

REALISM AND IDEALISM  
IN THE MAJOR PLAYS OF  
BERTOLT BRECHT

by

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B. A., The University of British Columbia, 1961

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

in the  
DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard:

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
September, 1967

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This thesis is based on the major plays of Bertolt Brecht; reference to his lyrics and critical writings is made where pertinent. The thesis examines the contradictions between Brecht's realistic assessment of human nature and his Marxist ideal of how man should be in order to change society. Brecht viewed society and the behaviour of the individual from two vantage points: the first was that of man who accepted society and conformed because he was concerned mostly with his own survival; the second was that of the Marxist critic, who claimed that the survival of the individual was unimportant, and that the traditional class structure had to be destroyed. Brecht pleaded idealistically for heroism and martyrdom in the service of the Marxist cause. On the other hand, he was sympathetic to the misfortunes of the common man, and realistically urged him to repudiate the necessity of heroic acts.

Chapter I introduces the main problems of the thesis, and traces briefly their development throughout Brecht's work.

Chapter II discusses the problems of individualism in four of the "Erste Stücke". Man's search to discover his own values for existence ends in disappointment; his insistence on hedonistic and homosexual behaviour is a sign of his rejection of society and all traditional values. In only one of the works does the protagonist join society. The choice he has to make between security and revolution anticipates the dilemma of man in most of the later plays; he prefers conformity to individual freedom. The isolation of man, and the in-

sufficiency of sensual pleasure reveal to the hedonists also that individualism is futile. The main characters in each of these plays are striking examples of Brecht's experimentation with the figure of the anti-hero.

Chapter III examines the implications of unheroic behaviour and capitulation in Mann ist Mann, and of conformity in Die Dreigroschenoper and Mahagonny. In the two operas, man is gradually forced to conform to the economic practices of bourgeois-capitalist society. In all three works, the individual's opportunism and willingness to capitulate to those in control, causes him to become evil and leads eventually to the dehumanization of man.

Chapter IV discusses Brecht's insistence on the necessity of conformity to Marxist doctrine in the "Lehrstücke", Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe and Die Tage der Commune. The individual finds that the ethics of the communist collective compel him to become evil. These plays mark the beginning of the Marxist Brecht's conflict with the poet of human nature. In his attempt to accept Marxist doctrine without reservation, Brecht had to force himself consciously to overlook the shortcomings of Marxist practice. These plays stress that man must replace his belief in personal integrity with an unyielding faith in the ethics of the collective. Consequently, he must refuse to help or pity the suffering, and deliberately resort to revolutionary violence.

Chapter V investigates Brecht's contradictory views about heroism in a number of the plays of exile and the later "Be-

arbeitungen". His greater fidelity to his knowledge of human nature, and to his sympathy for the common man generally prevailed over his desire to show that man would accept Marxist doctrine and sacrifice himself for the cause. Most of these plays present unheroic, finely observed individuals who prefer to settle for the small pleasures of life rather than resist oppression in order to seek freedom or justice. The plays of exile reveal a less dogmatic Brecht, but still one who never ceased to emphasize the need for social change. He avoided depicting contemporary social evils in these dramas, and showed those of all time.

Chapter VI assesses the varying emphases and the contradictions of Brecht's thought. The chapter concludes that although Brecht insisted from first to last on the necessity of man's unheroic behaviour, his individuals did become more humane. There was no progression in his ideas concerning how man was to survive in traditional society or how he might achieve social change. The plays since the "Lehrstücke" revealed a shifting of emphasis from the dehumanization of the individual to the necessity of man's accepting personal responsibility for the welfare of his fellows. The real progression of Brecht was not in his thought, but in his art, in his ability to depict human nature in conflict with the injustices of all ages and societies.

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## Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

Brecht's sympathy for the little man points to the fundamental unity of his work. His plays have no heroes. In their place appear the unheroic individual and the anti-hero. Brecht rejected the heroic tradition as early as 1914 in his schoolboy essay on the theme "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori". And in 1955, one year before his death, the farmers in Pauken und Trompeten<sup>1</sup> still scoffed at the suggestion that they should die for a cause which enriched the ruling class. The ideals of Schiller's tragic hero seemed all too abstract to Brecht in 1920, when he wrote:

Ich habe den "Don Carlos", weiß Gott, je und je geliebt. Aber in diesen Tagen lese ich in Sinclairs "Sumpf" die Geschichte eines Arbeiters, der in den Schlachthöfen Chicagos zu Tod gehungert wird. Es handelt sich um einfachen Hunger, Kälte, Krankheit, die einen Mann unterkriegen, so sicher, als ob sie von Gott eingesetzt seien. Dieser Mann hat einmal eine kleine Vision von Freiheit, wird dann mit Gummiknüppeln niedergeschlagen. Seine Freiheit hat mit Carlos' Freiheit nicht das mindeste zu tun, ich weiß es: aber ich kann Carlos' Knechtschaft nicht mehr recht ernst nehmen.<sup>2</sup>

The American socialist influenced Brecht greatly, as seems evident from the fact that two of Brecht's dramas were set in Sinclair's Chicago with exploited workers and tyrannical capitalists. These aspects of Sinclair's novel appear in the background of Im Dickicht der Städte, and merge with a parody of Schiller's romantic tragedy, Die Jungfrau von Orleans,

in Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe.

The early Brecht's compassionate objections to society's abuse of the common man fused in the mid nineteen-twenties with his Marxist view of social conditions "von unten her".<sup>3</sup> In the course of his more than thirty plays Brecht divided society into four groups: the largest was that of the exploited, to which belonged a motley array of workers, peasants and prostitutes; then came the ruling classes made up of royalty, nobility and the bourgeois-capitalists. The police and the military ensured the physical suppression of the poor, while the servants of religion--their hierarchy ranged from enlightened Popes to tippling monks and secular but starry-eyed<sup>4</sup> Salvation Army lasses--guaranteed spiritual domination. Most of Brecht's anti-heroes and Marxist heroines are commoners; a few, such as Galilei, Antigone and Joan Dark, belong to other groups. They all portray social conditions in a world which extends from China to London, from the days of Lukullus to those of Stalin. Everywhere and in every age Brecht finds that the traditional order and its injustices must be abolished.

His early plays before Mann ist Mann as well as those written in exile (1933-1948) are concerned mainly with the individual's struggle to survive and to find some measure of happiness. In between these two groups are the works which depict capitalist society, Die heilige Johanna, Die Dreigroschenoper, Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, and those which portray the communist collective, Das Badener Lehrstück, Die Maßnahme and Die Mutter. In both these societies man tries

desperately to conform and to lose his individuality. In the early plays, Baal, Im Dickicht, and Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England, man passively seeks to discover himself in the sensual; society and he mutually reject each other. The hedonist, alienated by his homosexuality, accepts the absence of God, raises no social issues, but regrets his infinite isolation from his fellow. In contrast, in the plays of exile man's unwillingness to sacrifice his pleasures, his goods or his life causes him to capitulate to the demands of those in control. The economic laws of society force the individual to conform, and corrupt him in the process.

But Brecht does have protagonists who cannot be totally dehumanized, even if the majority of the lesser characters, whether rich or poor, are callous or evil. His maternal figures are amongst the most humane and the most brutal of all his individuals; they are the ones who have to make the greatest sacrifices. Some, such as Mother Courage and Shen Te, are compelled to become monsters of moral insensitivity, but only because they do not have enough money to be kind. Brecht's heroic and unheroic maternal figures share his approval. They do enjoy some of his sympathy; they also reap his scorn. Gruesche comes closest to his concept of how woman should be in reality. The heroic sacrifices of Antigone and Jeanne d'Arc point to his Marxist ideal: the heroic martyr of social change. These two protagonists are, however, far less plausible than the highly realistic Galilei; in comparison, they are so pure and noble that they resemble an idea more than actual persons;

hence Brecht can sacrifice them for a cause as abstract as they, the Marxist promise. Brecht was constrained to make an anti-hero of Galilei, when he would have liked him to become a heroic martyr. It was Brecht's realism, his fascination for the sensual, for the weaknesses of man, which prevented the Marxist idealist in him from sacrificing Galilei.

In most of Brecht's plays capitalist society appears as a force of evil and the communist revolution as a force for the eventual good of mankind. Brecht's second play, Trommeln in der Nacht, contained these themes as early as 1919. Brecht wanted to teach that the structure of society was changeable; he urged the common man to recognize that there was no necessity for social injustices. But how was man to act if he was to survive and alter the structure of society?<sup>5</sup> It was characteristic of Brecht to give answers which contradicted each other. Brecht, the poet of human nature, was concerned with showing realistically how man should not act if he wished to survive. On the other hand, Brecht, the political idealist, drew heavily on the teachings and theories of Marx, Engels and Lenin to show how man should act if he wished to reshape the world for the benefit of all men. Brecht, the realist, stressed individualism and man's desire to survive under even the worst conditions. In contrast, as a Marxist idealist, he emphasized the importance of immediate change and urged man to practice self-abnegation. He taught the necessity of violence because he was convinced that man, basically good, but weak and passive by nature, preferred to tolerate injustice and

live, rather than die in the service of an ideal. Brecht sought goodness in the communist promise of a better world because he believed it was impossible to find this goodness in the capitalist world. He was aware that the communist collective debased<sup>6</sup> man, but he chose to believe that communist evil was justifiable because it negated the evil of traditional society and produced communist good. Brecht substituted the political exploitation of man for economic exploitation. The individual's pity and kindness led to his impoverishment or death in traditional society, and this same goodness caused his liquidation in the communist collective. Brecht taught that both societies brought about the dehumanization of man; each forced the individual to ignore his personal ethical objections to exploiting or executing his fellow.

Brecht carefully avoided calling man's goodness a moral urge. He preferred to interpret it as something individual rather than social, as something instinctive rather than learned. He thought that personal morality was as inexpedient in the communist collective as it was disadvantageous in capitalist society.

Although Brecht developed great skill in the use of dialectic argument, he also had a facile habit of being able to compartmentalize and ignore the more serious realistic objections to his Marxist idealism.<sup>7</sup> In particular, Brecht intentionally overlooked in the "Lehrstücke",<sup>8</sup> Leben des Galilei, Antigone and Der Prozess der Jeanne d'Arc that he idealistically demanded of the activist and the gifted or noble indi-

vidual what he discouraged in his more realistic figures of the little man, such as Kragler, namely, heroic devotion to an ideal.

## Chapter II

THE FUTILITY OF INDIVIDUALISM IN THE  
"ERSTE STÜCKE"

Three of Brecht's "Erste Stücke", Baal, Im Dickicht der Städte, and Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England, present the individual who turns his back on society in order to seek self-fulfillment in the pleasures of the senses. The gratification of the erotic instinct becomes his only purpose in existence. The further estranged he becomes from his fellows, however, the less he is able to find meaning in his individualism.

A number of Brecht's early poems in the Hauspostille share themes common to these dramas: indifference to society and its evils, a Baalian oneness with nature, and an abandonment to sensuality. The surrender to the pleasure urge seems, in the poems also, a way of providing man with a reason to survive in an apparently meaningless and unchangeable world. The river occurs frequently in the poems and in some of the songs in the dramas<sup>9</sup> as a motif of man's lethargy and indifference to social evils. In the poem "Vom Schwimmen in Seen und Flüssen" (G, I, 65-66) man lies in the water on his back, watches the drift of the clouds, and is carried downstream by a strong current. He abandons himself to the flow, instinctively aware that if he resisted, he would soon tire and sink. Whither the irresistible current is sweeping him is of no concern as long as his passivity assures him pleasure. "Das Schiff" (G, I, 23), a poem of a ship at

sea, is also a poem of man<sup>10</sup> cast loose by God, moving aimlessly, yet surely toward death, without an anchor in religion or society; here man is the helpless plaything of whatever forces act upon him. He remains indifferent, and still experiences a certain pleasure which this submission affords. The frequent recurrence in the early poems and dramas of the anti-activist suggests that the early Brecht considered sensual pleasure and the individual's pursuit of happiness more important than the hazardous and apparently impossible task of changing social evils. By Brecht's own admission<sup>11</sup> the figure of Kragler in another early play, Trommeln in der Nacht, illustrates such a view. He represents the little man opposed to heroic acts, the anti-hero who finds it easier to join society for his own good, rather than fight for individual freedom and the good of others.

An early poem from the Hauspostille, "Gegen Verführung", exhorts man not to make the sacrifices demanded by society's religious and moral teachings; man should instead enjoy the present life to the full before death surprises him. The second stanza reads:

LaBt euch nicht betrügen,  
 DaB Leben wenig ist.  
 Schlürft es in schnellen Zügen!  
 Es wird euch nicht genügen  
 Wenn ihr es lassen müBt!

G, I, 143-144

Brecht warns that religion's promised reward of great joy in life hereafter is a hoax to get man to accept present misery and exploitation; the poem cautions that man will also be misled if he accepts society's argument that it is his duty he-

roically to sacrifice himself to preserve the traditional order. Hence, the individual should devote himself to a life of pleasure before all else.

The main character of Baal acts exactly as this poem would have man behave. Baal breaks all ties with society, and gives himself over completely to hedonism. Like Don Juan in Brecht's adaptation of Molière's Don Juan, he is an anti-heroic figure; he rebels sexually against traditional society. Don Juan considers it his mission to experience one amorous adventure after another. Baal does not. He seeks vainly in his orgies an escape, initially from his disgust with society, and then from his horror of life's lack of meaning. Unlike Don Juan, Baal considers the briefness of sensual joy a sign of the world's cruelty present even within himself. His extreme eroticism becomes a rebellion against life's apparent absurdity; man renews himself, and, in so doing, condemns man to an eternal cycle of pleasure and pain.<sup>12</sup> The fleeting joys of the senses remain, however, his flimsy reason to avoid as long as possible the liberation of death.

The ever-changing colours and clouds of the sky, the coming and passing of the seasons, the flow of the rivers and the short duration of physical ecstasies are the early Brecht's favourite motifs of change. They remind Baal that nothing lasts unless it is the continuous "Stirb und werde"<sup>13</sup> which surrounds him. Unsatisfied by his search for happiness with women, Baal had hoped to find lasting pleasure with Ekart in a homosexual union. This attraction promised at first to become his most

enduring source of pleasure; but Ekart betrays him with a waitress. Baal's homosexuality is a definite refusal to accept society on terms other than his own.<sup>14</sup> His asocial behaviour assures, however, his freedom from exploitation.

But in Im Dickicht Brecht emphasizes even more that it is impossible for the individual to obtain fulfillment in homosexuality. He shows that Garga and Shlink transfer society's practice of economic exploitation onto a most personal level; Brecht claims, as it were, that the modern world sets man against man even when he attempts to live apart from society; its influence is inexorable.

In Leben Eduards Brecht created another pair of homosexual anti-heroes. The dying monarch, the Church, and the ministers refuse to allow Eduard the further company of his lover, Gaveston. But Eduard sees the only reason for his existence in the pleasures of this alliance. He refuses to compromise his decision to keep Gaveston, and enters civil war to protect their relationship. Gaveston soon realizes that society will not allow him to remain with Eduard. Resigned to the emptiness of life, he accepts death as a liberation from loneliness and persecution:

Ich rühr jetzt keine Hand mehr und leg  
 Mich einfach in den Boden da, damit  
 Nicht ich bleib bis ans Ende der Zeiten.  
 S, II, 45

Eduard avenges Gaveston, loses the war, and must spend the rest of his days in prison. His imprisonment is really a self-imposed martyrdom which shows the senselessness of having refused to compromise his urges and renounce Gaveston. In

their case, man must die if he seeks satisfaction in the rule of instinct; it threatens to destroy the established social order. Those in control, the nobles, dictate that man may not act in his own interest, their society comes first.

Brecht was much interested in violence and the ultimate senselessness of certain forms of physical struggle: war, sport, and sadistic homosexuality. He was profoundly attracted by the element of competition, as for example in bicycle racing and boxing. It is as though he asked: "What does it prove to win? Is there any more sense to life in being the conqueror, rather than the conquered?" In terms of man's survival struggle these questions would read: "Is it the hero or the unheroic figure who wins? Is the individual better off if he risks his life for an ideal or if he compromises that ideal in order to enjoy security?"

Brecht portrayed in Im Dickicht mainly the senselessness of the survival struggle and to a lesser extent the evils of capitalist society. This drama described the somewhat intangible pleasures of a fight at the end of which Garga appeared as an anti-hero figure, even though he "won" his contest with Shlink. Brecht claimed ironically, that the violence in Schiller's Die Räuber inspired him to portray "einen Kampf an sich".<sup>15</sup> Brecht thus wanted to show that the only sense of struggle was the pleasure of the fight and the discovery of the better man. The better man turned out to be the anti-hero, who fought to succeed, but without having any purpose in surviving. Brecht

admitted<sup>16</sup> that Im Dickicht became a play which reflected his difficulties in depicting a meaningful conflict which could prove something. The work does suggest that life loses all significance when instinct traps man in a sadistic-masochistic battle with his fellow. Garga is always aware of his loneliness; he cannot be distracted by the enjoyment of his love-hate encounters with Shlink. There is no continuum of pleasure in their contest, for it is soon over. Garga takes the competition seriously, interprets it as a struggle to survive, and loses Shlink. Dying, the latter tells Garga that he knows why their struggle was doomed: "Die unendliche Vereinzelung des Menschen macht eine Feindschaft zum unerreichbaren Ziel" (S, I, 307). Bitter at their failure to continue, he reproaches Garga: "Sie haben nicht begriffen, was es war. Sie wollten mein Ende, aber ich wollte den Kampf" (S, I, 312). Garga desires unheroically to stay alive at all costs, yet he has neither personal nor social ambitions. He represents man cast loose by society. He sacrifices intellectual freedom, his family, his fiancée and the pleasures of the battle; the victor's triumph goes to Shlink: "Es ist nicht wichtig, der Stärkere zu sein," says Garga coldly, "sondern der Lebendige" (S, I, 312). He is, perhaps, Brecht's most striking and unusual experiment with the figure of the anti-hero.

