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GEORG BÜCHNER'S DANTONS TOD AS A POSSIBLE  
SOURCE FOR PETER WEISS'S  
MARAT/SADE

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## INTRODUCTION

E. M. Fleissner writes that "revolt is central to the drama. . . ." and in Georg Büchner's Dantons Tod and Peter Weiss's Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats dargestellt durch die Schauspielgruppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade revolt becomes revolution.<sup>1</sup> Specifically the French Revolution serves as both plays' backdrop, and in them Büchner and Weiss recount two of the Revolution's most terrifying events, the execution of Danton and the murder of Marat, respectively. These plays, however, are not mere dramatizations of history because in<sup>to</sup> each the author injects his own opinions and ideas so that they become personal statements, not only about revolution, but about life in general.

This thesis is a discussion of similarities in origin, idea and technique of both dramas; thus it is an attempt to establish Dantons Tod as a possible source for Marat/Sade.<sup>2</sup> Although Weiss himself, to the best of this writer's knowledge, has never acknowledged an indebtedness to Büchner, an observant reader cannot fail to notice in Marat/Sade many echoes of Büchner's thought and also many dramatic techniques which Büchner devised and utilized a century ago. Critical circles on both sides of the Atlantic have recognized the similarity and relationship between the two. For example,

Curt Hohoff writing for Merkur refers to Büchner as one of Weiss's literary Vorläufer.<sup>3</sup> In his review of the Paris production of Marat/Sade Jean Duvignaud comments: "Peter Weiss connaît l'aventure dramatique contemporaine: il sait que le plus moderne des dramaturges romantiques, Georg Büchner, rencontre à Strassbourg, où il fait ses études, les survivants de la conspiration de Babeuf et qu'il écrit sa Mort de Danton à leur lointaine des torches de Septembre."<sup>4</sup> In the United States Harry T. Moore contends that Weiss's play "is not really new theater. . . ." because of a long series of literary precursors, the first of whom was Georg Büchner.<sup>5</sup> Finally, Newsweek's drama critic attempts to define the similarity when he writes: "In bringing together two crucial figures of the French Revolutionary era, Weiss, like Georg Büchner, whose 'Danton's Death' has clearly influenced him, confronts one perennial view of history and human nature with another."<sup>6</sup> The existence of a relationship is patently obvious; its nature is more elusive.

To investigate this relationship my thesis will first consider both Weiss's and Büchner's backgrounds and note what must surely be an unusual series of coincidences. Next, it will analyze in detail the exact manner of dramatic development each author uses. With this background material in mind, it will next turn to the plays themselves and consider the dramatic and technical similarities. Initially, there is the overriding problem of Büchner's and Weiss's opinion towards

revolution. Each author had different beliefs, and the ideas presented in these dramas must be considered. Since both plays are essentially stage works, some attention must be given to their theatrical aspects, and in the correspondence here one finds much that is intriguing. Finally, this thesis will scrutinize the major characters' philosophies to see if any relationships are therein revealed.

The amount of published material on these two authors at times seems astonishing, especially when one considers that both of them are relative "newcomers" to German literary criticism. Of the available works, two have been of immense aid and should be singled out as especially worthwhile: Karl Viëtor's Georg Büchner and Karlheinz Braun's Materialien zu Peter Weiss' Marat/Sade.

## GEORG BÜCHNER

To obtain the background material necessary to study Dantons Tod, this thesis will first examine Büchner from a biographical standpoint. In doing so, it will pay particularly close attention not only to early influences on him, but also to his political philosophy and activities.

The son of a former military doctor and an extremely religious and sensitive mother, Georg Büchner was born on 17 October 1813, in Goddeau<sup>12</sup>, situated near the Hessian capital, Darmstadt.<sup>7</sup> Three years later the family moved to Darmstadt, where Georg grew up the oldest of six children. The Büchners appear to have been reasonably prosperous, and one finds in this earlier period little or nothing to foreshadow Georg's despair of later years. Indeed, the family situation was conducive to Büchner's development in two of the areas - politics and science - on which he left his mark.

His father, Ernst Karl Büchner, had served as a military doctor with Napoleon's forces in Holland, and "had become imbued with the contemporary French spirit in politics and social life. . . ."8 He was a Francophile, and through him Georg learned French history and first met the characters of the Revolution. One would certainly be overstepping the historical boundaries to describe the elder Büchner as a revolutionary; he most certainly was not, and his son's political activities always concerned him. Nevertheless,

it is not inaccurate to say that Ernst Büchner was a liberal, and that his influence is partially responsible for Georg's early feeling of social conscience.

That Büchner studied science and undertook medical studies was no accident, but primarily the result of family influence. That Georg's father, uncle and grandfather were doctors and Georg himself and his brother Ludwig were scientists indicates science's importance to the Büchner family. Karl Viëtor comments on this tradition in the Büchner family: "Wo die Arzneikunst so sehr als Familientradition gelten konnte, daß man sagen darf, sie habe den Büchners im Blut gesteckt, war es gewiß nicht merkwürdig, wenn Georg schon früh zur Naturwissenschaft sich entschloß. Merkwürdig war vielmehr, daß er dichterisches Genie besaß. Das hatte diese Familie bisher noch nicht hervorgebracht."<sup>9</sup>

Büchner's first schooling came under Dr. Carl Weiterhausen in Darmstadt and later at the Ludwig-Georgs-Gymnasium.<sup>10</sup> Here he early turned his vision to politics and philosophy. One comment by a youthful friend, Ludwig Wilhelm Luck, is interesting for its illumination of a social conscience in Büchner so early in life: "Er war nicht gewillt, daß die Unwissenheit des Volks benützt werde, es zu betrügen oder zum Werkzeug zu machen."<sup>11</sup> Thus, that Büchner would later turn to politics certainly comes as no surprise. His

friends indicated the wide range of his literary interests, from Shakespeare to Faust, and also his dislikes, Schiller in particular. His only works extant from this period are school essays, which ironically enough comprise more pages than his seriously intended literary output. Like his readings, they also indicate the breadth of his interest at the Gymnasium. The titles range from Kato von Utika to Über die Freundschaft, and in his essay on suicide one finds several strikingly modern sociological ideas.<sup>12</sup> Büchner's early schooling, therefore, foreshadows the later, more mature writer's talent and interests.

Büchner continued his education in the fall of 1831 at the University of ~~S~~Straßburg, which his father had chosen to acquaint his son further with French culture and for its medical school's high quality. There Büchner soon made himself welcome, and this period was probably the happiest he knew. He lodged with a Protestant minister, Johann Jakob Jaeglé, to whose daughter Minna he later became secretly engaged. In addition, Jaeglé provided Büchner with Pastor Oberlin's diary, which served as the basis for the fragmentary story Lenz. In Straßburg Büchner had a reasonably wide set of friends, foremost among whom were August and Wilhelm Stöber, and it is through these friends that he first became actively involved in politics.

The Straßburg political climate at the time was very



conducive to such activity. Until the French Revolution the town had remained culturally German, but in the years following that event the mood and spirit became almost entirely French.<sup>13</sup> In addition, many German political refugees streamed into Straßburg seeking safety and also a convenient location to organize revolution for export. They assembled from there and elsewhere and unsuccessful raid on the "beiden Militärwachen in Frankfurt."<sup>14</sup> Whether or not Büchner knew of this attack is open to question, but his concern with politics in this period cannot be denied. For example, a friend years later said that Büchner had participated in a local chapter of the Society of the Rights of Man, although no other evidence supports this assertion. In Straßburg one will find not only the political activist Büchner, but also the incipiently disillusioned Büchner. Indeed, the ideas and beliefs that were to play so important a role in Dantons Tod had their genesis here.

The letters which Büchner sent his family fully reveal the actual importance that politics had for him. Only nine are still extant, and many appear to be incomplete. Büchner's ambivalent attitude toward politics is apparent from the beginning. The first letter describes a political demonstration for the Polish revolutionary Romarino who had fled Poland in 1831. Büchner recounts the activity and the excite-

ment and then concludes with a revealing personal comment: "Darauf erscheint Romarino auf dem Balkon, dankt, man ruft Vivat - und die Komödie ist fertig."<sup>15</sup> This variety of political demonstration was, indeed, nothing but a Komödie to Büchner; he had no use for it. A subsequent letter in December 1832, probably intended to reassure the family of Georg's noninvolvement in political activities, reveals Büchner's despair of the hope for political action. It concludes: "Für eine politische Handlung habe ich keine Zeit mehr, es wäre auch nicht der Mühe wert, das Ganze ist doch nur eine Komödie. Der König und die Kammern regieren; und das Volk klatscht und bezahlt."<sup>16</sup> But in the new year, the tone of Büchner's letters began to change, and one senses the ascendant spirit of violent rebellion and his belief in revolution as the single path for the equality struggle to follow. On 5 April 1833, he writes: "Meine Meinung ist die: Wenn in unserer Zeit etwas helfen soll, so ist es Gewalt. Wir wissen, was wir von unseren Fürsten zu erwarten haben. Alles, was sie bewilligten, wurde ihnen durch die Notwendigkeit abgezwungen."<sup>17</sup> Yet even in such a powerful letter Büchner does not yield fully to revolution; he says such action is all in vain:

Wenn ich an dem, was geschehen, keinen Teil nehmen werde, so geschieht es weder aus Mißbilligung noch aus Furcht, sondern nur weil ich im gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt jede revolutionäre Bewegung als eine ver-

gebliche Unternehmung betrachte. . . .<sup>18</sup>

This same despairing thought about political action recurs again in a June letter worthy of quotation in full:

Ich werde zwar immer meiner Grundsätzen gemäß handeln, habe aber in neuerer Zeit gelernt, daß nur das notwendige Bedürfnis der großen Masse Umänderungen herbeiführen kann, daß alles Bewegen und Schreien der einzelnen vergebliches Torenwerk ist. Sie schreiben - man liest sie nicht; sie schreien - man hört sie nicht; sie handeln - man hilft ihnen nicht. . . .Ihr könnt voraussehen, daß ich mich in die Gießener Winkelpolitik und revolutionären Kinderstreiche nicht einlassen werde.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in Straßburg, two thoughts ruled Büchner's political mind: his desire for social reform and his belief that political activity could not achieve its goals.

Because a Hessian ordinance required that students spend at least two years at a regional university, Büchner transferred to the University of Gießen in 1833, and it is here and in nearby Darmstadt that his political activity reaches its apex. Leaving behind his fiancée Minna, a circle of good friends and also that small amount of freedom he had enjoyed in Straßburg displeased Büchner enormously. He expressed his distasteful reaction to the region and city in a letter to Minna, probably written early in 1834:

"Hier ist kein Berg, wo die Aussicht frei sei. Hügel hinter Hügel und breite Täler, eine hohle Mittelmäßigkeit in allem;

ich kann mich nicht an diese Natur gewöhnen, und die Stadt ist abscheulich."<sup>20</sup> Büchner's reaction to his detestable surroundings was to withdraw and to be aloof. Karl Vogt, one of his acquaintances at the time, reminisced: "Offen gestanden, dieser Georg Büchner war uns nicht sympatisch."<sup>21</sup> But one must not assume that Büchner had no friends in Gießen, for from early in 1834, he was actively engaged in political activities, despite his recent despair about such efforts.

Soon after his arrival in Gießen, Büchner became associated with the Société des Droits de l'Homme or, as it was probably named there, the Gesellschaft der Menschenrechte. This group differed from most other student organizations in its insistence on a broad class base, including members from every order of society. Whether the group existed in Gießen before Büchner's arrival remains undetermined, but, at any rate, he supplied the force to make it a vital and active organization. Through this society Büchner became friends with August Becker, described by A. H. J. Knight as "eccentric, misanthropic, desperately poor and unhappy. . . an active, if not very effective, revolutionary," and a local radical preacher, Friedrich Ludwig Weidig.<sup>22</sup> Büchner's association with this group of malcontent rebels dates from early 1834, after his return from a stay in Darmstadt to overcome an attack of meningitis.<sup>23</sup> Records of this society's activity and

Büchner's involvement in it are nonexistent except for one pamphlet, Der Hessische Landbote, which resulted in Büchner's permanent exile from Germany.

Büchner's attitude toward politics at this time was ambivalent. On the one hand, he placed little faith in political action, but on the other hand, he felt the current situation compelled him to some action, no matter how ineffective. He expressed this despair and unhappiness in a letter to his family in April 1834, undoubtedly long after his secret subversion had begun:

Ich war [in Gießen] im Äußern ruhig, doch war ich in tiefe Schwermut verfallen; dabei engten mich die politischen Verhältnisse ein, ich schämte mich, ein Knecht zu sein, einem vermoordeten ^/mit Knechten/ Fürstengeschlecht und einem kriechenden Staatsdiener-Aristokratismus zu Gefallen. Ich kam nach Gießen in die widrigsten Verhältnisse, Kummer und Widerwillen machten mich krank.<sup>24</sup>

Though Büchner had probably felt this way for some time, his own letters give no evidence of political concern until 19 March when he describes an "Untersuchung wegen der Verbindungen. . . ." in the Gießen student body.<sup>25</sup> More evidence appears in letters of 25 May and 2 July, which speak of two separate and ineffective demonstrations.<sup>26</sup> Then on 3 August Büchner suddenly writes his family from Frankfurt, telling them: "Ich benutze jeden Vorwand, um mich von meiner Kette loszumachen."<sup>27</sup> He wanted his parents

to believe that he had simply made a pleasure trip, but the concluding sentences lend a clue that more was involved in this journey than scenery: "Den kleinen Umweg machte ich, weil es von dieser Seite [von Offenbach] leichter ist in die Stadt zu kommen, ohne angehalten zu werden. Die Zeit erlaubte mir nicht, mich mit den nötigen Papieren zu versehen."<sup>28</sup> Perhaps there was not sufficient time to collect the proper papers, but then perhaps the journey was not entirely legitimate. A letter written upon return to Gießen on 8 August raises further suspicions about Büchner's activities. In it he recounts his friend Karl Minnigerode's arrest and the authorities' search of his own quarters, and a second letter, dated the end of August, echoes the previous protestations of innocence and noninvolvement in the events which had transpired.<sup>29</sup> But Büchner was not innocent, far from it; he was as deeply involved as the other conspirators.

During the spring and early summer of 1834, Büchner and Weidig had been preparing Der Hessische Landbote, a revolutionary pamphlet. Büchner had composed the first draft, which was very economically oriented and vindictive toward the ruling classes. Weidig, much to Büchner's chagrin, had toned down the document considerably; nevertheless, it retains for the most part Büchner's revolutionary spirit. The force of the accompanying motto "Friede den Hütten; Krieg den Palästen"

certainly indicates Büchner's deep involvement. The revised version was published in July 1834, but in August its existence was revealed to the Hessian authorities who immediately took steps to prevent its distribution, describing it as hochverräterisch.<sup>30</sup> Weidig was immediately arrested, as was Becker and the Minnigerode mentioned in the letter of 5 August. Büchner's trip to Frankfurt was actually to warn accomplices there, and elsewhere, of what had happened. He himself remained unmolested by the authorities but did not resume his studies at the University. In October 1834, Büchner moved to Darmstadt and lived there with his family until March 1835. During this period he was under constant suspicion not only by the authorities, but also by his family, who were not fully cognizant of his activities in Gießen. It was in this turbulent and apprehensive period that Dantons Tod, of which Chapter Two contains a detailed discussion, emerged.

