

University College London

**SHAKESPEARE AND BRECHT:
A STUDY OF DIALECTIC STRUCTURES
IN SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA AND THEIR
INFLUENCE ON BRECHT'S THEATRE
AND DRAMATIC THEORY.**

Submitted for the degree of PhD
at The University of London.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores aspects of Brecht's adaptations of Shakespeare's plots and rhetoric while focusing particularly on matters of structural influence. Both authors use metafictional references in their plays to foreground a stylised artificiality, thereby pointing to the interaction of social and literary semiotics. These 'alienating' strategies expose the construction and the limitations of ideologies presented in a play, demanding recognition of the dialectical processes thus engaged. The study of Brecht's theory and practice against the background of Shakespeare's drama produces new insight into Brecht's works; similarly, Shakespeare's plays viewed against the background of Brecht's theatre and dramatic theory provide new insight into Shakespeare's literary practice. Both authors are seen to operate within and against their societies' discursive limitations in ways which are best understood through the intertextual connections proposed here.

A revaluation of Brecht's attitude to Shakespeare in the context of his criticism of the orthodox theatre foregrounds the influence of Shakespearean dramaturgy on Brecht's dramatic theory. The imaginative or aesthetic dialectic structures of Shakespearean drama, particularly in *Richard II*, *Hamlet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, are as important to Brecht's concept of a dialectical drama as the historical-material dialectic of Hegel and Marx. The development of Brecht's dialectic approach and

Shakespeare's influence upon it ~~are~~ illustrated here with reference to *Baal* and *The Life of Galileo*. *Man equals Man* is used to link pre- and post-Marxist Brecht in order to explicate Brecht's sharpening of his already dialectical structure. Brecht's tendency polemically to privilege a Marxist discourse in order to criticise the *status quo*, as in his rewriting of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, undermines the flexible dialectic of Shakespearean drama; but by constructing his plays on a Shakespearean model which introduces the audience to an interrogative critical practice, Brecht undercuts the overt didacticism present in his plays.

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Salute.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJ</i>	:	<i>Arbeitsjournal 1938-55</i>
<i>BBA</i>	:	Bertolt Brecht Archive, Berlin
<i>BOT</i>	:	<i>Brecht on Theatre</i>
<i>Diaries</i>	:	<i>Diaries 1920-1922</i>
<i>GW</i>	:	<i>Gesammelte Werke</i>
<i>Letters</i>	:	<i>Letters 1913-1956</i>
<i>MD</i>	:	<i>Messingkauf Dialogues</i>
<i>Poems</i>	:	<i>Poems 1913-1956</i>
<i>PSP</i>	:	<i>Poems and Songs from the Plays</i>
<i>RC</i>	:	<i>Refugee Conversations</i>

Shakespeare's and Brecht's plays are cited by short title; e.g. *Midsummer Night's Dream* is abbreviated to *MND*; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* to *Ui*. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays unless otherwise noted are from the Alexander text and are cited according to act, scene and line number in that edition.

Quotations from Brecht's works are more problematic: for the plays, poems, letters, diaries and *The Messingkauf Dialogues* all quotations are from the Methuen complete works translated into English unless otherwise noted and are cited by page number; other works are cited in the text according to the abbreviations included in the complete list above.

Full bibliographical information is included in the bibliography.

Without some dialectics after all one can't write about much but cookery.

Brecht in a letter to Swedish critic Arnold Ljungdal, June 1940 (*Letters* 327).

I tell you, Captain, if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant you sall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth; it is call'd Wye at Monmouth, but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both.

Fluellen to Gower in *Henry V* (IV.vii.22-30)

INTRODUCTION

In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919) T. S. Eliot observes that 'the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past' (Eliot 1975: 39). This thesis explores the development of Brecht's dramaturgy and the place of Shakespeare in that development with particular emphasis on dramatic structure and the critical practice that can be extracted from it, using Brecht's drama and dramatic theory to explore elements of Shakespearean dramaturgy, or to use Brecht's term, to *verfremd*' Shakespeare, to look at his drama from a different perspective. The focus is on the questioning, challenging aspects of the plays as this was Brecht's focus when he was attacking the orthodox theatre and the society that supported it both before and after his study of Marx. A 'reading' of Shakespeare from a Brechtian point of view unlocks not only an ascertainable Shakespearean dramaturgy adopted by Brecht but a Shakespearean critical practice which can in turn be used to offer a 'reading' of Brecht.

The wealth of biographical information available on Brecht and the amount of material he himself produced to explicate his dramaturgical theories and practice can help in finding meaning or intention in a particular play, but the structure he adopted from Shakespeare seen from Brecht's own critical perspective undercuts such interpretative readings, even those of Brecht himself. The lack of biographical information on and theoretical

statements by Shakespeare - other than the plays themselves - help to illustrate how the structures of his plays present to the audience a critical practice useful in observing the events and characters represented: i.e. without firm knowledge from sources outside the plays regarding Shakespeare's political preferences it is impossible to determine from the narrative of a play which side the play supports - if any - because the dialectical structures equivocate the contradictory perspectives represented.

Shakespeare was the favourite poet of both Marx and Engels (Marx 1976: 436-7) and like Brecht their appreciation went beyond traditional aesthetic considerations: they comment favourably on his depiction of the nature of money in *Timon of Athens* (*ibid.* 136) and on his representations of historical movement (*ibid.* 259). On reading Marx, Brecht came to realise that the most important aspect of his own drama was its critical attitude; this revelation was not one of discovering what he should be doing but of coming to a clearer understanding about what he had been doing while attempting to carve himself a place in the orthodox theatre. Brecht's early plays sought to awaken or challenge what he describes as a drowsy, apathetic audience, to make them realise that there is more to theatre than heart wrenching soliloquies and consoling affirmations of their own bleak existences. As he became more familiar with Marx the challenge became more

sociopolitical, moving well beyond the confines of the theatre. For Brecht, Marxism is not merely the doctrine of class struggle and economic determinism, it is a critical tool useful for drawing attention to problems, distortions and contradictions. The necessity of adopting this critical attitude in order to address these problems underlies his drama and it is in the dialectical Shakespearean structure he used rather than the ostensible content of his plays that this attitude manifests itself.

Brecht's understanding of Marxism leads to a new dramatic form, the *Lehrstück*, at once a learning and a teaching play not intended for performance in the orthodox theatre. Whereas the epic theatre questions and challenges the orthodox theatre and the society which helps to produce it by exposing contradictions within the system, it also perpetuates that orthodoxy by participating in it. With the exception of *The Mother*, Brecht's *Lehrstücke* break with the orthodox theatre by removing the auditorium-stage split. They are plays for producers rather than consumers: no distinction is made between actors and spectators; everyone involved in the production both observes and acts using an experimental, flexible text which is always subject to change; the emphasis is on criticism and the changes that develop from it.² This thesis examines only Brecht's conventional drama, i.e. plays written for production in the orthodox theatre; the *Lehrstücke* are not dealt with

specifically and are used only to illustrate particular points; but the differences between *Lehrstücke* and traditional drama do help to emphasise Brecht's desire to instil a critical attitude in his audience through his use of Shakespearean dramaturgy.

A key factor in understanding the reciprocal relationship between Shakespeare and Brecht which this thesis proposes is Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* (*passim* *V-effekt*), a term Brecht began using after he had begun his study of Marx and after he had written several *Lehrstücke*. *Verfremdung* has not been translated into English here as there is no single English word which adequately conveys the *praxis* this term signifies. *Verfremdung* is related to *Entfremdung*, a word used by Hegel, Marx and others, and their common root *fremd* may be translated as outside, foreign, alien or strange; hence the translations alienation, estrangement, defamiliarisation, detachment, remarkable and the French *distanciation*. Willett (1984) defines *Verfremdung* as a matter of perception and understanding, a method for gaining new insights into the world by viewing it in a different, previously unfamiliar light, a practice which can be traced not only to the Russian Formalists and Shklovsky's term *ostrannenie* but to Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth and even to such clichés as 'shed new light on', 'to look with fresh eyes at' or 'open one's eyes to' (Willett 1984: 220-1). Brecht too notes the 'ancient' pedigree of the *V-effect* (MD 102). As Willett points

out, the value of such effects for Brecht goes well beyond his desire to break through the spectator's illusion, of re-presenting the commonplace and everyday as the strange and remarkable, but Willett sidesteps the political significance Brecht places on the term and the practice it signifies by concentrating instead on aesthetic questions.

Fredric Jameson (1972) accentuates the political aspects of *Verfremdung*, finding Brecht to be concerned primarily with the distinction between the static and the dynamic, between the eternal or permanent - which by definition has no history - and the alterable which is always already historical. Thus for Jameson the *V-effekt* is political 'in the most thoroughgoing sense of the word', seeking to make the audience aware of history as a process produced by themselves (Jameson 1972: 58). The *V-effekt* is itself historical, transitional and self-abolishing: the force of the revelation depending on the spectator having previously believed in the 'content' of the commonplace and is gauged against the implicit shock at seeing the commonplace differently (*ibid.* 90). In other words the *V-effekt* takes what is presently 'obvious', 'natural' or 'eternal' and produces surprise and curiosity out of it by, for example, placing it in ironicising quotation marks, or, as in the case of this thesis, by using the works of a later writer to re-examine the works of an earlier. Jameson's explication, although it attempts to politicise the term, still

defines *Verfremdung* as an aesthetic effect, as indeed does Brecht (MD 102); it only becomes a 'social measure' when the technique or critical attitude learned in the theatre is applied to events and concepts outside the theatre.

Verfremdung signifies the critical practice necessary for realising what Brecht calls 'historicising': i.e. the ability to perceive the present historically; to recognise the impermanence of truth and hence the ability of people to produce their own history, to effect change. This involves making something remarkable, observing it from the outside, distancing rather than alienating, not simply detachment but specifically - critical detachment. Brecht's efforts to disrupt emotional response were not intended to remove emotion from the drama but to allow the audience to consider the reasons behind an emotional response just as they are to consider the events and characters represented on the stage. The *V-effekt* is thus a device which allows criticism by attempting to make the spectator think about what is being represented rather than to accept it passively. This thesis does not offer a critique of this technique but rather attempts to demonstrate the presence of *V-effekte*, as well as other devices associated with Brecht, in Shakespeare's drama, devices which are neither merely 'aesthetic' nor specifically 'political' but critical in the sense that, as in Brecht's use, they challenge ideological perception, revealing not only the trick behind the

illusion but their own distortions as well, a practice at once self-critical and renovative.

Chapter 1 examines Brecht's comments on & criticism of Shakespearean drama included in diary and journal entries, letters, notes, essays and fragments as well as *The Messingkauf Dialogues*, *A Short Organum for the Theatre* and other theoretical works. The accepted reading of these comments in Anglo-American criticism is that Brecht held a negatively ambivalent attitude towards Shakespearean drama, utilising the form while rejecting the content. The validity of this view is challenged when Brecht's comments are placed in the context of his desire to revolutionise or reinvigorate the theatre, an attack which was both critical and self-promotional. Shakespeare's status as a 'classic' enabled Brecht to use him as a touchstone in his critical attacks on the orthodox theatre of Weimar Germany and in his work toward establishing an epic theatre and dialectic dramaturgy which would offer an alternative to other forms of playwriting and production. Brecht makes positive use of Shakespearean drama not only through adopting aspects of its dialectical structures but by uncovering materialist social criticism in the plays through the use of the critical practice the structure of Shakespearean drama itself suggests.

Chapter 2 analyses examples of the structures of Shakespeare's early plays, touching on aspects of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and

particularly *Richard II*, a play which exemplifies the representation and equivocation of multiple perspectives in Shakespearean drama through structure, imagery and wordplay. Brecht's writings on realism in drama and painting are used in conjunction with 16th century English commentaries in order to examine Shakespeare's use of contradiction and parody in organising the historical material into a critical drama. Later development by Shakespeare of the metafictional and parodic techniques apparent in the early plays is examined through the reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* in Chapter 3 which makes particular use of the dialectical relationship between the events which make up the narrative of the play and the structure which is used to present it. The structure of *Antony and Cleopatra* offers critical commentary on its own narrative perspective, thus alerting the audience to the limitations of a unified perspective, a strategy which is radically sceptical and ultimately self-critical.

Brecht's adoption of Shakespearean dramatic structures like those examined in chapters 2 and 3 exposes the superficial, narrative content of his drama to self-criticism while presenting to the audience the critical practice he thought necessary for the production of drama. The development of this critical attitude and the influence of Shakespearean dramaturgy on it is the subject of Chapter 4. An explication of Brecht's critical vocabulary is arrived at through discussion of

the relationship between Hegelian and Marxian dialectics, Brecht's understanding of the dialectic method and the influence of Shakespearean dramaturgy on Brecht's theory and practice. Chapter 5 examines the development of this critical attitude through the use of metafictional devices and parody in Brecht's early plays, particularly *Baal* - his earliest major play - and *Man Equals Man* - the last of his pre-Marxist plays and the first to be revised from a Marxist perspective. There is a visible tightening in Brecht's dramaturgy after his study of *Kapital* and exposure to dialectical materialism. This is evident in the comparison of pre-Marxist and post-Marxist texts of *Man equals Man* but it is also apparent that there is little actual change in Brecht's technique: the Shakespearean structure is strengthened as Brecht finds in Marxism a viable method for understanding his own and Shakespeare's dramaturgical practices.

Brecht's long period of exile was also one of his most productive periods: many of his best known plays were written while he was denied access to a theatre. Chapter 6 does not offer proof of any direct influence of *Hamlet* on *Galileo*, although there is discussion of the many coincidental parallels between the plays. Instead this chapter offers an examination of Brecht's criticism of *Hamlet* which is then used to analyse the dramaturgy of *Galileo*. Although Brecht comments that *Galileo* is opportunist and 'culinary', especially in structure, his revisions do little to change the structure of the play.

That Brecht was rehearsing a Berliner Ensemble production of *Galileo* at the time of his death suggests further that he realised the critical potential he had advocated throughout his career was inherent in the dialectical dramaturgy used to organise that play. The final chapter (7) presents a scene by scene comparison of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with Brecht's unfinished adaptation of it, *Coriolan*. Like *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolan* represents an obviously distorted perspective, but contrary to Shakespearean dramaturgy Brecht's adaptation is neither self-critical nor dialectically structured. By examining in detail why the adaptation is not Shakespearean it also becomes apparent why it is not Brechtian, suggesting in turn that the influence of Shakespeare on Brecht goes much deeper than the borrowing of dramaturgical techniques and actually provided Brecht with the critical practice Anglo-American criticism associates with him.

All citations are made in the text. Reference is made throughout to the most visible and in some sense the most popular Anglo-American criticism of both Shakespeare and Brecht as well as works which have had a direct influence on my work. Notes are included at the end of each chapter and in order to keep them to a minimum I have refrained from including a running annotated bibliography in the notes. The bibliography at the back of this thesis contains all works consulted during its preparation.

NOTES

1. Brecht's term *Verfremdung* is discussed below, pp 12-15.
2. For a detailed study of Brecht's *Lehrstücke* as compared to traditional drama see Steinweg (1978) and Wright (1989: 23) for a summary of Steinweg's work in English.

BRECHT ON SHAKESPEARE: A REVALUATION

I

Critical accounts of Shakespeare's influence on Brecht often summarise Brecht's attitude towards Shakespeare as ambivalent: i.e. an appreciation of form coupled with a rejection of content, a position which became more pronounced as Brecht's theories developed. The negative aspects of this ambivalence have been accentuated through use of Brecht's own emphasis on the importance of the 'story' or plot [*Fabel*] and the subject matter of drama, an emphasis which has led to undue stress being placed on the narrative content of Brecht's plays rather than the critical practice represented in them. The negative slant given to Brecht's ambivalent attitude towards Shakespeare does not exploit Brecht's comments on the critical examination of the socioeconomic forces he finds in Shakespeare's drama; neither does it take into account the context of Brecht's Shakespeare criticism as an element in his campaign to transform the orthodox theatre apparatus rather than a criticism of the plays *per se*. As the pre-eminent playwright of the orthodox theatre, Shakespeare becomes the focus of Brecht's sharpest criticism in his attempts to revolutionise the theatre.

Helge Hultberg's (1959) was the first essay to make a systematic comparative study of Shakespeare and Brecht. Based for the most part on statements by Brecht written before 1936, and especially on the transcript of a 1928

radio conversation between Brecht, sociologist Fritz Sternberg and Berlin theatre critic Herbert Ihering, Hultberg argues against any positive Shakespearean influence on Brecht, a position which has not found support. In *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* (1959) John Willett gives a more balanced view, noting Brecht's interest in Shakespearean verse and characters 'primarily as functions of the story', his use of chronicle form and the type of realism Brecht strived to achieve. Willett argues that Brecht saw his own goals attained in Shakespeare's drama, 'but not in the average Shakespearean production' (Willett 1959: 120-3). In his later work, however, Willett stresses only the formal influence of the chronicle play as a model for the epic theatre, commenting on the 'Shakespearean or "epic" strain' in Brecht's work (Willett 1984: 22-5). Willett notes too that Shakespeare was used by Brecht to justify his own working methods: 'Shakespeare interested Brecht as a practical man of the theatre, dealing shrewdly with his actors and readily amending his texts' (*ibid.* 27).

R. B. Parker (1963) notes many parallels in the dramaturgical strategies of Shakespeare and Brecht and attempts an explication of Shakespearean dramaturgy in light of Brecht's dramatic theory. Although Parker offers his reappraisal of Shakespeare (based on the work of Bernard Beckerman (1962)) as a challenge to classical-realist training, Parker finds - as does Martin Esslin (1959) - that there is a gap between Brecht's

theory and practice, a view which has been strongly challenged by Peter Brooker (1988). Although Brooker is not concerned with the influence of Shakespearean dramaturgy on Brecht, his thorough study of the Marxist underpinnings of Brecht's dramatic theory undermines the more general and in many ways naïve explications evident in Parker's and Esslin's approaches to Brecht. Brooker's work also suggests, albeit indirectly, a cogent approach towards a Brechtian reading of Shakespearean dramaturgy which Parker had attempted earlier.

Both W. E. Yuill (1977) and Helen Whall (1982) follow Esslin in concentrating on the difference between Brecht the intuitive artist and Brecht the political man, a discrepancy which they each use to explain what Whall calls Brecht's 'determined ambivalence' towards Shakespeare. Whall must offer an extremely limited, almost reactionary reading of Shakespeare to support her argument: e.g. Brecht 'despised the archaic and brutal contents of Shakespeare's plays, proclaiming him the great poet of barbarian art. Yet he admired and emulated Shakespearean form, style, and technique' (Whall 1982: 127). Although she fails to take many of Brecht's comments on Shakespeare in context she does suggest that the tension between content and form is essential to Brecht's dramaturgy which she sees as broadly parodic.

Rodney Symington's book length study *Brecht und Shakespeare* (1970) presents a positive view of Brecht's use of Shakespeare, finding praise rather than derision

during the same period Hultberg concentrates on, rationalising Brecht's harsher comments by turning to his dramaturgical practice where Shakespeare's influence is readily apparent. John Fuegi (1972) finds Symington's 'exclusively positive' view to be as inaccurate as Hultberg's and cautions against resolving the ambivalence of what he calls Brecht's 'lifelong love-hate relationship with his Elizabethan forerunner' (Fuegi 1972b: 291). Fuegi contends that Brecht was unaware of the connection between Shakespearean dramaturgy and epic theory while he was exploring his new approach to theatre in the 1920s and early 1930s but that after the period of the *Lehrstücke* Brecht found 'ever more to admire and emulate in Shakespearean dramaturgy' (*ibid.* 294-5). Fuegi does not find the influence of Shakespeare in Brecht's early, 'pre-Marxist' plays, finding, as does Willett, that Brecht returns to a style older than his own in the later plays, beginning with *The Life of Galileo* (1938) (*ibid.* 300-1). Fuegi's view is due as much to a misunderstanding of the dramaturgy of the *Lehrstücke* as to neglecting the sources and the context of Brecht's vehemence evident in many of his comments on Shakespeare.

In remarking on Brecht's concerns over literary tradition, Arrigio Subiotto (1975) finds Brecht's 'quarrel' is seldom with his 'literary ancestors', noting that he 'does not spare his scorn for the traditional ways of performing the classics and makes virulent

attacks on the misappropriation of past drama by society.' He cites Brecht's adaptation of Marlowe's *Edward II* as an attempt to break not with literary tradition but rather with the theatrical tradition which misrepresents it. (Subiotto 1975: 1). Margot Heinemann (1985) also finds that Brecht's Shakespeare criticism does not often refer to the plays themselves, the bulk of it referring instead to their production in the orthodox theatre (Heinemann 1985: 204-5). Following Fuegi, she finds the tension between content and form useful, warning against resolving the ambivalence in Brecht's fragmentary writings on Shakespeare because she feels their very nature reflects Brecht's 'flexible, experimental approach' (Heinemann 1985: 202). She concedes that a 'general way of seeing' does stand out even though she finds Brecht's attitude to Shakespeare to be contradictory and changing over time. Heinemann's is a balanced, provocative view, finding the 'power of Shakespeare's dramaturgy' in 'the contradictions, the doubleness of character and action' as well as in the conflicting, thought provoking responses it can produce in audiences, concluding that Brecht's adaptations tend toward a 'harmonising and flattening out' of Shakespeare much like he accuses the orthodox theatre of doing (*ibid.* 223).

Brecht does seem to hold strong reservations against the content of Shakespearean drama while at the same time using it as a structural model. This seems particularly

true of Brecht's early theoretical statements and his comments in *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1948) continue to display an apparent contempt for what he sees as the celebration of individual suffering and the 'eternally human' in Shakespeare's plays. In contrast to this are Brecht's admiration for Shakespeare in his early diary entries (1920-2) and the later *Arbeitsjournal* (1938-55) as well as in much of his theoretical writing, although in the latter it is often hidden under a cloak of scornful rhetoric. Brecht uses Shakespeare as a positive example more often than a negative one and in fact the negative examples concentrate on the production practices of the orthodox theatre rather than Shakespearean drama. Brecht's use of Shakespearean form as a model for epic theatre and dialectical drama, his lifelong interest in and use of elements of *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III*, *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and other Shakespeare plays, plus the discussion of 'The Street Scene' in the section of *The Messingkauf Dialogues* (1937-) concerning Shakespeare, are only a few of the many examples which foreground a dynamic relationship between Brecht and Shakespeare which cannot be seen simply as an appreciation of form conflicting with an objection to content. There is a dialogue, a working out of ideas through Shakespeare which is vitally important to Brecht's development.

The dynamic, dialectical effects of Shakespeare's

drama on Brecht's conception of the epic theatre may be demonstrated by a brief exert from 'Notes on Shakespeare', a collection of fragmentary studies and comments included in *On a non-Aristotelian Dramaturgy* (c1933):

Some of the epic traits in Shakespeare probably originate in the two circumstances that he was adapting already existing works (novels or dramas) and that, as we now may well assume, a collective of theatre experts was working together. In the historical dramas, where the epic is strongest, the existing subject matter opposed the synchronisation most vehemently. Certain historical characters had to appear because they would have been missed otherwise. Certain events had to happen for the same 'external' reasons. The thus incumbent movement of montage makes the play epic. (GW 15:335; tr. Rossi)

Brecht emphasises several traits he and Shakespeare share in their approaches to drama: adaptation; collective production; an emphasis on historical works with external causes brought out; a montage of effects creating a cumulative rhythm rather than an 'inevitable' conclusion. In light of such evidence it is important to consider the focus of Brecht's more vitriolic remarks concerning Shakespeare. Brecht's critical tone is often one of casual contempt and must be taken into account when evaluating his criticism. The development of this pose in his essays is also apparent in his plays; its possible sources help to clarify the content of Brecht's Shakespeare criticism.

II

One striking example of Brecht's appreciation for both the form and the content of Shakespearean drama is evident in comments he made in 1940 regarding a Swedish production of *Hamlet* in which his criticism is directed

towards the theatrical production he witnessed rather than the play itself:

Nothing is more comic than the serious way in which our theatres produce Shakespeare. He may well be theatrical, but he is never representative. Our-bourgeois theatre goes and theatre people cannot conceive of naïveté and complicity together [,] Shakespeare wrote for a small theatre of great significance, an intimate beer garden. His greatness cannot be measured by the meter, (AJ 210 (20 Nov. 1940); tr. Rossi)

Brecht draws attention to the inadequacies of orthodox theatre productions of Shakespeare, seeing in this style an inability to grasp and to realise the potential of the play. Shakespearean drama is 'theatrical', it is 'raw material' uniquely suited to the stage; it is complex, inquiring, thought provoking, not 'representative'. These comments come later in Brecht's career where the accepted view of his attitude towards Shakespeare sees in Brecht a greater willingness to accept at least the dramaturgical aspects of Shakespeare's drama if not the content. But this passage helps to focus attention on the target of Brecht's earlier critical writings where he uses Shakespeare to help him in his own criticism of the contemporary orthodox theatre in Germany.

Perhaps Brecht's strongest criticism of Shakespeare, and certainly one of the most quoted, is the following passage taken from the 1928 Cologne radio discussion concerning Shakespeare's heroes:

Yes, the great individuals! They were the subject matter, and the subject matter influenced the form of these plays. It was the so-called dramatic form and dramatic in this sense means; wild, passionate, contradictory, dynamic. What was this drama form like? What was its purpose? You can see it perfectly well in Shakespeare. Through four acts Shakespeare pushes the great individuals Lear, Othello, Macbeth, out of their human relationships (family, state) out onto the heath, into complete isolation, where he must pretend

to be great in his decline. This results in a form which is say, that of oat field driving [*Harferfeldtreibens*]. The first scene is only there for the second and all scenes are only there for the last one. Passion keeps this machine moving and the purpose of this machine is the great individual experience. Future times will call this kind of drama a drama for cannibals and they'll say that the human being was eaten as Richard III, with pleasure at the beginning and ... with pity at the end, but he was always eaten up. (GW 15:149; tr. Rossi)

Sternberg then points out that Shakespeare represents the 'heroic age' of the drama and thus the time of heroic experience, noting that although the heroic element later disappeared the 'experience mania' remained (*ibid.*). Brecht's criticism is echoed in paragraph 33 of the *Organum*:

The theatre as we know it shows the structure of society (represented on the stage) as incapable of being influenced by society (in the auditorium). ... Shakespeare's great solitary figures, bearing on their breast the star of their fate, carry through with irresistible force their futile and deadly outbursts; they prepare their own downfall; life, not death, becomes obscene as they collapse; the catastrophe is beyond criticism. Human sacrifices all round! Barbaric delights! We know that the barbarians have their art. Let us create another. (BOT 189)

Both these passages read as if Brecht were attacking Shakespeare's drama rather than the 20th century German theatre producing it and in a way he is: he must in order to effect changes in the theatre. But Brecht's deliberate distortion of Shakespeare's drama, his reading of it as character studies of unalterable 'solitary figures' or 'great individuals' who are 'passionately' and 'irresistibly' swept towards destruction, points out not what he believes to be wrong with this drama but what he believes is wrong with the 'barbaric', 'culinary' orthodox theatre. Brecht may also be referring in the later quotation to the Nazis' treatment of Jews,

homosexuals and others who were forced to bear on their breasts the star of their fate during the Nazis' barbaric rule of terror, adding a grim urgency to his call to change the theatre:

That Brecht is criticising theatre practice rather than Shakespearean dramaturgy is evident in 'On Experimental Theatre' (1940), a lecture written for theatre students and professionals while he was living in Finland and designed to explain to them the experiments he and his Berlin contemporaries were carrying out prior to 1933. In a section not included in Willett's translation (*BOT* 130-5) but that again uses *King Lear* as the main example, Brecht contends that empathy or sympathetic understanding between actor and spectator is not possible in cases involving changeable human beings and avoidable acts. The productions of the orthodox theatre allow the spectator to have only such responses as the 'mood' on stage permits:

As long as the stars of his fate hang over King Lear, as long as we consider him as being unchangeable, his deeds subject to nature without restriction, even presented as being fated, so long can we be sympathetically understanding towards him, ... The observations, emotions, and perceptions of the spectators were the same as those which brought the characters on stage into line. The stage could scarcely generate emotions, permit observations and facilitate understanding, which are not suggestively represented on it, Lear's wrath over his daughters infects the spectator, that is, the spectator, watching him, could only experience wrath, not perhaps amazement or uneasiness, and the same holds true for other possible emotions, (*Tulane Drama Review* 6:1 (1961) 12-3; tr. C. R. Mueller)

The target of Brecht's criticism is not *King Lear* but the tyrannical production practice which forces both actor and spectator 'into line', thus eliminating the opportunity for 'discussion' which could test the wrath

of Lear against its justification or provide it 'with a prophesy of its possible consequences'. Instead the orthodox theatre offers 'the direct transplantation of this wrath' from actor to audience (*ibid.* 13). Brecht suggests the following example as a means of alleviating this problem:

The wrath of Lear is shared in by his faithful servant Kent. Kent soundly thrashes a servant of the thankless daughters, who is instructed to disobey one of Lear's wishes. Shall the spectator of our time share Lear's wrath and approve of it, while in essence sympathizing with the thrashing of the servant, carried out on Lear's orders? The question is this: How can this scene be played so that the spectator, on the contrary, flies into a passion because of Lear's wrath? Only an emotion of this kind which can deny the spectator sympathetic understanding, which generally only he can experience, and which generally could occur only to him, and then only if he breaks through the theatre's power of suggestion, can be socially justified, (*ibid.* 13)

In saying that 'the spectator of our time' should not automatically share Lear's and Kent's wrath Brecht is not suggesting that Shakespeare intended this reaction: the emphasis in this essay is on production practice, 'the theatre's power of suggestion', on interpretation rather than perceived intention. Lear's and Kent's wrath, as Brecht calls it, is necessary for the 'socially justified' emotional response Brecht seeks to provoke.

Brecht introduces the *V-effekt* into his argument at this point, presenting it as a method for breaking the tyranny that the orthodox theatre apparatus exercises over both the spectator and the drama. According to Brecht, achieving this end would mean that the spectator would 'no longer see the human beings presented on the stage as being unchangeable, unadaptable, and handed over helpless to fate'; in addition it would give the

spectator 'a new attitude in the theatre' (*ibid.* 14); this would open up plays to other interpretations, making possible the representation of a socially justifiable dramatic dialectic:

To alienate an event or a character is simply to take what to the event or character is obvious, known, evident and produce surprise and curiosity out of it. Let us consider again the wrath of Lear over the thanklessness of his daughters. ... Through the technique of alienation ... the actor presents the wrath of Lear in such a way that the spectator can be surprised at it, so that he can conceive of still other reactions from Lear as well as that of wrath. The attitude of Lear is alienated, that is, it is presented as belonging specifically to Lear, as something shocking, remarkable, as a social phenomenon which is not self-evident. ... The experiences of Lear need not produce in all people of all times the emotion of wrath. Wrath may be an eternally possible reaction of the human being, but this kind of wrath, the kind of wrath which manifests itself in this way and which has such origins as those of Lear, is an ephemeral thing. The process of alienation, then, is the process of historicizing, of presenting events and persons as historical, and therefore ephemeral. The same, of course, may happen with contemporaries, their attitudes may also be presented as ephemeral, historical, and evanescent. (*ibid.*)

Brecht accepts wrath as a human emotion but insists that the reasons which provoke it be made subject to social history and he sees this demonstrated in Shakespeare's play: Lear's wrath must be presented as a choice, a conscious decision, an example of 'fixing the "not ... but ..."' (*BOT* 137). Brecht does not suggest that it is necessary to alter Shakespeare, only that the possibilities present in his plays should be opened up. For Brecht the production must historicise and make remarkable all human emotions; nothing should be presented as being natural, self-evident or fated; the production should demonstrate the social and historical reasons for the events represented and allow them to be critically assessed.

III

The focus of these middle period comments suggests a way of understanding Brecht's earlier Shakespeare criticism which displays a harshness which can be described as Shavian. 'Three Cheers for Shaw' (1926) illustrates the development of Brecht's dramatic theory as well as his Shakespeare criticism. What he seems to admire most about Shaw is his censorious critical attitude:

This extraordinary man seems to be of the opinion that nothing in the world need be feared so much as the ordinary man's calm and incorruptible eye, but that this must be feared without question. This theory [*Theorie*] is for him the source of a great natural superiority and by applying it systematically he has ensured that nobody who comes across him, in print, on the stage or in the flesh, can conceive for a moment of his undertaking an action or speaking a sentence without being afraid of that incorruptible eye. Indeed even the younger generation, whose qualifications lie largely in their aggressiveness, limit their aggressions to a strict minimum when they realize that any attack on one of Shaw's habits, even his habit of wearing peculiar underwear, is likely to end in the disastrous downfall of their own ill-considered garb.
(*BOT* 10)

Included here are Brecht's admiration for the critical abilities of the common people; the sense of superiority that comes from surrounding oneself with theory; appreciation of a systematic, scientific approach; and the use of all this to launch an effective, aggressive, barbed counterattack against one's detractors. Shaw's comment that Shakespeare is 'for an afternoon, but not for all time' (Shaw 1962: ix) contains the humour with the sting in its tail so often heard in Brecht, an example here being the joke centring around the 'downfall' of garments.

For Brecht, Shaw is a terrorist whose brand of terror

is an 'extraordinary one,' using the 'extraordinary weapon' humour (BOT 10). The vehemence and confidence of this 'terrorist' attitude affects the tone of Brecht's critical and theoretical writings. Shaw's self-consciously outrageous and coolly confident attacks on all who disagree with him, who do not meet his standards, or who fail to understand and recognise the superiority of his ideas gained him great fame. His criticism of Shakespeare is often rhetorically so vehement that it lacks credibility. In one review he calls *Cymbeline*

for the most part stagey trash of the lowest melodramatic order, in parts abominably written, throughout intellectually vulgar, and judged in point of thought by modern intellectual standards, vulgar, foolish, offensive, indecent, and exasperating beyond all tolerance. There are times when one asks despairingly why our stage should ever have been cursed with this 'immortal' pilferer of other men's stories and ideas, with his monstrous rhetorical fustian, his unbearable platitudes, his pretentious reduction of the subtlest problems of life to commonplaces against which a Polytechnic debating club would revolt, his incredible unsuggestiveness, his sententious combination of ready reflection with complete intellectual sterility, and his consequent incapacity for getting out of the depth of even the most ignorant audience, except when he solemnly says something so transcendently platitudinous that his more humble-minded hearers cannot bring themselves to believe that so great a man really meant to talk like their grandmothers. With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespear when I measure my mind against his. The intensity of my impatience with him occasionally reaches such a pitch, that it would positively be a relief to me to dig him up and throw stones at him, knowing as I do how incapable he and his worshippers are of understanding any less obvious form of indignity. (Shaw 1962: 50)

The effect is more important than the criticism for Shaw deliberately overstates his case and makes some very questionable points. Shaw's Shakespeare criticism can be put into context by Christopher Hill (1972) who observes that 'madness' or 'lunacy' - and by this he means a madness similar to the Fool's in *King Lear* which he

describes as an unexpurgated attack upon the 'establishment' - is a form of social protest. The 'lunatic' may be saner than the society criticised and rejected which in turn criticises and rejects the 'lunatic'. Hill places 'lunatic' within ironicising quotation marks because 'Many writers who were aware that their views would seem intolerably extreme to their respectable contemporaries deliberately exaggerated their eccentricities in order to get a hearing - as, in rather a different way, George Bernard Shaw did in the twentieth century' (Hill 1972: 14). Reviews such as the one quoted above may be considered 'terrorist attacks' because their purpose is to cause outrage through violence and so overthrow the establishment, or at the least to instigate change. Shaw admitted to Alfred Douglas nearly fifty years after the above review was written that these reviews were 'typical of the provocation under which I attacked Shakespear in the nineties,' their purpose being to make Shakespeare 'human and real' (Hyde 1982: 175). Shaw's campaign in *The Saturday Review* against a decadent Victorian theatre dominated by melodrama and farce was a fight to change the theatre. This effort includes the deflating of Shakespeare regardless of how much Shaw himself may admire him. As Shaw wrote to Ellen Terry, 'My capers are part of a bigger design than you think: Shakespear, for instance, is to me one of the towers of the Bastille and down he must come' (Shaw 1962: xii).

But Shaw must also show, albeit begrudgingly, a

respect for this 'model of perfection' even in the same review:

But I am bound to add that I pity the man who cannot enjoy Shakespear. He has outlasted thousands of abler thinkers, and will outlast a thousand more. His gift of telling a story (provided someone else told it to him first); his enormous power over language, as conspicuous in his senseless and silly abuse of it as in his miracles of expression; his humour; his sense of idiosyncratic character; and his prodigious fund of that vital energy which is, it seems, the true differentiating property behind the faculties, good, bad, or indifferent, of the man of genius, enable him to entertain us so effectively that the imaginary scenes and people he has created become more real to us than our actual life - at least, until our knowledge and grip of actual life begins to deepen and glow beyond the common, (*ibid*, 50-1)

Shakespeare's talents are recognised but Shaw must show the darling of bardolators and important actor-producers to be worthless if the innovations he seeks in the theatre are to be achieved. The reason behind this 'terrorist attack' must be kept in mind: the point Shaw is making is that Shakespeare as presented on stage in Shaw's time is pure sensual satisfaction without moral backbone or social instruction.

IV

Brecht's attitude is similar: to admit publicly to the influence of Shakespeare, indeed to base overtly a new approach to theatre and drama on his work would be tantamount to accepting the practices of the orthodox theatre apparatus. Like Shaw, Brecht pulls Shakespeare down in an attempt to pull the orthodox theatre down with him. Much in his early theoretical pieces concerns changing the way the theatre apparatus 'theatres down' (*BOT* 43) drama to suit itself, thereby obstructing the adoption of a critical attitude in both audience and

actor regardless of the play being performed. Criticism of the apparatus carries over into Brecht's criticism of film and radio. Part of his argument to retain artistic control over the film version of *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) maintains that the film industry itself determines how material is to be used and presented: 'Anybody who advises us not to make use of such new apparatus just confirms the apparatus's right to do bad work'. Similarly, radio as it existed then was 'purely an apparatus for distribution, for mere sharing out' (*ibid.* 52).

A censorious, cavalier, Shavian attitude is evident in the following early fragment concerning changes Brecht would make in the theatre:

It's a young man's agreeable business to acquire sins (and an old man's grisly occupation to cling to his habits). Sin is what is new, strong, surprising, strange. The theatre must take an interest in sin if the young are to be able to go there, (*ibid.* (c1927) 19-20)

The embryonic development of *Verfremdung* here - also evident, as Willett points out, 'in his praise for Shaw for "dislocating our stock associations"' (*ibid.* 19) - is delivered as provocatively as a Shaw or a Wedekind. The 'casual (contemptuous)' (*ibid.* 10) approach that uses humour as a weapon which Brecht admires in and adopts from Shaw is evident in much of Brecht's writing where Shakespeare is used as an example. In a public letter to Sternberg, published in Berlin in 1927, Brecht writes:

you, the sociologist, are alone in being prepared to admit that Shakespeare's great plays, the basis of our drama, are no longer effective. These works were followed by three centuries in which the individual developed into a capitalist, and what killed them

was not capitalism's consequences but capitalism itself. There is little point in mentioning post-Shakespearean drama, as it is invariably much feebler, and in Germany has been debauched by Latin influences. It continues to be supported just out of local patriotism, (*ibid*, 20-1)

Brecht attacks the same vulnerable target as Shaw and makes a similar point: he attempts to knock Shakespeare from his pedestal in order to expose the debauched state of the orthodox theatre. Despite his admiration for playwrights such as Lenz, Wedekind, Hauptmann and especially Büchner, Brecht is willing to discount all 'post-Shakespearean drama' as an ineffective, 'feeble' product of corrupting capitalism. Brecht is contemptuous, outrageous and funny, using a self-assured humour and sense of superiority to make his point that the theatre must change.

Brecht's early career and reputation are marked by this penchant for controversy. The upstart crow from Augsburg, lauded by Ihering while despised by his counterpart Alfred Kerr, charms his way into theatre circles and, much like Shaw, attacks any and all who stand in his way or criticise him. His early drama reviews and other freelance work attack mainstream, 'precious' theatre, are designed to cause trouble as well as bring him attention and are carried out with acerbic wit. Like Shaw he overcomes the 'inborn fear of being conceited' and learns to blow 'his own trumpet' (*ibid*. 10). Judging from Robert Greene's bitter description of the young Shakespeare in *Greenes Groats-Worth of Wit* (1592) as a man who 'supposes he is as well able to

bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you ... [and is] in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie' (Greene 12:144), Shakespeare's early career was not without this same sort of controversy. Brecht's first directing assignment, for Arnolt Bronnen's *Parricide* early in 1922, ended when three leading Berlin actors walked out after arguments with Brecht. Bronnen later remarked that 'Even before he [Brecht] had been performed anywhere, he was the terror of the mediocre stage director, the absolute horror of the manager' (Völker 1975: 35). The premiere of Brecht's *In the Jungle* (9 May 1923) ended with the firing of Jacob Geis who as *Dramaturg* for the Residence Theatre had suggested the play (*ibid.* 36-7). There was also a 'violent quarrel' over the conception of the planned performance of Brecht's *The Life of Edward II of England* (1924) the following year (*ibid.* 40). Fuegi suggests that 'Brecht relished the publicity and deliberately fashioned such scandals' (Fuegi 1987: 191). It seems to have taken Brecht very little time to learn, like Shaw, to apply 'a great part of his talent to intimidating people to a point when it would be an impertinence for them to prostrate themselves before him' (BOT 10).

V

Max Spalter's *Brecht's Tradition* (1967) traces a line in the German drama from Lenz to Brecht similar to that seen between Shaw and Brecht. Spalter emphasises the harsh, critical attitude of these dramatists as one of

their important shared characteristics, defining
'Brechtianism' partly in terms of this attitude:

Brechtianism, when not used as a synonym for cynicism, implies an uninhibited disgust for society as it has functioned in our time, a disgust so pervasive that hope for improvement must begin with the complete scrapping of what is. Anything less revolutionary is considered a ruse, and the Brechtian will not be taken in. (Spalter 1967: 109)

Although this does not do justice to Brecht's optimistic belief in humankind's inalienable right to happiness or his belief that change is not only possible but directable, it is an accurate description of his attitudes towards capitalism, fascism, the 'eternally human' and the orthodox theatre apparatus. Spalter suggests that writers 'are simply not "Brechtian"' if

they do not convey anything like his pitiless debunking attitude, his corrosive antiromanticism, his hard-headed refusal to idealize or glorify, his suspicion of all sentimentalities. No dramatic tradition deserves to be identified with Brecht if it is not composed of writers whose plays refract what one could call a skeptical Brechtian sensibility.... (*ibid.*, xi)

Spalter does not find this sceptical sensibility in the work of Goethe, Schiller, Tieck or Kaiser, or in the Romantic, Realist, Expressionist or Naturalist movements in general. He admits that these writers all leave their mark on Brecht but does not consider them to be 'Brechtian'. Spalter singles out Lenz, Grabbe, Büchner, Wedekind and Kraus not only because they share a common form and techniques with Brecht but because 'they share with him also a common temperament and outlook', one of 'moral outrage and cynical perception' (*ibid.* xi-xii).

Another important characteristic of the dramatists in 'Brecht's tradition' is their use of Shakespearean drama

as their starting point. Each chapter of Spalter's study begins with an account of a particular playwright's attitude towards Shakespearean drama and the extent of Shakespeare's influence on him. All, that is, except the chapter which concerns Brecht: here Shakespeare is hardly mentioned at all and the reader is left to feel the effect of his influence cumulatively through the preceding episodes:

From Shakespeare, Brecht and his anticipators learned much that suited their antinaturalistic temperaments, e.g., the art of constructing a play of highly vivid episodes which when linked together attained panoramic scope; the compatibility of powerful dramatic events with a context of commentary ... of protracted monologues or crisp poeticized observation; and the miscibility of the tragic and comic as well as the prosaic and lyrical. The Shakespearean history play was a perfect model of dramatized narrative in which individual scenes constituted autonomous units of action, Shakespeare offered an approach to character wholly divergent from the balanced psychological approach of nineteenth-century realism, (*ibid.*, 113)

Spalter sees the thrust of Shakespeare's influence on these writers in the episodic form of history plays: 'the episodic play grounded on a more or less anti-Aristotelian approach deserves singling out as a significant cultural development and ... this kind of drama deserves its unique identity from the very omissions which have so often been held against it' (*ibid.*, 201).