In contrast to Baal and Eduard, Kragler in Trommeln in der Nacht overcomes his unwillingness to conform and joins the middle-class. He represents a different aspect of Brecht's

examination of man's relationship to society: Kragler becomes the anti-hero who capitulates to a superior necessity. He values the material comforts of the bourgeois more than the uncertain promises of a militant idealism. He prefers to become a hypocrite rather than accept the misery and loneliness of the social outcasts and the revolutionaries. Kragler represents perhaps better than any other protagonist the opportunism of the realistic, untheoretical, pre-Marxist Brecht.

Kragler, like the disillusioned Beckmann in Borchert's Draußen vor der Tür, returns home from war only to find that he is mocked and no longer wanted. Society has grown fat on the sacrifices of the little man. Kragler identifies the forces of exploitation and domination with the self-righteous war-profiteers of the middle class. He rebels against them when he leaves his fiancée's engagement party. But his rebellion is not directed towards changing social conditions; he turns his back on those who control society and seeks the consolation of the asocial: prostitutes, alcoholics, and malcontents, whom Brecht would have the reader construe as idealistic activists in his later Marxist revision of this play.<sup>17</sup> Ironically, Kragler's disillusionment and his unwillingness to condone the cynical profiteering of the middle class prepare his eventual acceptance of that same group. He perceives that a refusal to join society and the attempt to manage as an outsider provide him neither with a livelihood nor with the opportunity to marry Anna. His freedom to choose how he will commit himself turns out to be an empty freedom, the greater

his desire becomes to enjoy what only the bourgeois can offer. He finds no sympathy with his new friends, the workers. The tavern owner, Glubb, tries to determine the degree of Kragler's dissatisfaction: "...dir ist eben ein kleiner Unrecht geschehen, da wächst Gras drüber..." (S, I, 188). Kragler admits that he is not of a rebellious nature, and reasons weakly, that if he chooses to accept domination and exploitation, as he believes he must, injustice no longer exists. He sings a revised version of "Ein Hund ging in die Küche":

Ein Hund ging in die Küche  
 Und stahl dem Koch ein Ei  
 Da nahm der Koch sein Hackebeil  
 Und schlug den Hund entzwei.  
 S, I, 187

Its second stanza with the burial scene follows. This song suggests that Kragler is very much aware of the dangers of the revolutionary uprising which is raging in the streets outside. After his song, he concludes pessimistically:

Und darum, macht euch's bequem auf dem  
 kleinen Stern, es ist kalt hier und etwas finster,  
 ...und die Welt ist zu alt für die  
 bessere Zeit und der Himmel ist schon vermietet....

S, I, 188-189

Such a resigned and unheroic attitude explains his refusal to join his drunken comrades in the uprising. He has already learned in war that no one will thank him for risking his life again. Glubb mocks Kragler's passive stand that it is useless to take the betterment of his condition into his own hands. Glubb believes that if man does not resist domination, others will most certainly control him instead:

"Na, dann laßt euch beherrschen! Halt dich ruhig, wenn sie

dir die Haut abziehen, Artillerist, sonst geht sie entzwei, es ist deine einzige" (S, I, 189). When Kragler realizes that the distraught Anna, searching for him in the streets, has chosen after all to return to him, his decision is made easy. Because security is more certain with her businessman father, he does not hesitate long to desert the revolutionaries. His cynical retort to their accusation that he is fleeing to safety reveals that he now thinks like the middle class whom he earlier despised when he returned from the war; he, too, has become a philistine: "Fast ersoffen seid ihr in euren Tränen über mich.... Mein Fleisch soll im Rinnstein verwesen, daB eure Idee in den Himmel kommt? Seid ihr besoffen?... Ich hab's bis zum Hals" (S, I, 203). Kragler's outburst is so violent for several reasons. His war experiences have taught him that it is unjust of the rich to expect the common man to die, not for his, but for their welfare. Now that he has finally managed to return home, he wants to live, not to die for the cause of others. He considers it is highly unrealistic of the poor to ask him to risk his life for the vague gains of a revolution whose success is already doubtful. Kragler's rational attitude, vulgarity, and realistic self-interest ironize the concept of the hero, mock his sense of mission, and demonstrate the absurdity of both for the little man.

In 1954 Brecht wrote rather defensively that to portray the security in conformity in Trommeln appeared to him in 1920 the lesser of two evils, the other being a conventional treat-

ment of Kragler as a hero who joined the revolution: "Die Auflehnung gegen eine zu verwerfende literarische Konvention führte hier beinahe zur Verwerfung einer großen sozialen Auflehnung" (S, I, 5). The word "beinahe"<sup>18</sup> cannot hide the fact that Brecht did reject the uprising and that he was not a Marxist at the time. Concerned with portraying an anti-heroic figure, and asserting his own rejection not just of literary but also social conventions, Brecht had definitely recommended not sympathizing with the Spartacists. The later Marxist Brecht idealized what the earlier Brecht had viewed sceptically. In 1954 Brecht was anxious to stress, perhaps too much that the Spartacists were willing to sacrifice their lives in the revolution, and that their goal was the improvement of social conditions for people like Kragler. Brecht's apologia is particularly interesting, because it exhibits the basic feature of many of the works from Das Badener Lehrstück onward; his defense reveals his desire to reshape human nature according to Marxist theory. In contrast to Trommeln, some of the plays of exile urgently demand revolution and advocate self-sacrifice for the cause, but others still favour Kragler's precedent: tolerating unjust conditions in order to guarantee one's security and comfort.

The individual's capitulation to the rule of the forces against him, and his unheroic desire to avoid the hazards of conflict occur for the first time in Brecht's drama Trommeln. In Kragler's actions there is a certain wisdom of compromise

and opportunism which also characterizes the unheroic behaviour of some protagonists in the plays of exile, such as *Mother Courage and Galilei*. The hedonistic individual in the "Erste Stücke" is, however, indifferent to the material interests of mankind, is unwilling to compromise his pleasure urge, and abandons himself to an unproductive, unsatisfying lethargy. Brecht's homosexual figures experience no conflict of sensus versus ratio; they eagerly follow whatever course their passions dictate; there is no question of resisting them. At first abused, and then ignored by society, these protagonists fall back exclusively upon themselves; they possess neither the desire to experience social justice, nor the will to change conditions. When they are compared to protagonists in the later plays, it is clear how Brecht's thought has developed. They represent the opposite of the agitators in the "Lehrstücke", for, in addition to being unheroic individuals, they are also anti-activists. Baal, Im Dickicht, and Leben Eduards are Brecht's only plays with the figure of the outsider. Thereafter he portrayed man as a member of bourgeois society or the communist collective.

Man's cheerless isolation and the insufficiency of sensual pleasure emphasize the futility of individualism.<sup>19</sup> Baal, Eduard, Gaveston, Garga and Shlink seek fulfillment apart from society and at the expense of their fellows. The truth of their situation is that they can find a purpose for existence neither in the values of society nor in their own.<sup>20</sup> Kragler's dilemma is, however, that of man in the later plays. Either

he sacrifices his individual freedom or he defends it by resisting the rich. Either he declares his allegiance to them or he sympathizes<sup>21</sup> with the exploited. He has to choose between security and revolution.

## Chapter III

THE DEHUMANIZATION OF MAN  
IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

The passivity of exploited man and his capitulation to those who control society are important themes in Mann ist Mann and the operas Die Dreigroschenoper and Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny. Here, as also in Trommeln in der Nacht, the protagonist conforms to the economic practices of society in order to assure his survival and to promote his material interests.

Galy Gay in Mann ist Mann capitulates because his desire to profit has committed him to an extent he had not foreseen. He resembles those who capitulate in the capitalist society of the operas, as well as those in Nazi Germany, and in Italy of the seventeenth century. His counterparts, the poor, the collaborators and Galilei, are as shortsighted as he. He thinks he can remain who he is and as he is by exploiting others, but instead, the opposite occurs: he is exploited and has to give up his principles and former way of life. He had failed to envisage the eventually dangerous, personal consequences of his initial opportunism, not to mention the social and political consequences. He becomes the tool, the "menschliche Kampfmaschine" (S, II, 327) of the soldiers.

In the operas the beggars, the robbers and the prostitutes all hope to gain from conforming to the economic

practices of middle class society. Their passive acceptance of exploitation and injustice serves, however, like Galy Gay's capitulation, to prolong and increase the evils of social injustices. Their compromise of their emotions of sympathy and their meek surrender of their rights to freedom and justice render social change impossible.

In many of his works Brecht depicts intense economic exploitation which estranges social classes from each other as well as individuals within each of these classes from one another. Such effective dissociation of man leads in some cases to a certain dualism of character. In Mann ist Mann, for example, Galy Gay's denial of his real identity introduces the dual or split personality. The dual personality and the donning of the mask are among Brecht's favorite devices to indicate that the dehumanization of the individual has taken place. At times Brecht combines the motifs of the split personality and the mask, as in Der gute Mensch, where Shen Te changes from a good person to an evil person in order to protect herself. In Die Dreigroschenoper the individual also shamelessly exploits his fellow man. He wishes to retain the illusion of being a respectable member of society, and is able to do so thanks to a convenient and conscious division of his personality; he distinguishes between his honourable, socially acceptable, private identity, and a contemptible, asocial, business identity.<sup>22</sup> In Mahagonny a similar but more superficial pretense exists; in both operas, however, there is little

which the individual would not eventually sacrifice to assure his ends.

Galy Gay's passivity, servility and desire to please are signs of a pronounced opportunism. The greater his chance to make a profit, the more willing he is to let himself be used for any purpose, and the more he becomes committed to a task which he initially disapproved of.

The soldiers, Polly, Jesse and Uriah, immediately recognize his weakness: "Das ist ein Mann, der nicht nein sagen kann" (S, II, 186). They bribe and cajole him into impersonating the lost Jeriah Jip. His amenability to their scheme depends on how much they permit him to take advantage of them. He fully exploits their predicament when they have to assemble for muster. Afterwards Galy Gay tells the audience<sup>23</sup> of his readiness to prostitute himself for the sake of gain: "Und es kommt auch nur darauf an in der Welt, daß man...ist, wie die Leute einen haben wollen, denn es ist so leicht" (S, II, 202).

In rationalizing about his desire to make his "cut", he fails to perceive any danger in his opportunism. He purposely remains in the army camp to turn the soldiers' disadvantage to his own account. When Widow Begbick asks him whether he is called Galy Gay, he says he is not. His denial is partly true, for he is eager to be someone else if it is worth the effort. There is a warning contained in Widow Begbick's song of passivity and capitulation, the

"Lied vom Fluß der Dinge":

Wie oft du auch den Fluß ansiehst, der träge  
Dahinzieht, nie siehst du dasselbe Wasser  
Nie kehrt es, das hinunterfließt, kein Tropfen  
von ihm  
Zu seinem Ursprung zurück.

S, II, 204

She sings a similar refrain<sup>24</sup> three times during the play, each time to emphasize that Galy Gay's transformation has proceeded, and that he has become too involved to turn back and assume his former identity.

Jeriah Jip has the same willingness as Galy Gay to let himself be misused in return for material rewards. In Scene 7 Wang, the chief priest of a pagoda, transforms the captive Jeriah Jip into a god in order to make good the money which the soldiers have stolen. Jeriah Jip is only too ready to stay with Wang and to deceive the brainwashed pious in return for steaks and beer. At first his desire to eat seems to conflict with his loyalty to his comrades, but once he sees the food, he forgets them. Jip is only one of a host of Brecht's characters who are always ready to sacrifice their principles for gain. His and Galy Gay's materialism illustrate the thought behind Brecht's maxim from Die Dreigroschenoper: "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral" (S, III, 99).

Galy Gay's interest in the sale of an elephant is expressed with Shylockian imagery: "Nun, wenn es so ist... so würde ich gerne mein Stück Fleisch herausschneiden" (S, II, 223). Perhaps Brecht refers to the "pound of flesh"<sup>25</sup>

in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice; in any case, the comment and its associations emphasize Galy Gay's greed and opportunism. Galy Gay's eagerness to profit is so evident that Uriah can express confidently: "Einer ist keiner.... So einer verwandelt sich eigentlich ganz von selber.... Das kommt weil er nichts zu verlieren hat" (S, II, 217-218). Brecht cautions here that the dictates of greed and self-interest silence man's ethical objections to exploiting other men.

Arrested, tried, and faced with immediate execution for his deceit, Galy Gay capitulates to the soldiers' demands: "Ich bin nicht der, den ihr sucht. Ich kenne ihn gar nicht. Mein Name ist Jip, ich kann es beschwören.... Ich bin nicht Galy Gay" (S, II, 251-252). His capitulation is a precedent for a later capitulation in Mother Courage's "Lied von der großen Kapitulation" in Scene 4 of Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder. Because Mother Courage fears losing the opportunity to trade, she voluntarily forfeits her right to justice; the loss is as negligible to her as the loss of his own identity is to Galy Gay. His willingness to capitulate and let himself be exploited is his last desperate attempt to stay alive, even if it should mean he must do whatever his superiors command. He realizes too late, that his opportunism requires him to commit himself more than he was prepared to. Now that he fears death, it is not too great a sacrifice to renounce his independence and identity in order barely to escape with his life:

Und ich, der eine ich und der andere ich  
 Werden gebraucht und sind also brauchbar.  
 Und hab' ich nicht angesehen diesen Elefanten  
 Drück ich ein Auge zu, was mich betrifft  
 Und lege ab, was unbeliebt an mir, und bin  
 Da angenehm.

S, II, 268

Galy Gay is made to appear unheroic, for he sees no point in suffering or dying for the sake of personal integrity. He reasons that his honour does not help him eat. Later on, Galilei thinks the same way. The parallels between him and Galy Gay are striking. Much that characterizes Galy Gay also applies to Galilei. Brecht used the ridiculous and the sublime to demonstrate that "a man's a man";<sup>26</sup> Galy Gay sees an elephant, and that proves his undoing; Galilei looks at the stars, and the controlling forces of his society reshape him, too. But behind the humour and clowning of Mann ist Mann Brecht records his fear that man's opportunistic servility leads unavoidably to tyranny; if man values life more than freedom and justice, he will always capitulate to those who dominate and exploit the masses. Mann ist Mann also teaches that even though there is no honour in capitulation, there is a certain wisdom in such an unheroic act, but it is this wisdom of the selfish which makes it possible for dictators to rule over man.

The figure of Galy Gay also anticipates the figure of the Young Comrade in Die Maßnahme as well as the figure of the collaborator in Brecht's later anti-fascist plays and poems.<sup>27</sup> Brecht wishes Galy Gay's denial of his actual identity to stand as a symbol of the complete repudiation

of conscience, ethics, and social responsibility; when man acts like Galy Gay, all human bonds are scorned. Galy Gay's capitulation shows that intolerable conditions become even worse when man suppresses his sensitivity and rejects his ideals. Such an act leads to the dehumanization of man and to a general condition of "entmenschter Menschheit",<sup>28</sup> the satiric portrayal of which was Brecht's intention in the operas of the late 1920's.

Brecht uses the song in almost every one of his plays to portray some aspect of man's dilemma. Solos, duets and choruses in both operas<sup>29</sup> ironically lament man's reluctance and lack of means to help his friends or the poor. The singers are realistic when they sadly affirm that man must exploit others if he is to survive; but when the singers claim to regret the way of life which they have found necessary to adopt, they are only being cynical. The songs in the operas and Mann ist Mann advocate man's passive conformity and his unheroic toleration of injustice: they suggest that capitulation is necessary, in some cases in order to profit, in others to avoid a destructive conflict with the powerful and the rich. It seems conclusive to those who must conform, that authority cannot be overthrown.<sup>30</sup> They are unable to formulate a possibility of social change. Resigned to making the best of things they yield and imitate the ethics of bourgeois society. An ironic subtitle to the Mahagonny of 1930, published in the second issue of

the Versuche, reads: "...ein Versuch in der epischen Oper: eine Sittenschilderung", applies with equal merit to Die Dreigroschenoper.<sup>31</sup> Each opera exposes the dual standard of ethics and ruthless mutual exploitation of all classes.

A syllogism in the Brechtian manner indicates the goal of all characters in the operas: "All men want happiness"; "Money buys happiness"; "Therefore all men want money".<sup>32</sup> There are several syllogisms, the conclusions of which are acted out in Die Dreigroschenoper: "Money is stolen"; "The 'Bürger' has money"; "Therefore the 'Bürger' steals money". Considering this conclusion as the first premise in the next syllogism, one continues: "The robber steals money"; and then there are two possible conclusions: "The robber is a 'Bürger'"; and "The 'Bürger' is a robber". For Brecht, to have is to have stolen.

In Die Dreigroschenoper whenever man needs money, he steals, deceives and betrays his fellows. The bourgeoisie do not generally appear to be robbers or swindlers since they are members of a traditionally respectable class. It turns out, though, that all men of all classes must necessarily become extortionists of some kind because their society is founded on a principle of mutual exploitation. The destitute, shiftless and crippled are unmasked as impersonators who beg for money with the aid of various devices and costumes. Their pitiable appearance is especially prepared to exploit the sympathy either of kind people who have had to become increasingly callous, or of the rich who are shocked

at the sight of the wretchedness to which they know they have contributed. Jonathan Jeremiah Peachum is the manager-owner of the beggars' business "Bettlerfreund". It is he who equips and exploits the beggars and the unemployed. In addition, there are the professional thieves who must work in the robbing business of the gentleman Macheath, a pimp, bigamist, thief, and murderer. The corruption of the police and their financial interest in organized crime are evident in the friendship of Macheath and the London Chief of Police, Tiger-Brown. The latter is a manager of crime who accepts a percentage commission of Macheath's robberies and offers in return an assurance of non-prosecution. Like the pseudo middle class businessmen Peachum and Macheath, Brown, too, keeps accounts, and records his business transactions in a pretentiously honourable manner.

