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from the INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

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editor's note

A number of concerns deserve the attention of IBS members and others interested in the Society's activities. On pages 78-79 you will find the official announcement for the Seventh International Symposium of the IBS, planned for December 1986 in Hong Kong. We are looking forward to a unique meeting of East and West in the spirit of Brecht and hope that many of you will be able to participate. The IBS steering Committee is now actively pursuing outside funding. Anyone with creative suggestions about funding sources should address one of the IBS officers. This is also the time to remind you that the IBS is incorporated in the State of Maryland (USA) as a non-profit, educational organization, and as such, all contributions, gifts and bequests to the Society are entirely tax deductible. Another call for papers, for the IBS Brecht sessions at the 1985 MLA Convention in Chicago, appears on 75.

As reported in the summary of the IBS Business Meeting (page 74-75) conducted at the 1984 MLA Convention, several important issues were raised about revising and amending the Constitution. All members in good standing received a mail ballot in February. The three proposals received overwhelmingly positive support, according to Secretary Karl-Heinz Schoeps:

1) Article V, Paragraph 2 will be changed so that now any ten IBS members may form a special interest committee, but without voting representation on the Steering Committee.
2) A "Low Income" category will be added to the dues schedule at the same rate as Student Membership.
3) Dues will be raised by US$5.00 in each membership category.

John Fuegi reports that Volume XII of the Brecht Yearbook will be distributed by June. Dues notices, with the new categories and fees, will be mailed out at the same time, and everyone is encouraged to pay dues promptly so that the IBS can continue its activities. Volume XIII will focus on "Brecht and Performance," but other topics will be considered. Submissions will be accepted through May, and the volume is expected to appear in Summer 1986.

Two requests to readers: We are dependent on your reports, especially those from the network of IBS "foreign correspondents," to keep the membership informed about international Brecht activities; please remember to send us information on productions, publications, exhibits, conference papers, etc. To complete the Communications archive, I am looking for a set of Volumes 1-6 of the IBS Newsletter (1970-1977); please contact me if you have any copies to donate.

Marc Silberman

THE SITE OF EPIC REPRESENTATION

Bernard Dort*

DEFINITION

First of all, what do we understand by epic representation? Beginning with a general typology of contemporary representation, I could use the following provisional definition:

> An attempt to offer to a socially aware audience a representation which is mediated by actors who, while being specialists, nonetheless remain delegates of this audience. This representation, situated within the frame of a specific and explicit stage apparatus, shows the unfolding of a series of historicized actions in such a way that the audience discovers, in their very enjoyment of this theatrical representation, the possibility of radically changing their situation in the world.

This definition incorporates Piscator's most significant productions and most of the productions by Brecht as well as by the Berliner Ensemble. (Today, however, a number of the Berliner Ensemble productions no longer have much to do with either epic representation or epic theatre.) Several productions by Giorgio Strehler are also relevant here[1] -- in particular his Life of Galileo (by Brecht) and his Much Ado in Chioggio (Barouf à Chioggia, by Goldoni), in addition to his work with the stage designer Luciano Damiani. We should also include spectacles such as 1789 and 1793 by the Théâtre du Soleil. And the list goes on.

THE ACTOR AS DRIVING FORCE

First of all, the relationship between actor and stage space is fundamental to epic representation, precisely because the actor's is a central active role. He defines the shape and extension of the stage space by his use of it. Taking up the terms of the above definition, I could say that the epic actor is highly specialized and at the same time a delegate of the audience. Epic representation requires him to perform on several levels. On the one hand, he must know how to observe--Brecht calls this the art of observation; on the other hand, he must know how to reconstruct on stage and communicate to the audience the results of this observation. Thus he must grasp these actions in order to recreate them and, finally, to expose the contradictions within these actions, whether they are the actions of

several or of a single character. This activity implies a specialization, a highly developed "art of acting."

But this actor remains nonetheless the delegate of the audience for the entire performance. He is not different from the audience. He is a member of the public and his difference from this public is a matter not of origin but of function. Acting as a representative of this public, he interprets at the present time characters from the past or, more precisely, he plays in the present time the actions of historicized characters, which are historicized even when they are our contemporaries. He plays these actions, not from the point of view of the stage, (understood as a privileged site where the truth is revealed) but from the point of view of the audience. The actor's function is in effect that of mediator. He presents to the audience a representation of their own reality. On the one hand, he constructs the representation; on the other, he communicates it to this audience, offers it to their judgment. Distancing (Verfremdung) is a way of moving from construction to communication: it presupposes a play between identification and distance. This is why the epic actor has such an active role. The representation is, in the final analysis, the actor's discourse on the state of the world (I paraphrase here a Galilean formulation adopted by Brecht); it is a discourse addressed to the audience, which presents to this audience a series of the "state of things."

Thus the stage space in epic representation can be understood as a function of the actor; it is a necessary condition of the performance, but it must nonetheless be resolved within this performance. Let us recall two excellent formulations by Walter Benjamin on the subject of "epic theatre":

> The stage reveals itself to the audience as no longer the 'boards that signify the world' -- a source of fascination, but as a site favorably disposed to exposition.

and: The stage has become a podium.[2]

THE STAGE AS SITE OF EXPOSITION

The epic stage appears to be a neutral site, a priori without signification. We can first identify this site by its opposition both to the naturalist milieu and to the symbolist space.

The naturalist milieu is defined not only by its tendency towards illusionism, the attempted reproduction of reality, but also by its function within the stage representation -- it precedes the action. Every naturalist has emphasized this. Antoine stated it very explicitly: one must first establish the site and the environment; only then can one pay attention to the development of the action, which is inscribed within this site. In its extreme form, this tendency leads (as with Stanislavski) to the reconstruction of a site (imaginary or not). For his production of Tartuffe, Orgon's entire house was reconstructed in the wings as well as on the stage, before the actors could begin to build their characters and set the plot of the play in motion. The milieu is absolutely determining; it precedes the characters which are its product.

However different the symbolist space (or more precisely the site of symbolist representation) might be, it is still, like the naturalist milieu, an (ideally) immediately meaningful space. Often hierarchized according to depth of field, it is set up according to a line of flight. What is behind, in the "depths" of the stage, is more important than what is in front, on the surface; what is hidden informs what is shown; the secret or essential Being informs the appearance. The epic site, however, breaks with the stage image, with the notion of Bühnenbild (for this reason, the term epic "site" is preferable to "space"). As Brecht writes:

> The word Bühnenbild, which in German refers to illusionist stage scenery, is well chosen, because it exposes all the disadvantages of this kind of decor. Apart from the fact that this image achieves its proper effect only when seen from a certain few seats in the auditorium, and appears more or less distorted from every other seat, a performance site (Spielfeld) composed like a picture has the advantages of neither a plastic work of art nor a terrain, though it pretends to be both.[3] (G.W., XV, 442)

Brecht continually rejects the notion of an image, a stage picture, and continually expresses his almost utopian desire to see the stage space become, as Benjamin has it, a blank page on which the actor, like a typewriter, writes his signs.

We can find visual equivalents of this mode of signification in the staging of many Berliner Ensemble productions. The limits of the stage space are defined by a white, off-white or grey cyclorama, which sets up a balance between an open and a closed space. While the cyclorama in effect closes the space, at the same time, by virtue of its brightness, it opens the space to infinity. It serves also as a projection screen. The stage can, on the other hand, be reduced to a simple platform, as Benjamin has it, which should not be thought of as a fairground booth or as a

commeddia dell'arte stage, but as a small platform such as a boxing ring, whose ropes both open and close the space, such as that set up on the Berliner Ensemble stage for the production of Little Mahagonny.

This neutral site is not, however, indeterminate. It is rather specific, in the sense that it can be constructed differently on each occasion. As Brecht says:

> Each stage production suggests to each of several kinds of dramaturgy a completely new, entirely concrete social task which the stage designer[4] must help to solve, by testing the appropriateness and effectiveness of, and by making the necessary changes to, stage and theatre design. The representation of the establishment of a collective economy for the intellectual and manual workers in Razbeg by Okhlopkov signifies a different social task and requires a different stage design from the representation of the demagogic apparatus of the Nazis in Round Heads and Pointed Heads (Brecht, Knutson) in Copenhagen, 1936, or from the representation of the petit bourgeois sabotage of the war in The Adventures of the Brave Soldier Schweik (Piscator, Brecht, Grosz) in Berlin, 1929, in front of an audience composed of rather different class elements. Since for every new play one has to rebuild the stage from scratch, which requires each time a thorough reconstruction, it is legitimate to introduce the concept of the stage designer as architect, to distinguish his present from his traditonal role which has been only to construct the set -- that is: the scaffolding and the decorated flats. In accordance with specific requirements, the stage designer may have to replace the boards with a conveyor belt, the background with a projection screen, the wings with an orchestra. He may have to transform the roof into supports for pulleys and may even have to envisage the possibility of moving the performance space into the middle of the auditorium. His task is to show the world. (G.W., XV, 439-440)

Thus the specificity of the stage space for each production and even the replacement of the notion of set designer or scenographer by that of stage designer or stage architect. For changing the stage space for each production may also require a change in the relationship between stage and auditorium, which is a function of position, of point of view, of the epic actor who mediates between stage and auditorium. The Théâtre du Soleil provides a good example of this rearrangement of the relationship between performance space and public space: the stage design for 1789 and 1793 symbolizes nothing in advance, but it immediately poses the whole problematic of the spectacle by prescribing a certain kind of play between actors, characters and spectators.[5]

The site of epic representation, while apparently simple, almost elementary, does not nonetheless reject the use of technique; its context is often highly technical. Not, perhaps, when it is simply and effectively a platform, but, for example in the work of Piscator. Brecht took pleasure in repeating that Piscator had tranformed the stage into a hall (salle) of machines and the auditorium (salle) into a parliament. Brecht himself did much the same, at any rate the Berliner Ensemble stage is surrounded by an impressive technical unit.

Brecht worked in a traditional theatre (the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm is, after all, a proscenium theatre), but we should nonetheless remember -- following Luciano Damiani -- that Brecht transformed the interior of the theatre. Around the stage box he constructed a sort of technical unit which seems more appropiate to a factory than to the technical apparatus of the late nineteenth-century theatre. Corresponding to the epic stage's simplicity, to its elementary appearance, Brecht sets up the complex technicality of this unit of machines, which remains visible beyond the limits of the actual stage space. The epic stage thus becomes a space which one can change as one wishes.

The workings of this infrastructure are not hidden from the audience. On the one hand, it is part of the theatre structure; it openly stands in for the stage, by relieving the latter of the task of seeing to its own transformability, by making the task easier. On the other, this unit is incorporated into the stage proper, is thus included in the stage design, by constituting the frame of the epic site. The proscenium in Strehler's Life of Galileo rests visibly on an entire system of winches and pulleys designed to move the stage's half-curtain (thus imitating the mechanical constructions of the seventeenth-century)[. . .]

For this neutral and malleable "expository site" is no less a historicized site -- at least a site suitable for speaking history. It belongs to today's society, but it is also historical.

GENERALIZED SITE/OPEN SITE

We can find the most powerful, perhaps too powerful, example of such a site in Piscator's Rasputin. His Segmentbühne representing half the globe was set up on a turning stage. The audience then had the world before their eyes: the turning stage presented all the facets of the globe, which were themselves arranged in several distinct levels (thus destroying the stage illusion). We could certainly see this as the epic theatre's return to symbolism (given that we do not refer to a

"baroque" image of the world), but this would be a distortion. That this stage space remains a tool is essential; it is intended to show the world, not to create an image of what it appears to be: to show it and to demonstrate its working.

Brecht often emphasizes that the ideal site for epic representation is the street. Not, of course, a real street (that would be a street, rather than the street), nor a particular street reproduced in its picturesque uniqueness, but the reconstructed street, figured on the stage. This is the represented street as site of representation, because it is not only a social site but a "site" of passage. It rejects the distinction between here and elsewhere. The frame of the stage does not isolate it from the rest of the world, neither does this frame privilege the street: the events in the street scene could happen elsewhere, beyond the limits of the stage. This is a site made to be crossed. No entrance or exit is a special event. (Can we even continue to speak of entrances and exits? Everything rather passes through.) In any case, one enters and leaves to the side, indifferently to right or left, rarely at the back of the stage.

The site of Mother Courage is situated wherever Anna Fierling happens to stop her cart. Here or there, it is almost always the same. Of course we know (from the placards) where that is, and we can sometimes guess at the battles taking place elsewhere, but these battles are not evoked in order to valorize the relative calm of the represented site, nor is the site evoked in order to provide a means of escape from the violence of the conflict. The site of Mother Courage is made up of a series of stopping-places on a track. Even at these stopping-places there is no opposition between exterior and interior. The 6th scene provides the specification -- rare in Mother Courage -- that the characters are inside Mother Courage's encampment. Not everyone may enter. Anna Fierling refuses entry to a common soldier; she admits "only officers." In this scene, then, there is a cut, a caesura, between events outside, (that is: the burial of the marshal of Empire Tilly, which we do not see but only hear distantly echoing), and events inside, (that is: the discussion between Mother Courage and the army chaplain about the war). This opposition between inside and out does not hold, however; it is broken by the wounded Kattrin's return. This return exposes the falsity of the opposition by reintroducing the outside into the inside. Besides, in the Berliner Ensemble production, the encampment, which might have been loaded with all the associations of the hearth -- closure, warmth, etc. -- is hardly closed on itself. It represents closure, rather then mimicking it.

Another example, all the more decisive: Luciano Damiani's model for Strehler's Life of Galileo. The interior/exterior distinction is certainly relevant here,

since this model reconstructs the framework of a late Renaissance edifice. This structure is permanent; the interior scenes in Galileo's house take place here (we know well that closure plays a significant thematic role here), but so do the exterior scenes, such as the Carnival, which demonstrates the extent of the influence of Galileo's science. Thus the Piccolo Teatro production sets up an interpenetration between inside and out and gives the spectator a sense of witnessing the action from both points of view, from the house and from the street. The Berliner Ensemble production makes the inverse choice, by situating the action of Life of Galileo within a kind of court demarcated by high copper walls. A closed court, a court pit, as it were, open only upward. While this certainly represents an identity between inside events and those outside, the closed court essentially signifies Galileo's defeat; neither a scientific study, nor a public place, this site is, finally, a prison. Damiani's structure (inspired by Leonardo's drawing) offers more opportunities for play: it indicates the period; it suggests scientific work; it nonetheless foretells nothing of Galileo's "destiny."

This kind of stage space is essentially incomplete. As Damiani's stage design suggests, the whole is represented only by the parts:

> Should we (therefore) be denied the thing itself, the reality, the tangible, tasteable, controllable thing, to have instead only 'signs' for this thing, something like characters (in word form) or mathematical symbols, instead of what these characters represent? References to the objects, but not the things themselves? Abstractions?
>
> Our distinguishing features are intended to mean nothing like this. They are entirely substantial realistic things, second-hand [English in original] as it were. A doorframe--for example--ripped from a wall by a demolition team, is a thing marked by society, with a biography, not a mental construction, signifying a passageway and nothing more. Obviously, this doorframe stands for somewhat more than an ordinary one. It has deliberately taken on the task of standing in for a fragment of wall or roof, since these are either absent or only imperfectly in place. . .The truth lies in representing the whole (the room) by the parts (windowframe, furniture, doorframe), the realistic whole by means of realistic parts.

REJECTING DEPTH AND SIGNIFICANT HIERACHY

Even if complex and composed or composite, the epic site offers neither a perspective around which stage elements are arranged, nor a hierachy of signification. As

I have said, the cyclorama rejects depth; it is only a screen, a horizon that is both close and far away. This cyclorama does not prevent us from entering the scene; its presence does not, furthermore, define distances on stage, nor does it lead to a hierarchization of stage elements. If a hierachy exists at all, it arises out of the performance rather than being prescribed by the shape of the stage. This should be clear if we compare the Berliner Ensemble's with the Piccolo Teatro's representation of a single scene in the Life of Galileo, the scene in which Galileo returns after his renunciation (sc. xii). In the Berliner Ensemble production, Galileo enters at the back, stage left. Approaching slowly, moving towards his disciples at center stage, who try to avoid him, he arrives finally at the front of the stage. The spectators notice his face little by little, becoming progressively more aware of the signs of aging and failure. In the Piccolo Teatro production, on the other hand, everything happens at once. Instead of a "dramatic" entrance from the back (this production would not allow that; everything is done laterally), Galileo enters by way of the wings near the front of the stage, as close as possible to the line separating stage and auditorium. Thus, far from hiding his face so that it is revealed bit by bit, Galileo turns to the audience in a way that is deliberately non-naturalistic, presenting them with his new mask, a faded white mask, marked by a laugh which is also a grimace of disgust. Only after this exposure to the audience does Galileo confront his disciples.

In contrast to the Berliner Ensemble's play on the stage's depth of field, the Piccolo Teatro production uses the stage's space as a series of wide horizontal bands (one is reminded of Piscator's use of conveyor belts for Schweik) whose function is delineated in each scene without being defined once and for all by their respective positions. The very shape of the Piccolo Teatro stage--wide rather than deep--is not so different from a cinemascope screen. Their Galileo production comes close to suggesting the simultaneous projection on parallel screens of several films -- the same characters move freely from screen to screen, from film to film.

Nonetheless, there are indisputably epic productions that use the stage's depth of field. For example, in Much Ado in Chioggia, Strehler installed at the back of the stage, up against the cyclorama, the model of a small town. But this model was reduced beyond the normal demands of perspective, that is: as if he had wanted to reproduce the town of Chioggia as seen from the coast. Thus, it becomes nothing more than a sign for a town. The stage image (here the term "image" is appropriate) was not intended to create an illusion.

In the Tales of Hoffman at the Paris Opera, Patrice Chereau used the same stage design, in a different way from Strehler (though epic nonetheless). Within this

distant zone, set up below the cyclorama, he had the characters enter -- the mother and the woman who had been the young girl in the third episode (Antonia's life) of the Tales. The effect is extraordinary: the past and the present appear literally in different dimensions. The effect is emphasized when the characters move from this receding zone forward to where the action takes place, and where they intervene in this action. This movement thus reestablishes the perspective between past and present: the past effectively contaminates the present. The stage image no longer exposes anything; it imposes itself on the action. The site is no longer segmented according to the requirements of epic narration; it becomes again a signifying totality in which the depth weighs on the surface, a hierarchized space in which everything is always already played (out). The segmentation of the site becomes once again a symbolist arrangement; it has discarded its epic function.

SITE BEARING SIGNS

Following Brecht, I have already used the word "signs" to indicate certain elements of epic representation. Let us now examine more closely the meaning which Brecht gives this word:

> Choosing significant features for the stage space is not the same as inventing symbols. A symbol for a factory might be a fortress. This would stand for all factories and would also remain unchanged for the same factory in different scenes. In this way a timeless image is found which symbolizes a single trait of all factories. But what happens when we explode the factory?. . .On the other hand, the signs I have in mind are realistic indications of the environment of the people in the play; studying these indications clarifies the social processes already underway as well as those we should set in motion. The imitation of the external appearance of a factory says very little because the appearance of a factory yard itself gives nothing away -- there were times whan the sight of a
> factory yard in the midst of villages where domestic industry was the rule signified revolutionary developments. But even emptier and more dangerous are symbolizations that no longer bear any relation to actual change. The art of abstraction should be managed by realists. . . . (G.W., XV, 455)

> We have given up appearances. What we have constructed resembles the actual place or any real place only rarely. We have no factory yard with buildings, tracks, etc., but perhaps nothing more than a gate and a siding car (which provides something to sit on in case we represent the breakfast break), that is:

> very few of the many objects apparent in a factory yard. In addition, we have certain things which are not immediately apparent; payrolls, a photograph of the owner, a page of the catalogue with a list of products, perhaps also one of those magazine photographs of workers in their Sunday best in a nice canteen with the caption: 'Our workers during the breakfast break." Does this amount to a factory yard? . . .
>
> It is clear that here must be significant features of production, and also others for exploitation, since the social relevance of this place is that production takes the form of exploitation and exploitation that of production. (G.W, XV, 456)

Signs of this kind are realistic, but not because they imitate reality. On the contrary, their primary value is that they are given as signs, whether material or linguistic. For a large part of his career, Brecht preferred the latter. His placards and posters, his projection screens from the Threepenny Opera "literalized" the theatre, provoking a reflection on the performance and a change in the relationship between spectacle and spectators. . .On the analogical level, we can mention the projection of drawings. The scenes in Strehler's Galileo can be identified with respect to this "model in one dimension," which represents in cross-section at the back of the stage space the building in which or in front of which the action takes place. But this topographical indication is not essential. What this sign has in view is History -- a certain historical state of (architectural) reality which we have to decipher.