On 21 February 1835, Büchner sent Dantons Tod to Karl Gutzkow who had agreed to publish it, and he himself fled to Straßburg. He remained there until September 1836, trying to support himself by writings and translations and completing his required scientific studies. He had decided to pursue a teaching career and spent much time preparing his dissertation Mémoire sur le système nerveux du barbeau,

which he read to the Straßburg Society of Natural History. Although reunited with his fiancée and once again in the town which had afforded him so much pleasure, Büchner was still not completely happy. His flight from Germany had alienated him from his father, who now denied him financial support. In addition he worried about his friends' arrest and imprisonment and feared for his own safety. At the same time, the pace of work which financial need forced upon him was crippling. In the year and a half in Straßburg, Büchner completed translations of Victor Hugo's Maria Tudor and Lucretia Borgia, finished Leonce und Lena (submitted too late to a national comedy competition in 1836), and began work on Lenz, Woyzeck, and Pietro Aretino. As the year progressed and Büchner's workload multiplied, he became more despondent and unhappy. On 1 June 1836, he reported to a friend, Eugen Boeckel, that he had completed his dissertation and that "Ich war wie ein Kranker. . . konnte nichts weiter, als mir die fatale Arbeit vom Hals schaffen."<sup>31</sup> Although Büchner's unhappiness continued through the summer, he received word in August that the University of Zürich had accepted his dissertation and awarded him a Ph.D. A solution to the ever-present financial worries was at hand, and in September Büchner traveled to Zürich to apply for a position as Privatdozent which was granted after a trial lecture in November.



Büchner led a withdrawn life in Zürich, lodging in Hans Zehnder's home, where his friends Wilhelm and Caroline Schulz also resided. He had prepared lectures on both speculative philosophy and natural history, but delivered only the latter. His spirit was still depressed; maybe the work was too great or maybe he had grown tired of living. At any rate, Büchner was an unhappy man. From Caroline Schulz's diary one learns the details surrounding his last days. A typhoid epidemic had swept the city, and in early February Büchner became ill. During much of his illness he was delirious, and only one quotation from him remains. Recorded by Caroline Schulz, it indicates again the dark cloud that covered his soul: "Wir haben der Schmerzen nicht zu viel, wir haben ihrer zu wenig, denn durch den Schmerz gehen wir zu Gott ein - Wir sind Tod, Staub, Asche, wie dürften wir klagen?"<sup>32</sup> On 19 February Büchner died and was interred in Krautgarten cemetery two days later.

The fame resulting from Dantons Tod's publication faded soon after its author's death, and Büchner almost passed into obscurity. Of his original works only Dantons Tod and Leonce und Lena are complete. Lenz and Woyzeck remain fragments; Pietro Aretino was probably burned by Minna Jaeglé along with a number of other manuscripts. Were it not for the Naturalists, chiefly Gerhart Hauptmann and Frank

Wedekind, Büchner's importance as a literary figure might never have been recognized. It is to their credit and to literature's benefit that Büchner's place of honor now stands assured.

Georg Büchner lived but twenty-four years, yet in that period of time he produced more of value and experienced more of life than men two or three times his age. From childhood, Büchner had a social conscience that demanded expression. He turned first to politics, but that entire sphere of activity soon disillusioned him, a rebuff which forced significant changes in his life. Not only did he leave his home as a consequence, but he also chose literature for financial gain and as a way to express his genuine unhappiness and despair. There is no sense to speculation about what Büchner would have produced had he lived; we must be content with what exists. Dantons Tod is a remarkable work in and of itself; its origins, as the next chapter will reveal, make it all the more so.

## DANTONS TOD: ITS ORIGINS

Having investigated the basic tensions and conflicts that dominated Büchner's life, our attention must now turn to the events surrounding Dantons Tod. This chapter will examine in detail the play's origins, discussing both the circumstances under which Büchner created his drama and also his developing dramatic theory.

Although Büchner's final stay in Darmstadt was not a pleasant one, it fortunately did result in Dantons Tod. Neither his parents nor the authorities were fully aware of his subversive activities, but both groups kept him under suspicion. Büchner fervently wished to effect a quick flight from the country, a desire which a lack of funds effectively blocked. Consequently, it was probably to earn money that he set Dantons Tod to paper. As previously mentioned, Büchner's father, although a political liberal, was no revolutionary, and his son's activities did not please him. Büchner had to work secretly on his emerging play under the cover of other books and manuscripts in his father's office. That he reportedly kept a ladder by the garden wall for quick escape in case the police arrived unexpectedly indicates the political tension which the young dramatist faced. In addition, Büchner was once called before a local judge, but evaded that legal confrontation by having his brother Wilhelm represent him.

Not only did difficulties at home and with the law worry

Büchner, but a troubled soul plagued him as well. One must consider the effect the Gießen events must have had on a person who had so long scorned political activity. His feelings then are found primarily in two documents, Dantons Tod and a letter written to his brother Wilhelm in July following his flight to Straßburg. This letter merits quotation in full because it concisely expresses Büchner's political philosophy at that time:

Ich würde Dir das nicht sagen, wenn ich im entferntesten jetzt an die Möglichkeit einer politischen Umwälzung glauben könnte. Ich habe mich seit einem halben Jahre vollkommen überzeugt, daß nichts zu tun ist und daß jeder, der im Augenblicke sich aufopfert, seine Haut wie ein Narr zu Markte trägt. Ich kann Dir nichts Näheres sagen, aber ich kenne die Verhältnisse; ich weiß, wie schwach, wie unbedeutend, wie zerstückelt die liberale Partei ist, ich weiß, daß ein zweckmäßiges, übereinstimmendes Handeln unmöglich ist und daß jeder Versuch auch nicht zum geringsten Resultate führt. . . Eine genaue Bekanntschaft mit dem Treiben der deutschen Revolutionärs im Auslande hat mich überzeugt, daß auch von dieser Seite nicht das geringste zu hoffen ist. Es herrscht unter ihnen eine babylonische Verwirrung, die nie gelöst werden wird. Hoffen wir auf die Zeit.<sup>33</sup>

As Büchner wrote, he was indeed a soul in torment. Karl Viëtor describes the circumstances: "In der Zeit der höchsten Spannung, den aufregenden Wochen vor der Flucht ist das Drama entstanden, herausgetrieben von dem Seelenkrampf einer schweren Krise."<sup>34</sup>

What is most remarkable about the origins of Dantons Tod is a lack of literary development in Büchner. One does not find a long series of preliminary compositions and literary attempts; instead, there is suddenly, almost overnight, a play, a work of literature. Büchner's development is therefore not that of a Goethe, and indeed, it is maybe most strikingly similar to Wolfgang Borchert's. In these two men one finds the same fast-paced, emotional, and yet comparatively short, outpouring of a soul. Büchner's earlier works consist only of his aforementioned school essays, none of which suggests a high degree of literary talent, and Der Hessische Landbote, an essentially political document. The source of his creative inspiration and the talent to give it form is an unsolved riddle. Karl Viëtor comments: "Bei Büchner gibt es keine früheren Anfänge und keine organische Entfaltung; es gibt keinen Mai, weil es keinen März und keinen April gibt."<sup>35</sup> One can only say that this lack of previous literary production makes Dantons Tod all the more indicative of Büchner's true genius.

Not only did Büchner not spend long years in developing a writing style, but he also did not spend very much time in composing his drama once he decided to write it. The reason for haste he explained in his letter accompanying the manuscript to Gutzkow: "Über das Werk selbst kann ich Ihnen nichts weiter sagen, als daß unglückliche Verhältnisse mich

zwangen, es in höchstens fünf Wochen zu schreiben."<sup>36</sup> As previously mentioned, a primary motivation for writing the play was money, and the need for immediate financial sustenance undoubtedly impelled Büchner to hasty work. But another reason for this almost incredible speed may have been the turbulent state of Büchner's mind at this point. His disappointment and frustration at his unsuccessful political attempt has already been discussed, and it may well be that this unsettled feeling not only provided him with the requisite inspiration, words being the only path left open since the failure of action, but also with the impetus to work quickly. Once more Karl Viëtor neatly synthesizes what may have been Büchner's reasoning:

Mit politischem Wollen und politischer Tat beginnt Büchner; als seine Leidenschaft zum Handeln, zum Verwandeln der zeitgenössischen Wirklichkeit in sich selbst zurückgestaut wird, als die niederschlagende Erfahrung diesen ersten, mit aller Entschlossenheit erstrebten Weg ungangbar findet, da, in dieser Passions- und Kreuzwegstunde wendet sich die Kraft, die aus ihm herausdrängt, in die andere Sphäre, der er seinem eingeborenen Wesen, den Möglichkeiten seiner Natur nach angehört: in die Sphäre der Poesie.<sup>37</sup>

The choice of the French Revolution as the background for his first drama seems perfectly normal. Büchner's father had served with Napoleon and had raised his son to admire "diese erste große Volkserhebung der Neuzeit. . . ." <sup>38</sup> Büchner continued

his historical studies at the Darmstadt Gymnasium and at the University of Gießen. In a letter to Minna Jaeglé from Gießen that bears great value for studies of Büchner's theories concerning revolution, he wrote: "Ich studierte die Geschichte der Revolution. Ich fühlte mich wie zernichtet unter dem gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte."<sup>39</sup> This statement's full implications will be discussed in the chapter on Revolution, but it does indicate Büchner's continuing concern with that historical period.

When Büchner finally turned to writing about the Revolution, three sources served as his drama's basis: F. A. Mignet's Histoire de la révolution française, Adolphe Thier's Histoire de la révolution française, and Carl Strahlheim's (nom de plume for Konrad Friedrich) Unsere Zeit oder geschichtliche Uebersicht der merkwürdigsten Ereignisse von 1789 bis 1830, nach den vorzüglichsten französischen, englischen, und deutschen Werken bearbeitet von einem ehemaligen Offizier der kaiserlich-französischen Armee.<sup>40</sup> From these studies, found in his home and in the Darmstadt library, Büchner derived the external base of his drama. To be sure, the larger part of the play is Büchner's own, but at the same time, much is pure history. Substantial sections, especially the speeches of Danton and Robespierre, are found almost verbatim in the aforementioned studies. While a full discussion of the relevant sections of each work is unnecessary

to this study, a few examples are useful in preparing to contrast Büchner's method of historical drama with Peter Weiss's. For example, there is Danton's famous line: "J'aime mieux. . .être guillotiné que guillotineur. . . ."41 In Dantons Tod the line appears: "Ich will lieber guillotiniert werden als guillotiniere lassen."42 Another striking example appears in a speech by Legendre which appears in Mignet as:

Citoyens, dit Legendre, quatre membres de cette assemblée sont arrêtés de cette nuit: je sais que Danton en est un; j'ignore le nom des autres. Mais, citoyens, je le déclare, je crois Danton aussi pur que moi, et cependant il est dans les fers. On a craint sans doute que ses réponses ne détruisissent les accusations dirigées contre lui; je demande en conséquence, qu'avant que vous entendiez aucun rapport, les détenus soient mandés et entendus.43

In Dantons Tod one finds Legendre saying:

Vier Mitglieder des Nationalkonvents sind verflossene Nacht verhaftet worden. Ich weiß, daß Danton einer von ihnen ist, die Namen der übrigen kenne ich nicht. Mögen sie übrigens sein, wer sie wollen, so verlange ich, daß sie vor den Schranken gehört werden.  
Bürger, ich erkläre es: ich halte Danton für ebenso rein wie mich selbst, und ich glaube nicht, daß mir irgendein Vorwurf gemacht werden kann.42

At the revolutionary tribunal Mignet reports Danton's first words as : "Je suis Danton, assez connu dans la



révolution; j'ai trente-cinq ans. Ma demure sera bientôt le néant, et mon nom vivra dans le Panthéon de l'histoire."<sup>45</sup> Büchner uses almost exactly the same words when he has Danton announce: "Die Revolution nennt meinen Namen. Meine Wohnung ist bald im Nichts und mein Name im Pantheon der Geschichte."<sup>46</sup> From these examples one can readily observe Büchner's exacting use of historical sources.

In a letter to his family defending Dantons Tod against criticism it had received the author expressed his views about playwrights and history:

Was übrigens die sogenannte Unsittlichkeit meines Buchs angeht, so habe ich folgendes zu antworten: der dramatische Dichter ist in meinen Augen nichts als ein Geschichtschreiber. . . . Seine höchste Aufgabe ist der Geschichte, wie sie sich wirklich begeben, so nahe als möglich zu kommen.<sup>47</sup>

One might question whether Büchner actually wrote Dantons Tod in this spirit because he certainly took liberties with history. Indeed, one may question Büchner's interpretation of Danton himself. The historical character was, to be sure, bored with the life he was leading and was beginning to see the futility of the Revolution, but at the same time the old vitality had not completely drained from him and his first intention was to save himself.<sup>48</sup> Yet Büchner's Danton is a completely ambivalent character, and for proof one needs only to compare the Act I opening in which Danton questions

existence itself with his passionate self-defense in Act III. While there is a certain contradiction in the historical Danton's character, Büchner has probably overemphasized this element. The dramatist, however, must not be faulted for this because he wrote history as he observed it, and it was this two-sided Danton that he saw. Viëtor's words again eloquently speak to the problem:

Der Widerspruch in Dantons Charakter ist nicht ein Produkt von Unfähigkeit oder Unsicherheit in der Kraft des Dichters. Nicht, weil Büchner es nicht fertig brachte, Dantons Gestalt zu runden und zu klären, ist sie so tief zwiespältig. Gerade dieser Widerspruch, dies Nicht-"aus-einem-Guß"-Sein, ist ihre Essenz. So sieht Büchner seinen Helden, so will er ihn darstellen. In diesem Widerspruch liegt für ihn das Geheimnis von Dantons Person.<sup>49</sup>

In Dantons Tod's origins one finds a situation probably unique in literary history. Beset by all manner of difficulties, a science student turned to literature both to earn money and to express his frustration. The result was Dantons Tod, a play all the more remarkable because of its author's literary inexperience. Although the drama depends heavily on history for both its story-line and for much of its actual dialogue, it is still a reflection of Büchner's own genius. Indeed, it is probably his own and unique conceptualization of the figures involved that has brought Dantons Tod its fame.

PETER WEISS

The years since World War II have been, comparatively speaking, unfruitful ones for German drama, and the period has not witnessed the growth of a movement like Naturalism or Expressionism in its impact. Instead, one finds only occasional bright flashes of German genius, and foreign works in translation, notably Jean Anouilh's and Thornton Wilder's, have been prominent on the German stage. This is not to say, however, that German drama has seen no important original works; such a claim is factually unsupportable. In the 1950's, the Swiss playwrights Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt achieved brilliant successes with their dramas, and their influence continues strong. Günter Grass is today noteworthy for his early play Die bösen Köche (1961). Then too, one must not overlook the storm that followed both Heinar Kipphardt's In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer (1964) and Rolf Hochhuth's Der Stellvertreter (1963). These works captured the public imagination not only by their basically documentary nature, but also with the deep controversy that each play aroused. Yet, even in the light of these efforts, critics still lament the basic sterility of the German stage.<sup>50</sup> Peter Weiss's Marat/Sade may well be the most important exception to this trend. It is today the subject of public and critical acclaim, and about it one may truly say that it is worthwhile both as good literature and as theater.

Weiss was born on 8 November 1916, in Naves, near

Berlin.<sup>51</sup> His father's Jewish-Hungarian family were grain dealers; the elder Weiss himself, however, converted to Christianity as a youth in Vienna.<sup>52</sup> Weiss's mother was Swiss-Austrian and spent the first years of her marriage in military camps with her husband during World War I. Post-war boundary changes gave the family Czechoslovakian citizenship, even though they continued to reside in Germany. While Weiss was a youth, the family was constantly on the move, and as a consequence, his formal education was chaotic. Nevertheless, even as an adolescent, he appears to have read extensively. In the autobiographical novel Fluchtpunkt (1961), Weiss comments:

Ich las von der Welt der Russen und Franzosen, der Engländer, Amerikaner und Skandinavier, und nichts hinderte mich, dort in Gedanken heimisch zu sein. Ich war verwandt mit Gauguin auf Tahiti, mit van Gogh in Arles, mit Myschkin in Sankt Petersburg, Leutnant Glahn im norwegischen Wald und Fabrizzio in der Karthause von Parma.<sup>53</sup>

One may well comment that, except for the constant wanderings and his partially Jewish background, Weiss's youth appears to be almost ordinary.