The prostitutes, Macheath, the Peachums, and Tiger-Brown have a dual identity and dual standards. They are easily able to keep their professional identity as socially unacceptable business people distinct from their private identity as socially acceptable ladies and gentlemen. Rather than regard their dual standards as paradoxical and themselves as hypocritical, they readily accept the convenience of a split character. The necessity of exploiting and cheating their fellow man in no way tarnishes their image of themselves as ladies or gentlemen. They contend that their real identity is the latter. As gentlefolk they can seriously pretend to affirm the "middle class" virtues of chastity, decency,

honour, and respect for the law. Thus their dualism conveniently sanctions beggary, deceit, betrayal, whoring, and manslaughter. These 'crimes' are lucrative sins<sup>33</sup> and vices which the businessman calls virtues.

The "Programmheft", written for the Berliner Ensemble Premiere (April 23, 1960), of Die Dreigroschenoper at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm includes some of Brecht's notes entitled: "Brecht über Die Dreigroschenoper". One of these notes reads:

In einem Terzett [Erstem Dreigroschenfinale] wurde das Bedauern darüber ausgedrückt, daß die Unsicherheit auf diesem Planeten es dem Menschen nicht möglich macht, seinem natürlichen Hang zur Güte und zu anständigem Benehmen nachzugehen.<sup>34</sup>

The operas proclaim Brecht's belief that this insecurity of man is rooted in the maintenance of a class system. The relentless mutual exploitation of man in capitalist society breeds universal acceptance of injustice and consequently an inescapable misery.

In neither Die Dreigroschenoper nor in Mahagonny, however, does Brecht show that man's natural disposition to the good leads to his economic impoverishment and eventual downfall, as it promises to do in Shen Te's case in Der gute Mensch. All the characters in the operas are involved in a desperate survival struggle which forces them to become selfish and callous. Each character knows from experience that the slightest act of good will or charity endangers his possessions and his life. Peachum and Macheath are the spokesmen for all. Their accumulated wisdom regarding the

necessity and expediency of their behaviour finds a proverbial summation in each of the various songs. In the "Erstes Dreigroschenfinale" of which Brecht wrote above, Peachum considers the impossibility of being "ein guter Mensch", and the necessity of being coarse and rapacious, as direct results of the existence of mass poverty and universal exploitation. Because conditions do not permit philanthropy, he rejects it, as do Mrs. Peachum and Polly: "Ja, dann ist's freilich nichts damit / Dann ist das eben alles Kitt" (S, III, 61)! Again, because of conditions, it appears only too obvious that man's honest efforts for a better life, his idealism, and his noble qualities will cause him even greater poverty, and result in his utter despair. The songs: "Die Ballade vom angenehmen Leben" (S, III, 85) and "Das Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit des menschlichen Strebens" (S, III, 111-112) deplore that the only solution to the insecurity of the human condition lies in wealth. Each song regrets that man is literally compelled to become inhuman--to become more and more evil and less concerned about the moral probity of his behaviour.

The importance of the "Salomo-Song" (S, III, 115-116) of Act III in Die Dreigroschenoper is not to be overlooked, for Brecht includes this piece later in a revised version in Scene 9 of Mutter Courage. In Die Dreigroschenoper Jenny sings this song, but neither she nor Peachum comments further on its theme, the futility of virtue and philanthropy. Brecht emphasizes this much more in Mutter Courage. Mother

Courage and the Dutch cook introduce the song as: "...das Lied von Salomon, Julius Cäsar und andere große Geister, denens nicht genützt hat" (S, VII, 184). Their comments after each of the stanzas illustrate the moral conflicts--or rather, the potential ones which do not come about--of the characters in both operas. The sutler and the cook sing: "Alle Tugenden sind nämlich gefährlich auf dieser Welt...man hat sie besser nicht und hat ein angenehmes Leben..." (S, VII, 185). The characters in the operas are always aware of this and never fail to suppress their emotions of sympathy. The fate of Saint Martin in this song illustrates why Heinrich and Jenny in Mahagonny refuse to come to the aid of their friend, the penniless Paul Ackermann: mutual exploitation in capitalist society forces them to consider charitable acts suicidal. The cook--who has a tavern in Utrecht--comments ironically: "Ja, da heißt's selbstlos sein und teilen, was man hat, aber wenn man nix hat?... Ja, die Selbstlosigkeit ist eine seltene Tugend, weil sie sich nicht rentiert" (S, VII, 186). He abandons Mother Courage for the same reason that Heinrich and Jenny abandon their best friend: they are unwilling to jeopardize their own security. Hence they feel that compromising their loyalty is the desirable alternative to doing good deeds. Man chooses "nur die Schlechtigkeiten" (S, III, 187) because there is no possibility of changing society.

In "Das zweite Dreigroschenfinale" Macheath and Jenny scorn the suggestion to be virtuous in spite of conditions.

They propose that misery and poverty must be averted by those in control. They reason that if man is wealthy, he will not have to suppress in himself the natural urge to be good. They conclude that man must become evil if he is poor:

Der Mensch lebt nur von Missetat allein!...  
 Denn wovon lebt der Mensch? Indem er stünd-  
 lich  
 Den Menschen peinigt, auszieht, anfällt, abwürgt  
 und frißt  
 Nur dadurch lebt der Mensch, daß er so gründ-  
 lich  
 Vergessen kann, daß er ein Mensch doch ist.  
 S, III, 100-101

But this is obviously very specious logic; and Brecht intended it to be so in order to prove a point. He shows that the capitalist who does have this material security is as inhuman as the poor man. Brecht stresses that it is the system, bourgeois-capitalist society, which causes the dehumanization of all men, the rich and the poor alike. This is one reason he wrote Mahagonny, to show that the opposite of what Jenny and Peachum believe will happen when the poor become rich. Instead of the ideal society, Mahagonny portrays the ultimate depravity of the capitalist-bourgeois system.

Brecht's favorite stylistic device was dialectic. Die Dreigroschenoper examines the reasons for the dehumanization of man from the point of view of the poor; Mahagonny, the "Goldstadt" (S, III, 175), restates this problem from the point of view of the rich. If all human relationships in Die Dreigroschenoper depend on the profit to be had from

"Elend als Ware" (S, III, 145), these relationships depend even more crassly in Mahagonny on the profit from "Vergnügen...als Ware" (S, III, 265). Whether man's misery or his desire for pleasure is exploited, all human relationships are necessarily regarded as a source of profit, and are deliberately established with this in mind. This planned and apparently inexorable injustice, ironically referred to as fate by Macheath and Brown in Die Dreigroschenoper, reappears in Mahagonny as man-made chaos, as capitalist society in its most extreme form.

Everyone's frantic search for happiness in the town of Mahagonny prepares for the proclamation of a predatory society. The consequence of this search is an economic "Kampf aller gegen alle" (S, III, 254), in which all men must suppress their natural goodness in order to survive. In Mahagonny it is "das größte Verbrechen" (S, III, 246) to be unable to pay for one's pleasure. Mahagonny's way of life ensures that no one will gratuitously help his fellow man. Hence, as in Die Dreigroschenoper, survival is possible only in as much as man "...so gründlich vergessen kann, daß er ein Mensch doch ist" (S, III, 101). The primacy of this struggle for self-preservation is expressed in Mahagonny in the often sung refrain concerning man's brutality and callousness:

Denn wie man sich bettet, so liegt man  
 Es deckt einen keiner da zu  
 Und wenn einer tritt, dann bin ich es  
 Und wird einer getreten, bist's du!  
 S, III, 210

In a last plaintive outcry the assembled citizens of Mahagonny lament their utter helplessness and estrangement from their fellows and from divine redemption:: "Können uns und euch und niemand helfen" (S, III, 258). Where this absence of help is acknowledged with despair in Mahagonny, it is parodied in Die Dreigroscheoper. Macheath's joyous cry at the appearance of the "reitender Bote" (S, III, 139) and at the news of his pardon: "Gerettet, gerettet! Ja, ich fühle es, wo die Not am größten, ist die Hilfe am nächsten" (S, III, 139) satirizes the sublime and the ridiculous. Here Brecht wishes to deride the unrealistic solution of the divine redemption<sup>35</sup> of man and expose the falseness of a trite proverb. More important, however, the dialectical interpretation of this romantic solution--like the last line of Mahagonny quoted above--reveals Brecht's sober conviction that man in capitalist society is judged and doomed ("gerichtet")<sup>36</sup> rather than redeemed, for man cannot afford to help his fellow. The operas warn that the more man accepts the capitalist way of life, the more depraved and rapacious his efforts in the struggle for survival will become.

In Mann ist Mann, Die Dreigroschenoper, and Mahagonny the individual becomes the victim of a materialist society which he either passively accepts or enthusiastically supports. This is true of Galy Gay, Macheath, Peachum, Brown and all the characters in Mahagonny. Man's willingness to

suppress in himself the good and the humane is encouraged by his self-interest, opportunism and fear of death. His dehumanization is the inevitable outcome of his capitulation to political and economic determinism.

## Chapter IV

THE DEHUMANIZATION OF MAN  
IN THE COMMUNIST COLLECTIVE

The "Lehrstücke"<sup>37</sup> treat the conflict between the compassionate individual and Marxist dogma. These plays try to prove the necessity of revolution and claim that only the violence of the communist collective can abolish the causes of mankind's suffering. They teach that expediency --whatever best serves the interests of the revolution--is the sole criterion for the collective's ethics. In order to maintain party solidarity, the activist must give up his individual identity, suppress his natural urge to do good, and accept Marxist idealism and the collective's goals. If he can do all three unfalteringly, he is able to survive. But if he follows the promptings of his emotions of sympathy and rejects the inhuman<sup>38</sup> ethics of the party, he is either liquidated, as in Die Maßnahme, or eventually succumbs to the terror of the bourgeois-capitalists, as in the later play of revolt, Die Tage der Commune. He must become inhuman to succeed.

Marxist theory seemed to Brecht to offer the only solution to the problem of social injustices in capitalist society. He was intensely attracted by the theory's promise to create in a later age a just society in which the collective's violence and the need for pity and help would cease to be necessary.

Brecht was aware of the naïveté of such a promise, but

he preferred to believe in a compensating present; he had rejected Christian religion's assurance of a "compensating Heaven"<sup>39</sup> in his teens. Nevertheless, his faith in a compensating present seems to indicate that he had retained the Christian's Credo, quia absurdum. Brecht was, however, equally aware that communist society could not recompense the individual for his sacrifices during his lifetime.

George Steiner shares a similar view: "Brecht believed in the dialectical process of history and in the inevitable accomplishment of the Marxist ideal.... He was too realistic not to know that the light on the horizon lay immensely far off and that there would be terrible suffering along the way...."<sup>40</sup> Why did Brecht repeatedly make his protagonists become Marxist idealists, who sacrificed even their lives if no visible improvement of social conditions were likely? In the scene "Volksbefragung" from Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches Brecht gave one of the clearest answers contained in his work. An activist in prison writes why he is ready to die for the revolution:

ICH HABE NUR MEINER  
KLASSE GEDIENT. WENN ES AUCH AUS-  
SIEHT, ALS OB ICH DAMIT NICHTS ER-  
REICHT HABE, SO IST DAS DOCH NICHT  
DIE WAHRHEIT....  
UNSERE AUFGABE IST SEHR SCHWER,  
ABER ES IST DIE GRÖSSTE, DIE ES GIBT:  
DIE MENSCHHEIT VON IHREN UNTER-  
DRÜCKERN ZU BEFREIEN. VORHER HAT  
DAS LEBEN KEINEN WERT, AUSSER DA-  
FÜR. [sic]

S, VI, 407-408

In short, the welfare of mankind and the faith in Marxism's

eventual success are reason enough for the activist to sacrifice his life. But when a realist who is usually cynical about most matters answers "it is necessary to believe", he is being contradictory. Brecht certainly recognized that he was "...ein Mensch mit seinem Widerspruch",<sup>41</sup> and he was able to live with it. Brecht found more solace in believing Marxist doctrine than in admitting its shortcomings in the real world. Such compartmentalizing of theory and practice let him set aside criticism which assailed his conviction that only Marxism could solve mankind's problems.

There is another aspect to Brecht's fallacy of wanting to create a perfect society. He asked the activist to be selfless and to place Marxist idealism before personal materialism. Brecht was being pragmatic in Die Dreigroschenoper when he objected: "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral" (S, III, 99); in the "Lehrstücke", however, he reversed his stand; in these plays his former demand to place materialism first became a plea for the necessity of selflessly following Marxist idealism. Such a plea is not so very different from that of the Black Straw Hats in Die heilige Johanna, when they urge the workers to practice Christian idealism rather than be so materialistic as to want steady jobs. Yet, it seems that in real life Brecht tended, like Mother Courage and Galilei, always to put the important material things first. His Austrian passport, West German publisher, and Swiss bank account<sup>42</sup> suggest that the pedestrian slowness and unreliability of the East German solution to the problems of political and material conditions did not

satisfy him; he needed the reassurance of a financial security and political freedom that this communist collective did not offer him. Macheath proclaimed in Die Dreigroschenoper that only wealth could provide security: "Nur wer im Wohlstand lebt, lebt angenehm" (S, III, 85); and Kalle, longing for freedom, remarked dryly in the Flüchtlingsgespräche: "Der PaB ist der edelste Teil von einem Menschen."<sup>43</sup>

Certain weaknesses detract from the political effectiveness of the "Lehrstücke". The plays are intentionally very didactic, logical and theoretical. This causes the action to appear unreal and explains perhaps why the works lack emotional appeal. It is also questionable whether the recurrent insistence on brutality and violence makes the plays encouraging and attractive.

Brecht assumed in these works the rôle of a teacher<sup>44</sup> of Marxist doctrine, and tried to explain what the activist's ethical convictions should be, how he should act, and why the decision to use violence was justified. In the process, however, Brecht's concern for elucidating such theoretical aspects of Marxism prevented a realistic portrayal of conflict and action. This imbalance with the greater emphasis on the abstract did not lend the plays the quality of probability.

His characters, including even those of Die Mutter, are improbable because they are shadow-like personifications of Marxist theory rather than actual human beings. Brecht tries to oversimplify man's complex nature; the individual must make the collective's ethics his own, that is, substitute

Marxist expediency for the humane, and cold, hard reason<sup>45</sup> for his emotions of sympathy. The majority of Brecht's lesser protagonists in the "Lehrstücke" are incredible, puppet-like activists who rationally and unquestioningly accept Marxist idealism. The main character of Die MaBnahme is, however, more realistic whenever he acts as a non-Marxist, as an individual. Four times his emotions of sympathy urge him to make decisions independently of the party; each time he impedes the revolution or endangers its success. When he practices total self-abnegation, he is improbable. Here Brecht's adherence to theory usurped his usually very realistic portrayals of man's indomitable will to survive. Having him executed<sup>46</sup> seems unlikely because it is so drastic. (Brecht wanted an extreme case to demonstrate the necessity of subordinating the individual to the party; solidarity and the revolution were much more important.)

There is another reason why Brecht's didactic works fail politically. They lack the direct appeal and emotional fervour of political literature, such as speeches or pamphlets.<sup>47</sup> The politico-philosophical system of Marxist thought exerted tremendous rational appeal on Brecht; and he seems to be a rather unfeeling exponent of its doctrine. Yet, he did not accept the system unquestioningly, as a simple fact indicates: four plays (Das Badener Lehrstück, Der Jasager, Die MaBnahme, Die Mutter) treat the distressing conflict between sympathy and reason which the individual expe-

riences in trying to adopt the collective's ethics. Brecht quite realistically noted that the individual's decision to suppress his own highly inexpedient moral urges could only follow a profound inner struggle in which reason blotted out sympathy. Hence, it is possible to read these plays also as a record of Brecht's inner struggle to determine his own position. Die MaBnahme is a monument to the victory he attained over his personal objections to the necessity of violence. With his conflict deposited in a distant mental compartment out of the way, he could ignore that his pessimistic solution--the execution of the sympathetic objector--detracted emotionally and politically from his arguments for revolution. Another example of his ability to disregard the political ineffectiveness of his works is his rendering of the Communist Manifesto into verse! This intensely private interest in Marxist theory rather than in actual Marxist practice suggests that Brecht intentionally indulged in such compartmentalizations as an exercise in self-assurance. It is more plausible, however, that the abstract and poetic preoccupation with questions of doctrine afforded him greater personal satisfaction than a realistic and politically relevant treatment would have offered.

The "Lehrstücke" teach that the collective's ethics must replace the sympathetic emotions of the individual. In a note to Die MaBnahme Brecht states:

Für einige ethische Begriffe, wie Gerechtigkeit, Freiheit, Menschlichkeit usw., die in der "MaBnahme" vorkommen, gilt, was Lenin über Sittlichkeit sagt:

"Unsere Sittlichkeit leiten wir aus den Interessen des proletarischen Klassenkampfes ab."

S, IV, 314

The collective's ethics in Die Maßnahme are the same as those of the other three primarily Marxist "Lehrstücke": Das Badener Lehrstück, Der Jasager, and Die Mutter. Brecht had already shown in the materialist society of the capitalist bourgeois (Trommeln, Die Dreigroschenoper, Mahagonny, Die heilige Johanna) that man was faced with an ethical dilemma. Either he compromised his personal ideals of kindness, freedom and justice, and accepted the practices of the middle class or he would suffer impoverishment or death. The individual in the communist collective of the four "Lehrstücke" under discussion is also confronted with a similar moral dilemma. Either he agrees to renounce his personal altruism in order to merge with the collective, or, he must willingly --or unwillingly--allow himself to be executed. Brecht shows in these didactic plays that the individual does consent to his own liquidation because he realizes that only the violence of communist solidarity can create a new society where there will be justice for all.

