dieses Wissen um den Witz und dieses Nichtwissen, daß sie damit noch nicht den Autor haben, dieses Verständnis und Einverständnis - nein, ich könnte es bei meinen Vorlesungen nicht aushalten, wenn ich nicht oben säße." ²⁴ Important is the fact that, if Kraus felt any personal relationship to his audience at all, it lay in the receptive mass entity he had made out of a collection of single units. Any consciousness of the thousand everyday individualities in front of him disturbed him. For him the members of the audience had to change their identity in the theatre as did the actor, though on a different plane.

It is clear that the stage did not play precisely the part in

22. Beim Wort genommen, p. 64.

23. Ibid., p. 284.

24. Ibid., p. 285.

Kraus's life that it did in Nestroy's. Whereas Nestroy was an actor to whom everything else was incidental, Kraus was a writer, critic and publisher. However, if we compare the foregoing descriptions of Kraus as a reader with those of Nestroy as an actor, we note some interesting parallels: some of the epithets applied to Nestroy's highly charged type of acting could well be transferred to Nestroy. One thinks of Schlögl's "Schwefelregen von infernalischem Witz, eine Sturmflut ätzender Lauge"²⁵ lashing into the Viennese Gemütlichkeit, for example, and the effect Nestroy often exerted on his audiences: "mittels frappanten Wechsels zwischen Schwerfälligkeit und Beweglichkeit überraschend und förmlich elektrisierend".²⁶ On the other hand, where Nestroy really did seem to transform himself through mask, mime and gesture as well as the use of his voice into the character he was impersonating, one somehow has the feeling that Kraus remains conscious of himself speaking during all his readings, just as one is fully conscious on every page of Die Fackel of the personality of its publisher and author. There is a direct, distinctly egocentric quality combined with an ever-present self-consciousness in all that Kraus did and wrote. Kraus was fully aware of his mission as a satirist, and his awareness colours his mode of interpretation.

We have already established that the present performances of

25. See ch. IV, sect. 1, pp. 179-80 above.

26. See ch. IV, sect. 1, p. 178 above.

Nestroy do not compare with those of his time. One might likewise question the readings of Kraus followers, of Heinrich Fischer and Helmut Qualtinger. While Heinrich Fischer is not a professional actor at all, Qualtinger is of a completely different acting type from Kraus: he is more comparable to the Scholz type of acting and physique, and in Nestroy performances plays the Hausmeister-Gestalten. In the 1963 production of Eine Wohnung ist zu vermieten in the Vienna Volkstheater, for example, he played Scholz's part of Cajetan Balsan.²⁷ Kraus inclined towards the dynamic Nestroy type of acting and was of wiry physique, so how can he be reproduced by someone like Qualtinger? For a spectator who has not witnessed a Kraus reading, Qualtinger is a success: not only does he master both the Berlin and Viennese dialects, but he can convey through voice, manner and facial expression the essence of the characters' natures, and there is a potent suggestive power in his mime. For someone who had experienced Kraus there was an immediate answer to this: he is not Kraus. Heinrich Fischer's recordings are again most pleasing as long as one has only the written text before one's eyes, and does not compare him with Kraus's impassioned,

27. In this context it is interesting to observe that in his discussion of Eine Wohnung (Die Fackel, No. 613, April 1923, pp. 47-49) Kraus confuses the Nestroy and Scholz rôles: "Die Gestalt des Herrn von Gundelhuber, offenbar die Scholzische Rolle, ist in ihrer breitspürigen Dummheit eine der besten, die er geschaffen hat, der liebes- und auch sonst trunkene Hausmeister Cajetan eine der stärksten Nestroy-Partien" (p. 48). Nestroy played Gundelhuber, Scholz played Cajetan.

mocking, sardonic or lilting version of the same work. However, an actor is a mortal being, while the written word may live on, and if the writings of Kraus and the Possen of Nestroy are not to be limited to the text-books, we must accept the fact that they never can be recreated exactly as they were originally; though one may express the wish that the reign of filming and sound-recording which dawned in time to enable posterity to hear the voice of Kraus, may help to prevent the art of good actors sinking into oblivion.

CHAPTER V

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V. THE APHORISM

Ich beherrsche die Sprache nicht; aber die Sprache beherrscht mich vollkommen. Sie ist mir nicht die Dienerin meiner Gedanken. Ich lebe in einer Verbindung mit ihr, aus der ich Gedanken empfangen, und sie kann mit mir machen, was sie will. Ich pariere ihr aufs Wort. Denn aus dem Wort springt mir der junge Gedanke entgegen und formt rückwirkend die Sprache, die ihn schuf. Solche Gnade der Gedankenträchtigkeit zwingt auf die Knie und macht allen Aufwand zitternder Sorgfalt zur Pflicht. Die Sprache ist eine Herrin der Gedanken, und wer das Verhältnis umzukehren vermag, dem macht sie sich im Hause nützlich, aber sie sperrt ihm den Schoß. ¹

The German language is strangely suited to aphorisms, and the aphorism is an unusually effective weapon of the satirical mind. It also presupposes intense concentration of language and clarity, as well as originality, of thought. It is thus somewhat ironical that German, which can be so unwieldy and ungainly, is able to express far-reaching reflections of philosophical and complicated minds in a few phrases; under the hands of Nestroy and Karl Kraus the aphorism certainly gained a life of its own. Kraus published separate volumes of aphorisms alone and Nestroy welded them into his monologues and speeches. The aphorism thus provides an interesting and unusual point

1. Beim Wort genommen, pp. 134-135.

of contact in the work of the two satirists, a point at which one can examine under the microscope, as it were, the exact relationship which each writer bore to the language in which he wrote.

The aphorism is closely related to the epigram; indeed, the difference between the two is mainly a historical one, and nowadays hardly recognizable. At one time the word "epigram" meant an inscription on a building, a tomb, a coin or some such object, though this meaning is now obsolete, and as such inscriptions were generally brief and in verse, the name was later transferred to a short poem, especially one with a sting in the tail, and was later applied to any pungent saying. A style containing such sayings is now described as an epigrammatic style. An aphorism has neither the inscription nor verse connotation; it is simply a short, pithy maxim, to which the epigram has become very similar. The aphorism inclines, however, to be more philosophical and abstract than the epigram, and often assumes the form of a definition. Furthermore, an epigram can still be written in verse. The easiest way to detect the difference is to place an epigram and an aphorism side by side:

"When I am dead, I hope it may be said:
His sins were scarlet, but his books were read."²

"How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews."³

2. Hilaire Belloc, in Other Men's Flowers, compiled by A.P. Wavell, p. 417.

3. W.N. Ewer, *ibid.*, p. 417.

"So sagt man, jemand bekleide ein Amt, wenn er von dem Amt bekleidet wird." 4

"Ich habe überhaupt sehr viel gedacht, das weiß ich, viel mehr, als ich gelesen habe; es ist mir daher sehr viel von dem bekannt, was die Welt weiß, und daher irre ich mich oft, wenn ich mich in die Welt mische, und dieses macht mich schüchtern. Könnte ich das alles, was ich zusammengedacht habe, so sagen, wie es in mir ist, nicht getrennt (da möchte sich manches nicht zum besten ausnehmen), so würde es gewiß den Beifall der Welt erhalten." 5