When the Nazis assumed power in Germany and instigated their moves against the rest of Europe, the Weisses sensed that they would have to flee. In 1934, they emigrated to England, and here Peter acquired excellent facility with English. The Weisses did not remain there long and soon

moved to Czechoslovakia, an even more unfortunate choice than England. When the Nazis first struck the Czechs, the elder Weisses fled to Sweden and bought a textile plant in Gothenburg. Their son joined them in 1938, just as the Nazis were dismantling the Czech government. Weiss, however, quickly realized that his place was no longer with his parents and soon moved to Stockholm where he made his first plunge into the artistic world.<sup>54</sup>

In the years before Weiss became involved in the arts, events in his life seem less important than the background against which he matured. Probably the most overriding environmental circumstance is the bourgeois atmosphere in which he was reared. Christian Bachman comments: "Peter Weiss a reçu le long tunnel d'une enfance bourgeois avec tout son cortège de frustrations et d'interdits, ceux que l'on vous impose aussi bien que ceux l'on intériorise."<sup>55</sup> Today even Weiss himself recognizes the consequences of this environment and comments: "I grew up in bourgeois society, and I have spent most of my life freeing myself from the repressions, prejudices and egotism which this milieu forced upon me."<sup>56</sup> Consequently, one may well view most of his works as a reaction against this bourgeois background. Then too, the years Weiss spent as a refugee have also strongly affected him. He once commented: "Perhaps I am the perpetual refugee - physically from the Nazis; then from the frustration of the Swedish

language; now emotionally and morally from the new Germany. They always called me an outsider here [in Sweden], you know. I am - everywhere, I think."<sup>57</sup> In fact Weiss has never really had a homeland. As a child, he was a Czech citizen living in Germany, then a refugee in England, and finally a German-speaking Czech in Sweden. A fugitive from the bourgeois world and from half of Europe, Weiss was "a man without a country."

When a person is as beset by worries and difficulties as Weiss apparently was, he naturally seeks refuge, and Weiss found his in art, initially in painting. Once again Christian Bachman comments:

Et contre lui-même, contre ses parents, contre la société, il cherchera, aussi désespérément que les personnages de Marat/Sade, son salut personnel. Quant, pendant la guerre, ses amis lui reprocheront son refus d'engagement politique, il protestera: "C'est dans l'art, dira-t-il, que je voyais mes seules armes offensives et défensives."<sup>60</sup>

Weiss himself is even more precise in the words which conclude

Fl  
Fluchtpunkt:

Die Freiheit war absolut, ich konnte mich darin [in der Kunst] verlieren und ich konnte mich darin wiederfinden, ich konnte alles aufgeben, alle Bestrebungen, alle Zusammengehörigkeit, und ich konnte wieder beginnen zu sprechen. Und die Sprache, die sich jetzt einstellte, war die Sprache, die ich am Anfang meines Lebens gelernt hatte, die natürliche Sprache, die mein Werkzeug war, die nur noch mir selbst gehörte, und mit dem Land, in dem ich aufgewachsen war,

nichts mehr zu tun hatte. Diese Sprache war gegenwärtig, wann immer ich wollte und wo immer ich mich befand. Ich konnte in Paris leben oder in Stockholm, in London oder New York, und ich trug die Sprache bei mir, im leichtesten Gepäck. In diesem Augenblick war der Krieg überwunden, und die Jahre der Flucht waren überlebt. Ich konnte sprechen, konnte sagen, was ich sagen wollte, und vielleicht hörte mir jemand zu, vielleicht würden andere zu mir sprechen und ich würde sie verstehen. Alles was geschehen war, lag noch da, doch wir konnten uns darüber äußern, nichts mehr brauchte verborgen zu werden. Und ich konnte mir Papier kaufen, eine Feder, einen Zeichenstift, einen Pinsel, und Bilder entstehen lassen, wann immer und wo immer ich wollte. Und wenn es schwer war, an Worte und an Bilder heranzukommen, so war es nicht deshalb, weil ich nirgends hingehörte und keine Verständigungsmöglichkeiten erkennen konnte, sondern nur deshalb, weil manche Worte und Bilder so tief lagen, daß sie erst lange gesucht, abgetastet und miteinander verglichen werden mußten, ehe sie ein Material hergaben, das sich mitteilen ließ. An diesem Abend, im Frühjahr 1947, auf dem Seinedamm in Paris, im Alter von dreißig Jahren, sah ich, daß ich teilhaben konnte an einem Austausch von Gedanken, der ringsum stattfand, an kein Land gebunden.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the arts originally provided Weiss not only with a refuge from the world's problems, but also with a place in which he could search for himself. But this negative use of art could not last, and as Weiss gradually came to grips with these difficulties, he began, we shall find, to use artistic expression as a tool for change and not as a hole in which to hide.

Weiss's earliest attempts in the arts occurred in the early war years and involved painting and writing. Little

is known about his graphic works, and Weiss himself appears to have been dissatisfied with that medium. Nevertheless, he continued so to express himself until the early 1950's, at which time, he turned to film-making as his primary art form. About this change Weiss comments: "The film has interested me greatly and I have worked for years making films, and movies have actually taken over the role painting once played for me. The picture was too static for me and the film has the movement I seek."<sup>60</sup> His earliest films were surrealistic experiments reflecting his earlier work with surrealistic painting. "Hallucinations" (1953) was a six-minute short containing twelve erotic tableaux, visions one might imagine in the time between waking and sleeping. A second short was "The Studio of Doctor Faust," which used collages, distortion and noise-music and in which "Faust is Mephistopheles, modern and mad, laughingly experimenting with color, shapes, and perhaps a small bomb."<sup>61</sup> "Faces in Shadow" (1956), a documentary, treats the problems facing Sweden's elderly citizens and thus presages Weiss's later work with documentary drama. Finally, "The Mirage" (1958) portrays a hero driven berserk by hunger, who "links Chaplin's tramp and Kafka's K. in his role as a hallucinated underdog."<sup>62</sup> But even in the motion picture, Weiss slowly began to feel the same restrictions that he had earlier felt in painting. To him, "film seemed two-dimensional, a reproduction of the



action, while theater was closer to direct action itself."<sup>65</sup> Weiss therefore turned to drama as his primary means of expression.

Although Weiss finally appears to have chosen as his communicative mode a medium apart from the motion picture, one must not overlook how movies have affected him. Indeed, it is impossible to read any of his works without being aware of a certain cinematic technique. Weiss admits his indebtedness to the film when he says:

From the beginning, everything I have done has been extremely visual, even my novels, and this is essential to the staging of my plays: I have chosen my media so that they were visual, and sometimes I have forced them to be so. Sade interested me because his work is so visual - he could have written Marat/Sade himself, although the scenes and situations in his own plays happen to be lifeless compared to his other work.<sup>64</sup>

Certainly, no one who has witnessed a Marat/Sade performance can deny film technique's impact on Weiss's work. Its short and quite striking scenes in constant flow remind one a great deal of an experimental film director's work.

As previously mentioned, Weiss's other artistic outlet in this shelter-seeking period was literature, and perhaps one might comment that his graphic and literary interests finally merged in drama. The earlier works are noteworthy because in many ways, they reveal the degree to which Weiss

refused to face the world head-on. To understand them, however, it is first necessary to consider other writers' influence on Weiss, because, like most young, struggling writers, he was extremely impressionable. Unlike some, however, Weiss clearly acknowledges his debts. Kafka, more than any other writer, influenced the young Weiss, and the first half of Fluchtpunkt serves as testimony to Weiss's preoccupation with him.<sup>67</sup> The early war years, especially the Czechoslovakian ones, produced Weiss's first contact with Kafka; thus he was reading Amerika and Das Urteil at a time long before Kafka's genius achieved general recognition. The two writers share a common background in their Jewish heritage, position in a repulsive bourgeois milieu, and sense of homelessness. From Kafka, Weiss received a pessimistic and hopeless feeling that pervades much of his work until the mid-1950's.<sup>66</sup> Although Kafka's influence remained strong, Weiss could not remain dominated by a writer whose warped Weltanschauung could only be a destructive influence.

It was the discovery of Henry Miller's Tropic of Cancer that liberated Weiss's mind from its Kafkaesque world. Weiss comments in Fluchtpunkt about his relationship to Kafka after reading Miller's volume:

Die Welt, in der ich mit Kafka im Zwiegespräch stand, erhielt den Todesstoß. Sie war noch nah, sie bestand noch, doch sie war eine Grabkammer, in der ich gegen Mauern anlief. Kafka hatte nie

gewagt, die Urteilsprüche der Richter zu revidieren, er hatte die Übermacht verherrlicht und sich ständig vor ihr gedemütigt. Wenn er einmal auf dem Weg war, sie zu durchschauen, so sank er schon bald ins Knie, um Abbitte zu leisten. Er hatte in seinen Tagebüchern vermerkt, wie spielend leicht es sein müßte, eine Selbstbiographie zu schreiben, leicht wie die Niederschrift eines Traums. Und doch kam er nie dazu. In den Ansätzen zeigte sich gleich etwas Zwanghaftes, Niedergehaltenes. Nie hatte er sich von seinem Vater lossagen können, und auch vor der Frau hatte er nie etwas anderes empfunden als seine Untauglichkeit. Er hatte sich blindgestarrt an der Mauer, an der verrammelten Tür, und hinterwärts hatte er sich ermorden lassen.<sup>67</sup>

In an interview with Michael Roloff, Weiss commented that it was the marked contrast of Miller's world to Kafka's "entire twisted, guilt-laden, doomed and damned bourgeoisie. . . ." that made such a profound impression on him.<sup>68</sup> One need only compare Miller's rebellion, sexual though it may be, to Kafka's gloomy determinism and pessimism to understand what a liberating influence Miller was on young Weiss.

Perhaps even more significant in Weiss's break with Kafka is his statement (quoted above) that Kafka never succeeded in writing an autobiography. Weiss, perhaps validly, believes that Kafka could never come to terms sufficiently with himself to write such a work. In Miller, on the other hand, Weiss found an author in whom he could respect "the drastic realism, this complete control he has of being able to describe himself in all situations and the capacity of not being afraid of anything at all."<sup>69</sup>

Kafka was not sure of himself and he could not write his own life's story. In Miller, Weiss found the capacity and strength to deal with himself. The freedom of self-observation that Miller provides allows Weiss to write his own autobiography, which we shall soon discuss.<sup>70</sup>

Before finally turning to an analysis of Weiss's works, one must also consider, if only briefly, Weiss's choice of language. Marat/Sade's author is hardly unique in being bi- or trilingual. That Joseph Conrad could have written in French or Polish just as easily as in English, and that Isak Dinesen, Danish by birth, wrote in English are but two examples of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider the path that Weiss followed to find the most appropriate language. He, of course, grew up speaking German, and it was his natural language. The move to England introduced him to a new tongue, and Weiss commented that if he had remained there, he would have written English. But that sojourn proved too short, and the family was soon back in German-speaking lands. It was the flight to Sweden and residence there that forced Weiss to make his difficult choice. By the end of the war, his fluency in Swedish was almost perfect, and when he returned to Germany in 1947, it was as a Swedish newspaper reporter. Yet even then Weiss felt uncomfortable in Swedish, and when he first began to write creatively, he composed in German and then translated into

Swedish. This proved unacceptable and almost self-defeating and resulted in Weiss's ultimate selection of German for literary purposes.<sup>71</sup>

Weiss's first full-scale literary attempt was Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers, written in 1952, published in 1960. In it a group of disoriented people lives on an old farm isolated from the world. Time and space are confused; focus is blurred. The book, with illustrations by Weiss which combine the drawing and collage media, was the young author's first attempt to write a literary work in German, and as such stands as a milestone in his career. It was an experimental novel for him, about which he comments:

The fact that one has to reflect time and again about so very many things, how one goes about writing such a thing in the first place, that was why Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers was a purely linguistic exercise for me, that is why it is so complicated. I wanted to find out how well I could handle the language: that's why it contains these immensely intricate, long and difficult sentences.<sup>72</sup>

As a literary work, Schatten is puzzling. Weiss not only maintains that it is not symbolic and does not express modern life's meaninglessness or absurdity, but that it is purely realistic. He states: "I was not striving for anything symbolic whatsoever. . . .For me, these were just persons in the country. The entire piece is quite realistic as far as I am concerned. I just happened to know people who lived

like that. . . ."73 If one believes this statement, Weiss was still, at this stage, in mental seclusion and unable to focus his talents on external problems. On the other hand, if one denies Weiss's comment and insists that the novel does express meaninglessness, one must agree that Weiss has not solved his dilemma. In this case his writing would express, at worst, a negative attitude toward life and, at best, a neutral one. Neither interpretation reveals a creative author confronting difficulties and attacking them with all his resources.

Weiss's next important works are the two autobiographical novels, Abschied von den Eltern (1960) and Fluchtpunkt (1961). Thematically the books cover his life until 1947 and his break-away from that engulfing bourgeois and Kafkaesque world already discussed. In these first-person narratives Weiss faces himself and his life objectively. John Milfull continues this analysis: "This objectivity becomes so great that Abschied von den Eltern is called by its author 'Erzählung,' Fluchtpunkt 'Roman.' The self becomes a 'Stoff' like any other, reflects on itself as though it were non-self. Introspection becomes exact and clinical: the mind asserts control over the mind."74 Abschied and Fluchtpunkt are essentially the turning point for Weiss as writer. Because he is now able to face himself objectively and come to terms with what he finds, he can also analyze other people and ideas.

In 1963, Weiss published Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden, for which he was awarded the Charles Veillon prize for fiction.<sup>75</sup> In it three narrators, Abel, Babel and Cabel, walk alongside each other, supposedly conversing, but the book seems more like monologues than a conversation.<sup>76</sup> Gespräch is, in effect, unfinished, and Weiss comments on its incompleteness: "It lies in the nature of the book that it can never be anything but a fragment because it is an interior monologue and an interior monologue goes on as long as one lives."<sup>77</sup> Unfinished though it may be, one must note that the book shows three different viewpoints of one situation and contains an external narrator. It indicates Weiss's mental progress as a writer because previously he had been able to present only one perspective per book and there had never been an external narrator. The book is thus an important step toward objectivity. Although Weiss's intent in the novel remains open to question, Gespräch stands out among his writings in its analysis of a situation that is not exclusively self-oriented.

Marat/Sade, of whose origins Chapter Four contains a detailed discussion, appeared in 1964. In it Weiss for the first time concentrates his talents on a communal rather than a personal problem. The play is his analysis of revolution's validity as a force for productive change. This thesis' fifth chapter will examine the precise attitude

Weiss takes; suffice it to say here that his opinion changes from one of doubt to affirmation. Thus, in Marat/Sade Weiss takes one more step away from his use of literature as a sanctuary; indeed, as will be demonstrated later, one can see in the play's different revisions Weiss's development as a writer with a social conscience and a passionate desire to help his fellow man.

In 1965, Weiss published Die Ermittlung, a distillation of the proceedings at the Frankfurt trial of nineteen Auschwitz concentration camp guards. Two facts make it noteworthy in Weiss's development as dramatist. The first is that Die Ermittlung is in reality a non-play because everything said comes straight from the court's record. In his use of historical materials here, Weiss follows precisely Büchner's dictum that the dramatist should only be a history writer. At the same time, however, one must question the work as literature because Weiss's contribution is only the arrangement of the various speeches.

A second noteworthy feature is that Die Ermittlung represents Weiss's first important work expressing sympathy and concern for a problem of social significance. Weiss has turned from his own difficulties to those of others. He comments: "It was not enough to establish empathy with the suppressed and exploited, I also had to stand up for them in my writing."<sup>78</sup>



Thus Weiss has here freed himself from personal introspection and turned his work into a political tool. Der Gesang vom lusitanischen Popanz continues this same method of using history in the theater for political purposes. In this case, Weiss violently attacks the Portuguese cruelties in Angola. Finally, Diskurs über die Vorgeschichte und den Verlauf des lang andauernden Befreiungskrieges in Vietnam als Beispiel für die Notwendigkeit des bewaffneten Kämpfers der Unterdrückten sowie die Versuche der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, die Grundlagen der Revolution zu vernichten (1967) is, as one might suspect from the title, another in Weiss's series of political plays.