Das Badener Lehrstück, Die Maßnahme, and Die Mutter portray the development of an activist dedicated to the revolution. In each of these plays and in Die heilige Johanna the worker learns to shape his own destiny by becoming acquainted with the nature of the Klassenkampf. Activists teach him that social injustices must not be attributed to divine or political necessity; rather, they are created by

the capitalists. In "Rede an dänische Arbeiterschauspieler über die Kunst der Beobachtung"<sup>48</sup> Brecht speaks to the discontented but now enlightened workers:

...Habt ihr denn  
Nicht gehört...  
In die entfernten Dörfer wurde gemeldet  
Daß des Menschen Schicksal der Mensch ist!  
Darum  
Fordern wir...  
...die Menschenwelt  
So zu zeigen wie sie ist; von den Menschen  
gemacht und veränderbar.

The common man must reject his passive acceptance of the capitalist's terms, cease to compromise his material demands, and identify his ambitions with the aims of the Marxist cause. His discontent must become a purposeful anger,<sup>49</sup> which gives him the strength to rebel, to compromise everything but the aims of the party, and to sacrifice his own life. Such ideal revolutionary figures appear in a poem written in exile, "Die handelnd Unzufriedenen":

Sie waren geduldig nur im Kampf gegen die Unterdrücker  
Verträglich nur zu denen, die die Ausbeutung nicht ertrugen  
Müde nur des Unrechts.

G, VI, 77

The question of solidarity occupied a key position in Brecht's thought. He remarked in a discussion about the plebeians in Shakespeare's Coriolanus that man's resolve to rebel against the oppressors was difficult because it was so crucial: "Bedenkt wie schwer sich Menschen zum Aufstand entschließen!"<sup>50</sup> Lacking the support of solidarity, the subjected individual becomes resigned to his lot, consequently, he believes that a single effort to revolt is useless. Pela-

gea Wlassowa in Die Mutter thinks similarly when, talking of the factory owner's exploitation of the workers, she states: "Nur eines habe ich nicht bemerkt, nämlich daß man dagegen etwas hätte machen können." (S, V, 37). As long as she cannot envisage a united effort and the hope of successfully rebelling, she continues to accept the injustices of the ruling class. Brecht considers the individual's passive acceptance of exploitation as the betrayal of all the workers' rights to enjoy equal social and material opportunities.

The insignificance of individual identity, the importance of man's social responsibilities and the solidarity of effort are new concepts in Brecht's thought. They replace his former concern for the individual and his personal struggle to improve his own welfare. Compared to the early plays, Brecht no longer believes that the individual has to capitulate to his oppressors. Since Galy Gay and Widow Begbick in Mann ist Mann were interested primarily in surviving, they meekly behaved as the exigencies of every situation required. In the "Lehrstücke" Brecht rejects the worker's indifference to his oppressors, but applauds the agitator's unconcern for his personal fate; in the communist collective the survival of the individual ranks secondary to the solidarity and welfare of all men.

Party solidarity requires total self-abnegation of the individual. He must ignore the urge to be kind as well as suppress the desire to be rewarded for personal achievement.

The song "Lob der illegalen Arbeit" in Die Maßnahme treats this very problem. The Chorus acknowledges the individual's reluctance to accept the necessity of anonymity: "Wer täte nicht viel für den Ruhm, aber wer / Tut's für das Schweigen" (S, IV, 267)? By demanding that the interests of the collective come before the individual's, Brecht is naïvely, yet earnestly, saying that Marxist theory must be stronger than the reality of human nature. He first presented this question of the individual's wish for recognition in Scene 8, "Das Examen", and Scene 9, "Ruhm und Enteignung", of Das Badener Lehrstück. There, the crashed flier fails to suppress his desire for fame,<sup>51</sup> whereas three of his companions succeed in doing so.<sup>52</sup> The Learned Chorus obliterates the crashed flier's name from human memory--symbolically liquidating him; he had persisted in being too individualistic<sup>53</sup> and, as such, was no longer useful to the collective.

Das Badener Lehrstück re-examines according to Marxist doctrine a question which Brecht had treated with the figure of Galy Gay five years earlier, namely, man's willingness to assume a new identity by permitting his sense of values to be reshaped, whereby he becomes the instrument of an impersonal cause. Die Maßnahme treats this problem in the abstract. Here Brecht has the agitators describe the renunciation of their individual identity and the suppression of their emotions of sympathy with the expression: "...unsere Gesichter auslöschen" (S, IV, 263). Thereafter they wear masks<sup>54</sup> to symbolize this act of virtual dehumanization.

The willingness of the activist to renounce his individual identity proceeds from his acceptance of the doctrine of consent ("Einverständnis").

The necessity of this consent is demonstrated in each of the "Lehrstücke". In Das Badener Lehrstück Brecht equates man's self-abnegation with the beginning of usefulness to the cause; when the individual consents to efface himself fully, he has reached his "kleinste Größe" (S, III, 307) and can partake in the revolution. For those who forego personal materialism, as do the three flight mechanics in this play, consent is easy to learn. Each assures himself of achieving more in the collective than do individuals independently. Whoever cannot practice renunciation or agree to his individual insignificance must be liquidated.

Brecht states forcefully in Das Badener Lehrstück and Die Maßnahme that the doctrine of consent requires the activist to ignore the suffering of the exploited masses. He warns that man must choke back his emotions of sympathy at the sight of misery, and ignore the desire to help. The deaths of the Jasager and the Young Comrade caution that man's failure to prevent by sheer force of will a conflict between his sympathetic emotions and the collective's political rationale will inevitably result in his liquidation; his success in preventing this conflict results, however, in the party's ethics becoming the law of "Mitleidlosigkeit".<sup>55</sup>

In both Der Jasager and Die Maßnahme Brecht stresses that the individual must be asked whether he consents to the

collective's measures. Each protagonist gives the right answer by rationally and voluntarily agreeing to his own execution. On the surface, this kind of consent seems valuable, because it supports the infallibility of the party's decisions. But really, this consent is meaningless; Brecht states explicitly that it makes no difference whether the individual acknowledges the necessity of his own liquidation. He must accept it: "Aber auch wenn er nicht einverstanden ist, muß er verschwinden, und zwar ganz" (S, IV, 305). It seems that Brecht hesitates overly much in admitting that the end justifies the means. The important innovation with Der Neinsager<sup>56</sup> is the creation of a humane custom which permits man to help his fellows. But sympathy and help are possible in this play only because the mission of the teacher and pupils is no longer intended as a parallel to the goal of the communist collective. Brecht was, however, truer to his conviction of the necessity of refusing help in Der Jasager and Die Maßnahme. He was determined to show in both plays that the necessity of revolution could not be compromised by humanitarian considerations.

It is revealing at this point to compare statements in Die Maßnahme and Die heilige Johanna about acts which the communist collective and Joan Dark call moral and honourable. In Die Maßnahme the chorus teaches that the activist can consider moral every expedient act:

Mit wem säße der Rechtliche nicht zusammen  
Dem Recht zu helfen?  
Welche Medizin schmeckte zu schlecht

Dem Sterbenden?  
 Welche Niedrigkeit begingest du nicht, um  
 Die Niedrigkeit auszutilgen?  
 Könntest du die Welt endlich verändern, wofür  
 Wärest du dir zu gut?  
 Wer bist du?  
 Versinke in Schmutz  
 Umarme den Schlächter, aber  
 Ändere die Welt: sie braucht es!  
 S, IV, 289-290

Such directives indicate that there is no possibility of a moral conflict taking place in the activist. He has decided to suppress in himself his moral urge to do good and can ignore the suffering of others. Because he is held responsible only to the party, he does not consider himself personally responsible for whatever he may have to do. The just end of the communist collective negates the injustice of the means, hence, for the Marxist there can be no question of guilt, whether individual or collective. Expediency is thus the activist's only virtue.<sup>57</sup> Joan proclaims in similar terms the ethics of the revolution:

Denn nichts werde gezählt als gut, und sehe es  
 aus wie immer, als was  
 Wirklich hilft, und nichts gelte als ehrenhaft  
 mehr als was  
 Diese Welt endgültig ändert: sie braucht es.  
 S, IV, 202

For her, too, the only good and honourable acts are the expedient ones. Brecht avoids saying "moral" acts. She urges man to do what the activists in Die Maßnahme do; they substitute the belief in Marxist ethics for their own moral urge to do good. Their belief in Marxist ethics frees them from remorse and self-recrimination. They are easily able to make the expedient<sup>58</sup> decisions required by the revolution,

particularly in refusing to help the Young Comrade and executing him instead. These are moral acts from the point of view of the party because they are supposed to bring the Marxist promise closer to fruition.

But what of the sympathetic individual? Is not his goodness moral? By whose terms is it moral? Brecht again avoids calling it so. An unusual metaphor from Die Maßnahme helps explain why. In this metaphor the agitators' desire to help the Young Comrade is equated with primitive<sup>59</sup> animal instinct: "Wie das Tier dem Tiere hilft / Wünschten auch wir uns, ihm zu helfen..." (S, IV, 303-304). Brecht's comparison is fallacious in the respect that animals do not possess the urge to help each other; man does have it,<sup>60</sup> provided he is not forced to suppress it as the agitators are. This comparison brings up two important points. Firstly, what Brecht is really saying in this metaphor is that party dogma prevents man in the communist collective from following his good instincts as he would like to. Brecht believes that man has only good instincts; he thinks that it is society, whether capitalist or communist, which forces man to become evil. Secondly, in this particular instance Brecht wants to discredit the moral urge by calling it animal.

In general, Brecht does not regard man's goodness as a moral urge; rather, he relegates it to a biological level; he considers that it is an inborn instinctive quality, the manifestation of a natural law,<sup>61</sup> as the actions of his maternal figures (Kattrin and Grusche) suggest. In Brecht's

plays both capitalist society and the communist collective make the individual (Joan Dark, the Young Comrade) suffer or execute him for what he thought were good acts. Obviously, what each of them considers good is inconsistent "with the generally accepted standards of goodness or rightness"<sup>62</sup> of either society; thus, from this point of view Joan's acts, for example, cannot be called moral. Brecht did not call man's compassionate urge to be kind and help others moral because of his strictly sociological (Marxist) position; he could not apply the standard of capitalist or communist ethics to this urge, for he wished to distinguish between it and what they call moral. The capitalists, as Brecht claims in Die Dreigroschenoper and Die sieben Todsünden der Kleinbürger,<sup>63</sup> call moral only that behaviour which produces profit; the communists in the "Lehrstücke" consider moral only that which furthers the party's ends. Man has to learn in capitalist society and the communist collective that he cannot be as he wishes; he has to conform. All acts which enable him to do so earn him the approval of his respective society. If he behaves as the controlling forces of his particular society expect him to, he is called moral.

Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe belongs to this consideration of the "Lehrstücke" because it also treats the conflict of individual ethics with those of Marxism-Leninism. The gradual disillusionment and dehumanization of the Christian idealist Joan Dark portrays the necessary stages in the

formation of a Marxist activist. Pelagea Wlassowa in Die Mutter--also a primer of communist doctrine--undergoes a development similar to Joan's. In both plays Brecht claims that the capitalist-bourgeois exploit Christian teachings in order to pacify the discontented workers and distract them from the true causes of economic injustices. Joan's views on the use of force resemble those of Pelagea.

Joan's refusal to consider the use of violence stems from a desperate attempt to maintain her ethical convictions and her faith in a benevolent God. She fears that if she delivers the letter to the striking revolutionaries, she might become the instrument of the apparently nihilistic and doomed struggle of the Marxists:

Was  
 Steht in dem Brief? Ich könnt nichts tun  
 Was mit Gewalt getan sein müßte und  
 Gewalt erzeugte. Ein solcher stünd ja  
 Voller Arglist gegen den Mitmenschen  
 Außerhalb aller Abmachung  
 Die unter Menschen gewöhnlich ist.  
 Nicht mehr zugehörig, fände er  
 In der nicht mehr vertrauten Welt sich  
 Nicht mehr zurecht. Über seinem Haupte  
 Liefen jetzt die Gestirne ohne die  
 Alte Regel. Die Wörter  
 Änderten ihm ihren Sinn. Die Unschuld  
 Verließe ihn, der verfolgt und verfolgt wird.  
 Er sieht nichts mehr arglos.  
 So könnt ich nicht sein. Und drum geh ich.  
 S, IV, 159-160

Her timid statement is significant because it describes exactly the situation of the Marxist. Joan's Christian idealism, and emotional protests to the necessity of violence, contrast vividly with the enlightened pragmatism of the striking workers. Their belief in violence is unshakable; they urge

their fellows to resist the factory owners and strike-breakers even though the police use machine-guns:

Hört auf niemand, glaubt nichts  
Aber prüfet jeden Vorschlag  
Der zur wirklichen Änderung führt. Und vor  
  allem lernt:  
Daß es nur durch Gewalt geht und  
Wenn ihr es selber macht.

S, IV, 154

Like Joan, Pelagea has religious objections to the use of violence. She refuses to partake in a demonstration of the workers and the unemployed on May 1st because she is reluctant to act contrary to her belief in a just God:

Du weißt, daß ich an einen Gott im Himmel  
glaube. Ich will nichts von Gewalt wissen....  
wenn ich sterbe, möchte ich wenigstens nichts  
Gewalttätiges getan haben.

S, V, 40

Pelagea's fear also stems from having seen the police use force to quell disturbances and riots of the workers in the past. Her reservations are, however, gradually dispelled and her uncertain belief in violence as a panacea of the ills of the working class becomes revolutionary zeal when her son is imprisoned for demonstrating for a just cause.

Joan abandons her religious convictions when she discovers the brutal suppression of the workers and the financial complicity of religious institutions, such as her own "Schwarze Stroh Hüte", with the capitalist monopolies. She learns that it is in the financial interest of both groups to continue the present system of spiritual and economic domination.<sup>64</sup> She rejects the desire to help others after she realizes, angry, and conscious of her failure, that instead of helping the workers, she has betrayed them. Her last words:

"Es hilft nur Gewalt, wo Gewalt herrscht, und /Es helfen nur Menschen, wo Menschen sind" (S, IV, 206) affirm the necessity of adopting brutal means to combat brutality.

The description in Die heilige Johanna of Mauler's brutal measures ("MaBnahmen") to establish himself as head of the meat packers' monopoly and to re-open the slaughter houses anticipated Brecht's choice of the title of the later play Die MaBnahme. Mauler announces his solution to the workers' misery:

Denn nur durch  
ÄuBerste MaBnahmen, die hart erscheinen  
könnten  
Weil sie einige treffen, ziemlich viele sogar  
Kurz: die meisten, beinah alle  
Kann jetzt gerettet werden dies System  
Von Kauf und Verkauf...

S, IV, 186

The capitalist justifies extreme measures of violence in order to maintain the status quo whereas the communists justify their violence in the "Lehrstücke" by the determination to abolish the status quo.

Joan's statement: "Es helfen nur Menschen, wo Menschen sind" describes the dehumanization of man both in capitalist society and in the communist collective. Her words also point to a future age, for they suggest that the renunciation of personal ethics is temporary. Her declaration includes the reservation that man must be realistic and fight an ignoble oppressor with the only effective means: those of the oppressor. Joan, the pacifist, renounces passivity and looks forward to a new social ideal to be realized by pragmatism and violence, to the day when man's moral urge

will not betray him.

Joan is unsuccessful in her attempts to urge Mauler and the monopolists to relieve poverty. Her fruitless efforts to exhort the rich and the poor alike to practise kindness and Christian love are intentionally exaggerated by Brecht in order to demonstrate unequivocally the futility of religion and social reform. The impossibility of social reform bettering the lot of the masses in Die heilige Johanna is a further argument in favour of violence.

This suggests another reason why the Marxists refuse to alleviate the misery of the exploited. Compassion can mistakenly lead to reforming society rather than overthrowing it by revolution. In Die MaBnahme reform is symbolized by the Young Comrade's desire to provide better shoes for the unfortunate barge pullers. Such attempts to lessen man's suffering are synonymous with the desire to humanize the strict ideology of the party. This is called revisionism by the Marxists. They discourage it because they fear that it disguises social evils instead of destroying the system which causes them.

Brecht frequently urges that compassion become furious anger in times of suppression, misery, and war.<sup>65</sup> Actually, Joan's reversal from pity to anger when proclaiming the need for violence marks the beginning of this theme in Brecht's work.<sup>66</sup> Brecht also discourages the isolated act of pity and the good deed because he wishes to emphasize the necessity of viewing such acts in terms of their relevance to all society.

In the poem "Die Nachtlager" Brecht reasons that friendliness and help are useless and ineffectual because they do not abolish social evils. Giving a beggar some money to find a night's lodging may aid the beggar, but it is worthless in terms of bringing the revolution closer:

Aber die Welt wird dadurch nicht anders  
Die Beziehungen zwischen den Menschen bessern sich  
dadurch nicht  
Das Zeitalter der Ausbeutung wird dadurch nicht verkürzt.  
G, III, 166

Brecht does not say: "Do not help the beggar"; rather, he means: "Do not help the poor in this minor way only; learn instead that there is no social necessity for the existence of poverty."<sup>67</sup> "Die Nachtlager" has a certain calmness, a pronounced resignation which suggests that Brecht is being more pessimistic than Marxist when he fears that man's pity will always be unproductive of social change. This contrasts with Joan Dark's anger: "Oh, folgenlose Güte! Unmerkliche Gesinnung! / Ich habe nichts geändert" (S, IV, 202). Her exclamation has none of the pessimism in "Die Nachtlager"; it is a militant outcry to all men to suppress all goodness, because it is both unproductive and misleading. The party in Das Badener Lehrstück promises that such pitilessness and violence as Joan advocates are not the final answers to changing the world; the final answer lies in abolishing conditions which create the need both for help and for terror. How surprising it is for Joan to learn that, paradoxically, this can be achieved only by relying on violence. In the pamphlet Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit (1934) Brecht ex-

plains that the natural attribute of goodness<sup>68</sup> is weakness. Man's kindness cannot resist the abuse of exploitation by the poor and unemployed; they need more help and pity than the good person can give, as Shen Te was to deplore in the later play Der gute Mensch von Sezuan.