In a representation of this kind, most of the objects and accessories have the function of signs anchored in concrete materiality. This was the first lesson taught us by the Berliner Ensemble's production of Mother Courage in Paris (1953).[6] After several years of abstraction a la Vilar or decorativism in the style of the Cartel du Quatre, suddenly we saw objects on stage that had weight, like the
lasting products of a history, and which related something different from the words said by the characters. The told of the war, bearing witness to the omissions and blindness of men. They pointed to a reality which most men attempted to forget or to make others forget.

Given this almost paradoxical requirement -- the realism of signs (at least according to general consensus as to the meaning of these words) -- Brecht insists on another -- parsimony, or what we might call the economy of signs:

> Limiting the stage design to the strictly necessay (to the elements contributing to the play) makes it appear sparse, gives it the effect of poverty. In

> fact, this design pays no attention to the petit bourgeis notion of rich interiors; the souvenirs and familiar traces of every-day habits, now become 'second nature,' are missing. In any case, such an over-abundance of objects indicates only a lack of space. Poor dwellings, on the other hand, possess a real wealth of objects. The impression of sparseness arises also out of a stage design which rejects illusory totality, is content with suggesting significant features, working with general issues, leaving the spectator the task of concretization. (G.W., XV, 452-453)

Thus we can set up a dialectic between poverty and wealth, between materiality and abstraction, between what we can call the real (though it may only be the apparent) and the didactic. The street -- or rather the street scene -- reveals itself once again as the site par excellence of such an exchange:

> The street results from social processes (construction, traffic, commerce, habitation). Its significant features are also those of these social processess. In our representation of the street, we are free to add to the significant features of the real street (characteristic of specific social processes) significant features of social processes which the street does not show, but which are nonetheless indications of the social processes which are determinant (an estimation of the value of houses, or death statistics, for example). Inasmuch as certain features are characteristic of a certain place, they are also characteristic of specific social processes shaping that place (the production of commodities, of lodging). (G.W., XV, 461)

Complementing the economy of signs is the multiplicity of signs of different origins. The metaphor of the stage space as blank page which I have borrowed from Benjamin could be replaced by another: that of the epic stage as blackboard. Figures are written on it; the actor adds them up, then he erases the calculation and adds this result to another calculation, and so on. Erasing the figures corresponds to a particular feature of the Brechtian spectacle: the "wipe" effect of the half-curtain separating scene from following scene. But the actor never draws a final line, nor does he write done a conclusive result. There are always several columns -- or in theatrical terms -- several stage bands. It is up to the spectator to draw a conclusion from this flow of figures.

SITE SHOWN, SITE COMPOSED

The epic site is a composed site, a site which is shown. Several processes are going on here at the same time. Once again, the stage for Piscator's production of

Schweik provids the most telling and the most elementary example with its two conveyor belts and, behind, the projection screen. There is no possibility of moving from one conveyor belt to the other. The one is Schweik's way; the other is that of the dummies, the puppets of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The conveyor belts may move either in the same direction or in opposite directions. it is up to the spectator to establish the relationship, to work out the global movement of the spectacle from the relationship between these two parallel movements.

The Berliner Ensemble productions are also composed in at least three planes: the cyclorama, the stage space itself, and the proscenium. But this segmentation is far from absolute. The stage space can be divided into specific spaces--under one condition: this division must be functional and must not reintroduce symbolic and spatial depth.

In a sketch by Karl von Appen for St. Joan of the Stockyards,[7] we can see bridges or parallel passageways cutting up the space at different levels into performance areas which are completely separated from one another. These areas correspond to the social classes represented in the play. In other words, these planes, set up parallel to the front of the stage, are not connected by the "bridges" which are perpendicular to them and which converge towards a higher plane.

Site of songs, site of speeches to the audience, the proscenium is also the site of mediation, of ideological discussions, where the actor/character comments on the play (without, nonetheless, arriving at an exhaustive judgment). It is here, in front of the Brechtian half-curtain, that the encounter takes place between Galileo and the little monk, which constitutes the ideological center of gravity for Life of Galileo. This use of the proscenium corresponds not so much to technical necessity (gaining time needed to construct another set behind the curtain, as Antoine did when using the proscenium in his productions of Shakespeare), but rather to a global choice: the proscenium is the site where one takes up position with respect to the story one is telling.

Strehler has systematically linked this technique of dividing the stage into bands to lighting design. For Much Ado in Chioggia, for example, the set appears to be strictly naturalist; it reproduces, almost to the point of complete illusion, a small square. This square is flanked on each side, symmetrically, by the facades of high houses; behind, a quai extends, and, right at the back, below the cyclorama, is the picture I have already mentioned, which, reduced beyond the normal demands of perspective, is a reference rather than an accurate reproduction. The effect of (realistic) depth becomes instead an effect of presentation. The

respective dimensions of the houses, the square, the quai and the boat which is berthed there are also distorted. Furthermore, within this reworked space, Strehler creates at least four zones of different light intensity. One doesn't notice this at first; the presence of the actors, sometimes brightly lit, sometimes reduced to silhouettes, allows us to distinguish between one zone and the next. Thus, the proscenium is detached from the rest of the stage space: lit against the grain, the actors become figures in a Chinese shadowbox. Resembling the silhouettes of spectators rather than performers, they mediate between audience and people of Chioggia.

This proscenium (or first stage plane, since it is still part of the stage space) is essentially reserved for Substitute, who is for Strehler the incarnation of Goldoni himself (of the young Goldoni who had played similar roles)--a Goldoni who observes the adventures of the people of Chioggia, who intervenes to sort things out, lets himself become involved, but then at the very moment when he succeeds, finds himself excluded. At the end, he can only look on from the outside at the celebration in Chioggia and, leaving the stage space, disappears as it were in the direction of the audience. The performance ends, appropriately enough, with the distance widening between stage and auditorium.

The arrangement of the epic site in bands is not something to be treated high-heartedly. It is a narrative procedure, not an artifice used to reproduce reality. Every permutation is possible, but not a vague, unnoticed movement from one band to another. The epic stage must clearly reveal its montage.

MOBILE, MODIFIABLE SITE

The epic site is also mobile. I say mobile or movable, rather than transformable, since epic theatre places the accent on particular changes rather than toal transformations. Brecht indicates this clearly:

> The stage designer does well to proceed by montage of the stage structure in mobile elements. He constructs a scene in separate, independent, movable pieces. In order that it be seen from every angle, a doorframe has to rehearse just like the actor who uses it, and in order that it work effectively with the other elements of the construction in as many different arrangements as possible, it must have its own value, its own life. It plays a role, or several roles, exactly like an actor. It has the same right and the same duty to draw attention to itself, whether as extra or protagonist. (G.W., XV, 446)

Mobility of the stage elements functions neither as evidence of permanence (identity despite change), nor as evidence of a complete transformation. This point is rather to indicate at the same time a series of situations and the possibility of envisaging the situation from a different point of view. As Brecht writes in his note on "double appearance": "A hill approaches a soldier differently from the way it approaches a peasant" and "Stage designers should decide which of these two appearances they intend to consider." (G.W., XV, 462)

This quality of mobility and polyvalence of the stage space is not at all mysterious, but neither does it simply reject the play of appearance and reality that is supposed to be proper to all theatre. The issue is once again a matter of construction: the construction of a space that allows us to describe and to grasp social processes, a construction that has nothing to do with conjuring tricks:

> The narrator of parables does well to show openly to the audience everything that he uses for his parable, those elements which help him to show a process unfolding according to the laws determining it. The stage designer thus also shows explicitly the lamps, musical instruments, masks, walls and doors, steps, chairs and tables, which he uses to set up the parable. (G.W., XV, 454)

In Selling Bread (Brotladen) the actors arrived on stage after running through the auditorium, brandishing all the objects and utensils they intended to use. Openly, in front of us, the audience, they assembled the performance space; they displayed the means of their production. For the rest, the motive of the production added a double justification to the procedure: the Berliner Ensemble actors themselves were unemployed during the crisis represented by the parable of Selling Bread.

This way of showing the construction of the spectacle has become commonplace, perhaps even hackneyed, today. Without doubt, the procedure now has as much to do with theatricalized as with epic representation. But while the former reflects a traditional notion of the theatre, its being and its mystery, the latter places the emphasis on the work of men and on different social conditions and processes. What the actors establish is less a metamorphosis than a discontinuous succession of "reality tests." Recall Benjamin's formulation: "The state of things which epic theatre unveils is the dialectic within immobility."[8]

The discontinuous construction of the site bears on its transformability. What the spectator witnesses is not an irresistible theatrical process, but rather the reconstruction on stage of different conditions of reality -- or, better still, the representation of different hypotheses of reality.

Such mobility of the site echoes the instability of the characters in epic representation. The actors construct their characters, as the stage designer (helped sometimes by the actors) constructs the stage. In Man's a Man, setting up and dismantling of Widow Begbick's carriage-bar is effected in a way parallel to the transformation of Galy Gay into Jeremiah Jip.

Construction of this kind is the rule in epic representation. It is not merely admitted as such during the performance. Brecht insists that the performance space cannot be established once and for all, but results rather from a collaboration between designer and actor:

> Only the play of the actors' moving figures can determine the performance space which should therefore be finalized only during rehearsal. . .A good stage designer proceeds slowly, experimentally. He must use a working hypothesis founded on a close reading of the play and on thorough discussion with the other collaborators of the theatre, and, especially, on the social task of the play and the consequently necessary production style. His fundamental concept must be as general and as flexible as possible. He must continually test it against the results of the actors in rehearsal. Their wishes and intentions should be a source of invention for the stage designer. Studying the extent of their efforts, he should come to their aid if necessary. . . The actors should do likewise. . . . The stage designer can omit a good many things which the actors' performance provides, but he should nonetheless spare the actors unnecessary repetition. (G.W., XV, 441-443)

Furthermore, this site rarely appears definitely finished. It often bears the traces of its construction. Not hierarchized, refusing to present itself as an image of the world, it only suggests to the actors a series of provisional stage configurations within which they may inscribe diverse schemas of the social processes which they intend to present to the audience. We are familiar with the Brechtian concept of "arrangement." It can only result from a collective effort on the part of the director (the author and the dramaturg), the actors and the stage designer. In Karl von Appen's sketches, the indications for stage design coexist with character groupings, including suggested gesture and attitudes. Thus, the succession of these sketches resembles a cartoon strip of the performance. It establishes a series of relationships between the characters and their situations, spaces, objects. It breaks up the action into tableaux, continuity into discontinuity. Epic representation is thus founded on "segmentation" (découpage).

A REALITY-LABORATORY

Not only does the site of epic representation break with the naturalistic illusion, but it also presents itself as deliberately theatrical. At the same time, what it gives the spectator is not the theatre but reality. Epic representation remains experimental. Brecht continually insisted on this point -- using words such as "beauty," "lightness," gaiety," etc. In the note on "translating reality while avoiding a totalizing illusion," he writes:

> Several set designers make a point of constructing flats which would have us believe we are seeing the real place, in real life. But what they would have to achieve is that we believe we are in a good theatre. Indeed, they have even to succeed in persuading us that, even in a real place in real life, we are in a theatre. For the theatre is supposed to teach us to adopt a particular way of observing things, an attentive, alert attitude in the face of events, and a capacity to situate somewhat indistinct social groups quickly, with respect to the meaning of these events. (G.W., XV, 451)

The theatrical site is thus the site of a dual activity; it represents social labor, mediated by the actors' labor. The actors take apart and then reconstruct, in full view, actions, contradictions, processes. Under the spectators' gaze, they elaborate reality-models--models which function in a simpler fashion than reality. This articulated site where, for the benefit of the audience, the actors (who, despite their specialization, still remain delegates of this audience) act and activate the parables of epic theatre, can be called a laboratory. At the end of the performance, however, nothing should remain, not even an image. The site, like the text, is "consumed." The theatre itself has lasted a long time, but only reality is left.

Translated by Loren Kruger

FOOTNOTES

All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated. Translator's note = [T.N.]

*This essay was originally published in French as "Le lieu de la représentation épique," in Travail théâtral, nr. 27 (Spring 1977), and was reprinted in Bernard Dort, Théâtre en jeu (Paris: Seuil, 1979), pp. 94-112. This version is slightly shortened.

[1][T.N.] Giorgio Strehler, director of the Piccolo Teatro in Milan since the post-war years, is not only known for his translation and production of Brecht in Italy, but, more generally, regarded by many theatre theoreticians and practitioners in Europe as the director capable of restoring Brecht to Brecht in the face of the acknowledged sterility of the Berliner Ensemble today.

[2]Walter Benjamin, Versuche über Brecht, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 18, 31.

[3]Bertolt Brecht, "Über Bühnenbau und Musik des epischen Theaters," Gesammelte Werke (hereafter, G.W.), (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), XV, 493-440.

[4][T.N.] Dort translates Brecht's term Bühnenbauer by architecte de scène in order to emphasize the aspect of construction rather than decoration; given, however, that Brecht's explanation adequately distinguishes between decoration and construction, I have chosen the English equivalent stage designer which, in contemporary usage--thanks partly to Brecht--refers to the person responsible for the construction of the stage space.

[5][T.N.] The performances of 1789 and 1793 took place around the spectators who, in being forced literally to follow the action from place to place, moved beyond their role as audience to that of public, in the properly historical sense of a public participating in, by bearing witness to (the representation of) historical events.

[6][T.N.] A more detailed account of the revelatory effect of this performance can be found in the journal Théâtre Populaire, 1953ff, edited by Dort and Roland Barthes, founded expressly for the purpose of debating the nature and function of a popular political theatre. Cf. Bernard Dort, Lecture de Brecht, (Paris: Seuil, 1961) and Roland Barthes, Essais critiques, (Paris: Seuil, 1980).

[7]See, for example, in Friedrich Dieckmann, Karl von Appens Bühnenbilder am Berliner Ensemble, Szenenbilder, Figurinen, Entwürfe und Szenenfotos, (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1971), p. 386.

[8]Benjamin, p. 17.

EURIPIDES AND THE A-EFFECT

John Emigh

Ever since Aristotle set the style by noting his "faulty. . .general management of his subject,"[1] critics have been lamenting Euripides' shoddy playwrighting. His disconnected choric odes, his unending plots, his prosy prologues and epilogues, and, especially, his peculiarly slick and facile use of the deus ex machina have all come in for their share of critical abuse and excuse.

Excuses are legion. Euripides, it is generally admitted, was a noble Greek -- the voice of conscience in a classical world coming apart at its political and moral seams. Thus, he is honored as a friend of Socrates and precursor of Ibsen, as rationalist and realist, as feminist and pacifist. And he is honored as the last of the great Greek poets. He is honored, that is, in spite of his inability to write plays -- moment by moment, scene by scene, all in all. Until recently, only Medea and Hippolytus were generally exempted, and these two least Euripidean, most Aristotelian plays of the canon were invariably trotted out and placed in course syllabi as his acceptable contributions to "the classical tradition," while other plays were studied--if at all--as examples of pacifist art or as a means of gaining information on how the maenads danced.

John Gassner's treatment of Euripides exemplifies the tone. Gassner duly credits Euripides with "the most forceful realism and social criticism of the classic stage,"[2] then proceeds to depict him as cannily buying his intellectual freedom at the expense of artistic perfection:

> His endeavor to sugar-coat his bitter pills led to the inclusion of solos that bear an uncertain relation to the dramatic action and serve only to titillate the senses or induce a torpid acquiescence to the drama as a whole. Unity of tone, action, and idea is poorly maintained in some of the tragedies. Occasionally, as in the Ion, his dramaturgy is almost bewildering. Euripides could, however, console himself with the thought that without such compromises he could not have spoken his mind at all.[3]

"Unity of tone, action, and idea" brings us immediately back to Aristotle's door, this unity being the cardinal virtue of the Aristotelian aesthetic relevant to the works of Sophocles, Racine, and Ibsen alike. Euripides' plays do sin against this virtue -- they sin again and again and again. But Euripides was writing neither in

accordance with nor in anticipation of Aristotle's observations; he had entirely different dramatic principles and purposes in view. I suggest that these purposes and principles are Brechtian, and that the parallel is worth pushing.

Some disclaimers: I am not suggesting that Euripides "influenced" Brecht. Brecht seems to have come upon his principles and purposes quite independently of Euripides (and about 2400 years later), because of similar social concerns and aesthetic problems, at a time when the Western world was once more undergoing a period of catastrophic moral and political disintegration. Not all the analogies drawn will apply to all the plays of either playwright; perhaps none of them will. I do not want to picture Brecht with a curly beard or Euripides with round and rimless glasses. Differences will remain between the two playwrights. I am here concerned with their likenesses. Neither do I wish to nominate Euripides and Brecht for membership in an exclusive club, for much of what follows could easily be applied to, say, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. What I do hope is that by applying Brecht's theories to Euripides' plays and making what analogies we can, we may not only find the answers -- not always new ones -- to some critical puzzles, but also find some exciting ways of producing some very fine old plays.[4]

I want to begin perversely with Euripides' endings since they present perhaps the most puzzling and lamentable lapses of all for Euripides' Aristotelian critics. Verrall set down their dilemma in 1913:

> The final scenes. . .the coups de théâtre with which the action is wound up or cut short, have almost always a conventionality of manner, a perfunctory style, a looseness of adaptation, a feebleness in thought and feeling, which contrasts strangely with the originality, terseness, energy, and passion displayed in other parts of the work, and constantly prompt the critic to wonder, sarcastically, or sorrowfully, at such a suicide of genius.[5]

Certainly the most blatant such coup de théâtre occurs at the end of Orestes. William Arrowsmith describes the effect well:

> The impasse is complete; in any natural world the whole cumulative experience of the play points unmistakably to disaster. But then, suddenly, incredibly, Apollo appears, halts the violence, and methodically hands out their known mythical futures to all the characters. In no other extant Greek play does a part of a play stand in more glaring contrast to the whole than it does here; in no other play are the futures of the characters made to clash so violently with their portrayal and development in the play.[6]

As Arrowsmith goes on to point out, this is a resolution that quintessentially resolves nothing. The tour de force is transparent. It is also Brechtian. The "Happy Ending" of Three Penny Opera and the valedictory song of The Good Person of Szechuan are perfect echoes of the bothersome endings of Orestes and Ion.

In all four plays incongruous endings are used to wrench the foregoing action into new perspectives and to prevent the play from achieving a hermetic Aristotelian form -- i.e., to prevent "catharsis." In Brecht's words: "This dramaturgy does not make use of the 'identification' of the spectator with the play, as does the Aristotelian, and has a different point of view also towards other psychological effects a play may have on an audience, as, for example, towards the 'Catharsis.' Catharsis is not the main object of this dramaturgy."[7] Catharsis is not the main object because, for both playwrights, there can be no meaningful individual salvation or purgation -- neither for members of the cast of characters nor of the audience. For both, it is the whole of society that must be changed, and perhaps human nature itself. This may be why Aristotle, for all his quarrels with Euripides, conceded that he was "felt to be the most tragic of the poets."[8]

In all four plays, Three Penny Opera, The Good Person of Szechuan, Orestes, and Ion, the technique used to deny catharsis at the end of the dramatic action is that of underlining that action's theatricality. The effect relies on stressing the fact that the gods are not gods, but actors playing gods. Hence, the "conventionality of manner," "perfunctory style," "looseness of adaptation," "feebleness of thought and feeling," and ultimately the outrageously timed appearances of the deus on his super-slick machina and of Victoria's messenger on his merry-go-round horse. The patent theatricality, the "violation of dramatic logic" that characterizes these endings also forms a large part of their "meaning." The "Happy Ending" brought about by a phony god's intervention is itself phony; that is exactly the point. Far from being "conventional" endings to placate the populace by "sugar-coating" a bitter pill, these endings are designed to keep that pill from slipping down quite so quickly to join the rest of our well-digested memories.