Spalter's study is interesting not only for its discussion of the dramaturgical influence of Shakespeare on the German playwrights in question. He does not dwell on Brecht's attitude towards Shakespeare in particular, as do many other critical works dealing directly or indirectly with the relationship between these two poet-

playwrights. Spalter's near omission of Shakespeare in his chapter on Brecht has the effect of emphasising Shakespeare's importance to Brecht's drama; it is a cumulative effect similar to that of the episodic drama Brecht emulates. Similarly, Spalter does not note any cynicism or scepticism in Shakespeare's drama and again the effect of specific omission after so much evidence emphasises these characteristics. Brecht's attacks on what he calls Aristotelian dramaturgy converge with his criticism of the orthodox theatre apparatus and Shakespearean drama is often used as a positive alternate example; but the extent of its influence on Brecht's dramaturgy has been underplayed by the negative cast given to Brecht's ambivalent use of Shakespeare as well as his Shavian pose of casual contempt. What follows is a selection of Brecht's writings on Shakespeare, an attempt to show that Brecht's attitude is far from ambivalent in the established negative sense.

VI

The earliest references by Brecht to Shakespeare are found in Brecht's diary and letters.' Writing to Max Hohenester in 1917 he mentions, 'I haven't been reading much. Most recently *Coriolanus*. Wonderful!' (*Letters* 23). One should not make too much of a comment like this but *Coriolanus* is an important play for Brecht and an early mention of it as 'wonderful' when Brecht is only a year away from writing *Baal* (1918-24) - a play which parodies and 'debunks' the Romantic ideal of the poet - suggests

an affinity with Shakespeare which contrasts with Brecht's antipathy towards Romantics, Expressionists or Naturalists. His diary entry for 17 August 1920 reveals the depth of his appreciation for Shakespeare's writing:

I've read Shakespeare's *Antony & Cleopatra*, a splendid drama which really gripped me. The more central the place apparently taken by the plot, the richer and more powerful are the developments open to its exponents. They haven't got faces, they only have voices, they don't keep speaking, they just answer, they don't wear the plot like a rubber skin but wrap it around themselves like a proud garment full of folds. When the plot is a strong one these men needn't be walking museums, one doesn't have to make a meal of *them*, there's also the play itself. ... The clearer the details of a character, the thinner the connection with the observer, I love this play and the people in it. (*Diaries* 15)

Brecht was only 22 when he made this observation. Already he is picking out elements of Shakespeare's drama which would become features of his own: emphasis on plot making character development from outside rather than within a possibility; discouraging audience empathy with characters. Not only is he able to focus on aspects which will be useful to him but the sheer intelligence of his observations displays a deep understanding of dramatic art. These points should be kept in mind when considering Brecht's later criticisms.

A little over a year later there is an entry concerning *The Merchant of Venice* which shows the development of Brecht's critical position through what he sees as Shakespeare's emphasis on social forces determining character:

Here we have the story of an immoral contract. A man is more than a contract, than ships or money or happiness. He's not been thought out; he's operative. Here is a (battered, violated, spat-upon) fellow who wants to break some damned neck with the help of the law, and what the law does is to help dislocate his wrists for him. It is a father whose only daughter has been stolen. He is not

particularly nice, (No use is made of this, it would undermine the ground we're standing on.) Generally speaking the story is strong enough to support all kinds of luxuries, (*ibid*, 129)

The challenges Shakespeare offers to the concept of justice within a social formation involve exposing the contradictions within that formation. For Brecht, Shylock's insistence on the letter of the law entangles him in a conflict resulting from the equivocation of the socially constructed concepts of individual and justice. Tension results from the story constructed around this conflict rather than centring on internal character development or 'eternally human' ideals. Willett (1959) locates the influence of Shakespeare on Brecht in these concrete situations rather than in conflicting, contradictory ideals: 'Actual events, actual relations, clearly-defined actions, a sort of running fight in which each successive issue is plain: Brecht had aimed at such goals in Munich days, and in Shakespeare he saw them attained' (Willett 1959: 122-3). The continuation of the diary entry cited above reveals Brecht's recognition of a vital difference between Shakespearean drama and the drama of Brecht's time as well as a difference between their theatres and audiences. Shakespeare's characters are built up from the outside:

It's precisely people who act in precisely this way. Not like later, when the remarkable thing becomes the fact that this kind of people act like this. People in those days were still sufficiently interested in the plot. Today the same need is catered for by the novel. One need is satisfied by this play; the need for justice. The man knows we have invested something in it. We shan't look this horse in the mouth. We enjoy demolishing. The pretext; he's so immoral. In the old days people believed so as not to spoil the fun. Now their only fun is not believing. So one has to offer them things they can not believe in. And since the swindle now operates

primarily in the realm of ideals, that's where their plays are located, (*Diaries* 129)

The final point is an important one and the problems involved in producing Shakespeare in the orthodox theatre are central to much of Brecht's criticism. For him the orthodox theatre apparatus is a 'swindle' unable to cope with plays which do not fit its established production practice.

That Brecht is attacking the theatre rather than Shakespeare in what is considered to be his Shakespeare criticism is evident in the introduction to Brecht's radio adaptation of *Macbeth* (1927). Despite the cynical, debunking attitude of the piece as a whole, Brecht's attack focuses on the tendency of the orthodox theatre apparatus to force drama into a predetermined mould. Brecht's strategy is to come to an appreciation of *Macbeth* indirectly, to work towards a criticism of the orthodox theatre through the play, suggesting that the contemporary theatre is incapable of producing *Macbeth*. Brecht's opening remarks seem to focus on the play itself, first its content, then its form:

Some of my friends have told me openly and without reticence that they would in no way be interested in the play *Macbeth*. They said that they can think of nothing during this twittering of the witches; that poetic moods are damaging because they prevent their man from bringing order to the world; and a more general glorification of bare landscapes as heath would be absolutely too late at a time when the whole energy of humankind had to be directed towards persuading these heaths to produce corn. In any case, such an attempt to convert the heath into arable land and to change the murderers of kings into socialists would be far more useful as well as more poetic. One has to listen very carefully to these objections, because they come from the freshest minds of people who, in my opinion, have definitely got to be kept visiting the theatre. (*GW* 15:115; tr. Rossi)

He then goes on to state rather flatly that *Macbeth* 'does not stand up to contemporary theatre criticism', drawing attention to 'the frightening illogic which apparently already marked the conception of the play' (*ibid.* 115-6). A brief discussion concerning the prophecies contained in the play follows where he observes:

If aesthetics ever played a part in the conception of a drama, then the spectator should be allowed to demand that prophecies which one has been led to expect to come true when spoken are fulfilled, as happens in the case of *Macbeth* who indeed becomes king; the spectator can legitimately expect the son of Banquo to become king before the curtain finally falls, (*ibid.* 116)

His conclusion is unexpected, but certainly in line with his tongue-in-cheek attitude: 'One can only assume that this author has forgotten him, or that the actor who played him was not good enough to share a curtain call at the end' (*ibid.* 117). If these problems of credibility render the play 'sloppy' in the face of contemporary criticism, which it then cannot 'stand up to', Brecht contends that

it is not too much to maintain, as I do, that it also does not stand up to contemporary theatre. I am not completely sure, but I do not believe that this play, at least in the last 50 years, in any of our theatres, in any translation, and with any producer, would possibly succeed. Especially the middle parts of the play, the scenes which engage *Macbeth* in bloody but utterly hopeless enterprises, cannot be represented in the theatre as it is now. And these without question are the most important parts. I cannot here address fully the question of why they cannot be represented, I can only emphasise what seems to me from all this to be the main reason for it, (*ibid.* 117)

Brecht now switches to a more serious tone and more serious criticism, echoing his earlier comments on *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Merchant of Venice*. He points out that the 'illogic of the action, that constantly broken order of tragic events, is not

characteristic of our theatre, it is characteristic only in life'. The episodic structure Brecht refers to is also characteristic of the plays he had himself written by this time. Brecht consistently argues that the orthodox theatre is not capable of producing such works; it 'theatres down' any nonconformity that cannot be appropriated to its unbending form. This, Brecht contends, was not always the case: 'When we look at Shakespeare's plays, to whom we can certainly grant a measure of respect, then we must conclude that at one time there was a theatre which stood in a very different relationship to life'. Alfred Döblin's suggestion that 'one can never experience life through drama, only the mental state of the dramatist' is not dismissed but rather is qualified as Brecht argues that this is only true with respect to performance and drama 'set at a certain mental level' (*ibid.* 117-8). In what would seem to be a complete about face Brecht champions Shakespeare's drama and theatre:

the drama of Shakespeare and presumably also his theatre was certainly closer to that kind of form which could preserve that truth of life itself. Through that epic element which is in Shakespeare's plays and which makes them so difficult to produce in the theatre, Shakespeare was able to portray this truth. There is only one style for the contemporary theatre which brings out the true, namely the philosophic content of Shakespeare, and that is the epic style. (*ibid.* 118)

The distance Brecht seemed to be putting between himself and Shakespeare at the beginning of this piece now disappears as Shakespeare is claimed to be a writer of epic drama who could expect his audience 'not to be thinking very hard about the play, but to be thinking

about life' (*ibid.*).

Brecht goes on to dismiss 18th and 19th century drama on the grounds that 'Its philosophic content is nil'.

But where Schiller or Hebbel fail, Shakespeare succeeds:

It is not necessary for Shakespeare to think, Neither does he need to construe. In his case the spectator construes, Shakespeare in no way bends human fate in the second act in order to have a fifth act. Everything flows naturally with him. Because his acts are without connection, one recognises the chaotic nature of human fate, when it is reported by someone who has no interest in ordering in order to give life to an idea which can only be a prejudice, an argument which cannot be taken from life. There is nothing more stupid than to perform Shakespeare in such a way as to make him clear. He is by nature unclear. He is absolute matter. (*ibid.*, 119)

The objections of Brecht's friends voiced at the beginning of the piece are now put into perspective. Incredulity and 'frightening illogic' are explained as so much raw material retrieved for use in the revolutionary theatre. Shakespeare is seen as an example to be imitated, as an ally in the battle to change the theatre, not only in terms of dramatic form but in content and its treatment.

Only a fragment of Brecht's adaptation of *Macbeth* survives but it seems to share characteristics of his other adaptations: he shortens the play and reassigns speeches in order to emphasise that people are driven by external (i.e. social) rather than internal forces. An entry in the *Arbeitsjournal* dated 20 September 1945 concerning Brecht's film adaptation of *Macbeth* (*All Our Yesterdays*) suggests the direction his 1927 radio adaptation may have taken:

Between work on *Galileo* I am working with Lorre and Reyer on a *Macbeth* transcript for film. The great Shakespeare motif, the

fallibility of instinct (the unclarity of the inner voice), cannot be renewed. I bring to the fore the theme of the defencelessness of the small people against the ruling moral code, the restriction of their contribution to society to a contribution that consists of a kind of criminal potency. (AJ 755; tr. Rossi)

Whall's comment that in his radio adaptation Brecht undercuts 'the question of supernatural intervention so central to Shakespeare's text' is contradicted by her report that the witches' speeches are in fact retained in the new version: they are given to Macbeth and Banquo while 'Banquo stirs a "hell Broth" in his helmet'. Stressing that Brecht 'emphasized the themes of power and the governmental abuse of power' (Whall 1982: 131) she disregards the emphasis Shakespeare places on these themes as well as Brecht's recognition of their inclusion in the text. Johnson's comments put Brecht's adaptation and his forward into perspective:

The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that in Shakespeare's time it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions. (Johnson 1989: 229)

The 'unclarity of the inner voice' Brecht finds in *Macbeth*, the failure of instinct to warn against illusive predictions which may excuse rampant, immoral ambition is representable neither under the tyranny of the orthodox film apparatus in the Hollywood of the 1940s nor in the orthodox theatre apparatus in 1920s-30s Germany where the abuse of power excused by some external, inexplicable, unseen and unstoppable authority is given passive acceptance rather than being challenged to the point of change. Brecht must adapt *Macbeth* to realise the

challenge inherent in the play not because he feels Shakespeare lacks this challenging attitude but to prevent the orthodox apparatus from immobilising that challenge.

VII

Brecht's attack on the 'culinary' theatre in his notes to *Mahagonny* (1930) suggests that the theatre apparatus resists discussion of content in order to preserve itself. This tendency is apparent in the altering and reshaping of Shakespeare by the orthodox theatre to the point where *Macbeth* becomes merely a character study rather than a representation of the mechanisms of a particular society and some of the individuals involved in it. The content of the drama is disregarded; all that remains is a frame in which to hang a theatrical picture. Brecht consistently draws attention to the fact that theatre as it exists does not allow discussion of the content of plays. All the 'culinary' theatre gives its audience is a 'theatred down' picture of humankind: a picture suited to the theatre apparatus. Philosophy or social criticism are suppressed to the point of impotence; they become filler rather than fibre:

In the old operas all discussion of the content is rigidly excluded. If a member of the audience had happened to see a particular set of circumstances portrayed and had taken up a position *vis-à-vis* them, then the old opera would have lost its battle; the 'spell would have been broken'. Of course there were elements of the old opera which were not purely culinary. ... And yet the element of philosophy, almost of daring, in these operas was so subordinated to the culinary principle that their *sense* was in effect tottering and was soon absorbed in sensual satisfaction. ... The content had been smothered in opera. ... Those composers

who ... still insist on posing as philosophers, [promote a philosophy] which is of no use to man or beast, and can only be disposed of as a means of sensual satisfaction,... (BGT 39)

Brecht argues that if the new drama, his plays included, is to be effective, i.e. to be able to represent 'people's lives together' and so work towards positive changes in society, then the theatre must change. Theatre must give up control of the drama to allow the drama to create a theatre suited to its needs. To 'historicise' the theatre, to enable it to show human nature as capable of change, the audience must be allowed to observe all that happens on stage as history unfolding, not in any magical sense but as past events portrayed as choices made from several available options. In offering this perspective Brecht hopes to convince people that human nature is alterable, that the present is as changeable now as the past was then.

Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* uses bourgeois conventions of theatre as content to help instigate change. He does this by making the spectator the object of criticism. Theoretically this puts the audience in a position to 'appoint a new function for the theatre' which the theatre itself resists. Because it functions as a fulfiller of desires, the orthodox theatre apparatus cannot be trusted: the representations it offers are not accurate pictures of life. Brecht argues that the German drama as exemplified by his own work and that of his colleagues has advanced beyond what the present theatre apparatus is capable of producing and that it will

continue to develop thus widening the gap. If theatre is to keep pace it must change to suit the new plays rather than submitting them to a process which changes them beyond recognition. The spectator should support change in the theatre so that the new drama can produce its ways of showing people's lives together without interference from an unsympathetic theatre apparatus which dispenses drama like a drug - a palliative to placate people - rather than offering drama as a discussion concerning the sources of social problems (*BOT* 43).

The changes Brecht seeks are based on the radical, dynamic and experimental representations of Shakespearean drama:

Here the structural form didn't rule out the individual's deviations from the straight course, as brought about by 'just life' (a part is always played here by outside relationships, with other circumstances that 'don't take place'; a far wider cross-section is taken), but used such deviations as a motive force of the play's dynamics. This friction penetrates right inside the individual, to be overcome within him. The whole weight of this kind of drama comes from the piling up of resistances. The material is not yet arranged in accordance with any wish for an easy ideal formula. Something of Baconian materialism still survives here, and the individual himself still has flesh and bones and resists the formula's demands, (*BOT* 46)

Materialism gives rise to epic forms akin to Shakespearean chronicle drama which the orthodox theatre cannot accommodate because, among other things, its formula presents the dissolution of individuals merely as parts for actors developed from within (*ibid.* 45).

What is necessary is 'The hardest advance of all: backwards to common sense' (*MD* 52), a movement towards what Brecht understands as Shakespearean production practice. This involves abandoning formulaic production

centring around the creation of empathy between character and audience and between character and actor; as Brecht explains this in the *Organum*: 'We grasp the old works by a comparatively new method - empathy - on which they rely little' (*BOT* 182-3). Empathy is supported by an emphasis on illusion rather than representation, contributing to the blurring of the historical element of the drama.

Brecht addresses the problems involved in productions relying on the creation of empathy through illusion in the model book from his production of *Mother Courage* (1949). Citing Goethe's complaints about 'the "inadequacy of the English wooden stage" of Shakespeare's day' (*ibid.* 218), Brecht outlines a new theatre which would demolish the fourth wall, one which would not gloss over the 'reality that you are sitting in a theatre, and not with your eye glued to a keyhole' (*MD* 52). According to Brecht, Goethe could not conceive of tolerating Shakespeare's plays without such 'aids to naturalness' as stage machinery and realistic backcloths. He pictures plays in an Elizabethan playhouse as disappointing but

highly interesting fairy-tales narrated by a number of players who had tried to create an impression by making up as the characters, coming and going and carrying out the movements required by the story, but [leaving] it to the audience to imagine as many paradises and palaces as they liked on the empty stage. (*BOT* 218)

The external, materialistic aspect of the type of theatre Goethe is describing, one which relies on or even forces the spectators to use their imaginations, thus making them participants and not merely auditors, is akin to Brecht's epic theatre. The emphasis on empathy supported

by illusion in the orthodox theatre of Brecht's time does not require the audience to use their imaginations: this work is done for them; they are asked only to accept passively the representations which the theatre offers. Naturalist images can and do offer 'criticism of the real world' but Brecht regards it as 'Feeble criticism' because the perspective empathy gives allows identification with characters, thus leading to acceptance of the *status quo* (MD 27). Brecht forgives Goethe for his disparaging view of Shakespeare's non-illusionistic theatre only because the 'mechanics of illusion' in Goethe's day were far from perfect and thus helped to break the illusion:

The bourgeois classical theatre was happily situated half-way along the road to naturalistic illusionism, at a point where the stage machinery provided enough elements of illusion to improve the representation of some aspects of reality, but not so much as to make the audience feel that it was no longer in a theatre, ... In short, wherever it failed in the business of deception the theatre still proved to be theatre, (BOT 218)²

Imperfect illusion which draws attention to its theatricality helps to disrupt empathy, thereby creating a rhythm of drawing in and pushing out the spectator; illusion is used only to be disrupted, forcing the audience to consider rather than accept. Goethe's theatre is one of developing realism in stage representation; the machinery is visible but attempts are made to hide it rather than display it. No rhythm of drawing the spectators in only to force them out again is set up: imagination is exercised only because the illusion takes more effort to accept on the part of the spectator.

Brecht notes that in the hundred years since Goethe made his observations, improvements in machinery had 'led to such an emphasis being put on illusion that we newcomers would sooner think of Shakespeare on an empty stage than a Shakespeare who had ceased to stimulate or provoke any use of the imagination' (*ibid.*). Brecht recognises the advantages of an empty stage, emphasising it in *Mother Courage* where it becomes 'the *tabula rasa* on which the actors have been working for weeks, testing first one detail then another, learning the incidents of the chronicle by portraying them, and portraying them by judging them.' The mechanics of illusion are displayed and their use is subjected to criticism. The bare stage helps give a 'beautiful approximation' rather than a theatrically beautiful lavishness; exacting detail is left to worn, museum quality props and costumes. The reality of 'theatre as theatre' exposes what is necessary for changing reality into art:

Restoring the theatre's reality as theatre is now a precondition for any possibility of arriving at realistic images of human social life, ... The illusion created by the theatre must be a partial one, in order that it may always be recognized as an illusion. Reality, however complete, has to be altered by being turned into art, so that it can be seen to be alterable and be treated as such, (BOT 219)

A bare wooden stage offers such a partial realism, leaving paradises, palaces, isles full of noises, ghosts and fairies to the imaginations of an eager and intelligent audience to whom 'theatre was such a passion ... it could swallow immortal works of art greedily and barefacedly as so many "texts"' (*ibid.* 166). Beyond this

active use of the imagination, the 'eager and intelligent audience' would be in a position to imagine a 'life' or 'reality' different from the one represented on stage because the construction of the situation and/or the character is exposed.

Representation of illusion as illusion allows for criticism of society by exposing it as an alterable construction. Brecht sees this process at work in Shakespearean drama and attacks the orthodox theatre apparatus for neutralising its effects by manipulating the form of a play until it conforms to the formula of the apparatus. Manipulation of form affects the content of a play and the possible effects it may have. Brecht quite openly supports Shakespeare while deriding the theatre apparatus where questions of form are concerned but it is the question of content which has led to the negative conclusions concerning Brecht's ambivalence towards Shakespearean drama. Examination of Brecht's criticism of Shakespeare's dramatic content again reveals his continuing use of and support for Shakespeare in his attacks on the orthodox theatre apparatus.

VIII

Although Brecht's new theatre adopts a Shakespearean form he seems to feel that the old subject matter is inadequate as it appears to him to deal with surrendering to passions in the way actors and audience do in the orthodox theatre: 'The Elizabethan drama established a powerful freedom of the individual and generously

surrendered it to its passions'. These passions - to love and to be loved, to rule, to punish and not to punish - involve social factors which are often smoothed over: 'The actors should allow their audience to go on enjoying these freedoms. But at the same time, in the same performance, they will from now on establish also the freedom of society' (GW 15:333; tr. Rossi). In this section of 'Notes on Shakespeare' Brecht also criticises the orthodox theatre for its 'built-in technique which allows it to describe the passive person'; the 'eternal' question posed by 'fate' 'has only a triggering character, it is not subject to human activity' (*ibid.* 332). Heinemann points out that in these essays 'Brecht is responding directly to Goethe's and Hegel's reading ... based on the acceptance of evil and disaster as fated, unalterable, eternal' (Heinemann 1985: 213). In the grips of the 'culinary' theatre, Shakespeare's plays become little more than precious pictures of helpless humanity trapped by some ineradicable, uncontrollable force leading it to destruction. The orthodox theatre supports the smoothing over of contradiction which makes the cause of human suffering invisible, blaming an unseen fate or 'eternally human' traits rather than examining and considering socioeconomic factors. The essay 'On Form and Subject-Matter' (1930) suggests that 'The proper way to explore humanity's new mutual relationships is via the exploration of the new subject-matter. (Marriage, disease, money, war, etc.)' (BOT 29). It would seem then

that the new subject matter is not much different from the old; what is important is the attitude the theatre takes towards subject matter and the relationships arising from it in the play being produced. Brecht argues that this can only be achieved through the theatre adopting a pedagogical purpose (*ibid.* 30).

Theatre should allow the audience to view the events critically, not merely to accept them. Thus Lear must be 'demonstrated to the psychologists': the feeling of inevitable tragedy will not be possible if the production allows the audience to ask itself 'whether the food that Lear demands of his daughters for his hundred knights is available, and if not, where it could be coming from' (GW 15:333; tr. Rossi). Again Brecht is drawing attention to the social, material factors involved in a character's actions and choices. The familiar or typical is reconsidered. Brecht is constantly looking for visible determinants, in some ways filling in what the episodic form may leave out. These external determinants must be displayed in production rather than hidden or smoothed over. Performances which suggest questions such as 'Where does the food come from?' prevent acceptance of passive, inevitable tragedy by exposing some of the sociopolitical factors relevant to the tragedy. The disruption of stage illusion, of exposing the construction of a dramatic event, of making the familiar remarkable, of presenting theatre as theatre, offer a situation where it is possible for these questions to be

asked.

Like the introduction to *Macbeth* discussed above, this section of 'Notes on Shakespeare' ~~argues~~ argues that Shakespeare's episodic drama already contains the necessary material and that the theatre must find a way of presenting it:

During Shakespeare's play Antony launches an empire into war through his passion for Cleopatra, his sighs of love overflow into the sighs of the dying soldiers, his visit to his lover change into sea battles, his lover's pledge into political statements, an English king today in a similar situation loses his job and becomes happy. (*ibid*, 333-4)

The English king referred to is Edward VIII regarding his marriage to Mrs. Simpson. The material content of *Antony and Cleopatra* - e.g. the social motivations and consequences of Antony's actions - can only be brought out if the form is left intact. In constructing episodic drama the playwright compresses time and selects events regardless of their weight, significance or even existence in the source. Large battles, often portrayed as deciding factors in historical accounts, may be represented by single combat or be missing completely. Seemingly minor scenes not directly connected to the main action such as the Ventidius episode in *Antony and Cleopatra* (III.1) provide alternative perspectives not available in the orthodox theatre where everything is subordinated 'to a single idea ... propelling the spectator along a single track where he can look neither right nor left, up nor down' (*BOT* 44). The 'photographic', single perspective techniques used in the orthodox theatre cannot adequately present the

'cinematographic' spectrum of Shakespeare's episodic drama:

Reality seems to me to be approached most closely by such plays as Shakespeare's historical dramas, that is to say the dramatizations of chapters from the chronicles. There is no 'idea' in such pieces, no plot is formed, we can hardly talk about current affairs. It is only an illumination through certain established historical events with occasional corrections in the direction of the thought that 'this is actually not thinkable in any other way'. Courses on drama should begin with a comparison of, for instance, *King John* with the chronicle from which it is supposedly drawn, (*AJ* 306 (26 Oct, 1941); tr, Rossi)

Despite the seemingly haphazard construction of episodic drama, the story is all important. The episodes narrate the story from several points of view 'with the permanence of something makeshift' (*MD* 61) rather than presenting a progressive, unified thread from a single perspective. Brecht's list in the notes to *Mahagonny* comparing dramatic and epic theatre describes epic as a chronicle form: a narrative consisting of a montage of autonomous scenes showing a picture of the world through a series of curves and jumps (*BOT* 37). Episodic structure makes the story 'the heart of the theatrical performance. For it is what happens *between* people that provides them with all the material that they can then discuss, criticize, alter.' If characters must fit into contradictory episodes, *each* episode will be all the more striking by reaching fulfilment in a particular person (*ibid.* 200). As the contradictions in the story combine, rather than unravelling like a magical puzzle where everything finally fits, each scene retains its own significance. Forcing the play into a form governed by the needs of the theatre while ignoring the needs of a

particular play destroys the content of that play:

What keeps classic plays alive is the use that they are put to, even if they are misused. In classrooms they are examined for the moral; in the theatres they are a vehicle for vain and selfish actors, overambitious major-domos, profit seeking salesmen of an evening's entertainment. They are plundered and castrated; therefore they still exist. Even where they are 'only honoured', this is done in a clever, revitalizing manner; for nobody can honour anything without holding back a full part of the honour for itself. In short, degeneration suits classical plays because only something lively can live. A rigid cult would be as dangerous as the ceremony which forbade the Byzantine servants at court to touch the nobility, so that when in princely drunkenness they fell into a pond, they were left without help. In order not to die the servants let them die. (GW 15:335-6; tr, Rossi)

Brecht's tone is again sardonic but the sarcasm is aimed directly at the theatre apparatus and its mutilation of any drama which does not fit its form. In 'A Little Private Tuition for my Friend Max Gorelik' (1944) Brecht, in typical Shavian fashion, echoes this blasting of the apparatus and its self-perpetuating methods, depicting it as being in the hands of thugs who emphasise empathy over reason in a bid to control audience emotions:

The conventional theatre can only be defended when one uses obviously reactionary maxims like 'theatre is theatre' or 'drama is drama'. In this way the concept of drama is limited to the decadent drama of the parasitic bourgeoisie, Jupiter's lightning in the tiny hands of the L. B. Mayers. Look at the conflict in Elizabethan dramatic art, complicated, variable, mainly objective, always unsolvable, and look at what is made of it today whether in modern drama or in modern reproductions of Elizabethan drama! Look at the role of empathy then and now! What an inconsistent, intermittent, complicated part it plays in Shakespearean theatre! What we are served today as 'the eternal laws of the drama' are the very modern laws laid down by L. B. Mayer and the Theatre Guild. (GW 15:470; tr, Rossi)²

The tyranny of the formula with its concentration on empathy destroys the content and force of a play. Empathy plays a part in Elizabethan drama but its use is rhythmic, dynamic and contradictory; it is not a routine automatically applied to induce acceptance of a given

situation. The event which sparked Brecht's harangue is noted in an *Arbeitsjournal* entry dated 28 May 1944 where Brecht compares the structure of his *Caucasian Chalk Circle* to *Hamlet*. Again it is the apparatus which Brecht attacks for its tyrannical reshaping of drama to suit its own ends:

It is as if one were writing a play for the desert, Gorelik is here with a producer-writer named Auerbach, an American, whom he esteems. Winge tells the action of the *Chalk Circle*, Gorelik asks about the meaning, and then they all want to criticise the structure. 'Where is the conflict, the tension, the flesh and blood' and so on and so forth? I try to present to them or make them see the complicated and daring way *Hamlet* was structured. 'So what, then *Hamlet* is simply not structured' (or at least not what Moss Hart would call structured). When they get into the car with Winge they say 'It will never be a success. It cannot call forth emotion, it can't even achieve identification, but then he makes a theory out of that, he is crazy and gets worse.' The prostitution of these 'artists' is complete. The whore sells a mere 'effect', and she's well paid, because the client is impotent. The concern [*Interesse*] which this audience seems to take in life is that of the usurer, it should be called 'interest' ['*Zins*'] (*AJ* 653; tr. Rossi).

In Brecht's view the apparatus is concerned only with box office receipts; this is its 'material'. Plays are 'product', judged only by their ability to bring in a paying audience. If the form and/or content of a play do not conform to the proven formula of 'emotion' and 'identification' it is either rejected or adapted into a money-spinner, a process which effectively 'closes' a play by limiting its interpretation and production to the formula imposed on it by the apparatus.

IX

Brecht contends that manipulation by the theatre apparatus affects actors as much as plays; actors must portray characters according to the formula, thus

reducing the characters to parts for actors. One need look no further than Brecht's characterisation of The Actor in *The Messingkauf* to see what Brecht thought of actors who accepted the methods of the orthodox theatre apparatus as not only 'correct' but as the only answer to a complex problem. In 'Emphasis on Sport' (1926) Brecht complains of overworked, overwrought actors on whom the responsibility of the success or failure of the production rests. The theatre gives only what it knows will please within the boundaries it creates; there is no room for alternate production styles, only the supremely passionate artistic effort Brecht sees as bereft of fun. The crowds of dissatisfied people pouring out of both ends of the theatre after a performance is for Brecht a result of the production style of the orthodox theatre:

A play is simply unrecognizable once it has passed through this sausage machine, ... Behind a feigned intensity you are offered a naked struggle in lieu of real competence. They no longer know how to stage anything remarkable, and therefore worth seeing. In his obscure anxiety not to let the audience get away the actor is immediately so steamed up that he makes it seem the most natural thing in the world to insult one's father. At the same time it can be seen that acting takes a tremendous lot out of him. *And a man who strains himself on the stage is bound, if he is any good, to strain all the people sitting in the stalls.* (BOT 8)

The production formula is so entrenched that remarkable events are glossed over becoming merely 'parts for actors'. The representation of events as 'remarkable' develops later into the *V-effekt* where the 'familiar' appears strange or noteworthy. Through this strategy the actor engages the critical faculties of the spectator who is led to consider the 'familiar' in a new light rather than accepting what may be quite remarkable as 'typical'.

Brecht refers to *Richard III* as an example of Shakespeare's use of *V-effekte*. He adapted the courting scene (I.ii) as well as the dream scene before the battle at Bosworth Field (V.iii) for *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941), and the latter scene is also used as an example in *The Messingkauf*:

Richard III Act V scene 3 shows two camps with the tents of Richard and Richmond and in between these a ghost appearing in a dream to the two men, visible and audible to each of them and addressing itself to both, A theatre full of A-effects! (MD 58)

Such effects rely on stage practice and are open to interpretation when the text is produced on different types of stage but Brecht insists that Shakespeare intends the staging described here. The technique of making the familiar remarkable is expanded upon in a section of 'Notes on Shakespeare' which examines the treatment of Shakespeare's drama on the epic stage. Here Brecht explains how an actor in the epic theatre must go about representing a given situation, emphasising that the attitude adopted must have direct reference to the content of the scene if the result is to be realistic:

The famous scene in the first act of *Richard III* is notorious with actors for its difficulty. The success of the power hungry cripple with a lady who is mourning one or rather two of his victims is supposed to show his fascinating effect. It poses a difficult task for the actor to show fascination as a property. The probability of the proceedings suffers from that a lot as it is almost impossible for the actor to solve this task successfully. As a realist, the actor proceeds otherwise. He must study what Richard undertakes to win the widow, he must study his actions, not his being as such. He will find that his actions and with it his fascination consists of very crude flatteries. Therefore his success depends totally on the playing of the lady. It may even be required that she is not too beautiful and therefore not much used to flattery. (GW 15:334-5; tr. Rossi)⁴

Richard's fascination is shown in part by the actress

playing the widow; her reactions to him help to demonstrate this aspect of his character. It is also shown in the way Richard 'plays' the lady: the actor uses Richard's lines to 'play' the widow as one 'plays' a fish hooked on the end of a line. This reciprocal playing shows fascination as a property, as material, not 'simply people who do their own particular deed ... but human beings: shifting raw material, unformed and undefined' (MD 54). Brecht maintains that a character should be built up from the outside, from the social, political and economic pressures exerted on it rather than from within, from indeterminate, enigmatic, 'eternally human' traits which fail to take the social environment into account. A characteristic like Richard's charisma must be demonstrated as a property resulting from social relationships, as a product of a given society and its individuals' interactions within it.

Richard III and *Julius Caesar* resonate throughout *U1* and Brecht's gangster exercises a fascination similar to Richard's. In Scene 6 a ham actor teaches *U1* how to behave (i.e. perform) in public by using Antony's funeral oration from *Julius Caesar*. Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse der Spieler* (1922), a film Brecht could have seen, uses some of the same scenes in a strikingly similar way. Like *U1* it is a story of decadence and corruption: Mabuse controls a gang of murderers; he exercises a similar fascination over henchman and victim alike, taking form here in the even more obviously external, material

practice of hypnotism; there is also a scene where his victims return to haunt him. Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard as an evil yet fascinating villain - the Vice of the Moralities - no doubt influenced Lang as much as Brecht. Johnson notes that *Richard III* is one of Shakespeare's most celebrated performances but he finds the contradictory combination of evil and charm in Richard to be in parts trifling, shocking and improbable (Johnson 1989: 216). These are the very elements Brecht exploits in *Ui* (as well as in Macheath in *The Threepenny Opera*) to make him a 'realistic' character, i.e. one capable of representing external properties of human behaviour, given the proper performance. Brecht was uncertain what effect the juxtaposition of contradictions in *Ui* would have on the audience:

The effect of the double *Verfremdung* - 'gangster milieu' and grand style - I can predict only with great difficulty. It is also difficult to predict the effect of the exhibition of classical forms such as the scene in Martha Schwertlein's garden and the wooing scene from *Richard III*, (AJ 250 (28 Mar, 1941); tr, Rossi)

The effect of both examples is at once frightening and funny with the humour increasing the horror. The combination of styles, if the performance concentrates on showing *Ui*'s 'charm' as a property rather than as an individual trait, can lead the audience into critical consideration rather than unthinking acceptance.

By the time Brecht was revising *The Life of Galileo* with Charles Laughton in the late 1940s, he was confident that the proper portrayal of Galileo, who also shares characteristics with Richard III, would help the audience

achieve a critical attitude:

The portrayal of Galileo should not aim at rousing the audience to sympathy or empathy; they should rather be encouraged to adopt a deliberate attitude of wonder and criticism, Galileo should be portrayed as a phenomenon of the order of Richard III; the audience's emotions will be engaged by the vitality of this strange figure, (*Galileo* 1980; 137-8)

Brecht's essay on Laughton's portrayal of Galileo emphasises the need to expose rather than to cover 'the making of art, the active creative element' in it (*BOT* 164). The emphasis on illusion in the orthodox theatre works against this. He also notes that translators must translate the *Gestus* of a play as well as the text and that the actor must also bring the *Gestus* to the fore. Brecht and Laughton examined lyric passages from Shakespeare in order to find Brecht's own *Gestus* within *Galileo* (*ibid.* 166). All of these elements must be left 'open' in production; interpretation in performance must show the options available to a character in a given situation. Criticism must be applied to emotions involved in a choice by making the familiar remarkable, by demonstrating the 'not ... but ...' of that choice: i.e. 'it does "not" result from every representation "but" from certain ones: only "actually" is it familiar' (*ibid.* 145).

Brecht is careful to point out that he is not trying to create a theatre practice so specialised that it could produce nothing other than accurate reproductions of Elizabethan drama. Any practice must be adaptable to the play being produced; he maintains that his theatre will not be another 'sausage machine' which will manipulate

plays to suit its practice. Brecht had noted in 1927 that the theatre must work out

the style of production that our plays need and encourage, It won't be an adequate answer if theatres invent some kind of special style for them, in the same way as the so-called Munich Shakespearean stage was invented, which could only be used for Shakespeare, It has to be a style that can lend new force to a whole section of the theatrical repertoire which is still capable of life today, (*ibid*, 22-3)

Brecht makes a similar point in *Theaterarbeit* (1952).

Mannerisms developed through insistence on empathy and illusion, mechanically switched on as the curtain rises, give the impression 'that life must be exactly like a theatre instead of the theatre being just like life.'

Brecht believes these mannerisms originate from actors trying to excite their audience through their own excitement without appropriate reference to what is being represented in the play. The use of these mannerisms is almost unconscious in the orthodox theatre and has no place in Brecht's revolutionary alternative:

The pathos of speech and posture that suited Schiller and the Shakespeare performances which we owe to his time is no good for playwrights of our own day, or even Schiller himself now that it has degenerated into a routine, Great forms only get a new lease of life when they are continually nourished from a continually changing reality, (*ibid*, 244)

Whether Brecht succeeds in creating a theatre capable of producing works without reshaping them, a theatre whose 'formula' is one of 'continual change', depends to a large extent on the plays he chooses for performance and what he does to them prior to performance at the typewriter and in rehearsal.

X

Late in his career Brecht was eager to find 'the

manner in which Shakespeare should be played', to find a way back to Shakespeare (AJ (22 Dec. 1949 and 5 Mar. 1950) 915-6; tr. Rossi). This refers not only to recovering the skills and techniques necessary for performing Shakespeare's plays on stage but to discovering a way of producing drama which is radical and experimental in order to allow or even to force the adoption of a critical attitude in all the participants of a theatrical production. This is a project which concerned Brecht for most of his career and Shakespeare was important in its realisation.

It could be argued that Brecht uses Shakespeare as an example because Shakespeare's drama is so well known that it can immediately provide an easily recognisable reference point for discussion and as an object of *V-effekte*. But the instances where Shakespearean construction of plot and character are used as models for Brecht's own drama suggests that he uses Shakespearean drama for more fundamental purposes. It could also be argued that Brecht appropriates Shakespeare in the same way as he sees the orthodox theatre apparatus doing, albeit to different purposes. Shaw points out that Shakespeare will continue to be 'generally quoted and claimed by all the sections as an adherent' (Shaw 1958: 62) and Brecht's reading of Shakespeare certainly makes him into an ally rather than an enemy. His interpretations of Shakespeare are often deliberately distorted but here again Brecht uses Shakespeare to foreground

problems within the orthodox theatre apparatus rather than in Shakespearean drama.

This chapter argues against the accepted view which emphasises the negative aspects of Brecht's ambivalent attitude toward and use of Shakespeare. It contends that this conclusion arises from a misunderstanding about the target of Brecht's criticism due at least in part to his vitriolic tone and debunking attitude. With the many examples of Shakespearean resonance in Brecht's drama; instances of Brecht defending his own drama and his interpretation of older plays by pitting Shakespearean dramaturgy against the orthodox theatre apparatus; and his explanations about how the socioeconomic, i.e. materialistic, content of Shakespearean drama can successfully be brought out in the epic theatre, it is difficult to conclude that Brecht held simultaneous conflicting feelings about Shakespearean drama. On the contrary, it would seem that Brecht consistently uses Shakespeare as a model to be emulated in the creation of a dialectical drama and for producing works in an epic theatre. Brecht's ambivalence towards Shakespeare should be understood as a pose on Brecht's part, as a strategy used to instigate change in the orthodox theatre apparatus.

NOTES

1. Brecht's 1913 diary was discovered during the writing of the present study but was unavailable before completion.

2. Shaw's description of post-Shakespearean theatre is similar, though more detailed, highlighting the irony of the situation and attitude Brecht is referring to:

The magic of scenery put Shakespear on a Procrustean bed; and his torture grew worse and worse as audiences became more and more critical of scenic art, and demanded more and more perfect illusion. ... certain simple changes of scene in full view of the audience were tolerated for two hundred years. In my youth I was accustomed to the closing in of flats, the withdrawal or protrusion of side wings, the descent of sky borders and front scenes, all carried out shamelessly under the eyes of a pit without stalls, which jeered mercilessly when the flats would not join, or when the trick of their withdrawal was betrayed by the twinkling heels of the carpenters running them off, or, greatest delight of all, when the pulling back of a side wing revealed some old gentleman who, immersed in study of the opera libretto or a copy of the play, would remain for a few delirious moments unconscious of the fact that he was on the stage, in full view, and that the roar of applause and laughter from the delighted house was a tribute to his incongruous self. The odd thing was that the audiences who had this sort of fun more or less every night were great sticklers for illusion on the stage, and really believed that the ridiculous makeshifts they laughed at helped their dramatic imagination instead of destroying it. They were not subtle enough to distinguish between the pleasure of looking at a picture, which the best scenic artists gave them in a very high degree, and the interest of a drama, which is a very different matter. (Shaw 1958: 160-2)

3. I have used my own translation here as Willett's on *BOT* 161 is rather free.

4. A similar passage occurs in *MD*:

Either she must be shown to be terrified into it, or else she must be made to be ugly. But however you show this fascination it won't do you any good unless you can show how she fails him later in the play. So you have to show a relative power of fascination. (*MD* 61-2)

REVERSION, REFLECTION AND REFRACTION:
ASPECTS OF THE SHAKESPEAREAN DIALECTIC IN *RICHARD II*

I

Brecht finds in the episodic structure of Elizabethan chronicle plays a method for constructing his own 'theatre for the scientific age', a theatre for presenting experimental drama, i.e. drama which is experimental in form, structured around loosely linked episodes rather than the linear, neo-Aristotelian, unified narrative of well-made plays. This drama is also experimental in the sense that the subject matter is 'historicised': it is distanced from the 'present' of performance, portrayed as being in a state of flux, alterable, constantly changing. The imaginative or aesthetic dialectical process of Shakespearean drama that enables the historicisation of material is reflected structurally and thematically, for example, in *1 Henry IV* where Hotspur's conception of honour is criticised by Falstaff. Falstaff's cynical, common-sense view is neither presented as the new doctrine nor as a substitute for an older, 'feudal' view; both views are presented as alternatives which question and challenge each other. Shakespeare's dramaturgy thus reveals the historical context in which he wrote: social changes are reflected in his plays through explorations of specific problems which make it possible to arrive at a general, comprehensive overview of the period.

But 'historicising' includes as well the awareness

that the overview arrived at is itself constantly changing, constantly in the process of being produced from a variety of perspectives. In one sense 'dialectics' become the unifying subject matter of this drama and perspectivism the central metaphor: the simultaneous opposing and blending of contradictions presents multiple perspectives which question rather than affirm the validity of any single point of view. The succession of short scenes characteristic of the chronicle play promotes detachment as views collide without one being or becoming privileged over the others.

The English History or chronicle play is thought to have grown out of the patriotism and burgeoning nationalism of Elizabethan England, especially after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The belief that these plays support the Tudor hierarchy assumes not only an author but an audience sympathetic to the *status quo*. However, the interrogative nature of Shakespeare's drama provokes various responses depending on the spectator's perspective. The 'Tudor-Moral' view, as A. P. Rossiter calls it in *Angel with Horns* (1961), ignores the reciprocal commentary offered by Shakespeare's dramaturgy where 'the king is but a man' and a ruler's motivations and actions are subjected to critical interpretation via reflecting scenes and characters which expose problems in both ruler and society. The dialectic structure of the drama thus historicises history, putting the Tudor-Moral view in perspective. Rossiter locates the dialectic of

Shakespeare's Histories in the 'constant "Doubleness"', the dynamic, intuitive recognition of 'the coextancy and juxtaposition of opposites' without the negation of one 'in the theoretic interests of the other' (Rossiter 1961: 62). The result of this dramatic 'system of *paradox*' which places 'historical myths' in conflict is a 'display of constant inversions', relative, ambiguous and ironic: 'a process thoroughly dialectical' (*ibid.* 20-2).