Die heilige Johanna and the "Lehrstücke" belong together as parallel works of conversion and conviction.<sup>69</sup> The problems of pity, help, consent, and violence are basic to each of these plays. In each, Brecht rejects the individual's willingness to help, or the desire for social reform because he believes that neither achieves social change. In four of the plays the protagonist learns only when dying that he must adopt and carry out the teachings of Marxist doctrine. In Der Jasager and Die Maßnahme he has to give up his individual identity, and agree to his own execution for having made the mistake of wanting to be kind in an age of cruelty; his pity is useless in the struggle. Because pity in most men is a natural rather than a social urge, Brecht shows that it always fails to create a society in which pity will be superfluous.

The sympathetic individual's hesitation to use violence is one of Brecht's favorite leitmotifs. It occurs wherever he depicts the individual's gradual development from a helpless, exploited worker to a determined political revolutionary. In Die Mutter, Pelagea's hesitation to sanction violence becomes a firm decision to revolt against the capitalist bour-

geois. The agitators in Die Maßnahme hesitate to kill the Young Comrade, ultimately do so, and thereby further the revolution. Brecht's last play,<sup>70</sup> Die Tage der Commune, restates the basic precept of Marx and Engels that the middle class and their institutions can be overthrown only by violence. Here and in Die heilige Johanna Brecht focuses on the failure to use violence; he wishes to emphasize that man must not fear debasing himself. The delegates in Die Tage der Commune argue the pros and cons of using violence to realize their ideals:

RIGAULT: ...Und doch verlange  
ich nur Terror gegen Terror, obwohl wir allein das  
Recht auf Terror haben!

RUF: ...Wollen Sie  
leugnen, daß die Anwendung von Gewalt auch  
den, der sie anwendet, erniedrigt?

RIGAULT: Nein, ich leugne es nicht.  
S, X, 417

The members of the Paris Commune repeat the mistake of the Young Comrade in Die Maßnahme: they die because they cannot agree that the end justifies the means; they refuse to suppress their moral objections to a brutal extermination of their suppressors. Their failure ruthlessly to dehumanize themselves reaffirms Brecht's conviction that absolute ethical principles are senseless in an age when revolution is more necessary. Die Tage der Commune is significant since it represents Brecht's most mature thinking about these problems. His argument has not changed; the message of this play is still that of the "Lehrstücke": "Die Lehre der Klassiker / Das Abc des Kommunismus" (S, IV, 307). Brecht's advocacy of

the necessity of violence remained so vigorous during the twenty years from Das Badener Lehrstück to Die Tage der Commune because he was able to retain an unfaltering belief in the promise of Marxist theory.

## Chapter V

THE PLAYS OF EXILE  
 THE HEROIC SACRIFICE--  
 FUTILITY OR POLITICAL NECESSITY?

Brecht had represented the urge to do good as a dangerous, even fatal, weakness of simple people, such as Joan Dark, the Jasager, the Young Comrade and the Coolie. He had shown that it was only the naïve who attempted to do good. Why only they? They lacked wisdom, cunning, self-interest, and rational self-control. These qualities enabled their more sophisticated fellows to realize that, in an age of adversity, to pity and help others would inevitably result in their own detriment. Widow Begbick, Peachum, as well as the Agitators in Die MaBnahme were sufficiently wise and reasonable to recognize the personal and material disadvantages of philanthropy; they were able to suppress their moral urges, and capitulated to the inexorable economic or political necessities of their situation.

But even the most rational of Brecht's protagonists in the plays of exile, such as Mother Courage and Shen Te, were unable to be consistently realistic. They found themselves yielding to their emotions of sympathy in times of extreme want or cruelty, and with disastrous results. Because man was punished for good deeds, Brecht maintained that the compromise of all charitable intentions, capitulation to a superior force, and the toleration of even the worst evils were sensible and justifiable. But he had certain reservations:

He condemned the passive acceptance of all forms of tyranny when man became an opportunist and enslaved himself for the sake of gain. He condoned the necessity of suffering<sup>71</sup> the most outrageous injustices only if man was struggling desperately to survive. Brecht warned also, that the passivity and resignation of both the opportunistic and the naïve permitted the unscrupulous to rule unchallenged by allowing the social structure to remain unjust and unchanged.

In his later plays, Brecht's ideas concerning how man should act seem to contradict what he thought in earlier plays. In Mahagonny, Die heilige Johanna and the "Lehrstücke", for example, he had viewed the sympathetic individual's behaviour disapprovingly; his disapprobation derived from his Marxist ideal of expediency; whatever helped to change society was justified. After the communist plays, Brecht tends to have a more sympathetic attitude toward man's survival struggle. He is more compassionate because he is less concerned with changing the world than with proving the need for change. There is another reason for his pity. The difficulties and dilemma of his protagonists were often his own; what he condemned in others in his plays, he also condemned on occasion in himself, as is particularly evident in his lyrics, as for example in "Ballade von der Billigung der Welt" (G, III, 77-84), "Das zehnte Sonett" (G, II, 147), and "Böser Morgen" (G, VII, 11).

Brecht's "Lehrstücke" proved the necessity of liquidating the good individual because he failed to further the progress

of the revolution. In no other work did Brecht condemn this political inefficacy of man's kindness so vigorously as in Die Maßnahme. But it is striking that, after the "Lehrstücke", in those plays of exile written after 1937, the majority of Brecht's central characters are individuals who are kind. Their nature is basically good, and their most important acts derive from pity, mother-love, and the love of mankind. Brecht persisted in portraying the good individual and his difficulties, because he wanted to demonstrate the need for social change; concerning this, Eric Bentley writes: "Brecht is one of those artists...who do not really change their subject from one work to the next but, all their life long, worry the same point."<sup>72</sup> Yet Brecht was no more able in later plays than in the "Lehrstücke" to show how the change was to come about. He became drawn more to portraying human nature and the conflicts and compromises that were an inevitable part of life.

The plays of exile are particularly concerned with the good individual's rôle in society and his potential effectiveness as an agent of social good and political change. Many of these plays describe situations in which the heroism and martyrdom of this individual are justifiable, because they alter the structure of society. These works exhibit Brecht's ambivalent attitude toward the figure of the hero. He exaggerated--and later regretted<sup>73</sup>--the anti-heroic attitude of Kragler in Trommeln; he condemned the hero as a tyrant lusting

for fame, riches and power in Das Verhör des Lukullus; yet he idealizes the heroic freedom fighter in Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar. The criterion for Brecht's judgment of the hero is the extent to which he benefits society; that is, Brecht considers that the necessity of heroism is proportional to its usefulness. Tertullia in Scene 6 of Das Verhör explains to Lukullus that the judges, all of them commoners, pay most attention to "den Nutzen eines Menschen" (S, VII, 232). Also, they find that the testimony of kings and generals is not as valuable as the common man's in assessing the social worth of the individual's deeds.

Brecht's rather Marxist portraits of the heroes of antiquity, Lukullus, Creon, and Coriolan, were intended to depict efficient mass murderers who have in common a ruthless desire for self-aggrandizement in wars of conquest as well as a boundless contempt for the plebeian and his welfare. These heroes are vivid contrasts to the martyrs Simone Machard, Jeanne d'Arc, and Antigone. In their determination to defend France and Thebes and save their people, these heroines resolve to sacrifice their lives, but not their beliefs in human dignity, justice and freedom. (Their lack of concern for their own survival recalls the scene in Das Badener Lehrstück in which man humbly assumes his "kleinste GröBe" (S, III, 307),<sup>and</sup> agrees to his own liquidation in order to serve the state best).

All of Brecht's political heroines believe in the necessity of resistance and violence. He demonstrates that

their heroic struggles and their martyrdom are the only effective means of encouraging and inspiring the suppressed to rise up and free themselves from their oppressors. None of these heroines is tragic, for each achieves her end. The success of each justifies her self-sacrifice. The resistance of Simone and Antigone in their national interest is intended as a parallel to the activism of the Marxist revolutionaries of the "Lehrstücke". The desire to win the freedom of the state and the city state corresponds, then, to the necessity of revolution. If Simone and Antigone are conceived of as Marxist revolutionaries, they indicate a certain departure of Brecht from doctrine, which believes in the masses, rather than particular individuals as the agents of social change. Jeanne d'Arc is less a legendary figure than a Marxist revolutionary in medieval garb.<sup>74</sup> As might be expected, Brecht stresses the political rather than religious significance of Jeanne's martyrdom and self-sacrifice. This is shown by her decision to reject her recantation and become an example of resistance. She decides to do so upon learning that the people's pity for her has become revolutionary anger now directed against the English occupationary forces. The voices she hears are those of the people, not those of angels. Her martyrdom is justifiable for Brecht because it benefits the common man.

In Die Gewehre, Brecht interprets the individual's goodness as a betrayal of the interests of the people. Frau Carrar's love for her son Juan is made to appear

exaggerated and selfish.<sup>75</sup> Her pacifism and neutrality are condemned, are even traitorous<sup>76</sup> because her motives for keeping Juan out of the Spanish Civil War are purely personal and are eclipsed by a greater national need. Brecht warned in this play that mother-love is totally irrational and blinds a person to his political responsibilities. He rejects Frau Carrar's and the Church's pacifism because it allows the killing of the Spanish people to continue unopposed; the argument that Frau Carrar is against the freedom fighters because she is not for them, reiterates the message of the "Lehrstücke": only solidarity and violence can abolish violence.

As noted in Chapter IV, Brecht had demanded that man's pity for the suppressed become anger which would abolish the causes of their suffering. In the plays which justify the heroic self-sacrifice and martyrdom, he shows that love, noble idealism and patriotism must be transformed into an anger which spurs the protagonist to resist oppression. Frau Carrar's love for Juan becomes the anger to avenge his murder. Her sudden revolutionary idealism is, however, not just a desire for revenge; she wishes to assure for all men the freedom to live peacefully which was denied her husband, her son, and now herself. Simone's love for André, her brother, and her patriotism, too, are transformed into anger when she witnesses the opportunism and capitulation of the town's leaders: the innkeeper Soupeau, Mayor Chavez and Captain Fétain. Her acts of sabotage and the martyrdom of

her punishment inspire a similar spirit of patriotic resistance in the refugees and the poor. Antigone's rebellion against Creon stems from her love for her brother and from her horror at the course of her uncle's political ambitions. His cruel slaying and humiliation of Polyneikes deeply wounds Antigone's sense of human decency, outrages her family honour and offends her respect for the gods. Her personal censure of Creon and her sister's cowardly capitulation to him inspire her with the courage to expose his tyrannical rule and incite the people of Thebes against him.

In Mutter Courage and in Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, Brecht portrays another type of self-abnegation, the maternal sacrifice. Kattrin and Grusche symbolize for him the mother-protector; they are Mother-Love personified. He was particularly intrigued by the figure of the mother. Two plays bear the word "Mutter" in their titles. No less than eleven plays<sup>77</sup> present the mother or the mother-figure; most of these works treat her love and her efforts to save her son, her nation or mankind. Brecht's fascination for the maternal figure<sup>78</sup> was due, perhaps, to his respect for the eternal principle of motherhood, for the mother's instinctive readiness to sacrifice herself in the struggle to preserve the human race. Also, the mother symbolized for Brecht certain ever resurgent aspects of woman's nature: compassion, unselfishness and maternal goodness. These were dynamic, vital forces which asserted themselves courageously when man

needed help most.

The survival of Brecht's three greatest women, Mother Courage, Shen Te, and Grusche, teaches that in times of want and danger, such powerful maternal instincts must be either ruthlessly suppressed or cunningly protected. But Kattrin does not possess the self-control and cunning necessary to deny her innermost yearnings. It was necessary for Mother Courage to guard against emotions of sympathy, not only in herself, but in Kattrin, too. She was worried that Kattrin, the commiserable victim of man's brutality, pitied the helpless to the extent where it endangered her own existence. She warned Kattrin: "...du bist selber ein Kreuz: du hast ein gutes Herz" (S, VII, 77), and: "Sei nicht zu gutmütig, Kattrin, seis nie mehr....Halt dich immer recht still" (S, VII, 78). Kattrin once risked her life to rescue a baby from a burning house, but was forced to return the child to its mother. It is Kattrin's fate never to become a mother and to remain a "Kindernarr" (S, VII, 157). Mutter Courage teaches that man is better off without absolute virtues (Scene 9), but Kattrin's heroic self-sacrifice gives the lie to this lesson. Although she dies, the townspeople are spared. Her courageous act can not be discredited just because she is a "Kindernarr". She does something which no one else dares to do, and she succeeds. She resists armed might, whereas the peasant family capitulates to the soldiers in order to save their animals.

Grusche's initial unwillingness to rescue the abandoned

Michael contrasts with Kattrín's spontaneous and compassionate self-sacrifice. Grusche is well aware that her pity for the child will require great self-abnegation and expose her to very real dangers. Like Kattrín, her later actions also demonstrate that she is unable to repress her maternal longings and love for the helpless. Unlike Kattrín, she does possess the very real qualities of self-control and cunning necessary to ensure not only the survival of the child but also her own. Thanks to this prudence, Grusche is Brecht's first maternal figure who is able both to help others and to achieve self-fulfillment. What a change from the "Lehrstücke" which maintained that man does not and must not help the pitiable individual! Also, the validity of Brecht's insight in the early plays and operas that the individual must be more concerned with his own welfare than with compassion for others is partly refuted in Der kaukasische Kreidekreis--even by the males--for Grusche's fiancé Simon, her "husband" Jussup (a Biblical Joseph?), and the sympathetic Azdak assist Grusche when she needs help most.

Der kaukasische Kreidekreis stands apart from all other plays of Brecht. Its fortuitous and fairytale-like conclusion is an exception to his frequently disastrous or pessimistic endings. In no other drama do all the poor experience such a helpful form of justice as here. This is because Brecht was so interested elsewhere in showing injustice and teaching that brutal, realistic means had to be used to abolish it. This play is also the only work in which self-abnegation

benefits the protagonist, the figure of the mother. As a result, Grusche represents the triumph of the maternal instinct.

Even though the individual's sympathy sometimes favours the oppressed and needy, the Marxist Brecht claims<sup>79</sup> that the act of help is futile because it offers only temporary relief. It cannot change adverse conditions; it may prolong an already unfortunate situation which no act of love or kindness can alter. On the one hand, Kattrin's sacrifice is futile from the Marxist point of view<sup>in</sup> that it does not bring about social change. But, on the other, Brecht justifies her deed morally in terms of the good it accomplishes. His frequent portrayal of the maternal self-sacrifice reveals its quality of greatness. He considered this gesture the most truthful expression of woman's sincerity and love. Her act is also great, because it defends the right to life of others in spite of conditions, which, according to Brecht, make most men ignoble and insincere.

Simone, Antigone and Jeanne d'Arc are studies in the justification of martyrdom and the heroic self-sacrifice; in contrast, the Neinsager, Galilei, Keuner, Schweyk and Azdak are portraits of the repudiation of martyrdom and heroism. Between these groups stand Brecht's testimonies to the futility and greatness of the maternal sacrifice, *Mother Courage* and *Shen Te*.

Mutter Courage repeats Brecht's argument contained in

Die Dreigroschenoper and Mahagonny that man's heartlessness results from the fact that pity for others is impossible because it is economically ruinous for oneself. Brecht shows that for years Mother Courage is able to strangle her urge to help; she transforms compassion into philosophic humour and forced indifference. Her experience of life's struggle has taught her to refrain from making material and personal sacrifices for others. For example, she would like to keep her officers' shirts in order to sell them later for a profit, but Kattrin and the Chaplain, overcome with pity for the wounded peasants, compel her to give up the linen for nothing. The sutler-woman does succeed in ignoring the Chaplain's plea to rescue a child and another person from the burning farmhouse. Her prudence does not let her forget her financial responsibility toward Kattrin and herself. She believes that she can never afford to assist others, whether she is called upon to save the life of one of her own children or anybody else. On another occasion, under the pressure of time, she resists for several precious minutes the necessity of sacrificing her wagon to save Swiss Cheese; since her business depends on this vehicle, she hesitates; she fears that poverty and starvation will be the lot of herself and her children if she sells to Yvette. Although she finally does decide to part with the wagon, she unintentionally is saved from having to do so by the sound of the shots which kill Swiss Cheese. Shortly afterward, her song, "Das Lied von der groBen Kapitulation", indicates that she resolves once

again to follow consistently her doctrine of expediency and profit. She prefers not to protest the injustice of her fine and the damage done to her vehicle: "Warum, wenn ich aufmuck, möchts das Geschäft schädigen" (S, VII, 134). It is ironical that several years later, when reduced to begging for food, she and the cook sing another song, "Das Lied von Salomon... und andere große Geister, denens nicht genützt hat" (S, VII, 184-188), which advises man to reject the cardinal virtues, among them the urge to help the needy! It is amusing that both Mother Courage and the cook claim to practice the virtues of their song when really, they are most successful in rejecting them: "...wenn wir anders wären...möchten wir vielleicht satt sein..." (S, VII, 187). The fact is, they are already "anders" and yet they are starving. Conditions are so bad that to stay alive even without these virtues is a herculean feat. On this occasion Mother Courage has to make what is perhaps the most poignant decision of her life: to leave with the cook or to stay with Kattrin, to be callous and have enough to eat, or to be compassionate and risk starvation. Mother Courage had warned the cook that Kattrin made her own already difficult life even more difficult, because she was so compassionate: "Die leidet am Mitleid" (S, VII, 184). Nevertheless, it is this apparently helpless daughter who finally elicits Mother Courage's pity. Her willingness to remain with Kattrin, and her spontaneous sympathy contrast with the business-like pitilessness ("...er hat ein Kopf fürs Geschäft..." S, VII, 182) of the cook: "Das wär recht

unvernünftig," he says, "ich könnt's aber nicht ändern. Ich bin kein Unmensch, nur, das Wirtshaus ist ein kleines" (S, VII, 188). Actually, he is the mirror-image of Mother Courage herself. She has also had "ein Kopf fürs Geschäft", has been "kein Unmensch", has been reasonable about things. But from Mother Courage's present point of view, he is inhuman, and she knows she would be inhuman, too, if she deserted Kattrin. Her decision to remain with her daughter and give up the security of the cook's little inn is her most humane act. It represents a complete reversal of values, a repudiation of her former considerations of expediency. Her resolution is heroic. Her sacrifice is both futile and great. Futile, because her situation remains unchanged; the struggle of eking out a living from the war is a challenge which she is destined to lose. Great, because her courage, blind optimism, and maternal compassion give her the strength to place for the first time human values above material considerations and even above her own survival.