The examples of the Euripidean ending used above point to extreme practices, but the dramatic concerns involved are typical of both Euripides and Brecht. In such wildly diverse plays as Helen, Hippolytus, The Bacchae, and Heracles, Euripides gives the chorus a curious little tag at the end saying virtually the same thing: "What a surprising turn of events this play has had!" I suggest that the intended purpose of this tag is similarly to halt the digestive process for a moment and force the audience's attention back onto the action that they have just witnessed--

much as the epilogue to The Caucasian Chalk Circle and the warning at the end of Arturo Ui are designed to do more explicitly.

As with the endings, so with the beginnings. The puzzle of the Euripidean prologue is a similar problem with a similar solution. At times -- in Ion, in Hecuba, in Hippolytus, in The Bacchae -- the prosy prologues act as direct analogues to the projected Brechtian scene titles: "Father shall slay son with curses."[9] At other times, they are simply shorthand ways of setting up a situation and directing the audience's attention. "They seem deliberately calculated to offend us and destroy our interest,"[10] complains Murray, and, indeed they often are calculated to destroy our interest in that they are calculated to destroy a certain suspense about the outcome and to concentrate the audience's attention on the process by which that outcome is achieved -- a concentration already implicit in the Greek theatre's use of familiar myths.

As with Brecht's scene titles, however, the prologue does not tell all. Suspense is never completely eliminated. Polydorus can tell us the evils to befall his mother, but he cannot foretell the horror of her revenge. Sometimes this use of the prologue can be quite complex. In The Bacchae, Dionysus even changes his plans after telling the audience what he is about to do in the prologue. He does not satisfy himself with "proving to every man in Thebes I am a god,"[11] then going his way once his worship is established, nor does he ever marshal his maenads. Instead, he maliciously destroys Pentheus and in the end even punishes his Theban worshippers. Sloppy playwriting, perhaps, but I prefer to believe that Euripides is using the non-fulfillment of his prologue to direct our attention toward the malice and caprice that characterize this god's actions.

Aristotle personally started the criticism of Euripides' "faulty" choruses, remarking that "one should regard the Chorus as one of the actors; it should be a part of the whole, and share in the action of the play after the style of Sophocles, not of Euripides."[12] The observation is overextended. Euripides can and does use his choruses as characters: they often argue with, aid, or impede the protagonists' actions. Still, the choral odes themselves often do seem to have little or no causal justification within the action. To cite just one example, the second choral ode of Electra not only fails to arise naturally from the action, but the chorus is in possession of information it could not possibly have as characters within a realistic framework. Brecht once more provides a rationale: "As we cannot invite the audience to fling itself into the story as if it were a river and let itself be carried hither and thither, the individual episodes have to be knotted together in such a way that the knots are easily noticed. . .The parts of

the story have to be carefully set off one against another by giving each its own structure as a play within a play. . .[13] Euripides' choral odes are precisely such "knots" separating and commenting on the individual agons of, say, Hecuba, each of which can be read as "a play within a play."[14]

Brecht's writings are particularly relevant to the staging of these choral odes. To lift a direction from the Mother Courage model book, the odes should "give the right impression of musical insertions instead of leading people to think that the songs spring from the action."[15] Years ago, I had the pleasure of seeing Iphigenia at Aulis, Hecuba, Electra, and Orestes performed under Bernard Miles' directions at the Mermaid Theatre in London. The agons were beautifully played out with all of Euripides' sense of irony and the grotesque, but the production fell flat every time the chorus took the stage, and fell flat precisely because an attempt was made to blend the odes into the action, having them spoken line by line, "realistically," by individual members of a chorus that had lost its aesthetic reason for existence.

The maddening lack of "unity of tone" in Euripidean dialogue can be turned to good theatrical advantage using Brecht's advice on producing his own plays: "Nothing is more revolting than when the actor pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing. The three levels -- plain speech, heightened speech and singing -- must always remain distinct, and in no case should heightened speech represent an intensification of plain speech, or singing of heightened speech."[16] The choral odes are obvious examples of dialogue to be performed on a distinct level of song. I suggest that some of Euripides' messengers, his gods on their slicked-up machines and, perhaps, Polymestor delivering his curses at the end of Hecuba could all make use of a distinct level of "heightened speech" that would be set in deliberate contrast to the almost naturalistic dialogue of the typical Euripidean agon.

All of the techniques described above -- the tour de force endings, the perfunctory prologues, the disconnected choral odes, and the shifting tone of one dialogue -- involve "A-effects"; ie. they drive the audience's attention back onto the action, dislocating stock associations and forcing new perspectives. Brecht defines the principle best by example: "To see one's mother as a man's wife one needs an A-effect; that is provided, for instance, when one acquires a stepfather. If one sees one's teacher hounded by bailiffs, an A-effect occurs: one is jerked out of a relationship in which the teacher seems big into one where he seems small. An alienation of the motorcar takes place if after driving a modern car for a long while we drive an old model T Ford. . . ."[17]

Other uses of "A-effects" pervade Euripides' dramaturgy. Thus, the stock associations the audience might have for Achilles, Agamemnon, Menalaus, Apollo, Dionysus, Orestes, Helen, or Clytemnestra are dislocated in play after play, and the shock of that dislocation forces attention to their actions newly defined in their new contexts. Compare Brecht's treatment of Galileo, of St. Joan, and of Hitler.
Brecht seems to have learned this trick from Shaw, but he might just as well have looked to Euripides for inspiration.

The use of historical anachronisms for A-effect is likewise common to both Euripides and Brecht. The names of the characters in Orestes belong to the mythical past, but the characterizations and the institutions belong to Euripides' Athens, and the situations of The Trojan Women, Hecuba, Andromache, and Ion are loaded with contemporary referents and parallels. Brecht again provides a rational: "If we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which (the spectator) himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins."[18]

The same principle can be applied to the geographical and sexual transfers that mark the plays of both Euripides and Brecht. I believe that Euripides consistently used the Greek theatrical convention of male actors playing female roles to gain A-effects, or his equivalent -- a strategy also evident in the demonstrations by Mei Lin Fang that Brecht admired and drew inspiration from. Aristophanes chided Euripides for littering the stage with females, so his persistent use of them must have been unusual. The list of female leads is remarkable; it includes Medea, Alcestis, Phaedra, Hecuba, Electra, Andromache, Iphigenia, Polyxena, Evadne, Agave, Helen, Clytemnestra, and Creusa. In sixteen of the nineteen extant plays, the chorus is female. In fact, only one play has no female characters at all, Rhesus, and that one exception might well be spurious. Euripides' persistent forcing of the male-playing-female convention upon his audience may be analogous to Brecht's preoccupation with oriental roles and locales for Caucasian actors.

This certainly wasn't Euripides' only reason for writing so many female roles. The inferior social position and physical powers of women -- along with the capacity to suffer granted them by their male "superiors" -- appealed to him for thematic reasons, and he obviously recognized, as did Brecht, the melodramatic potential of a feminine character transformed by passion or nobly making a self-sacrifice -- two recurring situations in his plays that themselves involve A-effects. Medea, Hecuba, Shen Te-Shui Ta, the Mother, and St. Joan are all variations on the same theme; and Grusha is outdone by Evadne and Polyxena.

The conventional use of masks in the Greek theatre involved still another built-in A-effect. The Berliner Ensemble has its own equivalent: the use of green and white makeup, the tones of which often change as the play progresses; and in producing Caucasian Chalk Circle, Brecht employed commedia-like half-masks. Perhaps the most striking use of masks or makeup for estrangement in Brecht's production records, though, occurred in the original production of A Man's a Man. Brecht describes Peter Lorre "helping the playwright make a point" by progressively whitening his face as the fear of death takes hold of him. "The character's development [was] carefully divided into four phases, for which masks [were] employed."[19] Greek masking conventions would allow for similarly startling changes. Oliver Taplin has suggested the necessity for a mask with dark eye sockets and streams of blood for Oedipus's last entrance, and I would like to imagine Euripides making a similar use of masks in showing the dehumanization of Hecuba.

The point of all the foregoing is not simply that Euripides and Brecht often drew out of the same bag of tricks. The similar techniques indicate more basic similarities in the ways that the two men viewed the world and theatre's relationship to that world. The attitude towards destiny that emerges from the plays is a good case in point. Brecht repeatedly insists that the abandonment of the Aristotelian aesthetic involves the abandonment of the Aeschylean-Sophoclean sense of destiny: "Non-Aristotelian drama would at all costs avoid bundling together the events portrayed and presenting them as an inexorable fate, to which the human being is handed over helpless despite the beauty and significance of his reactions; on the contrary, it is precisely this fate that it would study closely, showing it up as of human contriving."[21]

Apply this to Euripides' plays. Helen's fulfillment of her "destiny" mocks the whole notion. Dionysus' action in The Bacchae is not inevitable at all; neither is it reasonable or consistent. The downfall of an Ion, a Pentheus, or an Hippolytus is not the result of an "inexorable fate" as is (perhaps) that of Oedipus or Ibsen's Oswald, but the result of psychological imbalance, stupidity, and petty gods. The amusement arising from the situations of Euripides' romantic comedies, Helen and Iphigenia at Tauris, are based precisely on a reversal of the accepted notions of destiny attached to the characters. The whole point of Iphigenia at Aulis seems to be that Iphigenia's destiny is not inevitable, and that any attempt to pass over the actions of Agamemnon as dictated by fate is to defend vulgarity and stupidity. It is as "preventable" as the rise of Arturo Ui. "When a family is ruined, I don't see the reason in inexorable fate," says Brecht.[22] Neither did Euripides when he wrote Electra, and that accounts for the uniqueness of his version. The very writing of a pacifist play such as The Trojan Women indicates a

belief on the author's part that sufferings of war are not inevitable by-products of an inexorable fate, but are caused by men acting arbitrarily and wrongly -- Athenians, for example, killing the natives of Melos to set a grisly political example of doubtful value. Parallels from recent European and American history have been all too numerous and obvious. Euripides may have had many fewer moments than Brecht when he thought such "human contriving" to be remedial, but he rarely lost a chance to show up that contriving. There are both advantages and limitations to this jettisoning of destiny from the dramatist's philosophical baggage. Euripides' general approach to the myths and Brecht's to Western history is Socratic; ie. the approach "confines itself to the stating of questions, to undermining the established view of the problem and the awakening of creative doubt."[23] The dramatic process implied by this approach is reductive, ruling out the transfiguration and ennobilization of character by the workings of destiny, and this reductive process may produce characters who can finally be pitied but not admired, as in The Bacchae, Hippolytus, or (in theory) Mother Courage. It may also produce characters who are the objects of satirical scorn, such as Menalaus in Iphigenia at Aulis, the nobles in The Caucasian Chalk Circle, the schemers in Helen, or the gangsters in Arturo Ui. The distance between the tragic and the comic is narrowed and possibilities emerge for essentially comic characters to act in tragic situations as in Mother Courage and Orestes. This may help account for the surprising amount of humor in Euripides' tragedies as well as the buoyancy of Brecht's protagonists. The ludicrous hero emerges and Azdak finds an ancestor in the Heracles of Alcestis. While the Socratic process can not produce an Oedipus -- at least not the Oedipus of Sophocles' plays -- it enables the dramatist to use his art as a weapon against an iniquitous society, to expose the grotesque nature of the world around us, and to uncover new sources of humor within the tragic.

The "deconstructive" approach to interpretation and production now gaining popularity may be seen as an extention of the Socratic mode of inquiry, given dramatic form by Euripides, and of Brecht's setting of part against part in a dramatic and political strategy. Contemporaneous with this development has been a reemergence of theatrical interest in Euripides over the past fifteen years. Those productions that have achieved the greatest vitality (I am thinking of Andrei Serban and Elizabeth Swados' Trojan Women, as well as Tadashi Suzuki's production of that play, Richard Schechner's adaptation of The Bacchae (Dionysus in '69), and Carol Sorgenfrei's Medea adaptation using techniques from Japanese Noh theatre) have all directly or indirectly drawn from Brecht's theatrical legacy in order to reveal the timeliness of Euripides' work. The artistic kinship between Brecht and Euripides is deeply rooted, its recognition seems appropriate, and the theatrical ramifications recognizing that kinship have yet to be exhausted.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Aristotle, Poetics, tr. S.H. Butcher (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), pp. 76-77.

[2]John Gassner, Masters of the Drama (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), p. 61.

[3]Gassner, p. 62.

[4]Jan Kott makes reference to the Brechtian structure of Euripidean plays in an account of his production of Orestes, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction," The Drama Review, XIII, No. 1 (Fall, 1968), p. 147. For the record, I wrote the first draft of this article in 1964, so that I don't happen to be indebted to Prof. Kott for the basic idea here, though I'm certainly glad of his company. His mention of the Brechtian structure in his production notes lends credence to the hope that thinking about Euripides in context with Brecht can lead to some interesting productions. Other productions that have followed this lead to varying degrees are mentioned at the end of this paper.

[5]A.W. Verrall, Euripides the Rationalist: A Study in the History of Art and Religion (Cambridge: University Press, 1913), p. 177.

[6]William Arrowsmith, Introduction to his own translation of Orestes, in The Complete Greek Tragedies, Euripides IV, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 109-110. Prof. Arrowsmith has been an early and notable exception among Euripides' critics and has brilliantly examined Euripides' "broken-backed" dramas in the introductions to his own translations in Hecuba, The Bacchae, The Cyclops, and Heracles, as well as Orestes, in the Chicago series. I believe my observations here complement his.

[7]Bertolt Brecht, Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic, tr. and ed. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 80.

[8]Aristotle, p. 77.

[9]Hippolytus, trans. David Grene, The Complete Greek Tragedies, Euripides I, p. 164.

[10]Gilbert Murray, Euripides and His Age (New York: Henry Holt, 1913), p. 205.

[11]The Bacchae, tr. William Arrowsmith, The Complete Greek Tragedies, Euripides V, p. 156.

[12]Aristotle, p. 92. [13]Brecht, p. 201.

[14]Again, the aesthetic was already implicit in Greek theatrical form. This accounts for the surprisingly Brechtian sound of Schiller's famous remark that "the Chorus. . . exercises a purifying influence on tragic poetry, insomuch as it keeps reflection apart from the incidents, and by this separation arms it with a poetical vigour." "On the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy," tr. A. Lodge and anthologized in Theatre and Drama in the Making, Vol. I, ed. John Gassner and Ralph G. Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), p. 71.

[15]Brecht, p. 217. [16]Brecht, p. 44. [17]Brecht, p. 144.

[18]Brecht, p. 190. [19]Brecht, p. 55.

[20]Oliver Taplin, Greek Tragedy in Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 89.

[21]Brecht, p. 87. [22]Brecht, p. 68.

[23]Martin Esslin, Brecht: The Man and His Work (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), p. 208.

A FEMINIST READING OF BRECHT'S PIRATE JENNY

Renate Fischetti

Ihr lehrt uns, wann ein Weib die Röcke heben
Und ihre Augen einwärts drehen kann.
Zuerst müsst ihr uns was zu fressen geben
Dann könnt ihr reden: damit fängt es an.
(Second Threepenny Final Chorus)

From a feminist point of view, it could be argued that Brecht, throughout his work, failed to offer a realistic image of women, and that a close scrutiny of the relationship between the sexes in Brecht's work reveals some age-old myths in which women are portrayed as idols, as objects of men's fears and desires, supporting an ideology which has kept both men and women enslaved. Brecht's Pirate Jenny is just such a woman. Jenny is one of the whores of the Threepenny Opera, and significantly the one who betrays Macheath, nearly costing him his head). Jenny's Song, however, is presented by Polly, just moments after she has been wed to Macheath:

> Gentlemen, if nobody wants to recite anything, I shall offer a little presentation. I shall pretend to be a girl I once saw in one of those small 4-penny-pubs in Soho. This girl was doing the dishes, and you should know that everyone thought she was funny. You should also know that she addressed the people in the pub and told them such things as I am about to sing to you now...[1]

Initially we wonder why Brecht presents this as a quote. Did he intend to cast a shadow on the young couple's seeming happiness? Did he want to shock audiences by having the bourgeois Polly speak the tough, threatening language of Jenny? Or did he equate Polly with Jenny, implying that all women are whores, ultimately bringing the downfall of men? Or did he simply want to sneak in a revolutionary statement, as Ernst Bloch had pointed out in his well-known early essay on the subject: "The guests laugh about Jenny's song and find it entertaining, the bourgeois audiences respond and help the Threepenny Opera to a success which it deserves for its plain old humor, but not for this dynamite passage."[2] The text does, indeed, have a revolutionary appeal. Any oppressed person would agree that it would be nice to have tables turned and to have the oppressors pay for injustices so long suffered. Women are included in this group. Could it be that Brecht was addressing their oppressed situation in particular? Doing dishes and making beds have been women's chores all along, pleasing men and entertaining them also. Why should women not

identify with Polly/Jenny and agree that being oppressed by men is an awful lot? Why should women not dream of a savior, a Prince Charming, or simply a miracle to free them from their miserable lot? Women might even get carried away to the point of wanting to settle accounts with their oppressors and go to such extremes as wanting their heads cut off. Or would they? Certainly, many a woman has been driven to despair, but would women readily endorse such violence as killing and destroying whole towns? Is Brecht not forcing on us something we do not really feel; is he not putting us in the company of characters that have long populated the fiction of men? Jenny, the whore, Polly, the gangster bride, the ship as death ship: all bear connotations that suggest evil and the dark forces in life. This prompted Bloch to say:

> . . .in this little song. . .the witchlikeness of woman is taken into account. . . Have revolutions not often had their gun-maidens, their women arsonists, is the image of the gangster bride not particularly suited for women, in every good gangster story and in life, which at times takes on the form of a cheap story? The "wickedness", the subversive aspects of woman, the silent condoning of revolution which this woman implores and expects, "You will see me smile when I do my dishes, and you will ask, what is she smiling for? You will see me stand by my window, and you will ask, why that vicious smile?" -- this smile has often been part of the red terror or was put to use by it.[3]

While we might forgive Bloch for getting carried away to such a degree that he quotes all the bad women he could think of, including the biblical serpent, and while we might smile at his benign attempts at redemption when he sees in the serpent a "caterpillar" from which shall emerge the "goddess reason,"[4] or when he quotes such oddities as "the maiden psyche in the dreadful paternal home of the world,"[5] we do recognize that there is something terribly wrong with the text if it permits such blatant sexism. Clearly Bloch read in it a mythological structure which Brecht may or may not have intended. This structure imposes a view of woman as dangerous, as harmful to man, as castrating. In sum it presents us with the age-old myth of the bad woman, a myth which we find in all manifestations of patriarchal culture and which is an affront to women of all times. The new feminism is calling for an end to these myths and voicing claims to represent women realistically, not in the guise of unacceptable stereotypes.