According to Rossiter, an important strategy in the realisation of this technique is evident in Falstaff's critical parodying in the *Henry IV* plays, a type of 'comic criticism' which operates by juxtaposing opposites 'so extreme as to seem irreconcilable' (*ibid.* 46). Like Brecht (albeit unknowingly), Rossiter notes the difficulties in persuading people that 'what is laughable may also be serious'; that laughter does not merely mock but opens a subject to criticism, or as Rossiter puts it, one who 'laughs at something is "thinking", or "as good as thinking" (and maybe better)' (*ibid.* 47). The ambivalence produced by a balanced and equivocal presentation of opposed value judgements, such as Hotspur and Falstaff on Honour or Hal and Falstaff as robbers in a usurper's state, provide 'a constant shifting of appearances' (*ibid.* 53) which question rather than affirm the frame Shakespeare works within. For Rossiter such irony is 'a display of essential ambivalence', the 'emotive effect' of which is 'a terrifying belittlement of human prescience or judgement' (*ibid.* 51). Wit like

Falstaff's parodying of Hotspur and Hal, or Richard III's charming, evil scheming, shakes the foundations of the frame the work is placed in, thus forcing the acceptance of a continual clash of equivocal opposites. Privileging one view over the others becomes a falsifying simplification, a subversion or denial of some part(s) of the whole.

Rossiter does not include *Richard II* in his discussion of dialectical, comic histories, seeing it as a 'first term in an epic-historical series ... seriously flawed by its peculiar dependence on *Woodstock*' (*ibid* 29). He also feels that 'the preciousness and self-regarding sentiment of Richard *could not stand* comic criticism or even lapse of seriousness' (*ibid.* 57). It is true that Shakespeare uses a dramaturgy different from *Richard III* and *1&2 Henry IV* in *Richard II* but it is no less dialectical: the 'shifting mirage-like effects of unstable appearances' which Rossiter notes in the comic histories is present in *Richard II* in the form of reversions, reflections and refractions evident in the juxtaposition of scenes and in elaborate wordplay, especially in the form of quibbles. As in the comic histories, the result of this sustained internal dialectic is not an ambivalent indeterminacy but a questioning multiple determinacy consisting of equivocal contradictory perspectives. Before turning to the play itself it is necessary first to examine some structural characteristics of Shakespearean dramaturgy which will

then help to foreground the dialectical structure of *Richard II*.

II

The term 'chronicle play' is itself multiply determinant when questions of genre are raised. Although usually used to designate Elizabethan History plays based on English historical chronicles, there is a reciprocal relationship between these episodic plays and those of other genres. Using examples from Shakespeare to illustrate this point, neither comedy nor tragedy is adequate or appropriate for classifying *Henry V* which is perhaps best described as a history play, thus linking it generically with *Henry VIII*. The elements of comedy are obvious in both these works and elements of tragedy may be found in the falls of Falstaff, Bardolph, and Katherine. The comic subplots centring around Falstaff in the *Henry IV* plays provide a fluctuation between history and comedy, while in *Cymbeline* the chronicle sources interact with romantic comedy, thereby expanding the boundaries of both genres. *Richard III* is a chronicle play and a tragedy with comedy interspersed and as such points the way towards *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. The staggering tragic effect of *King Lear* is partially the result of a structure which suggests a happy ending then denies it.² The later comedies, especially *All's Well that Ends Well* or *Measure for Measure*, likewise force the spectator to consider the expected happy endings, thus expanding the definition of comedy while

anticipating the obvious contrivance of the Romances. As Johnson notes in the *Preface*:

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind ... mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of composition,...

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter. (Johnson 1989: 125-6)

Johnson goes on to defend Shakespeare against neo-Aristotelian criticism by appealing to 'nature': 'mingled drama' instructs and pleases by exhibiting the benefits of both genres in a single work (*ibid.* 126). The point of this brief discussion is not to suggest or prove that all Shakespeare's plays are of mixed genre, it is rather to illustrate the experimental, contradictory, questioning nature of the imaginative dialectical structure characteristic of his drama. The genre of a play does not melt away into indeterminacy. Instead what appears is the defining of genre through collision: the boundaries of a genre are explored through its relationship to other genres within the structure of a single play.³

Shakespearean dramaturgy allows the audience to take up a critical attitude to the work and its subject matter, suggesting how that attitude should develop by reflecting the multiplicity of the society represented on stage onto the society watching the action - the society which helps to produce that representation. In Brechtian terms, contemporary society is thus made aware of the

process of history and its production by participating in an historicised drama. The equivocal arrangement of perspectives is enhanced by reference in a play to its own textuality: illusion is undermined through metafictional strategies so that a spectator is at once distanced from the fictional world and included in the realisation of fiction. This is enhanced further in performance on an open stage offering several points of view rather than through a proscenium arch or missing fourth wall which suggests one ideal vantage point. The struggle between differing perspectives is left unresolved, making interpretative judgement which seeks a definitive conclusion impossible, for each conclusion is challenged by another.

III

Although Sidney attacks 'mungrell' dramatic forms in *An Apology for Poetry* (c1580), he was writing some years before the dawning of the great age of English drama so he could not respond to Shakespeare as Johnson does. Following Aristotle and Horace, Sidney exalts poetry over history and philosophy, stressing the didactic and entertainment value present in its imitations of life. Lyly's 'apology' in the prologue to *Midas* (pub. 1592) argues that 'mungrell' forms are a realistic reflection of life:

Trafficke and trauell hath wouen the nature of all Nations into ours, and made this land like Arras, full of deuise, which was Broade-cloth, full of workmanshippe.

Time hath confounded our mindes, our mindes the matter; but all cometh to this passe, that what heretofore hath beene serued in seuerall dishes for a feaste, is now minced in a charger for a

Gallimaufrey, If wee present a mingle-mangle, our fault is to be excused, because the whole worlde is become an Hodge-podge, (Lyly 1902; III:115)

Although Lyly is referring specifically to a blending of genre, the 'mingle-mangle' or confused mixture reflects also the transitional, experimental nature of the age. He argues here that drama has become a contradictory 'Hodge-podge' because it reflects life.

Since the poet attains his or her poetical conceptions through imaginative reproductions of palpable objects and actions, imagination becomes an ordering principle of a *mimetic* art 'full of deuise'. In Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) the poet's creative faculty is described as

not onely nothing disorderly or confused with any monstrous imaginations or conceits, but very formall, and in his much multiformitie *uniforme*, that is well proportioned, and so passing cleare, that by it as by a glasse or mirrour, are represented vnto the soule all maner of bewtifull visions, whereby the inuentiue parte of the mynde is so much holpen, as without it no man could deuise any new or rare thing. ... And this phantasie may be resembled to a glasse ... whereof there be many tempers and manner of makinges, as the *perspectiues* doe acknowledge, for some be false glasses and shew thinges otherwise than they be in deede, and others right as they be in deede, neither fairer nor fouler, nor greater nor smaller. There be againe of these glasses that shew thinges exceeding faire and comely, others that shew figures very monstrous & illfaured, (Puttenham 1936; 19)

If art is to be a mirror reflecting life then it must portray the multiple and often contradictory perspectives of life. To emphasise the importance of the artist's imagination or 'phantasie' in the creation of *mimetic* art, Puttenham draws a distinction between '*phantastici*', a representation which is ambiguous as regards truth and illusion, and '*euphantasiote*', a palpable manifestation which expresses without doubt the thing presented.

'*Euphantasiote*' is the 'sorte of phantasie [of] all good Poets' (*ibid.*). His reference to '*perspectives*' helps to clarify this distinction.

The laws of linear perspective enable an artist to draw a subject in proportion by superimposing a grid or *velo* over it, thus imposing a 'rule' which brings the subject under the artist's control. The various synonyms for 'rule' - power, government, method, regulation, authority - emphasise the role of the artist as interpreter, a role which is passed on to the viewer. The metaphor for control is emphasised further by the use of the word *velo* itself, the Italian for veil. Assuming an artist wishes to create an illusion of reality, the use of these 'rules' - at once the grid and the laws governing its use - gives the artist a rational method for representing a comprehensive view of the subject while at the same time concealing the method of representation. However, when the rules are strictly followed the picture is distorted and the artist must make adjustments or creative decisions in order to give the appearance of proper proportion.

The laws of linear perspective are also used in creating the anamorphic picture or 'perspective': i.e. a distorted projection or drawing made to appear regular and properly proportioned when viewed from an unconventional point or by reflection from a suitable mirror (catoptrics), or through a refracting glass (dioptrics)⁴. The *OED* defines anamorphics further as 'a

deformation' since they are made by stretching or deforming the laws of linear perspective. E. B. Gilman (1978) calls their problematic, challenging point of view *The Curious Perspective*, a phrase which stresses the interrogative as well as the remarkable characteristics of anamorphics. Their effect, like Falstaff's, is to parody, subvert and question the single, privileged view of conventional linear perspective. The simultaneous representation of distinguishable and indistinguishable shapes draws attention to itself as illusion, engaging the imaginative faculties of the artist in creating double or multiple perspectives 'full of deuse' which question the comprehensiveness of the conventional point of view. In challenging the viewer to observe from several angles, some 'that shew thinges exceeding faire and comely, others that shew figures very monstrous & illfauored', all views are seen as aspects or perspectives of the same subject. Reference might be made here to Rossiter's concept of a Shakespearean *under-nature*, or Nietzsche's concept of a Dionysus-Apollo duality, the grinning skull behind the comely face, itself an anamorphic vision.

When Bushy attempts to soothe the Queen in *Richard II*, he compares her situation to an anamorphic picture:

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,
Which shows like grief itself, but is not so;
For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing entire to many objects,
Like perspectives which, rightly gaz'd upon,
Show nothing but confusion - ey'd awry,
Distinguish form, So your sweet Majesty,
Looking awry upon your lord's departure,
Find shapes of grief more than himself to wail;

Which, look'd on as it is, is nought but shadows
Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious Queen,
More than your lord's departure weep not - more is not seen;
Or if it be, 'tis with false sorrow's eye,
Which for things true weeps things imaginary. (II,ii,14-27)

Bushy describes a dioptric picture or one which is viewed through a refracting glass, but the method of viewing and the result are common to all anamorphics. Looked at 'rightly' or 'conventionally', as one would usually view any picture, anamorphic perspectives appear to represent 'nothing but confusion'; only when 'ey'd awry' or from some other point or points can one apprehend discernible shapes. Bushy explains to the Queen that she is looking at Richard's departure 'awry' and so sees something that is not there unless viewed from that angle. The Queen counters by continuing the metaphor, seeing her situation 'in reversion':

For nothing hath begot my something grief,
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve;
'Tis in reversion that I do possess.... (II,ii,36-8)

She counters Bushy's view with the reverse: her grief is substantial even if imagined, or it exists elsewhere waiting for her to take future possession of it through inheritance. Editors note the legal meaning of 'reversion' here and at I.iv.35 where Richard complains that Bolingbroke's behaviour before the 'common people' gives the impression that he is heir to the throne. The nonlegal meanings, i.e. reversal or reverting, also apply to the Queen's use of it above, reflecting the 'Doubleness' Rossiter notes in the 'comic' histories.

Shakespeare uses 'reversion' in only two other plays,

1 *Henry IV* and *Troilus and Cressida*. When Hotspur and Worcester learn of Northumberland's illness, Hotspur describes it as 'A perilous gash, a very limb lopp'd off', but 'a sweet reversion' renders it 'The very bottom and the soul of hope' (*1HIV* IV.1.43-53), emphasising the word's nonlegal meaning. When Troilus and Cressida finally meet, they create a 'picture' for Pandarus and the rest of the audience while they discuss the 'monstrous' and perfect aspects of love as if it were an anamorphic:

Tro, What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love?

Cres, More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

Tro, Fears make devils of cherubins; they never see truly.

Cres, Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer footing than blind reason stumbling without fear, To fear the worst oft cures the worse.

Tro, O, let my lady apprehend no fear! In all Cupid's pageant there is presented no monster, (*T&C* III.ii,64-72)

When Troilus declares near the end of this debate 'No perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present' (III.ii.89), his meaning turns like a perspective, playing on legal and nonlegal aspects of 'reversion': i.e. future perfections will not be praised until accomplished and the monstrosities they may now appear to be will not be praised presently.

The debate between the Queen and Bushy, like that between Troilus and Cressida, pits imagination and intuition against reason. For Bushy and Troilus imagined fear multiplies itself out of proportion; for the Queen and Cressida reason on its own presents unrealistic limitations. Bushy's use of anamorphics or deformed

perspective to defend his argument is thus made deeply ironic, equivocating both views. The debate between Theseus and Hippolyta in V.i of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a play linked with *Richard II* through their shared lyricism, dramatises the interdependence of reason and imagination by negotiating^s the apparent split. Theseus explains to Hippolyta that:

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends,
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact. (*MND* V.i,4-8)

Theseus believes that imagination creates what is not there, asserting that what the imagination conjures up 'The lunatic the lover, and the poet' render as 'airy shapes'. The unruly imagination is potentially so powerful

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear? (*V*,i,19-20)

In Theseus' view imaginative power is irrational, damaging, unauthoritative; anticipation, whether joyful or fearful, accomplishes its own fulfilment through a 'trick' of the imagination; it is an illusion. Theseus does not recognise that he is himself a lover and a poet and therefore 'mad': the conclusions he reaches through rational comprehension are the 'fancies' or 'images' of his own 'seething brain', the product of his own 'shaping fantasies'.

Hippolyta is sceptical of her husband's conclusion about the lovers' story. She offers a different though

equally pragmatic view: the lovers' consistency in relating their story, no matter how 'strange and admirable' that story is, provides for her stronger evidence that their story may indeed be true (V.1.23-7). The audience has just witnessed the action under dispute, seeing the lovers 'tricked' by Puck who, under the direction of Oberon, squeezes the juice of 'love-in-idleness' onto their eyes. This provides a visual dimension to the interplay between apprehending and comprehending. Theseus and the citizens are aware that a 'wood' lies outside Athens but are unaware that the 'wood' encompasses the city and is ruled by Oberon; they view the picture from only one angle. The fairies have the last word but as Puck points out, he, as well as the other fairies and the mortals, are all 'shadows': fantasies given shape through the imagination of a dramatic poet who has ordered all into a fiction comprehensible only if one accepts many perspectives, as in an anamorphic.

Graham Bradshaw (1987) hears Shakespeare's voice in Hippolyta's sceptical observation. He examines the difference between apprehension and comprehension, noting the ironic and '*unironic*' shift of meaning in Theseus' use of these words to demonstrate that Theseus is a dogmatic sceptic whereas Hippolyta's - and Shakespeare's - scepticism is radical, turning even on itself (Bradshaw 1987: 40-3). Bradshaw sees the immediate conflict as a question of appraisal concerning the moral consequences

of acts of valuing. He characterises Shakespeare's dramaturgy as 'radically sceptical interrogative perspectivism' and draws a distinction between the linear process of 'logical-discursive thought' evident in Theseus' statements and the 'challengingly exploratory' and 'jarringly contradictory' non-linear process of 'poetic-dramatic thinking' at work in the play:

Theseus's rationalism is itself irrational ... he refuses to see how his own mind's sense of what is 'out there' for reason to contemplate is subject to imagination. His refusal to submit his blinkered, dogmatic scepticism to a radically sceptical self-scrutiny is associated with a larger denial of those life-mysteries to which he is himself subject - mysteries which may be apprehended, but not comprehended. (*ibid*, 45)

Theseus' conception of the social hierarchy of Athens which places him at the top thus becomes a fantasy even though it is accepted (though not without some opposition) by the citizens represented. As in the making of both anamorphic and conventional perspectives, creative imagination plays an important role in 'shaping': it is the 'irrational' complement to a rational method.

Theseus' view may be compared to the viewer of a conventional perspective picture: set in the ideal position he believes the entire scene is fully revealed to him for his comprehension, not realising that what he is viewing is an illusion he has been taken in by. He is both trapped and limited by the single, linear view. Conversely, the anamorphic perspective draws attention to itself as an illusion by offering only indiscernible shapes from the conventional, ideal point of view. It

thus forces the viewer to see 'in reversion' to convention, to take instead several views from several perspectives, thus freeing the viewer or spectator to see critically. Gilman suggests that 'The dramatist's gesture toward the curious perspective may be read as an implicit stage direction for the role a Shakespearean audience must play' (Gilman 1978: 14). In adopting this critical attitude the audience is able to perceive a reciprocal, dialectical interdependence between 'illusion' and 'reality'.

IV

Puttenham's use of perspectives to justify the poet's use of imagination stems, as in Sidney's *Apology*, from poets being despised and reproached rather than praised for excelling in their art; it is a defence against a rational, linear, Theseus-like view:

for commonly who so is studious in th'Arte or shewes him selfe
excellent in it, they call him in disdayne a *phantasticall*; and a
light headed or phantasticall man (by conuersion) they call a Poet.
(Puttenham 1936: 18)

Puttenham finds this criticism injurious and unjust, 'the manifestation of his [the critic's] own ignorance' (*ibid.*). Bacon, whom Brecht calls 'the great pioneer of practical thinking' (BOT 67), defends poetry from a similar perspective. In *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) Bacon designates 'Poesy' as 'one of the principle portions of learning' and although he does not put poetry at the top of the pyramid as Sidney does, he agrees that it 'doth truly refer to the imagination' and should be respected and appreciated as such. Because it is 'not

tied to the laws of matter' poetry is free to make
'unlawful matches and divorces of things' as '*feigned
history*' and as such is used

to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those
points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, the world being
in proportion inferior to the soul; by reason whereof there is ...
a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute
variety, than can be found in the nature of things. (Bacon 1973;
II, IV)

According to Bacon, by 'feigning' history, by 'submitting
the show of things to the desires of the mind', poetry
may teach better than history (memory) or philosophy
(reason) 'because reason cannot be so sensible, nor
examples so fit'. Yet Bacon feels he must warn the
reader before embarking on his explication of philosophy
that 'it is not good to stay too long in the theatre'
(*ibid.*). This echoes his earlier warnings about 'the
distempers of learning': 'words are but the images of
matter'; 'vain matter is worse than vain words'; deceit
destroys 'the essential form of knowledge, which is
nothing but a representation of truth' (*ibid.* I: IV).

Although Bacon does not specifically address this
point, he raises questions about the relationship between
reason and imagination: the perception or apprehension of
'bare facts' must be interpreted to be comprehensible.
Brecht makes reference to Bacon and this question in the
debate concerning the relative realism of Naturalism in
The Messingkauf. The Dramaturg contends that Realism is
less naturalistic because, unlike Naturalism, it is not
concerned with being mistaken for real life. But he also
argues that illusion emerges more clearly from

naturalistic plays because they represent the 'actual reality' of theatre, a point with which the Philosopher heartily agrees, opening the question out to address *V-effekte*:

Bacon says nature betrays herself more easily when manhandled by art than if you leave her to her own devices, (*NO* 22-3)

The imaginative perspective 'makes strange' a particular aspect of nature which is revealed not only in the work of art itself but through the artist's activity and involvement with it. A large part of Brecht's project in *The Messingkauf* is to show multiple, contradictory perspectives: one man sees a trumpet as a musical instrument, another as a piece of brass; the confrontation between these views produces a *V-effekt*. Several observations made by the Philosopher emphasise this point by drawing attention to the interdependence of imagination and reason:

The man who drops a pebble hasn't begun representing the law of gravity ... nor has the man who merely gives an exact description of its fall. One might say at a pinch that his remarks don't contradict the facts, but we need more than that, ... He's like nature itself simply saying 'ask me a question', ... An image which has been mechanically drawn and made to serve many purposes cannot be anything but extremely imprecise. There are bound to be short cuts at the most instructive points; it's all bound to have been superficially done. Such images tend to be as embarrassing to the scientist as supposedly accurate flower paintings are. Magnifying-glasses and all other scientific instruments are equally useless in interpreting them, (*ibid*, 24)

It is not enough to present the 'bald facts', they are of little use to those who do not know what to do with them; they must be interpreted to have meaning, therefore the exchange of perspectives or opinions about 'the facts' is much more valuable. The difference between anamorphic

and conventional perspective pictures is again a useful analogy, but the immediate concern in this section of *The Messingkauf* is with Stanislavski and the inadequacy of representations based on his method. It is a question central to Brecht's theory:

The crux of the matter is that true realism has to do more than just make reality recognizable, ... One has to see through it too, One has to be able to see the laws that decide how the processes of life develop. These laws can't be spotted by the camera, (*ibid*, 27)

Brecht's use of a camera as a metaphor for 'true realism' or the reproduction of palpable objects and actions reveals the interdependent and complementary relationship between reason and imagination. Photography is an art form and even when the camera is used for journalistic reporting an imaginative and ideological decision must be made about what should be photographed, about what best captures or expresses the event. The photographic camera derives from the earlier *camera obscura*, a connection which draws attention to the ability of the photographic camera to exclude perspectives as well as invert and reverse them. Brecht insists that one must see 'through' the camera to those decisions surrounding its use in producing a particular representation. This way of seeing allows the eye to recognise 'the laws that decide how the processes of life develop' rather than smoothing over or obscuring these laws. Thus for Brecht a work of art which does not draw attention to itself as an illusion is unrealistic.

Elsewhere in *The Messingkauf* there is a discussion about whether Gauguin's paintings of Tahiti would be of

interest to someone involved in the rubber business since they give 'a general impression' rather than 'dry facts and statistics'. The Philosopher argues that the paintings are important because the artist's conception offers a specific yet broad perspective and because 'The rubber business isn't enough to stimulate a really deep, many-sided interest in a place like Tahiti' (*MD* 38). This question is explored further in examining the differences between schematic accuracy and imaginative rendering:

The difference between a scientific representation of a rhinoceros - a drawing in a natural history book, for instance - and an artistic one lies in the fact that the latter suggests something of the artist's relation to the animal. His drawing contains stories even if it represents the animal and nothing more. The beast looks idle or angry or mangy or cunning. He will have included a number of characteristics which we don't need to know for the mere study of its anatomy. (*ibid*, 80)

Such reductive arguments obscure the fact that, like photographs and linear perspective drawing, even the anatomically accurate schematic must have some imaginative content and that the artists who produce them cannot help but show their relation to the subject, as many of Leonardo's drawings of this kind demonstrate. Similarly, why a man throwing a stone or swatting a fly acts in a particular way is not only a question of outside perception of the act but of the man's perception of himself. The imaginative recreation or personal view of the event, especially when equivocally opposed by others, affords a fuller perspective because it not only places the act historically but historicises it, as in

'The Street Scene' or a theatre based on it:

The more concretely a case is put before him, the easier it is for a spectator to abstract ('Lear behaves like that,' 'Do I behave the same way?') One special father can be fathers in general, The specialness is a mark of generality. It's general to find something special, (*ibid*, 79)

For Brecht drama should ask questions and cause questions to be asked. His favorite maxims - 'the truth is concrete' and 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating' - are applicable here. 'Concrete' is usually opposed to 'abstract' and here refers to a coming together of parts to give a specific perspective. The *V-effekt* - which Brecht defines as an artistic and therefore imaginative effect (*ibid*. 102) - emphasises the causes behind concrete incidents, including the perspective(s) from which they are viewed. When 'made strange', i.e. subjected to a critical analysis which sees 'through' it, the concrete becomes abstract: the particular becomes the general. With reference to the other maxim, which Brecht attributes to Bacon, for theatre to be successful the specific imaginative representation or recreation - even one which offers a multitude of perspectives without an ordering hierarchy - must bring together or concretise instruction and entertainment. To have social significance the theatre must give 'a workable picture of the world':

project a picture of the world by artistic means; models of men's life together such as could help the spectator to understand his social environment and both rationally and emotionally to master it, (*BOT* 133)

For Brecht drama which draws attention to contradiction, which engages the spectator in a questioning process,

which demonstrates the relationship between imagination and reason, opens itself - and the society which produces it - to criticism by exercising a self-critical practice. The multiple perspectivism of Shakespearean dramaturgy may reveal a multitude of 'lies' but their juxtaposition within the structural framework of the drama exposes them as lies without prejudice.

V

Brecht responds positively to the 'Gallimaufrey' 'full of deuse' of Elizabethan drama, seeing the Renaissance in general as a time of experiment and revolution, as a period when the bourgeoisie were 'taking their first hesitant footsteps': 'The Globe Theatre's experiments and Galileo's experiments in treating the globe itself in a new way ... reflected certain global transformations' (MD 60). Brecht's comments on *V-effekte* in the paintings of the 16th century Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel (c1940^s) reveal not only his perception of the revolutionary, experimental nature of the time but the importance of balanced contradictory perspectives to it:

Such pictures don't just give off an atmosphere but a variety of atmospheres. Even though Brueghel manages to balance his contrasts he never merges them into one another, nor does he practice the separation of comic and tragic; his tragedy contains a comic element and his comedy a tragic one. (BOT 157)

As in anamorphics, contrasting contradictory elements are juxtaposed and mingled but the result is an awareness of difference rather than the creation of a new synthesis. Characteristics are defined negatively through

opposition; definition changes with perspective even from the conventional point of view.

A detailed exploration into the relationship between Renaissance art and Shakespearean dramaturgy which goes well beyond Brecht's insightful, fragmentary comments is provided by Madeleine Doran's *Endeavors of Art* (1954). Using Heinrich Wölfflin's concept of 'multiple unity' she explains how Shakespeare achieves unity through the coordination of accents between the independent parts of a work. Intent lies in the arrangement of parts rather than in the subject treated (Doran 1954: 6). A multiple unity based on contradiction not only allows equivocal perspectives but lends a flexibility to the historical frame of reference of the worlds inside and outside the plays. Doran's work had a great influence on Bernard Beckerman's reconstruction of early 17th century dramaturgy and theatre practice proposed in *Shakespeare at the Globe 1599-1609* (1962). Although he concentrates on plays of a specific decade, his observations apply to much earlier and later dramaturgy. The theory and practice he describes bear a striking resemblance to Brecht's epic theatre:⁷ in reflecting multiple perspectives of a given situation, Shakespeare's Globe plays give equal emphasis to their various elements producing 'a coordination rather than a subordination of parts'. This structural strategy contrasts sharply with Aristotelian drama as defined by Beckerman:

In classical and modern "realistic" construction, plot, or the structure of incidents, is dominant. It is an imitation of an

action to which character and language are subordinated. ... The incidents embrace the total significance of a play, for if plot, the structure of incidents, imitates the action which is the soul of tragedy, it must also contain the meaning of that action. Through plot the meaning radiates into character and language. Such a pyramid of emphasis, in which certain dramatic elements are subordinated, ensures genuine unity of action. (Beckerman 1962: 29)

Unity is achieved in Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian drama through a hierarchy of discourse but also through a hierarchy of parts: plot dominates character, story, language, thought. The ironicising quotation marks around 'realism' draw attention to the problems encountered when a privileged view is presented as comprehensive. Beckerman's summary of Renaissance construction emphasises its multiple perspectives, the interdependence and coordination of its parts and the absence of hierarchical arrangement:

In Renaissance construction, ... with its independent parts and coordinated accents, unity of action is not really possible. The structure of incidents does not implicitly contain the total meaning of the play. Character and thought have degrees of autonomy. They are not subordinate but coordinate with the plot. Therefore, the plot is not the sole source of unity. Instead, unity must arise from the dynamic interaction of the various parts of the drama: story, character, and language. (*ibid.*)

Beckerman's search for unity in Renaissance drama places it in opposition to Aristotelian drama and the often mechanically applied hierarchy of its successors. Its 'dynamic interaction' is the result of a dialectical arrangement of balanced perspectives, as in the case of anamorphics and the multiple perspectivism observed by Brecht in Brueghel. Whereas the linear unity of Aristotelian drama builds to a concentration of effect which is finally released, the imaginative dialectic structure of Shakespearean drama allows for sustained

effect through reversions, reflections and refractions widening out from the central themes and narrative.

There is a shift of emphasis from compression to extension. The open, multiple unity of Shakespearean drama is seen to provide a broad examination of the subject matter of a play since no single element can contain its total meaning, while metafictional references help to undermine any suggestion of realism or comprehensiveness. The relationship between reason and imagination is analogous to that between narrative and dramatic: as in the epic theatre, narrative and dramatic elements are autonomous yet interdependent: a single scene may not advance the narrative yet will still have dramatic effectiveness (e.g. the Porter scene (II.iii) in *Macbeth*; the Cinna the poet scene (III.iii) in *Julius Caesar*; the Garden scene III.iv in *Richard II*). The repetition of contradictions at different levels gives the plays the rhythmic pacing of montage and the multiple perspectives of anamorphics and of Brueghel.

VI

Rossiter's objections to *Richard II* are that in this play Shakespeare 'was bent on following Marlowe and writing an unEnglish tragedy', a point which he does not elaborate on; that comparisons between *Richard II* and the comic histories reveal its 'shortcomings' both dramatically and dialectically through its reliance on *Woodstock*; and that the play thus does not represent 'Shakespearian History at its highest development'

(Rossiter 1961: 57). But Rossiter's excellent work on what he calls the comic histories, and the conclusions he draws, apply to *Richard II* despite the apparent dramaturgical differences. Equivocal argument among contradictory perspectives is essential to the development of Shakespeare's dramaturgy and the critical attitude it suggests. Aspects of this process in *Richard II* may be found in the differing views of identity provided by the conflict between self-image and public image most obviously brought together in the duel between Richard as private individual and Richard as King. The inconsistency or 'unconformity' Rossiter finds in Richard's dual character and the play as a whole, explicable for him only through 'a theory of derangements or interruptions' (*ibid.* 24) - another unintentional nod towards Brecht - reflects this split.

Like Marlowe's Edward II, Richard's personal concerns affect his ability to rule: the peers lose confidence in him as he loses it in himself. The political repercussions of this conflict are explicated in the metaphor of the king's two bodies: the monarch's body natural as the incarnation of the nation's body politic. Ernst Kantorowicz (1957) describes this concept as a legal and political 'mystic fiction', the support of which can only lead to folly:

Mysticism, when transposed from the warm twilight of myth and fiction to the cold searchlight of fact and reason ... is exposed to the dangers of losing its spell or becoming quite meaningless when taken out of its native surroundings, its time and its space. (Kantorowicz 1957: 3)

Kingship becomes at once a concrete office with specific duties and responsibilities filled by an individual and an abstraction separated from the person performing those duties. This is demonstrated in *Richard II* when York says to the newly landed Bolingbroke:

Com'st thou because the anointed King is hence?
Why, foolish boy, the King is left behind,
And in my loyal bosom lies his power, (*RII II,iii,96-8*)

Kantorowicz points out that metaphors representing or equating the state and the human body as 'a "corporation" whereof the king is the head and the subjects are the members' was an old one in Elizabethan England but that it 'was quoted with great emphasis' in contemporary law courts (Kantorowicz 1957: 15). Inseparable from this metaphor is the concept of divine justification through military prowess: Richard can be identified as 'England' as long as he has the military strength to defend this image. His collapse causes a crisis of identity for himself and for the country. The give and take of the dialectical conflict between political reality and political metaphor explored in *Richard II* provides multiple perspectives on the complex relationship between rationality and fantasy.

The thematic frame for this exploration is constructed in the first scene. The play begins with Richard discussing with John of Gaunt the conflict between Bolingbroke and Mowbray; the combatants then enter, each charging the other with treason. This is the first of several such accusations: e.g. when Richard

seizes Gaunt's property Bolingbroke traitorously breaks his oath of banishment, returning to England to challenge the king directly rather than through Mowbray; paradoxically, he accuses the king of treason because of Richard's personal abuse of the monarchical power but must become a traitor himself to do so, as must Northumberland and his other supporters. This conflict reaches its peak in Act III when Richard figuratively steps down. It then remains only for 'plume-pluck'd Richard' officially to depose himself and ironically to number himself among the play's many traitors, a contradiction in the metaphor of the king's two bodies which the play emphasises rather than smooths over.

At stake in these conflicts besides the Christian monarchical order of England is honour and reputation for Mowbray and Bolingbroke, the publicly projected self-images of the individuals involved. Asked by Richard to forget and forgive, Mowbray explains that shame and dishonour forbid him from doing so:

Take but my shame,
And I resign my gage. My dear dear lord,
The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation; that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.
A jewel in a ten-times barr'd-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honour is my life; both grow in one;
Take honour from me, and my life is done.... (I.i,175-83)

Mowbray points out that although the king may bestow powerful 'names' or identities, as knight and duke Mowbray's self-image rests in a noble, 'spotless reputation' befitting, as he thinks, one of his position;

it is the most valued aspect of his mortal life. He lives by a code of honour which is his life both figuratively and historically: it is the image he is known by to his peers and that which he will be known by to 'succeeding issue'. When challenged, reputation can only be defended by deeds but these deeds are themselves based on the metaphor of divine justice: the victor in the duel is deemed to have been right and just as in a *Gottesurteil* or divine judgement through ordeal. Although there is no Falstaff to offer a counter definition, Mowbray's assertion is countered by Bolingbroke who defends his own honour and reputation in opposition to him. How Mowbray's life will be judged, the degree to which he will be thought to have lived honourably, lies, as does virtue in *Coriolanus*, in the interpretation of the time: those who wish or need to see Mowbray as a traitor will interpret his actions accordingly; those who do not will do otherwise.

The advice Gaunt gives the banished Bolingbroke before the latter's departure is an example of such creative interpretations: he instructs his son to suppose other reasons for his exile:

Think not the King did banish thee,
But thou the King, Woe doth the heavier sit
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour,
And not the King exil'd thee; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher cline,
Look what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou goest, not whence thou com'st, (I.iii.279-87)

Gaunt bases his advice on the proverb 'There is no virtue

like necessity' (1. 278); Richard gives his queen similar advice at V.1.37-50; Coriolanus takes similar action when he tells Rome 'I banish you'. Here the pragmatic Bolingbroke scoffs at Gaunt's advice as fantasy, instead seeing necessity in his having to depart and virtue in the manner in which he bears it:

O, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December snow
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
O, no! the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse,
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore, (I,iii,294-303)

Bolingbroke argues that the image provided by interpreting a situation so that it appears to be other than it is circumvents necessity. He effectively replaces Gaunt's proverb with his own, concluding that pain is never felt more strongly than when it grasps the good without relieving the bad. Like Mowbray, he lives by a code of honour which attempts to maintain a noble, spotless reputation: misfortune is borne for what it is, not glossed over or made new by imagining it or perceiving it in another, more flattering light. Unlike Mowbray, Bolingbroke shares with Falstaff a devious and clever skill for manipulation, exposing his code of honour as a convenient fiction.

Bolingbroke's rejection of Gaunt's perspective corresponds to Theseus' criticism of the lovers' story: he takes the purely rational view as comprehensive, refusing to see that his decision to face his banishment

armed only with the knowledge that he is 'yet a trueborn English man' (I.iii.309) amounts to substituting one image for another; both his father's interpretation and his own are 'shaping fantasies'. In an interesting article on power relationships within *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the dialectical relationship between it and Elizabethan society, Louis Montrose (1988) argues that a 'preoccupation with the transformation of the personal into the public, the metamorphosis of dream and fantasy into poetic drama ... does more than *analogize* the powers of prince and playwright: it ... *meta*-dramatizes the relations of power *between* prince and playwright' (Montrose 1988: 56). In calling attention to itself as fantasy the play presents cultural shaping as fantasy; thus the society that helped to produce the play by producing and shaping the poet informs the play but is also, like the lovers, transformed within it. The imaginative dialectical structure of the play provides a revolving perspective on the powers of fantasy and imagination, questioning the right of any authority to shape, as Montrose points out, but equally questioning all shaping.

Richard II, rather than being concerned with transformations of the personal into the public, explores their interdependence through the juxtaposition of other contradictory perspectives. The patriotic self-image Bolingbroke constructs out of his code of honour is deformed, as in an anamorphic, by the traitorous acts of

returning before his term of banishment has expired and of deposing Richard. The dialectical interplay between the 'sick' king, and hence the sick commonwealth, and the need for a 'cure' which is executed through treason, another 'sickness', is carried out through a series of ordering, 'shaping fantasies' seen from several angles.

A similar though more obviously metafictional situation occurs in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The levels of fantasy or 'show' spiral to bewildering depths: the audience watch Sly in his drunken stupor; the lord and his huntsmen then make Sly their 'show' and put on a 'show' for him in which Lucentio and Tranio enter only to become spectators to the performance of Baptista and company. Their exchange during this entrance:

Luc, But stay awhile; what *company* is this?
Tra, Master, some *show* to welcome us to town
(*Shrew* I.i.46-7; italics added)

emphasises the theatricality of their situation and the entire play. Later Tranio plays Lucentio while his master plays a teacher; Bianca plays the fair virgin, Katherina 'the shrew', and so on. These parts reflect the society's cultural hierarchy but through the fantasy worked on Sly by the huntsmen this hierarchy is subjected to critical analysis and derisive laughter. Katherina is not only a shrew but a rebel; she will not be 'appointed hours' and thus hinders the smooth running of the system. The exasperated Gremio hopes for a man who 'would thoroughly woo her, wed her, and bed her, and rid the house of her' (*Shrew* I.i.140), one who would get her into

the system and out of the way so that the system can again run smoothly. By the end of the play these 'supposed' identities are dispersed. Baptista's daughters, duly married off in the proper order, are almost unrecognisable to him: Bianca is as independent and strong-willed as Katherina had been; Katherina appears obedient and submissive.

The transformation of Katherina shows that her shrewishness, like her new role, is no more than a constructed image. Identity is presented as fantasy: Sly the tinker becomes a lord; Katherina the shrew becomes an 'ideal wife'. Outward appearance is essential: clothes and countenance contribute to what others apprehend a character to be; the character convinces them, and in some cases him or herself, by conforming to the appearance. Sly is provided with the outward appearance of a lord much to the delight of those tricking him. Petruchio's appearance at the wedding has the guests suspecting he is mad; he confirms their fears by defending his bride against 'thieves' and whisking her off. But this appearance, like the others and the play itself, is a deception and draws attention to itself as such. If and when the joke on Sly is revealed, depending on how convincing the players are, he could be as confused as Bottom:

I have had a most rare vision, I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was, Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream, Methought I was - there is no man can tell what, Methought I was, and methought I had, but man is but a patch'd fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had.
(*MND* IV,i,200-ff)

If Katherina 'awakens' her memories of the life her father's favouring of Bianca forced her into may not be so pleasant. Lucentio and Hortensio have rather rude awakenings as their dreams of obedient, submissive wives are abruptly shattered. Katherina fairly revels in her apprehension of the new role Petruchio has shaped for her; together they achieve a convincing public image of marital bliss as defined by their society. But like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, in drawing attention to the way in which these images are construed or 'supposed', and in drawing attention to its own status as fiction, questions such 'shaping fantasies'. Unlike the strategy of *The Taming of A Shrew*, Shakespeare does not present Sly 'awakened' and the deception stands: he is left a lord, albeit a reluctant one, identified by the fantasy which is forced upon him. His inability to fulfil what the image demands, to act the part of a lord according to the bounds set by the informing society, provide laughter for huntsmen as well as the audience proper while setting the stage for the exploration of identity in the rest of Shakespeare's play.

In *Richard II* the crisis of identity centres on Richard and his inability to embody successfully the office of King, although Bolingbroke's struggle is apparent as well. When Northumberland declares 'The King is not himself' (II.1.241) he is drawing attention to the gap between Richard's behaviour as private individual and

his expected behaviour as King. In calling on Ross and Willoughby to help bridge this gap, he also draws attention to the need of military power in supporting the metaphor of divine-right:

If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,
Imp out our drooping country's broken wing,
Redeen from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,
Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt,
And make high majesty look like itself,
Away with me in post to Ravenspurgh,... (II,i,291-6)

Northumberland's intricate wordplay emphasises that restoring the country involves repairing the damage to the King, both the individual and the office. Richard's personal misuse of the public weal is at once a deformation of the kingdom of England, the office of King and the individual filling that position. The quibble on 'gilt' (spelled 'guilt' in the quartos) stresses that Richard's personal behaviour is at the centre of the problem from Northumberland's perspective. Loyalty to the 'mystic fiction' or imaginary construct 'King' as embodiment of the country involves in this case treason against the individual who embodies the office, a fact Northumberland glosses over through indirect statement.

Richard's collapse begins as he discovers that he lacks the military power needed to support his divine right to rule. Like Bolingbroke in his disagreement with Gaunt over the interpretation of his banishment, Richard eventually refuses to accept any interpretation which disguises his fall: as far as he is concerned it comes about through acts of treason in which he himself is implicated (although the treasonous act he accuses

himself of is very different from those by which the rebels depose him). The complex interdependence of fiction and reality in the concepts of the king's two bodies and the divine right to rule is demonstrated in Richard's ironic, fluctuating confidence in 'the King' upon his return from Ireland. He 'conjures' the unfeeling earth of England to come to his aid, an appeal which is not irrational so long as his support remains intact:

Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords,
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native King
Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms, (III,ii,23-6)

The martial imagery is central, as Carlisle's answer shows:

Fear not, my lord; that Power that made you king
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all,
The means that heaven yields must be embrac'd
And not neglected,... (III,ii,27-30)

In other words the divine 'Power' that supports Richard is at once manifest in and dependent on his use of the material power available to him. Confident in his military strength Richard authoritatively cites his right to rule and the divine power behind it:

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord,
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel, (III,ii,54-61)

The news brought by Salisbury of the Welshmen's dispersal disperses Richard's divine metaphorical strength: the loss to his cause of 'twenty thousand men' makes him look

pale and dead. Aumerle bids him 'remember who you are' to which Richard responds: 'I had forgot myself. ... Is not the King's name twenty thousand names?' (III.ii.83-5). Although he still identifies himself as King, this brief recovery through metaphoric refraction is again dependent on material support for divine right embodied this time in the troops under his uncle York. Scroop soon disperses that hope as well as the others which rise briefly to Richard's aid. With the final collapse of his martial power his divine power evaporates and becomes suitable only for cursing: 'By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly That bids me be of comfort any more' (III.ii.207-8). The divine right and divine power he had cited in support of his status is reduced to flatteries as the despairing king retreats to the desolate and decaying Flint castle: 'He does me double wrong That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue' (III.ii.215-6). The removal of material support from the metaphors of the king's two bodies and divine right to rule severs the interdependence of fiction and reality within these concepts and Richard is increasingly forced to see himself as an entity separate from the King.

The appearance of Richard on the castle walls prompts both York and Bolingbroke to comment that Richard still looks like a king, albeit an angry one (III.iii.62-71). Although Richard is aware of the gap between himself and his role he continues to speak as King when predicting civil war if he is usurped (III.iii.77-100) and when

granting Bolingbroke his demands (III.iii.127-8). Richard ironically reverses the 'fair show' described upon his entrance, his perspective deforming the image Bolingbroke and York had described. The repeal of Bolingbroke's banishment and the restoration to him of the name and property of Lancaster are yet more damaging for Richard, increasing his estrangement from the name of King:

O that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
Or that I could forget what I have been!
Or not remember what I must be now! (III.iii.136-9)

In wishing that one so weak should not be granted such status Richard separates himself further from the office of King, finding his personal majesty inadequate to the task of embodying the metaphor. In the speech beginning 'What must the King do now?' (III.iii.143-75) he begins to speak of the King in the third person, aware of the separation, returning to the first person as he reverses the rich trappings which provide the outward appearance of kingship into parallel images of poverty. This tragic transformation is a reversal of the comic transformation of Sly in *The Taming of the Shrew* and adds to the loss of the earthly justification of his position begun in III.ii with the collapse of his military support. Here he finds the divine justification removed as well, replacing this metaphor with sighs which flatten summer corn causing 'a dearth in this revolting land' and tears which dig graves.