Today, Weiss lives in Stockholm, reading and conducting research for new political plays. In the twenty years that have elapsed since Weiss first came to Stockholm as an artist, his whole way of life has changed. His early artistic attempts, both graphic and literary, were mere efforts to find a refuge from an ugly world. Fortunately, as the hurt caused by the war and his wandering period healed, Weiss became able to appraise objectively his position in a bourgeois milieu. He achieved this state in the novels Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt and was then able to turn his vision outward. Marat/Sade, after its various revisions, becomes Weiss's first important statement on the outside. Thus a study of Weiss's

development as an artist reveals the tormented emergence of a creative soul from its hiding place. Only time will judge what has emerged, but one cannot deny the intriguing nature of this development.

## MARAT/SADE: ITS ORIGINS

In the preceding chapter we saw Weiss's slow and tortured literary development. Our attention now turns to Marat/Sade itself, and this chapter will investigate the play's origins. As in our examination of Dantons Tod we will carefully scrutinize Weiss's use of history and then contrast it with Büchner's.

The first impetus to write Marat/Sade came to Weiss in the autumn of 1962, after his then fourteen-year old son had just seen a film on the French Revolution. Together they undertook a study of the Revolution, and early in 1963, Weiss began his actual historical inquiries. The investigations illuminated for Weiss the figures of Jean Paul Marat and the Marquis de Sade in particular. Weiss discusses his interest in Marat:

Marat war als politisch denkender Mensch seiner Zeit weit voraus. Er gehörte zu den Schöpfern des sozialistischen Gedankens, wie er dann einige Jahrzehnte später von Marx ausgearbeitet wurde. Marat ging in seinem Denken sehr weit über den im allgemeinen unklaren philosophischen Rummel der Revolutionspolitik hinaus. Seine Ideen waren für die damalige Zeit so kühn, daß er von seinen Zeitgenossen erbittert angegriffen wurde und als der blutrünstige Marat verschrien war. Dieser "Sündenbock," auf den alle Schandtaten der Revolution abgeladen wurden, war der einzige wirkliche Revolutionär.<sup>79</sup>

Thus Marat was a figure with whom that part of Weiss's mind which begged for correction of the world's problems could

sympathize. Weiss continues and explains his impressions of Sade: "Sade war ein Zeitgenosse Marats. Er hat sich weitgehend mit der Revolution identifiziert, blieb jedoch gleichzeitig ein extremer Individualist. Außerdem war seine Persönlichkeit faszinierend genug, um als Marats Gegenspieler benutzt zu werden."<sup>80</sup> Thus that part of Weiss which wished to remain in the cave took refuge in Sade. The combatants were now at hand; the author, however, had not yet found his battlefield.

Weiss's method of uniting these two figures reveals one way in which Marat/Sade is similar to Dantons Tod. Originally, he seemed unable to find the unifying element, and the play's original version, a Hörspiel now lost, contained only the figure of Marat, excluding Sade altogether.<sup>81</sup> Weiss found this solution totally unsatisfactory and continued his search. In his readings he unexpectedly chanced upon a speech given by Sade on Marat's death. An answer was appearing, and Weiss read on. When he next discovered that Sade, during his thirteen years at Charenton, had written and produced numerous plays for the inmates, the solution was at hand.<sup>82</sup> Sade's speech and his incarceration at Charenton at least made it possible that he could have written such a play, and a historical basis therefore existed for Weiss's play as we know it today. In this insistence on the situation being at least "possible," Weiss echoes Büchner's belief and desire

for the writer to be as loyal to history as possible.

That the play's events and speeches are closely based on historical materials indicates this similarity again. As with Büchner, there will here be no attempt to investigate fully the play's correspondence with history. However, some examples are useful in demonstrating how like Büchner Weiss is in this regard. The most prominent historical similarity is the play's circumstances themselves. In his note on Marat/Sade's historical background, Weiss comments that Sade composed at Charenton seventeen plays in which the patients participated as a type of therapy, and that Parisian society considered an invitation ~~to~~ <sup>of</sup> one M. de Sade's performances a great honor.<sup>83</sup> Marat/Sade itself pretends to be one of those seventeen plays, and its audience in effect performs the visiting Parisians' role.

Marat is the play's most distinctly historical character, and Weiss comments about his Marat as compared to the original:

Die Figur des Marats entspricht weitgehend dem Original. Die meisten Aussprüche Marats sind seinen Schriften, teilweise sogar wörtlich, entnommen. Seine Laufbahn als Arzt und Wissenschaftler, und daß er während der letzten Jahre seines Lebens an einer Hautkrankheit litt und viele Stunden am Tag in der Badewanne verbrachte, um seine Leiden zu mildern, dies alles entspricht den Tatsachen.<sup>84</sup>

Just what historical sources Weiss used for Marat are not known, but any study of Marat's writings reveals many simi-

larities and echoes to the play. For example, on 27 May 1791, Marat announced:

Eleven months ago five hundred heads would have sufficed; to-day fifty thousand would be necessary; perhaps five hundred thousand will fall before the end of the year. France will have been flooded with blood, but it will not be more free because of it.<sup>85</sup>

In Weiss's play one finds Marat saying:

Was ist eine Wanne voll Blut  
 gegen das Blut das noch fließen wird  
 Einmal dachten wir daß ein hundert Tote genügten  
 dann sahen wir daß tausende noch zu wenig waren  
 und heute sind sie nicht mehr zu zählen  
 dort überall  
 überall<sup>86</sup>

On 25 December 1792, Marat, before the National Convention, criticized

the enormous waste of the officials of the new regime, the alarming perfidy of the traitors who command the armies of the Republic, the excessive misery of the people, and the disorders of fearful anarchy carried to its worst. . . .<sup>87</sup>

In Marat/Sade Marat addresses the National Assembly:

Unser Kriegminister  
 dessen Tugend und Ehrbarkeit ihr nie bezweifelt  
 hat das Getreide das zur Verpflegung unsrer Heere  
 bestimmt war  
 mit eigenem Gewinn ans Ausland verkauft  
 wo es jetzt den Truppen zugute kommt  
 die gegen uns stehn  
 Unser Heerführer Dumouriez  
 vor dem ich seit langem warnte  
 und dem ihr vor kurzem noch als Helden feiertet  
 ist zum Feind übergelaufen  
 Die Mehrzahl unserer Generäle  
 sympathisieren mit den Emigranten  
 und warten auf den Tag

an dem sie ihre gemeinsamen Geschäfte  
 wieder aufnehmen können  
 Unser Vertrauensmann in Finanzfragen  
 der vielgelobte Herr Cambon  
 zieht durch Herstellung falscher Wertpapiere  
 ein Vermögen in die eigne Tasche  
 während er durch die Ausfertigung von Assignaten  
 die Inflation in die Höhe treibt  
 und ich höre  
 daß unser geschickter Bankier Perregaux  
 mit den Engländern unter einer Decke steckt  
 und in seinen Panzerkellern  
 ein Spionagezentrum gegen uns leitet.<sup>88</sup>

As an additional point of fact, Marat's comment about Dumouriez  
 was a prophecy that proved entirely correct.<sup>89</sup> Finally, the  
 speeches given by the inmates portraying Lavoisier and Voltaire  
 also appear to have some historical basis.<sup>90</sup> Weiss's Marat,  
 in short, depends heavily on history for his existence.

Of the play's remaining characters, Charlotte Corday  
 most resembles an historical counterpart. This similarity  
 is twofold, involving her actions and her speeches. Her  
 activities in Marat/Sade correspond almost entirely to her  
 actual life. The real Charlotte Corday travelled from Caen  
 to Paris, bought a knife and went to visit Marat three times.  
 On the third visit, Marat, in his bath as usual, allowed her  
 to enter, and she reported, much to Marat's interest, that  
 she had come to reveal the names of traitors in Caen. At  
 this point Corday pulled out her knife and stabbed Marat.<sup>91</sup>  
 Such are also the actions of Weiss's Charlotte Corday. An  
 intriguing irony on Weiss's part is that he casts his Corday

as a somnambulist, whereas she was, in life, a quite active and busy person.<sup>92</sup> Throughout Corday's speeches in Marat/Sade one finds echoes of her only important writing, Eine Adresse an die Franzosen, die Freunde der Gesetze und des Friedens, a vigorous defense of her actions written shortly before Marat's assassination. A short example is the real Corday's comment, "Welches Tribunal wird mich verurteilen?"<sup>92</sup> which appears in Marat/Sade as "und wer spricht die Urteile/ wer spricht die Urteile."<sup>93</sup> The strongly defensive posture of Charlotte's speech in "Epilog" also reminds one of the real Corday's Adresse. Weiss's Charlotte Corday is for all intents and purposes the one who actually did travel from Caen to Paris in 1793.

The Marquis de Sade is the most freely developed of the play's characters. Weiss comments about his Sade figure, contrasting him with Marat and Corday:

Sade ist dagegen viel freier behandelt, obgleich er inhaltsmäßig nichts aussagt, was nicht seinem philosophischen Denken entspricht.<sup>95</sup>

In his historical note to the play Weiss quotes a letter from Sade to his wife which expresses the individualism that one finds in the play's Sade; a section of it deserves quotation:

Meine Denkungsart ist die Frucht meiner Über-



legungen, sie gehört zu meinem Leben, zu meiner Beschaffenheit. Es steht nicht in meiner Macht, sie zu ändern, und wenn es in meiner Macht stünde, würde ich es nicht tun. Diese Denkgangsart, die Sie tadeln, ist der einzige Trost in meinem Leben, sie erleichtert alle meine Leiden im Gefängnis, sie schafft alle meine Freuden auf der Welt, und mir liegt mehr an ihr als an meinem Leben.<sup>96</sup>

This is certainly the same Sade who says in the play:

Ich pfeife auf alle guten Absichten  
die sich nur in Sackgassen verlieren  
ich pfeife auf alle Opfer  
die für irgendeine Sache gebracht werden  
Ich glaube nur an mich selbst.<sup>97</sup>

Weiss concludes his justification for the Sade he presents:

Wir können uns Sade schwer vorstellen in einer Tätigkeit für das öffentliche Wohl. Er sah sich zu einem Doppelspiel gezwungen, befürwortete einerseits Marats radikale Argumente, sah aber andererseits die Gefahren eines totalitären Systems, auch gingen seine Ansichten zu einer gerechten Verteilung der Güter nicht so weit, daß er sein Schloß und seinen Grundbesitz hergeben wollte, und er fügte sich nicht gleichmütig, als er auf La Coste verzichten mußte, nachdem es geplündert und niedergebrannt worden war.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, though Weiss's Sade may not speak the actual Sade's <sup>word</sup> words, they are essentially one in the same person. Weiss has not deviated from history, only built upon it.

From these examples of Weiss's historical sources, one can see that he has written in Büchner's tradition. On the other hand, there is an important difference which Weiss

himself expresses: "Ich glaube, wenn ich mir einen historischen Stoff suche, dann bemühe ich mich vor allem darum, ihn zu aktualisieren, in meine Gegenwart zu versetzen und vielleicht auch zu revidieren."<sup>99</sup> And in revising history, Weiss leaves Büchner behind. If Büchner's characters do not correspond precisely to their historical models, it is not because Büchner purposely changed them, it is because he envisioned them differently from his reader. Büchner portrayed only what he considered historically accurate; Weiss, however, intentionally changes or invents upon history. Indeed, Weiss admits in his historical note to Marat/Sade that he has taken extreme liberties with the characters Roux and Duperret.<sup>100</sup> Although such deviations would probably be intolerable to Büchner, one cannot deny a definite similarity in both Büchner's and Weiss's use of historical materials.

Weiss's changing attitude toward revolution will be more fully examined in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that before Weiss completed his revisions of Marat/Sade, he had finally emerged from his hiding place and wished his art to effect change in the world. In an interview after the revisions, Weiss commented:

Ich glaube nicht, daß es genügt, einfach zu schreiben; es genügt nicht, über meinen persönlichen Kram zu schreiben. Ich meine, man sollte gar nicht anders schreiben als mit der

Absicht, die Gesellschaft zu beeinflussen oder zu ändern.<sup>101</sup>

This is not the same writer about whom Weiss once said:

All my strength was concentrated in not getting involved. I was fascinated by the power of destruction, I was drawing and writing down my visions, I made art into a shelter as the world fell apart.<sup>102</sup>

Weiss is now, for all intents, a political activist.

A study of Marat/Sade's genesis reveals two intriguing factors. First, Weiss makes extensive use of history in writing the play. If the characters do not always speak the historical figure's actual words, what they say usually corresponds to those characters' recorded attitudes. Although Weiss sometimes revises history and thus disobeys Büchner's dictum about the writer's proper role, the two are quite similar in their use of history. In addition, Marat/Sade stands as Weiss's first important political expression; for him, it is truly an significant work.

## REVOLUTION

The revolutionary concept is central to both Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade because each play's action occurs during the French Revolution and all the principal characters are leaders of that revolution. More important than this superficial connection, however, is that both Büchner and Weiss make strong, personal statements in their plays about the revolutionary process. This chapter will analyze in detail each author's attitude toward revolution and the manner in which his play expresses that opinion.

We have already seen Büchner's depressed state when he fled Gießen after the authorities moved against Der Hessische Landbote. His unhappiness was well-founded. Until he became involved in that pamphlet's publication, Büchner had long been cynical about political activity. To be sure, he had once stated that force was the only means to change things, but in the same breath, he had doubted violence's ability to be productive. Then, despite all his misgivings, Büchner had become involved in producing a revolutionary appeal. It was a final attempt to involve himself constructively in politics, and the attempt failed. Büchner had fervently wished to help the Hessian peasants recognize the need for change, and they, in turn, had disappointed him. A co-conspirator, August Becker, later wrote about the peasants' activity and Büchner's subsequent reaction:

Mit der von ihm geschriebenen Flugschrift wollte er vorderhand nur die Stimmung des Volks und der deutschen Revolutionärs erforschen. Als er später hörte, daß die Bauern die meisten gefundenen Flugschriften auf die Polizei abgeliefert hätten, als er vernahm, daß sich auch die Patrioten gegen seine Flugschrift ausgesprochen, gab er alle seine politischen Hoffnungen in bezug auf ein Anderswerden auf.<sup>104</sup>

Despairing of any political activity, Büchner fled to Darmstadt and there wrote Dantons Tod.

The play is Büchner's most detailed commentary on revolution, and from it one gleans a sense of his almost total disbelief in any such activity.<sup>105</sup> He expresses his disillusionment primarily through the play's central figure, Georg Danton, a man whom the Revolution's excesses had satiated.<sup>106</sup> Although one must be wary of believing that Büchner painted a self-portrait in Danton, it is obvious that he has his dramatic figure express many of his own political ideas. Disgust at what had gone before and fear of what was yet to come jointly comprise Danton's opinion of the Revolution, and each idea warrants discussion in turn.

The Revolution's violence and bloodletting had deeply depressed Danton. Historically, he had been deeply involved in the September Massacres and had tried to capitalize upon the chaos caused by those disorders.<sup>107</sup> In Dantons Tod the horrors that event had produced seem to haunt the central figure, and a sense of guilt permeates his character and his utterances.

Occasionally, this feeling swells to the surface, as in Act II:

Will denn das nie aufhören? Wird das Licht nie ausglühn und der Schall nie modern? Will's denn nie still und dunkel werden, daß wir uns die garstigen Stünden einander nicht mehr anhören und ansehen?

--September!--. . . .

Da schrie ich in der Angst, und ich erwachte. Ich trat ans Fenster -- und da hört ich's, Julie.

Was das Wort nur will? Warum gerade das? Was hab ich damit zu schaffen? Was streckt es nach mir die blutigen Hände? Ich hab es nicht geschlagen--o hilf mir, Julie, mein Sinn ist stumpf! War's nicht im September, Julie?108

Danton saw man, and thus himself, driven by a sense of necessity or inevitability. This worried him and tortured him, allowing him no peace. In his most extreme outburst about the Revolution Danton exclaims:

Wir haben nicht die Revolution, sondern die Revolution hat uns gemacht.