Why would Brecht, who, throughout his work, propagated a new humanism, fall short where women are concerned? Does his humanism exclude women? No, most certainly not. But his view of women is slightly patriarchal, to put it mildly, and he fails

to give them a life of their own. Pirate Jenny's song was written in the late twenties, when the first women's movement had brought significant gains for the improvement of the status of women in capitalist and socialist countries, a time when women had begun to enter the work force in larger numbers, when they had traded traditional, tight-fitting dresses for unconventional shorter and looser ones, when they cut their hair short, when they began to exhibit a more aggressive lifestyle. This happened not only in capitalist countries, where the new image of woman was instantly coined with the term "flapper," but women in socialist countries as well were beginning to change their appearance. Yet Brecht chose a Victorian setting for his play. In this setting, woman's role was particularly restricted. She was to be subservient, passive, relatively uneducated, humble, and proper, with little or no manifestation of sexual drive. Women and men were equally repressed through acceptable standards of behavior. All energies were spent on productivity, toward material welfare and social status. For the lower classes, sexuality was reproductive and often violent whereas the bourgeoisie had the option of elevating it to the symbolic. Thus Freud could define culture as the sublimation of sexual energy, and Victorian culture contains a wealth of information on the narcissistic fantasies of mostly bourgeois men, most striking of which is the vampire myth, where a strong sexual drive is relegated to dark violence, to images of death and decay. They myth of the "bad woman" is another such product. It has little to do with the way women are and contains a great deal of ambivalence toward them. The male child, as Freud found out, often sees the mother as potentially dangerous, threatening to castrate him as punishment for "evil" (unacceptable) feelings. Grown men often continue to feel this way about women they cannot control, thus the harmful nature of the "bad woman" who corrupts, betrays, and does harm to men who have fallen under their spell. It is for this reason that Jenny delights in the vision of ordering heads cut off. Were she to go unchallenged and to gain complete control, so it could be stipulated, she would convey uneasiness, a threat. Thus, she sings of the ship with eight sails which will take her away, a ship under the command of a "mystic pirate,"[6] the revolutionary for whom Jenny has prepared the way. Justice is done, the old social order abolished, and Jenny is safely in the hands of her master. The castration threat has been averted, Jenny is put in her place. The structure of the text therefore suggests that what Polly/Jenny sings about is not only a poignant revolutionary fantasy, but a specifically male one. Woman as true revolutionary is not possible, she may be a spy, a gun-maiden, but she needs a man to take control once the revolutionary moment has come. Therefore, Brecht might be accused of sticking with old-fashioned sexist stereotypes.

To redeem him, it might be said that this song, as all aspects of the Threepenny Opera, are to be read as his commentary on Victorian bourgeois mentality, which he

chose as a signifier of bourgeois society in its most severe form. It was definitely his intention to bare the cut-throat survival tactics of the Victorian bourgeoisie as intrinsically capitalist, where men and women were turned against one another and the world had become a cold, dark place, a "Valley of Sorrows" (Final Chorus). The trouble is that Brecht is ambivalent towards this. On the one had, he vehemently rejects the concept that men and women had to be at war, that their relationships had to be exploitative, that they had to live in fear. He sees those conditions as necessary outgrowths from a capitalist economy. On the other hand, he enjoys dwelling on this bourgeois misery because he seems fascinated with evil to the point where he reinforces some age-old sexist myths. As we know, such an ambivalent attitude towards decadence is a trend in much of Brecht's early work, witness the myth of virility in Baal, In the Jungle of Cities, Mahagonny, A Man is Man, and the Threepenny Opera, and other examples of the "bad woman" myth in the figure of widow Begbick, all the Threepenny whores, and the whores in Mahagonny. In his later plays, Brecht went on to create new ways to express more desirable values in human relationships. With the myth of the mother, women seemingly fared better. Yet even the mothers are for the most part oppressed, not very smart, and in great need of being educated, thus following sexual stereotypes we find elsewhere in the literature of men, and fitting the roles which patriarchal society has ascribed to them. For both mothers and whores are stock characters of our literatures. They represent male fantasies of women, and both attempt to deal with men's castration fear and their need to control it. Mothers sacrifice their own needs for those of others, whores get punished. In the end, the old order of the sexes prevails. Gorki's and Brecht's Mother turn heroic revolutionaries, appealing to our instincts for idol-worship and mirroring our better selves. Yet they are not the real leaders, and it could be asked if women necessarily wish to see themselves in such altruistic terms and so void of sensuality. It could also be asked why Brecht turned to the mother image just at the time when motherhood took on a great deal of significance in the ideologies of the day.[7] Shen-Te, of all the women in Brecht's later plays, is perhaps the most appealing, yet her duality signifies more than ever the involvement with sexual stereotypes and is totally unacceptable from a feminist view. Brecht chose to work with these stereotypes, thereby endorsing patriarchal ideology with all its consequences, the treatment of women as objects of desire or idolatry, and the general repression of basic drives of both men and women who would be much happier were they freed from the restraints of sexism. It is patriarchal ideology that has created power structures based on exploitation, forcing people to substitute their basic human needs with all types of obsessive behavior, mostly narcissistic, manifesting a whole range of perversities. It is true that capitalism is one of these perverse manifestations of human behavior, but an analysis of capitalism does not sufficiently

explain the oppression of women, children, and men.[8] While Brecht has written some of the most biting analyses of capitalist society, as for example, in the Threepenny Opera, and while he has offered some beautiful alternatives to the pointless narcissism of bourgeois-capitalist culture, his work stopped short of recognizing that the ills of capitalist society are tied to the ills of patriarchy. The removal of economic exploitation, as the events since have taught us, hardly removes all forms of exploitation, as long as women and men remain tied to conventional sex roles and as long as our culture permits men to see women not as people but as idols. Symbolic content in art is essential, but it would be foolish to let abuses such as the unrealistic treatment of women go unchallenged.

The women in Brecht's plays exhibit all the qualities of those found in conventional patriarchal myths despite the seemingly realistic characterization. It may be heretic to uncover such basic weaknesses in a writer of Brecht's stature, but in the process we do gain insights into the ideological background to which Brecht remained tied. We might want to forgive Brecht for his sins but hope that those who have come after him feel free to uncover those structures that have perpetuated patriarchal ideology and prevented people from both sexes to develop unrestrained social relationships in keeping with a truly new humanism. "You teach us when a woman may lift her skirts / When it's all right to flirt. / First we need something to eat / Then we can talk: That's the way things go"[9] -- those words by Jenny at the end of Act II should highlight not only the motto, "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral," but should question why women see themselves as objects and should help us recognize the power structures of sexual relationships so that we may outgrow them and begin to realize our potential.

FOOTNOTES

The translations of passages from the Threepenny Opera and from the Bloch article are mine.

[1]Bertolt Brecht, Gesammelte Werke (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1967), II, 414.

[2]Ernst Bloch, "Lied der Seeräuber-Jenny in der 'Dreigroschenoper'," in Bertolt Brechts Dreigroschenbuch I (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 294.

[3]Bloch, pp. 292-293. [4]Ibid. [5]Ibid. [6]Ibid.

[7]Kate Millet, "Reactionary Policy: The Models of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union," in Sexual Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 157-176; also in passing, Barbara Sichtermann, "Über die verlorene Erotik der Brüste," in Ästhetik und Kommunikation 47 (1982), 112.

[8]Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution (New York: William Morrow, 1970), p. 1-15.

[9]Brecht, p. 458.

THEATER TRANSLATION AS RECEPTION: THE EXAMPLE OF BRECHT'S GALILEO

Loren Kruger

One commonly begins a discussion of a translation by referring to its original. In speaking of Brecht's play Galileo, we should have in mind the definitive version, the text corresponding to Brecht's Berliner Ensemble production of the play in 1953. This text, the publishers assure us, is the signed original to which all copies, all versions and translations, must correspond. The copyright notice in this edition not only reminds its reader that this text is Brecht's last and final version, but by claiming that the text published by Suhrkamp in 1955 was written (with the collaboration of Margaret Steffin) in 1938-39, it also seeks to erase differences between the first text and the last, on the familiar if unstated grounds that these texts are essentially identical; for copyright and so also for translation purposes, both are Brecht's play on Galileo.[1]

Despite this assertion we can find considerable evidence to show that earlier "non-definitive" versions of the play have exercised a great deal of influence on Anglo-American translations of Galileo. The extent of this influence may lead us to suspect that the "definitive" Suhrkamp version (hereafter S text) is not so much a unique original from which all translations necessarily depart, as a particular version which the author's signature has legitimated as the definitive version. For earlier versions, the author's signature and thus the text's authority are necessarily provisional. In his continual revising, Brecht adopts the role of recipient of his text, reading and reworking it in the light of (his understanding of) historical demands on his theater. After Brecht's death in 1956, the authority of his signature invested in the S text is enforced by copyright; all subsequent translations are required to acknowledge this text as their source.[2]

This authority is retrospective as well as prescriptive; the copyright covers the two earlier versions of the play -- Die Erde bewegt sich and an English language version Galileo on which the actor Charles Laughton collaborated -- despite the fact that they differ in a number of ways from the definitive text. The force of the copyright suggests that textual identity involves institutional as well as linguistic matters.[3] This does not invalidate the latter but suggests that the factors deciding whether a translation corresponds adequately to its source are never purely linguistic factors. We have to take into account not only the institution of copyright but also the question of the text's function within the

literary or theatrical institution. If the translated text functions as a representation of Brecht's play about Galileo, whether on stage or in print, then it is worth investigating as such.

This factor of reception is crucial; not only does it provide an explanation of Brecht's reading and rewriting of his play as a mode of critical reception, but it also serves to remind us that the continued life of texts is determined by reception. This is because reception is no passive or neutral absorption of the text, but an active concretization of a text under historical conditions which, differing considerably from the conditions of that text's production, influence the course of the concretization.[4] In other words, our understanding of a text --especially a theater text -- is shaped inevitably by the means and context of this concretization. The representation of a text, whether hypothetically by an individual reader or concretely by a stage production, determines our understanding of the text. We may go so far as to say that in concretizing the text, we do not so much (attempt to) reconstruct an original, but realize our reconstruction as the text, whose meaning arises in the event of the text's representation in which the recipient, reader or spectator is a necessary participant.[5] This notion of textual meaning as event displaces the notion of text as object which can be completely known and exhaustively interpreted in favor of the idea of meaning realized by readers or spectators in a specific spatial and temporal context. This context is the site of the event, we may even say its theater, on which the stage is set for its reception by a particular audience.

When we speak of the reception of a particular text at a certain historical moment, the question of the nature of the recipient arises. We can avoid an unwieldy and rigid distinction between historically specific public and abstract individual addressee[6] by considering the place and role of the translator whose response is at once infidivual and intended to represent a particular public. The translator therefore occupies the position in which the individual addressee acts in the public's place, in that his/her response not only reflects and recognizes public reception of a text but also anticipates and shapes this and future reception. By thus shaping reception, a translation frames the event of meaning. The context of translation determines our understanding of the text; it mediates our access to the source text.[7] Just as reception is less a reconstruction of an original text as object and inviolate source of meaning than a concretization of meaning in a particular determining context, so translation is less a "faithful" reconstruction of an "original" than the production of a text that corresponds to a source text in ways that are determined as much by the context and the anticipated function of the translated text as by the linguistic structure of that source text. In the case of

theater, the text functions within a stage representation for a particular audience. We then identify the translated text as the translation of another (the source) text if it proves adequate to a function in the target literary or theatrical institution,[8] corresponding to that of the source text in the source institution. In other words, the Anglo-American audience treats a translation of Galileo in a way similar to the German audience's response to Leben des Galilei. Thus we recognize a translation as much by its adequacy to function in a way similar to that of the source text as by its linguistic equivalence to that text. As the translation theorist Andre Lefevere comments: "Translation is the result of an activity which derives from a text in the source language a text in the target language which corresponds with the text in the source language in certain salient features and which can be substituted for it under certain circumstances."[9] In its most extreme form this emphasis on function and reception as the determining features of a translation may lead one to dismiss completely the authority of the source text, a position Brecht sometimes adopts: "What keeps classical texts alive is the use that is made of them, even if this is [construed as] abuse. . .They are raped and pundered; in this way, they continue to exist."[10] However extreme this polemic, Brecht's statement is valuable in that it clearly marks reception as the crucial factor determining the form as well as the value of the translated text. To say that there is no translation which is essentially good, but only translations which are good-for-something, allows the translator to bypass the impasse in the traditional opposition between a "faithful" but awkward translation and one which "betrays" its source in its "freedom". This bypass extends the range of the translator's choice.

The stress on function and reception is not, however, an invitation to complete license on the translator's part, but instead a reminder that s/he translates to make a text available to director, spectator or reader, and is thus unlikely to avoid comparing translation with source. Even Brecht's polemical point takes up a position with respect to the source, however defiantly. We should recognize that the notion of the source is a necessary working hypothesis which guides the translator's activity. In order to begin translating, s/he must have some idea of a source text, whether that text is the original or not (one can translate a translation). Furthermore, within the context of translation, we can reasonably assume that we receive the translation as translation, that is, with the source text in mind, however much a theatrical representation may have obscured that source.[11] The source text thus functions as a norm both on the linguistic level and beyond which conditions our understanding of what constitutes an adequate translation, as a text that acknowledges this norm. Nonetheless the authority of the norm is not absolute nor is the source text simply an object waiting to be

uncovered. To assert that the translation is the ideally transparent revelation of an original is to disavow the mediation necessarily involved in every reconstruction, translation or interpretation of a text. So, although we should rightly beware of any translation attempts that claim to recover the pristine essence of an original, we should retain the notion of "original" as hypothesis, while remembering that a translated text can, in its turn, become a source text (and thus an "original") for a new translation. We shall see that this is precisely what happens in the case of Brecht's Galileo.

The first version of the paly, called Die Erde bewegt sich, was the product of Brecht's collaboration with Margaret Steffin in 1938-39. Now out of print and almost forgotten, this version remains significant chiefly as a thematic and formal point from which Brecht's subsequent revisions depart and to which they insistently return: the question of Galileo's status as a hero who, in a moment of apparent weakness, as he recants his teaching, saves science for posterity. In this version, Brecht stresses the value of Galileo's action, probably as an endorsement of the cunning necessary to fight Hitler's regime.[12] He emphatically unstresses it ever after as he grows more critical of a "heroic" representation of Galileo which, in encouraging the audience's empathy with Galileo, blunts the play's critical edge: "Life of Galileo is technically a big step backward. . .far too opportunistic. . .one would have to rewrite the piece entirely, without the interiors, the atmosphere, the empathy."[13] From the work on the next version --known as the Laughton version -- to his last revisions for the Berliner Ensemble production in 1953, Brecht continued to address the problem. To ensure the Verfremdung of the central character in a play which, even it its definitive version, seems to encourage considerable audience identification, is no simple task for director, actor and spectator as well as translator. Brecht's recognition of the problem's persistence is clear in a note written at about the same time as the Berlin production: "One of the greatest difficulties: how to emphasize the criminal within the hero. . .we cannot leave that to the public. We must emphasize it [nonetheless] and hope that the public gets the idea."[14] Reviews of the Berliner Ensemble production as well as the Laughton version reveal the extent and the intensity of the audience's empathy with Galileo.[15] The conflict between this empathy and Brecht's expressed intention is most apparent in the penultimate scene of the play in which Galileo repudiates Andrea's (and the spectator's) praise for his cunning in the service of pure scinece by condemning himself for "betraying his profession" through alienating himself from the needs of the people, a condemnation which actors and reviewers alike persist in reading against the grain.

The difficulties in representing this scene clearly have ramifications for the staging and reception of the play, and so also for its translation. I shall there-

fore use this scene as a touchstone in an investigation of the translated texts and their contexts. As the central concern here is the interrelationship between text and context in the function of the text, I shall concentrate less on a close textual comparison than on mapping the changing relationships between text and context as they are represented by the (reception of the) translations.

Our investigation then properly begins with the Laughton version, that is, the English-language text Galileo produced by Brecht and Laughton, collaborating for the play directed by Joseph Losey, and starring Laughton in Los Angeles in 1947 (hereafter the L text). The impact of this "non-definitive" version on the Anglo-American theatrical institution is considerable. We can assume that any post-1955 English-language translator of Leben des Galilei, even though working primarily from the S text, is not likely to ignore an earlier English-language version. His/her translation will bear traces of the L text as well as of the definitive version. We can at first glance find evidence for this impact on the covers of the translations. Both Desmond Vesey's (1960) and John Willett's (1980) volumes depict Laughton rather than Ernst Busch in the role of Galileo, even though we might expect a photograph of the latter's performance, given that the Berliner Ensemble production in 1953 is the acknowledged basis for the S text. Alluding to Laughton's performance, on the other hand, helps facilitate the absorption of these later translations into the Anglo-American canon by covertly suggesting that the play is already there. This gesture of retrospective appropriation essentially corresponds to the S text's appropriation of Die Erde bewegt sich. The impetus behind both moves is the delineation of a smooth genealogical line which denies the mediation and thus any breaks or detours resulting from the translation or reception of a text.

The L text announces itself as the "Laughton version." Though this suggests no definitive claims, when it was published, this text was nonetheless the only text, in English or in German to bear Brecht's signature (the copyright is in his name). Brecht claimed that he and Laughton shared the responsibility for the translation. Whatever the value of counter-claims that other unacknowledged translators were involved,[16] we should take Brecht's assertion seriously for two reasons. We should recognize, first of all, that Laughton's priority here has less to do with his (limited) access to German than with the prestige his fame as an actor lent to the play. More important, the collaboration between Brecht and Laughton provides significant comment on the peculiarities of theater translation:

> The awkward circumstance that one translator knew no German and the other scarcely any English compelled us. . .to use acting as our means of translation.

> We were forced to do what better equipped translators should do too: to translate Gestus. For language is theatrical insofar as it primarily expresses the mutual attitute of the speakers. . . (W., p. 134)

Brecht's emphasis on the intelligible (and intelligent) combination of word and gesture that gives us the Gestus informs his understanding of translation. If we bear in mind that the Gestus must, in Brecht's formulation, always represent social relations, as well as the actor's representation of those relations,[17] then his requirements for Laughton's performance and his consequent revisions can be seen as a continued attempt to hone this representation.

Honing the representation, making the translation "work on stage" nowhere means for Brecht that the translation may be linguistically inept or insufficiently rigorous. On the contrary, Brecht recognizes that "linguistic" and "theatrical" concerns cannot be easily separated. He never forgets that language on stage is always accompanied by gesture and that this relationship between language and gesture requires -- on the part of director, actor and translator -- a precise awareness of pace or "tempo-rhythm", to use Stanislavski's term. Because of the demands of the stage action, the running time of any utterance cannot be ignored: "In theatre translation, the problem of the running time is intensified because an author's sentences are generally lengthened by the translator."[18] It is important to realize here that the relationship between word and gesture on stage is not merely associative but rather a synthesis: "Gesture is that meaningfulness which is moving, in every sense of the word: what moves the words and what moves us."[19]

Brecht's work on Galileo seeks again and again to make these two movements coincide, to ensure, in other words, that the audience grasps the essential Gestus of Galileo's crime. The difficulty of this endeavor is clear in the difference between Brecht's intended representation of the penultimate scene -- the self-denunciation -- and Laughton's actual performance. Brecht writes: "In the Californian version. . .Galileo interrupts his pupil's hymns of praise to prove to him that his recantation had been a crime. . .In case anyone is interested, that is also the opinion of the playwright" (W., p. 131). And of the penultimate scene in particular, he notes that Galileo should be seen as one who prostitutes his intellect for those in power: "On no account should the actor make use of his self-analysis to endear the hero [sic] to the audience by his self-reproaches. All it [the analysis] does is to show that his brain is unimpaired, no matter what area he turns it to" (W. p. 130). He goes on to speak of Laughton's efforts to arrive at the desired representation: "Anxious to show that the crime makes the criminal more criminal, L. insisted, during the adaptation of the original [the 1938-39]

version, on a scene in which Galileo collaborates with the authorities in full view of the audience and frankly shows. . .his cynicism without entirely being able to conceal the effort this ignominious exercise costs him" (W., p. 154). Yet Brecht simultaneously acknowledges the risk involved in these efforts: "L. was fully aware of the recklessness with which he swam against the stream by throwing away his character -- no audience can stand a thing like that" (W., p. 154). In fact, audience resistance to Laughton's strategy of "acting against the grain" -- in the form of persistent identification with Galileo -- serves to demonstrate this difficulty of representation, as the reviews of the California production indicate.[20] Eric Bentley's comment can be taken as representative. He maintains that, despite Brecht's intentions, one can stay "pro-Galileo till the end," in that despite his self-denunciation, Galileo emerges as a "winning rogue."[21]

Brecht's response to these reviews confirms the determining effect of reception on translation. In order to avoid what he considered an "undesirable" reception, he made substantial changes in his (re)translation of the text for the Berliner Ensemble. As Willett's notes accompanying his edition indicate, Brecht attempted to reinforce the socio-political implications of Galileo's betrayal by rewriting dialogue and stage directions. He adds, for example, to Galileo's long self-denunciation speech which begins: "In meinen freien Stunden, deren ich viele habe. . .", references to "das Elend des Vielen" (S., p. 124) at the hands of "das Geschlecht erfinderischer Zwerge" (S., p. 126). He also incorporates elements from Laughton's performance which were not in the L text, such as the laugh which accompanies Galileo's allusion to Federzoni's lack of formal education (S., p. 120). Brecht comments: "The laughter in the picture [in the model book] was not suggested by the text and it was frightening" (W., p. 155), and follows this description with an interpretation of Laughton's action: "The laugh. . .does not contain bitterness about a society that treats science as something secret. . ., but a disgraceful mocking of Federzoni's inadequacies." It is precisely this interpretation of Brecht's which his revisions were to facilitate. He acknowledges the actor's contribution to translation, since that contribution can be made to reinforce a specific judgment of the action. Brecht would have his judgment of Galileo ideally contained in the actor's representation, or, as Bentley has it, Brecht would like Galileo to speak with his master's voice.[22]

It is to this voice of authority that translators of the S text, Leben des Galilei, have to respond, whether that response is respectful or defiant. English-language translations of this text vary between these two poles. Desmond Vesey's translation, published in Britain in 1960, attempts to echo the S text as closely as possible. John Willett's translation, published in 1980 with accompanying notes

and commentary, sets up an elaborate dialogue with the S text. Finally, the playwright Howard Brenton's translation, the text commissioned for the British National Theatre's production of The Life of Galileo in 1980, acts like a megaphone, amplifying and perhaps distorting certain aspects of the text. While Bentley, writing as late as 1966 in the context of the L text, continues to invoke the authority of this version, finding its "ambiguity. . .more human and more richly dramatic" than later ones, and asserting that no actor has yet surpassed Laughton's sympathetic combination of "every appearance of intellectual brilliance" with every appearance of physical indulgence,"[23] later translators are (legally) obliged to acknowledge, explicitly or not, Brecht's attempts to separate the "rogue" from the "merciless self-analyst."