The symbolic power of the 'base court' provokes

another flight of fancy from Richard in which the world is turned upside down: 'For night-owls shriek where mounting larks should sing' (III.iii.184) parallels the earlier change 'From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day' (III.ii.218). The force of Richard's imagery is lost on Northumberland who reports to Bolingbroke that 'Sorrow and grief of heart Makes him speak fondly, like a frantic man' (III.iii.185-6). Again an echo of Theseus suggests that the supposed rationality behind the rebels' actions is no more than a 'shaping fantasy' designed to justify their treason.

The Garden scene (III.iv) reflects the influence of creative imaginings on rationality back onto the scene of Richard's descent, emphasising once again the importance of interpretation and what it reveals about the interpreter. Peter Ure points out in his introduction to the Arden edition that 'The imaginative process most fundamental to the [Garden] scene was perhaps the granting of new life to an old metaphor ... a response to a hidden force in language ... very remarkable and very Shakespearian' (Arden *R11* lvi-vii). Ure is commenting directly about metaphors concerning human beings and plants, good government and gardening, but the position of the scene and the pulling contradictory perspectives within it force the audience to focus on the power associated with the imaginative process at work in this and earlier scenes.

The Garden scene begins with a brief exchange between

the Queen and two of her attendants, demonstrating the fluidity of interpretation and what it reveals about the interpreter. The sports suggested by the ladies 'To drive away the heavy thought of care' reveal the Queen's depression and refusal to lighten her sorrow as she sees her attendants' intentions 'in reversion'. She is mysteriously in accord with Richard as she was earlier when she felt 'Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb' (II.ii.10). The Gardener's first speech offers comment on the events leading up to Richard's submissions to Bolingbroke but must be read in relation to the Queen's reversals:

Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,
Which, like unruly children, make their sire
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight;
Give some supportance to the bending twigs,
Go thou, and like an executioner
Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays
That look too lofty in our commonwealth;
All must be even in our government,
You thus employ'd, I will go root away
The noisome weeds which without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers, (III.iv,29-39)

The Gardener places himself in the role of ideal ruler, delegating the tasks necessary for nurturing a healthy commonwealth. As an allegory this speech may be interpreted in many ways. Read one way the 'unruly children' are Bolingbroke and the rebels oppressing 'their sire' Richard with the 'prodigal weight' of their military strength. The King is a 'bending twig' in need of support against the 'too fast growing' Bolingbroke who looks 'too lofty', echoing Richard's 'your heart is up ... Thus high at least' in the previous scene. The

'noisome weeds' are men like Northumberland who take advantage of fertile rebellion for their own gain. But read another way Richard and his followers become the 'unruly children' who oppress the 'fatherland' with the 'prodigal weight' gained through tenancy and seizure; 'bending twigs' could refer to Bolingbroke whom the audience has just seen bending his knee to his king; the 'too fast growing sprays' and 'noisome weeds' are Bushy, Bagot and Green who look to the King for advancement and protection, the weeds Bolingbroke had sworn to 'pluck away'.

This last is the reading the Gardener intends as his next speech reveals. The 'hidden force in language' Ure notes is a response not only to the power of the Gardener's imagery but to the power associated with the control of the imaginative process or 'shaping fantasies'. Shakespeare's dramaturgy forces the audience to look back, to apply the present scene to preceding ones: when the Gardener proposes to 'set a bank of rue' where the Queen let fall a tear the audience is reminded of Richard's grave digging tears in the previous scene. This reflection of the earlier scene causes the audience to reflect on the events of both. The deathly action of Richard's tears are countered by the Gardener's more positive action but he sees new life being granted to the old metaphor only in the rise of Bolingbroke. Conversely, the Queen sees the death of a metaphor in the separation of Richard's body natural from the body

politic. The Gardener's allegiance, like Northumberland's, is quite clear as is its effect on interpretation, reminding the audience of Mowbray on honour and reputation, Gaunt's advice to his banished son and Bolingbroke's pragmatic reply. Interpretation is dependent on perspective and in the juxtaposition of these two scenes Shakespeare demonstrates not only the power of the imaginative process but the mechanism of interpretation lying behind it which unleashes its power.

The beginning of Act IV again leads the audience into seeing what takes place now ^{the} in light of what has gone before. The conflict between Bolingbroke and Mowbray in I.1 is parodied with the rising Bolingbroke now in charge of the proceedings: Bagot accuses Aumerle who answers by throwing down his gage; Bolingbroke forbids Bagot from taking it up, so Fitzwater acts as his proxy; he is followed in this by Percy and Another Lord; Surrey seconds Aumerle in challenging Fitzwater but Fitzwater quotes the banished Mowbray in his own defence, rechallenging Aumerle; the beleaguered Aumerle ironically appeals, 'Some honest Christian trust me with a gage' (IV.1.83) as he has none left to throw; the appeal is met and Bolingbroke sets the date of trial. It is not at all clear from this bewildering series of charge and counter charge who is speaking the truth and who is perjuring: Bolingbroke had charged Mowbray with Gloucester's death in Act I yet here Fitzwater cites Mowbray in charging Aumerle with the same. The king's presence is felt in

all this not only mystically for it is suggested he had sought Gloucester's death and ordered his execution. Despite historical evidence concerning this matter, Shakespeare leaves the question unresolved. This is an instance where Rossiter finds reference to *Woodstock* necessary but the issue goes beyond the historical events the play draws upon. The 'belittlement of human prescience or judgement' Rossiter finds in the comic histories is demonstrated here with a different emphasis. Both words and deeds are seen to be subject to interpretation rather than as incontrovertible fact; the victors in these chivalric battles will be deemed right and just through the metaphor of divine justice. Through the equivocal juxtaposition of contradictory perspectives Shakespeare thus demonstrates the role of imaginative constructs in the production of historical interpretation.

Fitzwater refers figuratively to Bolingbroke as the 'sun' (IV.1.35); the unnamed lord, who is not in the Folio, threatens to 'holloa' in Aumerle's ear 'From sun to sun' (IV.1.54) referring, as Ure and other editors note, to the period from sunrise to sunset, the prescribed period for a duel. This is also another reference to the rise of Bolingbroke who has all but ascended the throne in the 'new world' created through rebellion and the fall or 'setting' of Richard. Carlisle reminds the lords that they are 'subjects' in the 'presence' of and 'subject' to royalty, his irony

stressing the physical absence and mystical presence of
King Richard:

Thieves are not judg'd but they are by to hear,
Although apparent guilt be seen in them;
And shall the figure-of God's majesty,
...
Be judg'd by subject and inferior breath,
And he himself not present? (IV,i,123-9)

Again the quibble on 'guilt' stresses the 'belittlement of human prescience or judgement': the king is accused of robbing the country of material and human wealth by one who would steal the crown. The ambiguity of the mystic fiction of the king's two bodies has the King present even in Richard's absence and emphasises that treason against Richard is treason against the country and all of its subjects making Bolingbroke a traitor to himself, as Carlisle tells him: 'My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king, Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king' (IV.i.134-5). Carlisle's equally ambiguous warning against raising 'this house against this house' (IV.i.145) refers potentially to several possible interpretations revolving around raising the kingdom against itself and through refraction focuses attention on the complexities of the internal and external conflicts which reach their peak after Richard's official abdication.

A complicated play between the personal and family duels begins to develop, intensified by Richard's duel with his dual identity. The ceremonial transfer of the 'regalia' of 'state and crown To Henry Bolingbroke' is intended to stem the tide of the multifarious chaos

started by the rebellion but Richard's deepening crisis of identity reveals the ceremony and what it is supposed to achieve as further 'shaping fantasies'. Richard's elaborate quibble on 'care' reveals how little the ceremony accomplishes:

Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down,
My care is loss of care, by old care done;
Your care is gain of care, by new care won.
The cares I give I have, though given away;
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay, (IV,i,195-9)

All possible meanings of 'care' - responsibility, grief, trouble, vigilance, interest, protection, apprehension, etc. - combine to suggest equivocal readings which prohibit definitive judgement and open out to include other quibbles such as those on 'tend' and 'crown'. Perhaps the most confusing and rich word-play occurs in the following exchange:

Boling. Are you contented to resign the crown?
K. Rich. Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;
Therefore no no, for I resign to thee, (IV,i,200-2)

Bolingbroke's question asks whether Richard is satisfied with surrendering the office of King to which Richard responds by pointing out that in doing so he surrenders both his personal and political identities, as the homophonic quibbles on 'ay' and 'no' stress. No single written form can express the many possible readings of Richard's response which are applicable here, others being 'I know no ay' or 'I know no I', both of which affect the 'nothing' as well as the other 'I's and 'no's. Editors point out the similarity between Richard's answer and the following speech from *Romeo and Juliet*, a play

contemporary with *Richard II*:

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'I',
And that bare vowel I shall poison more
Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice,
I am not I if there be such an 'I';
Or those eyes shut that makes thee answer 'I',
If he be slain, say 'I'; or if not, 'No'....
(*R/ III,ii,45-50*)

Juliet mistakenly thinks that the Nurse is grieving for Romeo rather than Tybalt and the subsequent wordplay involves 'I', 'ay' and 'eye' including 'eyes' that kill with looks as well as deadly affirmations. The threat Juliet feels from the death of Romeo lies in the removal of an external source of her identity similar to the way in which Richard is threatened by the duel within himself expressed metaphorically by the separation of the king's two bodies. But unlike Juliet's, Richard's crisis is at once internal and external. A separation more like Richard II's is explored in *Richard III* the night before the battle of Bosworth Field:

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by,
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No - Yes, I am,
Then fly, What, from myself? Great reason why -
Lest I revenge, What, myself upon myself!
Alack, I love myself, Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! Alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain; yet I lie, I am not,
(*RIII V,iii,182-91*)

The *V-effekt* Brecht notes in the simultaneous appearance of the ghost in the two camps during this scene is present also in Richard's dual perception of himself: the man who loves himself and seeks the love of others confronts the villain he was determined to prove. The

content and construction of this speech resemble a duel between dual voices, showing the split in Richard's conscience:

Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter,
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain,
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree;
All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all 'Guilty! guilty!'
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die no soul will pity me;
And wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard,
(V,iii,192-206)

This remarkable speech flows back and forth, coming to rest only in Richard's acceptance of his dual nature much as Macbeth accepts his own. One argument recalls the other, questioning what each affirms; sins cry 'guilty!' at the bar but they are perjurers. Richard is brought to the point of despair by the threat of rejection and death as well as by the guilt caused by the weight of his crimes. He cannot pity himself because he is a pitiless murderer. But Ratcliff's warning to 'be not afraid of shadows' allows Richard to understand guilt as Falstaff understands honour, i.e. as a socially constructed moral code:

Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls;
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe,
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law,
(V,iii,308-11)

In his final moments Richard is inspired with new conviction. Despite his guilt - but perhaps because of

his 'gilt' - he is able to call on St. George and in the end 'enacts more wonders than a man, Daring an opposite to every danger' (V.iv. 2-3). Significantly, Richmond invokes God as well as St. George in his oration to his soldiers and with history on his side is victorious. Such fine points may be useful in recovering the dominant ideologies of a specific period but they cannot dispel the interrogative nature of Shakespearean dramaturgy. If Richard III is brought up short by the duel between his dual selves, then the audience is put into a similar position by being brought into empathy with him through his seductive personality only to have that empathy brutally deformed by his murderous machinations.

Richard II must confront his duelling dual selves after relinquishing his kingship. In passing the crown to Bolingbroke he gives up the physical, palpable trappings which provide him with the outward appearance of a unified identity. The separation of the man from the office is thus complete on one level but Richard's continuing struggle reveals that the mystical identity of King still lies within him. In an echo of Carlisle's warning to Bolingbroke he finds all present at the deposition ceremony, including himself, 'a sort of traitors'. He makes it clear that he is 'unking'd' in name only:

I have no name, no title -
No, not that name was given me at the font -
But 'tis usurp'd, Alack the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out,
And know not now what name to call myself!
O that I were a mockery king of snow,

Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke
To melt myself away in water drops! (*R* IV,i,255-262)

The final image metafictionally emphasises the complexities being presented: 'Richard' is and is not a 'mockery king'; he does and does not melt himself away. The audience is given a perspective similar to the one described for the Queen by Bushy, one which refracts a single image into many.

When Richard views himself in the glass he is surprised that the sorrow that has 'struck So many blows' upon him has 'made no deeper wounds'. Viewed from this angle the glass is a flatterer much like his 'followers in prosperity'. When Richard looks from another angle he sees the 'brittle glory' of the reflection and smashes the glass, destroying the 'face' while multiplying the sorrow into 'a hundred shivers':

K, Rich, Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport -
How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face,
Boling, The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd
The shadow of your face, (IV,i,290-3)

Bolingbroke's pragmatic and tactful reply - your grief has destroyed your reflection - is reversed by Richard, thus continuing the constantly revolving play of complex perspectives on the internal and external conflict:

'Tis very true; my grief lies all within;
And these external manner of laments
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
That swells with silence in the tortour'd soul,
There lies the substance,... (IV,i,295-9)

Like the Queen's 'conceit' Bolingbroke's words come back to him 'in reversion' (II.ii.34-6): they are at once returned to him and turned the opposite way in the way

the deposition reverses the coronation. The play between 'shadow' and 'substance' also echoes the perspective described by Bushy and again interpretation depends on the view taken. Looked at one way the glass 'crack'd in a hundred shivers' destroys the external reflections of internal sorrow. Looked at in another it becomes a refracting glass multiplying those reflections.

Richard retains the mystical identity of King until his death. When he meets his Queen he gives her advice similar to that which Gaunt had given Bolingbroke in I.iii, and for similar reasons of necessity. The reversion of their marriage vows parallels Richard's abdication making him 'doubly divorc'd' though the shadow of the substance remains. The imaginative, mystical construct of his identity is all that remains; as the Queen says, he is 'King Richard's tomb, And not King Richard' (V.i.12-3). In a situation not unlike Lear's, Richard is a 'shadow' despite his substance, 'an O without a figure', a king and no king. The Duke and Duchess of York continue to speak of Richard as King, noting his 'gentle' demeanour or nobleness of mind and body. The Duke makes specific reference to the 'dust' thrown upon Richard's 'sacred head' (V.ii.30) reversing Northumberland's earlier 'dust that hides our sceptre's gilt'. As Richard duels with his dual identity there is also the duel between the rival Kings. York also refers to Bolingbroke as King, as do the Duchess and Aumerle in the following scene. Bolingbroke's new identity remains

incomplete because Richard retains his mystical status. Bolingbroke will possess only the outward, material appearance of King, including the moral code which he so masterfully exploits: he appears to be unwilling to put his former King to death, preferring to leave that task to favour seeking followers who can then be turned out.

Rossiter suggests the Galley scene in *Antony and Cleopatra* as a later example of 'Shakespearian History at its highest development' because it demonstrates the 'sardonic comedy' in the 'frailty of the Great' (Rossiter 1961: 57). The circumstances surrounding Richard's murder and Bolingbroke's implication in it reveal not only the frailty of the Great but the appropriation and exploitation of power that takes place in what Rossiter calls 'the strange absurd chances that turn the fate of worlds' (*ibid.*). Richard's prison soliloquy explores the relationship between reason and imagination, reflecting back on the entire play and looking forward to its conclusion. The 'doubleness' Rossiter refers to in the comic histories, observed as reversions, reflections and refractions in the present play, contrast and comment on Richard's dual identity. They are presented here as a mating of 'brain' and 'soul', spawning an unending stream of restless 'thoughts':

My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father; and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
And these same thoughts people this little world,
In humours like the people of this world,
For no thought is contented, (V.v,6-11)

In the short catalogue which follows this speech Richard

demonstrates how all 'thoughts' are 'intermix'd' and are nothing more than flattering images which suggest ease where none exists. He then applies this to himself:

Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented, Sometimes am I king;
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am, Then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I king'd again; and by and by
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing, But whate'er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleas'd till he be eas'd
With being nothing. (V.v.31-41)

The constant reversals finally end when Exton's 'fierce hand ... with the King's blood [stains] the King's own land' (V.v.109-10). Bolingbroke is now able to assume complete identity as King although the treason which gave him the crown continues to plague him and the kingdom:

Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.
Come, mourn with me for what I do lament,
And put on sullen black incontinent,
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,
To wash the blood off from my guilty hand,
March sadly after; grace my mournings here
In weeping after this untimely bier. (V.vi.45-52)

His words have a hollow ring, emphasised by the many references to the outward appearances of grief. The mystic fiction or 'shadow' of the king's two bodies appears to die with Richard, leaving Bolingbroke with only the 'substance', the regalia and the political realities of power. With the metaphor of divine justification missing Bolingbroke's identity as King is in question as Richard's has been throughout most of the play.

VII

The imaginative dialectic of *Richard II* constructed around an equivocal arrangement of contradictory perspectives provides a strategy for parodying and questioning single, linear views which attempt to smooth over their internal contradictions. The Tudor-Moral view is thus put into perspective as history historicised, revealing history as a process of interpretation rather than a collection of 'facts'. The audience is allowed to take up a critical attitude, to see both Richard and Bolingbroke 'in reversion': both are at once kings and traitors. By leaving the struggle between differing perspectives unresolved the play resists decoding, suspending interpretative judgement and definitive conclusion. The simultaneous opposition and blending of contradictions, as in an anamorphic, opens the multiple perspectives of the play to continuing revolution.

NOTES

1. The technical use of 'interrogative' based on the work of Catherine Belsey (1980) will be developed and explicated more fully in Chapter 4 below.

2. Johnson's comment that he was 'so shocked by Cordelia's death that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor' (Johnson 1989: 223) is well known and attests to the effectiveness of Shakespeare's playing expectations off each other. More recently, Stephen Booth explores the question of genre in *Macbeth, King Lear, Indefinition and Tragedy* (1983).

3. Emrys Jones (1971) traces both structural and thematic characteristics shared between Shakespeare's early and later work in his provoking study *Scenic Form in Shakespeare*. See also Mark Rose *Shakespearean Design* (1972).

4. See Joseph Moxon *Practical Perspective* (1670), an interesting and complete methodology on perspective drawing from the basics to anamorphics.

5. As with 'interrogative', the technical use of 'negotiate' will be developed in Chapter 4 below.

6. W. H. Auden's comments on Brueghel's painting parallel Brecht's and it is possible that Brecht knew the poem 'Musée des Beaux Arts' - published June 1940 - in which they are voiced. See *BOT* 159.

7. As mentioned in Chapter 1 above, Parker (1963) also notes this similarity. Drawing on Beckerman's (1962) work he perceives many parallels but his article is limited by both its length and a naïve understanding of *Verfremdung* and *Gestus* which perpetrates misconceptions about Brecht's theories.

8. Cecil Seronsy (1963) examines the importance of supposition in '"Supposes" as the Unifying Theme in *The Taming of the Shrew*'.

FICTIONALISED HISTORY AND HISTORICISED FICTION

IN *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*

I

In the *Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare's plays Johnson writes that 'History' as a dramatic genre 'was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion.' Noting that History and Tragedy often cannot be 'nicely distinguished' he comments that 'There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra* than in the history of *Richard the Second*' (Johnson 1989: 127). He notes that the 'continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents and the quick succession of one personage to another' in the later play 'call the mind forward without intermission from the first act to the last'. He observes further that the 'power of delighting' in *Antony and Cleopatra* 'is derived principally from the frequent changes of scene' even though he feels that the events 'are produced without any art of connection or care of disposition' (*ibid.* 231). The recognition of the play as a sequence of short scenes despite its being published in the Folio without act or scene divisions has since been echoed by countless commentators, most notably Emrys Jones (1971), as has the ability of the play to engage its audience.

Bradley (1909) also brings *Richard II* and *Antony and Cleopatra* together, suggesting that there is something

'half-hearted' and 'ironical' in Shakespeare's presentation of Antony's struggle with external, political conflicts, resulting in the blunting of audience empathy with Antony which Bradley finds to be less acute than that for Richard even though the latter loses a smaller realm (Bradley 1909: 290-2). Yet Bradley finds too that Antony, like Richard, in seeing 'his own downfall with the eye of a poet' draws the audience into a more intense empathy with Antony than Shakespeare was formerly capable of producing (*ibid.* 295). Bradley explains this contradictory audience response as a consequence of the historical scope of the plot combined with the structure of the play.

Ernest Schanzer (1963) finds the structural pattern of *Antony and Cleopatra* to be the heart of the play (Schanzer 1963: 132). Unlike Johnson he sees Shakespeare solving the problem of adapting the 'multitude of characters and incidents' of his sources by 'imposing shape and coherence' upon the 'heterogenous material' by establishing 'a series of parallels and contrasts.' Schanzer finds the function of the structural pattern similar to 'a silent commentator, a means of expressing the playwright's attitudes and concerns'; *Antony and Cleopatra* is the play in which 'the structural pattern is most perfectly adjusted to the theme and has, in fact, become one of the chief vehicles for its expression' (*ibid.* 133). The characteristic perspectivism of Shakespearean dramaturgy allows the plays to function as

criticism, as statements which challenge orthodoxy, a strategy Brecht sought to achieve in his own plays. As in *Richard II*, the structure of events in *Antony and Cleopatra* can be construed as challenging an accepted moral view by making the perspective which shapes the portrayal of the lovers visible, thus demonstrating how history is fictionalised and fiction historicised through the dialectic between narrative and structure, a process which makes the unified perspective of the narrative presentation self-critical.

The moral view presented in *Antony and Cleopatra* is not necessarily that of Plutarch or of Shakespeare's other possible sources, although Shakespeare undoubtedly uses these sources in shaping both his Rome and his Egypt; nor is it necessarily a Tudor-moral view as discussed by Rossiter. Paradoxically, it is the view presented, the view Shakespeare creates which is challenged. S. L. Bethell (1944) suggests that Antony and Cleopatra are presented in the play in the broad context of the Roman Empire. Bullough adds in his commentary on Bethell that 'the Roman Empire is seen mainly in relation to Antony and Cleopatra'; that 'few of Shakespeare's plays give a more definite idea of the characters of the chief personages'; and that Antony and Cleopatra are represented as bringing out 'the worst in each other ... for a Roman triumvir and a Queen, that is' (Bullough V:250). Earlier in his introduction Bullough comments that Shakespeare's 'theatrical genius and

chronicle-technique led him to explore the process of decline, to represent the principal incidents of several years, the vacillations of Antony and the caprices of Cleopatra, and to enact the many turns of their struggle against the fate they brought on themselves' (*ibid.* 238-9). These comments emphasise that an internal perspective within the play, a distinctly 'Roman-moral' perspective, creates the representations of Antony and Cleopatra, portraying them and their story as tragic because of their inability to live according to Roman order and control. The challenge which the play can offer to history is not directed against its sources or contemporary social mores as such, although these are indeed questioned, but against the process of writing and presenting history. There is a dynamic dialectical tension within the play as it struggles against itself, against the historical images it represents and deforms. The personages and events portrayed are at once historical and exposed as fictional through a process which reveals the unified perspective of their presentation from the point of view of a Rome Shakespeare creates:

the quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I'th' posture of a whore, (V,ii,215-20)

Critics have often noted the metafictional significance of this passage, especially as in Shakespeare's time a boy playing Cleopatra would be delivering these lines.

Such metafictional devices expose the Roman-moral perspective Shakespeare uses to represent the story of Antony and Cleopatra. By openly dispelling illusion the play reveals itself as illusion; that it is drawn from history and, as Bullough and others have commented, stays so close to its historical sources, suggests that all historical writing, if not fictional, is told from a perspective which fictionalises history through distortion and omission. The strategy of self-exposure may be seen as interrogating an orthodox or accepted perspective without offering answers, thereby opening the material to interpretation while showing interpretation to be dependent upon point of view and therefore limited rather than comprehensive.

In a study called 'The Shakespearean Dialectic' (1949), John Danby notes a cinematographic swiftness in the structure of *Antony and Cleopatra* but observes that 'At the same time the technique is always under deliberate, almost cool, control.' That Egypt may be 'called up vividly' by Enobarbus and that Rome is 'a real presence in Egypt' (Danby 1949: 196) suggests, despite Danby's efforts to demonstrate the mixing he defines as integral to a Shakespearean dialectic, that the story of the lovers is told from only one perspective. There is a 'deliberate logic' to the dialectic Danby describes: the juxtaposing, mingling and marrying of opposites which promises strength leads to 'dissolution' (*ibid.* 198-9). This is central to the Roman-moral perspective, the

vehicle used to present the tragedy; it echoes Enobarbus' cynical yet astute comment, 'that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance' (II.vi.125), a comment which re-enforces the Roman view as it presents and is represented in the play. Danby finds a moralistic dichotomy between the World and the Flesh - Rome and Egypt - what he calls a 'trick' on Shakespeare's part of using contraries to organise the universe which the dialectic process then rots with motion, 'unhappy and bedizened and sordid, streaked with the mean, ignoble, the contemptible' (Danby 1949: 211). Danby's definition of 'the Shakespearean dialectic' absorbs the distinctly Roman-moral view as his comments on Cleopatra reveal:

Shakespeare gives Cleopatra everything of which he is capable except his final and absolute approval, Cleopatra is not an Octavia, much less a Cordelia, The profusion of rich and hectic colour that surrounds her is the colour of the endless cycle of growth and decay, new greenery on old rottenness, the colour of the passions, the wild flaring of life as it burns itself richly away to death so that love of life and greed for death become indistinguishable, (*ibid*, 209)

Despite the ambiguity apparent in his apprehension of Egypt, Danby finds the tone of the play to be unambiguously one of 'ripe-rottenness and hopelessness, the vision of self-destruction', frustration and futility, 'the tragedy of the destruction of man [and] the creative spirit' (*ibid*. 212-3). His observation that 'Shakespeare needs the opposites that merge, unite, and fall apart' in order to 'enable him to handle the reality he is writing about' (*ibid*. 204) emphasises that the 'reality' Danby perceives is the Roman-moral one which

presents the story of the lovers through the play as history and tragedy. Finding ultimately that *Antony and Cleopatra* is a 'technical *tour de force* which Shakespeare enjoyed for its own sake', that Shakespeare had 'fallen a victim of habitual mannerism' (*ibid.* 212), does however point not only to the frustration encountered when trying to interpret the play but toward a structure which underscores the personal perspective of judgement in the presentation of history examined in the play through what Danby calls Shakespeare's 'critique of judgement'.

The exasperation encountered by Danby is also apparent in *The Common Liar* (1973) where Janet Adelman points out that attempts to judge between the value systems represented in the play are undercut by its disjunctive shifts in perspective. The audience's 'search for certainty' between the rival claims of Egypt and Rome 'often encounters the stumbling block of the play itself'. Audience uncertainty is thus 'an essential feature of the play' for while it demands that the audience make judgements the play frustrates the audience's ability to judge rationally not as an end in itself but in order to force participation in the experience of the play (Adelman 1973: 14). She notes also a challenge to the concept of identity in the merging and blending of contradictions, concluding that 'if there is an answer, it is not in the realm of being ... but in the realm of becoming: identity is defined not by static measurement but by flux' (*ibid.* 145). Finding

that the play strives hard 'to command our belief, but only in the context of our doubt' (*ibid.* 169) Adelman sees Shakespeare forcing the audience 'ultimately to make the same leap of faith that the lovers make', as she herself does despite finding the play to be characterised by a 'fluidity of interpretation' common to Renaissance art which allows the 'infinite variety' of the play to be held in suspension without 'straining after singleness and certainty of meaning'.

Adelman's struggle against her desire to find unambiguous meaning in the play is revealing:

In general, the Renaissance was more at home with diversity than we are; the sensibility which nourished the fruitful confusions of Renaissance syncretism has been destroyed by the triumph of scientific intellect. Underlying syncretism is the conviction that there is one essential truth which may be embodied in apparently contradictory ways - a conviction wholly alien to our assumption that opposites are irreconcilable. We want the play to conform tidily to our system: Rome or Egypt, Reason or Passion, Public or Private. But in fact the play achieves a fluidity of possibility far more akin to our actual experience than any of our systems can be, (*ibid.* 170)

Adelman's reactions reveal a struggle between the play and a critical perspective which is incapable of grasping its irreducible complexity, a 'fluidity of possibility' which awakens and challenges understanding. Her reaction is similar to Brecht's criticism of the orthodox theatre apparatus, the 'sausage machine' that forces a play into a system for the sake of the system. It also reveals the inadequacy of a critical practice based on simple, diametric opposition, one which smooths over contradictions by negating rather than negotiating them, a process which arrests the flux of the dialectic.

Adelman historicises her criticism while stressing that the comprehensiveness of 'scientific intellect' apparent in the victory of a Duke Theseus or an Octavius Caesar is exposed as limited by Shakespearean dramaturgy. The play works against itself by 'fixing the "not ... but ..."' in telling and showing its audience that what is presented is not real but fiction, not truth but lies. This challenge to judgement arises from the dynamic tension set up between rational and imaginative perspectives, what Adelman calls 'a fundamental paradox of the human imagination: that occasionally the truth can only be told in lies' (*ibid.* 164). This strategy deforms the unified perspective of 'Roman History' as it is presented in the play by exposing its status as fiction. As Adelman points out, the paradox of telling the truth in lies is explored by Sidney in *The Apology* as he defends the artist's creative imagination against Platonism with the paradox of true fiction.

In *Paradoxia Epidemica* (1961) Rosalie Colie argues that paradoxes equivocate, that one meaning must always be taken with the other, that paradox is speculative in that meanings infinitely mirror and reflect each other (Colie 1961: 6). Self-reference separates rhetorical paradox from affirmation or opinion thus making paradox self-critical, turning object into subject, commenting on its own method or technique and criticising the limitations of argument and human judgement. Colie adds that in the exploitation of relative or competing value

systems, such as the way Egypt and Rome are represented in *Antony and Cleopatra*, 'paradox is always somehow involved in dialectic: challenging some orthodoxy, the paradox is an oblique criticism of absolute judgement or absolute convention' (*ibid.* 10). Paradoxes simultaneously open out and turn inward, challenging human judgement by acknowledging infinite alterations and the inability to grasp them. By placing nothing and infinity - the infinitesimal and the infinite - in dialectical opposition, paradox explores relativism by exploiting appearances and by developing inconsistencies, incompatibility and contradiction. Because they are self-reflexive, paradoxes force consideration of relativity by drawing attention to their own artifice, thus challenging the limits of understanding; as Colie puts it, 'Self-limiting, they deny limitation' (*ibid.* 38).

In a brief study of paradox in *Antony and Cleopatra*, B. T. Spencer (1958) suggests the phrase 'paradoxical metaphor' to express the 'sense of bafflement and surprise, the inherent contradiction' caused by the many rhetorical paradoxes contained in the play, the use of which 'serves to hold contradictions in solution' (Spencer 1958: 373-4). In a later article M. J. B. Allen (1984) notes that the tendency of the play to ask questions which frustrate interpretation is due to its being structured around 'a dialectic of paradox ... that will always seek to persuade'. Allen seems to agree with

Danby, suggesting that *Antony and Cleopatra* is a technical *tour de force* as he finds only more paradoxes lying behind what he calls the many rhetorical questions asked in the play, concluding that the resulting dialectic provides the audience 'with a wealth of instances rather than analysis, with a gorgeous blazon of paradoxes rather than a penetrating enquiry into the nature of paradox ...' (Allen 1984: 18).

Although paradox is an important element in the art of the period (Colie argues that the use of paradox was epidemic until the mid 17th century), reducing *Antony and Cleopatra* to a series of paradoxes cannot deal with the complexity of the play. However, an understanding of the dialectic of paradox does go some way towards releasing the dynamic of the play and to pointing towards the self-critical critical practice it demands. The dynamic between the play and human judgement and between the play and itself with which Adelman struggles, Emrys Jones (1971) accepts. Discussing the structure of *Antony and Cleopatra* in relation to earlier Shakespeare plays he notes that the short scenes promote detachment, allowing consideration while ultimately thwarting judgement:

The constant interruptions to the dialogue and the restless shifting of points of view have the effect of encouraging reflection and a tentative evaluation of what is going on before us, ... We are induced to assume a contemplative posture; unsparingly observant but sympathetic, and finally acquiescent. We have the means of passing judgement, but we refrain from doing so. This is the vision of the historical poet, as Shakespeare conceived it in this play. (Jones 1971: 239)

The reaction that the play forces on its audience that Jones describes here is similar to the reaction Brecht

sought to instil in his audience. Jones goes on to explain that the sequence of short scenes helps the audience to focus attention on causality 'with a sharp awareness of the true intricacy of the working of cause and effect.' He finds in the play a Montaignean sense of complexity, a dialectical process of flux 'which the precise ordering of the often very circumscribed scenic units helps to define; ... [a] sense of combined continuity and discontinuity' (*ibid.* 254). In *Antony and Cleopatra*, as in the sustained paradox of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* and the scepticism of Montaigne's essays, doubt becomes a rhetorical and self-critical device. Erasmus' *Encomia* uses rhetorical paradox to create a defence of the indefensible and to praise the unpraiseworthy; Montaigne, e.g. in his defence of Sebond, seems to attack what he claims to be defending. Like the radical scepticism apparent in *Richard II* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the extent to which judgement is contingent on faith is explored in *Antony and Cleopatra* by exposing the mechanisms and machinations used in creating and interpreting history. This strategy can force a leap of faith, as Adelman suggests, but it also examines the definition of faith by juxtaposing the opposites 'belief' and 'doubt', blending them and suspending judgement. In this process historical fact becomes, like faith, unknowable, subject to constant revision according to perspective; and the act of interpretation itself is shown to be inadequate unless fluid.

II

In a discussion of the relativism of Montaigne and how it can provide an intellectual context for Shakespearean drama, W. R. Elton suggests that the explorations of Montaigne's essays may be 'related to the dialectic of drama, that contradiction is truth. As in Shakespearean drama, without dogmatic or reductive exclusions, [Montaigne] experiments, "essays", and questions, in an open-ended and inconclusive manner, the world of experience' (Wells 1986: 26). Uncertain as to whether or not human reason and senses could be trusted, Montaigne discussed the ethnocentric relativism of miracles, providence, witches, magic, medicine, concluding that what is not known is more important than what is: 'for all that our wisdom can do alone is no great matter; the more piercing, quick, and apprehensive it is, the weaker it finds itself, and is by so much more apt to mistrust itself' (Montaigne I:123). This notion is discussed further in his essay 'That it is Folly to Measure Truth and Error by Our Own Capacity':

If we give the names of monster and miracle to everything our reason cannot comprehend, how many are continually presented before our eyes? ... it is rather custom than knowledge that takes away their strangeness ... and that if those things were now newly presented to us, we should think them as incredible, if not more, than any others, ... for, to condemn [unlikely things] as impossible, is by a temerarious presumption to pretend to know the utmost bounds of possibility. (*ibid*, I:187-8)

For Montaigne, reason could be used to enquire and to debate but not to choose. This view stands in sharp contrast to the dogmatism of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as the Roman-moral view of *Antony*

and Cleopatra, challenging the powers of rational judgement by acknowledging and accepting the unknown or mysterious.

Montaigne's search for truth attempts to affirm nothing while questioning everything, including his ability to know anything, even the perception of change. Such scepticism could be considered as inherently conservative in that the *status quo* must be accepted for it to be challenged; Montaigne also seems to argue for an obedient exterior conformity coexistent with internal doubt:

We are either wholly and absolutely to submit ourselves to the authority of our ecclesiastical polity, or totally throw off all obedience to it; 'tis not for us to determine what and how much obedience we owe to it, ... Why do we not consider what contradictions we find in our own judgments; how many things were yesterday articles of our faith, that to-day appear no other than fables? Glory and curiosity are the scourges of the soul; the last prompts us to thrust our noses into everything, the other forbids us to leave anything doubtful and undecided. (*ibid*, I:190-1)

Montaigne's is a problematic, complex and unresolvable stance in which the limitations of judgement are exposed and challenged. Knowledge cannot reach an ideal conclusion, only a continual revolution of transitory stages. His call to 'consider what contradictions we find in our own judgements' challenges the *status quo* by focusing on change and difference: custom determines identity, articles of faith become fables. The dialectical interplay between change and relative constancy remains an interrogative process, at once a conservative and a revolutionary force: orthodoxy is accepted but the equivocation of alternative views provides a position

from which to criticise and/or change the *status quo*.

Relativism is similarly problematic: what is 'natural' in one culture is 'unnatural' in another. The opening of Brecht's *The Exception and the Rule* (1930) draws on a similarly radical, relativist scepticism to challenge aspects of orthodoxy in Germany:

Examine carefully the behaviour of these people;
Find it surprising though not unusual
Inexplicable though normal
Incomprehensible though it is the rule,
Consider even the most insignificant, seemingly simple
Action with distrust, Ask yourself whether it is necessary
Especially if it is usual,
We ask you expressly to discover
That what happens all the time is not natural,
(*The Exception and the Rule*; in *The Measure Taken* 37)

This is a call to observation and careful consideration rather than to revolution *per se*, although the final lines in the play, 'where you have recognised abuse Do something about it!', illustrate the revolutionary intent. Brecht's *Lehrstück* may be seen as a *V-effekt* of orthodoxy and judgement: the usual and customary become inexplicable and astounding; paradoxically, justice according to the rule becomes an abuse (*ibid.* 60). What appears to be justice from one perspective is something very different when viewed from another. Shakespeare's dramaturgy in *Antony and Cleopatra* is similarly paradoxical and similarly challenging: the rapid flow of scenes transforms the stage with a word yet the stage remains relatively unchanged; Antony shifts shape like a cloud yet remains Antony. The story of Antony and Cleopatra as history revealing itself as fiction exposes its own construction of historical fact through a

distorting perspective, opening the presentation or representation of the lovers to criticism. It simultaneously beckons and denies interpretation.

III

Antony and Cleopatra begins with an ongoing dialogue between Philo and Demetrius of which the audience hears only one side. Philo's first word, the first word of the play, is 'Nay'. This denial, whether it is direct or a paradoxical affirmative denial as is used later (e.g. I.ii.41 & 48), begins the process of contradiction characteristic of the play by questioning the truth of a proposition. Philo explains the change that he perceives having taken place in Antony since his general has come to Egypt, attempting to convince Demetrius of the truth of his opinion of Antony when Antony and Cleopatra enter, giving Philo a visible example with which to support his opinion. He bids Demetrius

Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool, Behold and see, (I,i,11-13)

Philo argues that what Demetrius sees will prove the truth of what he says. 'Behold and see' is not only a challenge to Demetrius to test the validity of Philo's opinion but a challenge to all spectators to check what they hear against what they see, a challenge illustrated in the metafictional devices of representation itself and of showing spectators watching as happens, for example, in *The Taming of the Shrew* where fiction is viewed as fact according to a convention of suspended disbelief.

Like Demetrius, the audience hears that Antony is 'transform'd' and are told to let their eyes confirm this assertion. The narrative presents the audience with information about what is real and what is feigned while the structure puts them in a position to see the confusion within these interdependent concepts.

The first exchange between Antony and Cleopatra repeats the opposition of the visible and the spoken. Cleopatra enters in full pomp with Antony by her side among the other members of her court, publicly demanding proof of Antony's love:

Cleo, If it be love indeed, tell me how much,
Ant, There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd,
Cleo, I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd,
Ant, Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth,
(I.i,14-17)

Paradoxically, by arguing that he can neither tell nor show Cleopatra the magnitude of his love, that any interpretation which attempts to limit it must fall short of the mark, Antony unknowingly confirms Philo's complaint that 'this dotage of our general's O'erflows the measure'. The difference in perspective between Rome and Egypt is immediately apparent in the contrasting concepts of 'dotage' and 'love', a contrast which justifies the Roman-moral view. Antony goes so far as to reject Rome by refusing to hear its messenger, an act which leads to further hyperbole in praise of Cleopatra and of his love for her:

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space,
Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man, The nobleness of life

Is to do thus when such a mutual pair
And such twain can do't, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless. (I.i.33-40)"

Continuing to appear to justify Philo's claim, Antony refuses to hear the messenger, arguing that the 'nobleness of life' is to transcend earthly empires, a hyperbolic sentiment to be sure but one with political as well as romantic significance. Cleopatra remains unconvinced by Antony's hyperbole and their debate continues until Antony dismisses the messenger and leads the Queen and her train off stage, rejecting Rome but leaving the stage once again to the Romans Philo and Demetrius.

In spite of the damning visual and audible evidence Demetrius remains unconvinced by Philo's argument. He hopes for 'better deeds to-morrow' but is willing to admit that what he has just witnessed 'approves the common liar, who Thus speaks of him [Antony] at Rome' (I.i.60-61). Demetrius' refusal to be convinced challenges the evidence contained in the Roman-moral tableau of Antony and Cleopatra which Philo presents, suggesting to the audience that they cannot be certain about what they see and hear. The inconclusiveness of this first scene is characteristic of the entire play as acts of presentation, interpretation and judgement based on reason and observed phenomena are explored and challenged.

In Demetrius Shakespeare portrays a model spectator; he sees and hears the first exchange between Antony and

Cleopatra as an on stage member of the audience, then offers considered though inconclusive comment in spite of his observation of 'facts' which seem to confirm Philo's opinion. Like Brecht's ideal spectator Demetrius remains detached from the action, free to consider what is represented without allowing his emotions or his reason to override each other. He is not yet willing to interpret what he has heard and seen, unlike Cleopatra who interprets the messenger's news before hearing it:

your dismissal
Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony,
Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? Both?
Call in the messengers, (I,i,26-29)

These words make Antony blush and Cleopatra interprets this 'visible' sign as further proof of the truth of her opinion:

As I am Egypt's Queen,
Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
Is Caesar's homager, Else so thy cheek pays shame
When shrill-tongu'd Fulvia scolds, (I,i, 29-32)

Just as Philo believes that seeing Antony's behaviour when he is with Cleopatra will convince Demetrius that he is correct, Cleopatra believes that Antony's blushing proves she is correct in her assertion that Antony's expressions of infinite love are empty and that he will return to Rome. Her opinion is neither confirmed nor denied. Contrary to Demetrius' Brechtian observation Cleopatra lets her emotions override her reason, a characteristic given her and her nation through her Roman portrayal. While Demetrius offers only an inconclusive suspension of judgement, Philo and Cleopatra provide the

opposite extremes of perception, Philo relying on reason, Cleopatra on emotion; both use visible evidence to justify their claims. A contradiction in the Roman perspective is revealed in the reactions of Philo and Cleopatra: the similarity in their processes of deduction exposes the limitations of both. The narrative presented through the Roman perspective attempts to justify itself but is undercut by a structure which draws attention to the contradictions within the unified, limited perspective.

The fortunetelling episode which follows the first scene does not advance the narrative and so appears to exist only to fill out the atmosphere of Egypt, yet its structure exposes the contradictions present in the perspective of the narrative. Charmian treats the business as a game, wanting 'a good fortune' for herself, 'a worky-day fortune' for Iras and 'the worst of all' for Alexas. She and Iras all but ignore the prophecies they are foretold:

You shall be yet far fairer than you are,

...

You shall be more loving than beloved,

...

You shall outlive the lady whom you serve,

...

You have seen and prov'd a fairer former fortune
Than that which is to approach. (I,ii,16; 22; 30; 32-3)

These are deceptively simple statements, the possible meanings of which are not pursued. Paralleling Cleopatra's behaviour in the first scene, Charmian interprets according to her desires: she would be fairer 'in flesh' and have 'long life'. When the second

prophecy does not please her, she threatens to end the game unless better fortunes are forthcoming. The game does end when Cleopatra, whom Enobarbus mistakes for Antony, enters only to leave immediately upon Antony's arrival in 'Roman thought'. Enobarbus' mistake underscores other apparent misinterpretations in the scene and links the Egyptian Soothsayer with the Roman messenger.

Both Soothsayer and messengers offer news from outside the boundaries of the court; the latter based on physical sources, the former on intuition. As the play progresses both methods of communication are shown to be susceptible to interpretation and misinterpretation according to the perspective of the recipient: Charmian interprets according to her desires, while Antony, like Cleopatra in the previous scene, interprets according to his fears, finishing the news himself and sending the messenger away before he can respond or continue (I.ii.108). Both methods are also shown to be accurate, a fact the narrative glosses over even though the events report it; it is the structure of the play which juxtaposes the methods as contrasting parallels drawing attention to the limited perspective of the narrative.