"Psychologen sind Durchschauer der Leere und Schwindler der Tiefe." 6

The first two of these are epigrams, the last three are aphorisms. The effect of the epigrams lies in the aural effect 7 and the form. One is struck by the conciseness of expression, and the thought is a single entity. In the aphorism the thought-content, which is generally hidden or of a complicated nature, is the primary consideration, the form is then the "servant" of the thought, and must act as the best possible vehicle for the thought. In Hilaire Belloc's epigram a linguistic trick is responsible for the effect, that of breaking down the dead-read-said assonance by the word "scarlet", which thus lends the word "read" its secondary meaning of "red" through association of ideas. While the second aphorism depends mainly on the form, the

4. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Aphorismen (Wiesbaden, 1958), p. 39.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

6. Karl Kraus, Beim Wort genommen, p. 224.

7. Cf., however, pp. 242-243 below.

brevity, the monosyllabic simplicity and the rhymes, the thought-content does rival the form, and were the epigram written as an ordinary sentence: "How odd of God to choose the Jews", it would approach the aphoristic convention. Similarly, if the last aphorism quoted above⁶ were arranged so that the form outweighed the thought-content in effect, containing rhyme or assonance, perhaps, it might verge on epigram, though it would thereby lose in intricacy and depth of thought. For the epigram is like a single flash; the aphorism encourages further thought. Kraus's aphorism heading this chapter and Lichtenberg's second aphorism quoted above consists of an unusual thought fully developed. Both examples are too long, too detailed and too complicated to bear any resemblance to the epigram. The first Lichtenberg aphorism⁴ is more problematic; Lichtenberg has taken a conventional phrase, "ein Amt bekleiden", and has twisted it so that the phrase assumes a second and ironical significance. This twisting of clichés is a favourite trick of the aphorist.⁸ The form of expression is, however, outweighed by the thought content, and while it is certainly pungent and concise, it has not the piercing, flash-like effect of the epigram. While these two forms of maxim may easily overlap, therefore, one must bear in mind that the epigram was originally a brief verse inscription and that it has still retained that extreme brevity; an aphorism does not pay so

8. See p. 241 below.

much attention to form; the content and then the form of expression are important. It is important to remember that one talks of an "epigrammatic style" and an "aphoristic way of thinking";⁹ this means on the one hand a style interlarded with brief and penetrating witticisms of an epigrammatic nature, on the other a manner of thinking which finds expression in maxims. It is also noteworthy that in Germany the aphorism occupies the position which the epigram occupies in England, and that on occasion the words could be interchanged in a translation, meaning of course that where a German would write an Aphorismus an Englishman would compose an epigram.

The mental prerequisites for both epigrams and aphorisms are, however, identical: a sharp wit, a clear, penetrating mind, complete control of the language together with a sensitive feeling for the various nuances and the evocative quality of words and word-combinations and sounds and sound-combinations. They require a temperament which is cool and analytical; romantic and poetic minds are given to description rather than definition and profuseness rather than brevity. Both aphorism and epigram must be of a forceful nature, they are frequently even pugnacious and scathing.

The aphorism does not strictly belong to dramatic satire. Indeed

9. See Die Fackel, No. 254, May 1908, p. 6, cit. p. 156 above.

Karl Kraus's aphorisms¹⁰ have nothing to do with his plays at all, but they form an important part of his satire. Sometimes they were written independently and published as single sentences in Die Fackel, sometimes the passages which we know as aphorisms were extracts from longer passages or articles and republished by Kraus or by a later editor¹¹ as solitary aphorisms. Nestroy, to whom the plot of his plays was of secondary importance, compiled and collected aphorisms independently of his plays. Otto Rommel maintains: "Sein handschriftlicher Nachlaß beweist, daß die blendenden Aphorismen, in denen die Gedankenerlebnisse dieses Geistmenschen auskristallisierten, zuerst vielfach ganz unabhängig von einer theatralischen Gestaltung entstanden."¹²

Is there any justification, therefore, for including a discussion of the aphorism at all when we are strictly limited to dramatic satire? Firstly, it is worthy of mention as a common means of expression in two satirists of different centuries and of different character. Secondly, the aphorism acquired in Nestroy's hands a singularly theatrical effect, and thirdly the aphorism contains the concentrated essence of the satirical thought of the writer concerned.

Nestroy's maxims are bonmots rather than aphorisms in the strict

10. Published as follows: 1909 Sprüche und Widersprüche (Munich, 1909), Pro domo et mundo (Munich, 1912), Nachts (Leipzig, 1918).

11. Heinrich Fischer is the editor and publisher of Kraus's works.

12. Die Altwiener Volkskomödie (Vienna, 1952), p. 960.

sense of the word. One has the impression that he is primarily concerned with the theatrical effect of each sentence. Thus there are a number of startling, somewhat showy elements, such as flourishes in imagery, a marked rhythm, incongruities in the meaning. With this in mind Nestroy gives us some unusual recipes; firstly Kilian Blau's recipe for an engagement dinner: "Die leere Pastete meines Innern muß g'füllt wer'n mit den Tauben der Zärtlichkeit, über den Schmarren meines Lebens müssen die Weinberln der häuslichen Glückseligkeit gestreut werden, das ist die Kochkunst, die das Verlobungsfest verherrlichen muß;"¹³ and secondly Johann's recipe for money-making: "Man nehme: Keckheit, Devotion, Impertinenz, Pfiffigkeit, Egoismus, fünf lange Finger, zwei große Säcke, und ein kleines Gewissen, wickle das alles in eine Livree, so gibt das in zehn Jahren einen ganzen Haufen Dukaten. Probatum est!"¹⁴ The first of these is too personal to be an aphorism, and it is not satirical. Nestroy is merely employing his usual trick of applying lavish and exotic imagery which seems incongruous with its setting on first sight, bringing about a witty surprise effect. The second uses the same trick in a satirical way: whereas Kilian talks of love in terms of cookery, Johann talks of money-making in terms of roguery. He is saying in an indirect and sophisticated

13. Der Färber und sein Zwillingsbruder, I,6. See p. 254a below.

14. Zu ebener Erde und erster Stock, I,3.

manner that a deceitful footman like himself is the best money-maker. This is typical of Nestroy's ironic criticism, and the sting is none the less poisonous because it is hidden in imagery and witticisms.