To call Vesey's translation an echo of the S Text should draw attention to his emphasis on linguistic equivalence at the expense of theatrical function. Less concerned than Brecht and Laughton with the production of a theater text than with a faithful representation of the S text, Vesey attempts to follow the German as closely as possible. This does not mean that Vesey's text "reads like German" but rather that his text reflects his interest in reconstructing the S text as text instead of producing a text with a corresponding function, whether theatrical or literary, to that of the source text. Ironically, this fidelity to the word gives rise to a text that is not only ill-suited to the stage but also often simply ponderous, because it takes insufficient account of tempo-rhythms. Consider the following slight but significant example from the self-denunciation scene:

> Andrea: . . .Ihre Hände sind befleckt, sagen wir. Sie sagen: Besser befleckt als leer.
> Galilei: Besser befleckt als leer. Klingt realistisch, klingt nach mir. Neue Wissenschaft, neue Ethik. (S., p. 122)

Vesey translates Galileo's response as follows:

> Galileo: Better tainted than empty. Sounds realistic, sounds like me. New science, new ethics. (V., p. 115)

In contrast, Brecht/Laughton chose the following:

> Galileo: Better stained than empty. Sounds realistic, sounds like me. (L., W., p. 259)

To this Willett adds, following the S text's edition: "New science, new ethics" (W., p. 106).

Given that Galileo has already repudiated Andrea's praise, this particular reply is certainly meant ironically; it is likely that Galileo would be parodying Andrea's rhetoric. In this case, "Better stained than empty" improves on "Better tainted than empty," not simply because this smooths out the rhythm of Galileo's reply, but because this very smoothness emphasizes a certain sarcastic sing-song element in his retort and so brings the spectator back to the Gestus of merciless self-analysis which informs the exchange.

In contrast to Vesey's text, which does not immediately announce itself as a translation (the cover announces simply "The Life of Galileo by Bertolt Brecht"), Willett's makes this clear from the start by mentioning the notes and commentary surrounding the translation. This acknowledgement serves as much to set this new translation apart from Vesey's as to indicate the debt they both owe to the S text. That a new translation appears at all implies a demand for one. It suggests that Galileo is at this point sufficiently absorbed into the Anglo-American canon to warrant the effort and scholarship required to produce a text that, serving as an educational and as a stage edition, reinforces its place in the canon. Published in 1980, in both Britain and the U.S., as Volume 5, no. 1 of the Collected Plays, this edition is clearly intended to replace both the Laughton and the Vesey texts as the definitive translation of the definitive text. To say that Willett's translation sets up a dialogue with its source in no way contradicts this claim for authority. The chronological account of earlier versions and the scene by scene comparison accompanying the translation are to be read as evidence for the legitimacy of this claim.

The opposite is the case with Howard Brenton's (hereafter B) text. If Willett's translation claims to be the culmination of all previous attempts at English-language renderings of Galileo, Brenton's is unashamedly a particular version tailored to the demands of the National Theare production.[24] His aims as a marxist playwright are to produce a text that reflects his understanding of the Brecht play's status as a marxist classic. In the "Translator's Note" he takes pains to distance himself from those such as Bentley who try to emphasize Brecht's "humanism:"

> One word of warning, if warning it be to you. There has been a lot of loose talk about Brecht's "Humanism," his "Ambiguity." Brecht was a humanist, for marxism is, to a marxist, the true humanism. Brecht was a dab hand at saying two things at once - Ambiguity. But he was a communist. Oh yes, like it or not, he was a communist and a communist writer. . .[and] set out to justify the ways of communism to men and women.

With this declaration, Brenton focuses directly on the play's function which, as he conceives it, is to remind a latter-day audience of the urgency of Brecht's critique of scientists' irresponsibility, and he attempts to justify the changes he makes to the text on the grounds of his uncompromising commitment to this critique.

While acknowledging the force of Brenton's emphasis on a tendentious element in Galileo and of his evaluation of the play as "desperately timely," given its allusions (especially at the end) to the horrors of nuclear war, we must nonetheless look at the consequences for translation of Brenton's aggressive engagement. This tends to magnify and sometimes to distort what is more subtly but no less effectively expressed in the S text. Consider, for example, the exchange between Galileo and Priuli, the university bursar, in the first scene:

> Priuli: Herr Galilei, wir wissen, Sie sind ein grosser Mann. Ein grosser, aber unzufriedener Mann. . .
> Galilei: Ja, ich bin unzufrieden, was ihr mir noch bezahlen würdet, wenn ihr Verstand hättet. (S., p. 20)

In translating "unzufrieden" with "angry" rather than "dissatisfied," Brenton blunts the edge of the critical emphasis on Galileo's productive restlessness by introducing an element of undirected aggression. In this, and in a number of other places in his text,[25] Brenton's promotion of what he understands to be the "marxist Brecht" tends to distort as it magnifies some of the play's essential Gestus -- in particular, Galileo's peculiar combination of "intellectual brilliance" and "physical indulgence."

Despite this manifest carelessness, which may well be due to the relative haste with which this text was prepared for the stage, Brenton's reading and representation of Galileo does more than point to the play's timeliness. While we should not entirely ignore local distortions nor dismiss the claim that Brenton's fame (like Laughton's before him) carried more weight in his commission than his competence in German,[26] we should nonetheless acknowledge the value of Brenton's sense of the play on stage, which can be seen locally in his response to tempo-rhythm, as well as in his understanding of the possible relationships between the translated text and the time and place of the theatrical production. His sensitivity to tempo-rhythms is clear, for example, in his rendering of Galileo's "New Age" speech in the first scene of the play. Where the S text reads:

> Dadurch ist eine Zugluft entstanden, welche sogar den Fürsten und Prälaten die goldbestreckten Röcke lüftet, so dass fette und dünne Beine darunter sichtbar werden, Beine wie unsere Beine. (S., p. 9)

Brenton translates:

> So a wind of questions lifts the gold embroidered robes of princes and prelates, to show -- just fat or thin legs, legs like our legs. (B., p. 3)

Brenton's pause, instead of the conjunction "so that," which both Willett and Vesey use, is a masterly stroke, as it introduces a crucial moment of suspense before the mocking revelation of the "legs," which is intended to demystify the figures of authority. Whatever the relative value of Brenton's local changes to the S text, the value of his text as a whole depends on his conception of that text's theatrical function and reception, in particular, on his anticipation of the audience's response to Galileo's self-denunciation. In keeping with his Marxist critique of the scientist's alienation from social injustice, we might expect a deliberate refusal to treat Galileo heroically. In fact, Brenton's insistence on including in the production the last scene of the play -- "Galileo's book crosses the Italian frontier" -- on the grounds that it is the most efrective way to draw audience attention away from identification with the man to recognizing critically the implications of his work, is crucial, especially in contrast to the "traditional" omission of this scene, established by the (post-Brechtian) Berliner Ensemble productions of the Play:[27] "It's a matter of taking the theatrical 'high' away. . .without this scene, people would think of Galileo at the end, not of his science."[28] This awareness of affect complements and mediates Brenton's polemic in the "Translator's Note": the play is incomplete without the spectator's critical reception.

In the final analysis, Brenton does to Brecht's text what Brecht was accustomed to do to his own and others'. He reworks the text in response to his understanding of the demands of contemporary (and in this case, British) theater and society. In other words, he undertakes the translation with a dual awareness of reception: on the one hand, his role as active recipient, as critical heir, of the play, on the other, his understanding of the reception that he anticipates and also encourages for this translation. Brenton thus acknowledges, even emphasizes, the appropriating moment in the process of reception. To receive a text is not simply to accept it but to take it up in a place different from that of its source, that is, to translate it.

We can generalize from Brenton's particular concerns (the impact of the National Theatre production of Brecht's Galileo) to assert that the translator must work with a sense of the place of his/her text. Without this in view, theater translation would remain unfocused and ineffective, since the lack of a sense of place

implies a lack of a sense of the audience's reception. This reception is for the translator as much the anticipated as the recorded reception. As the translated text occupies the site of reception by articulating a response to a given source text, so it opens up a place (or places) for future reception of both source and translated texts.

In evaluating the translated text, we must take into account the place(s) of this text, so as to establish the context within which to judge it. In the case of Brecht's Galileo and, I would argue, of theater texts in general, the appropriate context follows from a recognition that the place of such texts is in particular theaters in which the conditions of reception are historically specific. In the texts considered here, this recognition varies from Vesey's indifference to the matter to Brenton's prescription. In between, Willett's translation, together with his and Ralph Manheim's notes and commentary, recognizes the theatrical place of the text without prescribing a particular (kind of) stage production. This text is more comprehensive than Brenton's, since it allows for different (combinations of) readings as well as stage productions. One can choose to ignore the notes, but one cannot deny that they modify the quality of the translation by suggesting alternatives to it. Brenton's text and the Brecht/Laughton collaboration, on the other hand, may be limited, but they are also sharpened by the frame of a particular (series of) stage production(s). Each represents a choice, a selective concretization within the range of possibilities, and, as such, is not better in any absolute sense than any other concretization but more or less appropriate to the conditions of its reception. So the evaluation of a translation is, like any representation of that translation, a provisional but necessary answer to a double question: how far does the production of a translated text fit and/or form the site of its reception?

FOOTNOTES

[1]Documentation of this difference was provided for the first time eight years after the publication of the definitive text, in Materialien zu Brechts "Galilei" (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1963).

[2]The edition of the Suhrkamp text I shall be using is: Bertolt Brecht, Leben des Galilei (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980). The English translations of this text are:
The Life of Galileo, tr. Desmond Vesey (London: Methuen, 1960), hereafter V.
Life of Galileo, tr. John Willett, eds. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (London: Methuen, 1980), hereafter W (includes editorial notes and commentary and selected comments by Brecht).
The Life of Galileo, tr. Howard Brenton (London: Methuen, 1980), hereafter B.
The earlier "non-definitive" English version: Galileo, tr. Charles Laughton (New York: Grove Press, 1952), reprinted as an appendix to The Life of Galileo, eds. Willett and Manheim, pp. 201-265; hereafter L.

[3]For the concept of "institution," see Peter Bürger, Theorie der Avantgarde (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 15: "The status [of art] (the institution of art) represents the limiting conditions within which single works are produced and received." (My translation) This concept covers two aspects of these limiting conditions: 1) the constraints exercised on the work by the apparatus (both ideological and technical) of publishing, distribution, staging, etc., and 2) the norms set by the canon, not only of accepted texts, but of directing, acting styles, etc.

[4]Cf. H.R. Jauss, Towards an Aesthetic of Reception, tr. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 19: "The historical life of the literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressee. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon of experience in which the perpetual inversion occurs from passive absorption [Aufnahme] to critical understanding, from passive to active reception. . .The historicity of literature, as well as its communicative nature, assumes a dialogic and also developing relationship among work, public and new work." (Translation modified) Although Jauss refers specifically to literary texts, his comments are also valid for theater texts, particularly in his discussion of the relationship between text and critical recipient whose activity leads to the production of a new text.

[5]For the concept of meaning as event, see Jauss, Reception, p. 32; Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1981), pp. 125ff.; Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in this Class? (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1981), p. 3.

[6]As note 3 suggests, Jauss presumes a collective public role for the addressee of a text -- to avoid the "psychological labyrinth" (p. 22) of individual response -- without specifying the complexity of collective reception. Iser, on the other hand, defines his applied reader as a "textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient. . .the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures" (p. 34). Although he also allows for the reader's intervention in the meaning event, in the form of the "structured act" of reading, Iser's avowedly "transcendent model" (p. 38) remains an abstract hypothesis, which, whatever the insights it may offer into the phenomenology of reading, lacks the historical aspect of Jauss' formulation.

[7]In current translation studies, "source language text" denotes the text to be translated; see Susan Bassnett-McGuire, Translation Studies (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 2.

[8]"Target language text" denotes the end product of the translation and, by analogy, "target (language) institution" the institution of theater or literature which forms the context of the translated text.

[9]"Translating Literature/Translated Literature -- The State of the Art," in The Languages of Theater, ed. O. Zuber (London: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 154.

[10]"Heilig machen die Sakrilege," in Gesammelte Werke, XV, 335.

[11]One of the most telling cases in this respect is that of Peter Weiss' Marat-Sade. For an English (speaking) audience, this text is completely represented, that is, replaced, by Peter Brook's 1968 production of the play. The mediation of translator Geoffrey Skelton, "versifier" Adrian Mitchell and even of the changes resulting from Brook's direction are seldom mentioned.

[12]Quoted by Willett, p. 131, Brecht notes: "The first version of the play ended differently. . .[Galileo] uses the visit of Andrea to smuggle the book across the frontier. His recantation had given him the chance to create a seminal work. He had been wise."

13Quoted by Käthe Rülicke, "Bemerkungen zur Schlußszene," in Materialien, p. 121.

[14]Gesammelte Werke, XVI, 694.

[15]For the Berlier Ensemble production, see Hans Bunge, Fragen Sie mehr über Brecht (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1970), p. 252; Fritz Erpenbeck, quoted by John Fuegi, The Essential Brecht (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1973); Agnes Hufner, Brecht in Frankreich (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968). For the Laughton version, see Eric Bentley, The Brecht Commentaries (New York: Grove Press, 1981), pp 184ff; James Lyon, Bertolt Brecht in America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 196ff.

[16]Lyon, pp. 171ff.

[17]Brecht, Gesammelte Werke, XV, 482, 427-428.

[18]H. Carlson, "Problems in Play Translation," in Educational Theatre Journal, Vol. 126 (1964), 56.

[19]Robert Corrigan, "Translating for Actors," in The Craft and Context of Translations, eds. William Arrowsmith and Roger Shattuck (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 98.

[20]See note 14.

[21]Eric Bentley, ed., Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. xxivff.

[22]Bentley, ed., Seven Plays, p. xxvi.

[23]Bentley, The Brecht Commentaries, p. 193.

[24]This connection is reflected on the cover of the text. Instead of the (by now) customary allusion to Laughton's performance, the cover of Brenton's text is the same as that of the National Theatre program -- a photograph of the earth rising.

[25]See, for example, the jargon which Brenton rather inconsistently attributes to the young Andrea in the first scene by translating Andrea's question about "Dem Kippernikus und seinem Drehen" by the somewhat technical "that Kippernickus and his revolving" (B., p. 3), whereas Willett has the more colloquial "that Copper Knickers and turning" (W., p. 8).

[26]For Brenton's reliance on Vesey's translation, see Richard Ockenden's review article in the Times Literary Supplement, 22 August, 1980, and Michael Hays, "Smoking Theatre" in Time Out, 7 August, 1980. James Treglown, in the above edition of the TLS and in a later report on a conference on play translation (TLS, 12 September, 1980), notes that Brenton received what his agent called "a large cash payment" for his work, whereas the brothers Plaice, who provided Brenton with a "working translation," were not acknowledged. Treglown suggests that the "recent spate of theatre translations by well-known playwrights" is some cause for alarm, since a number of these translators turn out to have little or no access to the source language, though they seem quite undeterred nonetheless, as Christopher Hapton's (alleged) comment implies: "If you're asked to translate a play you've always loved, it's very hard to turn it down on the grounds that you don't know the language." Whatever the legal aspects of the case, this statement reminds us that Brenton's desire, like Hampton's, to retranslate a familiar text indicates the extent of its absorption into the target theatrical institution.

[27]Hufner, Brecht in Frankreich, p. 215.

[28]Brenton, quoted by Jim Hiley, in Galilei: Theatre at Work (London: Routlege & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 52-53.

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ELABORATING BRECHT: CHURCHILL'S DOMESTIC DRAMA

Janelle Reinelt

As Peter Brook has noted, "Brecht is the key figure of our time, and all theatre work today at some point starts or returns to his statements and achievement."[1] Socialist-feminist playwright Caryl Churchill writes in the Brechtian tradition, elaborating aspects of his celebrated alienation effect. Her play, Cloud Nine, has had tremendous success in the United States as well as in England. Audiences in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Seattle have all responded enthusiastically to Churchill's pointed political comedy, a surprising phenomenon in light of this country's current neo-reactionary mood. A close look at the structure and action of the play reveals inherent reasons for its popularity. Cloud Nine combines Brechtian dramaturgy with a traditional comic structure of reconciliation, thus achieving wide appeal.

The play opens on British Africa of Victorian times. We see a stereotypical colonial fmaily consisting of husband, wife, son, daughter and mother-in-law. Everyone knows his/her place; everyone is obsessed with keeping it. However, a complex set of secret sexual liaisons undermines the social stability of the family while local native unrest threatens the political hegemony of English male supremacy. Churchill thus sets the play on the eve of crisis, using sexual politics to comment on and mirror the racist, colonial chauvinism of Victoriana at the point of collapse.

The boldest theatrical stroke in the work is cross gender/race casting. In the first act a man plays wife Betty, a woman plays son Edward, a white man plays the black servant Joshua, and a rag doll "plays" daughter Viki. The cross-casting, a startling performance device, immediately dislocates the audience's perceptions of the play. Some, but not all of the cast are involved in the gender/race splits; they explain themselves in direct address: Betty tells us, "I live for Clive. The whole aim of my life is to be what he looks for in a wife. I am a man's creation as you see. And what men want is what I want to be."[2] Edward explains his plight: "What father wants I'd dearly like to be. I find it rather hard as you can see." Joshua, for his part, is also trying hard to conform to dominant values: "My skin is black but oh my soul is white. . .As you can see, what white men want is what I want to be." Thus the cross-casting identifies strain between role and identity, tension between a natural self, on the one hand, and the conditioning of social role and dominant ideology on the other. In Los Angeles, the production program

contained this quote from Virginia Woolf's Orlando: "Different though the sexes are they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above." This vacillation is identified and exposed through cross-casting.

Bertolt Brecht's 1940 essay, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect," offers some insight into the theatrical purpose of Churchill's cross-casting in Cloud Nine. For Brecht, the alienation technique aims at making "the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism" toward the material presented. For this reason, he rejects acting techniques which rely on empathy, insisting instead on acting as demonstration of social behavior. This showing forth of behavior, called a social "gest," must be immediately and objectively clear. He writes, "The actor has to find a sensibly perceptible outward expression for his character's emotions, preferably some action that gives away what is going on inside him. The emotion in question must be brought out, must lose all its restrictions so that it can be treated on a big scale."[3] In Cloud Nine, Churchill provides for this acting challenge within the text. Cross-casting insures large scale outward expression of the characters' inner conflict.