IV

In addition to the dialectic tension between narrative and structure, metafictional techniques add to the complexity of the play, thereby forcing a dialectical intermingling of fact and fiction which tempts

consideration while thwarting judgement, a technique similar to the teasing challenge of paradox. Such strategies as using a character as an actor or as a spectator expose the playwright's role in shaping both characters and play world but also question any claim to authenticity presented in the play. For example, Cleopatra's role in the play as consummate actress, as 'a wonderful piece of work' as Enobarbus calls her, is often noted. As René Weis (1983) suggests, Cleopatra

is fully attuned to the potential uses of ... [the] intrinsically dialectic nature of drama. Indeed, the most subtle and poignant affirmation of her relationship with Antony as something larger than Octavius' political order boldly avails itself of the unique tension generated in the drama from a clash between its two major channels of communication; visual reality and language.

Her role as consummate actress involves the ability to embrace fiction. In calling the asp she applies to her breast 'a "baby" she is ... not deluding herself, but consciously embraces an illusion as truth' (Weis 1983: 9). This ability is necessary to maintain the balance Shakespeare creates. Her first performance comes in the opening scene when she imitates Caesar:

who knows
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
His pow'rful mandate to you; 'Do this or this;
Take in that kingdom or enfranchise that;
Perform't, or else we damn thee', (I,i,20-24)

This may not be as important as her other performances in the play but combined with watching the stage spectators Philo and Demetrius and the use of 'perform' rather than other synonyms for 'do' such as 'execute' or 'conduct', it reminds the audience at the very start that it is in a theatre watching a fictional enactment of history.

The 'infinite variety' of Cleopatra's power of manipulation is part of the structural unity of the play: her contradictory character mirrors the bewildering, oscillating structure of the whole while justifying the Roman-moral perspective of the narrative which portrays her and Antony's love affair as tragic. Bradley's description of Cleopatra in his 1909 lecture on the play is perhaps the most revealing of the many comments about the metafictional aspect of her character as he depicts her as an actress unintentionally: 'Cleopatra is not sure of her powers over him [Antony], exerts all her fascination to detain him, and plays the part of the innocent victim who has yielded to passion and must now expect to be deserted by her seducer' (Bradley 1909: 285-6). Bradley looks at Cleopatra historically rather than as a character in a work of fiction, ignoring Shakespeare's use of the play metaphor through Cleopatra as well as his own use of it in his lecture. His description of Cleopatra must be quoted at length to appreciate what a consummate actress she is and also to see to what extent Bradley has submitted to the Roman-moral perspective which the play represents and undercuts:

She lives for feeling. Her feelings are, so to speak, sacred, and pain must not come near her, ... Her body is exquisitely sensitive, and her emotions marvellously swift. They are really so; but she exaggerates them so much, and exhibits them so continually for effect, that some readers fancy them merely feigned. They are all-important, and everybody must attend to them. She announces to her women that she is pale, or sick and sullen; they must lead her to her chamber but must not speak to her. ... when he [Antony] is sitting apart sunk in shame, she must be supported into his presence, she cannot stand, her head droops, she will die (it is

the opinion of Eros) unless he comforts her, ... Doubtless she wrought magic on the senses, but she had not extraordinary beauty, like Helen's, such beauty as seems divine, ... [Shakespeare] goes out of his way to add to her age, and tells us of her wrinkles and the waning of her lip. But Enobarbus, in his very mockery, calls her a wonderful piece of work, (*ibid*, 300-2)

Exhibiting exaggerated emotions for effect fits Brecht's definition of an actor in the culinary theatre, the theatre dedicated to manipulating its audience through the use of inappropriate emotion. It is also in line with the Roman-moral view of Cleopatra as enchantress, as a woman whose sighs and tears are winds and waters greater than any reported storms and tempests, who can die twenty times upon a far poorer moment than Antony's departure. She is a master-mistress of this art, manipulating Antony throughout the play, but the dramaturgy which uses this characterisation in conjunction with other metafictional effects reminds the audience that what is portrayed is only one particular view, a fiction constructed to support, in this case, Roman domination.

Bradley's prejudices concerning physical beauty reveal Shakespeare's more liberal definition and significantly no character describes Cleopatra's beauty while she is on stage. According to the Roman view she is magical, a witch who has enchanted Antony in order to gain political power. If beauty is magnetic or attractive, Cleopatra does not rely on physical appearance alone to be beautiful: her magic lies in her infinite variety, her ability as an actress to fit herself to all occasions. While this has the effect of

pleasing Antony, of bewitching him by making her beautiful beyond description, it serves her political ambitions as well and this in turn serves the political ambitions of the Roman-moral narrative that presents her history. Cleopatra's desirability transcends physical beauty and the magic of her acting ability; she also wields political power and her stature as a world leader grows thanks to the military prowess of Antony who is portrayed as acting on her behalf only to be betrayed by her. That some readers fancy Cleopatra's actions and emotions 'merely feigned' reveals the limits of the perspective from which her portrayal is drawn: she is a fiction, portrayed as she is in order to prove what the Roman view presents.

Enobarbus is an important vehicle for the Roman-moral representation of Cleopatra. His descriptions of her as a 'wonderful piece of work' and of her performance at Cyndus before Antony and all Alexandria portray her not only as a seemingly irresistible enchantress but as an actress capable of making 'defect perfection', of inducing hunger 'Where most she satisfies' (II.ii.235-42). Unlike Demetrius who appears only in the first scene, Enobarbus appears regularly, offering comment and criticism on the people and events around him as well as about himself. His role as a Chorus figure is often noted; he keeps things 'in perspective' and it is a distinctly Roman view that he offers: 'Under a compelling occasion, let women die. It were pity to cast them away

for nothing, though between them and a great cause they should be esteemed nothing' (I.ii.133-ff). Order and control are of paramount importance in the political, masculine life of Rome; anything which threatens it is subdued or destroyed. A doctrine of Roman domination is reflected not only in Enobarbus' overt meaning but in the sexual punning which continues in the 'light answers' he gives Antony. In his apparent role as Chorus, Enobarbus predicts that 'the band that seems to tie' the friendship between Caesar and Antony together 'will be the very strangler of their amity' and even as he utters these words the audience knows he is correct. As Pompey observes, his plainness nothing ill becomes him but his characterisation serves the Roman-moral view: he is used to glorify Caesar and Rome while degrading Antony as well as Cleopatra and the feminine world of Egypt.

In his first scene Enobarbus appears almost in a Fool's capacity, calling for wine, foretelling that the present company will be 'drunk to bed', mistaking Cleopatra for Antony, then teasing Antony when he tells him that they must leave Egypt and that Fulvia is dead. Antony puts an end to Enobarbus' teasing contradictions, allowing the audience a glimpse of his loyalty and discipline, his soldierly *virtú*, through his immediate acquiescence to Antony but a trace of the Fool's knowing nod remains, challenging Antony's authority. Enobarbus is neither the Fool of *King Lear* nor another Falstaff: although clever in I.ii he is later quite blunt, giving

the appearance of plain, unquestionable honesty:

Eno, Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant, you may,
when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again, You shall
have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to do,
Ant, Thou art a soldier only, Speak no more,
Eno, That truth should be silent I had almost forgot, (II,ii,107-12)

Silenced by Antony, Enobarbus becomes a 'considerate stone' only thinking what decorum bars him from saying. He speaks in prose while the rest speak in verse, a soldier among statesmen. That bluntness is a Roman characteristic is reflected in the striking similarity between Enobarbus' advice and Caesar's reply:

I do not much dislike the matter, but
The manner of his speech; for't cannot be
We shall remain in friendship, our conditions
So diff'ring in their acts, Yet if I knew
What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge
O'th'world, I would pursue it, (II,ii,115-20)

Caesar's bluntness is acceptable where Enobarbus' is not, perhaps because it can be construed as conciliatory; Caesar speaks properly where Enobarbus is merely plain. At the end of the galley scene Caesar's bluntness reflects the Roman-moral ethic in a controlled rhetoric that shows him to be master of himself and of the situation in spite of the Egyptian Bacchanal challenge to order which, somewhat paradoxically, Enobarbus calls for:

our graver business
Frowns at this levity, Gentle lords, let's part;
You see we have burnt our cheeks, Strong Enobarb
Is weaker than the wine, and mine own tongue
Splits what it speaks, The wild disguise hath almost
Antick'd us all, What needs more words? (II,vii,118-23)

Caesar calls for the order and reason of Roman life, keeping at bay the 'wild disguise' which later makes a fool of and ultimately destroys Antony, and Enobarbus

through too close association with his general. The moderation Caesar demonstrates here contrasts with Enobarbus' desire to continue drinking in Menas' cabin as well as his description of life in Egypt where they 'did sleep day out of countenance and made the night light with drinking' (II.ii.181-2). The moderation Caesar calls for and the order and control of the Roman hierarchy are supported by Ventidius in the scene immediately following (III.i). Later, when Antony and Octavia are leaving Rome, Caesar's warning is again as blunt and open as any comments from Enobarbus:

Most noble Antony,
Let not the piece of virtue which is set
Betwixt us as the cement of our love
To keep it builded be the ram to batter
The fortress of it; for better might we
Have lov'd without this mean, if on both parts
This be not cherish'd, (III.ii,27-33)

Echoing Enobarbus' earlier prediction of dissolution with this warning not only gives the prediction further credence, it emphasises the role of a Roman perspective in the portrayal of Antony and in the presentation of the entire play. The blunt, straightforward statements of Caesar and Enobarbus characterise the Roman perspective; it is presented as honest, correct, ordered, realistic. Enobarbus becomes a tool for validating the Roman-moral view: he is the honest Roman soldier who is corrupted, betrayed and destroyed by Antony, the general who has succumbed to temptation.

V

Antony's conflicting loyalties and desires - the

rotting motion which brings about his downfall and the moral debate surrounding it - become more complex throughout the play yet the Roman view first displayed by Philo continues to dominate. In leaving Egypt after Fulvia is dead and he is apparently free to marry Cleopatra - an act which would legitimate her as yet marginalised influence on Rome - Antony attempts to prove to himself and to Rome that he can break free of the 'dotage' which has caused him to be idle for so long and is thus made to agree with the opinion of the common liar:

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage,
...
I must from this enchanting queen break off,
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch,
(I.ii,113-114 & 125-127)

At the same time that his Roman political consciousness is reasserting itself Antony attempts to put an end to his ongoing argument with Cleopatra concerning the sincerity of his love. He will now seek to prove his love for her by expanding her kingdom through his military prowess:

Quarrel no more, but be prepar'd to know
The purposes I bear; which are, or cease,
As you shall give th'advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war
As thou affects. (I.iii,66-71)

Whether or not Antony is sincere or merely lying to Cleopatra in order to effect his departure is unclear. It is characteristic of the Shakespearean imaginative-aesthetic dialectic that Antony can prove his love for

Cleopatra and prove he is free from dotage on her through a single action: leaving Egypt to fight for Cleopatra both challenges and approves the opinion of the common liar; it also shows loyalty and disloyalty to Rome.² Throughout the play Antony attempts to balance his conflicting goals: happy in Egypt until 'A Roman thought has struck him', he leaves for Rome; once in Rome he cannot wait to return to his Egyptian dish. The moral and political perspectives presented in the play portray Antony's oscillation as the cause of his slow, painful, ignoble death. But although his characterisation is dominated by this orthodox Roman-moral portrayal, the structure of the play draws attention to the process of representation which portrays him. This is demonstrated in his brief soliloquy following his hearing the news of Fulvia's death:

There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it,
What our contempts doth often hurl from us
We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,
By revolution low'ring, does become
The opposite of itself, She's good, being gone;
The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on, (I,ii,118-124)

The dialectic process Antony describes is the dialectic process of the play: as an object is revolved so it appears to change, becoming 'The opposite of itself' as the viewer's perspective is changed. Whereas in *Richard II* a multiple perspective is achieved through the views of several characters, here a single perspective is represented and maintained; it is only through the dramatic structure that this unified perspective is revolved or rotated to expose alternatives through irony

and paradox thus interrogating the dominant perspective by revealing its internal contradictions. With the exception of Demetrius who hopes 'Of better deeds to-morrow', the Roman perspective portrays Antony from one side only, subverting contradictions in order to present the tragedy of the great soldier corrupted and corrupting. That the play is more tragicomic than tragic suggests that the distorted Roman presentation contradicts itself as it attempts to smooth over or eliminate contradictions.

Lepidus' description of Antony after Caesar has labelled him 'A man who is the abstract of all faults That all men follow' (I.iv.9-10) suggests that Caesar's conclusion is selective, deliberately revealing only a part of Antony:

I must not think there are
Evils enow to darken all his goodness,
His faults, in him, seem as the spots of heaven,
More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary
Rather than purchas'd; what he cannot change
Than what he chooses, (I.iv, 10-15)

By inverting a convention - making faults light against a dark background - the limits of the convention are exposed to a process of revolution similar to that which Antony observes in his reaction to the death of Fulvia. This rhetorical *V-effekt* suggests that the audience re-examine the convention but also questions the validity of Caesar's portrayal of 'an Antony'.

Weis argues that Dolabella's negative reply to Cleopatra's question about her 'dream-vision' of 'an Antony' (V.ii.76-94) is 'a rejection of the creative

power of dreaming as a kind of imagination' (Weis 1983: 1-2). Cleopatra's assertion that fancy can surpass nature is portrayed in the play as hyperbolic, excessive and ultimately destructive, as Dolabella's attempts to terminate her visionary passage suggest: 'If it might please ye-'; 'Most sovereign creature-'; 'Cleopatra-'; and finally, 'Gentle madam, no'. Weis notes the correspondence between Cleopatra's vision and Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra at Cyndus, finding Enobarbus to be in agreement with Cleopatra about the power of imagination in creating 'a "true" mode of fiction' (*ibid.* 4-5). Given the context of Enobarbus' speech the audience cannot be sure how much of it is accurate, how much fanciful: having been some time in Egypt and finding that stories of life there are abroad in Rome, he describes for Agrippa and Maecenas a vision of Egypt which exceeds the reports they have heard.³ The challenge of fiction, exemplified in Enobarbus' visions of Egypt and Cleopatra, in Cleopatra's vision of 'an Antony' and in Lepidus' brief and remarkable vision of Antony, lies in its ability to question orthodox boundaries, and as Weis suggests, this interrogation operates particularly in 'the distinction between reality and illusion and their respective claims to being the truth' (*ibid.* 6).

Caesar's description of 'an Antony' in I.iv becomes subject to like questioning, more so as the play progresses and the ironies are intensified but also in

the context in which he utters it. In an episode which parallels the public debate between Antony and Cleopatra in I.1, Caesar argues that Lepidus' vision of Antony is 'too indulgent'. In the presence of Lepidus and 'their Train' Caesar publicly berates the absent Antony for neglecting his duty to Rome as well as for ignoring the boundaries a Roman-moral perspective would contain him in:

Let's grant it is not
Amiss to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,
To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,
To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet
With knaves that smell of sweat, Say this becomes him -
As his composure must be rare indeed
Whom these things cannot blemish - yet must Antony
No way excuse his foils when we do bear
So great weight in his lightness, (I.iv.16-25)

The political motivations for Caesar's didactic tirade are clear and his description of Antony continues in a line with Philo's. After the Messenger relates to Caesar the news that Pompey's rebellion is worsening, Caesar conjures up his own dream vision of 'an Antony' in an attempt to shame the truant triumvir publicly while calling him back to *virtu*, duty and masculine Rome:

Antony,
Leave thy lascivious wassails, When thou once
Was beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,
Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer, Thou didst drink
The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at, Thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou brows'd, On the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on, And all this -
It wounds thine honour that I speak it now -

Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not, (I,iv,55-71)

Like Enobarbus' Cyndus speech, this speech closely follows North's translation of Plutarch but Caesar's expansive departures from it are not visible within the play; neither is a knowledge of Plutarch necessary to grasp how this speech subverts Caesar's intentions. Lepidus, the weak third, may be convinced but Caesar's own earlier speech reveals this vision of 'an Antony' as a fiction disguised as truth not only by revealing the motivations behind his desire to shame Antony into Roman action in front of Lepidus and the others but by pointing toward what lies beyond Antony's acquiescence by echoing the process referred to in Antony's brief soliloquy:

It hath been taught us from the primal state
That he which is was wish'd until he were;
And the ebb'd man, ne'er lov'd till ne'er worth love,
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion, (I,iv,41-7)

Caesar is referring directly to Pompey the Great and the citizens of Rome in this passage but what he says is equally applicable to his own feelings about Antony uttered only seven lines later. Antony is wished for now that he is gone and Caesar certainly tries to project an image of Antony as 'the ebb'd man' whose present behaviour renders him 'ne'er worth love' who becomes 'dear'd by being lack'd'. Carrying the analogy further would number Caesar among the 'common body', an association the Roman-moral perspective attempts to deny, instead portraying Caesar as the only man capable of

achieving and maintaining 'universal peace'. The process that 'By revolution low'ring' reveals 'The opposite of itself' exposes Caesar's image of 'an Antony' as a carefully considered fiction undermining its authority by exposing its limitations.

The scene moves quickly back to Alexandria and further visions of 'an Antony'. Up to now Antony has been portrayed as a great soldier in decline, his greatness drained off by Cleopatra while the effect on her is merely mentioned: Enobarbus mistakes her for Antony at I.ii.76 and Caesar notes that Antony 'is not more manlike Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy More womanly than he' (I.iv.5-7). In I.v Cleopatra shows how much of 'Antony' she has absorbed. Feeding herself 'With most delicious poison' she invokes 'The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm And burgonet of men' to think on his 'serpent of old Nile' as he marches toward Rome, revealing how much she has benefited from her association with Antony:

Broad-fronted Caesar,
When thou wast here above the ground, I was
A morsel for a monarch; and great Pompey
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;
There would he anchor his aspect and die
With looking on his life. (I.v.23-34)

The editorial debate over whether or not 'Think on me, That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black, And wrinkled deep in time' (I.v.27-9) is a question or an imperative helps to reveal the presence of the Roman-moral perspective in this scene. If the sentence is a question it shows Cleopatra in sentimental mood thus emphasising

the idleness of Egypt while drawing attention to the extent to which Cleopatra's greatness is dependent on Antony's action. If an imperative it shows how much control Cleopatra exercises or believes she exercises over Antony. In mentioning her former lovers in the next lines - also great, fallen Romans - the implication is that she did not have the control over them that she now has over Antony. Alexas' description of Antony in this scene shows him as 'the firm Roman', 'Like to the time o'th' year between the extremes Of hot and cold' (I.v.43 & 51-2). Cleopatra's excitement and pleasure at this description of 'well-divided disposition' and 'heavenly mingle' continue to underscore how much her stature depends upon Antony's prowess and how much of Antony's greatness has been drained off and absorbed by Cleopatra. Her argument with Charmian at the end of this episode over whether or not she ever loved Caesar so at a time when she 'was green in judgment, cold in blood' reveals the sinister side of her love for Antony, an aspect essential to the project of the Roman-moral perspective.

The visions of 'an Antony' the narrative presents help to portray Antony's military actions on behalf of Cleopatra as acts of treason. As Enobarbus' prediction of dissolution is acted out, Antony's decline sharpens, validating the Roman ideal of order and moderation and justifying Roman domination in its quest for 'universal peace'. Although Enobarbus' reaction to Antony's retreat after the first battle against Caesar is to 'Think and

die' and he finds in Antony's 'sword against sword' challenge to Caesar that his general is all but utterly defeated, he remains loyal to both Antony and the Roman doctrine of *virtù*:

Mine honesty and I begin to square,
The loyalty well held to fools does make
Our faith mere folly, Yet he that can endure
To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord
Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
And earns a place i'th'story, (III,xiii,41-6)

Later in this scene he reasserts his loyalty to Antony by bringing him to see Caesar's messenger 'wooing' Cleopatra but his confidence in his general is beginning to crack as it continues to conflict with his Roman ideals.

According to Enobarbus, as a Roman Antony should be able to remain 'Lord of his reason' despite 'The itch of his affection'; he does not blame Cleopatra for Antony's defeat rather he credits Caesar, noting that Caesar has not only defeated Antony in battle but 'hast subdu'd His judgment too'. The episode in Caesar's camp that follows (IV.1) re-enforces this view by portraying Antony as a hunted animal raging as he falls, with Caesar coolly continuing to take the advantage.

The Roman-moral portrayal of Antony as a manipulative, treasonous corrupter of honest men through his association with Cleopatra is demonstrated when he asks his household servants to wait on him the night before the final battle with Caesar. His words are interpreted by Enobarbus as 'one of those odd tricks which sorrow shoots Out of mind', designed 'To make his followers weep' (IV.11.14-15 & 24). Antony's speech seems to

confirm Enobarbus' opinion:

Tend me to-night;
May be it is the period of your duty,
Haply you shall not see me more; or if,
A mangled shadow, Perchance to-morrow
You'll serve another master, I look on you
As one that takes his leave, Mine honest friends,
I turn you not away; but, like a master
Married to your good service, stay till death.
Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,
And the gods yield you for't! (IV.ii,24-33)

These words do in fact cause Antony's followers to weep:

'What mean you, sir, To give them this discomfort? Look,
they weep; And I, an ass, am onion-ey'd' (IV.ii.33-35)

but Antony swears that he is not seeking this result:

Now the witch take me if I meant it thus!
Grace grow where those drops fall! My hearty friends,
You take me in too dolorous a sense;
For I spake to you for your comfort, did desire you
To burn this night with torches. (IV.ii,37-41)

Both Antony's and Enobarbus' interpretations of events in this episode have some claim to truth. Antony leaves the fate of his servants to chance: it 'May be' that this is their last opportunity to serve him; 'Haply' they may not see him again, or at least not in his present state; and they may go on to serve another master, either by chance or by choice. He at any rate is treating this as their last meeting and by this says he means to enjoy this night as if it were his last, a comment with which he hopes to comfort them. Enobarbus takes this as a ploy to make them pity Antony in the face of defeat and Antony must answer this by telling them:

Know, my hearts,
I hope well of to-morrow, and will lead you
Where rather I'll expect victorious life
Than death and honour. Let's to supper, come,
And drown consideration, (IV.ii,41-5)

The audience is presented with contradictory interpretations each having some validity and is unable to judge which one is correct as Enobarbus' interpretation is undercut by Antony's explanation while Antony's sincerity is questioned by the ease with which he seems to manipulate his followers' emotions. The frank bluntness of Enobarbus which places him in the role of a Chorus figure and should privilege his opinions is countered by Antony's display of Roman honour in his bald acceptance of an uncertain future. Drawing a decisive conclusion from the events represented becomes an impossibly complex process despite the unified perspective of the narrative. The variables exposed by emphasising contradictions reveal the importance of perspective to interpretation.

The suspension of judgement necessitated by the dialectic process evident IV.ii is heightened in the episode which follows it in which a noise is heard both as 'Music i'th'air' and 'Under the earth'. The noise is interpreted in two ways: 'It signs well, does it not?' is countered with a simple 'No'. One soldier suggests ''Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd, Now leaves him' (IV.iii.13-7)⁴ and this view is not countered. But the continuing inconclusiveness questions the validity of the soldier's conclusion. By employing a different type of *V-effekt*, i.e. by denying a debate over the mysterious noise after hearing and seeing so much debate in the previous scene, Shakespeare draws attention specifically towards debate. That the debate over the origin and

meaning of the noise simply stops should make the audience curiously uncomfortable as there is no explanation for this interpretation other than what appears to be intuition. Drawing a rational conclusion through intuition as the soldier seems to do reveals a contradiction in the Roman perspective: presenting itself as being the opposite of the excess and irrationality of feminine Egypt, in this episode a Roman soldier aligns himself with the practices of the Egyptian soothsayer. The audience can draw no firmer conclusion concerning the origin and meaning of the noise than the soldiers who follow the noise off stage saying, "'Tis strange' (IV.iii.26). Yet the portrayal of Antony in the several episodes leading to his defeat as the last of his forces surrender to Caesar reveals further contradictions in the Roman-moral perspective as the metaphoric element of the soldier's intuitive conclusion is denied as its substance is fulfilled:

Eros, ho!
The shirt of Nessus is upon me; teach me,
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage;
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o'th'moon,
And with those hands that grasp'd the heaviest club
Subdue my worthiest self, The witch shall die,
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall
Under this plot, She dies for't, Eros, ho! (IV,xii,42-9)

Antony reaffirms his Herculean ancestry, countering the suggestion that the god has left him, yet the Roman perspective continues to dominate by portraying Antony as 'the Herculean Roman' betrayed by a woman.⁵ This minor inconsistency in the Roman portrayal of 'an Antony', foregrounded through the dialectic process operating

between narrative and structure reinforces the suspension of judgement demonstrated by Demetrius.

Antony's own imaginative vision of himself before his suicide draws on the destructive flux his character has been cast in:

Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish;
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air,
...
That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,
As water is in water,
...
My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body, Here I am Antony;
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave. (IV,xiv,2-14)

The muscular, martial imagery of this vision underscores the material power Antony is portrayed as squandering through his association with Cleopatra, echoing Philo's claim that the eyes that 'glow'd like plated Mars' and 'His captain's heart' are 'become the bellows and the fan To cool a gipsy's lust' (I.i.2-10). Calling 'Eros' twenty times within approximately 130 lines, Antony not only calls or refers to his loyal follower but invokes the god of love whom, as the narrative tries to prove, Antony has himself followed to his cost. The opposition between love and Egypt on the one hand and Rome and political power on the other is acted out in the scenes of Antony's defeat and suicide, the Roman perspective attempting to confirm its unique comprehension of the material world and its ability to shape it and its history.

Antony is portrayed by the perspective of the narrative as a corrupter of honest men, a traitor not worth the love and respect he commands. Through his close association with Antony, the honest and truthful Enobarbus becomes in his own opinion 'the villain of the earth', 'A master-leaver and a fugitive'; the thought of these faults become 'the flint and hardness' he throws himself against to end his life. Enobarbus' seemingly effortless death contrasts sharply with Antony's torturous one, yet Enobarbus dies in agony, calling Antony's name while Antony - maimed and bloody and showing the outward signs of physical agony - dies in Cleopatra's arms 'a Roman by a Roman Valiantly vanquish'd'. Again the structure of the play transfers the presentation of the narrative into a different perspective. The representation of Antony's death, which the audience expects from the beginning, confirms from the Roman perspective that his life in Egypt has made him a less effective soldier, transforming his Romanness to such an extent that he cannot carry out an efficient, honourable Roman death. The expected tragedy becomes farce as Cleopatra, Charmian and Iras hoist the 'case of that huge spirit' aloft to their all too penetrable fortress to cries of 'A heavy sight!' This tactic, added to the cumulative questioning of Antony's sincerity throughout the play and the constant reminder to the audience that what they are experiencing is fiction, interrogates the limits of tragedy as a genre, almost

forcing the audience to take a critical view of the events.

VI

In the final act an envious Cleopatra attempts to reduce Caesar's luck to opportunism: ''Tis paltry to be Caesar: Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave, A minister of her will' (V.ii.2-4). Her view is contradicted by the Roman-moral view which sees Caesar as the man of action, seizing opportunity and advantage, actively creating his 'luck' and having a hand in shaping his own fate as well as others'. Cleopatra herself draws attention to the advantage of acting decisively:

it is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds,
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change,
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,
The beggar's nurse and Caesar's, (V.ii.4-8)

Yet even with the ostentatious tableau of death that Cleopatra creates, her attempt to stop the rotting motion and bring the action to rest is unsuccessful. Antony's death is 'that thing that ends all other deeds' for Antony alone. The 'bewildering oscillations of scene' (Danby 1949: 198) do stop - there is one scene set in Caesar's camp following Antony's death, the remainder of the play being set in Cleopatra's palace - but the dialectic process operating between narrative and structure continues even beyond the death of Cleopatra and her women.

Anne Barton (1973) tries to prove that the motion is eventually arrested. Seeing the final portrayal of

Antony as Mars rather than the Gorgon she points out that this final judgement is possible 'Only if Cleopatra keeps faith with Antony now and dies ... [so that] the flux of the play [can] be stilled and their love claim value' (Barton 1973: 17). Suggesting that Cleopatra must die 'ostentatiously as a tragedy queen' to avoid being used by Caesar and having the lovers' stature reduced, Barton thus follows the narrative line that the Roman-moral perspective presents. Quoting Cleopatra's 'boy my greatness' speech she concludes 'If she does not die well, this is the way her story, and Antony's, will be told for all of time that matters' (*ibid.*). As is often noted this is the way the lovers' story is being presented since a boy would be playing Cleopatra when Shakespeare wrote the play. By not taking into account the suspension of judgement Shakespeare has so carefully constructed Barton's conclusion authorises the Roman perspective, making it necessary to take a 'leap of faith' in order to overcome contradictions. The dramaturgy of *Antony and Cleopatra* reveals the Roman-moral perspective as similarly limited, as all interpretative criticism must be whether or not it accounts for unresolvable contradictions.

Barton also points out with some emphasis that the audience wants Cleopatra to die, a reaction she says 'flies in the face of normal tragic convention' (*ibid.* 16). Tragic convention cannot be specifically defined; it is determined by the customs and conventions of the

society in which it is written. These customs and conventions are often identified and defined later through critical practice. As a genre tragedy usually portrays the life of a significant person through the cause and effect relationship apparent in the series of events which makes up the story of that person's life; it is a performance of potential human transcendence juxtaposed to human limitations and frailties. What constitutes a significant person is also often socially determined: in a monarchy the significant person would be a ruler, such as Antony; a democracy may portray a common citizen as tragic hero. Regardless of the relative social standing of the tragic hero, tragedy demonstrates the sublimity of the human spirit by extolling human courage, nobility and dignity in the face of defeat.

The tension between desire and expectation awakened by the designation 'tragedy' and the knowledge of a generically predetermined outcome that Barton draws attention to is a result of the dialectical interchange between the unified perspective of the narrative and the contradictions it attempts to smooth over which are brought out by the structure of the play. As in the case of Antony, the audience have been expecting Cleopatra's death since the beginning; her death is necessary to bring the play to an end but it is not an act which 'shackles accident and bolts up change'. Cleopatra's death must have the visible signs of high tragedy in order to give credence to hers and Antony's peerless love

but this act also justifies the Roman perspective. By paralleling it with the death of Antony and by providing the audience with two views of Cleopatra's death - the event itself, including the preparations which lead up to it, and what Caesar sees afterwards - the structure of the play reveals the manipulation of the narrative in its presentation of tragedy. Audience desire for a successful heroic death rather than for the prevention or postponement of it, exposes the relativism of the concept of victory by revealing the limitations of the Roman view. Victory in the material, Roman world is out of Antony's and Cleopatra's reach yet they can achieve a spiritual, otherworldly victory if Cleopatra is successful. The Roman perspective attempts to show the vacancy of the other world by celebrating Roman materialism, a strategy which also reveals its own limitations.

Barton's conclusion may not deal adequately with the dialectic operating in *Antony and Cleopatra* between the narrative and the structure but it is a demonstration of what the dialectic can reveal: the leap of faith she takes is equivalent to the leap of faith necessary for presenting a unified perspective such as is apparent in the narrative of the play. The Roman-moral perspective on Antony portrays him as a great man in decline who, because he is 'a Roman', retains an element of nobility; his fall is the effect of his association with Cleopatra coupled with the strength of Caesar's character, that of

the ultimate Roman. The degree of nobility and sublimity the Roman perspective allows Cleopatra through her death tableau is in turn the result of her association with Antony: paralleling Antony's 'Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us Ourselves to end ourselves' and 'Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done And we must sleep' (IV.xiv.21-2 and 35-6), Cleopatra tells Charmian and Iras:

My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look,
Our lamp is spent, it's out! Good sirs, take heart.
We'll bury him; and then, what's brave, what's noble,
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make death proud to take us. Come, away;
This case of that huge spirit now is cold.
Ah, women, women! Come; we have no friend
But resolution and the briefest end. (IV,xv,84-91)

Emphasising an inherent feminine-ness in Cleopatra and Egypt - evident in the repetition of 'women', 'girls' and the ironic 'sirs' - is essential to the Roman perspective as it helps to illustrate the difference between the opposing moral poles which they are made to represent. Although Cleopatra attempts to appropriate Roman ideals, by showing the artificiality and preparation needed to stage her death tableau the Roman narrative may be seen as attempting to deny to Cleopatra the glory she seeks. The structure of the play renders this narrative strategy self-critical by revealing the contradictions it attempts to smooth over.

A challenge to the Roman view comes unintentionally from Proculeius after he disarms Cleopatra in her first, rushed suicide attempt:

Do not abuse my master's bounty by

Th'undoing of yourself, Let the world see
His nobleness well acted, which your death
Will never let come forth, (V.ii,43-46)

If Cleopatra dies Caesar will not have the opportunity to 'perform' acts which illustrate his nobleness; that this definition of nobleness includes a mock enshrining of Cleopatra for Caesar's triumph keeps the audience aware that nobleness, like other concepts in the play such as treason, love or dotage, has multiple meanings and uses. Emphasis on performance, especially on the play as performance, is increased as the play progresses toward its completion.

Cleopatra's preparations for her death begin after she tells Proculeius that she would rather suffer an ignoble death in Egypt than be shown to the 'shouting varlety Of censuring Rome' (V.ii.56-57). Dolabella tactfully clears the stage of Proculeius and the soldiers and becomes another of the play's many traitors. He tells Cleopatra that her loss smites his very heart at root after she conjures up an image of 'an Antony' 'past the size of dreaming', demonstrating to her audience and herself the nobleness that her final performance must attain; the boundary she must break through in staging her final act recalls Antony's earlier insistence that she must 'find out new heaven, new earth'. With Dolabella's assurance that Caesar will in fact lead her in triumph, she meets Caesar face to face, encountering the play's final acts of treason. Caesar's plans for Cleopatra have been made clear to the audience earlier in

this act yet now he tells the queen 'You shall advise me in all for Cleopatra' (V.ii.136). This treachery is paralleled by that of Cleopatra's treasurer Seleucus who points out that the 'petty things' not admitted to the brief of all her money, plate, and jewels are 'Enough to purchase what you have made known' (V.ii.147)⁶. The narrative shows Caesar's command of the situation, justifying his right to rule by emphasising the strength of his Roman will, but by drawing attention to the incident with Seleucus the structure counters the Roman portrayal of Caesar by revealing his actions as a betrayal of trust. Whether or not Caesar's planned betrayal of Cleopatra is justifiable becomes a question of perspective.

For Cleopatra there will be no more treason, no more changeableness:

My resolution's plac'd, and I have nothing
Of woman in me, Now from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine, (V.ii,236-239)

As far as she is concerned Antony's death was noble and hers must be also. Abhorring the imagined Roman comedy parodying Alexandrian revels, seeing Antony 'brought drunken forth' and some squeaking Cleopatra boying her greatness in the posture of a whore, she will create her own play consisting only of the single, sublime scene of her death. What she plans is a tableau opposite to that represented in *The Winter's Tale* where marble becomes woman. The obvious contrivance of the later play is equally important to *Antony and Cleopatra*: the

superficiality of Cleopatra's dignity which the Roman-moral narrative presents is interrogated by the metafictional, parodic strategy it employs.

Cleopatra's constancy is unwavering. The Clown offers her several opportunities to change her mind yet she remains resolved, sending him off with many farewells and assuring him his words will be heeded. With consummate skill she speaks of immortal longings, is attired, applies asp to her breast and arm and dies; but her ostentatious, staged death is somewhat flawed: her 'crown's awry'. The small detail of her crown slipping as she slumps into death, a blemish which Charmian must mend before she plays her own part, is a final reminder of the preparation necessary for staging this tragic scene. Perhaps even more troubling is Iras' sudden, inexplicable death. She dies with Cleopatra's kiss, 20 lines before her queen, and like Enobarbus' there is no apparent cause for her death other than thought: Iras may be echoing Enobarbus' instruction 'Think and die', she may die of a broken heart or simply will herself dead. Whatever the cause, her death, like Enobarbus', is without contrivance or explanation; it is and remains mysterious. For Cleopatra it proves her 'base' after she has 'become' fire and air, for Iras will greet Antony first, winning that kiss which Cleopatra feels it is her heaven to have. Iras' death is graceful, natural and sublime, Cleopatra's painstakingly elaborate, artificial and ingenious. In juxtaposing the unprepared for and

mysterious death of Iras with the almost over prepared for death of Cleopatra which is then presented as an easily solvable mystery to Caesar, the Roman-moral perspective emphasises Cleopatra's efforts as it did Antony's.

The structure interrogates this narrative presentation through underscoring the parallels and contrasts existing between the presentations of Antony's and Cleopatra's deaths. Caesar's tactics in dealing with Cleopatra are similar to those Cleopatra had used on Antony: she feared the news of her death would drive Antony to suicide and acted too late; Caesar fears the same with regard to Cleopatra. The structure reveals this similarity, raising the possibility that Caesar's actions may be contrived by him in order to maintain his honour while avoiding the accusations of tyranny and murder which plagued his uncle. In addition, Caesar's reaction to Cleopatra's death contrasts sharply with Cleopatra's reaction to Antony's: Cleopatra faints then vows to pursue a line that will ensure the lovers a spiritual victory over Caesar and thereby giving their love historical value; this victory is then portrayed as superficial by the Roman perspective. Caesar on the other hand remains cool and purposeful and any emotional reaction is kept under control or relieved in private.

Like Antony and Cleopatra, Caesar is also an excellent performer. At the scene of Cleopatra's death, as elsewhere, he allows himself ample room to manoeuvre

regardless of the steps others take. The ambiguity Bradley notes in Caesar concerning his attitude towards Octavia's marriage to Antony is also present in this final scene. Caesar would be content to parade Cleopatra through Rome - 'her life in Rome Would be eternal in our triumph' (V.i.65-66) - but equally content if she and her heirs were safely dead with no claim to any of his empire. And it is better, as in the case of Antony, if he has no direct hand in her death; he may drive her to it but he neither performs nor sanctions the deed himself. Caesar's final words acknowledge Cleopatra's effort in staging a noble, tragic death without celebrating the lovers, showing that he also is prepared to play his role as victor in the performance:

She shall be buried by her Antony;
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous, High events as these
Strike those that make them; and their story is
No less in pity than his glory which
Brought them to be lamented, Our army shall
In solemn show attend this funeral,
And then to Rome, Come, Dolabella, see
High order in this great solemnity, (V.ii.355-363)

Caesar includes himself in those that make these high events; their pitiable story is a part of his glorious one for according to the Roman-moral view it is his glory which 'Brought them to be lamented'. But like Theseus at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Caesar's view is incomplete: Shakespeare includes himself as well for it is the historian and in this case the playwright who is maker of 'High events as these'. The author's 'glory' becomes a play which demonstrates the suspension of

judgement, lamenting and celebrating not only the pair so famous but Caesar as well for Caesar is also one of the victors - his victory is merely different from that of the lovers. He is also one of the losers, for like the lovers Caesar is diminished by his own contrivance and manipulative tactics.

VII

In *Antony and Cleopatra* Shakespeare reveals the limitations of interpretative judgement by exposing a unified perspective to its own contradictions, presenting a self-critical technique which frustrates criticism. The teasing temptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* is its challenge to be understood, its ability to force one to pursue answers to the many questions it raises. That all answers are inadequate is revealed not only in the many critical attempts made at understanding the play, including this one, but in the process of interpretation evident within the play itself. The dramaturgy of *Antony and Cleopatra* reveals that all interpretations must be forced upon it just as the Roman-moral view is forced on the portrayal of the lovers, on the events of their lives that have been selected for presentation, and on the audience which beholds the play; it also reveals that even this judgement must be forced on the play. The degree to which narrative and structure can be separated is disputable as the narrative relies on the structure to present its story. Yet the dialectic operating between structure and narrative reveals contradictions within the

perspective of the narrative, thus making the narrative self-critical. *Antony and Cleopatra* offers only one perspective on the story of the eponymous lovers but the dialectical interplay between narrative and structure rotates or revolves that perspective, thus making the events and characters presented as the play 'the opposite of itself'.

NOTES

1. Alexander retains Pope's stage direction '[*embracing*]' followed by a comma after 'thus' in line 37. The lack of punctuation and stage direction in the Folio removes the emphasis from 'thus' rendering the passage more hyperbolic. In providing visual information the added stage direction defines 'the nobleness of life' as 'embracing', an action which may be interpreted several ways but which certainly crosses Antony's intentions by diminishing the hyperbole through definition. Without this editorial intrusion 'thus' refers to the preceding lines.
2. An earlier example of this technique occurs in *1HIV*. The contradictory accounts given by Hal and Falstaff of the Gadshill incident focus on the question of Falstaff's honour. Earlier scenes show the discrepancies in both versions: Hal's perspective portrays Falstaff as cynical and wrong but his argument becomes unconvincing in light of the evidence of the others which shows Falstaff determined to outwit the Prince. The possibility that Falstaff did recognise Hal is left open as are questions concerning the integrity of both characters.
3. Enobarbus' departures from and additions to North's Plutarch reveal exactly how excessive his vision is but one need not know the source material to realise that here Enobarbus is bragging.
4. The suppression in the play of Antony's association with Bacchus and a stressing of his connection with Hercules, another detail which depends on a knowledge of Plutarch or other sources, further emphasises the strategy of the Roman-moral perspective to make Antony's fall greater.

5. In the *New Cambridge* edition of *Antony and Cleopatra* David Bevington notes that according to classical mythology Hercules was betrayed by the Centaur Nessus rather than his faithful wife Deianira and in blaming 'his downfall and death on the treachery of a woman' Antony misses 'the irony of Deianira's innocence' (217). The appropriation and alteration of the myth is further evidence of the continuing presence of a Roman-moral perspective in the presentation of Antony's tragedy which the dramatic structure undercuts but there is nothing in the play to draw attention to this possibly manipulative misquotation.

6. Plutarch seems to suggest that the incident with Seleucus was planned by Cleopatra: 'he took his leave of her, supposing he had deceived her. But indeed he was deceived himself' (Bullough V:314). The play shows Cleopatra seeing through Caesar's machinations ('He words me, girls' V.ii.190) and portrays Seleucus' actions as traitorous only to Cleopatra.

BRECHT'S DIALECTIC THEATRE:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICAL ATTITUDE

I

As noted in Chapter 1, Brecht's criticism of Shakespeare is directed at the orthodox theatre apparatus rather than Shakespearean drama; he often uses Shakespeare to foreground the tendency of the apparatus to smooth over contradictions, to remove the 'continual clash' and thus immobilise the dialectic. Brecht objects to the tendency of the orthodox theatre to offer representations of idealised character and to focus on the 'eternally human' rather than the constantly changing. His criticism of this theatre is summed up in an addition to the *Organum*:

If there is any development it is always steady, never by jerks;
the developments always take place within a definite framework
which cannot be broken through, (*BOT* 277)

To counter this tendency Brecht uses Shakespeare to illustrate how drama should be produced, i.e. written, performed and observed. Although he often criticised the orthodox theatre for using the power of manipulation available in drama - the power criticised by Plato in *The Republic* - Brecht appropriates this power for his own purposes. He suggests in his theoretical essays that actors adopt a critical attitude towards the play being produced in order to allow and in some cases to force the audience to take up an equally critical position, thus freeing the dialectic from the constraints of the apparatus and allowing it to operate freely. Brecht observes approvingly 'the right attitude' in the 'casual

(contemptuous)' Shaw: his is the only attitude 'which permits complete concentration and real alertness' (*ibid.* 10). This definition is developed in *The Messingkauf*. The Philosopher complains that the Actor is 'rather a dictatorial character', especially on the stage, and because of this he feels that when he is in the theatre he is 'Being seen through, understood better than he understands himself, caught out in secret desires', a situation he finds 'rather gruesome'. The Actor is eager to avoid further argument because tempers appear to be rising, to which the Philosopher quickly responds:

Who ever accused you of arguing, temper or no temper? You never argue on the stage, anyway. You provoke all sorts of passions, but a passion for argument - oh no, Indeed you don't even satisfy it when it's there, (ND 19-20)

Argument is essential to Brecht's epic theatre and it is in any case inherent in the dialogic structure of drama, but not all drama offers argument in the sense of open discussion or debate. Alfred White (1978) draws attention to Brecht's use of philosophical dialogues like the *The Messingkauf* which are based on similar works by Plato, Galileo and Diderot where 'arguments between different figures may end in a consensus, but not in a forced harmonisation which would make any of the participants give up his individuality' (White 1978: 20). For Brecht, conventional, orthodox drama seeks to prove, thus offering a predetermined, inevitable, conclusive argument; epic or dialectical drama offers debate without privileging one side or the other, thus giving questions raised by the drama multiple, contradictory answers.