These elements are likewise to be found in Nestroy's definitions, of which Willibald's witticisms in Die schlimmen Buben provide suitable examples.¹⁵ The effectiveness lies in a number of clashing elements: there is the voluble ingenuity of Willibald as opposed to the conventional pedantry of Wampl who should by rights be intellectually superior; while his answers are actually "wrong" Willibald recites them with the air of the conscientious scholar to whom learning is second nature; and behind the "wrongness" there are truths lurking which a "right" answer could not express. The full effect of Willibald's definitions can only be realized when one is aware of their context, and again the theatrical effect is important. These same points apply in Willibald's Auftrittsmonolog; he is comparing school to the outside world, and comes to the conclusion that the world is the exact opposite of school and what one learns in it: "In der Schul' muß man ruhig sein, in der Welt ist es just gut, wenn man ^{recht} viel Lärm macht; in der Schul' haben's extra eine Eselsbank, in der Welt sind die Esel auf allen Plätzen zerstreut."¹⁶ The effect of these sentences does not lie,

15. See ch. II, sect. 2, p. 94 above.

16. Scene 3.

as in the first two quoted, in overwhelmingly lavish imagery, but in the clash between, to employ an academic cliché, "Sein und Schein". However, as Karl Kraus most aptly remarks in an aphorism: "Schein hat mehr Buchstaben als Sein";¹⁷ the longer word has, in fact, more show and less meaning, and thus Willibald proves that what appears to the majority of people to be true is in fact deception. This trick of exposing the uncanny and unpleasant truth behind an apparent truism also belongs to Nestroy's stock in trade. A favourite subject of Nestroy's is the hollowness and falseness of social life:

"Wenn die Gäst' wüßten, wie z'wider sie Einem oft sind, es ließ sich gar kein Mensch mehr einladen auf der Welt."¹⁸

By stating, in this case quite baldly, a fact which is generally only admitted among close friends and otherwise hidden under the camouflage of politeness, Nestroy gives the effect of stripping an unpleasant Sein of its protective and attractive Schein. This is what shocked many people and Nestroy has because of it frequently been labelled as a cynic. His philosophizing and moralizing bormots contain especially concentrated doses of such galling truths, for example:

"Ja, beim Heiraten muß man net voreilig sein; das Geld, was man auf die Hochzeit ausgibt, ist sehr häufig die erste Einzahlung in die wechselseitige Lebensverbitterungsanstalt."¹⁹

17. Beim Wort genommen, p. 267.

18. Das Mäd'l aus der Vorstadt, I,6.

19. Der Färber und sein Zwillingsbruder, I,10. See p. 254a below.

Marriage was a subject Nestroy was fond of attacking; behind the romantic views of domestic bliss he experienced and portrayed the more realistic and unpleasant aspects of the daily routine, nagging, quarrels and boredom. In the above quotation he uses both his trick of unusual imagery and that of contradicting the fallacious views commonly held; the effect of the sentence lies in the two last words, for besides their grandiose sound and their originality, the Lebensverbitterung sounds very like its opposite, the Lebensversicherung, thus reverting back very subtly to the basic idea of money.

The idea that Nestroy's aphorisms often came into being quite independently of the plays can be supported in that they are not invariably imbedded in their context, and that where this is the case, as in Die schlimmen Buben mentioned above, the context may easily have arisen from the aphorism or basic idea. Moreover, the context enriches Nestroy's bonmots rather than explains them. Sometimes, however, it is clear that aphorism and context were once separate. For example, where Fabian Strick suddenly says: "Ich glaube von jedem Menschen das Schlechteste, selbst von mir, und ich hab' mich noch selten getäuscht,"²⁰ it does not exactly clash with the context, but it is a sentence which could occur innumerable times in innumerable contexts in Nestroy's plays. This is, of course, a pure supposition, but it would be an

20. Die beiden Nachtwandler, I,16.

aesthetic confirmation of the theory put forward by Otto Rommel.²¹ Where something can be removed from its setting without incurring any harm whatever, it is also possible that it arose independently of that setting. It is significant here that most of Karl Kraus's aphorisms were conceived as aphorisms, or, that if they were removed from a context, the context actually amplifies their meaning. These are generally longer than the real aphorism. It seems to belong to the nature of an aphorism that it is complete in itself, and if it is put together with other thoughts it serves to illustrate or embellish them, but, if it is a good aphorism, it must be complete in itself, and the surrounding ideas should make no difference to it. The theatrical effect with Nestroy was thus a significant feature, for his aphorisms were conceived for the stage alone. An audience has not time to ponder over the intricacies of dark and difficult philosophical points, especially when the actor is Nestroy. A stage aphorism can certainly be twisted, embellished and indirect, but its essential meaning must come in a flash, though one needs time to think out why the effect is so and what produces it. This is a definite feature of Nestroy: one can appreciate his wit without having to think out too long what he means.

This is not the case with Kraus's aphorisms, which would certainly

21. See p. 233 above.

not be suitable for the stage. They are deeper, more subtle and more abstract than Nestroy's bonmots. For Karl Kraus the aphorism was a direct means for him to express his views on and relation with language itself. He has also conveniently left us aphorisms on the aphorism, and these shed much light on what was in Kraus's mind the mystic unity of thought and expression. Moreover, one generally talks of using or "controlling" language. Kraus maintained that he was the servant and not the master of language, and this idea was the starting-point from which he worked. It is interesting to study Kraus's views on the aphorism:

"Ein Aphorismus braucht nicht wahr zu sein. Aber er soll die Wahrheit überflügeln. Er muß gleichsam mit einem Satz über sie hinauskommen." 22

"Der Aphorismus deckt sich nie mit der Wahrheit; er ist entweder eine halbe Wahrheit oder anderthalb." 23

"Einen Aphorismus kann man in keine Schreibmaschine diktieren. Es würde zu lange dauern." 24

"Der längste Atem gehört zum Aphorismus." 25

For Kraus an aphorism is not a slick and effortless phrase, but a product of growth; it is a thought or even several thoughts which have been so refined and schooled and finally so welded together that the final aphorism is the concentrated expression of the essence of the

22. Beim Wort genommen, p. 117.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 238.

original thoughts. Thus that curious aphorism "Einen Aphorismus kann man in keine Schreibmaschine diktieren. Es würde zu lange dauern" assumes some meaning: the thought involved in the shortest aphorism is so endless that to formulate each thought-process in terms of language would last too long. A typewriter cannot reproduce thought, it can only reproduce a carbon-copy of the final result in its completed form. A second interpretation of this aphorism might be that the moment of inspiration when the aphorism itself is born is so sudden and so brief that even the most responsive typewriter would not react quickly enough to record it. How an aphorism comes into being must vary with the nature of the aphorism and the circumstances, but the process must lie somewhere between the two extremes of careful polishing and searching on the one hand and the flash-like inspiration on the other.

Kraus also discusses the "truth" of an aphorism. This is not the conventional truth which for the reader has grown into a truism, but some new and often startling idea, which "soll die Wahrheit überflügeln". This also explains the sentences "Ein Aphorismus braucht nicht wahr zu sein" and "Der Aphorismus deckt sich nie mit der Wahrheit". The content of the aphorism and the expression are in Kraus's interpretation one and the same thing, thought and language are one, for "Weil ich den Gedanken beim Wort nehme, kommt er"²⁶ and "Der Sinn nahm die

26. Beim Wort genommen, p. 236.

Form, sie sträubte und ergab sich. Der Gedanke entsprang, der die Züge beider trug." ²⁷ This process is so self-dependent and so complete that it renders any idea of a context impossible.