Brecht wrote Mutter Courage (1939) and Der gute Mensch (1938-1940) concurrently, as the dates of composition suggest. Hence, it is not surprising that the two plays bear close resemblances to each other. In Mutter Courage, The Thirty Years' War--Brecht's favorite image of the survival struggle was war--is portrayed as an economic undertaking. An economic war is also the setting of Der gute Mensch.

If Shen Te personifies a natural law: love for mankind, her alter ego, Shui Ta, personifies another natural law:

man's ruthlessness in the survival struggle. In terms of pity, Shen Te is an elevated (gesteigerte) Kattrín, but with a dual nature, the rational part of which corresponds more closely to Mother Courage. The problems of pity and love which were so disastrous for Kattrín and Mother Courage prove also to be Shen Te's undoing. Her love for her neighbours and her love for Yang Sun threaten her ruin. Her love for her unborn child forces her to defend both it and herself with a mercantile spirit infinitely more heartless than that of Mother Courage; indeed, as Shui Ta (the "Tabakkönig"), Shen Te is the capitalist terror Pierpont Mauler (the "Fleischkönig") reincarnated.

Both Mother Courage and Yvette had warned against the confusion of an overpowering love; they ironically called this love a "Himmelsmacht" (S, VII, 198). Yvette's helpless love for the cook, Pfeifenpieter, caused her to end as a prostitute. Mother Courage cautioned Kattrín that love would enslave her, too (S, VII, 98). Because Shen Te loves her neighbours and Sun, they appear more helpless to her than they really are. Their need for her love is, however, purely economic. They recognize that since her urge to do good is so strong, her reason is powerless to prevent her good deeds. Shui Ta characterizes love as the most fatal and expensive of all weaknesses; often the spokesman for the Marxist Brecht, he blames society for Sun's want and greed: "Was ist das für eine Welt?/ Die Liebkosungen gehen in Würgungen über" (S, VIII, 309). If this is true of Sun, it is also true of

Shen Te. Her decision to suppress her sympathetic emotions and become Shui Ta illustrates once again Brecht's conviction that if man pities others for very long, he brings on his own ruin. Shui Ta also illustrates another aspect of Brecht's polemic in Mutter Courage: that social and economic injustices force man to become evil. The cook in Mutter Courage protested that he was not inhuman, but conditions forced him to be reasonable about matters. Shui Ta is so reasonable that all whom he exploits call him inhuman (Scene 10).

Der gute Mensch shows that in the struggle with economic interests, human interests have to take second place. The play teaches that the capitalist system--as Brecht claimed to view it here--could never provide the ideal society<sup>80</sup> in which man's goodness would prove beneficial to his own welfare. It is striking that Brecht felt human interests would have to come before economic interests in this ideal society; but this was more the dream of Brecht the Marxist visionary than of Brecht the realist. As a realist, he saw quite clearly that because the economic solution was more pressing, a solution to the moral problem would have to wait.

The dualism of Brecht's protagonists, and their conflict between good and evil are a product of Brecht's own dilemma and dualism as a realistic observer of human nature and a political idealist. Underlying Mutter Courage and Der gute Mensch is a problem which disturbed the Marxist moralist greatly. Man did not try to find a solution to the causes

of injustice; instead, he would repeatedly take pity on the suffering. The realist Brecht knew that man would remain true to his nature, but the Marxist wanted man to subordinate human nature to political theory. In the "Epilog" of Der gute Mensch, Brecht discussed this dilemma; he stated he could not resolve it; his remark is only partly true. He wanted the audience to think for themselves. Of course, the Marxist Brecht had a solution, his patent one, but he had to close his eyes to the fact that it would cause as much suffering as Shui Ta's, the capitalist's, solution:

Was könnt die Lösung  
sein?  
Wir konnten keine finden, nicht einmal für  
Geld.  
Soll es ein andrer Mensch sein? Oder eine  
andre Welt?  
Vielleicht nur andere Götter? Oder keine?  
Wir sind zerschmettert und nicht nur zum Scheine!  
S, VIII, 407

The theorist would have liked the spectator to answer "Yes" to each of these questions. It is true that neither Mutter Courage nor Der gute Mensch gives any specific directions how to alter society,<sup>81</sup> yet it is clear, particularly in Der gute Mensch, that Brecht's argument for revolutionary violence was the only corrective acceptable to him.

Shen Te's reason achieves one of her ends, but precludes another, her desire to do good. Her dilemma was also that of the political Brecht; deep down, it pained him that man could accomplish the revolution only by first suppressing his kindness. His poem "An die Nachgeborenen" reflects his chagrin, that his own good intentions made him a monster:

"Ach wir, / Die wir den Boden bereiten wollten für Freundlichkeit / Konnten selber nicht freundlich sein" (G, IV, 145).

Kattrin, Shen Te, and Grusche are as humane as anybody in Brecht's world can be. And although Shen Te and Grusche have to deceive others in order to do the good, their very human failings are atoned for by the goodness of their intentions. Their reine Mütterlichkeit is akin to the "reine Menschlichkeit" found in Iphigenie, about whom Goethe wrote: "Alle menschliche Gebrechen / Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit".<sup>82</sup> To be sure, neither Shen Te nor Grusche possesses Iphigenie's ability to bring about a moral regeneration in others, but they do possess--and only whenever conditions permit-- a similar power of self-renunciation which allows them to achieve their ideal: to be good, friendly, and to preserve the lives of others.

In Schweyk im zweiten Weltkrieg and Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, Brecht regards heroism from the vantage point of the common man<sup>83</sup> who is most concerned with his own survival. Like the suppressed in Das Verhör, Brecht's exaggerated figures of the unheroic hero, Schweyk and Azdak, reject wars as power struggles instigated by the rich and paid for by the poor. Schweyk ironically maintains that military leaders must give up their ambitions because the little man musters no enthusiasm for world conquest, and considers even "das Heldentum" (S,X, 25) superfluous. Instead, the little

man prefers, like Schweyk, the simple pleasures of food and drink.

Both Schweyk and Azdak live in an age of war; they know that to offend the military is to face punishment or death. Yet both men manoeuvre themselves purposely, as it were, into situations in which it is likely that they may be executed. Schweyk's love of irony leads him to mock the ridiculousness of Hitler and the Nazi war machine to such an extent that Brettschneider arrests him. Azdak believes so strongly that a new age of justice and equality has come that he willingly gives himself up as an enemy of the people; he has let the Grand Duke escape. Both Schweyk and Azdak face judgment, the former by a group he despises, the latter by a court he erroneously respects. What are their reasons for seeking their own destruction? Schweyk would like his country to be rid of the Nazis, but it is too dangerous openly to oppose them; therefore, he resorts to irony, and obtains his personal satisfaction in this way. He feels he cannot come to grief. Long experience has taught him that his doubletalk, cheerful subservience, and disarming self-prostration so effectively hoodwink the Nazis that they dismiss him as an idiot. The only way, he suggests, to avoid imprisonment or conscription, is to capitulate. He relates how he duped Scharführer Bullinger: "In solchen Zeiten muß man sich unterwerfen. Es ist Übungssache. Ich hab ihm die Hand geleckt" (S, X, 43).

But why does his counterpart, Azdak, give himself up to

the soldiers? Is he a masochist? To some extent, perhaps; but he is, surprisingly, also a disappointed idealist whose corrupt practices during the various governments of the princes derive from his conviction that his honourable behaviour in an age of tyranny would be waste and stupidity. Azdak suffers greatly from the injustices of the old regime. Schauwa, the policeman, who represents this injustice, is a thorn in Azdak's side. Just as Schweyk's only weapon against the Nazis is mockery, Azdak's sole defence against Schauwa is scorn. Azdak gives himself up, because being punished by a people's court will give him the satisfaction of knowing that a golden age of justice for the common man has at last arrived. Azdak's urgent desire to experience such justice seems more plausible when compared to a similar wish that Brecht made in an early (1926?) poem, "Das zehnte Sonett" (G, II, 147):

Es ist mir gleich, ob diese Welt mich liebt  
Seit ich hier wohn, drang manches an mein Ohr  
Und ich behalt mir jede Feigheit vor  
Jedoch verdrießt es mich, daß es nicht Größe gibt.

Und wär ein Tisch und säßen Große dort  
Ich säße gern als Mindestler am Tisch  
Und wär ein Fisch, ich äß den Schwanz vom Fisch  
Und kriegt' ich nichts, ich ginge doch nicht fort.

Ein Buch, das mir von solchem Tisch erzählte!  
Ach, gäb's Gerechtigkeit!-- und wenn sie mir  
gleich fehlte--  
So wär ich froh und träfe sie selbst mich.

Gibt's alles dies, und bin ich selbst nur blind?  
Was ich nicht gern gesteh: gerade ich  
Verachte solche, die im Unglück sind.

The poem is included in its entirety here because it is an

astonishingly frank confession of Brecht's thoughts and feelings about idealism and expediency. While suggesting possible reasons for the actions of Schweyk, Azdak, and Galilei, this poem also helps to establish that each of these characters belongs to a continuum in Brecht's thought. Their repudiation of heroic acts points to Brecht's long-standing belief that there is no possibility of justice in the present age; accordingly, Brecht maintains that their opportunism and self-prostration are vindicated.

Azdak discovers, however, that his optimism about the arrival of the new age has clouded his judgment of the military; they do not use the uprising to overthrow the princes. Rather, they have merely transferred their allegiance from one prince to another, instead of to the commoners, as he had hoped. When he learns this, he despairs, hides his head in his hands, and shrewdly ponders his next move. It is at this point that Brecht again uses the motif of denial or recantation of one's beliefs. The militia challenges Azdak, whereupon he reverses his stand, calls his song of equality and freedom false, and denies believing in government by the people. Later, when Natella Abaschwili, the governor's wife, returns, Azdak again refuses to resist the new regime; he prefers not to defend his secret idealism: "Aus. Aber ich werd niemand den Gefallen tun, menschliche Größe zu zeigen" (S, X, 275). He makes a show of consent to Natella Abaschwili's demands, calling himself "Eine willfährige [Person], die zu Diensten steht" (S, X, 275). Instead

of remaining and accepting the new regime as do the soldiers, Azdak tries to run away. He does so, not because it is against his ethics to serve the regime he hates, but because he is afraid of death: "Ich hab Todesfurcht" (S, X, 275). Azdak has a cousin in Galilei who also fears physical pain. In both figures, Brecht portrays the emotions of cowardice, either to discredit apparent heroism, as in the case of Azdak, or to prevent heroism and martyrdom, as with Galilei.

Azdak realizes that it is only a question of time before the regime of the Grand Duke will execute him for dispensing an arbitrary justice at the expense of the wealthy. Azdak is neither a social reformer, nor a fighter for his poetic vision of a society ruled by the common man. He can see no benefit for himself by remaining judge. He has no intention of sacrificing himself for the people who show so little ability and desire to defend or help themselves. He tells Grusche that he blames them for their own misfortune: "Ihr seid blöd. Es ist nur recht, daß ihr's auf den Deckel kriegt" (S, X, 292). Consequently, he is only exercising his common sense when he yields to his fear of death: "Denn ich leg den Richterrock ab, weil er mir zu heiß geworden ist. Ich mach keinem den Helden" (S, X, 299).

In Schweyk there is a "dicke Frau" who suggests that the people themselves are partly to blame for the presence of the Nazi tyrants: "...mir sin mit schuld. Ich kennt mir vorstellen, daß man mehr machet als Slibowitz trinkn und Witze" (S, X, 54). Her obesity implies that she is neither a

resistance worker nor someone who worries very much about Hitler. Naming her "die dicke Frau", Brecht as much as asks: "What is the most likely reason she is fat in wartime?" It is obvious that she, too, has capitulated to the invaders. She does recognize the passivity of the people, but she does nothing to oppose the Nazis. Schweyk comments that the only form of resistance possible is to suffer domination and quietly survive: "Verlangens nicht zu viel von sich. Es ist schon viel, wenn man überhaupt noch da ist heutzutage. Da ist man leicht so bescheftigt mit Ieberleben, daß man zu nix andern kommt" (S,X, 54). Brecht is also ironizing the fact that in times of danger, man is by nature often too lethargic and too selfish to risk any form of protest.

Azdak's self-prostration before the rulers is a refutation of heroic resistance against impossible odds. Schweyk, too, prostrates himself, but with an irony which is his only substitute for overt rebellion. He cannot afford to be heroic. Not unlike Azdak or Schweyk is Egge in Keuner's little story "Maßnahmen gegen die Gewalt". Egge also sees the futility in resisting a superior force. He makes a show of consent to the authorities while cherishing a silent disagreement, until it is wise, that is, safe, to show any opposition. Brecht is insistent about teaching such unheroic, submissive behaviour. Another example in Schweyk is Frau Kopecka. She tries to defend her honour against Scharführer Bullinger's accusations and is struck down; later she shows she has learned her lesson, when she sings in the "Lied vom 'Kelch'": "Ehre trägt nur Schaden" (S, X, 121).

Schweyk and Azdak do not contemplate self-sacrifice or resistance. They are too realistic to believe that they could thereby bring about social change. They also know that the forces of oppression are too great, and that the people share their convictions of the hopelessness of rebellion. They illustrate Brecht's pragmatic belief that it is not for the small man to be a hero, for he always loses. Egge teaches this, too. In Schweyk, Brecht parodies the heroic protagonist who sacrifices himself for the welfare of others. The heroic act becomes a comic, or rather, ridiculous sacrifice. Schweyk intercedes in the affair of the butchered dog in order to save his friends Baloun and Frau Kopecka from Nazi brutality. From that point on, his heroism is made to appear absurd and grotesque.

War and military government are common to these two plays and the Keuner story. Brecht stressed that all the little man could do under such conditions, was to hope that times would soon change. Such optimism underlies Egge's silence in "Maßnahmen", as well as in the song, "Das Lied von der Moldau", in Schweyk.

Egge, Azdak, and Schweyk have no difficulty deciding whether to resist or capitulate. Their ready and even outwardly cheerful self-prostration does not produce an inner conflict between what is expedient and what is honourable; they do not betray an ideal of heroism, because none of them accepts the validity of such a concept. The potential hero or martyr should have a sense of responsibility which enables

him to struggle idealistically and unselfishly for a cause. Neither Schweyk nor Azdak possesses cause or responsibility beyond himself. This situation changes partly with Galilei.

Brecht wrote two German versions<sup>84</sup> of Leben des Galilei, in both of which Galilei recants. The essential difference between the two is the changed fourteenth scene and Brecht's different attitude toward Galilei, which changes from approval to disapproval. In the first version, this scene shows Galilei as an unheroic hero and a champion of truth. In the revised fourteenth scene in the second version, Galilei condemns himself as a criminal and a coward.

It seems that it was not until the explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945 that Brecht realized the universal implications of Galilei's recantation: "Der infernalische Effekt der Großen Bombe stellte den Konflikt des Galilei mit der Obrigkeit seiner Zeit in ein neues, schärferes Licht" (S, VIII, 201). Brecht realized that his approval of Galilei's recantation could mistakenly be interpreted as praise of the scientist whose capitulation permitted his oppressors to abuse his discoveries. He believed that he had made Galilei betray a possible revolution and ignore the welfare of mankind by recanting. More than twenty-five years earlier, Brecht had made a similar misjudgment in Trommeln in der Nacht. Desiring to portray Kragler as an anti-hero, Brecht had him turn his back on the Spartacus uprising. Brecht writes in both cases that he had made grave errors, that is, the Marxist had.<sup>85</sup>

The first thirteen scenes of the play remain essentially unchanged.<sup>86</sup> They show a Galilei whose behaviour is consistent with that of many of Brecht's later unheroic heroes. Both Schweyk and Azdak, for example, were characterized in the manner of Galilei several years after Brecht had written the first version of Leben des Galilei. Whatever was expedient in helping Galilei achieve his end was also justifiable for Schweyk and Azdak: cunning, deceit, self-prostration, false consent and opportunism; Brecht remained equally realistic in his portrayal of the latter two.

He approved of Galilei's unheroic behaviour in the earlier version because it was a cunning deception of his oppressors, and enabled him to spread the truth in spite of them: "Sein Widerruf hatte ihm die Möglichkeit verschafft, ein entscheidendes Werk zu schaffen. Er war weise gewesen."<sup>87</sup> Keuner had emphasized in the anecdote "Von den Trägern des Wissens" (1930) that the scholar could not afford to be virtuous in the traditional sense, rather, he should be unheroic: "Wer das Wissen trägt, hat von allen Tugenden nur eine: daß er das Wissen trägt...."<sup>88</sup> And this was the first Galilei's great virtue. Brecht reasoned in 1939 that Galilei's possible alternative--refusing to recant and dying as a martyr-of truth--would have been futile heroism. Brecht had recommended in 1934 in Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit that in an age of ruthless domination man had to discover the truth and spread it in secret, if it was to provide any effective resistance against tyrants. Hence, this first version

of Leben des Galilei is consistent with Brecht's realistic views concerning the inefficacy and waste of heroism and self-sacrifice in the service of an abstract ideal.