The impact of cross-casting reverberates through the play. Even simple actions become powerful social gests. When Betty rearranges the folds of his/her skirt, the manner of arranging is clearly a learned gestural nuance. Its very awkwardness draws attention to the arbitrariness of feminine social graces. Betty's struggle to conform is comic, graphic and politically clear.

Brecht writes, ". . .besides what he [the actor] actually is doing. . .he will at all essential points discover, specify, imply what he is not doing; that is to say, he will act in such a way that the alternative emerges as clearly as possible, that his acting allows the other possibilities to be inferred and only represents one out of the possible variants."[4] When Edward plays with Viki's doll, it is obvious he/she is not playing with a truck, or a gun. The ease and happiness with which he/she plays reveal a range of human responses which transcends the silliness and regimentation of sex-role stereotyping. When Joshua sings an English Christmas carol, the audience immediately perceives cultural oppression in a direct theatrical image, reminding us of the absence of indigenous music. Thus, cross-casting offers a unique elaboration of the A-effect.

In their cross-cast roles, Betty, Edward and Joshua reveal the essential conflict of the first act. They struggle to conform to status quo expectations against the

inclinations of their own inner lives. Churchill increases the pressure on them through the sexual temptations of an attractive explorer friend named Harry, who has sex with each of the three before he marries the lesbian governess in love with Betty -- which he does in order to keep up the appearance of his heterosexuality. The native rebellion finally radicalizes Joshua when the English kill his parents, and the Act ends as Joshua raises his gun against Clive, the family patriarch, in a stop-action freeze, image of the imminent demise of British colonialism.

The first act conditions the audience to critique the situation and characters, but also lulls it into a false complacency with regard to the past. "Things aren't like that anymore, thank goodness," breathes the bourgeois theatre-goer, "we're beyond all that." Then Churchill, borrowing the skillful use of juxtaposition from Brecht, catapults us into the present. In Act Two, the family, sans Clive, reappears in a present day London park, 25 years older than they were in Act One.

The actors change roles, and now Betty, who has left Clive, is played by a woman. Edward, a gentle homosexual park gardener, is played by a man, and grown-up Victoria, no longer a rag doll, is played by the actress who played Edward, her brother, in Act One. The cross-casting is still continued as the male actor who played Joshua is now the eight-year-old daughter of Lin, a woman who meets Victoria in the park and eventually becomes her lover. In fact, each actor from Act One reappears in a new role. If all this sounds rather complicated, the visual impact of the casting is immediate and stimulates myriad associational variants on the theme of sexual ambivalence.

In the abrupt shift from "history" to the present, Churchill scores an impressive Brechtian upset. The audience, conditioned by the first act to look critically at the behavior and social context of characters in the past, must now continue to examine matters closer to home. While Victorian sex-role stereotyping and political chauvinism were deadly, contemporary role confusion and the residue of imperialism remain problematic. The published text begins with a monologue, spoken by Gerry, Edward's lover. He describes picking up strangers on the train from Victoria to Clapham: "He was jerking off with his left hand, and I could see he'd got a fair-sized one. I wished he'd keep still so I could see his watch. I was getting really turned on. What if we pulled into Clapham Junction now before I shot my load" (p. 30). Gerry's impersonal detachment and graphic description deliberately shock the audience. The first act does not prepare one for the harsh contemporaneity of this scene. Having struck a new note of realism, Churchill then continues the political and social critique of the first act, exploring the ambivalence of sex and role. Gerry and Edward have dependency problems which parody heterosexual patterns:

Edward: Everyone's always tried to stop me being feminine and now you are too.
Gerry: You're putting it on.
Edward: I like doing the cooking. I like being fucked. You do like me like this, really.
Gerry: I'm bored Eddy. . .I don't want to be married.
Edward: I do.
Gerry: Well, I'm divorcing you.
Edward: I wouldn't want to keep a man who wants his freedom.
Gerry: Eddy, do stop playing the injured wife, it's not funny.
Edward: I'm not playing. It's true. (p. 43)

Victoria has her problems with husband Martin, who claims, "My one aim is to give you rolling orgasms like I do other women. So why the hell don't you have them?" (p. 38) Victoria leaves Martin for Lin, but their lesbian love has its problems too, including class differences. Lin is working class; Vic is bourgeois intellectual. Vic complains that Lin does not have sufficient political sophistication. Lin responds, "No, but I'm good at kissing, aren't I?" (p. 40)

Child-rearing is a real issue in this brave new world. Cathy, played by the former Joshua is a conflict-laden little girl/boy. Lin tells her the Man will get her if she doesn't behave, and buys her guns. "I dress her in jeans, she wants to wear dresses, maybe she should wear dresses. I don't know. I can't work it out, I don't want to" (p. 40). In Act One, poor little boy/girl Edward was forbidden his femininity; in Act Two, poor little girl/boy Cathy is also forbidden her feminine side.

Churchill "historicizes" the present in Brechtian fashion. Our critical consciousness, conditioned by the first act, resists a traditional empathetic response to the second. In the essay previously quoted, Brecht writes, "The object of the A-effect is to alienate the social gest underlying every incident. By social gest is meant the mimetic and gestural expression of the social relationships prevailing between people of a given period."[5] Every social gest in the second act is open to scrutiny and judgment. When male Cathy plays with toy guns, wearing a dress and singing the following ditty, the spectacle is the message: "Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick. Silly Jack, he should jump higher. Goodness gracious, great balls of fire" (p. 30). It's funny; it's disturbing; it's theatrically effective.

Bertolt Brecht's own plays have enjoyed only limited popular success in this country. Audiences accustomed to American realism and method have often resisted

the aggressive challenge of Brecht's A-effect. How, then, to explain the success of Churchill's play? First, the cultural background of Churchill's characters is much closer to American experience than that of Brecht's exotic playscripts. Even the plays set here express his personal mythology of America rather than any readily recognizable representation. Moreover, the issues of Cloud Nine are particularly problematic for our generation. Many of us have struggled to redefine our sexual and social relationships, experiencing the confusion of wornout family patterns either in our own life or in the lives of friends. More importantly, the play has an overriding healing action. Without losing the critical edge of her analysis, Churchill allows for a traditional comic closure.

This aspect of Cloud Nine points out one major difference between Brecht and Churchill. Brecht frequently withheld or frustrated comic closure as part of his distancing technique. Three Penny Opera and The Caucasian Chalk Circle, for example, both provide formal closure undermined by content. In Three Penny Opera, Brecht deliberately ridicules the convention of the last-hour savior to point up the practical impossibility of comic resolution and make fun of the form, while The Caucasian Chalk Circle's justice is only possible in folklore and not, we are told, in reality. The good woman of Szechuan's plight is an unsolved problem, Brecht withholding resolution and challenging the audience to find one. Puntila and his Hired Man Matti provides a reversal on traditional comic closure as there is no wedding, no improvement, and no reconciliation: Matti leaves, giving up on the rehabilitation of Puntila. For Brecht, comic resolutions were mostly false promises. Churchill prefers to suggest some steps, however qualified, toward resolution.

The structure of the second act employs three converging lines of reconciliation. First, in a gentle orgy scene, Lin, Vic and Edward, quite drunkenly, try to conjure up the ancient goddesses. Sexuality dissolves into undifferentiated libidinous expression as Edward joins a ménage à trois with Vic and Lin. All possible sexual combinations are permissible as long as they are appropriate for those involved. They choose having sex with a stranger, who turns out to be Martin. This inclusiveness and liberation are unleashed in a comic scene of drunkenness and revelry as old as ancient drama. However, the celebration is qualified: Churchill breaks the revelry with the harsh political reality of neo-colonial Britain. Lin's working class brother, a soldier killed in Northern Ireland, appears to her in the middle of the group romp, speaking a language of distorted eroticism. "That was the worst thing in the fucking army. . .No fun when the fucking kids hate you. I got so I fucking wanted to kill someone and I got fucking killed myself and I want a fuck" (p. 46). With this abrupt juxtaposition, Churchill reminds us that seeking a per-

sonal solution will not ultimately solve problems generic to the social structure. The perversion of our sexual identities can be traced to our political systems. Sexual hedonism is not a solution, only a temporary escape. Real change is systemic.

The second reconciliation, between Gerry and Edward, permits Gerry to transcend his previous alienation and Edward to find an appropriate sexual role. As a result of their dependency conflict, Gerry had moved out of their flat. Edward moved in with Lin and Vic where he found pleasure doing the housework and taking care of Cathy. Gerry, who wanted the impersonal sex of a train fuck, comes looking for Edward.

> Gerry: I thought for a moment you meant you were living with women.
> Edward: We do all sleep together, yes.

Gerry takes in the new information, then he invites Edward to dinner. Edward agrees: "I'll come round for you tomorrow night, about 7:30" (p. 48).

Betty's quest for identity structures and unifies this seemingly bifurcated play. In the first act, she is racked with the competing claims of duty and passion; in the second, she slowly takes a series of steps toward awakening self-hood. At the beginning of the act she has left Clive, but she cannot stand to be alone -- she is totally frightened: "I'll never be able to manage. If I can't even walk down the street by myself. Everything looks so fierce." She admits she doesn't like women: "They don't have such interesting conversations as men. There has never been a woman composer of genius. They don't have a sense of humour. They spoil things for themselves with their emotions. I can't say I do like women very much, no" (p. 39). In the course of the play, she discovers that she can hold down a job, that she likes earning money and being independent.

The third reconciliation is between Betty and her children, and ultimately between Betty and herself. She has avoided admitting that Edward is gay and that Vic lives with Lin. She makes her own timid overtures to Gerry, then realizes he's gay. "I think Edward did try to tell me once but I didn't want to listen. So what I'm being told now is that Edward is 'gay' is that right? and you are too. And I've been making rather a fool of myself" (p. 52). Nevertheless she invites him 'round anyway. She even suggests she might move in with her children and share their household. Vic initially refuses, "I don't want to live with my mother," but Lin replies, "Don't think of her as your mother, think of her as Betty." Vic's last lines in the play are, "Betty, would you like an ice cream?" (p. 51).

Finally, Betty closes the play with a direct address monologue about her changing attitudes toward sexuality: "I used to think Clive was the one who liked sex. But then I found I missed it. . .I thought if Clive wasn't looking at me there wasn't a person there. And one night in bed in my flat I was so frightened I started touching myself" (p. 49). With humor and sensitivity, Churchill writes a speech about masturbation. Betty embraces her former self, the Betty of Act One, in the closing tableau. Her journey has led her to sexual expression, personal independence, and healthy relationships with those around her.

These various bindings-up of the wounds do not diminish the unsolved problems of contemporary life. No one watching the domestic struggles of Martin and Vicky, Gerry and Edward, or the political testimony of Lin's dead brother can feel secure in a happy ending. The cross-casting of both acts constantly points up continuing antinomies between sex and role. Formal resolution is achieved, but the critical analyses remain. Churchill has it both ways.

For Brecht, the aim of the alienation technique was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism to the incidents. Churchill has hit upon a method of insuring an attitude of inquiry toward contemporary experience. Cloud Nine and her next play, Top Girls, share the tactic of historical discontinuity. In both plays, the deceptive comfort of the historical past gives way to contemporary problems in the second act. The audience, conditioned to view critically and make political judgments, historicizes a closer reality without lapsing into empathetic identification.

In the most recent Brecht Yearbook, Joel Schechter writes: "The debt owed to Brecht by his successors is so extensive that it is tempting to divide the century's political theatre into two categories, 'Before Brecht' and 'After.' At the same time, the most prominent creators of contemporary political theatre have not slavishly imitated Brecht."[6] Caryl Churchill, an important new voice in our contemporary theatre, shows her grounding in Brechtian dramaturgy and her own imaginative theatricalism in Cloud Nine.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Peter Brook, The Empty Space (New York: Avon Books, 1968), p. 65.

[2]Caryl Churchill, Cloud Nine (London: Pluto Press, 1979), p. 2. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

[3]Bertolt Brecht, Brecht on Theatre, ed. and trans. by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 139.

[4]Brecht, p. 137.

[5]Brecht, p. 136.

[6]Joel Schechter, "Beyond Brecht: New Authors, New Spectators," in Beyond Brecht: The Brecht Yearbook, Vol. 11, ed. by John Fuegi, Gisela Bahr, and John Willett (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1983), p. 43.

INTERVIEW WITH HILMAR THATE

by Mechthild Spiegel

Hilmar Thate, 52, actor, raised and educated in the GDR, has performed in West German theaters for the past four years and also worked in several films. Thate's relationship to the theater is simultaneously direct and circuitous. Direct because from the beginning he gravitated toward what interested him most -- the theater. At 18 he had his first stage engagement, and at the time of this interview (1984) he had appeared in so many stage and film roles that he could hardly count them anymore. Circuitous in that he has worked in a wide variety of theaters in East Germany as well as West Germany and has come to know very different types of directors.

Decisive for Thate's development was his encounter with Brecht and his theater -- with the actual person Brecht, whom Thate calls the great integrating theater figure in this century, as well as with Brecht's ideas, writings and plays. Brechtian theater is no rigid theater of models for Thate, as many falsely understand and perform it, but an attitude towards life and a basic outlook which regards complicated relationships with naiveté and combines innocence with a scientific outlook. When Thate arrived in Berlin from the provincial city of Cottbus for the first time in 1949, he not only could not tell a cognac from a liqueur, but he could not even determine what a good or bad performance might be.

"In Cottbus we were amazed at what Brecht wrote about the actor. One should play along side the role, remain capable of observation and not, as Stanislavski says, identify with the role and the character. I knew nothing, didn't know what a good or bad performance was. I was helpless in the face of the old pros who could always recognize at once, 'great or garbage.' I, however, stood there like an ox at a new gate. I had alot of trouble; my powers of judgment were totally overtaxed. What is empathy, what does alienation mean, or the epic style of performance? It was an open question as to how a synthesis between the actor's personality and the prescribed role develops. Are feeling and passion to be excluded or is a particular kind of feeling and passion necessary?"

At that time his Cottbus theater director brought him to Berlin and strongly advised him to work with the Berlin Ensemble, even if only to raise the curtain there. A major orientation was only to be found at the Berlin Ensemble, the Mecca for all those interested in the theater.

"Very unprepared, very confused, but curious and interested, I came to Brecht. He received me at his house and had long conversations with me. He wrote a note for me: 'Give Herr Thate a seat in the theater, if there are no more seats in the auditorium, on the lighting bridge or in the orchestra loge.' I left the note at the box office -- unfortunately, found a seat in the auditorium and saw Mother Courage starring Helene Weigel. I was thunderstruck, a spiritual lightning bolt hit me. I was completely flabbergasted. This no longer had anything to do with what we had learned in acting school. I then returned to Cottbus and continued to perform there, but something had happened to me. The descent into a lengthy course of learning and desire to comprehend had begun."

During his discussion with the young actor, Brecht had taken an interest in him and suggested that he come by again in two weeks for a visit, to try out.

". . . but then I chickened out pure and simple. That was the result of the Courage performance. I was intimidated. The detour began. I played at various theaters, finally came to Berlin, worked there with very bad people, also with harmless but boring ones, was finally noticed as a young actor, and only then came together again with the people at the Berlin Ensemble to whom I had always been drawn. But by that time, Brecht had already been dead for two years."

Up to that moment, the BE was the chief point of orientation for Thate, even if he had served on the "opposition front" until 1958. For although Brecht was granted every conceivable courtesy in the GDR, he nevertheless had to prevail against the dominant conception of the theater, against Stanislavski's "stale socialist realism," which was always held up to young student actors and which became a program of cultural policy.

"This empathy nonsense, this hyper-individualism, this immersing in the mood, this style of identification are much more appropriate as tools of late bourgeois theater than of the work of the great experimenters Meyerhold or Tahirov or Brecht himself. On the other hand, one must defend Stanislavski against the interpreters of his writings, for he was a great practical director. By the way, the same soulful theater of illusions is still the main diet of the West German cultural scene as well.

"It is true that Brecht was the great example, but he was always explained away as an exception in the GDR. Brecht was tolerated, but by no means were his suggestions and methods actually put into practice. At that time he had not yet become the orientation for socialist theater. His hope was to teach, to have an

impact, to change; but there was still too much Stalinism then, yet also many friends and disciples. Important people, gifted people, young and old were drawn to Brecht and his theater, despite official frowns. Returning from his emigration with great expectations for this strange Germany, Brecht needed all the cunning of his intellect in order to maintain himself in the country of his hopes, in the GDR. He didn't do it sullenly but with great hope. He was always a utopian thinker, and he gladly seized this word "socialism" without treating it cynically."

For Thate, the actor, it was fascinating the way Brecht introduced different relationships in the theater, a new way of communicating by means of theater concepts, the way he developed a new style of staging and production, which, for example, was marked by anecdotes, oriented itself toward everyday life and gave practical help to actors when the question arose as to how a character should develop out of a role.

"Brecht truly loved actors. He had a passion for the theater, a passion to try out his plays, and he knew that he needed actors for that. Brecht encouraged the actors while they were working, he didn't create tension. Brecht's manner of producing, and the way I would like it to be still today, consisted above all in creating through playful suggestions a working atmosphere in which the actors could work optimally. There was no 'directorial voyeurism,' something which I have to endure so often today and which gets on my nerves -- where the 'Directorial World Champion' says, 'Okay, now show me what you can do!' and the actor is left alone, wandering about, dependent on his survival ability. When Brecht produced, he constantly told stories. 'That reminds me of a story. . .' was a typical opening line for his working method. Actors were encouraged not to be embarrassed, even to ask silly questions. Work was characterized by having a good time. The production rolled along. I don't think there were ever agonizing situations; quarrels, yes, but those were necessary.

"Brecht listened, was curious about people, was drawn to and pleased by the capabilities of others. His playful and circuitous directing style was contagious and at the same time irritating for his fellow workers. Only with this style could Brecht succeed in attracting the most differing types of people. A favorite line of his was, 'Everything gets easier when dialectic becomes a matter of feeling.'

"He tried out points of view, new types you might say. The first freaks that I ever saw in my life were running around the BE. They were such strange people, curiosities. That was the first time I discovered and saw something like that. Aha! I thought, that's what he means by epic theater! Today I know that is true.

I was fascinated how such important people as Eisler, Dessau, Bloch, Johannes R. Becher, old communists, even Georg Lukàcs, emigrants came to Brecht. He knew how to judge people and things. He knew how to mitigate situations, he understood dogmatism without being dogmatic. He knew that new freedoms inevitably lead through bottlenecks. Dialectics was his favorite toy."

This dialectic is what Hilmar Thate means when he speaks of the mental attitude that Brecht brought about in himself and some other theater people, a mentality for the actor which consisted of asking questions, recognizing behavior, building up alternatives. In short, an undogmatic attitude towards one's surroundings. Not exactly a common attitude when you consider how often vanity, careerism, etc. determine what happens in the theater. It is hard for Thate to hold on to a Brechtian attitude in West Germany where culture has become business management and theater has become commerce. It was not easy in East Germany either, and Thate's departure from the BE in 1970 is related to the fact that conditions there grew rigid and Brecht's productive calm turned into tiring tedium. The Brechtian joy in experimentation and curiosity was buried by the drive for success and crushed by his own legend. Yet Thate does not want to take a malicious view from the West of the conditions at the BE, that is a cheap shot in his opinion.

"It is crucial that one separate the Berlin Ensemble, which was so important to Brecht -- he founded it after all -- where he tried out his plays, where a new type of actor developed, from the BE, which in the meantime has become an institution. Legend and reality surely find themselves in antagonistic positions here. 'The toils of the mountains,' Brecht says, 'are behind us, before us lie the toils of the plains.' While Brecht himself was still mired deeply in the toils of the mountains, we now have to deal with the toils of the plains. I don't know if they are more amusing."

Translated by Kathleen Komar

THOUGHTS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S RICHARD III

Excerpts from the correspondence of Bernhard Reich with Heinz-Uwe Haus
1971/1972

Editor's Note: Bernhard Reich, who lived in the Soviet Union from the mid-twenties until his death in 1972, belonged to the earliest circle of Brecht's friends and collaborators. He is to a large part responsible for having introduced Brecht and Brecht's theatrical ideas to the Soviet public through his scholarly and journalistic writing, including introductions to the printed versions of Brecht's major plays.