Kraus's aphorisms have nothing to do with his drama. They are, however, a vehicle for his satire, and as such may be considered briefly. The satirical effect in the sentence springs namely from the same technique of surprise, incongruity, repetition and understatement or (in the case of the aphorism this is less frequent) overstatement as have already been established as properties in the satirist's stock in trade. Often this surprise effect consists in changing a well-known cliché to invert the meaning: "Wo nehme ich nur all die Zeit her, so viel nicht zu lesen?" ²⁸ Such a difference is made by the removal or insertion of a single word, or sometimes even letter, as is exemplified by the scathing aphorism Kraus "composed" on the Germans: "Die Deutschen - das Volk der Richter und Henker." ²⁹ In this case the stereotype phrase makes itself ridiculous by virtue of the extreme meaning it can assume with only the slightest change in form. Another method Kraus employs is to take one characteristic of a given object, clothe it in a metaphorical form, then apply the new form back to the original object, but in such a way that it appears incongruous and the meaning is

27. Beim Wort genommen, p. 235.

28. Ibid., p. 119.

29. Ibid., p. 159.

hidden: "Jeder Wiener ist eine Sehenswürdigkeit, jeder Berliner ein Verkehrsmittel." ³⁰ Otherwise Kraus uses the aphorism to explore the shades of meaning in a word which is commonly overlooked by the normal lazy mind: "Kunst ist etwas, was so klar ist, daß es niemand versteht. Daß über allen Gipfeln Ruh' ist, begreift jeder Deutsche und hat gleichwohl noch keiner erfaßt." ³¹ Here, whilst implying the mental sluggishness of the Germans, he illustrates the shades of meaning between verstehen, begreifen, and erfassen. Most of these examples are written in reasonably simple language, not normally the case with Kraus, and yet one must emphasize that this does not mean that his aphorisms are easy. On the contrary, behind the simplest words, as is the case with the last aphorism, there lie compound meanings and a number of interpretations.

While the usual elements of surprise, incongruity and inversion are present in the aphorisms of both Nestroy and Kraus, the difference between the two writers is significant. Nestroy's aphorisms were written for a theatre audience, Kraus's for a reader; Nestroy's depend upon an immediate effect, Kraus's on deep and careful thought; Nestroy's had to give the actor, generally himself, full opportunity to exert his powers of diction, thus the aural effect was important, while

30. Beim Wort genommen, p. 145.

31. Ibid., p. 434.

Kraus attaches significance to the inner depth and subtlety of the aphorism; Nestroy's rapid reasonings and metaphorical flourishes overwhelm and dazzle; in Kraus's aphorisms is contained his simplest and most difficult language; and finally, Nestroy intended, if to shock, then to amuse at the same time; Kraus, if his readers were shocked by what he said, only wanted to induce them to think. In both cases the aphorism was a means of twisting the deceits, the conceits and the clichés of a corrupt world back upon themselves to reveal to that world what an emptiness lay beneath their conventions and what an unknown abundance lay concealed in their language.

CHAPTER VI

* *
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VI. CONCLUSION

"Difficile est saturam non scribere."¹
(Juvenal.)

Satire is not a branch of literature or even a form of writing. It is a conflict between a man's mind and the surrounding world. The form it assumes depends upon the nature of that mind and of the conflict. Even a study of one branch of satire alone of two out of the many satirists different civilizations have produced has shown the wide variety of possibilities open to the satirical mind for self-expression. Even the limited field of dramatic satire has led us over the Posse, the travesty, the parody, invective, lyrical poetry, literal reproduction, criticism, mime and gesture, reading recitals, the aphorism and the bormot. This has involved discussions of comedy, tragedy, the grotesque, humour, wit, irony, sarcasm, the aesthetic, the disgusting, the real and the ideal. We have seen how satire can shock, repel, amuse and sting, how it can distort and caricature while still seeking to tell the truth. The satirist has also brought us into contact with

1. Satire I, line 30. Quoted by Worcester, op. cit., p. 13.

great minds like Shakespeare down to small minds like Franz Anton Wiest, with great ethical controversies and personal animosities, with Wagner's Tannhäuser and with Seyfried's Bär und Bessa. The one feature all these varied aspects of life, literature and thought have in common is the notion of conflict: the dramatic satirist assumes the sardonic smile, or even the grimace, of a clown in order to distort the mask of stupidity and complacency covering the faces of his fellow-men into the shape of reality he sees in it. This does not necessarily mean that he is right, for if satire is a fight the satirist must take sides, and even if he changes from one camp to the other, as Karl Kraus was wont to do in his personal relationships, he will fight with a vengeance. The satirist is an extremist, and he expresses his adulation or his loathing with such force that the reader must take care not to let himself either be carried away or be inordinately revolted. If one is acquainted with the work of a satirist one can hardly be apathetic about him; he tempts us to prejudices about himself and his work which may be as extreme as those he holds for and against the world about him. This may be the reason for the small number of unbiased works on satire. Kurt Wolff applied this with particular emphasis to Karl Kraus: "In den Jahren, die ich Kraus kannte, sah, verlegte - etwa im Jahrzehnt 1912 bis 1922 - erschütterte mich die Wahrnehmung, daß es eigentlich nur zwei polare Gruppen von Menschen gab, die überhaupt eine Beziehung zu ihm hatten: besessene Anbeter und besessene Gegner."²

2. Op. cit., p. 76.

Extreme adulation can on both sides change rapidly into extreme hatred, and none is as capable as the satirist of hatred, and none is subjected to more hatred than he. The relationship between Kraus and Franz Werfel illustrates this most clearly. Werfel's wife, Alma Mahler-Werfel, has in her autobiography Mein Leben few words to say on Kraus, and those few are far from complimentary: "Er war ein amüsanter Causeur ... lenkte die Gespräche nach seinen Gutdünken und wirkte eher harmlos, was er durchaus nicht war. Er horchte herum - ließ sich erzählen und verwendete den Tratsch ungeprüft in seiner neugegründeten Zeitschrift Die Fackel. Wie viele von meinen Freunden hat er darin angeprangert!"³

In general, however, the works on Kraus are written by the "besessene Anbeter" and we seldom come across words like the above in reliable sources. To strike the correct balance between the two extremes and do Kraus justice is a necessary but tricky task, for any material one touches, whether written by himself or by others, has at least a tendency to be prejudiced. This prejudice has continued to this day, people either find Kraus repellent or they idolize him.

One must be careful not to fall into the trap of being prejudiced against the satirist on account of his material. What Karl Kraus works on is often far from palatable, and, moreover, he calls a spade not merely a spade but, as the Yorkshireman once said, a "bloomin' shovel",

3. Frankfurt am Main, 1963, p. 20.

and queasy minds are often offended by it. But nowadays "unpleasant" subjects have become fashionable in all branches of art, whether it involves depicting drunkenness and sordidity in a serious play such as Shelagh Delaney consciously does in A Taste of Honey or writing lyric poems after the style of Günther Grass. Why should we blame the satirist for working on the corrupt? He has at least the perspicacity to recognize that it is corrupt and to use the most deadly and damning weapons in his power to fight it.