This is not a question of degree but rather one of attitude as both styles of theatre use the manipulative, suggestive power of the drama to achieve their effects: but where the orthodox, dramatic theatre tries to convince the audience, the epic tries to instil in all its participants a critical attitude. Brecht's 'theatre for the scientific age' uses dialectics to set up a new way of seeing in order to question whatever is considered to be 'normal' or 'natural' by distancing it, making it strange or remarkable so that it can be examined from the outside and its status as 'normal', 'natural' or 'eternal' can be challenged or viewed from a different perspective as in Shakespearean drama. Brecht's study of dialectics helped him to refine and develop his use of this dramaturgy, building on the critical, sceptical attitude its structural characteristics afford, allowing him to produce plays which are always questioning, always doubting, always arguing and experimenting rather like his Galileo's method of questioning everything without prejudice: 'My object is not to establish that I was right but to find out if' (*Galileo* 1980: 80-1).

Brecht characterises epic drama as dialectically structured. The famous and oft-quoted *Mahagonny* table outlines the differences between dramatic and epic theatre or Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian drama. Besides epic theatre offering argument rather than suggestion, other differences are: the spectator is distanced from the action in order to study it rather

than being drawn in to share the experience; the individual as process (and therefore alterable) is the object of inquiry rather than being represented as 'eternally human' and thus taken for granted; autonomous scenes are arranged as in a montage so that the narrative moves in curves and jumps rather than one scene leading into another in an evolutionary, linear plot progression (BOT 37). Brecht continually revised and distilled these differences but the distinction between dramatic and epic theatre or Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian drama remains: the epic is dialectical, the dramatic is not.

In its broadest sense, *dialectic* (*dialektos*) is no more than the art of argumentation and is also defined as discourse, conversation, discussion or debate. These synonyms draw attention to the relationship between *dialectic* and *dialogue* (*dialogos*: a conversation, dialectic arguments), both of which derive from the Greek *dialego*: to pick out one from another, to distinguish (Liddell et al. 350-1). The relationship between dialectic and dialogue is implicit in *contradiction*: 'speaking against or in opposition to (OED), or the juxtaposition of opposing views as in Plato's *Dialogues* which emphasise the relationship between dialectic and dialogue in both form and content as the dialogue form produces debate. Dialectic can thus signify both a system of analysis and a literary structure based on opposition. The rhyme scheme *abababcc* (*ottava rima*) may be understood as consisting of dialectical opposition

which resolves in the final couplet. The dynamic of such structures also allows them to be described as *dramatic*; hence the inherently dialectical nature of dramatic forms.

Brecht's terminology is arguably of limited analytical usefulness. His attempts to distinguish between dialectic and non-dialectic drama do not sufficiently deal with the oppositional nature of drama which makes it inherently dialectical. The difference Brecht notes is one of degree but it is also one of attitude. In Brecht's use Aristotelian drama designates not only plays conforming to the rules laid out in Aristotle's *Poetics* but also the production methods of the orthodox theatre regardless of the play being produced. This means that *Hamlet* could become an Aristotelian play solely through production methods regardless of the differences between Aristotelian and Shakespearean dramaturgies. Conversely, *Oedipus Rex* - the prime example of Aristotelian drama in the *Poetics* - could become an epic or non-Aristotelian play solely through production methods.² As Edward McInnes (1980) points out, the distinction between Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian defines also an incompatibility with tragedy or a 'negation of the tragic' brought on by Brecht's 'historicist position' (McInnes 1980: 5-6). The terms epic and dramatic present their own problems, not the least of which being Brecht's own growing dissatisfaction with describing his theatre as epic (*BOT*

281) but also because of discrepancies between Brecht's and Aristotle's definitions of these terms to denote different literary genres, each having different strategies of representation.

Questions of genre suggested by Brecht's use of epic and dramatic are obscured further when dealing with plays of mixed genre. The term 'problem play'³ designates a play whose genre is problematical as well as a play which focuses on social problems or problems of human life; the lack of clear generic definition can cause ambiguity even when a unified perspective on the problem is apparent. This definition is often narrowed somewhat to designate 'the drama of ideas' associated with Ibsen, Shaw and others, a large list which often includes Brecht and Shakespeare. A further development along these lines is suggested by Ernest Schanzer whose use of the term designates those plays

in which we find a concern with a moral problem which is central to it, presented in such a manner that we are unsure of our moral bearings, so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible or even probable, (Schanzer 1963: 6)

This is an attractive and useful definition but one which is hampered by the term itself which, as Schanzer points out, is limited by its habitual association with *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* seemingly at the expense of other possible candidates. Schanzer suggests that the term be abandoned because it exaggerates supposed similarities between the plays within the designation and the supposed differences from

those excluded. Yet Schanzer's study does suggest a direction worth pursuing by drawing attention to the problematical character of Shakespearean drama that appealed to Brecht: Shakespeare's dramaturgy creates opposition without progressing towards a final resolution, the dialectical structure producing simultaneous conflicting responses which are not reconciled in the conclusion. As Elizabeth Wright (1989) notes progression is not a necessary characteristic of the dialectic *per se*:

the dialectic is more directly attributable to the nature of human communication ... [it] is the pattern of the change of any concept or meaning that results from the source of reference being placed in a new context of relevance, a new intentional perspective. It does not necessarily follow, then, that the dialectic is progressive, (Wright 1989: 14)

When the relationship between dialectic and dialogue is considered, the dialectic may be understood as a series of interchanges, transactions or negotiations set into motion by being engaged in dialogue. Patterns superimposed onto a series of changes are thus directive rather than inherent.

White notes that Brecht wished 'to give the drama the possibilities of the narrative' by using narrative procedures which bridge the gap between stage and audience, thus presenting the actor 'as past and continuously completely present', allowing the audience the freedom 'to go its own pace ... coolly making comparisons' (White 1978: 39-40). Although White does not draw attention to it, his explication suggests an affinity between Brecht's dramatic theories and Bakhtin's

theory of the novel also evident in the relationship between dialectic and dialogue. The most striking similarity between the theories of Brecht and Bakhtin lies in Bakhtin's conception of a dialectical engagement of the past with the present:

The depiction of a past in the novel in no sense presumes the modernization of this past. ... On the contrary, only in the novel have we the possibility of an authentically objective portrayal of the past as the past. Contemporary reality with its new experiences is retained as a way of seeing, it has depth, sharpness, breadth and vividness peculiar to that way of seeing, but should not in any way penetrate into the already portrayed content of the past, as a force of modernizing and distorting the uniqueness of that past. After all, every great and serious contemporaneity requires an authentic profile of the past, an authentic other language from another time. (Bakhtin 1981: 29-30)

This parallels Brecht's ideas about historicising both the past and the present and the use of the *V-effekt* to provide a new way of seeing which would enable historicisation. Yet despite these obvious analogies, Bakhtin's insistence that genres other than the novel are closed until novelised presents problems. David Lodge (1990) suggests that many of the writers who work in genres Bakhtin considers closed 'can easily be accommodated in Bakhtin's literary-historical scheme by his concept of novelization' or the 'dialogising' of a monologic medium. Lodge's use of Shakespeare as a case in point reveals not only the correspondences between Shakespearean drama and Bakhtin's concept of the novel but those between Shakespeare and Brecht: 'it would not be difficult to construct a Bakhtinian reading of Shakespearean drama, which is manifestly polyphonic in comparison to classical or neoclassical drama, and to

relate this to the evolution of Elizabethan theatre from the carnivalesque tradition of the mystery plays, with their parodic-travestying subplots and refusal to 'stylistic decorum' (Lodge 1990: 96). Brecht's admiration for fairground representations of important historical events, his appreciation of Brueghel, the comedian Karl Valentin, the drama of Wedekind, and his emphasis on sport and fun in the theatre all correspond to the development Lodge draws attention to.

But if there are many correspondences between the theories of Brecht and Bakhtin there are important divergences as well. For example, the inherently conservative nature of carnival presents problems for a revolutionary theatre such as Brecht wished to establish. Not only is carnival a sanctioned inversion of authority, it is a celebration of power which rejuvenates, justifies and supports the apparatus of the *status quo*: far from instigating any radical changes it merely replaces one ruler with another, thus legitimising and maintaining the existing hierarchical arrangement. It could be argued that theatre is a form of carnival: e.g. E. K. Chambers' *The Medieval Stage* (1903) and Allardyce Nicoll's *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* (1931) trace the development of comic theatre from carnivalesque ritual beginnings; the beginnings of tragedy are traceable to similar sources.⁴ Like the carnival, theatre is subject to forms of sanctioning and censorship - this is evident in the cases of Shakespeare's London and in the Germany of the 1930s.

Charges of conservatism which apply to the carnival also apply to the theatre and this is where a break between Brecht and Bakhtin is obvious: whereas Bakhtin presents an historical schema for literature showing a tendency towards 'novelisation', Brecht is concerned with revolutionising the theatre by developing methods of production involving both writing and staging which incorporate and demonstrate dialectical thinking for aesthetic but ultimately for political purposes. Constructing 'a Bakhtinian reading' of Brecht or Shakespeare would be simple and revealing but it could not adequately account for Brecht's desire to instil a critical practice in his audience through his plays.

Another problematical divergence is Brecht's and Bakhtin's uses of similar terms to signify different concepts. In Bakhtin's work the the novel stands in opposition to and in dialectical engagement with the epic. Unfortunately, the epic Bakhtin defines is more akin to what Brecht would define as dramatic, Aristotelian and non-dialectical. For Bakhtin epic denotes a distanced, fully finished and completed image set in the absolute past in which heroes are tragic and by their very natures must perish, a form of art growing out of and supporting a national tradition by presenting a single and unified world view which character, having no face, language or gesture outside its world, may never step outside into contemporaneity (Bakhtin 1981: 36). It is Bakhtin's idea

of the novel which corresponds to Brecht's idea of epic: 'a dialogized system made up of images of "languages," styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language. Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation' (*ibid.* 49). For Bakhtin the novel continues to develop because it allows development to be comprehended as a self-critical process (*ibid.* 6-7). Again, the parallels between theories are striking but attempting to systematise Brecht's theoretical vocabulary through the introduction of similar terms which denote contradictory concepts would add rather than relieve difficulties and confusion⁵. The introduction of new terms would no doubt have a similar effect but a more systematic approach is needed to come to a fuller understanding of the distinctions Brecht makes.

A cogent terminology useful for understanding the difference between epic and dramatic, Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian or dialectic and non-dialectic in Brecht's use of these terms is suggested in Catherine Belsey's *Critical Practice* (1980), a study indebted to Brecht's theories and to Shakespearean dramaturgy. Closely following Colin McCabe's (1974) explication of Brecht's theses and drawing on the work of the linguist Emile Benveniste, Belsey distinguishes three kinds of texts - *imperative*, *declarative* and *interrogative* - suggesting that these categories can help to isolate characteristic formal features of a text. According to

Belsey's definitions imperative texts are propagandistic in that they exhort, instruct and order the reader, 'constituting the reader as a unified subject in conflict with what exists outside'. They are usually non-fictional, referring instead 'to the world outside discourse', displaying neither illusionism nor narrative leading to closure. Sermons and party political literature are examples of the imperative text (Belsey 1980: 91). Declarative texts impart 'knowledge' to 'a reader whose position is thereby stabilized, through a privileged discourse which is to varying degrees invisible' (*ibid.*). Belsey singles out classic realist fiction as being broadly declarative. Her motives for doing so are ideological, reflecting the imperative mode of her text, but the characteristics she cites in these works are applicable to works Brecht classifies as Aristotelian and non-dialectical. According to Belsey declarative texts may be characterised by 'illusionism, narrative leading to closure, and a hierarchy of discourses' (*ibid.* 70). Non-contradictory, unified character is the key to this type of fiction where contradiction is present only in the form of danger, e.g. in exposing the precariousness of the ego. The declarative text cannot foreground contradiction because 'the logic of its structure - the movement towards closure - precludes the possibility of leaving the reader simply to confront the contradictions which the text may have defined' (*ibid.* 82). A closure which resolves

contradiction or solves enigma is essential to the declarative text.

The interrogative text is so named because 'The position of the "author" inscribed in the text, if it can be located at all, is seen as questioning or as literally contradictory'. Such texts avoid the often 'invisible' and unifying hierarchy of discourse and single point of view of declarative texts, instead bringing multiple points of view 'into unresolved collision or contradiction ... no authorial or authoritative discourse points to a single position which is the place of the coherence of meaning' (*ibid.* 91-2). The reader may be invited to produce answers, as in Brecht (e.g. *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944-5) and the *Lehrstücke*), or at least encouraged to look for them, but also may be asked simply to observe and consider the problems of producing answers. The unity of the reader is further disrupted by discouraging identification with unified, non-contradictory characters. Belsey cites the poetry of Donne and Marvell and the drama of Shakespeare and Brecht as characteristic interrogative texts.⁶

Although some texts may be classified as belonging to one mode or another because of internal characteristics, critical practice can reclassify texts: 'a different way of reading, a different critical approach can transfer a text from one modality to another' (*ibid.*). The critical practice suggested by the structural strategies used in the creation of interrogative texts is analogous to the

critical attitude or dialectical thinking Brecht tries to instil in his actors and audience. Applying this critical method can turn almost any work of fiction into an interrogative text: e.g. a play which focuses on 'eternally human' emotions rather than historical social conditions can be made interrogative, i.e. dialectical, through non-Aristotelian or epic production methods which expose rather than smooth over the internal contradictions in the play. However, Brecht never relies solely on epic production methods, finding it more effective to incorporate dialectic, interrogative structure into his drama. The commercial success and, for Brecht, the aesthetic and political failure of *The Threepenny Opera* shows to what extent a declarative and even imperative element is necessary in Brecht's drama, revealing in turn the continual presence of the dialectic.

II

The development of Brecht's concept of a critical, dialectical theatre is itself an example of the dialectic process in motion. The dialogue which takes place between aesthetic, philosophical and political commitments, both in his drama and ⁱⁿ the theoretical works meant to explicate his dramaturgy, foregrounds contradiction by equivocating these various perspectives, thus demonstrating the critical method of observation Brecht sought to represent for his audience, i.e. the ability to think dialectically. Although Hegel's dialectic method,

especially as it is used by Marx, is important in the development of Brecht's dramaturgy, Shakespeare, Marlowe and the dramatists of the Elizabethan and Jacobean popular theatres provided Brecht with models in dramatic form. In *Dialectics in the Theatre* (1951-5) Brecht commends Shakespeare's dramatic structure, noting that 'over a dozen playwrights around 1600 used this kind of structure, not all of them geniuses' (GW 16:939).

Whereas the Hegelian dialectic is an epistemological method for understanding the operation and production of history demonstrated through a process or series of negations, Shakespeare's dialectic is a method of writing, a way of constructing texts which then suggests critical methods of observation and play production through a process of negotiation.

The earliest entry for *Negotiate* in the *OED* is from Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1597): 'Let every eye negotiate for itself, And trust no agent' (II.1.157-8). Earlier uses of related words have to do with transactional processes in business and law. Homi Bhabha (1988) explains negotiation as a dialectical historical continuity 'that makes it possible to conceptualize the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements' without the idealism of a dialectic similar to Hegel's conception of a necessarily progressive History, or the 'scienticism' of materialist conditions important to Marx. Along this continuum *praxis* becomes a '*negotiation* of contradictory and antagonistic instances' opening up

'hybrid sites and objectives of struggle' by destroying 'familiar polarities' and stressing the historical differences between them. Negotiation draws attention to structures which attempt to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without negation (Bhabha 1988: 11).⁷ Although Bhabha's observations are made with specific reference to political theory, they help to illustrate an important difference between Hegel's evolutionary dialectic - the process of progressive negation adopted by Marx - and Shakespeare's imaginative dialectic, a process of juxtaposition and blending, a simultaneous opposition and doubling, which provides multiple ways of observing dramatic action.

The dialectical engagement between Hegel and Marx illustrates the notions of progressive history both thinkers espouse: each offers dialectical advances on earlier systems, seeing themselves as part of the dialectical progress of history. Subiotto suggests that

Marx's 'correction' of the Hegelian dialectic principle in its application to man in a historical context ... can help determine the nature of adaptation by Brecht. The latter is the re-siting of an original in a new historical context, with all the accumulated knowledge, events and experience of intervening years actually altering it, to produce something radically different. (Subiotto 1975: 14)

Hegel historicises the dialectic, thereby allowing Marx to historicise Hegel; the idea of negative progress itself becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy which paradoxically obliterates the dialectic. Briefly examining the development of Hegel's dialectic and Marx's appropriation of it helps to illustrate how a rigorous

dialectical engagement, rather than negating the dialectic process, demands a continuation of that process through the equivocal negotiation of contradictory perspectives. In adopting a dramatic structure based on Shakespeare, Brecht avoids the pitfalls into which Hegel and Marx fall, maintaining the tension between politically motivated intentions and philosophically derived aesthetics. The suspension of judgement and continuation of the dialectic in Brecht's drama is due largely to the broader possibilities afforded by the structural characteristics he adopts.

In the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817) Hegel describes the dialectic as a universal process:

Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there dialectic is at work. It is the soul of all knowledge which is truly scientific, (Hegel 1892; 148)

Hegel draws a distinction between his concept of the dialectic and an earlier concept of dialectic as a method of formal logic consisting of the statement of two opposites - thesis and antithesis - as predicates of a single subject. Examples of this type of dialectic are Plato's *Dialogues* or Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* where views are put forward primarily to be contradicted and negated by a privileged view presented in the text. There is an element of this type of dialectic in Hegel's use of the term even though he regards such applications as an ultimately negative, non-progressive form: his own conception of the method develops dialectically out of

the older method. In the *Philosophy of Right* (1821) Hegel acknowledges this development: 'The method whereby ... the concept develops itself out of itself is expounded in logic and is here likewise presupposed'; he then goes on to highlight the differences:

The concept's moving principle, which alike engenders and dissolves the particularizations of the universal, I call 'dialectic', though I do not mean that dialectic which takes an object, proposition, &c., given to feeling or, in general, to immediate consciousness, and explains it away, confuses it, pursues it this way and that and has as its sole task the deduction of the contrary of that with which it starts - a negative type of dialectic commonly appearing even in Plato. Dialectic of this kind may regard as its final result either the contrary of the idea with which it begins, or ... the contradictory of this idea, ... The loftier dialectic of the concept consists not simply in producing the determination as a contrary and a restriction, but in producing and seizing upon the positive content and outcome of the determination, because it is this which makes it solely a development and an immanent progress. Moreover, this dialectic is not an activity of subjective thinking applied to some matter externally, but is rather the matter's very soul putting forth its branches and fruit organically. (Hegel 1967: 34-5)

Like the older method, Hegel's is negative in character; the difference lies in the 'negation of the negation' and its culmination in a positive result: i.e. the synthesis of opposites and a reassertion of the same contradiction at a higher level. The result is both a continuity and a discontinuity with the past, incorporating some aspects while transcending others. Hegel's dialectic is thus paradoxically progressive since advances are made through negation.

The preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) suggests that the negativity of opposites 'is their very soul, their moving spirit' (Hegel 1971: 97). Each impulse generates a contrary impulse; the struggle that ensues is thus the dynamic of history: opposites confront

each other resulting not in the victory of one over the other but in a progressive synthesis of the two moving to a higher level. Hegel goes on to explain that

While this negative factor appears in the first instance as a dissimilarity, as an inequality, between ego and object, it is just as much the inequality of the substance with itself. What seems to take place outside it, to be an activity directed against it, is its own doing, its own activity,... (*ibid*, 97)

The unity of opposites implied in this passage explains Hegel's assertion that 'The truth is the whole. The whole ... is merely the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development' (*ibid*. 81). The ambiguity of the verb *aufheben* (to keep, to abolish, to raise and to raze) draws attention to the active relationship between the elements of the triad and enables Hegel to conceive of a 'whole' which both sustains and abolishes contradiction while progressing beyond it. This ambiguity allows Hegel to emphasise the positive impulse of negativity at the expense of the triadic form, but he cannot escape the triadic formula completely: it is inherent in the thesis-antithesis-synthesis relationship. However, any conception of 'the whole' must include contradiction.

In the *Science of Logic* (1812-6) Hegel sharpens the concept of the unity of opposites: 'contradiction is as essential to reality as identity ... it is the source of all life and movement because whatever is in contradiction must pass over into something else' (Hegel 1929: II:58). It is not

a blemish, deficiency, or fault in a thing if a contradiction can be shown in it. On the contrary ... every concept is essentially a

union of distinguished and distinguishable moments, which pass over through determinate and essential difference into contradictory moments. It is true that this contradictory concretion resolves itself into nothing - it passes back into its negative unity. Now the thing, the subject, or the concept is itself just this negative unity: it is contradictory in itself, but also it is resolved Contradiction,... (*ibid*, II:70)

The synthesis resulting from opposition resolves contradiction and is at the same time self-contradictory. The dialectic process is thus perpetual and any final resolution becomes impossible. However, Hegel's conception of a progressive dialectic points to an ultimate goal which would arrest the flux. This is in part due to the unified perspective and hierarchy of discourse apparent in Hegel's texts: the *Philosophy of History* (1840) and the *Philosophy of Right* end in the affirmation of the Prussian state as the realisation of human freedom. The *Phenomenology* is more abstract: Hegel's own mind becomes the manifestation of Mind grasping its own nature and becoming the final stage in history. Paraphrasing Marx's criticism in the 'Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy' (1844), Hegel himself becomes an abstract form of alienated humanity and sets himself up as the measure of the alienated world. The whole history of alienation and the whole recovery of this alienation is for Marx nothing but the history of the production of abstract thought (Marx 1975: 99).

Although Marx brushes aside Hegel's philosophy, he sees in the *Phenomenology* all the elements of criticism already prepared and elaborated in a manner often rising

far above the Hegelian standpoint. For Marx, Hegel had 'discovered an expression of the historical movement' which was merely abstract but he commends 'the positive aspect of the negation of the negation' and 'the negative aspect in it as the only true self-affirming act of all being.' Thus Hegel's explication was not 'real history' but an 'act of creation' (*ibid.* 98). The 'greatness' of the *Phenomenology* and its 'final product' is 'the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle ... [which] conceives of the self-creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as externalization and the transcendence of this externalization' (*ibid.* 101). The progressive nature of the Hegelian dialectic allows Marx to conceive of the process as revolutionary, enabling him to stand Hegel on his feet. In the Preface to the 1872 edition of *Capital* Marx states that his own dialectic method is not only different from Hegel's but is its 'direct opposite.' Marx contradicts Hegel's ideal world so that the material world may be 'reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.' Although Marx condemns Hegel's dialectic for 'mystifying' history, he contends that it:

by no means prevents ... [Hegel] from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you should discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell, (*ibid.* 420)

Marx and Engels acknowledge that the dialectic process itself prohibits its arrest or resolution through any ideological conclusion. But notwithstanding their

desire to avoid the pitfalls of imaging a Utopian future, many passages demonstrate how didacticism or revolutionary zeal predicts the culmination of history and the obliteration of the dialectic. Despite ideological differences with Hegel, Marx's and Engel's conceptions of freedom predict (and would therefore cause and seek) a resolution of the dialectic process in the fulfilment of human freedom.

In outlining the difference between Hegelian and Marxian dialectics, Herbert Marcuse (1941) points out that both see dialectics as motivated by 'the negative character of reality', the 'truth' for each lying 'only in the whole, the "negative totality"'. For Hegel, totality is the totality of reason, 'a closed ontological system', his dialectic process a 'universal ontological one in which history was patterned on the metaphysical process of being'. Marx 'detached dialectic from this ontological base' and 'the negative reality becomes a *historical* condition which cannot be hypostatized as a metaphysical state of affairs. In other words, it becomes a social condition, associated with a particular historical form of society'. Marx uses the dialectic process as a historical method, 'which takes facts as elements of a definite historical totality from which they cannot be isolated' (Marcuse 1941: 312-4). In effect Marx pinpoints the ideological limitations of Hegel's philosophy; he 'historicises' it, labels it conservative because of its support of the *status quo* and

substitutes his own revolutionary discourse in its place, replacing the material manifestation of Hegel's ideal conception of freedom with his own.

In adopting a progressive, evolutionary dialectic Marx is led, as Hegel was, towards the ultimate obliteration of the dialectic process. Although their conceptions of freedom radically differ from each other, they are both similarly circumscribed by their dominant ideologies as declared in their texts. As Gayatri Spivak (1987) points out, the shifting spectrum between shared ideological apparatus makes it impossible 'to mark off a group as an entity without sharing complicity with its ideological definition' (Spivak 1987: 118). In other words, there is a dialectical relationship between Marx and Hegel which forces Marx into at least a partial ideological complicity with Hegel. A similar tension is evident in Brecht's relationship with orthodox Soviet Marxism in a comment made to Walter Benjamin in 1938: 'There can't be any doubt about it any longer: the struggle against ideology has become a new ideology' (Benjamin 1973: 119). In an *Arbeitsjournal* entry from the following year Brecht comments, 'Literature and art seem shitty, political theory gone to the dogs ... the Marxists outside are now in a position about like that of Marx relative to the German Social-Democrats. Positively [constructively] critical' (Volker 1975: 88). Yet just as Brecht supported the orthodox theatre by participating in it while trying to change it, he shares some

ideological complicity with orthodox Soviet Marxism. In his conclusion to *The Political Unconscious* (1981) Fredric Jameson notes that the 'identification of culture and barbarism affirms the Utopian dimension of ideological texts and all high culture'. Drawing on Benjamin's thesis that 'There has never been a document of culture which was not at one and the same time a document of barbarism', Jameson concludes that for orthodox Marxism this means that all the works of class history - whether art or artifact - are profoundly ideological, displaying a vested interest in and a functional relationship with social formations based on violence and exploitation. Because the 'undiminished power of ideological distortion that persists even within the restored Utopian meaning of cultural artifacts ... and within the symbolic power of art and culture' preserves the 'will to domination', there can be no easy 'reappropriation of classics as humanistic expressions of ... historically "progressive" force' (Jameson 1981: 281-99).

Commitment to or acceptance of an ideology as the 'true explanation of existence' must give an incomplete version of existence when expressed in a text because commitment necessitates a closure which must disclose the 'truths' of that ideology. Thus in a work where a hierarchy of discourse privileges a part of the whole, the privileged view becomes at once a sub-version and an act of subversion as the limitations of the privileged

view are exposed, invalidating its assumed comprehensiveness. Hegel's and Marx's use of the dialectic as a progressive method leads both thinkers to view history not as a random series of changes but as a logical, 'necessary' progression towards ultimate freedom driven by contradiction, the negative aspect of the dialectic, and paradoxically towards the obliteration of the dialectic itself. Subiotto suggests that 'the idea of progress is constantly to the fore in all ... [Brecht's] cogitations' not in the sense of 'the ebullient material optimism of nineteenth-century historians beguiled by technological advances' but rather in 'a philosophical idea of progress derived from Hegel's exposition of the historical dialectic' (Subiotto 1975: 10). The political content of Brecht's drama, the presentation and privileging of his own perspective on Marx, often conflicts with the dialectical strategy adopted from Shakespearean drama, a strategy which terminates neither the dialectic process at work in a play nor in the critical process it demonstrates. The progressive nature of the dialectic in both Hegel and Marx is the point where their presentations of dialectics differ from the application of an apparently similar process evident in Shakespearean dramaturgy. Shakespeare's plays progress towards a conclusion through negotiation rather than the negation of the multiple, contradictory perspectives represented. In using this strategy Brecht criticises the specific political doctrine presented in his plays,

in turn demonstrating a method of observation which is ultimately self-critical.

III

Hans Eisler once noted that 'Brecht had the admirable virtue of reading only what he could use'. Suggesting that Brecht read Hegel's *Aesthetik*, Eisler was amazed to find that Brecht immediately came upon the passages he found most helpful and applicable to his work (Hayman 1983: 121). During his exile in Finland, Brecht began writing *The Refugee Conversations* (1940), a series of talks between the exiles Ziffel and Kalle on a variety of topics. Unlike *The Messingkauf* where the perspective of the Philosopher is privileged over the Dramaturg, who in turn displays some advancement beyond the practices of the 'barbaric' orthodox theatre; the Actress, who shows slightly less; and her hapless male counterpart the Actor who shows almost none at all; the teacher-student relationship between Ziffel and Kalle is continually inverted, demonstrating the dialectic at work in a text. In one section Ziffel explains to Kalle the value of Hegel's dialectic in words very like those of Brecht's *Galileo*: 'It is unbearable to live in a land where there is no humour, but it is even more unbearable in a land where one needs humour' (RC 107; tr. Rossi). The section on Hegel's dialectic is worth quoting at length for it offers a perspective on Brecht's ideas about the dialectic different from those expressed in his essays on theatre, showing the different line taken in his

conception and use of the dialectic.

Ziffel calls Hegel the funniest of all philosophers and it is humour, he says, which makes the dialectic so invaluable:

His book *The Great Logic* I once read when I had rheumatism and could not move. It is one of the funniest books in the whole of world literature. It concerns the way of life of concepts, those lewd, slippery, unstable, irresponsible existences; how they insult each other and fight each other with knives, then sit down together for dinner as if nothing had happened. They appear, so to speak, in pairs, each married to its opposite, they do business together as pairs, that is, they sign contracts as pairs, conduct trials as pairs, perform holdups and break ins as pairs, write books and make sworn statements as pairs, all this while being completely at odds with each other, in every business a disunited pair! That which order maintains, disorder immediately and possibly in the same breath, denies; disorder is the inseparable partner of order. They cannot live together nor without each other. (*ibid*, 109-110)

The oxymoron 'disunited pair' (*uneiniges Paar*) expresses the importance of contradiction in the dialectic process and points to the humour inherent in Brecht's understanding of it, i.e. humour in the sense of the conception and/or perception of incongruities or contradictions which then disappoint expectations. What is also interesting in this passage is the way Brecht incorporates the humour he is describing into the style and content of the piece. Ziffel discovers the motion of the dialectic when he cannot move. His phrase 'they do business together' (*Geschäfte erledigen sie*) refers not only to the signing of contracts and the other activities he describes but also to defecating. The expression 'that is' (*das heißt*) immediately preceding the disclaiming explanation emphasises the pun by calling attention to it. Ziffel goes on to commend Hegel for having a similar ability to recognise and make use of

ambiguities, inconsistencies and contradictions as sources of humour:

winking seems to have been as innate to him as a birthmark, and he had this ability till his death, without necessarily being conscious of it; he always winked with his eye, just as somebody else might surrender to an irrepressible St. Vitus dance. He had such humour that he could not imagine order without disorder. It was clear to him that immediately next to the greatest order there existed the greatest disorder; he went so far as to say that they existed in the same place! (*ibid*, 108)

According to Ziffel the ultimate incongruity and therefore the greatest source of humour is to have a reciprocal overflow taking place between the greatest order and the greatest disorder. Such incongruity is not necessarily progressive, and according to Brecht's conception of Hegel's dialectic as explained in *The Refugee Conversations*, change can zig-zag back and forth or be regressive.

Unlike Hegel's, the dialectic process Ziffel describes involves a process of negotiation, a blending or unifying of opposites without negation or progression towards an ultimate goal. Ziffel's expansion on the humour of Hegel's method shows that Brecht's conception of dialectics emphasises the humour lying in the incongruities themselves, their acceptance and the effect of their flowing into each other:

He had denied that one equals one not only because everything which exists relentlessly and tirelessly translates into something else, namely its opposite, but simply because nothing is identical even with itself. Like every humorist he was particularly interested in what things become. ... The cowardice of the brave and the bravery of the coward preoccupied him most of all, especially everything which is self-contradictory, and particularly that which is volatile,... (*ibid*, 108)

Ceaseless change, a constant state of flux, the fluidity

of one thing gushing into another, of smashing through boundaries and becoming something else while at the same time remaining itself is the quality of the dialectic process that Brecht finds the most humorous and the most useful. Progression becomes a question of intent and is thus not necessarily the result of change motivated by contradiction. When dialectical opposition is used as a structural device, as in Shakespearean drama, it overrides intent, often resulting in unresolvable ambiguity, revealing a multitude of possible intentions and resulting in unresolvable, parallel and contradictory meanings which force a suspension of judgement rather than affirming intention. Brecht's conception of the Hegelian dialectic as a scientific tool includes the characteristic of Shakespeare's dialectic to flow beyond boundaries without progression.

In the *Organum*, his most consistent and declarative theoretical statement, Brecht seeks 'to make dialectics into a source of enjoyment', pointing out the humour inherent in the process as he had done earlier in *The Refugee Conversations*:

The unexpectedness of logically progressive or zigzag development, the instability of every circumstance, the joke of contradiction and so forth; all these are ways of enjoying the liveliness of men, things and processes, and they heighten both our capacity for life and our pleasure in it, (*BOT* 277)

This passage also parallels Brecht's earlier descriptions of epic theatre in the *Mahagonny* notes and in essays on the style of acting necessary for the realisation of dialectical drama (*BOT* 37 & 55-6), as well as echoing

Engels' description of history which he describes as moving 'in leaps and bounds and in a zigzag line' (Marx et al. 1977: 50). Unlike the 'culinary' theatre, in Brecht's epic theatre contradiction is brought to the surface; the emphasis on pleasure and enjoyment reflects his desire to make learning in the theatre fun. The importance of fun [*Spass*] is difficult to overemphasise; it goes beyond making the pill of didacticism easier to swallow by giving it a sugar coating of enjoyment: this is the strategy of the orthodox, 'culinary' theatre. Brecht sees this theatre teaching no lesson other than 'people are like that', whereas his aim is to show the conditions which influence people, which make them act the way they do, which make them the people they appear to be. To achieve this aim both actors and audience must be educated in the art of observation: in order to see critically they must learn to think dialectically. This is where fun is so important for it allows the audience to observe incongruities and to enjoy the absurdity of permanence. What Brecht calls 'the joke of contradiction' is apparent in the idea that change is not merely possible but inevitable and perpetual. The pleasure results from learning to see from as many perspectives as possible, to recognise and to appreciate incongruities and contradictions.

Development of Brecht's aesthetic after his study of Marx as expressed in the *Organum* leads to his use of the dialectic as a method which

treats social situations as processes, and traces out all their inconsistencies. It regards nothing as existing except in so far as it changes, in other words is in disharmony with itself. This also goes for those human feelings, opinions and attitudes through which at any time the form of men's life together finds its expression, (BOT 193)

Spurning the 'eternally human' and any ideology which sees human nature as unchanging, Brecht focuses his attention on reciprocal, transactional conflict. His use of the dialectic process includes the blending of opposites as well as the struggle between them, an important characteristic of the Shakespearean dialectic as well as a tenet of dialectical materialism. Although this strategy is evident in Brecht's early, 'pre-Marxist' plays, by the time they were published in a revised 'final' form in 1954 he had changed his opinion of them; but his complaint in 'On Looking Through my First Plays' (1954) is not that they are undialectical or theoretically un-Marxist, it is that they do not adequately support socialist reform. These early major plays - *Baal* (1918-24); *Drums in the Night* (1922); *In the Jungle* (1922) (revised as *In the Jungle of Cities* (1927)); *The Life of Edward II of England* (1924); *Man equals Man* (1926) - all display a dialectical structure influenced by Shakespearean drama: episodic forms of reflecting, corresponding scenes; contradictory characters; complex and ambiguous cause and effect relationships; the juxtaposition and interaction of contradictory, often panoramic perspectives none of which are privileged. Brecht calls his drama non-Aristotelian because it stands in sharp contrast to the rules

Aristotle sets out in *Poetics* as Brecht understands them, especially with regard to empathy and *catharsis* but also because his drama demands a method of production capable of portraying the experience of dialectics unavailable in the orthodox theatre.

IV

Brecht is receptive then to both Marxist and Shakespearean dialectics, his study of Marx helping him to recognise the social and political significance of the historical perspective in Shakespearean drama and to realise the revolutionary power of the epic, Shakespearean structure he was already using:

When I read Marx's *Capital* I understood my plays. ... It wasn't of course that I found I had unconsciously written a whole pile of Marxist plays; but this man Marx was the only spectator for my plays I'd ever come across. For a man with interests like his must of necessity be interested in my plays, not because they are so intelligent but because he is - they are something for him to think about. This happened because I was as hard up for opinions as for money, and had the same attitude to both; that they are there not to be hoarded but to be spent, (*BOT* (1927) 23-4)².

Brecht sought an audience - and a staff - of thinkers, of people capable of critical observation. Opinions are borrowed, developed and spent in a provocative atmosphere, but where the 'culinary', orthodox theatre seeks to provoke emotions, Brecht seeks to provoke thought, criticism. It is in this way that the epic theatre would provide the practice necessary for the production of dialectical drama.

In an article discussing Brecht and Marxist dialectics, T. W. H. Metscher (1972) suggests that without the Marxist concept of dialectics Brecht's drama

is 'lacking in conceptual precision and political perspective.' According to Metscher, Marxism gives Brecht 'the methods and categories of historical analysis and a positive answer to the question of social practice' (Metscher 1972: 134). But entries in Brecht's diary for the years 1920-2 reveal an understanding of dialectics which explains why Brecht was so attracted to Marxism as a basis for developing a new aesthetics for the theatre. The relationship between dialectic and dialogue is apparent as Brecht searches for a way to express the dynamic he was striving for in his drama. The entry for 3 September 1920 reveals his dissatisfaction with simple, diametric opposition and his desire to recognise the blending of opposites through dialogue:

I'm beginning to feel a faint prejudice against binary divisions (strong-weak, big-small, happy-unhappy, ideal-not ideal). It only happens because people are unable to think of more than two things at once. That's all that will fit into a sparrow-sized brain. But the soundest policy is just to keep on tacking. The question of costs has to be settled by discussion, (*Diaries* 34)

Brecht's prejudice stems from his coming to believe that simplifications used to foreground contradiction are neither necessary nor taken from experience. They are a convention, an automatic, reductive and inadequate model. Eleven days later Brecht writes:

Recently my fingers have developed a prejudice against comparatives. They all follow this pattern; a squirrel is smaller than a tree. A bird is more musical than a tree. Each of us is the strongest man in his own skin. Characteristics should take off their hats to one another, instead of spitting in each other's faces, (*ibid*, 48)

In his introduction to the English translation of the *Diaries* Willett suggests that here Brecht 'is striking at

the root of German polarised thinking, and thereby of the thesis-antithesis language of the dialectic' (*ibid.* xx). But Brecht's anti-antagonistic suggestion that characteristics should acknowledge rather than spurn each other, that there should be discussion, that one must 'keep on tacking' or keep the process going points to his use of a dialectic process as the transactional, motivating force behind the plays written before his study of dialectics begins. A complex, non-hierarchical perspective is preferred to simplistic 'black and white' opposition. If there is a single perspective in Brecht's early plays it is paradoxical, one which focuses on sustaining contradictions. As Brecht writes in the prologue to *In the Jungle*: 'Don't worry your heads about the motives for the fight, concentrate on the stakes. Judge impartially the technique of the contenders, and keep your eyes fixed on the finish' (*Jungle* 2).

Brecht's use of confrontation in the structural design of *In the Jungle* and the emphasis on the fight itself seem to contradict the anti-antagonistic tendency evident in diary entries made while he was writing this play but the paradoxical challenge to the audience to judge impartially suggests the importance of contradiction itself. In the play the character Schlink describes his search for freedom as a disease manifesting itself in a chain of abuse beginning with the Yangtze:

The Yangtze tortured the junks and the junks tortured us. There was a man who trampled our faces every time he stepped into the boat. At night we were too lazy to move our faces away. Somehow the man was never too lazy. We in turn had a cat to torture. She was drowned while learning to swim, though she'd eaten the rats that were all over us. All those people had the disease (*ibid*, 26-27).

The incongruities involved in persons undergoing pain because they are too lazy to put an end to it and who destroy something even though it is useful to them seems, contrary to the diary entries, to be almost senselessly antagonistic. The confrontational aspect of the play can be seen as a dramatisation of one of the ideas contained in 'Emphasis on Sport' in which Brecht calls for an emphasis on the fun of the struggle inherent in the 'good sporting spirit' (*BOT* 8). In the play the struggle is presented as a prize fight, 'an inexplicable wrestling match between two men' (*Jungle* 2); its source of fun is the match itself, the incongruities and the chaos caused by the confrontation. Schlink's search for freedom takes the form of finding an opponent, the struggle with whom ends in Schlink's death. Garga puts the struggle with Schlink and its outcome into perspective, emphasising that it is the struggle itself which is most important: 'It's a good thing to be alone. The chaos is spent. That was the best time' (*ibid*. 62). It seems that Brecht was not 'as hard up for opinions' as he was later to portray himself as being, having so many in this case as to be self-contradictory. This itself shows how eager Brecht was to create an open, experimental and critical attitude in his drama.

Esslin's biographic approach to Brecht's drama

identifies a personal contradiction within Brecht himself which surfaces in the dialectical character of his work:

Brecht's success as a writer is largely dependent on the ambivalence of the images he uses - and this in turn derives from the particularly acute form in which he was involved in the basic human conflict between reason and instinct, (Esslin 1959; 221-2)

Willett (1959) notes a similarity between Brecht's conception of the dialectic process and Elizabethan dramatic structure but like Esslin suggests that the dialectic process suits Brecht's temperament, that it is a characteristic of his artistic vision and so comes naturally to him:

the rambling methods of the Elizabethan theatre fitted Brecht's conception of the Marxist dialectic. Argument, clash, contradiction; the 'mechanism of an event' could be shown in slow motion; one scene following shapelessly on another so as to lead to a cumulative rather than a conclusive effect, (Willett 1959; 121)

In his later study Willett (1984) suggests that a sharpening in Brecht's understanding of and dramatic use of dialectics led him to see his early plays as unconsciously dialectical, enabling a more purposeful use of dialectics to develop out of them. Perhaps Brecht's study of dialectics and his growing commitment to sociopolitical change allowed him to develop this historical view of his own work. Willett however does not note this development, concentrating instead on Brecht's use of the word 'dialectic' first in the early 1930s then again in the mid-1950s, restating his earlier opinion by suggesting that:

These outward uses of the term ... were much less important than the encouragement given to Brecht's natural way of seeing things by the very notion of the continual clash of opposing factors leading to a situation where everything was in a state of qualitative and quantitative change. A world in motion was congenial to him, a

world of contradiction, inconsistency and paradox even more so. Dialectics then not only helped him, as a dramatist, to understand the conflicting elements in people's interests and to put such conflicts of motivation clearly and sharply on the stage; it also made him laugh, whence his somewhat unexpected assertion that nobody could understand the Hegelian dialectic without a sense of humour. (Willett 1984: 207)

The presence in Brecht's work of a continual clash of opposing factors in 'the basic human conflict' obvious to Willett and Esslin is in their view then not due to Brecht's study of dialectics but to his personal artistic vision; his study of dialectics merely sharpening what was already there both artistically and politically. Peter Brooker (1988), concentrating on texts written after Brecht had begun studying Marx, argues against this view, seeing Brecht absorbing and applying 'the essential philosophy of Marxism into the realm of art and its "social duties"'. He notes how this distinguishes Brecht's drama from other 'committed art' which 'treats a topical political subject, or propagandises for a particular political programme or party' (Brooker 1988: 50). The views of Willett and Esslin on the one hand and of Brooker on the other are complementary: just as Brecht had found a spectator for his plays in Marx, he finds in Marxism a vocabulary which explains his dramaturgical practice and in the process enhances his understanding of the value of Shakespearean dramaturgy to his project.