Haus, September 9, 1971
I appreciated your critique of Brecht's use of Shakespeare, ie. especially concerning the way he adapted Coriolan. . .Brecht did not really want to correct Shakespeare but rather to demonstrate the substance and tolerance which his [Shakespeare's] texts allow for. He felt that the roll of the "popular masses" was only a yarn which could not hold up under careful scrutiny. Of significance is the category of royalty -- to use that old catchword.
Brecht answers the question "What is beautiful?" like this: "Beautiful is when one solves the problems." And Shakespeare defines "true love" point blank: "even death relents before your beauty." The degree of dialectics and topicality -- in thought and poetics -- available in everyday theater practice is painfully evident. Shakespeare's/Brecht's recommendations for a theater of the future are hardly applied here, in spite of the fact that "in our hearts" there is hardly anyone we consider more our contemporaries than these two; they encourage us to absorb the everyday and the developments of our epoch. Why? Perhaps because their communicative forms were never an end in themselves, or just writing? Even in Richard III the purpose is not "illustration" or ideological justification but rather the narrative impulses of the structures themselves, the transparency.

Reich, October 25, 1971
Shakespeare depicts the striving for the royal crown as a pure striving in and of itself. Richard pursues power like a kind of sport. Most revealing is the courting of Anne: He does not wait for a more propitious set of circumstances. The acrobatic accomplishment under adverse circumstances entices him. Fine. Then he has the crown. What then? Now he can decapitate as many people as his heart desires; abuse everyone (such as the loyal Catesby); have everyone worship him. Apparently that is not enough. To what end is Richard's royal power a means? That's what one has to determine.

FOOTNOTES

Reich, November 5, 1972.

In Richard the treatment of history in conjunction with moral and religious ideas wins the upper hand, although in my opinion Shakespeare had a genuine and strong urge for a historical perspective. In the play he ultimately set his sight upon shaping the struggle between good and evil; the villain -- the earthly devil -- rages. Ultimately he is conquered. Richmond must struggle against the royal troops which are three times as strong -- even not counting the troops of Stanley the Turncoat -- and still he triumphs. From Margarete's perspective evil was sent as retaliator, as executor he deserves catastrophe. Richmond's final speech is undoubtedly intended by Shakespeare to be serious: as the final conclusion of a bloody period, as the solemn commencement of a new peaceful period ending the wars between brothers. And to Shakespeare the end of the York dynasty actually seemed the positive historical factor. Must one, should one follow Shakespeare's line of thinking? No! Because we know that Shakespeare's view was not right, and that the enthronement of justice -- wherever people would like to rectify reality -- is historically just as insignificant as the linear, wishful thinking of Chekhov's Uncle Vanya. Well, what to do?

It would make sense to reduce Richmond both textually and structurally; but I doubt it would be right to eliminate the final speech. It would seem convenient to estrange the final speech -- a ritual whose execution would almost seem unavoidable. . . And yet that is too convenient to be satisfying. A great deal of time was necessary to achieve the objective precondition for the formation of a modern absolutist state. Richard III made his historical contribution to the extermination of the feudal lords who competed with the king; but he made it spontaneously, as did his predecessors. Nonetheless you are right, when you regard Richard as a reformer. . .because the power hungry fanatic not only does himself in; mountains of corpses cover the path which he took. But if you examine who lies there: Clarence, Edward (indirectly), Hastings, the three courtiers, Buckingham; with the exception of the three young princes they are all bad, negative people (not so much from the standpoint of morality, but from the standpoint of historical productivity). . . Whereas from the perspective of the Lancester-Tudors' historical revisionism the reign and downfall of Richard was inglorious and a coup, from the perspective of the national historical process it was negatively-productive -- which Richard himself did not imagine nor did he himself intend.

Did the objective historical result leave its mark upon Shakespeare's play? I think that one must first of all elaborate on the centrifugal element, which is present in Shakespeare simply as a naturalistic fact:

a)Clarence-Bohemian. The malcontents probably rally around him.

b)Margarete--Anna. I think that Anna passes through London with the casket of the last Lancester king as a demonstration. She even stops at street corners and wails.

(Perhaps it is only the unintentional adherence to a ritual which, objectively seen, has an agitational effect.)

c) The Queen's relatives. The salaried courtier type, who has influence and the means to carry out something.

d)Baron Hastings is a salaried courtier (Lord-Chamberlain); in him the psychological independence of a baron is developed. Buckingham clearly shows this vis-à-vis his sovereign in the coronation scene. The combination Henry IV--Northumberland is repeated here, yet Buckingham is somehow submissive and assimilationist from the beginning.

e)Stanley. Stanley must be turned into an important figure in the chess game from the very beginning. The king is dead, the successor to the throne is not yet of age. Stanley sees his chance. His first appearance -- a warning to Hastings --is the beginning of a conspiracy. He would like to win Hastings over. His defection during the battle was decisive to Richard's defeat (as was Clarence's defection previously to the defeat of the White Rose). In other words, the process of disintegration proceeds hectically, and Richard Gloster has many competitors. There is a race to the throne.

f)Citizens. One would have to study closely English History in order to arrive at a rounded answer. I am surprised by the position manifest in the mass scene, which differs considerably from other such scenes. The citizens have more self-confidence. They distance themselves from the courtly feud and from the confusing back and forth of the cliques (at least that appears to be the tendency). Furthermore, the citizens are distanced here from the common people. In an analogous situation in Richard III the common people (who embrace the enthronement of Henry IV) have a passive function. Here they have an active role: the initiative for Richard's proclamation is transferred to the citizens.

Told as a plot it would go like this: After the abdication of Hastings and his troops, Richard looks around for another ally and finds one in the person of the Lord Mayor. . .The citizens have in fact gained here important political powers. It can be assumed that Richard or Buckingham succeeded in finally interesting the Lord Mayor (although the motives were not revealed. Perhaps the Lord Mayor fears the interregnum, perhaps he can wangle some privileges?).

In Shakespeare the citizenry would like to stay neutral, and it allows itself to be whipped into place only with difficulty. Perhaps it is appropriate and historically more correct that the citizens are truly convinced and vote for Richard. In that case one would have to eliminate some passages from the text; that's really no crime.

Reich, December 17, 1971

Yes: the murderers. The murderer plagued by pangs of conscience before the murder

is a common character in Elizabethan drama. It would attract me to divide the murder scene into the profane procedure -- they come to do their work -- and then a clown-dialogue-conversation concerning pangs of conscience. While skimming through I also noticed the following elements: Hastings' drama possesses a certain artistic independence. It is a separate play within the play. The play has a very short middle. The exposition extends up into the fourth act (in Macbeth it ends in the first act). The feeling of triumph at being king is short-lived; the decline, the fall, the catastrophe begins in the same scene. That was decisive for the composition of Jessner's Richard, which I described once before.

Haus, January 17, 1972

In Schloesser's and Weimann's studies it was possible to infer certain theatrical devices of the Shakespearean "complementary perspective" from the nature of the contemporary manner of acting, and from the stage construction, the platform stage. These devices mobilize the public's independent process of reflection. They might well influence our coneption, the manner of acting, the decor and costumes, the use of music, etc. And they will make evident how historicity and a relatedness to the present can yield an exciting, contemporary unity. Shakespeare and Brecht make it possible to correct acting and viewing habits by exploiting the structures of their works -- not merely through an ideological screen. Not only incidentally: they have also given me encouraging ideas for my "own" work. I'm considering a version of Measure for Measure. I am convinced that in the future the relationship between high and low will become a more productive one to the extent that one succeeds in making not only the theme but also its theatrical transmission into a conscious experience. The public's interest in progressive theater work (not necessarily that of the State) will increase in relationship to the latter's ability to bestow upon the dramatic struggles in society an aesthetic import. Thank you for your intellectual confirmation. Shakespeare and Brecht challenge me, but in a different way since my meeting with you. Now my image of beauty has become -- it seems to me -- more concrete.

Translated by Yolanda Julia Broyles

recent productions

TRUMPETS AND DRUMS directed by BARBARA DAMASHEK
Denver Center Theater, May 1984

Juliette Victor-Rood

The five-year old Denver Center Theater Company concluded its 1983-84 season with a thirty-performance run of Trumpets and Drums, a Brechtian adaptation of George Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer (1706). The Denver group used Rose and Martin Kastner's English translation for their production of Pauken und Trompeten, first staged in 1955 by the Berlin Ensemble and Brecht's last complete adaptation before his death. Although literary scholars have some questions about Brecht's actual participation in this adaptation, the issue is of little interest to general audiences; the play was advertised as being Brecht, and only in the program itself were Elisabeth Hauptmann and Benno Besson mentioned as "original script collaborators."

According to Eric Rothstein (George Farquhar, 1967), "The Recruiting Officer is a pro-war play, characterized by the same dry-eyed patriotic militarism that appears in Farquhar's other plays." This attitude, of course, is diametrically opposed to Brecht's intent. The German critic Jan Knopf (Brecht-Handbuch, 1980) writes, "Aktueller Anlaß zur Bearbeitung soll die Remilitarisierung in Westdeutschland gewesen sein; die Verhandlungen zur Aufnahme der Bundesrepublik in die NATO waren Anfang 1955 im Gang; am 8. Mai waren sie beendet." Eric Bentley (The Brecht Commentaries, 1981) comments, "Brecht's 'pacifist convictions' were as solid as a rock. At times they even conflicted with his loyalty to the communists: he put on his antimilitarist play Trumpets and Drums at a time when East Germany, as well as West, was rearming." Further evidence of Brecht's attitude toward war comes from the fact that he published his Kriegsfibel in 1955, the same year that Trumpets and Drums was produced.

Rudolf Wagner-Regény's music used for the original 1955 premiere did not complement the Denver production; instead, the director, Barbara Damashek, composed her own original score. Although one could recognize portions of familiar melodies integrated into Demashek's score (ie. Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus, the slow movement of Haydn's third quartet, Opus 76, or "Deutschland über alles", and Mouret's "Rondeau" from his "First Symphonic Suite", the Masterpiece Theatre theme), other sections reminded one, in a general way, of Kurt Weill. In addition, the singing style and voice of the actress playing Melinda brought Lotte Lenya more than just vaguely to mind. Before the play started, and while most of the audience was in the foyer, a voice announced the following over the public address system, "Trumpets and Drums company, fifteen minutes to Act 1 (sic.)." A

similar announcement was then repeated ten and five minutes before the beginning of the play. Finally, when most of the audience was seated, an announcement came, "Trumpets and Drums company, places for Act 1." After a few seconds, the musicians and the musical director, Michael Fauss, all attired in late eighteenth-century garb, entered the front of the stage from a ramp underneath the spectators and then crossed the stage to their places slightly lower than the stage, off to the right. Because steeply rising seating surrounds the stage in a U-shape, the orchestra was visible during the performance to all members of the audience except those sitting directly above it.

The stage itself immediately attracted attention. The floor was a black and tan map of Shrewsbury with buildings, roads, trees, and "the path of the river Severn" indicated. Close to both wings were tall, multi-panel walls, folded like Spanish screens, which consisted of rectangles and squares with black and white cartoon drawings of, for instance, a trumpet, a drum, a lock (labeled: the jail), the market place, a hammer and gavel (labeled: the justice of the peace), a grenadier, a flag (labeled: Brittania). During the course of the play, the appropriate translucent panels were illuminated from behind to indicate clearly to the spectators the location or focal point of the action. (The broad-shouldered man and Lady Prude also announced some tableaux.) At the conclusion of the interlude after scene six as well as at the end of the play all the panels were lit up in rapid, random succession. The lighting designer, Allen Lee Hughes, had about half of the lights on stage clearly visible to the audience. The only curtain was at the back of the stage, concealing a portrait of George III, which was revealed almost immediately in the prologue. The portrait was then replaced in scene one by a three-dimensional drawing of the city of Shrewsbury, a complement to the two-dimensional map on the floor.

The flat, black-and-white set, designed by Michael Stauffer, reflected period artists. The director commented (in Space/Stage 31, 1984):

> The satirical cartoon is a very important image in the play. . .I have this notion in my head of dealing with broadsheets and leaflets and pamphlets and the way the news was disseminated on both sides of the ocean. . .A paper world where the ultimate paper, of course, is money. But attention to printed matter on the page, the printed word, runs through the play -- going all the way from love letters to the Declaration of Independence. All this printed matter is being distributed in Shrewsbury to a population that is mainly illiterate, and therefore very defenseless. . .Because we're in a paper world, we've decided to make the set out of paper, a two dimensional world. And that, I think, brings us close to Brecht's intention for theater. Above all, the play should be a theatrical device. . .We see the theater, we see that it's a play.

Although the paper set amused the audience, the various cloth backdrops worked even more effectively in this respect. The image of Worthy banging his head against a tree trunk of cloth, which rippled each time he struck it, was funny. Later the trees were rolled up and then drawn upwards. The statement about the sun setting on the British empire was accompanied by a stereotypical drawing of a sun, also made of cloth, lowered from above the stage until it folded neatly on the floor. After the intermission, scene seven began with leaflets falling from far above the stage to the audience in the front rows. Some people caught the sheets and started to read them, while other sheets landed on the stage. Needless to say, this effectively captured the audience's attention. One stage prop which metamorphized during the course of the play started out as the recruiter's wooden cart in the prologue. Later, in scene ten, it became a bed, occupied by Mr. Wilful (Victoria) and Rose, although directions in the German version read, "Victoria schläft auf einem Stuhl." In scene eleven, the "cart" was transformed into the jail confining Mr. Wilful and Captain Plume. Although the "cart" perhaps did not have the same impact as Mother Courage's wagon, it nevertheless was an element connecting some scenes.

About the theme of the play, the director commented (Stage/Space, 31, 1984): "The play, I think, is about the buying and selling of bodies in the marketplace. In both endeavors -- love and war -- there's a price for everything. . .In the world of the play, the most base and basic part of human nature is greed. And everyone's behavior is the filter through which they express their greed. . .The style we're after is well described by a direction Brecht is said to have given to his actors: 'Let your tears flow from your brains'." Local critics were in disagreement about the success of the production. Alan Dumas (Stage/Space) wrote, "'Trumpets and Drums' is as pure an example as one can find of Brecht's singular genius in sublimating a profound social message in a delightfully funny evening of theater," while M.S. Mason felt the production was "a watered-down, sentimentalized, gutless production, meant to appeal to the very element responsible for the hideous circumstances the play depicts." The audience at the performance I attended was "mature'; they are the people who might have had sons and grandsons in Vietnam, maybe also in Lebanon, and in May 1984, perhaps they were thinking about the current unsettling situations in the Persian Gulf or in Central America. I believe they enjoyed the entertaining aspects of the play, but the final tableau left them with something to think about: the play concluded with the alternation of turning up and dimming the stage lights. Each time the lights were dimmed, shots rang out; each time the lights came up again, more townspeople and soldiers fell to the ground, dead.

THE LITTLE THREEPENNY CAFE: Songs and Poems of Bertolt Brecht
Conceived and directed by LOUIS FANTASIA
The Olio Theater, Los Angeles, October/November 1984

by Bruce Bebb (reprinted from The LA Reader, Nov. 2, 1984)

"The Little Threepenny Cafe, a musical theater piece that must be granted admirable intentions, tells us some about the great writer who arrived here on July 21, 1941 -- some, but not nearly enough. . . The Brecht of this work is called the Streetsinger. As played by Joe Spano (who takes the part two nights a week; Dan Gerrity plays the role two other nights), the singer/songwriter/poet is an earnest, warm-hearted fellow; he's on the run from fascism, but takes time out to sing songs and intone verses decrying the barbarity of the Nazis and extolling the virtues of little people everywhere. The Little Threepenny Cafe is set in a cabaret, the tables of which meld with the seating arrangements for the audience. The other characters are the Owner (Louis R. Plante), the Owner's Wife (Marilyn Child), the Waiter (Rick Lieberman), the Waitress (Susie G. Dixon), and two customers: a Man at Table (Donald Craig) and a Woman at Table (Melissa Converse). Songs and poems alternate -- ten have music by Kurt Weill; thirteen music by Hanns Eisler; the song from Mother Courage has music by Paul Dessau; and two have music composed or arranged by Brecht himself. Most of the music, and the style in which it is sung is pleasant -- that's what's wrong with it. Brecht was a master of the double-edged statement. . .Of the actor/singers, only Rick Lieberman approaches the cynicism and disguised self-pity that the words demand. Instead we get prettiness most of the time. It isn't the ironic prettiness of painting a glowing picture of something practically unbearable -- that would be an accomplishment -- it's the empty prettiness of making a pear-shaped tone without being conscious of what you are saying. For example, when Marilyn Child sings "Nanna's Song," from the sound of it she might be describing a carriage ride in the park -- she's supposed to be a prostitute recounting being turned out at sixteen, and when she comforts herself with the words, "Thank God it's over quickly," she means both the sexual act with her customers and her life itself. Director Louis Fantasia must share the blame for this misconception of the entire project with the musical director, Norman Bergen. The latter seems never to have availed himself of the recordings in German of Brecht's songs performed in the hostile, mocking style the author intended. It's as if Fantasia and Bergen want to get rid of the real Brecht. . .They don't give us anything that suggests what he and his times were like. Do they want us to feel sorry for him? But he doesn't need our pity, and he despised emotion for its own sake in the theater. The show has several first-rate ingredients: excellent

verses, heart-wrenching music (when it's played in the right spirit), fine actor/singers, even the authentic shabby atmosphere. It could have been mean and tough, and then it might have come close to being one of the best shows of the year. It would deliver the goods."

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MAHAGONNY SONGSPIEL directed by CACA ROSSET
Teatro do Ornitorrinco, São Paulo, 1982

by Hugo Medrano (reprinted from Americas, Jan./Feb. 1985, p. 55-56)

"The Teatro do Ornitorrinco began functioning in São Paulo, Brazil in 1977 without a license to operate or authorization from censorship officials in the basement of a commercial theater. The audience were guests of the group and friends of the actors, and when the curtain came down, the hat was passed for contributions. The show consisted of three short Strindberg pieces and was so successful that it was taken to several cities in Brazil, where it ran for full seasons. At that time, and up to 1979, the group had only three actors: Caca Rosset (the present director), Maria Alice Vergueiro (Rosset's acting teacher from his secondary school days and the São Paulo Theater University) and another actor who had graduated from the same university. After a two-year break, the group was reorganized and, additional actors having joined, began working more regularly. They put on several shows of Brazilian music, poetry readings and a collective creation called Ornitorrinco canta Brecht y baila (Ornitorrinco Sings Brecht and Dances), made up of songs and short scenes with scripts from Brecht. In 1982, with the staging of Bertolt Brecht's Mahagonny Songspiel, the Teatro do Ornitorrinco was the biggest hit of the São Paulo theater season. . . Teatro do Ornitorrinco's production of Brecht's first version of Mahagonny Songspiel assimilates and sums up the premises of the work in a simple, direct and effective manner. For Ornitorrinco, Mahagonny is a city of pleasures. The prostitute Jenny Smith, played by Dada Cyrino, offers liquor to the audience and, half naked, sings of her misfortunes. Maria Alice Vergueiro, as the widow Begbick, is masterly in persuading the audience to offer money so that the show may go on. And Caca Rosset, as Jimmy Mahoney, clownishly convinces the people of the city that 'everything should be allowed,' but in the end he dies at their hands for lack of money to pay for a crime he has committed. Ornitorrinco's interpretation of this play and of the Brechtian method differs in many respects from how the work is envisaged by US and even other Latin American groups. Caca Rosset explains this difference. 'In Brazil we don't have any tradi-

tion of Brecht's theater, or an acting method like Stanislavski's or Grotowsky's or the Actor's Studio's in the US. The Brazilian actor's tradition is much closer to the circus, popular comedians, the revue or the cabaret. And actually, this is all part of the origins of Brecht's work, too. When he was starting out, he worked alot as a cabaretier with the famous comic Karl Valentin, with whom he appeared and for whom he wrote short pieces. It is very important to remember Brecht's origins because his work, apart from being political, is also very sensual. In the US and in many groups in Latin America, there is a dichotomy between the political and the sensual, and I think that in staging Brecht neither of the two may be left out. There is a dialectical relationship between pleasure and sensuality, on one hand, and political ideas and discourse on the other. In Mahagonny, for example, we did not set out to present a discursive, verbal, Cartesian work or to follow the Berliner Ensemble or the US model. We started with an "epidermal" experience of the work so that we would have a Brecht that was alive, something that was the product of our own idiosyncrasy, of our own defects and qualities as artists and individuals'. . .Gratuitous eroticism, nakedness on stage, and aggression toward the audience were some of the charges provoked by the staging of Mahagonny Songspiel [guest performance in New York, Joe Papp Festival, August 1984]. Others, however, applauded the dynamism, interpretation and purity of the production. However, one could sense that, overtly or covertly, people were asking themselves: Is this part of the commercial eroticism that Brazil exports. . . ?"