On the contrary, viewing both Kraus and Nestroy objectively at a distance, one notices several distinctly aesthetic qualities in both men. One of these is their marked musicality. "Die Funktion der Musik: den Krampf des Lebens zu lösen, den Verstand Erholung zu schaffen und die gedankliche Tätigkeit entspannend wieder anzulegen. ...Vereinigt sich die lösende Wirkung der Musik mit einer Verantwortungslösen Heiterkeit, die in diesem Wirrsal ein Bild unserer realen Verkehrtheiten ahnen läßt, so erweist sich die Operette als die einzige dramatische Form, die den theatralischen Möglichkeiten vollkommen ebermäßig ist." ⁴ Whether this theory is valid is here irrelevant; important is the fact that these words were written by the Fackel-Kraus, the scourge of Vienna. Similarly Nestroy, whose "indecent

4. Die Fackel, No. 270, January 1909, p. 8. In "Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne".

gestures" disgusted some of his contemporaries, had at the age of thirteen performed in public as a pianist, had sung the parts of Sarastro and Don Giovanni and to the end enlivened his own Possen with gay couplets, set to the lilting music of Adolf Müller.

Objections are often made too about the kind of laughter which satire provokes. The naive type of comedy releases a "pure" laughter, untainted by the derision, the obscenities and the bitterness of the laughter satire must release, say some; the laughter of operetta on the one hand and the laughter of Shakespeare's comedies on the other is far superior to the impure laughter of satire. Just how relative and subjective such statements are is shown by a few comparisons between differing views on the same writer and differing views on laughter.

A rather clumsy little rhyme was current, for example, among artist circles during Nestroy's last guest performance in Vienna:

"Du bist, trotz des Geschrei's der Leute,
In Deinem Fache nur der Zweite.
Der erste, mein lieber Johannes,
War halt doch der Aristophanes." 5

Nestroy was popularly viewed as the Aristophanes of Vienna, and the epithet was, bearing in mind the standing of the Greek comedy-writer, a compliment. Without a doubt the plays of Aristophanes show us unabashed the crudities of life. Both Nestroy and Kraus were blamed heavily for doing the same thing. Of Aristophanes Friedrich Schlegel

5. Cit. Leopold Rosner in his introduction to Johann Nestroys Werke (19 Teile in 2 Bänden), Berlin/Leipzig, p. XII.

said: "Wenn irgend etwas in menschlichen Werken göttlich genannt werden darf, so ist es die schöne Fröhlichkeit und die erhabene Freiheit in den Werken des Aristophanes,"⁶ and Hegel resorted to less sublime phraseology: "Ohne ihn gelesen zu haben, läßt sich kaum wissen, wie dem Menschen sauwohl sein kann."⁶ Few of Nestroy's critics would apply the word "sauwohl" to Nestroy's characters or his audiences, few would talk of an "erhabene Freiheit", and still Nestroy is popularly named the Viennese Aristophanes; yet the Greek satirist parodied the master Sophocles as Nestroy parodied the far less masterly Hebbel, and somehow Aristophanes, when one has grown accustomed to the crudities, delights. Nowadays Nestroy also delights, in his own day he was rather a sensation and the delight was mingled with shock. The answer is that posterity generally gives a satirist fairer treatment than contemporaries do. The immediacy of the shock-impact, the inability to see in perspective the conditions the satirist is lampooning generally prevent the world from appreciating a contemporary satirist. This point is charmingly confirmed by two remarks by Hebbel himself. Of the illustrious Aristophanes he wrote in a letter of 5 January 1843 to Dr. Rendtorf: "Nach meiner Ansicht kommt eine solche Vollendung der Form selbst bei den Griechen nicht zum zweitenmal vor; bei den Neueren

6. Both these quotations are contained in an essay, "Griechische Komödie", by Otto Weinreich published in the programme of the Münchener Kammerspiele for Der Frieden by Aristophanes, adapted by Peter Hacks, season 1964/65, premiere 20 September 1964.

nun ja ohnehin nicht. Es ist strengste Geschlossenheit und freistes Darüberstehen zu gleicher Zeit. Die Philologen wundern sich, daß er den sogenannten Plan so oft fallen läßt. Die Narren! Eben darum nannte ihn Plato den Liebling der Grazien, und er ist nicht bloß ihr Liebling, er ist ihr Mann, er hat ihnen zu gebieten. Wahrlich, die wahnsinnige Trunkenheit, womit er den Schlauch, worin er eben seinen Wein gefaßt hat, zerreißt und ihn gen Himmel, den Olympiern in die Augen spritzt, ist die höchste Höhe der Kunst; er verbrennt Opfer und Altar zugleich."⁷ If Hebbel was able to appreciate the special humour of Aristophanes, he was certainly unable to appreciate the special humour of Nestroy, for Wagner, likewise the victim of Nestroy's parodistic muse, is quoted as saying: "Der verstorbene Hebbel bezeichnete mir einmal im Gespräche die eigentümliche Gemeinheit des Wiener Komikers Nestroy damit, daß eine Rose, wenn dieser daran gerochen haben würde, jedenfalls stinken müßte."⁸ The tone is different indeed, and may possibly be explained by the fact that Hebbel was not parodied by Aristophanes.

The phenomenon of laughter was also viewed in a different light by the Greeks than by the audiences of our civilization. Laughter was loved by the gods, who thus sanctioned the laughter of comedy, even

7. Quoted at the end of Weinreich's essay (see fn. 6). I was not able to find this letter in the edition Friedrich Hebbels Briefe by Richard Maria Werner (Berlin, 1900).

8. "Nestroy Feier", Die Fackel, No. 351, June 1912, p. 31.

when it verged on the obscene, for even the sad goddess was enlivened and moved to laughter by the obscene jokes of her maid Jambe... For the Greeks obscenity was a proper and natural component of comedy; with the progress of two thousand years later generations are shocked and revolted. Laughter itself has even experienced periods of complete disrepute, as Lord Chesterfield advised his son: "Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill-manners: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit or sense never yet made any body laugh; they are above it; they please the mind and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. ...A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it; a plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is; not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions." ⁹ It would be interesting to know what Lord Chesterfield thought about Shakespeare's comedies.

