The Visit: Teachers Justice

During the 1940s to 1950s, many countries in Europe were impoverished due to the second World War. With Gullen being poverty-stricken, Durrenmatt portrays a change in human nature within the characters of the play. One of the most prominent changes in human nature in The Visit was by the teacher, being the more ethical person throughout the story.

At the beginning of act three, the teacher and the doctor tried to persuade Claire that instead of killing Ill, Gullen would offer their factories for investment. But to their dismay, Claire already owned the factories they offered, leaving them the only option to gain the money is through murder. As the play progresses, the teacher became more disturbed by the corrupt nature of the Gulleners and was willing to tell the journalists the root of the corruptness that sprouted with Claire. (Durrenmatt 80) Throughout the play, the teacher was one of the only characters who acknowledged the change in corruptness of the people of Gullen. Following his moral principles, the teacher tries to take action against the injustices that are occurring within the Gullen but is being shot down with each attempt. He is fighting against it.

During the teacher's conversation with Ill, the teacher finally gives in to the temptation that was presented by Claire. He tells Ill that he is "slowly becoming a murder," while at the same time drinking a bottle of Steinhager (Durrenmatt 85). The bottle of alcohol plays a significant role in this scene. Earlier in the story, Steinhager was one of the more expensive types of alcohol that no one would buy due to their poverty-stricken community. But with Claire's offer, many of the residents of Gullen started to buy Steinhager and other expensive items. Now that the teacher is drinking the expensive alcohol, we see that the once ethical, ungreedy, with a sense of justice teacher conforming to the other Gulleners. He outweighs the material gain over his own sense of morality. This change is apparent towards the end, in the scene where the teacher is telling the journalists and radio reporters about bringing justice to Ill. He tells the reporters that the trial is not for the money, but for bringing justice (Durrenmatt 102). This scene is significant because the teacher is giving a hypocritical speech to act like what he and the other Gulleners are doing in justified to the press, but without the press, they are corrupt individuals. Also the teacher's sense of "justice" throughout the play. From the beginning, his sense of "justice" was to not kill Ill, but in this last scene, his sense changed to that of killing Ill.