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A KURT WEILL CABARET with MARTHA SCHLAMME AND ALVIN EPSTEIN
Harold Clurman Theatre, New York City, December 1984

by Paul Berman (reprinted from The Nation, Jan. 19, 1985)

"Why do serious movie-lovers have such trouble appreciating theater? Partly it's because they've grown accustomed to the extravagances of the screen. They want hoopla and big effects, these serious movie-lovers, though they'd never admit it to themselves. They go to theater looking for fireworks. They find them at the opera. Grand opera, above all the performing arts, is in fashion. Meanwhile the art of theater, when it flourishes, does so on tiny stages in remote theaters, with minuscule casts in minuscule plays, or in no play at all, just a revue. No extravagance. Merely the spark of life -- if anyone's noticing. I thought of this watching Martha Schlamme present her evening of Kurt Weill at the tiny Harold

Clurman Theatre. Schlamme has been singing Weill for years. Not long ago she was doing it with Eric Bentley. Currently she's with Alvin Epstein. Certainly there was nothing vast about the production, except the use of microphones, which rattled one's ears. There was much to be criticized. Schlamme and Epstein seemed over-directed at times, underrehearsed at others -- a bad combination. Epstein is a fine actor and has a good voice, but he gets lost in song rhythms or gets trapped by them. Yet the night I was there, something caught fire. Maybe it was Schlamme hamming it up in her Spandex pants and purple blouse, conjuring the great dives of Bilbao. Maybe it was Brecht's lyrics to Weill's music -- those lyrics that make Ira Gerschwin and Maxwell Anderson and Ogden Nash, the American writers who teamed with Weill, look flat and tinselly. Schlamme's rendition of Brechtian women throwing themselves away for the wrong man, of German war widows who never stopped to think what war means until their husbands were killed -- these performances were at once rueful, angry, ironic, sexy, bitter, tragic. Like life, no? At least it was like something you don't, can't, find at the movies."

notate

notate, the information and news bulletin of the Brecht-Zentrum in the GDR, appears six times a year

No. 5/1984 Topic: 35 Years Berliner Ensemble
- Manfred Wekwerth on the 35th birthday of the BE
- Critics discuss Horst Sagert's important BE production of Goethe's Urfaust (1984)
- Wolf Siegert reviews the Recklinghausen production of Die Tage der Commune
- BE dramaturge Joachim Tenschert discusses Helene Weigel as actress and producer

No. 6/1984 Topic: Brecht and the Fine Arts
- Friedemann Berger on Brecht's relationship to the publishing house Kiepenhauer in the early twenties
- Ditte Buchmann on the fine arts books in Brecht's personal library
- Angela Kuberski reviews documentary volumes of important GDR Brecht productions published by the Brecht-Zentrum
- Detlev Lücke reviews drawings and etchings by Eckhard Froeschlin and Herbert Sandberg based on Brecht's "Der anachronistische Zug"
- Excerpts from Brecht's comments about the fine arts in the GDR (1949-1955)
- Plus book reviews

Each issue of notate contains additional notes on Brecht activities in the GDR and around the world. The bulletin can be ordered from Buchexport DDR, 7010 Leipzig, Postfach 160 (15 MdN/year).

Summary by Marc Silberman

mla

RE-VISIONS OF BRECHT: ADAPTATIONS AND RADICAL PRODUCTIONS

December 27, 1984

Abstracts

Sue Ellen Case (University of Washington): "In the Jungle of Cities in Seattle"
Christoph Nel's production was rich in strong imagery and metaphors but alienated the audience to the point where most had left by intermission. This raises important questions about the tolerance of the public (middle class, season ticket holders) who are seeking thoughtful entertainment, at most, but certainly not the visual and sensual barrage of this production. [abstract by editor]

R.G. Davis (San Francisco): The Exception and the Rule in Australia"
A two part presentation, the first dealing with a Bunraku Kabuki production of Exception and the Rule, in Adelaide, Australia, where the director replaced Stanislavsky terminology during the rehearsal process with a Marxist approach to the actors' problems. The second part comprises a short statement on re-visioning: if the production is to grapple with current social problems, then a re-vision is automatically a part of the dramaturgy, production and performance.

Judith Joseph/Stuart McDowell (Shelter West Theater Company): "Fatzer at the Shelter West Theater"
Fatzer combines both elements of expressionism and matter-of-fact realism, and, although the play has much in common with Man is Man, on which Brecht was working virtually at the same time, both reflect two fairly separate traditions of the "fairground clown" (Man is Man) and the "city journalist" (Fatzer). Fatzer fascinated me because it appeared to be entirely different from Brecht's other, early work. It suggested, of course, a bit of the terse historical drama of what we call his 'didactic period' (a bit of the sparseness of The Mother mixed with the docu-drama subject matter of the Lindberg didactic play). But it also had a flavor all its own, as if Brecht were probing for a new style -- a new beginning -- a new kind of theatre. The very fact that the play remained unfinished suggests this even further. As if Brecht couldn't put a handle on its beginning, middle or end. Fatzer contains inspired material, and the fact that it remains unfinished has no bearing on attempts to bring the play to life today. Its various rewrites should prove challenging to directors, dramaturges, and actors, as they try to make up their minds what to make of the play. Brecht was searching for the play through these rewrites for one, unified approach. So, too, must we. (Shelter West Company, Judith Joseph: Artistic Director, W. Stuart McDowell: Translator and Director, performed at the Vandam Theatre, New York City, Winter 1979)

Joel Schechter (Yale University): "The Theater of Trials from Brecht to the Green Party"

In 1932 Brecht told Sergei Tretyakov that he planned to start a new theater in Berlin, one devoted exclusively to the staging of famous courtroom trials. Brecht never managed to create this theater, but his description of it has been implemented, with variation, by the Green Party in West Germany. At their Nuremburg Tribunal for anticipated World War III war crimes (1983), the Green Party created an event that was both politics and theater -- or politics as theater, perhaps. The inaugural session of the Tribunal opened with Green Party delegate Petra Kelly quoting Brecht, and the whole spirit of the proceedings can be seen as extension of Brecht's own interest in a theater which would transform spectators into judges. (The lecture featured several slides of Green Party Tribunal documents, including a secret Pentagon manual instructing American soldiers on how to fight a nuclear war.)

Summary of Discussion (Carol Poore, Brown University)

Discussion after presentation of papers at the 1984 MLA Brecht Session concentrated on the following two points:

1) It seems to be the case that theaters in the United States today are producing Brecht's early plays much more frequently than his middle or later ones. On the one hand, the early plays focus more on issues of sexuality and thus may seem more relevant to contemporary debates. On the other hand, due to the present political climate, many theater groups may feel forced to exercise self-censorship and reluctant to perform the later, Marxist plays. Several examples were given of how the arena for taking chances is shrinking in off-off Broadway theater, due to audience reactions and financial problems.

2)The apparently lessening interest in producing Brecht's later works led into a discussion of whether the epic form is still politically vital, or whether it has been used so much that it no longer has an activating impetus. The underlying question here is how the theater can still move a contemporary audience in the United States (and in other countries), and in what direction. The most important point raised was the effect of television on theater. Has the pervasiveness of the media created an audience trained in total passivity who transfers its habits to the theater, viewing it as a high-class form of TV? In order to jar an audience out of a passive, consumer attitude, must theaters provide emotional entertainment first, before going on to provide "something else?" Do we bring television into the theater? All of these aspects indicate that a session on "Brecht and Media" at a future conference could be most productive.

Minutes of the IBS Business Meeting (December 27, 1984)

I. Announcements

A. 7th International Symposium in Hong Kong (December 8-13, 1986)

B. Possibility of co-sponsorship with Asociación de Trabajadores e Investigadores del Nuevo Teatro (ATINT) of a Conference in Cuba to be held in January 1986. Those present moved, seconded and passed:

a) that IBS encourage ATINT to continue its efforts to organize a conference in Cuba or in some other Latin American country, if it can be arranged at a mutually agreeable time,

b) that an IBS sub-committtee be convened to work with the other groups involved if and when plans materialize.

II. The Steering Committee proposes to raise dues by $5 in each membership category and to add a "low income" category to the student membership (the entire membership will be able to vote on this proposal by mail ballot).

III. The Steering Committee proposes to up-date and edit the 1977 IBS Constitution and By-Laws. Members present supported the proposal and asked Marc Silberman to prepare the document for a mail ballot of the full membership.

IV. New Business

A. Announcement by Janelle Reinelt of the Brecht Panel at the American Theater Association (ATA) Conference in Toronto, Canada (August 1985)

B. Communications is now indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, Germanistik and Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik, as well as included in the data bank of the Institute for Theatre Research.

C. Interest was expressed in clarifying access to and status of the Brecht documents at the Weidener Library (Harvard University).

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Modern Language Association 1985
Chicago, December 27-30

Brecht and Poetry: contact Johannes Maczewski, Department of Germanic Studies, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2, Canada.

Brecht and Latin America: contact Marina Pianca, Modern Languages, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY 13617.

Although the official MLA deadline for submissions is April 1, moderators will accept abstracts of 200 words through May 1.

notices

BRECHT ON FILM

A symposium co-produced by Warren Leming and Chicago Filmmakers will be held in Chicago on April 24-28, 1985, and will feature presentations by Reinhold Grimm ("Brecht and Chicago"), Lee Baxandall ("Marxism and Art"), and Martin Walsh ("Performing Brecht"). In addition, there will be a variety of events scheduled during the four days, including films ("Kuhle Wampe", Straub/Huillet's "The Business Life of Julius Caesar", Carroll Reed's "Man in Between", Fritz Lang's "Hangmen Also Die", a video of the Berlin Ensemble "Mutter Courage" production from 1959, and a German TV documentary on Brecht's life), music by Chicago New Wave groups, songs by Brecht/Eisler, and a cabaret performance. The public is invited, tickets cost $5/day at the door with discounts for multiple performances. For more information, contact Brenda Webb, c/o Brecht on Film, Chicago Filmmakers, 6 West Hubbard, Chicago, IL 60601, Tel: 312/ 329 0854.

Bertolt Brecht Förderkreis Augsburg e.V.

On May 23, 1984, the Bertolt Brecht Förderkreis Augsburg e.V. was officially established at a meeting attended by 40 interested parties. It is the intention and goal of the Förderkreis to welcome Augsburg's son Bertolt Brecht back to his home town. There has been for years a tense relationship between Augsburg and Bert Brecht, caused by his political past. Although Brecht never became a member of the Communist Party, the citizens of Augsburg took it amiss that he settled in East Berlin after World War II. For this reason, the Förderkreis wants to introduce the Augsburg public to Brecht's poetic texts as well as establish a group where all those interested in Brecht can meet one another. The Förderkreis has already established contacts between the Augsburger Stadttheater and the University and cooperated in planning a conference from February 3-10, 1985, and a series of lectures. In addition, the Förderkreis helped initiate together with the Verband bildender Künstler an exhibition on Brecht and his plays. For more information, contact Horst Jesse, Bert-Brecht-Förderkreis, Kitzenmarkt 1, 8900 Augsburg.

"The recorded voice of BB singing "Das Lied der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens" from the Threepenny Opera was amplified through the streets of Augsburg (February 10) as the Bavarian city marked what would have been the 87th birthday of its most famous native son. His brother Walter Brecht, 84, a professor in Darmstadt, and Munich actress Hanne Hiob, Brecht's daughter from his marriage with singer Marianne Zoff, were among those present for the ceremonies, which included the unveiling of a memorial plaque by Mayor Hans Breuer. The plaque is to adorn Brecht's birthplace, a small house in a traditional artisans' quarter of the city. The dwelling itself, newly renovated, was inaugurated Sunday as a Brecht museum, after many years of neglect during which, according to the current municipal administration, the city fathers had trouble separating the artist in Brecht from his politics: indeed, a group of private citizens who hung the first memorial plaque on

the house in 1960 were questioned by police." (as reported in The Week in Germany, February 15, 1985)

KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, No. 2 of an expanded and very attractive Kurt Weill Newsletter appeared in Fall 1984, including Jürgen Schebera's report from the GDR, Michael Morley on recordings of Brecht/Weill songs, Lys Symonette on "Sprechen Sie Brecht or Singen Sie Weill", and performance and book reviews. The Kurt Weill Foundation is prepared to answer inquiries about legalities, copyrights and permissions for performance of Weill works as well as to assist with program notes, photographs and historical information. The Foundation is also soliciting proposals from individuals and non-profit organizations for funding of projects related to the perpetuation of Kurt Weill's artistic legacy in the following areas: research grants, publication assistance, performance and production grants, dissertation fellowships, travel grants, translations and adaptations. All correspondence should be addressed to: David Farneth, Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, 142 West End Avenue, Suite 1-R, New York, NY 10023, Tel: 212/ 873 1465.

AMERICAN THEATER ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

IBS is sponsoring a session on "Brecht's Legacy" at the ATA Conference to be held in Toronto, Canada, on August 4, 1985. Chaired by Janelle Reinelt (California State University, Sacramento), the panel will include:

John Rouse (Tulane University): Brecht and West German Theater -- Production Dramaturgy and Direct orial Interpretation

Loren Kruger (Cornell University): Brecht and Roland Barthes -- The Double Inheritance

Darko Suvin (McGill University): Brechtian and Pseudo-Brechtian -- Two Adaptations of Coriolanus

John Birringer (Yale University): Repetition and Revolution --Theater-Anthropology after Brecht

CORRECTION

Lee Baxandall pointed out a serious printing error in his notice on "Brecht as a Forerunner of Punk" in Communications XIV/1, p. 65. The correct text should read: "Brecht's rudeness, his intransigent uncouth behavior, has been taken by nearly all commentators as a proof of arrogance and egotism, and as a contradiction of his communist political program." [The editor]

REQUEST

Warren Leming is soliciting suggestions, syllabi, contacts for a community-oriented course he is planning to teach in Chicago on Brechtian Theater for video, film and theater people. Contact Leming at 1625 N. Oakley, Chicago, IL 60647.

Seventh International Symposium
of the
International Brecht Society
Hong Kong, 8-13th December 1986

Programme:
The International Brecht Society invites participation in its Seventh International Symposium, the first to be held in Asia. Contributions to the following topics would be especially welcome:

1. Paradigm Change - Models in Contention
2. Third World Culture
3. Politics of the Psyche
4. Presentational Drama
5. Western and Eastern Aesthetics

Apart from regular members, we anticipate delegates to this Symposium from China, Japan, India, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. We expect, as some have already indicated, that they will also wish to contribute through performance. We are planning for a unique event.

We propose a six-day Symposium to facilitate a more satisfactory engagement with our topics than is possible with the conventional twenty-minute paper format. Though this will naturally depend upon the response, we propose to arrange for a mix of full formal papers of forty-five to sixty minutes length, followed by adequate discussion time, and less formal Symposia with designated participant speakers. Such a structure should enable us to come to grips with, for example, the topical issue of how a Western and Eastern aesthetic may be converging and here, as everywhere else, Brecht's work will constitute one focus for the discussion.

Due partly to the distances, planning for this Symposium will be more difficult than for previous functions. We therefore request initial indications of participation, with proposals for papers and suggestions, as soon as possible. The deadline for abstracts (one page) will be **NOVEMBER 1, 1985.** It will be possible to make later adjustments, but the main direction of our activities must be established by this deadline. Participants are invited to submit proposals for other areas of discussion and papers on other topics; these will be sympathetically considered by the organizers. All proposals should be sent, preferably with a copy to the other, either to:

Antony Tatlow, President, IBS, Dept. of English/Comparative Literature, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Darko Suvin, Vice-President, IBS, Comparative Literature Program, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2K6 Travel, Accommodation and Cost:

We are announcing this Symposium far in advance because of the need to make adequate financial provision. In the current economic climate we cannot hold out the hope of any subsidies. Costs will have to be borne by participants or their respective institutions. We will, however, continue to seek financial assistance, while remaining cautiously pessimistic as to the outcome. At current rates, it is possible to purchase return tickets from respectable airlines between London/Europe and Hong Kong for £540, and between the USA (West Coast) and Hong Kong for around US$640. It is, however, currently possible to buy a one-way ticket Hong Kong - San Francisco from reliable Philippine Airlines for US$270. Good travel agents should be able to alert participants to relatively economic modes of travel. If anyone has difficulty finding such fares, write to A. Tatlow, who will pass the letters on to experts in Hong Kong.

Accommodation is possible in all price ranges. There is usually a strong demand for such lodging in Hong Kong, and it is absolutely vital to make arrangements well in advance. Apart from the very limited possibility of some free private accommodation, we can secure reasonable discounts from hotels, such as the Hong Kong Hilton, provided we know in time and the response is adequate. Such reservations need to be made about one year in advance. Current discounted rates a Hilton-type hotel are US$30. Excellent rooms are also available, again provided sufficient notice is given, at the comfortable and centrally located YMCA; current rates are US$15 for a single and US$23 for a double room. Further information is available from A. Tatlow upon request.

Venue:
The Symposium will be held at the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts and at the University of Hong Kong. It is co-sponsored by the Department of English Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong.

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I am interested in exploring relationships between Irish theater and Brecht... I would very much appreciate correspondance concerning the following topics: German and Irish political and cultural ties; Brecht's response to the Roger Casement case; plays by Irish dramatists on the German stage; reasons why Brecht departed from Marlowe and chose to have his Gaveston in Edward II presented as an Irishman; Brecht's use of Synge's Riders to the Sea as a source for Senora Carrar's Rifles and references to the play in Mother Courage.
Raymond Mustoe, 925 24th Street, Bellingham, WA 98225, USA

CONTRIBUTORS

Yolanda Julia Broyles teaches German and Chicano Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Carol Calacci is a graphic artist in Chicago; she recently designed the sets and costumes for a Brecht production by Walter Leming.

Bernard Dort is a renowned French theater critic and has written on and translated Brecht.

John Emigh teaches in the Department of Theatre Arts at Brown University (Providence, Rhode Island).

Renate Fischetti teaches German at the University of Maryland (Baltimore County) and makes films.

Heinz-Uwe Haus is a theater director and teacher from Berlin/GDR who met Bernhard Reich in Riga in 1970.

Kathleen Komar teaches German and comparative literature at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Loren Kruger is an advanced graduate student in comparative literature at Cornell University whose dissertation on Brecht translations is forthcoming.

Janelle Reinelt teaches in the Department of Drama at the State University of California, Sacramento.

Mechthild Spiegel is a teacher and theater journalist living in West-Berlin.

Juliette Victor-Rood publishes on film, Austrian and Hungarian literature, computers in literary research, and is also a published translator.

OFFICERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

President: Antony Tatlow (University of Hong Kong)

Vice-President: Darko Suvin (McGill University, Montreal)

Secretary-Treasurer: Karl-Heinz Schoeps (University of Illinois)

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forthcoming

Astrid von Kotze: Workers' Plays in South Africa
Jan E. Olsson: Schweyk and the Military Review Motif
Göran Bjelkendahl: *Lux in Tenebris* --Filmscript and Notes
DeVina Barajas: Singing Brecht
R. G. Davis: A Short Statement on Revisioning
Michael Gilbert: Brecht and Music
Marina Pianca: Brecht in Latin America

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