Und wenn es ginge--ich will lieber guillotiniert werden als guillotiniert werden lassen. Ich hab es satt; wozu sollen wir Menschen miteinander kämpfen? Wir sollten uns nebeneinander setzen und Ruhe haben. Es wurde ein Fehler gemacht, wie wir geschaffen wurden; es fehlt uns was, ich habe keinen Namen dafür-- aber wir werden es uns einander nicht aus den Eingeweiden herauswühlen, was sollen wir uns drum die Leiber aufbrechen? Geht, wir sind elende Alchymisten!109

The Revolution and its attendant terror had indeed disgusted Danton; he had had enough.

Danton; he had had enough. Although Büchner had not participated in violent activity the equal of Danton's, he too was satiated. In contrast, however, it was the Revolution's constant disappointments that disgusted him. In Danton, Büchner found a mouthpiece for his own despair.

Danton also reacts against the spectre of coming terror. When he says: "Ich weiß wohl -- die Revolution ist wie Saturn, sie frißt ihre eignen Kinder,"<sup>110</sup> he expresses what was to become an historical fact. Danton and Robespierre both helped to create the Revolution, and it successively consumed them. In this process of self-consumption Danton saw the Revolution inevitably headed toward dictatorship. He says before the Revolutionary Tribunal:

Eines Tages wird man die Wahrheit erkennen. Ich sehe großes Unglück über Frankreich hereinbrechen. Das ist die Diktatur; sie hat ihren Schleier zerrissen, sie trägt die Stirne hoch, sie schreitet über unsere Leichen.<sup>111</sup>

It is not difficult to discern Napoleon's shadow in this scene's background. Whether Büchner himself saw revolution leading to dictatorship is questionable; some critics believe so.<sup>112</sup> Although he never made such a comment in his letters, or anywhere else for that matter, the strength of this theme's statement in Dantons Tod lends credence to such possibility.

While considering Büchner's and Danton's disgust with revolution, one must not believe that either man had lost faith in those basic principles which impelled him to political action. Büchner's Danton has a social conscience, and in his defense before the Revolutionary Tribunal he says:

--Ihr wollt Brot, und sie werfen euch Köpfe hin!  
Ihr durstet, und sie machen euch das Blut von den  
Stufen der Guillotine lecken!<sup>113</sup>

Thus, Danton's disillusionment was not so great that he completely forgot why he had joined the Terror. Such was also Büchner's situation. Although political activity had made him cynical about revolution, he had not lost his intense feelings for the poor and oppressed. The foremost evidence for this statement is Woyzeck, in which Büchner creates a wretched character for whom one can only have sympathy. A New Year's Day letter to his family in 1836, gives further proof:

Ich komme vom Christkindelsmarkt: überall Haufen zerlumpter, frierer Kinder, die mit aufgerissenen Augen und traurigen Gesichtern vor den Herrlichkeiten aus Wasser und Mehl, Dreck und Goldpapier standen. Der Gedanke, daß für die meisten Menschen auch die armseligsten Genüsse und Freuden unerreichbare Kostbarkeiten sind, machte mich sehr bitter.<sup>114</sup>

Similar thoughts appear in an 1836 letter to Gutzkow:

Unsere Zeit braucht Eisen und Brot--und dann ein Kreuz oder sonst so was. Ich glaube, man muß in sozialen Dingen von einem absoluten Rechtsgrundsatz ausgehen, die Bildung eines neuen geistigen Lebens im Volke suchen und die abgelebte moderne Gesellschaft zum Teufel gehen lassen.<sup>115</sup>

Although Büchner was no longer an active revolutionary, he certainly still recognized the masses' need for help.

The portrait Büchner paints of the Revolution itself



serves as his second form of comment on the revolutionary process, and the picture is hardly a pleasing one. For this purpose he uses the Paris mobs to demonstrate his actual feelings, and in the play one begins to sense Büchner's ambivalent attitude toward the lower classes. To be sure, there is a strong feeling that the people are suffering and that conditions need to be righted. At the same time, however, there is an almost overriding impression that the people are stupid, unreliable and a hindrance to their own progress. On one occasion Danton comments: "Das Volk ist wie ein Kind, es muß alles zerbrechen, um zu sehen, was darin steckt,"<sup>116</sup> a statement echoing Büchner's own worry about the lower classes. In fact, the play nowhere contains a scene flattering to the mob. One episode from the first act contains what is possibly Büchner's most devastating critique; its dialogue runs:

DRITTER BÜRGER: Fort! Totgeschlagen, wer kein  
Loch im Rock hat!  
ERSTER BÜRGER: Totgeschlagen, wer lesen und schrei-  
ben kann!  
ZWEITER BÜRGER: Totgeschlagen, wer auswärts geht!  
ALLE (schreien): Totgeschlagen! Totgeschlagen!<sup>117</sup>

An almost equally disturbing scene occurs in the Revolutionary Tribunal, where Danton and Robespierre so easily sway the crowd from one extreme to another. The comment here is obvious: the mob does not and cannot reason. Büchner's attitude toward the Parisian mob reveals again the dislike he felt for active and violent politics.

About the play Herbert Lindenberger has commented:

"Danton's Death seeks to demonstrate the tragic gap between political ideals and political actualities. . . ."118 As such it stands as an expression of Büchner's attitude toward revolution. Like the play's Danton, Büchner sympathized with the masses and wished to improve their situation. But, also like Danton, he saw his actions thwarted and often carried to destructive extremes. In short, both men were tired of revolutionary activity and renounced it. As Büchner himself says in a letter quoted in full in Chapter Two:

Ich habe mich seit einem halben Jahre vollkommen überzeugt, daß nichts zu tun ist und daß jeder, der im Augenblick sich aufopfert, seine Haut wie ein Narr zu Markte trägt.<sup>119</sup>

Peter Weiss's feelings about politics and revolution are unfortunately neither as precise nor as easily discernable as Büchner's. His view has been constantly changing, and Marat/Sade is but one step in that amalgamative process. Indeed, even as he wrote the play, Weiss's ideas were in flux, and the play's different versions give evidence of the mutation. We have already noted that Marat/Sade is his first important political comment after long refusing to involve his art in the exterior world. It is now necessary to discuss that comment's nature.

Marat/Sade is a debate between that part of Weiss's

mind which begged for revolution and the other part which derided such activity. Peter Brook, the play's London and New York director, comments about Weiss during the play's conception:

Surely what's interesting is that there are two completely distinct Peter Weisses. There is a man who at a moment in his life was so wracked by the absolute impossibility of making sense of his own contradictions that he lived through an immense transformation, with everything Sade means. He emerged from his sadistic period to face a world which appalled him; so he swung into politics. Here every argument he gave even momentary belief to dissolved, and he came back to the Sade-like view that it is all different forms of subjective limitation -- there's no way out. Weiss couldn't resolve the contradiction, and in that state of mind he wrote a play in which everything expressed is just like taking his head and opening it and giving it to you on a plate.<sup>120</sup>

Norman Podhoretz comments: "The play is largely about politics: it is the dark night of the soul of a Marxist, or possibly a Communist, or of a revolutionist at least."<sup>121</sup> Finally, Weiss himself has said:

But the whole play for me, of course, is very personal. On one side, I'm the individual who thinks it's hopeless to change anything in society, that we can't do anything and it's just like hell anyhow; whatever we do is just doomed to be a disaster. That's the point of Sade. He says: "Well, I do my art and do it as well as I can, and I don't bother what's going to happen around me." And then there is the other point of view: we are in between other people and we want to change something, our lives and perhaps the lives of others too; that's the point of the Socialist and of Marat.<sup>122</sup>

Thus, Marat/Sade, like Dantons Tod, stands as its author's comment about political involvement.

As Weiss himself commented, the play's principals hold differing views about revolution and politics: Marat is the revolutionary, the Socialist; Sade is the individual, the man who despairs of revolution. What these characters say is therefore Weiss's own internal argument. Curt Hohoff clarifies Weiss's actions: ". . . die Sprache ist nie Ausdruck der Personen, sondern Medium eines Autors, der durch die Masken seiner Puppen spricht."<sup>123</sup> As a consequence, one needs only to examine the speeches of Marat and of Sade to understand Weiss's conflicting political views.

Marat is the political activist who says to the individualist Sade:

Gegen das Schweigen der Natur  
 stelle ich eine Tätigkeit  
 In der großen Gleichgültigkeit  
 erfinde ich einen Sinn  
 Anstatt reglos zuzusehn  
 greife ich ein  
 und erkenne Dinge für falsch ^/gewisse/  
 und arbeite daran sie zu verändern und zu verbessern.<sup>124</sup>

Not only does Marat want change, but he also preaches that the Revolution must continue, even after the initial accomplishments:

Laßt euch nicht täuschen  
 wenn unsre Revolution erstickt worden ist  
 und wenn es heißt

daß die Zustände sich jetzt gebessert haben  
 Auch wenn ihr die Not nicht mehr seht  
 weil die Not übertüncht ist  
 und wenn ihr Geld verdient  
 und euch was leisten könnt von dem  
 was die Industrien euch andrehn  
 und es euch scheint  
 euer Wohlstand stände vor der Tür  
 so ist das nur eine Erfindung von denen  
 die immer noch viel mehr haben als ihr.125

Marat is the man who makes the inevitable dictatorial plea,  
 despite his assertions to the contrary:

Wir brauchen endlich einen wahren Abgeordneten des Volks  
 einen der unbestechlich ist  
 einen dem wir trauen können  
 Wir haben die Auflösung und das Chaos  
 das ist gut  
 das ist das erste Stadium  
 Jetzt müssen wir zum zweiten Stadium gelangen  
 Wählt einen  
 der eure Interessen wahrt

Zwischenrufe: Marat als Diktator  
 Marat in der Badewanne  
 Runter mit ihm in die Kloaken  
 Diktator der Ratten

Diktator  
 dieses Wort soll verschwinden  
 ich hasse alles  
 was an Meister und Patriarchen erinnert  
 Ich spreche von einem Chef  
 der in der Zeit der Krise126

Sade, on the other hand, proclaims the role of the  
 individual and decries the collective revolution:

Ich  
 habe es ~~auf~~gegeben mich mit ihr [der Wirklichkeit] zu befassen  
 mein Leben ist die Imagination  
 Die Revolution  
 interessiert mich nicht mehr.127

He believes in himself and not in his nation, thus not in other men:

Marat  
 siehst du den Irrsinn dieser Vaterlandsliebe  
 ich sage dir  
 ich habe diesen Heroismus längst aufgegeben  
 ich pfeife auf diese Nation  
 so wie ich auf alle andern Nationen pfeife. . . .  
 Ich pfeife auf alle guten Absichten  
 die sich nur in Sackgassen verlieren  
 Ich pfeife auf alle gute Opfer  
 die für irgendeine Sache gebracht werden  
 Ich glaube nur an mich selbst.<sup>128</sup>

Sade, like Danton, was satiated by the bloodshed and could participate no longer: "Ich sah daß ich nicht fähig war zum Mord."<sup>129</sup> Also, like Danton, he saw the Revolution leading to a French disaster:

und jetzt Marat  
 jetzt sehe ich  
 wohin sie führt  
 diese Revolution  
 zu einem Versiechen des einzelnen  
 zu einem langsamen Aufgehen in Gleichförmigkeit  
 zu einem Absterben des Urteilsvermögens...  
 zu einer tödlichen Schwäche  
 unter einem Staat  
 dessen Gebilde unendlich weit  
 von jedem einzelnen entfernt ist  
 und nicht mehr anzugreifen ist.<sup>130</sup>

Thus, almost point by point, Sade's ideology stands dramatically opposed to Marat's.

One can readily see how carefully Weiss has balanced not

only Marat and Sade themselves, but also the philosophies each represents. The discussion must now concern the direction in which the debate resolves itself. Three conclusions seem possible: a solution favoring Marat, one favoring Sade, and one that expresses a careful balance between the two. In addition, one must recognize that it is possible for Weiss to hold one view and the reader another; the possibilities mentioned are not mutually self-exclusive. Indeed, Weiss himself has followed a meandering path in his answer to the question. At an early stage many critics assumed that it was Sade who voiced Weiss's opinion.<sup>132</sup> This possibility is certainly valid because Sade created Marat, and he also wrote everything Marat says. One would be hard-pressed to believe that Sade set himself up for self-destruction. Nevertheless, Weiss himself rejected this answer when he said: "If Sade made up Marat, sometimes his own voice of Marat gets stronger and just grows to a degree which he himself perhaps didn't dream of."<sup>133</sup> Weiss next achieved a neutral position; consider, for example, his comment: "For the playwright, naturally, it is most important that a production should express a play's dualism, the ambivalence of its situation -- in Marat/Sade, the confrontation of individualism and Socialism/Collectivism."<sup>134</sup> It was this same Weiss who could say about his own personal political problem: "The political and social atmosphere in West Germany is unbearable, but so is the prison atmosphere of East Germany."<sup>135</sup>

Weiss, at this stage, has found his answer in giving no answer; the debate is a stalemate.

When Weiss says that a Marat/Sade production must emphasize the unresolved conflict, he is simply expressing his own mental anguish at having to resolve an apparently impossible problem. Nevertheless, necessity requires a decision, and as Weiss decides, he reorients his work to make what he believes to be a constructive contribution to society. He personally concludes the debate in Marat's favor, and does so by adding an epilogue to the play. Earlier versions had simply ended with Marat's murder and its resultant chaos or by one of the patients assuming the role of Napoleon. But in the fifth revision Weiss extends the play, and as Karlheinz Braun comments:

Erst in der letzten Fassung des Stückes findet Weiss eine Antwort seiner offenen Frage, auch wenn er sie wieder in eine Frage kleidet. In der letzten Fassung endet das Stück mit den Schreien des Radikalsozialisten Roux: "Wann werdet ihr sehen lernen/ Wann werdet ihr endlich verstehen."<sup>136</sup>

Roux had preached for Marat's reform, and it is this opinion that Weiss now holds. He comments: "Later I added an epilogue . . . which makes it clear that from the playwright's point of view Marat is right."<sup>137</sup> Weiss now firmly believes in the Socialist/Communist revolution and intends his work to aid that revolt. He states:

Peaceful social reforms are illusory, for the



capitalists will never voluntarily surrender their property. There must be revolution, and it must sweep the entire world. This also implies that the arts, to be meaningful, must also be revolutionary.<sup>138</sup>

Later he amplified on this statement:

Zwischen den beiden Wahlmöglichkeiten, die mir heute bleiben, sehe ich nur in der sozialistischen Gesellschaftsordnung die Möglichkeit zur Beseitigung der bestehenden Mißverhältnisse in der Welt.<sup>139</sup>

In this spirit Weiss wrote Die Ermittlung and his other political plays. He is a revolutionary and a Socialist, if not a Communist.

Although Weiss now claims Marat as the confrontation's eventual winner, serious doubt still exists that the play actually proves that point. In the first place, Marat/Sade's richness in dramatics enables a director to form almost any conclusion he wishes. Then too, the play seems inconclusive to one who reads it without previously knowing Weiss's comments. Such is the conclusion Ernst Wendt draws:

Die Herausforderung, die Weissens Stück anbietet, scheint nun - nach den verschiedenen Inszenierungen, die zu sehen war<sup>en</sup> gerade in seiner Unentschiedenheit zu liegen: tückisch sind ja die Positionen von Marat und de Sade ausbalanciert.<sup>140</sup>

Quite possibly, John Milfull has found the play's essence when he comments:

In the long run, de Sade and Marat are extremes

which demand a synthesis not in the play. De Sade's defeat of Marat, Marat's own failure in his revolution, are no cause for "rejoicing": the final mood of the play is rather, as Ernst Wendt says in his recent essay, "Trauer über die Unmöglichkeit von Revolution."<sup>141</sup>

Thus, Marat/Sade may well contain more than its author intended; at any rate, it affords endless speculation.