Brecht justified Galilei's recantation in the earlier version; he approached Galilei's dilemma from the point of view of the suppressed individual's struggle to survive and ensure his interests. This realistic portrayal of the individual's behaviour also explains Brecht's sympathy for the plight of Shen Te, Schweyk and Azdak. Such an emphasis on the importance of the individual was totally abandoned in the later version of the fourteenth scene of Leben des Galilei. Here, Brecht judged Galilei's situation from a dual aspect: with a Marxist's concern for the necessity of political revolution, as well as with a humanistic concern for the fate of mankind, if knowledge is placed in the hands of those who will abuse it.

The later Galilei no longer enjoys the sympathetic understanding which Brecht reserved for the unheroic self-prostration of the earlier Galilei and of Azdak; both Azdak and the later Galilei refute their idealism because they are afraid of physical pain and death: "Ich habe widerrufen," admits Galilei, "weil ich den körperlichen Schmerz fürchtete" (S, VIII, 183). Why does Brecht have the later Galilei recant for fear of torture? The implications of his recantation have changed and so has his motivation for this act. Brecht believed that he had to make an example of Galilei's irresponsibility. He could not have done so, if Galilei's

recantation had remained an act of cunning, the purpose of which was, in the first version, to gain time and write the Discorsi. He needed an excuse to discredit Galilei as a man and as a scientist; accordingly, he made Galilei a physical coward. Galilei idealistically suggests that he could have heroically sacrificed himself for social justice, freedom of research and truth, had his reason been stronger than his senses. He knows that at one time there was much popular desire for revolution, a desire which could have been exploited by his martyrdom. In contrast, Azdak is too realistic to become a martyr for the cause of justice; he also enjoys life too much to want to sacrifice himself for the intangible. Galilei cannot agree with Andrea that handing over the Discorsi mitigates his betrayal of his friends, profession and the welfare of humanity. The book comes too late, for science is no longer a force of political change. Brecht's comment in Schriften zum Theater: "...die ganze Astronomie ist unpolitisch geworden..." (IV, 270) suggests that he had completely overlooked the political significance of science in the first version of Leben des Galilei.

Brecht asks something of Galilei that he asks of none of his other characters: to be morally responsible to all of humanity for his act of cowardice. Galilei's recantation was morally justifiable for Brecht in the first version, but not in the second. Galilei must now be condemned because his motive for recanting is the selfish one of wishing to

preserve his comfort and security. His search and struggle to find the truth are judged in a new light: he has pursued knowledge for its own sake, purely for his personal pleasure and gain.

Brecht's reappraisal of Galilei brings into focus the contradictions between Galilei's thought and behaviour. Galilei paradoxically appears as truthful as he is dishonest, and as courageous as he is cowardly. He claims from the very beginning to be vitally interested in making the lives of the common people easier; they should be freed from spiritual and political traditions which enslave them to a life of misery. On the other hand, he despises them for their stupidity. They are unable to outwit their oppressors and lead a comfortable life. He seems to take only an intellectual pleasure in envisaging the rebellion of the people, for he condemns their revolutionary demonstrations of the "Fastnacht" scene.

He presents an ethic which he does not live by. He knows that honesty, courage and the love of mankind--the absolute virtues of Mutter Courage--will cost him his pleasures and his life. He expects Mucius to uphold the truth: "...wer sie [die Wahrheit] weiß und sie eine Lüge nennt, der ist ein Verbrecher" (S, VIII, 120). But he himself, who pretends to have invented the telescope, remains silent eight years and must finally call himself a criminal when he recants. Before his meeting with Sarti in Scene 14, Galilei had been opposed to heroic actions.

Yet, for the sake of truth, he was willing courageously to brave the cholera in Venice, and defy the Inquisition by remaining in Florence. Nevertheless, his virtues and his vices serve both the truth as well as his own pleasures.

Galilei's self-denunciation is a product of Brecht's theory bound Marxist idealism. Galilei's political ideas are inconsistent with his realistic opportunism in the preceding thirteen scenes. His typically Marxist Selbstkritik is not at all consistent with his former repudiation of the necessity of heroism: "Unglücklich das Land, das Helden nötig hat" (S, VIII, 168). Now Galilei believes in the value of the heroic self-sacrifice, and places it in the service of a political idea. He was, however, cast in the same mould as Schweyk and Azdak; they yielded when the dangers to their well-being were greatest. (His staying in Venice during the plague was more an obsession with research than a desire to sacrifice himself to find the truth).

Galilei's self-denunciation is spoken not by the voice of reason, but by the voice of party dogma. His self-annihilation is exactly what the Marxists demand of the person who values his own individualism and survival more than the social good: "[Die Selbstkritik] soll schonungslos sein, teils eine heilsame, schocktherapeutische Wirkung haben, notfalls aber auch bis zur moralischen Selbstvernichtung und Diskreditierung führen".<sup>89</sup> The realist Brecht knew that man would compromise the truth to save his skin. Brecht contradicts this realism when, as a Marxist, he forbids

the compromise of Galilei's social responsibility. Galilei is reduced to being Brecht's mouthpiece for a denunciation of the princes, landed gentry and the Church who use religion to drug the masses.<sup>90</sup> Galilei wants revolution and not reform; he argues too much like Brecht in Die heilige Johanna and the "Lehrstücke"; he believes that science, truth and reason can replace mysticism and faith. Yet Brecht's belief in a compensating present was held intact more by his faith in dogma than by his reason.

Prior to his recantation, Galilei believed that reason could bring about social change of its own accord. His love of the truth and his passion for astronomy make him somewhat "blind" in more than a literal sense. He thinks that others will agree to see things as he does, if he presents them with his proof. His naïvely idealistic belief in the irresistible attraction of reason prevents him from recognizing the very realistic and wholly rational attitude of the Church toward secular interests. He actually believes that the leaders of the Church will admit they are in error, accept his discoveries, and consent to the inevitable loss of their power and possessions. During his self-denunciation, however, Galilei is more realistic about change: his remarks imply that violence is the answer, not reason; here he recommends political means to achieve political ends.

Brecht failed to see the naïveté and the possible logical extension of his thought, when he had Galilei exclaim: "Wissen verschaffend über alles für alle, trachtet

sie [die Wissenschaft] Zweifler zu machen aus alle" (§, VIII, 185). Such a remark illustrates Brecht's love of theorizing. Was he so naïve to believe that in the Marxist State all people will be allowed to share and profit in the knowledge of all subjects? Of course not; this is another example of his facile separation of Marxist theory from Marxist reality. Also, he does not think his sentence to an end when he says that science must make sceptics of everybody; did he include the Marxist who must unquestioningly follow party dogma in order to make the communist promise come true? It seems that Brecht preferred to ignore that he was asking the Marxist to believe exactly what he forbade the Christian.

Brecht's idealistic demand that Galilei should become a hero-martyr is inconsistent with his realistic picture of human nature in this play and in others. The majority of Brecht's protagonists are passive; they accept their fate. Brecht was realistic in not making Galilei the selfless martyr and the heroic hero that he would have perhaps liked him to become. A man who insisted on his pleasures, who was so unwilling to renounce them that he was ready to deceive the Rector of Padua with "his" telescope, crawl before the Medici for the sake of gain, ruin his daughter's happiness, capitulate to the Inquisition, and deny the truth, such a man would have been unconvincing as a Marxist hero. Galilei is actually more effective teaching the necessity of the martyr than becoming one himself. Besides, the realist Brecht knew that man's answer to the challenge of heroism would likely be determined by his emotions and material interests,

not by his idealism.

The plays of exile present an increasing divergence of Brecht's views about the necessity of heroism and martyrdom. From Die Gewehre onward, his sympathy for the individual in his struggle to survive became more and more pronounced. At the same time, however, Brecht developed a growing concern for the social and political responsibilities of the individual. He believed that every man had great potential as an agent of good and social change. He began to suggest that heroism was very necessary on both the social and political level. He justified the heroic self-sacrifice when the heroine's death inspired the people and unleashed revolution. Martyrdom was desirable because it could alter society.

Brecht was also preoccupied with the maternal sacrifice for other human beings. His concentration on the behaviour of the maternal figure in times of war revealed mother-love, compassion, goodness and selflessness which promised to preserve mankind. By showing that the individual did help others and would sacrifice herself to save them, Brecht insisted even more vehemently than in the "Lehrstücke" that social change had to come. Where the Marxist had earlier refused to allow man his sympathetic emotions, the realist now permitted their expression; and after Katrin's death, the individual finally ceased to be executed for good deeds. The dehumanization of mankind was not as universal as Brecht had earlier

claimed that it was. Although Shen Te had to forgo being kind, the motherly girl Grusche could safely achieve her goal.

Brecht's realistic attitude toward man's difficulties and material interests was made obvious by depicting the individual as an unheroic figure. His treatment of the behaviour of the first Galilei and Schweyk was consistent with the portrayal of Kragler as an anti-hero twenty-five years earlier. Their anti-heroism was the product of a very rational attitude. Brecht had dramatized this reasoned repudiation of the heroic self-sacrifice elsewhere, too, in particular with Galy Gay, Mother Courage, Schweyk and the Neinsager. Although the Marxist Brecht tried to argue for the heroism of the activist, the realist had the students in Der Neinsager tell the teacher: "Was der Knabe sagt, ist vernünftig, wenn es auch nicht heldenhaft ist" (S, IV, 245). Brecht later tried to excuse this anti-heroism in Azdak and Galilei by depicting them as the victims of their own emotions.

What the realist permitted the little man, the Marxist refused the more gifted individual. Galilei became a complex of contradictions, teaching one thing and doing another himself. He became a symbol of Brecht himself, and of the recurrent dilemma in the dramas. He showed the struggle of the Marxist and the realist Brecht in an unresolved conflict with each other. The political Brecht claimed to be right, but the poet of human nature allowed Galilei to reply almost like Galy Gay?<sup>91</sup> "Ich muB jetzt essen" (S, VIII, 188).

Each tried to behave as was demanded by the superior force to which they capitulated, but each remained true to human nature.

It was Brecht's strength to portray man's weaknesses; it was his weakness to insist on man's strength. But it was the tension between these forces within Brecht which continually stimulated his creative genius.

## Chapter VI

## CONCLUSION

A fidelity to diverging views characterizes the fundamental dilemma of Brecht. As a Marxist he believed that society was changeable, but as a realist he feared that human nature was not. Man in Brecht's work is less interesting from the point of view of what Brecht wants him to become politically, than from the point of view of what he is. From Das Badener Lehrstück onward Brecht's plays portray man's difficulties when he chooses between protecting his own interests and helping the wretched, or between pursuing his own fulfillment and sacrificing himself for a political ideal. Whether they struggle to survive, or to reshape society, Brecht's main characters often have a hard time acting as the necessity of their particular situation requires. Expediency is a virtue which man can practice only if he is able to ignore his personal ethics, or, as Brecht preferred to say, to master his inborn tendency to do good. Indeed, the individual's goodness is dialectically interpreted in both capitalist society and in the communist collective as a harmful weakness. It either destroys him in both societies, or distracts him from pursuing his own welfare in capitalist society and that of mankind in the communist collective. Wherever Brecht depicts the individual's success in suppressing his emotions of sympathy, the dehumanization of man in the capitalist or the communist world is presented, as for example in Mahagonny and Der

gute Mensch or in Das Badener Lehrstück and Die Maßnahme.

Both the realistic, critical assessment of tradition, and the Marxist idealism of Brecht are expressed in his desire to teach the common man that there is no necessity for the extensive economic injustices of capitalist society. Brecht knew that unjust acts were unavoidable in the communist collective, but he could accept them, in theory at least, because he believed they were necessary to make the communist promise come true. Where the early Brecht attempted to destroy society's traditional illusions about the necessity of the hero and his social order, the later Brecht tried to educate his audience to apply the underlying principles of the scientific method, reason and doubt, to what they believed was unchangeable. But he objected if his carefully tended belief in the Marxist promise of better things to come were subjected to a similar critical examination and also shown to be changeable.

Brecht maintained that he could make the theatre better serve the cause of social justice by purging the spectator of his prejudices and ignorance rather than of his pity and fear.<sup>92</sup> Usually, Brecht supplied Marxist prejudices as a substitute. He shocked the audience even more than his predecessors, Büchner, Kleist, Hebbel and Hauptmann, with the figure of the anti-hero. The hero was for Brecht "...a relic in the museum of the moral past."<sup>93</sup> His anti-hero rejects society's religious and ethical values as empty and unjust; his definite refusal to die teaches firstly, that he cannot and will not try alone to change the traditional order, and secondly, that a better solution than

demanding the individual's self-sacrifice must be found.

Ironically, Brecht required the activist to become a hero and urged him to believe that it was honourable and necessary to die for the communist cause. Only Brecht's Marxist heroines are willing to die to realize an ideal. In contrast, his anti-heroes are generally quite rational about their situation; they prefer more realistically to survive, and devote themselves to whatever pleasures life affords. They illustrate Brecht's view that it is not for the little man to be heroic, because he always loses.

Most of Brecht's later characters chose to live in a society which sought to subject them; a few of the early protagonists became outsiders. The inhumanity of those who determined man's destiny appeared in most of Brecht's plays as economic and political domination: business, war and tyranny. His fidelity to his realistic knowledge of how man did act, and his loyalty to his idealistic notion of how man should have acted in such a world, are reflected in the actions and conflicts of his protagonists. In three of the "Erste Stücke", for example, the individual rebelled against society and devoted himself to a lethargic hedonism. The recurrent motif of the anti-hero's homosexuality symbolized Brecht's rejection of middle class society. In the "Lehrstücke" and some of the later plays, Die Gewehre and Die Tage der Commune, activists attempted to renew and control society; here Brecht tried to alter man's nature to suit Marxist theory. In the plays of exile Brecht again devoted his attention to individuals, but

to more realistic and unheroic figures, such as Galilei, Schweyk and Azdak. Where the earlier characters refused to conform, these later ones found it wiser to be expedient and capitulated to their oppressors. They were satisfied with the possible--simple pleasures and partial self-fulfillment; they did not strive for a personal ideal of social freedom (Schweyk), justice (Azdak), or intellectual liberty (Galilei).

The more Brecht insisted on a Marxist solution, the more the ethics of communist control resembled those of his exaggerated and distorted capitalists. Brecht justified the suppression of man's natural goodness; he logically protected his belief in Marxist violence by considering it a Hegelian negation of negation: communist evil was to triumph over capitalist evil to produce social justice in a compensating present--later on! In this respect, the "Lehrstücke" are the antithesis of Die Dreigroschenoper and Mahagonny. Social interests must replace individual interests, selflessness selfishness, and Marxist self-abnegation capitalist self-aggrandizement. Brecht's anxiousness to see man in control of his own destiny led him to contradict his more realistic reservations concerning the necessity of heroism and martyrdom. The realist Brecht knew that some men were too ignorant of the causes of injustice to be able to abolish them. Others were either indifferent to social evils, loved life too much, or were too sensible to risk what they valued so greatly for the promise of so little in return. But the Marxist moralist felt that people had to

help themselves, and that they would do so, if encouraged and inspired. Thus Brecht found himself unwillingly teaching the necessity of the heroic martyr, when really, it was ideological indoctrination of the masses which was necessary.<sup>94</sup> Ironically, Brecht's portrayal of Galilei as a human being was so realistic, that later, the Marxist Brecht found it impossible to recast him as a political martyr. Galilei was too self-interested and too calculating to become a sacrificial figure for Marxist progress. Like Montaigne, he could say: "Ich bin ein Mensch: mir ist nichts Menschliches fremd."<sup>95</sup> Brecht never did solve his dilemma that man's weaknesses, his love of pleasure, or urge to help suffering individuals, always interfered with the successful prosecution of Marxist ideals. Brecht adapted Sophocles' Antigone and Anna Seghers' Der Prozess der Jeanne d'Arc for two seemingly paradoxical reasons. On the one hand, he could not overcome his realistic objections to creating an irrational hero. On the other, he needed a heroic martyr to show how revolution could be emotionally inspired, rather than rationally discouraged as in Die Tage der Commune.

In the plays of exile, particularly those from Mutter Courage on, Brecht gradually gave up portraying present social evils and depicted instead those of all time. He found no solution for contemporary issues in the present, he found none in the past. But he did stress in the later plays much more effectively than in the "Lehrstücke", that man had to suppress his goodness, overcome even his personal interests, his resig-

nation to social evils, and recognize that he had to resist injustice in order to abolish it. But in his emphasis on resistance Brecht was being more theoretical than practical, for, as he taught in two of his last plays, Schweyk and Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, man must use his cunning and wit, not his blood, to overcome or avoid evil.

Brecht also found it unappealing to dramatize and praise the achievements and problems of the communist hero in established Marxist society of the twentieth century. Rather, he was attracted more by the individual's moral and physical struggle to come to terms with a society which had to be changed. To describe an ethical conflict and its resolution left Brecht freer to record human nature; here he could be critical, ironic, give contrasting views, imply how the individual should have acted and which political solution he should have chosen. Of course, it was always the Marxist solution which Brecht desired, but the realist and the teacher in him refused to allow the Marxist to portray a political Utopia. Brecht chose to believe that once the revolution had been accomplished man would behave as he should. Teaching how man should act to bring the revolution about was more important than praising him for having done so. But the irony of Brecht's work is that he found greater satisfaction in showing how man should survive than in teaching how man should change society. That is, Brecht preferred to portray the anti-hero rather than the hero.