The only conclusion that one can reach about the standards for judging the merit of a satirist must be, therefore, that there is no

9. "Lord Chesterfield's Advice to his Son", in Practical Morality or a Guide to Men and Manners (London, 1820), pp. 63-64.

final conclusion. How the satirist will be judged depends upon the attitudes, tastes and usages of the people who judge him, and this will inevitably result in some sort of bias. If we have no consistent measures even in our views on laughter, anything provoking such a sophisticated laughter as satire will inevitably be subject to the ebb and flow of popular opinion. Die letzten Tage der Menschheit must surely be one of the most serious pieces of writing in existence, even by virtue of the grotesqueness of the laughter it may provoke. It is also one of the most obviously satirical works of our time. It is, therefore, with some astonishment that we read the following remark made by an influential Landesgerichtsrat which Karl Kraus recounts with amused exasperation in Die Fackel: "Schkandäl - wenn solche Sachen in einer Satire vorkommen, na scheen; aber in einem teiern und ernst sein wollenden Buch, unaheert!" 10

Misunderstanding and prejudice seem, therefore, to be the satirist's lot, possibly because, even if he understands his contemporaries too well for their personal comfort, he himself must take sides in his fight against the world. Anyone occupied with studying the satirist must also venture on to the battle-field, because faced with the extreme views, the attacks, the insults, the veiled irony or the grimace of the grotesque, one cannot remain indifferent. The satirist has a bad

10. No. 657, August 1924, p. 73.

reputation which, I would say, is generally undeserved. As long as satire remains at a low level of tasteless personal invective it cannot be defended and it will not live, but good satire is one of the most demanding of phenomena. It requires a minute control of language, a mind which penetrates to the core of vice and wrong-doing whilst all around are oblivious of their existence, and it demands the personality, the courage and the conviction to put the meaning across. Nor is the satirist necessarily a misanthropist; on the contrary, good satire presupposes a love of those who suffer under the wrong-doing which it is attacking. The writings of satirists themselves confirm the assertion that the ultimate aim of the genuine and convinced satirist is positive. Karl Kraus himself said: "Die Satire ist fern aller Feindseligkeit und bedeutet ein Wohlwollen für eine ideale Gesamtheit, zu der sie nicht gegen, aber durch die realen Einzelnen dringt." ¹¹

Similarly the Spanish satirist Mariano José de Larra wrote exactly one hundred years before Kraus's death: "Somos satíricos, porque queremos criticar abusos, porque quisiéramos contribuir con nuestras débiles fuerzas a la perfección posible de la sociedad a que tenemos la honra de pertenecer." ¹²

11. Beim Wort genommen, p. 289.

12. "De la sátira y de los satíricos" in Artículos de crítica literaria y artística, vol. II (Madrid, 1960), p. 188; first appeared in El Español, 2 March, 1836. Larra (1809-1837) is significant primarily as/.....

For Karl Kraus eternal life lay in the power of the mind, and conversely the decay of the mind meant the downfall of the world. He was convinced that the fruits of his own mind were worth immortalizing, for the mystical power of the word, of language, enshrined them. Lesser minds are, however, capable of misinterpreting and garbling even the language to which Kraus devoted his life in forming, and, while he is gradually becoming the fashionable but more than a little dubious writer in modern study and thought, justice is still not being done to him. His language is certainly an object of great admiration, his material is considered daring - but Kraus is still either a worshipped idol or a highly suspicious character. The vital power of his penetrating mind is still not realized sufficiently. Kraus even seemed to have a presentiment of this himself, for in 1930, six years before his death, he composed an epitaph for himself which might well echo the fate of many a maligned and misinterpreted fellow-satirist:

"Wie leer ist es hier
an meiner Stelle.
Vertan alles Streben.
Nichts bleibt von mir
als die Quelle,
die sie nicht angegeben." 13

* * * * *

as a journalist and critic of his contemporary Spain. His articles fall into 3 groups: 1) Artículos de costumbres, 2) Artículos políticos y sociales and 3) Artículos de crítica literaria y artística, these last dealing with French and Spanish classical literature and contemporary Spanish literature. A feature of his writing is satirical sarcasm in style and pessimism in tone. In Larra's view satire should serve society. He condemns personal invective. His early death was the result of suicide.

13. "Die Quelle: der Geist, welchem dieses vertane Streben entsprungen

NOTE

The wording of the passages referred to above in fn. 13, p. 234 and fn. 19, p. 236, and quoted on those pages, is taken from Rosner's undated two-volume edition of Nestroy's selected works, vol. 2, Nestroy-Lexikon, p. 19 and p. 8 respectively. The wording found in Rommel is less picturesque and less rhythmical, hence I preferred Rosner's wording for a discussion of the aphorism. In Rommel's edition the passages run:

"... die leere Pasteten meines Innern muß g'füllt werden mit den Tauben der Zärtlichkeit, über den Schmarren meines Lebens muß der Zucker der Liebe gestreut werden. Das is die Kochkunst, die das Verlobungsfest verherrlichen muß."

and

"Ja, beim Heiraten muß man nit voreilig sein; das is ein Schritt, der Überlegung braucht; so mancher tummelt sich beim Unterschreiben des Eh'kontraktes und glaubt, jetzt wird er Mitglied des seligsten Vereins und derweil schreibt man sich in die wechselseitige Lebensverbitterungsanstalt ein."

.

The passage quoted on p. 147, lines 7-10, above is taken from the Rommel-Brukner edition. Kraus's version in "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" runs:

"... bei dem die Ruhe seine einzige Arbeit ist; er liegt von höheres Macht gefesselt," etc.

n/

APPENDICES AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

The satirical significance of names

1. Nestroy (Chapter II, Section 1):¹

(a) Names indicating wealth and aristocracy:

- (i) Baron von Massengold - Der Unbedeutende
- (ii) Frau von Frankenfrei - Freiheit in Krähwinkel
- (iii) Hippolyt Schwamm Edler
von Waschhausen - Kampl
- (iv) Herr von Goldfuchs - Zu ebener Erde und erster
Stock
- (v) Herr von Sonnenstern - Glück, Mißbrauch und Rückkehr
- (vi) Herr von Nelkenstein - Eulenspiegel

(b) Names indicating dominant characteristics:

(i) Dullness or weakness of character:

Willibald Wachs (Freiheit in Krähwinkel).
Semmelschmarrn (Nagerl und Handschuh). (Sammel, SGer.: Brötchen.
Schmarren, lit. SG: a scrambled pancake commonly eaten in
Austria in particular; also used /slang/ with meaning "trash".
Herr von Wachsweich (opposite Herr von Steinfels), (Zu e. Erde).
Herr von Gigl (Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt). (gigel-gagel: dial.
for wigel-wagel, wacklig.)

(ii) Unpleasant characteristics:

Frau von Schnabelbeiß (Freiheit in Krähwinkel).
Herr von Wichtig (Die schlimmen Buben).
Herr Zangler (Einen Jux will er sich machen). (Zanga dial.:
bissige Weibsperson; or, if there is any such intention
behind this name, from HG Zange, as a metaphor for his
precise, biting, clipped manner.)
Konstantius Immerzorn (Der Affe und der Bräutigam).

1. This is a selection of Nestroy's names to indicate any special tendencies, not a comprehensive list.

Herr von Falsch (Der Treulose); (cf. Treuhold, his servant).
Frau Zachelhuberin (Eisenbahnheiraten). (Zasch'n dial. slang:
liederliches Weibsbild).

(iii) Miscellaneous:

Herr Zins (Zu ebener Erde), Herr Zwinger (Mein Freund), both
landlords.