Both Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade are revolutionary plays in that the revolutionary concept is their essence. In Dantons Tod Georg Büchner adopts a negative attitude toward revolt and says that it is futile for man to engage in such political activity. In his eyes, the revolutionary can see in his past and present only the terror he has caused and before him only dictatorship's ugly spectre. Büchner, to be sure, deeply regretted the existence of social evils, but even so, he could not accept revolution as a practical solution. In contrast to Büchner, Peter Weiss now claims that he is a revolutionary and regards such disruptive action as his only recourse. He says that Marat/Sade, like all art, is and must be revolutionary. Certainly one can read such an interpretation into Marat/Sade, but that is by no means the only interpretation possible. The play is complex, and the arguments for and against political activity are carefully formulated. As a consequence, what Marat/Sade says is something the reader must decide for himself.

## DANTONS TOD AND MARAT/SADE AS DRAMAS

Both Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade are essentially theatrical works, and although reading is a valuable experience, a stage presentation reveals more of their value. Indeed, it is as theater pieces that these two dramas have their greatest similarity. Time and again, one finds Dantons Tod's stage techniques echoed in Marat/Sade, and the relationship, to say the least, is striking. Weiss has not admitted Büchner as an influence, and it may well be that the influence has been indirect. Nevertheless, there are similarities between the two plays that warrant investigation. Perhaps the most viable approach is to discuss some of Dantons Tod's distinctive dramatic features and then to analyze Marat/Sade in the light of those observations. Particular note will also be made of any relationship between these two writers and Bertolt Brecht because he is quite possibly the strongest link between them.

One of Dantons Tod's most striking features is the large number (thirty-two) of scenes, some short, others long, all striking. In the play's course the action shifts from residences to the Parisian streets to the Revolutionary Tribunal to jails. Büchner paints his portrait of the Terror in bold, forceful strokes that give and broad picture of Paris at that time. This plethora of scenes was then almost unique in German literature's annals. It calls to mind principally Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen, even though the plays differ

markedly intellectually. The only other German dramatists suggested are Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz and Christian Dietrich Grabbe, and one thinks especially of the latter's Napoleon.<sup>142</sup> Probably Shakespeare's influence was greater on Büchner than any German writer's. In a letter to Minna, Büchner says: "Der arme Shakespeare war Schreiber den Tag über und mußte nachts dichten, und ich, der ich nicht wert bin, ihm die Schuhriemen zu lösen, hab's weit besser. . . ."143 It was this scenic form that allowed Büchner to include much seemingly unrelated material and to create a vivid portrait of an era on fire.

Büchner is often seen as one of Bertolt Brecht's precursors, and we shall endeavor, wherever possible, to note similarities. In scenic structure there is certainly a relationship between Dantons Tod (as well as Woyzeck) and Brecht's epic theater. Brecht's theory calls for a play's scenes to be virtually autonomous, and in a sense, this is the situation in Dantons Tod. Although its scenes cannot stand alone and they do support one another, each one appears to summarize the total problem of futility and disgust.<sup>144</sup> In this manner the scenes are autonomous; each one is a statement. Woyzeck's scenic structure is even more Brechtian. There the proper scenic order is debatable, but nevertheless, almost any sensible arrangement seems to convey the ideas.

Woyzeck's scenes are extremely independent of each other. Although these two plays themselves may not be epic theater, they are definitely precursors.

Dantons Tod is as unusual linguistically as it is structurally. Not only is the play written in prose, a decided reaction to Classicism's blank verse, but it is also richly endowed with equally uncommon luxuriant metaphor.<sup>145</sup> Consider, for example, Danton's speeches in the Conciergerie shortly before his execution:

Die Freiheit und eine Hure sind die kosmopolitischsten Dinge unter der Sonne. Sie wird sich jetzt anständig im Ehebett des Advokaten von Arras prostituieren. Aber ich denke, sie wird die Klytämnestra gegen ihn spielen; ich lasse ihm keine sechs Monate Frist, ich ziehe ihn mit mir.

Aber wir sind die armen Musikanten und unsere Körper die Instrumente. Sind denn die häßlichen Töne, welche auf ihnen herausgepfuscht werden, nur da, um höher und höher dringend und endlich leise verhallend wie ein wollüstiger Hauch in himmlischen Ohren zu sterben?<sup>146</sup>

One notes in the play a linguistic grandeur and force that would be remarkable for any age, but which is all the more so for a time that was so immersed in Classicism's dramatic blank verse.

Even more unusual linguistically is the dialogue's basically rhetorical quality. Everybody seems to be intent on making speeches instead of conducting conversation. The

characters talk at or past each other, seldom to each other. Consider Act Two's opening, as Danton uses Camille's cue to wander into a philosophical discussion:

CAMILLE. Rasch, Danton, wir haben keine Zeit zu verlieren!  
 DANTON (er kleidet sich an). Aber die Zeit verliert uns.  
 Das ist sehr langweilig, immer das Hemd zuerst und dann die Hosen drüber zu ziehen und des Abends ins Bett und morgens wieder heraus zu kriechen und einen Fuß immer so vor den andern zu setzen; da ist gar kein Absehen, wie es anders werden soll. Das ist sehr traurig, und daß Millionen es schon so gemacht haben, und daß Millionen es wieder so machen werden, und daß wir noch obendrein aus zwei Hälften bestehen, die beide das nämliche tun, so daß alles doppelt geschieht - das ist sehr traurig.<sup>147</sup>

Büchner

Büchner was a rare master of language as his metaphor and rhetoric indicate.

Another of Dantons Tod's significant features is its use of the grotesque and the obscene. To say the least, Büchner's portrait of the Terror is convincingly and hideously effective. One sees a constant progression of shocking scenes: the crowd tries to lynch a young man for using a handkerchief to blow his nose; carters bicker over the pay for transporting the guillotine's victims; Parisians dance at the executions; and perhaps the most forceful of all, the executioners' glee and cheerfulness as they wash away the blade's blood. Then too, Danton is constantly cursing, and indeed, almost everyone uses extremely vile language. Büchner probably had two goals

in his calculated attempt to shock the audience. First, he was indicating his revulsion at this entire period. The Terror had shocked him, and it should shock the playgoer too. Here one remembers the letter he wrote to his family (quoted in Chapter Two) defending his obscenities because the dramatist's role was merely to recreate history. The period was a horrible one, and Büchner intended it to be remembered as such. Secondly, Büchner's use of the grotesque further reveals his social conscience. Time after time, a hideous scene contains an explanatory piece of information. Most notable is the scene with Simon's sluttish daughter. One would normally be disgusted at her immoral conduct, but the reader is quickly told that her prostitution enables her family to eat. Here Büchner does not blame the lower classes for this deprivation and depravity in which they live, but instead the economic and social forces which work against them.<sup>148</sup> The grotesque enables Büchner to make their plight all the more pitiable. He intended to shock his audience and make them think, and his technique reminds<sup>one</sup> somewhat of Brecht's Verfremdung. At any rate, Büchner's success seems unquestionable.

While lyric and music do not play an overriding role in Dantons Tod, their function, nevertheless, deserves consideration. Six songs appear in the play, and they serve two purposes for Büchner. On two occasions, he uses song to indicate

the crowd's grotesque nature. The first song, in Act One, reflects the mob's incessant cry "An die Laterne":

Die da liegen in der Erden  
 Von de Würm gefresse werden;  
 Besser hangen in der Luft,  
 Als verfaulen in der Gruft!<sup>149</sup>

Then, in the play's final scene as the executioners clean their apparatus, one of them sings:

Und wann ich hame geh,  
 Scheint der Mond so schein. . .  
 Scheint in meines Ellervaters Fenster--  
 Kerl, wo bleibst so lang bei de Menschen?<sup>150</sup>

By portraying happy individuals in such repulsive scenes, Büchner has neatly and indirectly used music to criticize the crowd and its actions.

In his other uses of song, Büchner makes direct and personal comments about the Revolution and about life. In the Act Two "Promenade" scene, a Bänkelsänger sings:

Was doch ist, was doch ist  
 Aller Männer Freud und Lust? . . .  
 Unter Kummer, unter Sorgen  
 Sich bemühen vom frühen Morgen,  
 Bis der Tag vorüber ist.

To which question about life's value a beggar replies:

Eine Handvolle Erde und ein wenig Moos . . .  
 Ist auf dieser Erde einst mein letztes Los!<sup>151</sup>



Büchner, through the beggar, here comments on the "emptiness of the bourgeois life style and the emptiness of life itself. . . ." <sup>152</sup>  
 He continues this same thought in an exchange later in the scene:

SOLDAT! Christinlein, lieb Christinlein mein  
 Tut dir der Schaden weh, Schaden weh,  
 Schaden weh, Schaden weh?  
 ROSALIE! Ach nein, ihr Herrn Soldaten,  
 Ich hätt es gerne meh, gerne meh,  
 gerne meh, gerne meh.<sup>153</sup>

In Lucille's Act Four song to her husband, Camille, as she stands outside the prison, Büchner again creates a portrait whose melancholy grabs the emotions, and it is interesting that this song, like so many others, Büchner borrowed in an altered form from Des Knaben Wunderhorn.<sup>154</sup> The play's final song, also borrowed from that source, occurs in Act Four, with Lucille again as the singer:

Es ist ein Schnitter, der heißt Tod,  
 Hat Gewalt vom höchsten Gott.  
 Viel Hunderttausend ungezählt,  
 Was nur unter die Sichel fällt.<sup>155</sup>

The pathos here is almost unbearable and becomes even more so when Lucille, in a final deranged act, shouts "Es lebe der König," and is summarily arrested. Büchner has, I believe, used this Volkslied as a final expression of the inevitability which he felt oppressing him and of his own personal disgust at the Revolution. If the first line read, "Es ist ein Schnitter,

der heißt Revolution," it might express more closely Büchner's sentiments; nevertheless, the song is still a forceful comment. As is the case with much of Dantons Tod's actual dialogue, Büchner has borrowed his songs from previously published works. Even so, the songs, like the adopted dialogue, express his own unhappy feelings.

Beginning with the Naturalists, Büchner's influence on contemporary drama has been profound. Space does not permit a full discussion of this subject, and indeed, Herbert Lindenberger's Georg Büchner and Max Spalter's Brecht's Tradition obviate such a presentation. Suffice it to say that the Naturalists saw in Büchner a truly creative genius and borrowed his use of short, swift scenes and his use of the grotesque.<sup>156</sup> Later dramatists, especially Brecht, turned to Büchner the thinker, and as Max Spalter comments: "Brecht, like Büchner, conveys misery, joy, waste and isolation, life purposely unwinding in spasmodic fits of pleasure and pain, aggression and passivity alternating as impersonally as the creative and degenerative cycles of nature."<sup>157</sup> In addition, as we have already noted, Brecht's theatrical theory has a firm basis in Büchner, especially in its scenic structure. Thus, Büchner, directly and indirectly through Brecht and others, must be regarded as a primary influence on almost all of contemporary German, if not Western, drama.

Although we have already discussed Weiss's primary literary influences, one author, Bertolt Brecht, whose importance cannot be overestimated, should also be considered. Weiss himself has commented: "Brecht is the one who has helped me most, because he never wrote anything just for the sake of the dramatic event but rather to show how the world is and find out how to change it."<sup>158</sup> Thus, it is probably Brecht's political activism that has the greatest intellectual appeal to Weiss. He further echoes Brecht's thoughts about drama's goal when he comments:

I want to activate them [the audience], to force them to choose positions. For me, to write drama is to illustrate problems and point out solutions. My plays do not have conventional lead roles. The lead roles are played by history and ideas.<sup>159</sup>

A later comment sounds even more Brechtian: "I am creating a new kind of theater, and I hope I am helping to create a new kind of world."<sup>160</sup> In its desire to motivate the audience, Weiss's drama reveals an extensive Brechtian influence, but as we shall observe, that influence is far more pervasive.

Marat/Sade contains a strange anomaly in its scenic structure: there are thirty-three scenes, most of which are separated geographically, but there is only one set, the asylum's bathhouse. Thus, it is possible to see a Marat/Sade performance and not be completely aware of the multitude of

scenes. Nevertheless, there are, in reality, two acts with thirty-odd scenes, and in Weiss's technique one notes certain similarities with Büchner. The most striking correspondence is the multitude of quick-paced scenes, each of which appears to be unified. About this scenic form and its result, Jean Duvignaud has commented: "Car Marat-Sade n'est pas à vrai dire<sup>ni</sup> une pièce ni un drame: c'est une suite de tableaux vivants enchaînés par le dialogue du tribun et de l'écrivain."<sup>161</sup> Thus, one sees in Marat/Sade thirty-three dramatic units, each of which intends to illuminate one particular idea. Usually, Weiss gives each scene a quite clear and revealing title, from which one can learn exactly what will occur, for example, "Zweiter Besuch der Corday," "Marats Geschichte," or "Gespräch über Tod und Leben." With these titles Weiss is undoubtedly trying to achieve Brechtian Verfremdung so that his audience will consider the ideas instead of worrying about the action. In fact, the play's title serves the same purpose, because from it the reader or theatergoer knows exactly what will take place. What is germane to the present discussion, though, is the large number of seemingly independent scenes.

In its episodic structure, Marat/Sade fully fulfills Brecht's requirement that the scene be autonomous. As with Büchner, the scenes, though all interrelated, seem quite independent. Although both plays contain discussions and events that seem extraneous to the action revealed in the titles,

there is always a unifying factor. In Dantons Tod it is the Reign of Terror; in Marat/Sade it is the madhouse surroundings. As was earlier indicated, Büchner's scenic technique probably influenced Brecht, and it is obvious that Weiss has borrowed heavily from Brecht for his Marat/Sade. Here the relationship appears to be that Büchner is a Brechtian predecessor, while Weiss is an inheritor of that tradition.

There is as little agreement about Weiss's use of language as there is about the play's proper political interpretation. Critics have variously characterized it as everything from "stirring, exciting, at times exalting,"<sup>162</sup> to "trite."<sup>163</sup> Subjective criticism aside, one does note a certain flatness in the language, a lack of enthusiasm. Probably this is warranted, because Sade is neither a professional dramatist nor actor, but merely a theatrical dilettante.<sup>164</sup> One would not expect bright, captivating language from him. In addition, his actors are asylum patients and their speeches would naturally avoid exciting and arousing phrasing.<sup>164</sup> Weiss's language is thus extremely appropriate and effective in its flatness, a quality that would otherwise be negative.

Despite this rationalization there is still something troubling in Marat/Sade's language, which Curt Hohoff explains:

Der große Vorteil des von Weiss entdeckten und erarbeiteten Stils ist die Geschlossenheit der Sprache. Alle Personen sprechen das gleiche Idiom,

ob de Sade philosophiert, Marat eine Rede hält, der Direktor Einwände erhebt, das Volk schreit oder der Ausrufer seinen Zeigestock hebt: die Sprache ist nie Ausdruck der Personen, sondern Medium eines Autors, der durch die Masken seiner Puppen spricht.<sup>165</sup>

Indeed, as Mr. Hohoff later indicates, the speeches are merely rhetorical, never contrasting with each other; everything seems like monologue. The result is that there is no real drama, only position taking; individualism vs. collectivism. No matter how much Marat and Sade talk, they but seldom talk to each other and disagree; each man is incessantly in the pulpit. As radical as this concept of a play without interlocking dialogue might seem, it is really not new. Büchner does almost the same thing in Dantons Tod. There, from the first scene on, the characters talk past each other, never to each other. In both cases, what one observes is the "drama of commentary. . . ." <sup>166</sup> The characters do not verbalize their own thoughts and sentiments, but their author's, a technique reflecting each play's existence as a political comment. Accidental or not, there is in Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade a distinct similarity in the use of rhetorical language.