Brecht did offer a few visions of the future, but as was characteristic of his evasiveness, they had a historical setting; he depicted the individual's noble sentiments and self-

lessness, and the justice of communist society after a dictatorship of the proletariat ceased to be necessary. He was, perhaps, less successful with this in the frame-story of Der kaukasische Kreidekreis than he was in describing the government of the common man in Coriolan and Die Tage der Commune. Each of these plays showed graphically his conviction that society was changeable, but that human nature (Grusche, Coriolan, the Communards) was not. Because of this dilemma, and because he wished to teach man to think for himself how to alter society, Brecht showed how man should not act, he showed why man failed. He emphasized man's responsibility to society, but he also suggested that man assure his own comforts first. The riddle of Brecht is most fairly solved by the answer that he believed in neither, and he believed in both.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The title and date of composition of Brecht's plays are given in a reference table on p.115. All excerpts from the plays are taken from: Bertolt Brecht, Stücke, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1955-1961, vols. I-XII. Quotations from the plays are followed by the abbreviation S, volume number (in Roman numerals), and page number (in Arabic numerals). Similarly, all excerpts from Brecht's poems are taken from: Bertolt Brecht, Gedichte, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1960-1965, vols. I-IX. Quotations from the poems are followed by the abbreviation G, the volume number, and the page number.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Brecht's review of Don Carlos in "Augsburger Theaterkritiken", in the newspaper "Volkswille", April 15, 1920, in "Zweites Sonderheft Bertolt Brecht", Sinn und Form, Rütten und Loening, Berlin, 1957, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. "Rede anlässlich der Verleihung des Lenin [Stalin] Preises", Versuche 15, Suhrkamp, Berlin, 1957, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. E. Bentley, ed., Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht, Grove Press, New York, 1961, p. xxvii.

<sup>5</sup>W. H. Sokel, The Writer in Extremis, McGraw Hill, New York, Paperback edition, 1964, p. 232: "...the nature of answers is the posing of questions...."

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. M. Esslin, Brecht, Doubleday Anchor, Garden City, 1961, p. 71.

<sup>8</sup>The "Lehrstücke" are: Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis, Der Jasager und Der Neinsager, Die Maßnahme, Die Mutter ("...im Stil der Lehrstücke geschrieben...." S, V, 118), Die Ausnahme und die Regel, and Die Horatier und die Kuriatier.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. "Lied vom Fluß der Dinge" in Mann ist Mann, S, II, 204; 231-232; 243-244; 249. See also Chapter III, pp. 21-22.

<sup>10</sup>Compare the interpretation of Bernhard Blume: "Motive der Frühen Lyrik Bertolt Brechts: I Der Tod im Wasser", Monatshefte, March 1965, vol. LVII, No. 3, pp. 103-104.

<sup>11</sup>See S, I, 7.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. W. H. Sokel, Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, Doubleday Anchor, Garden City, N. Y., 1963, p. xxvii.

<sup>13</sup>J. W. von Goethe, "Selige Sehnsucht", in Goethes Werke, ed. E. Trunz, Wegner, Hamburg, 1952, vol. 4, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup>W. H. Sokel, Anthology, pp. xxviii-xxix.

<sup>15</sup>See S, I, 10-11.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. footnote 15.

<sup>17</sup>See S, I, 7.

<sup>18</sup>Schweyk ironizes the use of this word in a long speech to Brettschneider which starts: "So ein Wort wie 'beinah' is (sic) oft eine Täuschung..." (S, X, 23).

<sup>19</sup>Cf. "A Prologue to Brecht's Baal", by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, transl. A. Schwarz, Tulane Drama Review, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. R. Ley, The Marxist Ethos of Bertolt Brecht and its Relation to Existentialism: a Study of the Writer in the Scientific Age, Ph. D. Diss., Rutgers, The State University, 1963, pp. 288-290.

<sup>21</sup>In his revision (1953?) of Trommeln Brecht deleted certain key speeches which indicated that Kragler had to suppress his sympathy for the revolutionaries if he was to save himself. Compare the following editions: B. Brecht, Trommeln in der Nacht, Propyläen Verlag, Berlin, [n. d. 1925?], 3. Aufl., p. 89, and S, I, p. 199.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Brecht, "Anmerkungen zur 'Dreigroschenoper'", S, III, 146-149.

<sup>23</sup>Mann ist Mann is the first of the "Erste Stücke" to use the song as a means of deliberately interrupting and commenting on the action or the dialogue. Brecht uses this technique to make the audience consciously aware of the actions on stage. This is the first play in which Brecht develops certain aspects of the later formulated theories of epic theatre; cf. S, II, 319-326.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. footnote 9.

<sup>25</sup>W. Shakespeare, The Complete Works, Books, Inc., New York, 1948, p. 224.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. the title of E. Bentley's translation, Seven Plays, p. 69.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches (S, VI); "An die Gleichgeschalteten" (G, IV, 76); "Lied des Speichel-leckers" (G, V, 167).

<sup>28</sup>See S, IV, 14.

<sup>29</sup>The songs should be considered in conjunction with Brecht's attack on the traditional conception of the opera (culinary, sensually intoxicating evening entertainment). He rejected the Gesamtkunstwerk and its illusory function. He felt this art form was abused by those who wished to maintain and preserve the status quo in society. He believed they were opposed to innovations in opera and drama. Kurt Weill's parody of the opera's traditional musical form was a further sign of his and Brecht's open belligerency toward all oppressive, self-interested and unjust authorities in the artistic world and in society. Cf. "Anmerkungen zur 'Dreigroschenoper'", S, III, 141-160; and "Anmerkungen zur Oper 'Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny'--Oper--aber Neuerungen!", S, III, 259-276.

<sup>30</sup>Resistance in order to change or to overthrow society was not considered by the protagonists in the "Erste Stücke" because of the domination of instinct and because they had chosen to become outsiders. A later series of plays, the "Lehrstücke" (1929-1934), echoes the anguished cry of the Marxist convert Brecht to change the intolerable class order; in these plays, resistance and revolution mark the swing of the pendulum to aggressivity and to a rejection of all compromise made purely in the interest of self-enrichment.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Brecht, S, III, 159: "'Die Dreigroschenoper' gibt eine Darstellung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (und nicht nur 'lumpenproletarischer Elemente')."

<sup>32</sup>In his poems and plays, Brecht often provides the two premises of a syllogism or gives a thesis and an antithesis and has the reader supply the conclusion or synthesis himself. This is the case with the two stanza poem "Der Schneider von Ulm (Ulm 1592)" (G, IV, 28), to which the reader automatically adds the missing conclusion. Cf. Hans Mayer, "Anmerkung zu einer Szene", Theaterarbeit, Suhrkamp, Berlin, 2nd ed., 1961, pp. 249-253.

<sup>33</sup>Brecht returned to a trenchant satire of these sins in the ballet "Die sieben Todsünden der Kleinbürger" (1933) (G, III, 131-152), with the split personality of Anna. Her virtues, which in reality are virtues, are dialectically reversed in the ballet, and for the business-minded bourgeois are deadly sins because they do not produce profit and eventually lead to one's starvation.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. the "Programmheft" for the Première of Die Dreigroschenoper on April 23, 1960 by the Berliner Ensemble am Schiffbauerdamm, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Faust I, line 4611; cf. also the final scene and canonization of Joan Dark in Die heilige Johanna.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. footnote 35.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. footnote 8.

<sup>38</sup>In Brecht's "Lehrstücke" the party's ethics are in-human only from the individual's point of view, not from the activist's. Here the Marxist ethic considers humane and moral whatever eventually creates justice. But whose justice is this? The Marxist ideal of justice. Brecht considers that Marxist violence is humane because it makes possible what is good for the communist collective. This view is evident from one short poem: "Unrecht ist menschlich / Menschlicher aber / Kampf gegen Unrecht" (G, II, 199)! Cf. also pp. 46-50 of chapter IV.

<sup>39</sup>Cf. G. Steiner, The Death of Tragedy, Hill and Wang, New York, 1963, p. 129.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. G. Steiner, The Death of Tragedy, p. 345. But as an astute realist Brecht did have some misgivings. His intensely personal lyrics openly display these reservations. For example, the "Ballade von der Billigung der Welt" (G, III, 77) treats Brecht's doubt concerning his advocacy of communist measures; stanzas three and twenty-eight are outspoken self-accusations.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. C. F. Meyer, Gesammelte Werke, Rascher, Zürich, 1943, vol. V, p. 258.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. M. Esslin, Brecht, p. x.

<sup>43</sup>B. Brecht, Prosa II--Geschichten 2, ed. H. Ramthun, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1965, p. 151.

<sup>44</sup>Der Jasager, Der Neinsager, Die Horatier und die Kuratier and Die Ausnahme und die Regel were written for school children. Brecht also intended that the children act the plays. Die Maßnahme was written for workers, although Brecht's intention to have them act in it seems to have been the result of a certain shortsightedness on his part, namely, the Neue Musik Berlin refused to produce it; cf. S, IV, 309. Brecht intended the figures of the activists in these plays to serve as ideal, uncomplicated examples of how the individual could best serve the interests of the cause; as anonymous expendables to be manipulated at will.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. M. Esslin, Brecht, p. 246.

<sup>46</sup>As Esslin points out, liquidation was, on the contrary, very probable, as later Stalinist purges proved. Cf. Esslin, Brecht, p. 233.

<sup>47</sup>Similarly, Kleist's Hermannsschlacht--abstractly a portrayal of Kleist's hate for Napoleon and the French, and of his own hopes for a vigorous resurgence of German Nationalism--fails as a political piece. On the other hand, Georg Büchner's explosive and denunciatory pamphlet which clamoured for revolution, Der hessische Landbote, overflows with indignation and reaches out with the hard-hitting directness a political work must have if it is to convince and win its readers. It is interesting that Büchner, more so than Brecht, revealed a more realistic grasp of the genre, subject matter and tone which the writer should use in order to urge social and political change. The doctrinaire Brecht believed, however, that faith and convictions based on ideology rather than on short lived emotions, such as inspiration or hate, would be more effective in the long, hard struggle to achieve the Marxist ideal.

<sup>48</sup>B. Brecht, Schriften zum Theater, ed. W. Hecht, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1963, vol. V, pp. 257-258.

<sup>49</sup>B. Brecht, Schr. z. Th., II, 208-209.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. B. Brecht, "Die Dialektik auf dem Theater", Versuche 15, Heft 37, p. 80.

<sup>51</sup>"Ich wurde nicht genug gerühmt", S, III, 304.

<sup>52</sup>"Wir sind niemand", S, III, 305.

<sup>53</sup>"...zu eigentümlich...", S, III, 311.

<sup>54</sup>The mask was Brecht's favourite symbol of evil and cruelty. It is worn by capitalists, tyrants, and soldiers or the members of the communist collective. Shen Te, for example, wears the mask of evil to become Shui Ta; the soldiers and the governor in Der kaukasische Kreidekreis also wear this disguise. In the poem "Maske des Bösen" (G, IV, 7) the mask takes on the aspect of unnaturalness as it does with Shui Ta.

<sup>55</sup>H. Mayer, Bertolt Brecht und die Tradition, Neske, Pfullingen, 1961, p. 73.

<sup>56</sup>This play also anticipates the thought of Die Horatier und die Kuriatier where Brecht stresses similar themes, such as the necessity of reason, cunning, and expediency. It also takes up a question treated at length in Chapter V, namely, the rejection of the--from the Marxist point of view--useless heroic act of dying for the sake of preserving one's honour or meaningless tradition.

<sup>57</sup>See S, IV, 265-266.

<sup>58</sup>H. Mayer, Bertolt Brecht, p. 70.

<sup>59</sup>Later, in Die Tage der Commune, Brecht considers helping others a noble deed.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. footnote 34 and the discussion of this problem on page 28 of Chapter III,

<sup>61</sup>The New Testament, Romans, II, 14.

<sup>62</sup>Webster's New World Dictionary, Nelson, Foster and Scott, Toronto, 1960, College Edition, p. 956.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. footnote 33.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. B. Brecht, "Zu 'Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe'", Schr. zum Th., II, 140ff.

<sup>65</sup>Eighteen of Brecht's thirty-five plays (vols. I-XII, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt edition) deal specifically with wars and revolutions from various periods of history. Brecht was sure that man was basically good by nature; that in times of hardship and war, it was a natural law for man's goodness to assert itself in an effort to help and preserve mankind.

<sup>66</sup>Twenty years later in Kleines Organon für das Theater of 1948, Brecht insisted that the theater public learn this too: "Sie [die Zuschauer] seien unterhalten...mit dem Zorn, in den das Mitleid mit den Unterdrückten nützlich sich verwandeln kann...." Versuche 12, Suhrkamp, Berlin, p. 118.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. W. Jens, Deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart, Piper Verlag, Stuttgart, 1962, 4th rev. ed., pp. 126-128. Here Jens analyzes this poem in terms of the problem of twentieth century social criticism.

<sup>68</sup>B. Brecht, "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit", Der 21. Versuch, Versuche 9, p. 88.

<sup>69</sup>H. Mayer, Bertolt Brecht, p. 78.

<sup>70</sup>Brecht called his later dramatic works "Bearbeitungen" (cf. S, XI; S, XII); they are adaptations of plays both classical and modern.

<sup>71</sup>Brecht saw fine differences in man's passive attitude toward domination. He distinguished between man's acceptance of tyranny and man's suffering tyranny. For Brecht, acceptance implied the act of choice which came from long habit, resignation or approval (as with *Mother Courage*), whereas suffering signified a rejection based on silent disapproval, as with *Herr Egge*.

72E. Bentley, Seven Plays, "Introduction", p. xli.

73See S, I, 6-7.

74Cf. W. Zimmermann, Brechts "Leben des Galilei", Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, Düsseldorf, 1965, p. 52.

75This theme of a mother's fear of losing her son in war recurs frequently in Brecht's work: in Mutter Courage and in the poem of the "Fischweib" in Das Verhör, for example.

76In Die Gewehre Brecht opposes pacifism, yet in Mutter Courage and in Das Verhör he argues vehemently in favour of pacifism; the polemic thrust of each play is, however, for or against pacifism, depending on which attitude serves the interest of the common man better in his particular age and situation.

77Die heilige Johanna, Der Jasager, Die Mutter, Die Gewehre, Mutter Courage, Das Verhör, Galilei, Der gute Mensch, Die Gesichte, Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, Der Prozess.

78The beginning of his interest in the mother-figure seems to coincide with the birth of his own children and his marriage to Helene Weigel in the late nineteen-twenties.

79Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 53-54.

80Brecht never stated in so many words what this ideal society would be like. In Die Dreigroschenoper he had one of the victims of capitalist society exclaim that economic interests would most certainly have to come first; Macheath sang: Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral.

Erst muß es möglich sein auch armen Leuten  
Vom großen Brotlaib sich ihr Teil zu schneiden (S, III, 99).  
And Mother Courage felt that virtues would become superfluous in the "good" society: "In einem guten Land brauchts keine Tugenden, alle Menschen können ganz gewöhnlich sein, mittelge-scheit und meinetwegen Feiglinge" (S, VII, 89-90).

81Cf. F. Dürrenmatt, Friedrich Schiller, Arche, Zürich, <sup>1964</sup>p. 39.

82Cf. Goethe, J. W. v., Werke, hrsg. im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen, H. Böhlau, Weimar, 1887-1912, Bd.4, p. 277.

83Cf. footnote 3.

84The first version, Die Erde bewegt sich, was written in 1938 and 1939; the second German version Leben des Galilei was completed after 1947 when Brecht and Charles Laughton revised the first version and translated it into English; the second German version was first published in 1955 in Versuche 14,

Suhrkamp, Berlin; a third version for the stage also exists: cf. Esslin, Brecht, pp. 301-302. Cf. also K.-D. Petersen, Bertolt Brecht, Leben und Werk, Ein Bücherverzeichnis, Stadtbücherei, Dortmund 1966, p. 29, p. 33.

<sup>85</sup>See S, I, 5-8; S, VIII, 201.

<sup>86</sup>See S, VIII, 201.

<sup>87</sup>Cf. Schr. z. Th., IV, 224.

<sup>88</sup>Brecht, Versuche 2, p. 20. An adapted form of this statement appears in the proclamation of the communist's ethics of expediency in Die Maßnahme: "Wer für den Kommunismus kämpft / Hat von allen Tugenden nur eine: / Daß er für den Kommunismus kämpft" (S, IV, 266).

<sup>89</sup>Cf. SBZ von A bis Z. Ein Taschen- und Nachschlagebuch über die Sowjetische Besatzungszone Deutschlands, hrsg. vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 10. überarb. u. erw. Aufl., Deutscher Bundes-Verlag, Bonn, 1966, p. 264.

<sup>90</sup>See S, VIII, 185.

<sup>91</sup>See S, II, 283: "Ja, es ist sehr wichtig, daß ich esse."

<sup>92</sup>Otto Mann, B. B.--Mass oder Mythos?, W. Rothe Verlag, Heidelberg, 1958, p. 19. In this polemic, Otto Mann overstates his case, and, because of his perspective, fails to be true to his own knowledge of Brecht's intentions and critical writings. Further, he does the works of Brecht an injustice. Mann intentionally examines Brecht's plays from a point of view which Brecht rejected--that of adherence to aristotelian dramatic principles--which is guaranteed to discredit Brecht as a dramatist in the traditional sense. But not being aristotelian was one of Brecht's reasons for success. Mann writes on page 24: "Wir wollen sehen, was von Aischylos bis zu Gerhart Hauptmann zu einem Drama gehörte, und überprüfen, wie weit Brecht im Lichte dieser Überlieferung als Dramatiker besteht." Careful not to mention Brecht's rejection of aristotelian principles, Mann demonstrates that Brecht does not emulate Greek and German Classical drama. Brecht is a poor "neo-classicist" and not a "Dichter", because for Mann, he fails to provide exposition and to develop character by means of events and dialogue; he does not show a noble or middleclass tragic hero, who, subject to his tragic flaw or an inexorable external fate, expresses the nobility and grandeur of soul in great human pathos and extreme suffering. In addition, Brecht portrays types instead of finely drawn individuals; these types are representative in exaggerated realistic manner of the classes he hates, in the case of the middle class. Mann sees in Brecht only the skillful and accomplished servant of the theatre. Many of his statements are untenable upon consultation of the plays. Mann wrote this "attack" (Esslin, Brecht, p. 330) in order to discredit a communist poet who hated the middle class, mocked its weaknesses, and exposed its evils.

<sup>93</sup>G. Steiner, The Death of Tragedy, p. 342.

<sup>94</sup>See Chapter IV, p. 39.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. B. Brecht, Versuche 15, "Zu 'Leben des Galilei'", Suhrkamp, Berlin, 1957, p. 133.

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