Brecht seeks in his drama to uncover the socio-economic conditions which contribute to human behaviour using a Marxist aesthetic to advance a Marxist political platform. His emphasis on 'pedagogics' and 'committed

art' (e.g. *BOT* 67) point to the didactic tendency in his work. Willett's suggestion that Brecht's dissatisfaction with his early drama stems from its having been 'designed for the existing bourgeois "apparatus" and audience' shows the tension developing between Brecht's political and aesthetic commitments (Willett 1984: 207). Belsey calls Brecht a 'consistently interrogative writer' but concedes that an authorial voice is nevertheless recognisable in his drama (Belsey 1980: 94). In her definition of the imperative text Belsey does not refer to didactic fiction, i.e. works which advocate a doctrinaire solution to social, political, economic or moral issues or problems. Several of Brecht's plays, whether *Lehrstücke* or conventional drama, easily fit this definition. According to her own definitions then, Brecht's dominant mode may sometimes be declarative or even imperative.

Brooker points out that the concept of learning, of making it possible for the spectator to develop a critical attitude, 'is at the heart of ... [Brecht's] opposition to Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian categories' where empathy and imitation induce a passivity which leads to social and political conformity. Brooker's conclusion that Brecht argues 'for a theatre with an educative and politicising function which would help install an informed but questioning general public' (Brooker 1988: 48) foregrounds the problems encountered when trying to call Brecht consistently interrogative.

Brecht's didacticism attempts to constitute the reader or spectator as a unified subject in conflict with what exists outside the play world - the socioeconomic *status quo* - as well as imparting knowledge to a reader or spectator whose position is stabilised through a privileged discourse of nonconformity, or through conformity to an ideology alternative to the *status quo*. Society and the human subject are represented as alterable rather than fixed, making revolution possible, but Brecht does not usually stop at this point: readers and spectators are often led towards accepting specific answers. The use of contradiction as a structural principle always opens these conclusions to criticism despite efforts to establish their validity. Turned on itself Brechtian criticism becomes a form of radical scepticism, interrogating and challenging its own doctrines as it challenges and reaffirms others. White notes the political influence on Brecht's aesthetic position, suggesting that the 'Marxism' of Brecht's plays 'is in the underlying attitudes, the dialectical structure, rather than in superficial content or in any following of the Communist aesthetic line' (White 1978: 19). Schanzer's conception of the problem play as one which provokes uncertain and divided responses in the minds of the audience by exposing contradictions, along with the critical attitude Brecht continually strived to maintain, explains how dialectical structures, when exploited by critical production methods, become critical

of political content, putting Brecht's didacticism into a different perspective.

Brecht's struggle with political and aesthetic commitments reveals the declarative and imperative tendency in his writing which belies any supposed interrogative intentions, yet his use of a rigorously dialectical, interrogative structure sustains this tension through self-criticism. Roland Barthes (1956) examines Brecht's tendency towards self-criticism by discussing four ideologically opposed 'digestions' of Brecht, concluding suggestively that 'Brecht reveals whoever speaks about him' (Barthes 1972: 73). Barthes finds a coherent, consistent, and remarkably organised Marxist content in Brecht, one which protests against abusive distortions derived from party doctrine (*ibid.*). This content is at once ideological and methodological:

What Brecht takes from Marxism are not slogans, an articulation of arguments, but a general method of explanation. It follows that in Brecht's theatre the Marxist elements always seem to be recreated. Basically, Brecht's greatness, and his solitude, is that he keeps inventing Marxism. The ideological theme, in Brecht, could be precisely defined as a dynamic of events which combines observation and explanation, ethics and politics; according to the profoundest Marxist teaching, each theme is at once the expression of what men want to be and of what things are, at once a protest (because it unmasks) and a reconciliation (because it explains), (*ibid.*, 74)

Barthes does indeed 'reveal himself' in speaking of Brecht here, as he does later in the essay when he describes Brechtian theatre as 'a moral theatre' (*ibid.* 75). He too finds Brecht to be 'strictly interrogative', asking specifically 'how to be good in a bad society?', but Barthes' own ideology distorts the 'Brechtian criticism' he describes. Arguing that Brecht has 'a

great cleansing power, a pedagogical power' concerning moral problems of revolutionary conduct, he sees Brecht infiltrating self-evident questions with a 'morality of invention' that analyses concrete historical situations through a 'correct reading of history', the plasticity of morality deriving from the plasticity of history (*ibid.* 76). History and morality are thus invented and reinvented to suit the ideology supported by their author, a process that not only challenges the authority of other histories but of itself as well.

Brecht's 'theatre for a scientific age' observes that the world is ordered and it is critical of explanations that demonstrate that order. Using the metaphor of scientific method, Brecht's plays - published collectively as *Versuche* or experiments - may be seen as models or simplified representations of reality, dramatic experiments which purport to explain reality through (necessarily) selective and incomplete representations. The 'facts' or events represented in a play are thus selective assertions about an irreducibly complex reality. Brecht's epistemology, i.e. his dramaturgy, designates the principles for selecting and defining these 'facts'; it also orders the plays in terms of how they ought and ought not to be used and appreciated. The *V-effekt* is important in the methodology of the scientific observation of dramatic experiments as a device for maintaining the distance necessary for the observation and analysis of the object or event from the

outside. Since a methodology can only comprehend that which is contained in its assumptions, it is an ideological ordering device which offers a distorted representation rather than a 'true picture of the real world'. Ordering by class, gender or other differences is conditional and imposed; preconceptions within the methodology give the object or event a meaning which harmonises with those preconceptions, making the models self-fulfilling prophecies. Although it appears to be a self-correcting process where images are structured and tested against a hypothesis, interpretation is nevertheless carried out according to the preconceptions of the methodology.

Finding through experimentation what is presupposed beforehand results in a perspective of stability or changelessness, thus eliminating any chance of discovery. Emphasising what is already learned or accepted rather than submitting that knowledge to sceptical critical analysis is thus counter revolutionary. As in the method of Brecht's Galileo, it is important to think dialectically in order to avoid the self-fulfilling prophecy of hypothetical thinking: the object of scientific criticism is not to establish correctness but constantly to question assumptions, to submit the multiple perspectives to multiple types of enquiry. A 'correct reading of history' in a scientific sense analyses the nature of hidden assumptions, exposing to self-criticism its own ideological base and the contra-

dictions within it. There must be criticism of the model as well as examination of the premises and conclusions relevant to it. The 'pedagogical power' Barthes notes lies in the discovery that concepts such as understanding, explanation or truth can only be ephemeral interpretations.

Because there is a dialectical element inherent in dramatic form, drama is an ideal vehicle for experiment and discovery. Brecht succinctly summarises his dramatic purposes in the short essay 'Politics in the Theatre'

(nd):

It is not enough to demand of the theatre only knowledge, revealing images of reality, Our theatre must stir the delight in discovery, it must organize the enjoyment of changing reality, Our spectators must not only hear how to free Prometheus Bound, but also school themselves in the enjoyment of freeing him, All the delights and pleasures of the inventors and discoverers, the triumphal feelings of the liberators, must be taught by our theatre, (*World Theatre* 15:3-4 (1966) 200)

Any dramaturgy incorporating the imaginative scientific method Brecht speaks of will be interrogative, based on a paradoxical structure of contradiction that undermines perceived intent; it must be in some sense incomplete, open-ended and sceptical. The dilemma facing Brecht when he comes up against his own criticism is one of negotiation: he needs to show that all ordering systems are not equally valid, that 'truth' is not an illusion but in a state of flux, momentary, temporal, historical. Yet at the same time he must show that the road of discovery in 'the theatre for the scientific age' cannot be merely a means for achieving an ideologically ordered end, it must be sceptical and rigorously self-critical in

order to remodel and reinvent its own ideology, thus preventing the experiments from becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. The sustained, flexible dialectic of Shakespearean drama provides Brecht with a challenging model because it demonstrates that ordering devices or methodologies, when equivocally presented, reveal themselves as subversively self-critical, as reductive and limiting interpretations of 'facts' drawn from the same 'reality'. The Shakespearean dialectic is not necessarily progressive, but for Brecht it can help to teach the way to achieve progress.

NOTES

1. The relationship between dialectic, dialogue and contradiction is apparent when the latter term is split in two - *contra-diction* - emphasising its use to denote two voices or discourses speaking against each other.
2. For example, the Leopold Jessner production of *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Kolonnos*, performed together at the Berlin Staatstheater in 1929, the subject of Brecht's essay-review 'Last Stage: Oedipus' where he briefly discusses the 'epic' mastering of major, classical forms; and Brecht's own adaptation of *Antigone* in 1947 (see *BOT* 24-5).
3. See also F. S. Boas (1896); E. K. Chambers' edition of *Measure for Measure* (1906); W. W. Lawrence (1931); H. B. Charlton (1938); C.J. Sisson (1934); E. M. W. Tillyard (1949); A. P. Rossiter (1961); T. Hawkes (1964); J. W. Lever's Arden edition of *Measure for Measure* (1965); G. K. Hunter's Arden edition of *All's Well That Ends Well* (1967); R. A. Foakes (1971); S. Snyder (1979); R. Wheeler (1981); N. Frye (1983); Vivian Thomas (1987).
4. See also Chambers (1923); Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*; F. M. Cornford (1914); C. L. Barber (1948); N. Frye (1957 & 1965); W. Clemen (1961); L. Salinger (1974); E. Berry (1984); M. D. Bristol (1985); Stallybrass and White (1986); L. Francois (1991).

5. In his explication of Brecht's terminology Edward McInnes (1980) equates the epic and the novel because of their social-historical views of human existence, opposing these genres to the dramatic which represents a more intense and personalised view. He also notes Goethe's and Schiller's opinions that the drama is always in the 'absolute present', an notion which contradicts Bakhtin's view (McInnes 1980: 3).

6. Belsey is not the first to call Shakespeare's drama 'interrogative'; In 'The World of *Hamlet*' Maynard Mack finds Hamlet's world to be 'pre-eminently in the interrogative mood' (*Yale Review* XLI (1952) 502-23).

7. Bhabha cites Ernsto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: 1985) and Rodolphe Gasché *The Tain of the Mirror* (Camb., MA: 1986) for elaboration and philosophical underpinning of the concepts he proposes.

8. Brecht had begun collecting material for *Joe Fleischhacker* in June/July 1926 and complained that no one could give him 'an adequate explanation of what goes on in a Corn Exchange. ... The projected drama did not get written, instead I started to read Marx, and then, not until then, was reading Marx' (GW VIII:602; quoted Volker 1975: 46). However, other entries in Klaus Volker's *Brecht Chronicle* suggest that Brecht had an interest in left wing politics long before beginning his study of Marx. For example, Volker notes that on 16 January 1919, the day after the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, Brecht and Hanns-Otto Muensterer attended political rallies in Munich as well as others at later dates including the memorial services for Luxembourg, Liebknecht and Franz Mahring. The first version of *Drums in the Night* - known originally as *Spartacus* - was written during this time. In February 1919 Brecht and Caspar Neher called on a bedridden Otto Mueller to talk politics, socialism and Spartacism (*ibid.* 11-2). When Mueller volunteered with the Whites in April Brecht sent word that he would not attend his funeral (*ibid.* 15.) In a review of Hebbel's *Judith* published in *Der Volkswille* (January 12 1921) Brecht writes: 'Comrades! Keep your eyes open! The Counter-revolution may strike within a few days!' (*ibid.* 27). The entry for 7 March 1921 notes that Brecht's friends Georg Pfanzelt and Otto Mueller feel neglected and disappointed, believing that Brecht has gone political. Neher assures them that he sees 'no political action whatever anywhere and in any instance' but does not deny Brecht's interest (*ibid.* 28). In Munich in September 1923 Brecht meets the new chief director of the *Kammerspiele Theater* Bernard Reich and his wife Anna Lazis, also known as Asja, who has studied in Moscow and gives 'Brecht exact and detailed information about the new Russian theater, and about Soviet Russia. He retains her as directorial assistant for *Edward* and gives her a small part' (*ibid.* 38).

HISTORICISING THROUGH PARODY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRECHT'S DIALECTICAL DRAMATURGY FROM *BAAL* TO *MAN EQUALS MAN*

I

In his study of Philip Massinger (1920), T. S. Eliot suggests that one of 'the surest tests' for judging the merits of a particular poet is to examine the way in which he or she 'borrows':

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest, (Eliot 1975: 153)

Brecht fits Eliot's description of 'a good poet': he steals from remote and diverse sources, radically changing what he takes to construct a whole which often stands 'in reversion' to the earlier, alien sources.¹ Eliot's statement, and the judgements he bases upon them, may reveal more about Eliot than Massinger, especially in its contradictions, but the question of literary appropriations in the form of parody - borrowings, thefts, quotations, misquotations, etc. - is important not only for developing an understanding of Brecht's attitude towards and intertextual relationship with Shakespeare but for developing an understanding of Brecht's continually evolving dramaturgy and the importance of parody to it.

Many of Brecht's literary borrowings are parodic reactions which attempt to correct or refocus either the source material itself or particular interpretations of

it: *Baal* (1918-24) is a violent, irreverent answer to Johst's *The Lonely One* and like Brecht's adaptation of Marlowe's *Edward II* (1924) parodies a romantic ideal of the hero then current in Germany; *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1931) draws on and parodies plays by Schiller and Shaw as *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) does with Gay's *Beggar's Opera*; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941) parodies Goethe's *Faust* in its strategic use of verse, a technique also used in *The Roundheads and the Pointed Heads* (1932), a play which began as an adaptation of *Measure for Measure*. There also are several unpublished sketches and storyboards by Brecht based on Shakespeare plays such as *Antony and Cleopatra with Accordion* (1922), *Hamlet of the Wheat Exchange* (1931) and *Measure for Measure or the Salt Tax* (c1931). This list is far from complete, but the point, as Eliot notes, is not what Brecht takes but what he does with it: he mimics rather than imitates, producing a new work which lets the sources - often social as well as literary - come through, allowing the audience to see the dialectical relationship between old and new.

Brecht borrowed widely from many literary sources, defending the practice by commenting that 'Shakespeare was a thief too' (Willett 1959: 124). But Brecht gleaned more than this defensive pose from studying Shakespearean dramaturgy: the concept of historicising may be understood as 'the present' parodying and ironicising 'the past' through presenting stylised representations of

it. A character, for example, is at once represented and representing, providing an image of what it portrays next to and in a dialectical exchange with an image of who constructs the portrayal. This practice is evident in Shakespeare's technique in *Antony and Cleopatra* as it is explored above in chapter 3, where it involves a double parody in that Shakespeare represents a Roman-moral perspective in the act of presenting its own image of Antony and Cleopatra; this has the effect of parodying and in some ways of travestyng the Roman portrayal, exposing and criticising the limitations of its unified perspective by exposing the contradictions the representation smooths over. The technique of exposing the perspective of a narrative to criticism, especially when used with metafictional devices, also exposes the hand of the author in organising the work, drawing attention to the fictional and exclusionary status of the work, a practice at once critical and self-critical. The 'corrective' parody Brecht practices on *The Lonely One* through *Baal* works in a similar way, developing later into the process he calls historicising, explicated in his later theoretical works and practised in later plays as he developed an aesthetic approach to drama based on his conception of Marxist criticism. This development itself is for Brecht a process of refining many of the characteristic aspects of the epic theatre already visible in his early work.

Although *Baal* grows out of Johst's play, knowledge of the parodied source is unnecessary as the play engages the abstract conception of 'the poet' in a dialectical struggle which juxtaposes the ideal with the material, the 'illusion' with the 'reality'. Loosely structured in chronicle form, *Baal* consists of 22 self-contained scenes which not only report incidents in Baal's life but, through the juxtaposition of these incidents as they are represented through his character, present images of the society he shapes and is shaped by. The first scene parodies the life of the bourgeoisie in Weimar Germany as Baal repays his host, the decadent, exploitive Mech, and his fellow guests in kind, exposing their hypocrisy and parasitic motives. Mech wants to exploit Baal's poems as he does crabs, eels, and cinnamon tree forests. Piller hopes for a reward from Mech for introducing him to Baal's poetry. Baal's boss Pschierer, to deflect blame away from his own shameful treatment of Baal and workers in general, puts the blame for Baal's poverty on society rather than the miserable wages he pays him. The other guests praise Baal, basking in the wake of and eager to share in Mech's generosity. Baal, while gluttonously devouring food and wine, points out that even lowly lorry drivers pay him for his songs and suggests 'soft shirts' as a possible payment Mech might wish to tender. While attempting to seduce Mech's wife during the meal, Baal asks about Mech's 'Butchered forests', his 'trade in

animals', and what he wants with Baal's poetry. These 'insults' break up the party, but their juxtaposition to the behaviour of Mech and his guests, including Baal, questions whether or not Baal's comments and actions are any more insulting than Mech's offer or his guests' behaviour (*Baal* 5-9). In the third scene Baal sums up the party for the lorry drivers: 'He threw me out ... because I threw up his wine' (*ibid.* 11).

Contradictions such as those in the first scene recur throughout the play, portraying through Baal a grotesque parody of the free human spirit and the society that destroys him. Singing for gin in a cabaret, Baal walks out rather than continue to be trapped by contracts and systems that stifle his creativity. He swindles farmers whom he sees as swindlers, using their lust for money to set up 'an impressive sight', i.e. mobilising bulls from seven villages and leaving the parson to pay the bill. He describes love as

drowning in wine on a hot day, her body surging like a cool wine
into every crease of your skin, limbs soft as plants in the wind,
and the weight of the collision to which you yield is like flying
against a storm, and her body tumbles over you like cool pebbles.
But love is also like a coconut, good while it is fresh but when
the juice is gone and only the bitter flesh remains you have to
spit it out, (*ibid.* 11)

Baal abuses Emilie, Mech's wife, then makes love to her. The abuse consists of admitting he wants other lovers and of showing Emilie that her hatred of the 'ill-bred' is groundless for even Baal is one of the ill-bred and she loves him. Yet this honesty appears cruel because of Baal's methods (*ibid.* 16-7). After seducing Johanna, who

in his eyes learns nothing from the experience, he is at once 'fed to the teeth' and dying of starvation (*ibid.* 18). He describes his soul as a suspension of impending life and death: 'the groaning of cornfields as they bend in the wind, and the gleam in the eyes of two insects who want to devour each other' (*ibid.* 30).

There is an emphasis in the play on ingesting, digesting and evacuating, a material representation of the process of change or becoming which parodies, ridicules and for Brecht corrects romantic views of metamorphosis and artistic development by portraying the underside of the ideal, a comic criticism much harsher than Marx's materialist 'correction' of Hegel. Brecht goes on and correcting ideals by standing them on their feet, emphasising the basest material underpinnings of the society in order to expose what he feels are the roots of its ideals. Baal absorbs his society, becoming fatter as he becomes the embodiment of it; he is referred to as an elephant several times, both for his size and for the toughness of his skin. In the hut Ekart tells him 'You've got fatter while we've been lying here' (*ibid.* 38); after Sophie drowns herself he tells him 'You overeat, Baal. You'll burst' to which Baal answers 'I'd like to hear the bang' (*ibid.* 50). The portrayal of Sophie and others as food which Baal eats, uses and discards places Baal at the centre as both the master of his world and its repository.

Baal's profane rotundity has its source in a story about a Zulu named Kaffir included in a letter Brecht wrote to school friend Max Hohenester. Dated 8 June 1917, it predates the completion of the first version of *Baal* by one year. In this story Kaffir is growing thinner daily. He gives up drinking and turns to religion, seeking the advice of a medicine man who advises him to 'make himself a living god'. Kaffir takes for his god a wild pig, sacrificing 'the best of the best to it, all the last bites that he forced himself to save,' but he continues to grow thinner while 'The god throve and grunted, sang with well-being' and grew ever fatter. Fearing his god could not help him, Kaffir kills it and eats the entire pig in a single night:

As a result, he was fat in the morning, as fat as a eunuch, as fat as bagpipes, miraculously fat, divinely fat. And even though in the course of the morning the man exploded in a thicket and died in a state of beatitude, it was a fat man who died. So the story can be cited as a pious refutation of the tendentious view held by certain unbelievers that what saves is faith and not the god. (*Letters* 22-3)

Baal dies when he can no longer continue to 'process' anymore of his world. He is not the ideal tragic soul of Johst's play, exploited and persecuted by society, but an animal-god who lives and thrives by it, ingesting, digesting and expelling not just 'the best of the best' but all that he can. Everything has been beautiful to him, all the contradictions of joy and pain. At the end he lies in the dirt listening to the rain and swallows death as he had swallowed life. Rather than presenting an abstract conception of a positive tragic hero who

falls victim to forces beyond its understanding or control, Brecht presents a negative anti-hero whose poetic imagery shocks and disgusts because Baal is an accurate reflection of the shocking, disgusting society he lives in. If the specific target of the parody is unimportant, the idea of the positive hero is essential to Brecht's anti-hero: without it there could be no parody, no dialectical engagement between past and present.

The distinction between mimicry and imitation, between ridicule and celebration, blurs any perceivable corrective parodic intent into an equivocal ambiguity of contradictory voices. Esslin (1959) for example, sees *Baal* as the dramatic manifestation of Brecht's early life as it is expressed in his poetry, as an allegorical celebration rather than as a ridiculing parody: the poems and the early plays share the imagery of 'ships floating down mysterious rivers, their hulls slowly rotting away, decomposing bodies carried towards the sea'; 'Nature, the forest, and the sky ... stand for the forces of instinct and uncontrolled emotion. ... [Brecht's] poetry reflected a complete merging of his self in the powerful process of vegetative growth and decay'. For Esslin poet, dramatist and hero are 'entirely at the mercy of ... uncontrollable impulses': Baal cannot help writing poetry, seducing women, or killing Ekart 'because irrational forces are at work within him' (Esslin 1959: 212-3). Esslin's reading accounts for only the parodied voice, disregarding the

juxtaposition of material and ideal Brecht constructs in the play.

In *Baal* poetry is used to focus the parody on a conception of the romantic poet; Baal's poetry is a representation or image of poetry which characterises Baal while parodying abstract images of the poet and his or her chosen genre. The imagery Baal uses is a grotesque parody of romantic poetry, providing an ironic celebration of the poet as mouthpiece for the expression of human essence. The image of 'passive acceptance', as Esslin calls it, is indeed pervasive in *Baal*, but Baal is not a passive character: he wilfully and actively lives the life society offers him, becoming the embodiment of that society. The grotesque, nauseating tone characteristic of the play reveals its function as parody even without knowledge of its dramatic source. Baal's happiness takes the form of flowing with nature, of overcoming the alienation of humanity from the natural world, but in each scene grotesque images of life, love, decay and death are expressed in a parody of intense romantic poetry which undercuts the ideal. Although somewhat more cynical and lacking in the commitment to progressive, positive change Brecht later espoused, *Baal* is a sarcastic portrayal of society through the character of a god-like man shaped in the image and likeness of his society. The romantic image of the wandering poet and the society which destroys him is lampooned in the way Brecht later parodied his audience in *The Threepenny*

Opera: it is at once celebratory and derisive.

In 'On Looking Through my First Plays' (1954), Brecht notes that *Baal* 'is lacking in wisdom' and 'could present all kinds of difficulties to those who have not learnt to think dialectically'. Calling *Baal* 'anti-social, but in an anti-social society', Brecht felt that the materialist corrective to idealism the play offers lacked the necessary perspective: i.e. it does not allow the audience to see 'how *Baal* would react to having his talents employed; what he is resisting is their misuse' (*Baal* 65-6). In 1943 he planned his own counterplay *Evil Baal the Asocial One* but this attempted parody came to nothing as did *The Travels of the God of Fortune* begun in 1941 after Brecht had purchased a Chinese charm. In 1945 he began working on an opera of the same title with Paul Dessau (Volker 1975: 119, 105 & 133). Centring around a fat and satisfied Chinese god of happiness *The Travels* tells the story of the god's journey to the East after a war. He convinces several people to fight for their own personal happiness; this involves peasants being given land and workers the control of factories. Persecuted by the authorities, the god is sentenced to death; but despite all efforts they cannot kill him and he dances off singing '*Humanity's urge for happiness can never be entirely killed*' (*Baal* 65-6).

In these 'anti-*Baal*' projects Brecht attempted to retell *Baal* with the 'wisdom' he felt it lacked; yet even without a stridently Marxist criticism of society or a

dialectical underpinning as fully developed as in later works, there is a forceful dialectic operating in *Baal* and the other early plays. The imagery and violent, nauseating juxtapositions of *Baal* are also characteristic of Brecht's *Edward II*, *Drums in the Night* and *In the Jungle of Cities*, a play which he saw as an urban version of *Baal*. These plays criticise society by showing how people are forced to fight in order to survive in it: society does not help people to live, rather it makes life extremely difficult. Though these early plays question the worlds they mirror and parody and make use of a dialectical structure which draws attention towards the negotiation of contradiction rather than its negation, Brecht felt them to be inferior to his later work. What is missing besides a conscious Marxist perspective in both *Baal* and *Drums* but is present in *Edward* and *Jungle* is temporal and spatial distance from the present, an element Brecht came to feel was essential to demonstrating the process of historicising in his drama. The distance portrayed in plays which represent remote times, such as Shakespearean history plays or Brecht's *Mother Courage*, or remote, often fantastic places as in Shakespeare's Italian and classical settings or in Brecht's American and Asian locales, helps to focus attention on change taking place over time and from place to place, enabling the present to be seen historically as part of a continuing process of becoming.

III

In the 'Second Appendix to the Messingkauf Theory' Brecht makes three points which he feels show what part dialectical materialism plays in establishing the theatre for the scientific age. The first states that 'The *self-evident* ... is resolved into its component parts when countered by the A-effect and turned into a new form of the *evident*', thus breaking up an imposed abstract schema concerning the shaping of experience by consciousness. The act of discovery is repeated as the *V-effekt* is used to demonstrate how experience corrects or confirms what the individual has taken from the community. The second point applies the first principle to the theatre: 'The contradiction between empathy and detachment is made stronger and becomes an element in the performance.' The dialectical tension between empathy and detachment is an interrogative process, confronting the spectator with contradictions which question his or her responses to a character or an action which usually appears as 'normal behaviour' but has been made remarkable and therefore open to questioning and criticism by being viewed historically. The past, including attitudes associated with it, must be presented historically, placed in ironising quotation marks by the present, thus emphasising not only the changes that have taken place but the process and possibility of change itself. This process is explained by the third point which defines historicising as a process which

'involves judging a particular social system from another social system's point of view'; these perspectives are explained as being the result of the development of society (MD 102-3).

These three points summarise the scientific theatre, or *thaëter*, which The Philosopher of *The Messingkauf* wishes to set up. He makes clear on the second night the role that the *V-effekt* must play in the process of historicising in a speech which suggests a Montaignean relativism:

Anyone who has observed with astonishment the eating habits, the judicial processes, the love of life of savage peoples will also be able to observe our own eating customs, judicial processes and love life with astonishment. Miserable philistines will always find the same motive forces in history, their own. And those only so far as they are aware of them, which is not very far. Man with a capital M ... changes just as much as a pebble in a river bed, knocking against other peoples. And like a pebble he moves forward. As he has no object in life, he could really achieve anything 'given the right circumstances': conquer the world like *Caesar*, for instance. Anything can happen to him; he's at home in any disaster. He has been rewarded with ingratitude like *Lear*, been enraged like *Richard III*. He has given up everything for his wife, like *Antony* did for Cleopatra, and has nagged her more or less as *Othello* did his. He is as hesitant as *Hamlet* to right wrong by blood shed; his friends are like *Timon's*. He is exactly like everybody; everybody is like him. Differences don't matter; it's all one to him. In all men he can see only Man, the singular of the plural word 'people'. And so his intellectual poverty infects everything with which he comes into intellectual touch. (*ibid.*, 48-9)

Without historicisation differences become indistinct; e.g. one cannot perceive to what extent a pebble is changed by its environment; Shakespearean heroes become inert statements in support of an unchanging conception of 'Man' instead of animated critical experiments. The Philosopher maintains that a theatre can emphasise temporal and spatial differences through characters and events by providing the audience with the method and

means of historicising, i.e. a scientific approach employing dialectical materialism through use of the *V-effekt*. The credibility of the conception of an eternally consistent 'Man with a capital M' is challenged when historical differences in social conditions are presented as determining factors of individuality, a process of continual change which the orthodox theatre - and the bourgeois society which supports it - fail to address:

We observe our social environment too as if it were part of nature, almost like a landscape. Money that produces interest we regard like a pear tree that produces pears. Wars, because they have similar effects to earthquakes and appear equally unavoidable, we regard as if they were earthquakes. Regarding something like marriage we just murmur: 'It's what's natural.' It amazes us to hear that in other parts of the world, or in our own at other periods, people have regarded other relationships between man and woman as the natural ones, (*ibid*, 49)

Here the Philosopher is following Marx in his sixth thesis on Feuerbach where he states that 'human essence' is not inherent in each individual in an abstract sense but in 'the ensemble of social relations' (Marx 1975: 157), relations which change relative to time and place. In a substitution of material for ideal conceptions, social conditioning of the individual becomes the essence of humanity. For Brecht, individuality itself seemingly becomes as unimportant and potentially as nonexistent as 'Man with a capital M', as he explains in 'The Third Appendix to the Messingkauf Theory':

The new theatre appeals to social man because man has helped himself in a social way technically, scientifically and politically. It exposes any given type together with his way of behaving; so as to throw light on his social motivations; he can only be grasped if they are mastered. Individuals remain individual, but become a social phenomenon; their passions and also

their fates become a social concern, The individual's position in society loses its God-given quality and becomes the centre of attention, (MD 103-4)

Brecht wished to show that fate lay not in the hands of mysterious, inexplicable forces but in human hands, in the societies they create and inhabit. He wanted his plays to show that changes in the fate of a character result from pressures coming from the character's society. By showing how malleable a human being is Brecht hopes his audience will in turn see their society as changeable; fate must be examined like everything else, put under the microscope of the drama until its inner workings are understood. It must not simply be accepted with a shrug as universal and unavoidable: 'The idea is that the spectator should be put in a position where he can make comparisons about everything that influences the way in which human beings behave' (BOT 86).

For Brecht any concept of fate must take in a broader spectrum of events encompassing all those felt to be of natural cause, including not only floods and earthquakes but war, bankruptcy and famine, and he sees the tacit acceptance of such events as dangerous. He explores the social, human aspects of these events in an attempt to uncover their ultimately human causes for his audience, e.g. as in his 'Foreword to *Macbeth*' and the 'Notes on Shakespeare'. This is also the subject of one stanza of 'The Playwright's Song' (1935), a poem meant for inclusion in *The Messingkauf*:

I see snowstorms making their entrances
I see earthquakes coming forward
I see mountains blocking the road
And rivers I see breaking their banks,
But the snowstorms have hats on
The earthquakes have money in their wallet
The mountains came in a conveyance
And the headlong rivers control the police,
That I reveal, (*Poems* 258)

Rather than being seen as a mysterious power controlling humankind, fate is explained as a result of choices made within social institutions. The commitment to change, the attitude that nothing can or should remain the same, is expressed in the conversation concerning the first scene of *Coriolanus* in which Shakespeare, as his plays are presented in the orthodox theatre, is used as a metaphor for the constant: 'I think we can amend Shakespeare if we can amend him' (*BOT* 259).

Judging from Brecht's comments in the appendices to the *Messingkauf* theory and elsewhere in which he endorses a social, materialistic causality derived from Marxism over what he perceives to be an unchanging ideal, it would appear that he feels a theoretical approach which reduces characters to 'types' in order to expose the social derivations of their individuality is less philistine than one which posits abstract, invisible or unknown 'natural' causes as the determining factor of individuality. His adherence to a Marxist theory of 'Man' as 'the sum of all the social conditions of all times' (*MD* 63) prevents him in his theoretical writings from engaging contradictions in characters arising from their social construction, contradictions which give his

drama its dynamic dialectical tension by providing a dialogue between idealist and materialist perspectives. He had praised Shaw in mid-1926 for dislocating his audience's stock associations of types (BOT 11) and emphasis on the construction of the individual through social pressure is often the subject of Brecht's drama.

Keith Dickson (1978) suggests that the target of Brecht's early work 'is not so much society, which cramps the individual's life-style ... [but] the individual himself, whose insistence on a unique identity makes society impossible' (Dickson 1978: 33). For example, the shift in emphasis in Brecht's adaptation of *Antigone* (1948) makes Creon into a fanatical villain: he becomes a stronger individual in Brecht's play, more certain of his identity than in the original. In the novel *The Business Deals of Mr Julius Caesar* (c1940), Caesar is successful only when in the service of others, never when he acts on his own. The same is true of Iberin in *The Roundheads and the Pointed Heads* and of Ui in his play: exploiters are revealed operating their hero-puppets from behind the scenes. This results in heroes being demythicised, cut down to size until they have no more power and no more freedom than their own victims or slaves; yet attention remains firmly focused on the individual as a social phenomenon.

In the *Organum* Brecht describes the individual as a blank space on which society writes and where the present thus becomes history:

There is a great deal to man, we say; so a great deal can be made out of him. He does not have to stay the way he is now, nor does he have to be seen only as he is now, but also as he might become. We must not start with him; we must start on him, (BOT 193)

Much of Brecht's drama attempts to expose this complex, fluid nature of identity through the adaptability of its characters. Prior to work on *The Messingkauf* Brecht had made similar comments to those cited above concerning individuality and historical change in his oft-quoted introduction to the 1927 radio adaptation of *Man equals Man*. Stating that accepted forms of art are not capable of embracing 'the new things that came into the world long before the world war' and therefore can 'no longer embrace a large number of the old things', he argues that this is due to the decline of the people for whom 'these old things' were important. This declining 'stratum of humanity' is being replaced by the now evolving 'new human type' who 'will not let himself be changed by machines but will himself change the machine; and whatever he looks like he will above all look human.' The central character of *Man equals Man*, the packer Galy Gay, is 'possibly an ancestor of just that new human type' and Brecht suggests that looking at him historically will 'bring out his attitude to things as precisely as possible':

You will see that among other things he is a great liar and an incorrigible optimist; he can fit in with anything, almost without difficulty. He seems to be used to putting up with a great deal. It is in fact very seldom that he can allow himself an opinion of his own. ... I imagine also that you are used to treating a man as a weakling if he can't say no, but this Galy Gay is by no means a weakling; on the contrary he is the strongest of all. That is to say he becomes the strongest once he has ceased to be a private person; he only becomes strong in the mass. ... No doubt you will

go on to say that it's a pity that a man should be tricked like this and simply forced to surrender his precious ego, all he possesses (as it were); but it isn't. It's a jolly business. For this Galy Gay comes to no harm; he wins. And a man who adopts such an attitude is bound to win. But possibly you will come to quite a different conclusion. To which I am the last person to object. (BOT 18-9)

Brecht's final challenge emphasises the contradictions he suggests the audience examine: the chameleonic Galy Gay is a tolerant optimist and a liar who voices few opinions; he cannot say no yet is far from weak; he gains strength as he succumbs to pressures from the mass and emerges finally as the victor. If Galy Gay can be reduced to a 'type' it is a contradictory type without 'stock associations'. Richard Hayman (1983) points out in his biography of Brecht that affairs in the Germany of this time parallel the contradictions which make up the character Galy Gay and his situation:

Millions of Germans were adapting to circumstances and suppressing their own opinions by joining the Nazi Party; neither the play nor Brecht's statements condemn the new mendacity, the new adaptability, while any basic ambivalence towards it is fanned into comedy,
Not that ... [Brecht] was yet concerned about social injustice. His premise was that since life is so very short, one must live it to the full, ignoring the suffering caused, and not wasting time on resisting changes in the political environment. (Hayman 1983: 109)

Brecht was already beginning to develop a stronger, more obvious sense of 'social injustice' focusing on specific targets than may be visible in his early plays. He had become interested in Marxism late in 1926 before he delivered the radio introduction to *Man equals Man* cited above but not before he had created Galy Gay and his play. The apparent contradiction of a Marxist showing the negative aspects of mass culture and the process of

the social determination of individuality - the 'mass production' of the individual - in a play where group activity is both restrictive and criminal can be explained through the biographical information Hayman suggests as well as through viewing the play as a presentation of a Marxist perspective on the misuse of socialism by bourgeois fascists. Brecht's comments in his introduction, especially his final challenge to his audience to disagree with him, point towards the many contradictions in *Man equals Man*; the structure of the play itself is self-critical and self-challenging in its critique of judgement and in its defiance to the suspension of disbelief. The process of historicising, of drawing attention to differences by making the 'natural' remarkable, a process developing out of the comic criticism of parody which is itself effected through the juxtaposition of irreconcilable differences, becomes an aesthetic strategy similar to Shakespearean dramaturgy. Like the dialectic, this strategy is not inherently revolutionary but can become so by allowing the audience to see the events or characters both in a play and in the world outside the play from an historical perspective, thus emphasising human ability to effect change with or without the 'great men' of history.

IV

The similarities between *Baal* and *Man equals Man* go beyond referring to the protagonists as elephants and portraying them as passive receptacles. The malleability

and interchangeability of one person with another is a recurring theme: Baal makes references to women as lumps of flesh without faces and tells Sophie she must forget her name (*Baal* 24); this is repeated later when Johannes shouts 'No names! We know each other' as Baal buys him a drink (*ibid.* 53). When Baal seduces Ekart's redheaded lover he tells her 'A man's a man, in this respect most of them are equal' (*ibid.* 49). Brecht's method of presenting and examining individuality in *Baal* is present 'in reversion' in *Man equals Man*: where Baal is the incarnation of a society at once human and dehumanising, Galy Gay's character is established, disassembled and re-established to show to what extent his character shapes and is shaped by his society. The plays also share a common structure and a comic, questioning attitude, a criticism that is interrogative rather than declarative in that it lacks overt didacticism, offering instead a sceptical, cynical view of society without putting forward a particular solution. Parody is an important element in the dialectic of both plays, not as they relate to specific literary sources but to a particular view of the individual and its relationship to society accepted outside and portrayed within the plays.

Whall (1981) examines this topic in terms of parody, finding in Brecht an attempt to banish the ghosts of the past while simultaneously introducing topically relevant subject matter and new dramatic forms, an exorcism she feels Brecht thought it necessary to perform in order to

adapt Shakespeare and other playwrights for performance in the modern world: 'In a series of "anti-plays" and adaptations Brecht rejects what he must of the past but, through parody, saves what he can'. As she notes, *Baal* is such an anti-play and she argues persuasively for looking at *Man equals Man* as a direct parody of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and at *The Good Person of Szechwan* as a parody of *As You Like It*. She draws attention to the dialectic of parody, the interaction between old and new, as she notes what she calls Brecht's one consistent dramatic practice: 'from his first to his last days as a playwright he sought out dramatic models against which he could react - and to which he thereby gives new life'. Taking the view that there is a conflict between 'Brecht the intuitive artist' who is attracted to 'promising artistic forms' and 'Brecht the political man' who rejects 'bourgeois content', Whall notes that Brecht sustains in his drama a dialogue between these opposing voices which often results in a 'complex parody' based on a 'principle of reduction' (Whall 1981: 128-33).

The difference Whall finds between 'Brecht the intuitive artist' and 'Brecht the political man' disregards the different contexts in which these supposedly duelling voices are expressed, a position examined in Chapter 1 above. Similarly, when discussing Brecht's radio adaptations of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* Whall does not take into account the changes necessary when

transferring a work from one medium to another, a process often necessitating reduction. Nor does she recognise fully Shakespeare's use of parody, relying instead on concepts of providence and of traditions of comedy and tragedy which she sees Shakespeare supporting instead of exploring and questioning. She calls *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'Shakespeare's most conservative and romantic comedy,' and sees Brecht rebelling against and mocking 'Shakespeare's comedic vision' by banishing 'the court, the aristocrats, the woods [sic], the fairies, and with these the theme of transformation through love'. She finds that Brecht 'is intrigued by the way in which characters [in *MND*] mistake each other, even seem to become each other. He is not attracted to the ideas of supernatural magic or the providence of love - concepts as archaic for Brecht as their own alter-identities, fate and tragic destiny'. Whall equates what she terms Shakespeare's 'supernatural magic' with fate, seeing it as a force outside humanity's control ruling their lives. She also sees 'the folly of love' as an affirmation of 'the comedy of being human', saying nothing of how Shakespeare's play demonstrates how his characters are manipulated and transformed by whichever society they are in, including the play itself. Labelling the parody of the Pyramus and Thisbe scene a 'gentle satire ... tragic content rendered comic by the method of presentation', Whall recognises Shakespeare's parody as a 'complex interaction between stage audience and inner play, inner

play and outer play, [and] all of these with the "real" audience' which leads to 'our acceptance of the folly of love, the comedy of being human' (*ibid.* 136-7).

Shakespeare's parody goes much further than Whall allows: by placing the performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in circumstances which alter its form, transforming the tragedy into burlesque, the play within the play reflects back on the transformations which take place in the wood. In the main action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare's fairy world, with its own social institutions, is a parody of his Athens, the social institutions of which include wars and oppressive marriage laws. In moving the action to an enchanted wood Shakespeare shows that those who venture there are subject to the rules governing that world. The lovers are manipulated by their new society - the 'madness' of the wood - just as they had been shaped by their society in Athens. Whall does not acknowledge that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'being human' involves being affected, even transformed, by one's society. Like Brecht's dismantling and reassembly of Galy Gay in *Man equals Man*, the scenes in the wood show that human beings are to a significant degree shaped by their society just as the genre of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is shaped by the circumstances of performance. To further emphasise this point, Oberon, the non-human and in some ways super-human captain of fairy, cannot completely control the society of which he is the leader; his well-meaning intervention

into the lives of the lovers is confused by Puck's mischief, which Puck blames on fate: 'Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth, A million fail, confounding oath on oath' (III.ii.92-3). The real source of confusion and the ultimate 'o'er-ruler' in the play world is not the unseen powers of fate but the visible rule of the playwright who determines character and controls the actions and events in the play, exposing his role through metafictional devices.

Whall finds that in *Man equals Man* and *The Elephant Calf* 'Brecht's comic investigation of personal identity, his succinct and witty gloss on the power of persuasion and the limitations of logic, his (for him) unusually explicit invitation to the audience to consider the relationship of illusion and reality' cannot be 'adequately pursued' unless compared 'to their Shakespearean source, and to the tradition of comedy'. Following on from the work of Rodney Symington (1970), Whall traces what she sees as Brecht's parody of his Shakespearean source for *Man Equals Man* and suggests reading 'through the lens of parodic reduction' in order to 'discover' how in 'breaking the link between the Shakespearean themes of transformation and love Brecht utterly transforms the meaning of metamorphosis' by rewriting the earlier play without 'the lovers' (*ibid.* 135-7). Brecht's play contains a variety of lovers who do not necessarily offer direct parallels to Shakespeare's but who do play significant roles in the

many transformations of *Man equals Man*: Galy Gay is married and his wife makes significant appearances in the play; in the earlier version Begbick and her daughters sell sex, especially to Fairchild who later castrates himself to avoid further indiscretions; in later versions the daughters disappear leaving a more wily Begbick to conduct business on her own as, for example, in Scene 2 where she attempts to seduce Galy Gay and in Scene 10 where she is paid to get into bed with him. These 'lovers' are parodic representations of classic types, as are Shakespeare's lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* who not only parody classic types but each other.

As in *Baal*, it is not so much Brecht's borrowing of plot elements or characters from particular plays and other literary sources but his use of certain dramatic techniques which reveal the importance of Shakespeare in Brecht's developing dramaturgy. The use of metafictional devices which make the author's role in shaping the play visible is one obvious example: in the play within the play scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* this strategy allows the audience to see the internal parody; reference to an external source is not necessary. Brecht's parody in *Man equals Man* is similarly self-contained, operating through a series of juxtapositions; the critical practice of historicising through parody makes the connection between the play and the world outside it, including Shakespearean drama and the various traditions of comedy and tragedy attached to it.