Sigmund Siegl (Freiheit in Krähwinkel) - official.

Rummelpuff (Freiheit in Krähwinkel) - military commander.

(Rummel: Aufstand, Tumult; Puff (dial.): Stoß.)

Eberhard Ultra (Freiheit in Krähwinkel).

Monsieur Bonbon (Zu ebener Erde) - dandy.

(c) Names indicating trade or profession:

Ignaz Stimmstock, violin-maker - Eisenbahnheiraten
Patzmann, painter (patzen: bungle)¹
Kipfl, baker (Kipfel: Hörnchen)
Strudl, landlord - Lumpazivagabundus
Zwirn, tailor's mate
Knieriem, cobbler's mate
Leim, joiner (mate)
Hobelmann, master joiner
Gluthammer, locksmith - Der Zerrissene
Krautkopf, tenant farmer
Riegl, watchman - Glück, Mißbrauch und Rückkehr
Aspik, cook - Zu ebener Erde
Faden } ropemakers
Strick } - Die beiden Nachtwandler
Frau Schmittling, herb-seller
Flachs, weaver - Der Unbedeutende
Mehlwurm, a rich miller - Eulenspiegel
Plutzerkern, gardener (dial.:
Kürbissame, pumpkin seed) - Der Talisman
Flora Baumscheer, gardener

(d) Others:

Ramsperl (unreiner, unruhiger
Mensch) - Nagerl und Handschuh

1. Cf. Patzmann (ironical), village surgeon in Nur Ruhe.

Protschpak, Bohemian baker (czech. <u>proč pak: Warum gar?</u>)	- <u>Eisenbahnheiraten</u>
Schnoferl (<u>schnofeln</u> , dial.: <u>schniffeln</u>)	- <u>Das Mädl aus der Vorstadt</u>
Tratschmiedl (<u>Tratsch: Geschwätz</u>)	- <u>Tritschtratsch</u>
Wampl (<u>Wamme, Wamperl</u> , dial.: <u>Bäuchlein</u>)	- <u>Die schlimmen Buben</u>
Titus Feuerfuchs, red-head	- <u>Der Talisman</u>
Weinberl (dial. <u>Rosine</u>)	- <u>Einen Jux will er sich machen</u>

2. K r a u s (Chapter III, Section 2):

(a) Die letzten Tage der Menschheit:

(i) Many characters are left unnamed as types:

e.g. I,1: Ein Gebildeter. Ein Wiener. Eine Prostituierte.
Ein Intellektueller. Ein alter Abonent der Neuen Freien
Presse.

I,13: Ein Schwerbetrunkenener. Ein Paar. Ein Kondukteur.
Ein galizisches Flüchtlingspaar. Ein Verzehrungssteuerbeamter.
Ein Wiener.

(ii) Sometimes characters are connected with a single
characteristic or event, which might normally be considered
insignificant, but which Kraus stresses:

I,1: Eine Dame mit leichtem Anflug von Schnurrbart.

II,22: Ein älterer korpulenter Herr mit Koteletts und
Zwicker, der in jeder Hand einen Marschallsstab trägt.

II,9: Eine Dame, die soeben mit tiefer Empfindung Heine
rezitiert hat.

(iii) This trick is also used to provoke horror:

II,1: Ein Schwerverwundeter auf Krücken, mit Glieder-
zuckungen.

V,1: Zwei Beinstömpfe in einer abgerissenen Uniform.

V,3: Eine Frau, die soeben vor Hunger zusammengebrochen
ist.

(iv) Some/.....

Appendix A (contd.)

(iv) Some characters are indicated with lengthy or exaggeratedly exact explanation:

II,8: Der ungenannt sein wollende Herr Oberleutnant, der in Schaumanns Apotheke, Stockerau, zu Gunsten des Roten Kreuzes den Betrag von 1 K erlegt hat.

V,11: Kriegsgeneralversammlung des sozialdemokratischen Wahlvereines des Großberliner Riesenwahlkrieses Teltow-Beskow-Storkow-Charlottenburg.

(v) Many characters are left entirely vague and anonymous:

III,25: Zwei junge Männer.

III,27: Zwei andere junge Männer.

(vi) Sometimes Kraus works with intensification:

II,12: Ein starker Esser. Ein normaler Esser. Ein Hungernder.

(vii) Names:

Historical figures: Wilhelm II, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hindenburg.

Names of exaggerated figures:

I,5: Graf Leopold Franz Rudolf Ernest Vinzenz Immoenz Maria. Baron Eduard Alois Josef Ottokar Ignazius Eusebius Maria.

II,13: Hofrat i.P. Dlahobetzky von Dlahobetz.
Hofrat i.P. Tibetanzl.

Particularly unusual names, especially those indicating by suffixes or formation of what descent their owners are:

-igg suffix (Carinthia): Pogatschnigg, Frau Pogatschnigg (III,11).

Slavonic names: I,9: Kotzlik, Czechowiczka.

V,25: Pollatschek.

-l, -erl suffixes indicating South German, Austrian birth:

I,9: Anderle, Fleischanderl, Süßmandl.

Children: Willichen, Mariechen, Hänschen, Trüdchen, etc. (III,40).

Generally, however, Kraus prefers to leave his characters unnamed.

(b) Die/.....

(b) Die Unüberwindlichen:

Many characters also left unnamed.

Barkassy, word-play on Bekessy.

Camillioni, word-play on Camillo Castiglioni.

Names indicating type: the officials Hinsichtl and
Rücksichtl of Die Pfeife (cf. Sigmund Siegl in Nestroy's
Freiheit in Krahwinkel).

APPENDIX B

The pattern of scenes in

Die letzten Tage der Menschheit

1. The Vorspiel and each of the 5 acts open with a crowd-scene on the Sirk-Ecke of the Ringstraße.
2. The reception scenes on the railway stations Südbahnhof (Vorspiel, 10) and Nordbahnhof (V,52) form a kind of "frame" to the action.

Most of the scenes then fall into clearly discernible groups.

Each type of scene recurs at fairly regular intervals, sometimes increasing in frequency as the play progresses. Such scenes are marked *.

3. Conversation scenes:

- (a) in cafés, restaurants, night-clubs, etc.:

Vorspiel, 2.
Act I, 10, 17.
Act II, 9, 17, 25.
Act III, 29, 45.
Act IV, 35.
Act V, 10, 25.

- (b) in streets:

Act I, 5, 11, 13, 25, 30.
Act II, 4, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 30.
Act III, 4, 24, 26, 30, 46.
Act IV, 5, 26, 27, 33.
Act V, 9, 19, 26, 39, 40, 45, 53.

- (c) in or in front of specified buildings:

Act I, 6, 7, 8, 22.
Act II, 22.
Act III, 5, 6, 7, 25, 27.
Act IV, 4.
Act V, 3, 30.

*(d) Nörgler and Optimist:

Act I, 4, 15, 29.
Act II, 2, 10, 29.
Act III, 14, 39, 41.
Act IV, 2, 15, 29, 36, 40, 42.
Act V, 2, 8, 18, 31, 33, 42, 44, 49 (Nörgler alone: V, 54).