No one can attend a Marat/Sade performance and not be aware of the extensive appearance of grotesque and shocking events in the play. He may well be repelled by what he sees, but he cannot ignore it. These shocking features are surely

one of the play's most effective allurements, and are not nearly as apparent in the written text as on the stage. The reader may pause for a second when he reads Weiss's instruction for Marat to rise naked from his bath, but he is startled when he sees it on the stage. As with Büchner, Marat/Sade's grotesque is both verbal and visual. Perhaps the most excruciating scene verbally is Sade's explicit description of Damien's execution.<sup>167</sup> Visually, almost the entire play is grotesque in appearance, from the patients' tortured entrance to the chaotic and frightening conclusion in which the patients seem to lose all control of their senses. Marat/Sade runs the gamut from buckets of blood to whippings to sexual attacks, and the effect is almost overwhelming. The mind can only boggle at this incredible display of the distasteful and shocking.

Many critics believe they see Antonin Artaud's influence in Marat/Sade. For example, Ernst Wendt comments:

Die Wirkung auf dem Zuschauer war - ganz im Artaudschen Sinne - eine aus psychischer und physischer Verletzung gemischte; für Augenblicke stockte einem der Atem, zog sich das Herz zusammen. . . .<sup>168</sup>

Artaud wished to shock his audience into making an opinion by ripping its collective emotion asunder and thereby causing it to become angry and disgusted. Many people who have viewed a Marat/Sade performance might well agree that the play was

successful in this regard. Weiss himself, however, denies Artaud's direct influence:

I admire him, though I know him only from his theoretical writings and poems. But I didn't think of Artaud when I wrote Marat/Sade, which grew out of its own material and had to be played a certain way in the atmosphere which the material created. However, Peter Brook was thinking of Artaud before he produced Marat/Sade, and he used Artaudian principles.<sup>169</sup>

Perhaps Weiss has reason to question an Artaudian influence, because on the surface it seems almost contradictory to his Brechtian tradition. Brecht wished to alienate the audience so that it would respond and analyze the play intellectually, and not emotionally. Artaud, in contrast, demands full play of the emotions and insists on battering them wherever possible. It would seem that one could not combine the two theories in a single artistic work, but Weiss, despite his disclaimer, seems to have succeeded. Both heritages are definitely at play in Marat/Sade.

It is difficult to find any real similarity in the use Büchner and Weiss make of the grotesque. Although both plays are remarkable for the shocking scenes they contain, the authors' individual intentions appear to be quite different. Through the grotesque Büchner expressed both his disgust at the Revolution and his social conscience. In that he wished also to make the audience think, there is perhaps some correspondence. Weiss, on the other hand, shocks and disturbs



only to get the audience to respond to the emotions presented so that it feels itself a part of the play. Perhaps one can argue that Büchner would have eventually arrived at such a position. He almost does so in Woyzeck, but at the time he created Dantons Tod, he had not progressed so far.

Music plays an important role in Marat/Sade, although as is the case with most of Weiss's dramatic technique, it is not used in the conventional sense. The Four Singers, who perform the principal singing role, are certainly not in the musical comedy tradition. Consider, for example, Weiss's description of them:

Sie haben ihre Anstaltskleidung mit grotesken Kostümstücken versehen. Sie tragen die Revolutionsmütze, Rossignol stellt mit Trikolorenbinde und umgehängtem Säbel die "Marianne" dar.<sup>170</sup>

Or, consider their first important song:

Marat was ist aus unserer Revolution geworden  
 Marat wir wolln nicht mehr warten bis morgen  
 Marat wir sind immer noch arme Leute  
 und die versprochenen Änderungen wollen wir heute.<sup>171</sup>

Thus neither do Weiss's performers look ordinary, nor do they sing ordinary lyrics with commonplace themes. Weiss is, instead, using music as a method of Brechtian alienation. He designed the singers' appearance and the words themselves to make the audience analyze the songs intellectually and

and not respond to them emotionally.<sup>172</sup> In a certain sense, one may view Büchner's songs as having the same intent. Although their surroundings do not necessarily alienate, one responds to them intellectually and realizes that they contains Büchner's comments. Just as it is Büchner who really says, "Es ist ein Schnitter, der heißt Tod," it is, in one sense, Weiss who says, "Was ist aus unserer Revolution geworden." Both plays' songs contain the authors' comments, and here there appears to be a distinct similarity.

Both Weiss and Büchner have richly endowed their plays with abundant theatrical devices, and in many ways they are the same in both dramas. In each one the scenes are basically short and swift and have their settings in a variety of places. More important is the connection each appears to have to Brecht's epic theater. Although much of Dantons Tod's language is vivid and expressive and much of Marat/Sade's seems flat, there is a distinct connection in the rhetorical nature of the plays' speeches. The characters in both dramas often speak past each other and appear to be talking only to themselves. Each play is also astonishing for the extensive grotesqueness it contains, and although the two authors' intentions were divergent, such a feature's existence in both plays is certainly unusual. One notes a final theatrical similarity in the musical realm; each play's

music is pointed and carefully selected to convey a desired idea. The degree to which Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade depend upon actual presentations is quite obvious; truly they are both works for the stage.

## THE PLAYS AND PHILOSOPHY

Not the least of these two plays' similarities is the philosophical correspondence one notes in the central characters. It would be foolish to say that Weiss patterned his Marat on Büchner's Robespierre or his Sade on Danton, for each author was working closely with history. Nevertheless, whether by intent or by accident, there is a similarity between Marat and Robespierre and also between Sade and Danton that merits examination.

The Marat/Robespierre relationship is the easier of the two to analyze, because the characters, as presented, are basically flat and one-sided. Both men are revolutionaries to the ultimate degree, and probably without any scruples whatsoever. Robespierre, along with his political ally St. Just, preaches the Reign of Terror and then proceeds to implement it. His philosophy is violence; he believes that blood must purge blood if the revolution is to become pure. Only once does Robespierre's character reveal another side. In the first act, after he has ordered the Dantonists' arrest, he finds himself alone and suddenly comprehends how isolated man really is. The language's tone changes from rhetorically didactic to almost poetic:

Jawohl, Blutmessias, der opfert und nicht geopfert  
wird.--Er hat sie mit seinem Blut erlöst, und ich

erlöse sie mit ihrem eignen. Er hat sie sündigen gemacht, und ich nehme die Sünde auf mich. Er hatte die Wollust des Schmerzes, und ich habe die Qual des Henkers. Wer hat sich mehr verleugnet, ich oder er?--Und doch ist was von Narrheit in dem Gedanken.--Was sehen wir nur immer nach dem Einen? Wahrlich, der Menschensohn wird in uns allen gekreuzigt, wir ringen alle in Gethsemanegarten im blutigen Schweiß, aber es erlöst keiner den andern mit seinen Wunden.  
 Mein Camille!--Sie gehen alle von mir--es ist alles wüst und leer--ich bin allein.<sup>173</sup>

The mood, however, soon breaks, and Robespierre resumes a stand as terrifying as his colleagues'. Marat, on the other hand, never deviates from his mold; he always preaches revolt, from any and every pulpit. ~~No~~ where does he more clearly declaim his view than in the reworked "Epilog":

Was sich mir zeigte war eine einzige Welt  
 und diese war regiert vom Geld  
 doch die es besaßen waren nur wenige  
 und die's nicht besaßen waren unzählige  
 Es zeigte sich mir daß es galt  
 das Gesetz zu brechen mit Gewalt  
 und jene zu stürzen die dick und breit  
 dasitzen in geheuchelter Sicherheit  
 die uns erklären die Unterschiede müßten bestehen  
 und der Kampf um den Profit müßte weitergehn.<sup>174</sup>

Belief in revolt links these two characters philosophically; it is not only their existences' center, but also their main component.

In contrast to Robespierre's and Marat's simplicity, Danton and Sade pose many more philosophical problems. The

chapter on revolution indicated the satiety and disgust that both men feel towards political activity. This feeling, however, is but one facet of their personalities and indicates a more pervasive malaise. Before attempting a comparison of the two men, a brief investigation of each's philosophical system is first necessary.

Karl Viëtor has observed that, "Büchners Danton ist der erste passive Held im deutschen Drama."<sup>175</sup> As a consequence, in the play's course he makes almost no attempt to save either himself or his friends. Even when he stirs himself to some action, as before the Revolutionary Tribunal, he soon abandons the attempt without explanation. For some reason Danton is simply incapable of rebellion. In a literature that had produced active heroes like Götz von Berlichingen or mental ones like Maria Stuart, this is indeed a strange turn of events. E. M. Fleissner analyzes what had been the hero's role:

In order to escape despair, the hero, knowing failure is inevitable, relies ultimately on a spiritual refuge where his revolt, no matter how abortive, constitutes an enduring mark of strength and distinction. We call it the tragic sense of life and derive from it an uplifting emotional experience of human dignity in the face of suffering and death.<sup>176</sup>

But the audience can derive nothing uplifting from Büchner's Danton; there is little admirable, indeed little that

arouses sympathy in him. One feels sorry for Danton (if one feels sorry for him at all) not because he is in a most unfortunate situation, but because he does not have the requisite moral vigor to extract himself. Thus, Danton is not only a passive hero in his actions, but he is also the prototype anti-hero, because everything he does runs counter to the heroic tradition.

Büchner's admiration for Shakespeare has already been discussed, and in his Danton figure, the influence certainly reveals itself. Karl Viëtor persuasively argues that Danton's closest literary kin is Hamlet. Referring to that Shakespearean character, he asks rhetorically, "Ist er nicht auch ein philosophisch verhinderter Täter, ein durch den Gedanken gelähmter, ein disillusionierter 'Dionysiker'?"<sup>177</sup> He bases his argument on part of Nietzsche's Geburt der Tragödie, a section whose eloquence merits quotation:

In diesem Sinne hat der dionysiker Mensch Ähnlichkeit mit Hamlet: beide haben einen wahren Blick in das Wesen der Dinge getan, sie haben erkannt, und es ekelt sie zu handeln; denn ihre Handlung kann nichts am ewigen Wesen der Dinge ändern, sie empfinden es als lächerlich oder schmachvoll, daß ihnen zugemutet wird, die Welt, die aus den Fugen ist, wieder einzurichten. Die Erkenntnis tötet das Handeln, . . . . Jetzt verfängt kein Trost mehr, die Sehnsucht geht über eine Welt nach dem Tode, über die Götter selbst hinaus, das Dasein wird, samt seiner gleißenden Widerspiegelung in den Göttern oder in einem unsterblichen Jenseits, vermeint. In der Bewußtheit der einmal geschauten Wahrheit sieht jetzt der Mensch überall nur das Entsetzliche oder Absurde des Seins: . . . es ekelt ihn.<sup>178</sup>

Danton, like Hamlet, has peered into the abyss; the result is his disgust at life and at himself. Unlike Hamlet, Danton does not, indeed he cannot, strike out; he has acquired a death-wish, which, as the play's title so clearly reveals, eventually fulfills itself.

Danton's character is enormously complicated and to discuss all its facets would be practically impossible. Nevertheless, there are certain features which lend themselves to categorization and analysis. One of the most recognizable is Danton's nihilism, especially as he expresses it in the fourth act: "Die Welt ist das Chaos. Das Nichts ist der zu gebärende Weltgott."<sup>179</sup> This nihilistic approach extends even to a lack of faith in the Self, the clearest example of which is Danton's well-known and already quoted remark, "Wir haben nicht die Revolution, sondern die Revolution hat uns gemacht." Danton believes quite literally in nothing, neither in himself, nor in other human beings, nor in the world.

Although Danton seemingly finds little consolation in life, he nevertheless does conduct himself in accordance with an ethical system. He characterizes himself as an Epicurean, a sensualist in its most literal sense. In his first act exchange with Robespierre, Danton exclaims:

Es gibt nur Epikureer, und zwar grobe und



feine, Christus war der feinste; das ist der einzige Unterschied, den ich zwischen den Menschen herausbringen kann. Jeder handelt seiner Natur gemäß, d.h. er tut, was ihm wohl tut. 180

Accordingly, Danton provides himself with those items that gratify the senses. As one learns in the play, he cavorts with prostitutes, partakes of fine food and drink and lives amidst opulence. Thus, though Danton can find no meaning to life, he takes advantage of it, and conducts his existence as he wishes, indulging himself in every way he desires.

If one were to apply a twentieth-century philosophical system to Danton's personal ethic, it would most probably be existentialism. In the most literal sense, Danton is fraught with worry about existence; his attempts to understand it have failed, but he still worries and will not yet renounce it. Then too, Danton seems to spend enormous amounts of time in worry, fear and anxiety about the reason for existence to take the form it has. Consider his remark to Camille in Act Two:

Ich begreife nicht, warum die Leute nicht auf der Gasse stehenbleiben und einander ins Gesicht lachen. Ich meine, sie müßten zu den Fenstern und zu den Gräbern herauslachen, und der Himmel müsse sich wälzen vor Lachen. 181

Danton has stood back and contemplated his desire to do something meaningful, when, as he now knows, there is no

meaning. The thought frightens him and he becomes, as the quotation reveals, cynical about life. Indeed, Danton's fright is so great that he in effect develops a death-wish, and will no longer act to save himself. His gaze into the abyss has destroyed him, and now, not only the September Massacres, but all of life's ugliness haunts him. While the existential system does not require a reaction as destructive as Danton's, it is nevertheless one of the paths open to the man who has sought meaning in life and found nothing.

If Danton does not understand life, perhaps one can say that Sade understands it all too well. His years beyond Charenton's gates had revealed to him all life's pleasures and also its horrors. Now in the role of a detached observer, he comments on life's absurdities. Sade sees man as fighting a hopeless battle against a nature that is indifferent to him. In the important "Gespräch über Tod und Leben," he says:

Jeder Tod auch der grausamste  
 ertrinkt in der völligen Gleichgültigkeit der Natur  
 Nur wir verleihen unserm Leben irgendeinen Wert  
 die Natur würde schweigend zusehen  
 rotteten wir unsere ganze Rasse aus. . .  
 Unsere Morde haben kein Feuer  
 weil sie zur täglichen Ordnung gehören  
 Ohne Leidenschaft verurteilen wir  
 kein schöner individueller Tod mehr

stellt sich uns dar  
 nur ein anonymes entwertetes Sterben  
 in das wir ganze Völker schicken könnten  
 in kalter Berechnung  
 bis es einmal soweit ist  
 alles Leben  
 aufzuheben.<sup>182</sup>

Sade, unlike Danton, rebels at this impersonal nature and death:

Ich hasse die Natur  
 ich will sie überwinden  
 ich will sie mit ihren eigenen Waffen schlagen  
 in ihren eigenen Fallen fangen.<sup>183</sup>

In this anxiety, veneered by a calm detachment, Sade reveals his existential personality. H-B. Moeller comments:

The Marquis de Sade. . . exhibits the existentialist personality: introspection and isolation, a leaning toward pure imagination rather than material application, distrust of all knowledge. He genuinely knows neither good nor himself, nothing but fear, suffering and death is certain to him.<sup>184</sup>

That is as revealing a character sketch as one can draw of Weiss's Sade; he is, indeed, a twentieth-century existentialist.

That both Danton and Sade are essentially existential figures establishes a certain connection between them; nevertheless basic differences do exist in their philosophies. There is first the method by which each man has arrived at his existential state of being. To be sure, Danton expresses satiation caused by the Revolution's excesses, but as was

earlier noted, this is merely symptomatic of a grander malaise afflicting his entire mental system. Danton is simply tired of life; the abyss has scared him too much. This problem's manifestation is that he argues against revolution, not merely because he believes it to be evil, but more importantly because he is "tired." Sade, in contrast, has also peered into the abyss, but he has rationally backed away. Recall his comment: "Ich sah daß ich nicht fähig war zum Mord."<sup>185</sup> Where Danton acts from emotional and subjective feeling in general, Sade has achieved his position from a rational consideration of the alternatives.