(e) Abonment and Patriot:

Act II, 3, 26.
Act III, 37.
Act IV, 19, 24.
Act V, 12, 17, 29.

(f) In private houses:

Act I, 14.
Act II, 21, 33.
Act IV, 18, 22, 45.

(g) In the Berlin Tiergarten:

Act III, 34.
Act IV, 27.

Vienna Stadtpark:

Act V, 43.

4. Scenes set in public places:

(a) cinema, theatre, lecture hall:

Act II, 24, 28.
Act III, 35, 36.
Act IV, 28.
Act V, 28.

(b) churches or places with religious significance:

Act I, 27.
Act III, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

(c) trains or railway stations:

Act I, 13.
Act IV, 3, 16.
Act V, 2, 47.

Appendix B (contd.)

(d) public meetings:

Act III, 11.
Act V, 7, 11.

*(e) hospitals or camps:

Act IV, 13, 41.
Act V, 35, 36.

(f) Volksschule:

Act I, 9. ("frame-scene" comparable to stations/ scenes, 2.)
Act V, 23.

(g) Wurstelprater:

Act II, 8.

5. Scenes set in official buildings:

*(a) offices, etc.:

Vorspiel, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.
Act I, 19.
Act II, 15, 16.
Act III, 22, 28, 43.
Act IV, 17, 21, 44.
Act V, 4, 13, 21, 22, 24.

(b) newspaper houses:

Act I, 28.
Act III, 20.
Act IV, 43.
Act V, 16, 38.

(c) war archives:

Act III, 9.

(d) law-courts:

Act III, 13.
Act IV, 30, 32.

(d) police station:

Act IV, 34.

6. Military scenes:

(a) on the front or in battle:

Act I, 20, 21, 23, 26.
Act II, 5, 6, 7.
Act III, 3, 42.
Act IV, 10.
Act V, 14, 15, 32, 27, 37.

*(b) other scenes with military background (e.g. headquarters):

Act I, 16, 18, 24.
Act II, 30, 31, 32.
Act III, 2, 23, 31, 33.
Act IV, 9, 11, 12, 14, 37, 38, 39, 44.
Act V, 5, 6, 20, 41, 51, 55.

7. Miscellaneous:

(a) scenes in lonely or unfriendly surroundings:

Act I, 2, 3.
Act II, 27.
Act III, 32.
Act V, 46.

(b) scenes with some medical background (e.g. doctor's surgery):

Act III, 10, 21.
Act IV, 7, 8.

(c) others:

Act II, 14.
Act III, 8, 12, 38, 40, 44.
Act IV, 26, 20, 23, 25, 31.
Act V, 34, 46, 47, 50.

APPENDIX C

Articles referring to Nestroy in Die Fackel ¹

(Taken from the microfilm in the Vienna Stadtbibliothek of
Professor Karl Jaray's Fackel-Katalog)

<u>Article reference</u>	<u>Issue no.</u>	<u>Page</u>
Nestroy Denkmal	781	48
	811	98, 103
Nestroy-Feier, 2. Mai 1912	349	41
Die Presse	351	28, 43
Nestroy und das Burgtheater	75	22
	88	21
Causa Herzl contra Nestroy	88	11
Der liberale Nestroy	89	31
	91	27
Freiheit im Krähwinkel	254	1
Girardi und Kainz (Valentin)	254	4
	349	8
	595	53, 76
Friedjung über Nestroy	343	30
Nestroy gegen Friedjung	345	40
Necker, Biographie	343	30
Zur Nestroy-Feier	347	27
"Nestroy und die Nachwelt" ²	349	1
Nestroy und Hofmannsthal	349	7
Nestroy, Scholz, Girardi, Wedekind	349	8
Dialekt	349	15
	676	24
Monologe, Sätze, Couplets	349	42
<u>Hauptling Abendwind</u>	351	32
Von der Nestroy-Woche	351	45

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1. Only the first number of the issue and the first page of the article, if the reference is simultaneously the title of the article, are given.
 2. "Nestroy und die Nachwelt" occupies the first 23 pages of No. 349. Hence the following 3 references are contained in it.

<u>Article reference</u>	<u>Issue no.</u>	<u>Page</u>
Birinski	384	32
	387	7
Von Spekulanten, Dilettanten und Alkoholikern geschändet	400	48
Glasbrenner	400	43
<u>Die beiden Nachtwandler</u>	405	3
	445	95
Nestroy und die Berliner	431	53
Nestroy und Hebbel	457	53
Nestroy und Shakespeare	462	71
(Verweser seiner selbst)	484	132
Rausch-Humor	577	51
Nestroy und die Literaten	595	53
Peter Sturmbusch	608	40
Nestroy-Zyklus	613	42
Zeitgenössisches Publikum und zeitgenössische Kritik	613	47
	657	100
	668	67
	679	38, 90
Friedells <u>Das ist klassisch</u>	613	51
Nestroy-Kenner	632	130, 131
Nestroy-Ausgaben	668	66
	676	42
	781	55
<u>Eine Wohnung zu vermieten</u>	668	64
Meine Zusatzstrophen	676	20
Nestroy und Grillparzer	679	81
	864	55
Wiener Theaterbrief in Klagenfurt	679	88
Drei verschollene Lieder:		
Tischlerlied	679	91
Heiraten	691	35
	697	36
	706	50
Holzhackerlied	691	35
	697	36
Nestroy und Anzengruber	697	39
Die Musik in Nestroys Stücken	706	51
Von Nestroy-Bühnen	717	40
Die Wiener und Nestroy	781	48
Nestroy als Jupiter in Offenbach's <u>Orpheus</u>	845	9
Schändung des <u>Lumpazi</u> in Berlin	857	50

APPENDIX D

Relevant references in Die Fackel¹

<u>Article reference</u>	<u>Issue no.</u>	<u>Page</u>
<u>Theater:</u>		
Größe und Niedergang der deutschen Theaters	697	30
Das moderne Theater	294	46
Die Literaturlüge auf dem Theater	457	53
Kraus und das Theater	561	105
	649	14
Untergang der volkstümlichen Wiener Theaterkunst	239	39
Wiener Theateraffären	245	13
Ensemble und künstlerische Individualität	254	5
Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne	270	1
	759	39
Wien und Berlin	175	17
	222	15
	227	37
Das Recht des Publikums	190	19
	261	9
<u>Vorleser, Vorlesungen:</u>		
Ich und das Publikum	336	41
Der Vorleser	472	23
Unbefugte Vorleser	508	26
	857	63
Warum ich vorlese	384	28
	531	35
	583	51
200 Vorlesungen über das geistige Wien	676	47
<u>Satiriker:</u>		
Das Problem des Satirikers	351	42
Die Schwächen der Schwachen	360	14
Bühnensatire	57	3
Die Satire ist wehrlos	472	26
Satirisches Betrachten	622	107
Die Symbolkraft des satirischen Wortes	827	74

1. See Appendix C, p. 264, fn. 1.

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