Even more disparate are the actions each character performs in his existential state. Danton's solution is to abandon all hope in himself and in existence. He believes, and indeed can believe, only in nothingness. Thus, although he involves himself in all the sensual pleasures, one cannot say that he enjoys them. Pleasure would imply meaning, and that concept does not exist for Danton. Accordingly, no other path remains open but for his death-wish to seek fulfillment. In marked contrast to Danton, Sade not only wishes to live, but he intends to enjoy life. Instead of yielding to life's absurdities, Sade finds pleasure in eroticism. In his pre-prison years Sade had experienced almost every type of erotic excess, but even after entering Charenton, he does not cease

searching for these diversions. In the asylum, Sade finds his outlet in the imagination. **N**owhere in Marat/Sade is this more forcefully conveyed than the scene "Sade unter der Peitsche."<sup>186</sup> As Charlotte Corday lashes Sade, one senses the erotic pleasure he derives from this masochistic performance. In the New York production, this scene entered an imaginary realm as Corday used her loosened hair, instead of a whip, to strike Sade. In both cases one senses that Sade has not yielded to life's absurdity, but is bending it to his will. Sade and Danton are both existential figures, but their courses of conduct differ substantially.

Both Marat/Sade and Dantons Tod abound in philosophical argument, and all of the central characters offer intriguing comparisons and contrasts. Although flat by most dramatic standards, Robespierre and Marat are forceful and direct in their pleas for violence, and the playwrights have developed chilling and convincing portraits of two men whose existence terror governs. As sparkling as these characters are, it is Danton and Sade who provide the plays' philosophical tours de force. Connected by an existential viewpoint, these two characters take differing tacks in their approach to life. Danton submits to the chaos; Sade rebels, even if his manner is somewhat abnormal. There is, indeed, much food for thought in both solutions.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has endeavored to confirm a system of similarities between Georg Büchner's Dantons Tod and Peter Weiss's Marat/Sade. Its analysis has consisted of four sections. A study of these plays' origins reveals intriguing correspondences which may or may not be coincidences. Both Büchner and Weiss wrote their plays at a time of extreme mental crisis, and it was furthermore a concern over political activity that prompted their internal turmoil. Likewise, both authors found in the French Revolution an expression of their anxiety. Perhaps the most remarkable similarity in this connection is the extensive use both Büchner and Weiss make of historical sources. Not only do both plays have their bases in fact, but also much of the actual dialogue derives from published sources.

Both dramas concern revolution, and, in truth, stand as Büchner's and Weiss's own political commentaries. When Büchner's involvement in politics through Der Hessische Landbote came to naught, he turned his back on revolution. Dantons Tod is a scathing indictment of revolutionary activity in which Büchner contends that revolution's only two results are unnecessary bloodshed and dictatorship. In marked contrast to Büchner's stance, Peter Weiss now claims that not only is he himself a revolutionary, but that his drama has revolutionary intentions. His assertion, when considered

in light of Marat/Sade's origins, falls somewhat short of the truth. In the play's five revisions, Weiss gradually moves from indecision about political activity to wholehearted support of it. Nevertheless, much of Weiss's earlier skepticism remains, and the play contains something to please both sides of the proverbial political fence. These two dramas may present different opinions about political activity, but the revolutionary process is their core.

A theater-goer easily notes many obvious similarities between the plays. Both contain a large number of short, fast-paced, basically autonomous scenes. Here one sees between Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade a connection filtered through Brecht's dramatic theory. The language in both dramas is unusual for its highly rhetorical nature. In both cases the characters almost always talk around and past each other; there is little actual conversation. Music plays an important role in both dramas, although its function in each one appears to be different. Büchner uses songs, many derived from historical sources, to comment directly and indirectly on revolution. Weiss, on the other hand, uses his music in Brecht's Verfremdung tradition. In that Weiss's songs are also commentary in nature, there is a relationship; but even then, the method each author's music uses is different. In sum, dramatic technique forges a strong bond between Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade, but it does not unify them.

An attentive reader quickly notes a philosophical correspondence between Robespierre and Marat and between Danton and Sade. The first two characters seem to live only for revolution and violence; revolt forms their existence's center. The second two, however, question existence itself. Both have participated in the Revolution's horrors, and now they recoil from life itself. The path each man followed, though, is markedly different. Danton, unable to find any meaning to life, forms a death-wish, which is ultimately fulfilled. Sade, on the other hand, finds diversion and enjoyment, if not meaning, in life's sensual pleasures. Thus, what truly links these two characters is their inability to believe.

The one problem now remaining is whether a direct relationship actually exists between Dantons Tod and Marat/Sade. On the one hand, there are the critical opinions, cited in this thesis' introduction, which claim a definite link between the works. A large body of circumstantial evidence, as this thesis hopefully indicates, also points to a relationship. To attribute to coincidence all the similarities described here seems a bit farfetched. On the other hand, however, there is the fact that Weiss appears never to have made a comment, one way or the other, about Büchner. He has been quite free in listing writers who have influenced him, including



almost everyone from Henry Miller to Bert Brecht. Yet, in all these discussions, Georg Büchner's name does not appear. Perhaps, Weiss is justified in not acknowledging another dramatist with whom he seems to have so much in common. No writer wants plagiarism's spectre hanging above his head, although in this case there is more than enough original genius in both plays to prevent such a problem. Until the voluminous materials that Weiss used in preparing Marat/Sade become available for public inspection, it will be impossible to confirm one way or the other such a relationship's existence. Comments before that time must remain speculation. In my opinion, there is a relationship and a strong one at that.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 "Revolution as Theater: Danton's Death and Marat/Sade," Massachusetts Review, VII (1966), 543.

2 To disencumber discussion, Weiss's twenty-one word title will hereafter be shortened to the one used here.

3 "Marats Tod als Moritat," Merkur, XIX (1965), 194.

4 "La fausse monnaie chasse la bonne," La Nouvelle Revue Française, XIV (1965), 889.

5 Twentieth-Century German Literature (New York, 1967), p. 161.

6 "Assault on the Senses," (anon. rev.), Newsweek, LXVII (January 10, 1966), 63.

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7 Herbert Lindenberger, Georg Büchner (Carbondale, Ill., 1964), p. 6. Unless otherwise cited, all biographical information used here is from the chapter of this book entitled "Biographical Background," pp. 3-18.

8 A. H. J. Knight, Georg Büchner (Oxford, 1951), p. 6.

9 Karl Viëtor, Georg Büchner: Politik, Dichtung, Wissenschaft (Bern, 1949), S. 216.

10 Knight, p. 7.

11 Georg Büchners Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, ed. Fritz Bergemann (Leipzig, 1922), S. 631 -- hereafter cited as S.W.B.

12 Knight, pp. 9, 12-13. One notes in particular the young Büchner's belief that suicide is a manifestation of a severe mental disturbance.

13 Knight, p. 15.

14 Viëtor, S. 19.

15 S.W.B., S. 523.

16 S.W.B., S. 524.

- 17 S.W.B., S. 525.
- 18 S.W.B., S. 525.
- 19 S.W.B., S. 527.
- 20 S.W.B., S. 529.
- 21 S.W.B., S. 633.
- 22 Knight, p. 23.
- 23 Knight, p. 24.
- 24 S.W.B., S. 536.
- 25 S.W.B., S. 534.
- 26 Knight, p. 32.
- 27 S.W.B., S. 537.
- 28 S.W.B., S. 538.
- 29 S.W.B., S. 538-41.
- 30 Knight, p. 39.
- 31 Knight, p. 59.
- 32 S.W.B., S. 650.
- 33 S.W.B., S. 548-49.
- 34 Viëtor, S. 96-97.
- 35 Viëtor, S. 96.
- 36 S.W.B., S. 543.
- 37 Viëtor, S. 96.
- 38 Viëtor, S. 97.
- 39 S.W.B., S. 530.
- 40 Knight, p. 71.
- 41 F. A. Mignet, Histoire de la révolution française (Paris, 1836), II, 51.

42 S.W.B., S. 34.

43 Mignet, p. 53.

44 S.W.B., S. 45.

45 Mignet, p. 55.

46 S.W.B., S. 55.

47 S.W.B., S. 551-52.

48 Robert Christophe in Danton (New York, 1967) emphasises Danton's will to live and his intention to resist Robespierre's designs upon him. At the same time, he does not overlook the feeling of boredom and nihilism that was obviously part of Danton's mind at that time. This biography is also interesting for its mercenary analysis of Danton's early revolutionary motivation.

49 Viëtor, S. 104.

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50 Hans-Bernhard Moeller, "German Theater 1964: Weiss's Reasoning in the Madhouse," Symposium, XX (1966), 163.

51 Materialien zu Peter Weiss' Marat/Sade, ed. Karlheinz Braun (Frankfurt am Main, 1967), S. 2 -- hereafter cited as Materialien.

52 Oliver Clausen, "Weiss/Propagandist and Weiss/Playwright," New York Times Magazine, (Oct. 2, 1966), p. 130. Unless otherwise cited, all biographical material is from this article.

53 Frankfurt am Main, 1962, S. 9-10.

54 Clausen, p. 128.

55 "Peter Weiss ou la remontée du chaos," Les Temps Modernes, XX (Juillet 1965), 180.

56 Clausen, p. 128.

57 Clausen, p. 124.

58 Bachman, p. 181.

59 S. 196-97.

60 Michael Roloff, "An Interview with Peter Weiss," Partisan Review, XXXII (1965), 226.

61 Paul Gray, "A Living World: an Interview with Peter Weiss," Tulane Drama Review, XI (Fall 1966), 107.

62 Gray, p. 108.

63 Gray, p. 106.

64 Gray, p. 108.

65 Roloff, p. 221.

66 John Milfull, "From Kafka to Brecht: Peter Weiss's Development towards Marxism," German Life and Letters, XX (October 1966), 61.

67 S. 164.

68 Roloff, p. 221.

69 Roloff, p. 221.

70 Milfull, p. 62.

71 Roloff, p. 223.

72 Roloff, p. 224.

73 Roloff, p. 224.

74 Milfull, p. 63.

75 Moeller, p. 164.

76 It is possible that Abel, Babel and Cabel are three components of Weiss's personality, and as such he can justifiably speak in the following quotation of "interior monologue."

77 Roloff, p. 228.

78 Peter Weiss, "I Come out of My Hiding Place," Nation CCII (1966), 655.

#### MARAT/SADE: ITS ORIGINS

79 Materialien, S. 93.

80 Materialien, S. 93.

81 Materialien, S. 30.

82 Materialien, S. 94.

83 Peter Weiss, Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats dargestellt durch die Schauspielgruppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade (Frankfurt am Main, 1964), S. 139 -- hereafter cited as Marat/Sade.

84 Materialien, S. 93.

85 Louis R. Gottschalk, Jean Paul Marat: A Study in Radicalism (New York, 1927), p. 121.

86 Marat/Sade, S. 26.

87 Gottschalk, p. 132.

88 Marat/Sade, S. 99-101.

89 Gottschalk, p. 174.

90 Materialien, S. 16. Their speeches, though not entirely historical, represent the general derisive attitude which the Académie française maintained toward Marat.

91 Gottschalk, p. 168.

92 Materialien, S. 22.

93 Materialien, S. 24.

94 Marat/Sade, S. 118.

95 Materialien, S. 93-94.

96 Marat/Sade, S. 141.

97 Marat/Sade, S. 58.

98 Marat/Sade, S. 141.

99 Materialien, S. 103.

100 Marat/Sade, S. 143.

101 Materialien, S. 97.

102 Weiss, "Hiding Place," p. 652.

103 Weiss, "Hiding Place," p. 655.

## REVOLUTION

- 104 S.W.B., S. 636.
- 105 Ironically enough, many nineteenth-century critics viewed the play as pro-revolutionary. See Viëtor, S. 100.
- 106 Michael Hamburger, Reason and Energy (New York, 1957), p. 186.
- 107 Stanley Loomis, Paris in the Terror (New York, 1964), pp. 207-08.
- 108 S.W.B., S. 42-43.
- 109 S.W.B., S. 34.
- 110 S.W.B., S. 26.
- 111 S.W.B., S. 66.
- 112 Knight, p. 84.
- 113 S.W.B., S. 67.
- 114 S.W.B., S. 560.
- 115 S.W.B., S. 563.
- 116 S.W.B., S. 26.
- 117 S.W.B., S. 14.
- 118 Lindenberger, p. 41.
- 119 S.W.B., S. 548.
- 120 "Marat/Sade Forum," Tulane Drama Review, XI (Summer 1966), 222.
- 121 "Marat/Sade Forum," p. 222.
- 122 A. Alvarez, "Peter Weiss: The Truths That Are Uttered in a Madhouse," New York Times, December 26, 1966, Sec. X, p. 3.
- 123 Hohoff, S. 196.
- 124 Marat/Sade, S. 38-39.

- 125 Marat/Sade, S. 79-80.
- 126 Marat/Sade, S. 104-05. Marat's words disappear in what Weiss describes as "gewaltsamer Tumult." The patients have once again interrupted the play's course.
- 127 Marat/Sade, S. 48.
- 128 Marat/Sade, S. 57-58.
- 129 Marat/Sade, S. 70.
- 130 Marat/Sade, S. 71-72.
- 131 Frederick Lumley, New Trends in Twentieth Century Drama (New York, 1967), p. 251.
- 132 Alvarez, p. 3.
- 133 Alvarez, p. 3.
- 134 Roloff, p. 231.
- 135 Clausen, p.128.
- 136 Materialien, S. 154.
- 137 "Playwright as Politician: The Revolutionary World of Peter Weiss," Playbill, III (March 1966), 6.
- 138 Clausen, p. 128.
- 139 Materialien, S. 119.
- 140 Ernst Wendt, "Peter Weiss zwischen den Ideologien," Akzente, XII (October 1965), 417.
- 141 Milfull, p. 67.

DANTONS TOD AND MARAT/SADE AS DRAMAS

- 142 Max Spalter, Brecht's Tradition (Baltimore, 1967), p. 82.
- 143 S.W.B., S. 568.
- 144 Spalter, p. 85.
- 145 Lindenberger, p. 45.



- 146 S.W.B., S. 74, 76.
- 147 S.W.B., S. 32-33.
- 148 Spalter, pp. 85-86.
- 149 S.W.B., S. 15.
- 150 S.W.B., S. 80.
- 151 S.W.B., S. 36-37.
- 152 Spalter, p. 90.
- 153 S.W.B., S. 37.
- 154 Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Volkslied und Verseinlage in den Dramen Büchners," Georg Büchner, hrsg. von Wolfgang Martens (Darmstadt, 1965), S. 443.
- 155 S.W.B., S. 80.
- 156 Henry Hatfield, Modern German Literature (New York, 1967), p. 62.
- 157 Spalter, p. 161.
- 158 Gray, p. 112.
- 159 Clausen, p. 28.
- 160 Clausen, p. 128.
- 161 Duvignaud, p. 890.
- 162 Susan Sontag, "Marat/Sade/Artaud," Partisan Review, XXXII (Spring 1965), 213.
- 163 Harold Clurman, The Naked Image (New York, 1966), p. 121.
- 164 Even when a violent patient such as Roux begins to exhort his fellow inmates with fiery speeches, he is immediately subdued. Excitement is to be avoided at all costs.
- 165 Hohoff, S. 196.
- 166 Spalter, p. 93.
- 167 Marat/Sade, S. 36. Although the event Sade describes is disgustingly grotesque, Weiss carefully maintains flat language

and Sade recites in a detached manner.

168 Wendt, S. 419.

169 Gray, p. 111.

170 Marat/Sade, S. 8.

171 Marat/Sade, 20-21.

172 Fleissner, p. 558.

THE PLAYS AND PHILOSOPHY

173 S.W.B., S. 32.

174 Marat/Sade, S. 131-32.

175 Viëtor, S. 152.

176 Fleissner, p. 543.

177 Viëtor, S. 107.

178 Friedrich Nietzsche, Geburt der Tragödie, quoted in Viëtor, S. 107.

179 S.W.B., S. 76.

180 S.W.B., S. 28.

181 S.W.B., S. 38.

182 Marat/Sade, S. 35, 37.

183 Marat/Sade, S. 35.

184 Moeller, p. 166.

185 Marat/Sade, S. 70.

186 Marat/Sade, S. 67-73.

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