Brecht worked on what can be considered the *Man equals Man* project for much of his professional life. Willett's and Manheim's notes for the Methuen edition of the play point out that Brecht had conceived of a project involving elements of the *Man equals Man* plot as early as 1918, when he would also have been working on *Baal*; he had finished a version of the play by the end of 1925. Several versions follow based on scripts used in productions, including one directed by Brecht in 1931, the 'final' version appearing in the 1954 edition of *Stücke I and II*. This is the version translated in the main body of the Methuen edition: a combination of the 1931 and 1938 versions with some additions from the 1950s (*passim* A). But, as its editors point out, Brecht never saw this version staged and could well have made further changes for a Berliner Ensemble production.² The 1926 version of *Man equals Man* (*passim* B) shares its structure and its comic, questioning attitude with the other early plays, but there is a difference in tone and a tightening of structure between the early plays and the last published version of *Man equals Man* due in part to Brecht's growing maturity in the theatre but also to his study of Marxism and the dialectic method. A brief comparison of the two versions of *Man equals Man* illustrates Brecht's move from the cynical and the sceptical to specific sociopolitical criticism; it also illustrates Brecht's refinement of parody into

historicisation. The metaphor of a scientific theatre based on a method derived from dialectical materialism allows Brecht to sharpen what he had learned from Shakespeare, turning this to the development of an aesthetic based on and striving for social change.

Man equals Man is concerned with identity as change, as a perpetual becoming through the negotiation of contradictions. Galy Gay is an embodiment of contradiction, a characteristic evident in his desire to 'be pleasant', to 'be the way people want you to be', a stance the audience soon finds to be a convenient, manipulative pose which Galy Gay strikes only when he stands to gain from it; when a situation does not suit him he beats a hasty retreat. His method of passive aggression is at once an embodiment of his social milieu and an encapsulation of the dialectical process of the play. Ronald Speirs (1982) calls *Man equals Man* a 'parable on the contingency of human existence' in which a combination of social and biological pressures sweep the characters along, their reactions shaping their destinies until they 'lose control over their lives'. He sees Galy Gay as a fool duped by the three soldiers who then

learns to exploit the situation they have put him in, and lays claim to their rations and blankets. In the topsy-turvy world of the play calculating activity enslaves while 'foolish' passivity proves to be a form of wisdom. (Speirs 1982: 118-9)

Reading the plot as a series of chance events which entrap the characters, he concludes that 'a situation of physical imprisonment symbolises the individual's general

lack of freedom to shape his own life' (*ibid.* 120). There is a reciprocal aspect between chance and calculation which Speirs' provocative reading does not address. The foolish 'elephant' Galy Gay actively calculates his passivity in order to get what he wants. In going out to buy a fish he finds several possibilities to do business and he attempts to satisfy his desire for food and money by being pleasant. He learns that the best way to achieve and continue to achieve what he desires is to flow with the situation by being open to possibilities, open to change. His passivity is a pose which allows him to satisfy his desires; like Baal he becomes a sponge, soaking up his social environment until he becomes both exploiter and exploited. Galy Gay demonstrates an ability to use whatever trap in which he finds himself to his best advantage. His passivity allows him to flow into a new situation and although he has no control over what he is faced with he 'wins' by actively participating in the events each new situation presents to him; his control over his own life demonstrates his resiliency even when he is faced with denying his own identity.

Brecht's idea of change or transformation in *Man equals Man* is quite specific. In the oft-quoted Interlude prior to Scene 9 Begbick tells the audience:

Tonight you are going to see a man reassembled like a car
Leaving all his individual components just as they are,
... whatever the purpose of his various transformations
He always lives up to his friends' expectations, (A 38)

The verbs *ummontieren* (to reassemble) and *umbauen* (to

rebuild) help Brecht to define his use of *Verwandlung*, the word translated as 'transformation' in the play's subtitle: 'The transformation of the porter Galy Gay in the military cantonment of Kilkoa during the year nineteen hundred and twenty five'. Nellhaus' translation of '*wozu auch immer er umgebaut wird*' ('whatever... transformations') is free but fair to the German; a more literal translation might be 'however he is rebuilt'. *Umbauen* may also mean to convert, to alter, to modify or to reorganise.

In his examination of Marxism and Modernism, Eugene Lunn (1982) describes the technique of cubism which can clarify further Brecht's use of 'transformation' in *Man equals Man*. Lunn notes that the cubists sought to reveal ambiguities in the viewers' perception of the physical human face and figure by organising their renderings in planes and geometric structures faceted on the picture surface. Human and physical forms were thus thought to be restructured 'down to their basic shapes, taking apart a machine in order to rebuild it', a technique intended 'to help master the immense complexity of the world'. This focus on mechanical dehumanisation, a 'revolutionary assault on the seeming stability of objects', involves dismantling the object of representation into its component parts, juxtaposing them to each other and reassembling them in one of several new combinations, each example representing one possible construction among many (Lunn 1982: 51).

Brecht's conception of change or transformation in *Man equals Man* implies a material and functional change without implying a change of essential elements; these are simply rearranged. It is a change of condition and use, of which an actor is an illustrative example. An actor is a person representing an historically different person and/or fictitious character while maintaining his or her actual identity. Regardless of how much an actor identifies with the character he or she portrays or to what degree the audience identifies the actor with the character, the actor remains the actor; his or her use determines his or her identity. Off stage the actor is only himself or herself; on stage the actor portrays the character while maintaining his or her own identity outside the role. The same may be said of a stage: it remains the same place no matter what location it is transformed into by the verbal images and/or visual aids of the play being acted upon it.

It is in this ambiguous sense that Brecht uses *Verwandlung* or 'transformation': as Sly is 'transformed' in *The Taming of the Shrew* from tinker to lord, Galy Gay will be visibly transformed from a simple, penniless porter from the harbour into The Human Fighting Machine and yet remain Galy Gay, just as the actor representing him will remain that actor. The same is true for the other transformations that take place in the play. The canteen is transformed into an empty space, yet the metafictional strategy of the play constantly reminds

the audience that the canteen is nothing more than a stage which is adapted according to its use. Jip changes from drunken soldier to god and back again, this metamorphosis also being marked by the use to which he is put. The sex-crazed super-soldier Fairchild is transformed into an impotent civilian first when he appears in civilian clothes in Scene 9-IVa, and later when he castrates himself; both of these transformations reveal that, despite the permanence of the castration, Fairchild does not really change: his *macho* persona is merely a pose to which the castration gives a material reality.

Galy Gay's transformation appears to begin after he is first used by the soldiers. The simple, soft natured, penniless porter 'who drinks not at all, smokes very little and has almost no vices' (A 3) - as he describes himself in Scene 1 - begins smoking and drinking a great deal. As long as he is to profit by complying with the wishes of others he can be made to do something he is not otherwise prepared to do. Asked to fill in for Jip, his soft nature enables him to bargain with the opportunistic soldiers until by the end of this scene he has inflated the single cigar offered in payment for his services into 'Five boxes of cheap cigars and eight bottles of brown ale' (A 21), an odd payment for a non-drinker and occasional smoker. After 1926 Brecht adds a short verse speech to the end of Scene 4 which outlines Galy Gay's strategy of passive aggression:

Now I could go away, but
Should a man go away when he is sent away?
Perhaps once he has gone
He may be needed again? And can a man go away
When he is needed, Unless it has to be
A man should not go away, (A 22)

Satisfied with the result of his dealings with the soldiers, Galy Gay decides to stay in the canteen in case he should be needed again, for if he is he may stand to profit even further. Paradoxically, his action involves being passive, being open to whatever may follow. In earlier versions Galy Gay stays without explanation: Uriah suggests in Scene 6 that he stayed because of the rain (B 92) - Begbick's final line in Scene 4 is 'It's started to rain' (B 88) - but this is not expanded upon. The flow of water as an image of change, hinted at in 1926, becomes a central metaphor in later versions.

The song Begbick sings at the end of Scene 4, also a later addition, focuses on the image of flowing water, suggesting that Galy Gay's transformation has already begun:

Often as you may see the river sluggishly flowing
Each time the water is different,
What's gone can't go past again, Not one drop
Ever flows back to its starting point, (A 22)

Audience attention is focused on change, the flowing movement of the dialectic process portrayed as a natural phenomenon. This shift in emphasis is in line with the more substantial alterations made to Scene 9, one of which is replacing the 'Man equals Man Song' with 'The Song of the Flow of Things'. The earlier song is used to punctuate the 'numbers' making up this scene, telling how

all soldiers receive the same rations, have the same kit, sleep with the same women, go to the same places and die the same death (B 106-115). The transformation of Begbick's canteen into an empty space, Fairchild's first appearance as an impotent civilian and the attempt to change Galy Gay into Jeraiah Jip are re-enforced by the song's several verses. Brecht dropped the 'Man equals Man Song' for his 1931 production in favour of beginning Scene 9 with Begbick's verse introduction to the new song, the refrain of which is:

Don't try to hold on to the wave
That's breaking against your foot; so long as
You stand in the stream fresh waves
Will always keep breaking against it, (A 39)

Again flowing water is used as an image of constant change as in the deliquescence of *Antony and Cleopatra* noted by Danby (Danby 1949: 198), focusing attention on change as a natural, material process. Using an organic metaphor to define human nature as constantly changing is an attempt to define change as a natural process, as an innate quality of human nature, in turn defining human nature as a process rather than a given. The seemingly natural status of phenomena such as love or war is likewise questioned: e.g. that war will take place is never doubted, the location is the only variable. In an attempt to show that individual identity can only be defined as changing, that continuity is only natural inasmuch as it is change, Brecht parodies the metaphoric use of flowing water by emphasising its material rather than its idealistic aspects.

'The Song of the Flow of Things' and the verse additions given to Begbick after 1926 centre around a dialectical flux which points to the changing nature of human identity, questioning the 'naturalness' of 'normal' actions by indicating their socioeconomic sources. The new song increases the ambiguity of the reciprocal nature of identity by showing the one who is changed as stationary and by emphasising the futility of action which attempts to arrest change. The inevitability of perpetual change in the flow of things is emphasised further in later versions by the short autobiographical poems Begbick speaks before singing; these accompany specifically the transformation of her canteen into an empty space, an event common to all versions. In the early version Scene 9 begins with chaos: Begbick enters her canteen at a run, pushing her daughters in front of her, panic stricken because the army is pulling out and she may be left behind. The three soldiers are in a similar state because they have so little time to reconstruct Galy Gay as Jeraiah Jip (B 104). Later versions begin with an offstage voice announcing the army's imminent departure while Begbick calmly sits behind her bar smoking (A 38-9). After singing, she rises to push back the canvas awnings, beginning the transformation of the canteen into an empty space, and also begins telling the audience the story of her life.

A a secure, stationary life with a man 'who kept ...
[her] fed and who was unlike anyone else' & when he dies, a

change which renders him unrecognisable. She rents out their bedroom so that she may continue to eat. That situation changes also and she arrives at her present occupation ending her tale with the chorus of 'The Song of the Flow of Things' before returning to her seat (A 39). Her calmness corresponds to the sluggish, flowing manner of the dialectic process and continuous, inexorable change.

In the second number she accompanies washing tarpaulins with the story of her good name being ruined after drinking four glasses of schnapps; like soiled linen, even when washed clean it is not the same: the process of soiling and cleaning continually change it. Feste relates a similar parable to Olivia in *Twelfth Night*: 'Anything that's mended is but patch'd; virtue that transgresses is but patch'd with sin, and sin that amends is but patch'd with virtue' (*TN* I.v.40-2). Begbick then warns Galy Gay, who listens to her song, 'don't speak your name so distinctly. What is the point? Considering that you are always using it to name a different person' (A 46-7). In the third number she tells of people being sure of an opinion who without realising it change their opinions as time passes:

I spoke to many people and listened
Carefully and heard many opinions
And heard many say of many things: 'That is for sure',
But when they came back they spoke differently from the way they
spoke earlier
And it was something else of which they said: 'That is for sure',
At that I told myself; of all sure things
The surest is doubt, (A 50)

Belief and doubt are juxtaposed: a particular belief being continually changed by a process of negotiating doubts which contradict it, causing it to reshape itself into a new belief relative to the new situation.

Begbick's critique of judgement takes on ridiculous proportions in *The Elephant Calf*, the foyer piece supposedly to be performed during intermission. Originally the penultimate scene of *Man equals Man* where it was set in a theatre and called *The Elephant Calf or the Demonstrability of Any Conceivable Assertion*, it was separated from the main play in 1926 when it was published as an appendix, disappearing altogether in later editions. As Willett points out, it was not until 1954 that the two works were reunited complete with instructions for performance in the foyer (A xii-iv)³. As *The Elephant Calf* intensifies the confusion already developing in the main play and serves as a comment on Begbick's assertion 'of all sure things The surest is doubt', a brief examination of it can illuminate certain critical aspects of *Man equals Man*.

The Elephant Calf is a performance by Polly, Jesse, Uriah and Galy Gay for soldiers from the main play. It takes place on a trestle stage under a few rubber trees, a setting used in the main play as the scene of Galy Gay's execution. Galy Gay, called Jip by Polly but referred to as Galy Gay in the speech headings, plays an Elephant Calf accused of murdering its mother, a living witness for the prosecution played by Jesse; Uriah plays

the Moon and charges the Elephant Calf with the crime, while Polly plays the Banana Tree, the 'arbiter of the jungle' who proceeds over the trial. The Banana Tree is both judge and prosecutor and sets out to prove that the Elephant Calf *is* a murderer, not a potential murderer, despite the fact that the alleged victim is alive and appears as a witness. To make matters more absurd Polly and his fellow actors perform their play in order to make money not only by charging ten cents admission but by taking bets on the outcome of the play: they weigh the dice in favour of the Elephant Calf to increase the betting then exert their control over the situation to ensure that they take the most money. This ulterior motive is akin to Galy Gay's seemingly soft nature which appears to make him an easy target for opportunists but, when he is clever enough, helps him to improve his situation. *The Elephant Calf* is specifically concerned with the nature of proof, with the Banana Tree leading the audience of soldiers on a winding path intended to prove the impossible.

The absurd humour of the plot and the parody of elevated verse and prose enhances the perspective of the play which looks at the absurdity of any conception of absolute proof. The following exchange between Banana Tree and Moon demonstrates the ambiguous portrayal of blind justice presented in the play:

POLLY: So the Elephant Calf hath perpetrated a crime?

URIAH: It is precisely as thou supposest, indeed this is an instance of thy perspicacity from which nought can be hid.

POLLY: O, you've seen nothing yet. Hath not the Elephant Calf

murdered his mother?
URIAH; Indeed he hath,
POLLY; Well, that's terrible,
URIAH; Appalling it is,
POLLY; If only I could find my specs,
URIAH; I just happen to have a pair on me, if they should fit you,
POLLY; They would fit all right if only they had lenses in them,
Look, no lenses,
URIAH; Better than nothing, anyway,
POLLY; It's not a laughing matter, (A 80-1)

The audience is presented with a perspicacious judge who cannot see, personifying blind justice in a parody which suggests that he will not be able to see the facts which will enable him to make lucid judgements. Yet he is also prophetic: prophets are traditionally blind and he knows what crime the Elephant Calf is accused of before the Moon tells him. Such comic ambiguity is characteristic of the effort to interrogate and explore judgement in *The Elephant Calf*.

The exchange which immediately follows the one quoted above emphasises further the absurdity of judgements which fail to take into account contradictory situations. The Banana Tree addresses the Elephant Calf:

POLLY; They tell me thou didst beat thy mother to death,
GALY GAY; No, I just broke her milk jug to pieces,
URIAH; On her head, on her head,
GALY GAY; No, Moon, on a stone, on a stone,
POLLY; And I tell thee thou didst do it, as sure as I am a Banana Tree,
URIAH; And as sure as I am the Moon I shall prove it, and my first proof is this woman here,
Enter Jesse as the Elephant Calf's mother, (A 81)

Polly's claim to be a banana tree and Uriah's claim to be the moon draw attention to the theatrical illusion and destroy it. Not only are they actors representing tree and moon, they are actors representing characters who are representing tree and moon. Their subsequent proof,

defended by the certainty of their being tree and moon is therefore empty except within the illusion provided by the theatre. The absurdity of the trial about to take place is underlined by the entrance of the victim, alive and well. The absurdity is intensified when, several lines later, the Elephant Calf is accused of stabbing its mother to death, not of beating her.

The major proof itself depends upon the Elephant Calf's proving its *inability* to murder the Moon (A 84). This is done by making the Elephant Calf climb a rope which the Moon holds. The Moon cannot support the weight and his false hand is torn off. The Elephant Calf holds up the artificial hand for the audience to see and is declared a murderer because he has not 'proved that it is impossible for ... [him] to commit a murder' and that he has 'so handled the Moon that it must needs bleed to death before first light' (A 85). This logic is carried one step further by the Banana Tree's 'patent super-proof' involving a chalk circle. The mother is placed inside the circle, the Elephant Calf outside holding a rope tied around the Mother's neck. Claiming that a child cannot murder its own mother and having proven that the Elephant Calf is a murderer, the Banana Tree asserts that if the Elephant Calf is the Mother's child then it 'willst have been given the strength to pull thine alleged mother out of the circle' to its own side (A 87). In performing this little task the Elephant Calf almost succeeds in choking the Mother to death and the Tree

tells the Elephant Calf:

Now shall unnatural deception reap its reward, For thou hast clearly made a terrible mistake, By thy crude tugging hast thou proved, not what thou intendedst, but merely that under no circumstances can'st thou be son or daughter of this wretchedly tormented Mother, Thou hast made plain the truth, Jackie Pall, (A 88)

Having been proved a murderer it is now proven that the Elephant Calf is not the child of the Mother. Both proofs are rather inadequate by logical standards but Polly pushes on. This final 'patent super-proof' is, in fact, not final at all, as the whole absurd business comes round to another final proof beginning with the Banana Tree's summing up:

this Elephant Calf is a murderer, The Elephant Calf, which is not the daughter of this honourable mother, as it suggested, but the son, as I have proved, and not the son either, as you saw, but simply no child whatsoever of this matron, whom it simply murdered, even though here she stands in full view of you all, acting as if nothing had happened, which is perfectly natural, even though previously unheard-of, as I can prove, and in fact I can now prove everything and am suggesting a great deal more and won't let myself be put off but insist on getting my certificate and even prove that, for I put it to you: what is anything without proof? *Steadily increasing applause.* Without proof men aren't men but orangutans, as proved by Darwin, and what about Progress, and just bat an eyelid, thou wretched little nonentity of a lie-sodden Elephant Calf, phoney to the very marrow, then I'll absolutely prove - in fact this is really the point of the whole thing, gentlemen - that this here Elephant Calf is no Elephant Calf whatsoever, but none other than Jeraiah Jip from Tipperary, (*ibid.*)

All of these proofs are empty if judged by the evidence used to validate them. The absurd logic - or illogic - of the Banana Tree's argument questions the concept of proof by asserting conclusions unrelated to the arguments. However, within the realm of the Banana Tree's logic these proofs are considered valid and are supported by his fellow actors within this world within worlds. The lines which follow the above speech are

crucial to this example of Brecht's critique of judgement because they seem at first to break one level of illusion. The following exchange seems to take place not between the Elephant Calf, the Banana Tree and the Moon, but between Galy Gay and Polly with an interjection from Uriah, all of whom seem to have stepped out of character:

GALY GAY: It won't wash.
POLLY: And why not? Why won't it wash?
GALY GAY: Because it's not in the book, Take that back,
POLLY: Anyway, you're a murderer,
GALY GAY: That's a lie.
POLLY: But I can prove it. Prove it, prove it, prove it.
*Galy Gay hurls himself with a groan at the Banana Tree whose base
gives way under the force of his attack.*
POLLY *falling*: See that? See that?
URIAH: All right, now you are a murderer.
POLLY *groaning*: And I proved it.
Curtain, (A 88-9)

This seeming chaos and genuine fighting between members of the cast is actually a part of their show; their play only ends after they sing a song '*before the curtain*'. The ending of Brecht's *The Elephant Calf*, however, is beyond this ending and it shows that the above fight is indeed part of the inner (inner) play because in what follows the characters of the farce portray the soldiers they represent rather than trees or elephants and defend all that has happened on their trestle stage.

The soldiers who have been watching Polly and the others now demand their money back because the play does not come 'to a proper conclusion', but Polly insists that what they have 'performed was the absolute truth'. He is backed up in this assertion by Galy Gay who calls for a boxing match to decide whether what they 'performed was the absolute truth, or if it was good or bad theatre' (A

90). In *The Elephant Calf* proof and absolute truth are valid only from a particular perspective; when seen from outside the confines of that perspective - the players' trestle stage - their validity is no longer certain. The soldiers who make up Polly's and his fellow actors' audience do not accept the validity of the proofs as defined by Polly in the theatre and an appeal is made to an equally arbitrary area for final proof, the boxing ring. If the judgements made by Polly in *The Elephant Calf* appear empty to its fictional audience they are equally absurd to the factual or implied audience in the foyer, as is the authority of the boxing match in this matter.

Brecht parodies *Man Equals Man* with *The Elephant Calf*. When the challenge to judgement contained in the inner play is juxtaposed to the action in the main play the confusions and doubts within it are put into perspective: instilling doubt in the audience becomes the object of the play. The transformation of Galy Gay in Scene 9, which parallels the transformation of the canteen, is far from convincing in all versions, the many metafictional references adding to the instability of belief. Galy Gay is suspended between his memories of himself as a porter and of the soldiers trying to convince him that he is Jip. The struggle between belief and doubt is heightened because he remembers more than he should: despite being blindfolded at the time he knows how many rifles were pointing at him at his execution

including the one that was missing (B 130; A 60).

Nonetheless, he decides

I shall close an eye to what concerns myself
And shed what is not likeable about me and thereby
Be pleasant, (A 62) .

He has been doing just this throughout the play and so appears not to have changed at all, except for his clothes, for he is now dressed as a soldier. He is also addressed as a soldier, and will soon be put to use as one. Since Brecht's conception of change or transformation in *Man equals Man* involves the use one is put to by reorganising the materials of composition it would appear that Galy Gay has indeed been transformed into a soldier and in order to continue being pleasant (and so profit) will accept himself as one; yet at the same time he remains conscious of his identity as Galy Gay the porter, a state which is as confusing for him as it is for the audience.

Confusion over who Galy Gay says he is and who he is told he is is heightened in later versions by additions to the verse speech he delivers before delivering his own funeral oration. Rhetorical questions help to increase the dialectical struggle between belief and doubt: would someone who had walked through a forest and the place that had been the forest recognise one another after the forest has disappeared?; 'When he sees his own footprints among the reeds With water spurting into them, does that puddle mean anything to him?'; unsure by what sign Galy Gay knows himself, he asks whether his foot would

recognise his severed arm, answering 'in my opinion the difference Between yes and no is not all that great'. He concludes by questioning the certainty of individuality, pointing to its relativity and the reciprocal conflict between individual and social milieu:

And if Galy Gay were not Galy Gay
Then he would be the drinking son of some other mother who
Would be some other man's mother if she
Were not his, and thus would anyway drink,
And would have been produced in March, not in September
Unless instead of March he had
Been produced only in September of this year, or already
In September the year before
Which represents that one small year's difference
That turns one man into another man,
And I, the one I and the other I
Are used and accordingly usable. (A 61)

Galy Gay remains himself in his malleability and desire to be pleasant despite the transformation he undergoes; any doubts he has about his new identity are cleared up in Scene 10 when he witnesses Fairchild's self-castration, an act that convinces him not to make 'so much fuss about his name' (A 69; B 140). In the final scene he becomes The Human Fighting Machine, destroying a mountain fortress so that the army can pass through. The final version ends with Galy Gay immersed in his new role:

And already I feel within me
The desire to sink my teeth
In the enemy's throat
Ancient urge to kill
Every family's breadwinner
To carry out the conquerors'
Mission, (A 76)

His ability to be pleasant has enabled him to eat and drink his comrades' rations because he is doing what they want him to do: to be Jip. Beyond this he is eager to be

pleasant to the conquerors as well, hoping to gain here, too, not caring whom he destroys in the process.

For his 1931 production Brecht cut Scenes 10 and 11, ending with the ambiguous transformation presented in Scene 9 but also including the speech quoted above which served as the play's final words. During this period, which included intensive study of Marx, Brecht felt that he had to cut the final scenes because 'having been unable to see any way of giving a negative character to the hero's growth within the collectivity ... I decided instead to leave that growth undescribed' (A 108). An important contradiction for the dialectical tension of the play is that the more Galy Gay surrenders himself to the will of 'the mass' the more he takes charge and the stronger his individuality becomes. This is especially apparent when Scenes 10 and 11 are included; without them Galy Gay's 'growth into crime' is only hinted at.

Scenes 10 and 11 are nearly identical in the 1926 and 1954 texts; there are only minor changes in the latter scene which serve to tighten the action, plus the addition of the above quoted speech. Brecht suggests that Galy Gay's 'growth into crime' may be brought out 'if only the performance is sufficiently alienating', making a few insertions during the 1950s to the last scene in order to facilitate this possibility (A 108). After firing the fourth shot at the mountain Galy Gay announces, 'Something that's no longer a mountain is tumbling down' at which point Fairchild enters (A 75).

The transformed Fairchild is thus juxtaposed to the changing mountain; as the mountain fortress begins smoking the castrated sergeant impotently threatens Galy Gay with his revolver; the fortress falls along with Fairchild's threat. Their confrontation is disrupted, as in the earlier version, but not only by the three cheers given Galy Gay by the soldiers: Brecht adds a distant voice which announces that the mountain fortress now in flames had housed seven thousand friendly, hard working refugees (A 76). Galy Gay, the profiteer who has learned to manipulate the collective to his own advantage, successfully retains his individuality even as he becomes a murderer in the service of faceless conquerors.

As Brecht found, attempts to politicise *Man equals Man* run up against the unresolvable contradictions of the play itself, a predicament enhanced by a dramaturgy which engages contradictions in a perpetual imaginative-dialectic process. Galy Gay becomes 'strong in the mass' only when he learns how to use the mass to his own advantage. The 1926 version questions the nature of identity while affirming individuality through Galy Gay's victory over his comrades and the fortress. Alienating this with the shocking news that innocent people are being killed, drawing attention to the fact that victory for one side means defeat for the other, does not place the play within the ideological framework Brecht wished to support through his revisions. Historically Brecht was writing and revising *Man equals Man* under different

sociopolitical systems and the *status quo* continues to be criticised each time. Drawing an analogy from the play, if man equals man then system equals system. The dialectical structure of the play maintains the dialogue between conflicting, contradictory perspectives. Brecht's revisions sharpen the focus on change yet continue to question the process of change itself by placing the conceptions of 'eternal' and socially determined 'human nature' in a parodic dialogue. Focusing on a slowly flowing dialectic in both content and structure prevents him from affirming one perspective at the expense of another.

A result of the characteristically Shakespearean dramaturgy around which *Man equals Man* is structured is to subject to criticism ideologies stemming from and supporting the *status quo*. The representation of a negative and manipulative collectivity and a positive, adaptable hero with a strong sense of who he is (whomever people want him to be as long as he profits) bothered Brecht later whereas earlier he had been quite willing to present this hero as an example of 'the new human type', one who 'becomes the strongest once he has ceased to be a private person' (BOT 19). The problem for Brecht, according to his remarks in 'On Looking through my First Plays', lies in the fact that Galy Gay is 'a socially negative hero who was by no means unsympathetically treated'. Along side this is the rather unsympathetic treatment of the 'collectivity' that transforms Galy Gay

from porter into soldier. The dialectic between empathy and detachment - a process Brecht came to identify as an intention to show the role of dialectical materialism in the theatre - undercuts any doctrinaire political ideology Brecht may have wished to support. Hindsight allows him to defend himself by suggesting that he was then criticising 'the false, bad collectivity (the "gang") and its powers of attraction' exploited by Hitler at that time (A 108). *Man equals Man* affirms Marx's concept of individuality in that Galy Gay is 'mass' produced, but at the same time this conception is questioned by his ability to accept the identity he is given by the mass and then produce an identity for them: they become the victims of his exploitative tactics. The whole question of identity is left open; it cannot even be defined as change or changeable because Galy Gay does little more than change his clothes and his job. His passive aggressiveness allows him to continue adapting throughout the play.

NOTES

1. That Shakespeare does not fit Eliot's description of a good poet is evident, for example, in his apparent use of North's Plutarch and other contemporary, English sources.
2. For a detailed textual history of the play, see 109-115 of the Methuen edition.
3. If *Man equals Man* is to be performed in two parts, the midpoint comes at the end of Scene 8. If the first half ends here, the second half starts with Begbick's interlude, unless, of course, her interlude actually begins the play as a prologue, as in Brecht's 1931 production where her interlude was replaced by Jesse's monologue concerning the relativity of personality which ends Scene 9-I (A 41-2). If Jesse's speech replaces the interlude, this scene ends with the soldiers beginning the transformation of the canteen into an empty space with 'the elephant ... dimly visible' in the background (A 41). See A 124 for a brief discussion of the various placings of Begbick's interlude. The most effective place for performing *The Elephant Calf* as an 'interlude for the foyer' may be between the end of Scene 8 and the beginning of Scene 9 (or the Interlude), the halfway point of *Man equals Man*.

HAMLET AND THE LIFE OF GALILEO

I

The period following Brecht's production of *Man equals Man* was one of chaos and commitment. With the *Lehrstücke* Brecht was experimenting with revolutionary forms in which to present the new subject matter. He had just lost his legal battle for artistic control of *The Threepenny Opera* film which premiered shortly after his own production of *Man equals Man* and his radio adaptation of *Hamlet* in 1931. Following successful productions of *Mahagonny* and *The Mother* in the same year, the film *Kuhle Wampe* was banned until changes were made, the government approved version finally opening in Berlin, 30 May 1932. During this period a radio broadcast of Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyards* was aired. Late in 1932 and into 1933 Brecht was attending lectures given by Karl Korsch; this led to the workshops on dialectical materialism held in Brecht's home. But on 28 February 1933, the day after the Reichstag Fire, Brecht, Weigel and their son Stefan left for Prague, beginning their long period of exile; their daughter Barbara soon joined them.

In addition to other work, Brecht spent much of the 1930s writing - and producing when possible - plays which dealt specifically with the new problems in Europe: e.g. *The Roundheads and the Pointed Heads* (1932), *The Seven Deadly Sins of the Bourgeoisie* (1933), *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (1937-8) and *Senora Carrar's Rifles*

(1937-8). The farcical critique of judgement represented in *Man equals Man* takes on a specific target in these plays; they are no less critical than earlier works, but the element of self-criticism is suppressed. Brecht's poem 'The Doubter' (c1937), written just prior to the first version of *The Life of Galileo*, betrays the frustration he felt as Hitler and his regime consolidated their position despite the efforts of those opposed to the Nazis. The Chinese scroll portraying 'the man on the bench who Doubted so much' shows Brecht acknowledging the need for self-criticism at a time when he had been proclaiming what he believed to be an unambiguous truth. Whenever he seemed to have found the answer to a question the scroll was unrolled and the newly completed work and its author were critically assessed:

I am doubtful whether
 ... what you said would still have value for anyone if it were less
 well said,
 Whether you said it well but perhaps
 Were not convinced of the truth of what you said,
 Whether it is not ambiguous; each possible misunderstanding
 Is your responsibility, Or it can be unambiguous
 And take the contradictions out of things; is it too unambiguous?
 If so, what you say is useless, Your thing has no life in it,
 Are you truly in the stream of happening? Do you accept
 All that develops? Are *you* developing? Who are you? To whom
 Do you speak? Who finds what you say useful? And, by the way;
 Is it sobering? Can it be read in the morning?
 Is it also linked to what is already there? Are the sentences that
 were
 Spoken before you made use of, or at least refuted? Is everything
 verifiable?
 By experience? By which one? But above all
 Always above all else; how does one act
 If one believes what you say? Above all; how does one act?
 (*Poems* 270-1)

The critical process outlined here is dramatised in *Hamlet* no less than *Galileo*. In both plays the 'heroes'

must decide on a course of action based on information presented to or discovered by them. A large part of each decision depends on whether 'facts' can be verified rather than merely interpreted from a self-fulfilling perspective, creating a dynamic tension between the self-criticism of both Hamlet and Galileo and their individual needs to commit themselves to action.

Although Brecht's writings on *Hamlet*, as with all his work concerning Shakespeare, consist mostly of fragmentary pieces scattered across a broad range of forms in divergent contexts, his understanding of the play seems to centre around the questions behind the question 'how does one act?', on the decision Hamlet must take given what he does and does not know. For example, after attending a Swedish production of the play on 20 November 1940, Brecht notes in his journal the inadequacy of interpretations which show the sense of the play to consist in 'the representation of the vacillating and hesitating intellectual man,' thus making Hamlet 'simply an idealist who is thrown off the rails by the violent clash with the real world, the idealist who becomes a cynic.' According to Brecht it is 'not a question of acting or not acting, ... rather the question is to remain silent or not to remain silent, to approve or not to approve' (AJ 815; tr. Rossi). In other words the problem is not the action itself but the motivation behind the action. Hamlet has grave doubts about Claudius, but is equally sceptical about these very

doubts, fearing that they are no more than self-fulfilling prophecies verified by a Ghost he is also unsure of: it may be nothing more than an apparition of certainty, a spectre or mirage of truth. Although the aloof readiness of Fortinbras is beneficial to him it is both helpful and fatal to Hamlet, while the reserved doubtfulness of Horatio, like that of Sagredo in *Galileo*, is respected though not celebrated. Hamlet's search for certainty has many parallels in *Galileo*, but there are significant differences as well. Galileo and his co-workers work methodically, each day questioning what they had found the day before; for Brecht the most important line in the play is 'My object is not to establish that I was right but to find out if I am'. The farcical critique of judgement represented in *Man equals Man* is presented in *Galileo* as soberly and as systematically as Galileo's experiments or Hamlet's careful though less than systematic investigations. The central question of 'The Doubter' - 'how does one act?' - is of obvious importance to Hamlet, but Galileo does not consider the consequences of his actions, making him the enthusiastic liberator of the truth in the first versions, the self-indulgent tool of oppressive rulers in the later.

II

The many parallels that can be found between *Hamlet* and *Galileo* at first seem merely coincidental and too much should not be made of them, yet these correspondences do show the similarities between the plays not

only by virtue of the parallels themselves but by the process of interpretation used to compare them, for it is how what appear to be 'the facts' are interpreted which provides the dynamic for both plays. Parallels can be found beyond the similarities in dramaturgy and subject matter. Each seems to occupy a unique place in the canon of its author, representing the beginning of a new and important period both for him and the time he lived in. An argument could be made that each also represents its author's most influential work. Both plays exist in three texts, the final versions each being perhaps too long for production; Brecht's English editors Willett and Manheim echo the many editors and directors of *Hamlet* when they suggest that as 'a reading text' *Galileo* has a balance which presents problems for a stage production which must compress the play 'without losing essential elements of so carefully thought-out a mixture' (*Galileo* 1980: xxi).¹

Hamlet and *Galileo* each dramatise the conflict between an established medieval tradition and a new way of seeing which challenges it, with the protagonists caught in the middle. Brecht sees the times in which both plays were written as times of epochal change for the societies they were written in and about. The age of Elizabeth came to a palpable end with the death of the Queen in 1603; the Lord Chamberlain's Men became the King's Men and the exploitation of the New World was to become more significant. The Philosopher in *The*

Messingkauf compares the experimental dramaturgy of Shakespeare and his company at the Globe Theatre with Galileo's experiments in treating the globe itself in a new way, each reflecting global transformations. The Dramaturg notes in relation to the structure of *Hamlet* that Shakespeare's company 'were experimenting just as Galileo was experimenting in Florence at that time and Bacon in London'; the Philosopher notes too that the bourgeoisie were beginning to assert themselves: their revolution was less than 40 years away (*MD 60*). In another section he compares Shakespeare's time with his own, drawing attention to Shakespeare's relationship to the elements of feudal 'barbarism' present but historically treated in *Hamlet*, these valuable fraction points [*Wertvolle Bruchstellen*] demonstrating 'where the new period collided with the old':

We too are at one and the same time fathers of a new period and sons of an old one; we understand a great deal of the remote past and can still share once overwhelming feelings which were stimulated on a grand scale, (*ibid*, 63)

Galileo's first long speech in his play emphasises the 'new time' in which he lives, a theme returned to throughout; Brecht's several preambles and introductions to *Galileo* also emphasise the importance of 'the new age' (cf. *Galileo* 1980: 6; 115-7; 121; 125; 127). When Brecht was writing *Galileo* nuclear fission had become a reality and the official start of World War II was only months away; as he and Laughton were finishing the American version the war ended and the nuclear age had begun; the Soviet version of Marxist-Leninism was about

to become the dominant, official ideology of Eastern Europe bringing new tensions to world affairs. For Brecht 'the dark times' of the 1930s and 1940s were to continue with different players. Willett and Manheim point out that 'three crucial moments' in recent history help to give *Galileo* its multiple relevance to the times in which it was written and revised: Hitler, the bomb and the death of Stalin. Each in turn corresponds to a version of the play (*ibid.* xix).

The first version of *Galileo* (1938-9) - called *The Earth Moves* in the first typescript - is not a text of questionable authority as is the first quarto of *Hamlet* (1603), but it is nearly as different from the two later versions as *Q1* is from *Q2* and Folio. In the first version Galileo is the hero who successfully continues his work despite being censured by the authorities and who in the end manages to get 'the truth' - the revolutionary scientific process outlined in the *Discorsi* - smuggled out of the country. The second version of *Galileo* (1944-7), written in English with Charles Laughton and known as the American version, is more revision than translation containing additions which show Brecht's changing attitude to the ethical relationship between science and society sparked by the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; this is for the most part reflected in the representation of the hero. Brecht had already made slight changes to the first version after Hahn and Strassmann split the uranium atom in December

1938 (Volker 1975: 87), but these are not nearly as substantial as those of the later rewrite in which Brecht tries to present Galileo as an ineffective hero, a decadent, counter revolutionary villain who must work as he must eat and who hands the fruits of his labours over to the reactionary authorities. The 'truth' is still smuggled out and placed in humanist hands, but it is too late: Galileo has betrayed science and society. The final version of *Galileo* (1953-6) is largely a German translation by Brecht of the American text but there are many small differences, mostly additions, reflecting not only the changes necessarily occurring in the process of translation itself but changes which show Brecht revising as he went, both for the book and for the Berliner Ensemble production being rehearsed when he died. Similarly, the relationship between Q2 and Folio of *Hamlet* is, as Harold Jenkins says in his edition of the play, 'one of the most puzzling of *Hamlet's* many problems' (Arden *Hamlet* 55) as the differences and correspondences between the two texts point sometimes to revision, both authorial and theatrical, sometimes to printer error; and the presence of Folio editors Heminge and Condell cannot be ignored. There is also evidence to suggest that a manuscript other than Q2 lies behind F but the nature of this work is conjectural and controversial.

Further correspondence between *Hamlet* and *Galileo* may be found in the different directions Shakespeare and Brecht were each to take in the plays they were to write

after these important works. What has been called Shakespeare's tragic period or the period of his great tragedies, dark comedies and problem plays, classifications which are often meant to suggest biographical as well as generic changes, begins just before the move to The Globe and the change of patron with the writing and performance of the tragedies *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. Many reasons have been put forward for this change in direction in Shakespeare's writing besides those directly connected with the theatre, e.g. the real events behind the betrayal portrayed in the *Sonnets*, Shakespeare's supposed connection with Essex and Southampton, as well as the infectious spirit of the new age. But as Peter Alexander points out in the introduction to his edition of Shakespeare's works, although 'accidents of life' may provide the material, cause and effect relationships between real events and the writing of fiction are too simple to explain these works or the changes which seem to take place in Shakespeare's writing. Alexander goes on to suggest that the relative 'bitterness and disgust' found by many critics in the works construed as belonging to this period in Shakespeare's development are due to the perspective taken in the interpretation of the works by the commentators rather than to the works themselves (xix). Yet changes in direction, development and subject matter are apparent regardless of how these changes are interpreted.

The writing of *Galileo* is also said to herald a new

period for Brecht. The change in emphasis evident in the revision of *Man equals Man* is developed further in the *Lehrstücke*, especially *The Mother*, and also in the didactic topical plays. The success of *The Threepenny Opera* in the orthodox theatre emphasised for Brecht that the play was not successful in presenting his critical method and political preferences to its bourgeois audience. The changes he tried to make to the play for the film version emphasise, as do the *Lehrstücke*, his shift towards a politically committed theatre. With *Galileo* another shift in emphasis is apparent and Brecht begins writing what his English editors call 'those great works of his forties on which his reputation largely rests' (*Galileo* 1980: vi): i.e. *Mother Courage* (1939), *Puntilla and his Man Matti* (1940), *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941), *The Good Person of Szechwan* (1941 & 1943) and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944-5). The reception of the later plays as Brecht's great works paradoxically reflects their suitability to performance and their relative success in the orthodox theatre. The overt doctrinaire 'message' of the *Lehrstücke* and the topical plays seems subdued in the later plays if not completely buried, allowing the critical method Brecht had been espousing since the 1920s to operate more fully and more seductively, but also more problematically. The period beginning with *Galileo* is also the time in which Brecht wrote major theoretical works not directly connected to specific plays: *The Messingkauf Dialogues*

was inspired by the dialogue form of Galileo's *Discorsi* and begun while Brecht was researching *Galileo*; *A Short Organum for the Theatre* follows the more declarative formal approach of Bacon's *Novum Organum*, a work Brecht appreciated for its anti-Aristotelian perspective (BOT 205).

A few months after completing the first version of *Galileo*, Brecht complained that this play, like *Senora Carrar*, represented technically a long step backward and commended his fragments *Fatzer* and *The Bread Shop* (1927-9) as representing the highest standard technically (AJ 41 (25 Feb. 1939)). While working on *Szechwan* a few months after finishing *Galileo*, Brecht calls this new play a charade work in which he can develop the epic technique in his writing and in that way at last come back up to standard (*ibid.* 45 (15 Mar. 1939)); but he found *Szechwan* more difficult to finish than any other play. In a New Year 1936-7 letter to his Marxist mentor Karl Korsch, Brecht complains in reference to *The Roundheads* that 'quite a few of my friends say I should choose either a reactionary content or a reactionary form, that both at once would be too much of a good thing. And a prominent Communist said: If that's Communism, I'm no Communist. Maybe he's right' (*Letters* 239). Yet Brecht then went on to write *Senora Carrar* and *Galileo*, apparently taking the advice of these friends, incorporating revolutionary content within 'reactionary' form. *Senora Carrar* was very successful in performances

at Paris and Prague and also in book form, published in October 1937. Just after completing the first version of *Galileo* Brecht was interviewed in a Danish newspaper in which he describes his new play as a story about 'Galileo's heroic fight for his modern scientific conviction: "The earth moves."' Brecht claims that the play is directed neither against Germany nor Italy but that 'it is written for New York', a piece designed for and intended to help establish him in America artistically and financially; it was soon to be translated into English by Desmond Vesey. At the time of this interview Brecht was protecting himself as much as reassuring the Danish authorities and was preparing for his move to America (Volker 1975: 88). He also at this time told Walter Benjamin: 'It's a good thing when someone who has taken up an extreme position then goes into a period of reaction. That way he arrives at a half-way house' (*Galileo* 1980: vi). Notwithstanding Brecht's own criticism of the structure of *Galileo*, he points out in a note dated 1939 that the play is not constructed according to 'the prevailing rules of play construction'; and in the 'Preamble to the American Version' he notes that not a single structural alteration was needed while he and Laughton made their revisions (*ibid.* 117-8 & 125). Questions concerning the revision of *Galileo* such as opportunist in relation to what[?], how and in what way are the later versions also opportunist[?] and how much do the revisions actually affect the form of the play[?] remain

despite Brecht's changes.

As in the case of Shakespeare and the 'period' beginning with *Hamlet* and ending with *Timon*, there are many possible and probable interpretations for the shift in emphasis apparent in Brecht's work beginning with *Galileo*, including a deepening understanding of dialectics which the comment to Benjamin suggests; he was at this time working closely with committed communists Ruth Berlau and Margarete Steffin as well as continuing his correspondence with Korsch. But *Senora Carrar* and especially *Galileo* do not show merely a return to a once abandoned form: the subject matter is also of a piece with his previous work. When Catherine Belsey calls Brecht a consistently interrogative writer she uses *Galileo* as her example, noting that Brecht's voice or position is clear in the text despite its interrogative approach; this suggests some connection with the more obviously committed work which preceded it even though the dramaturgy of the *Lehrstücke* is radically different from the more conventional *Galileo*. Brecht also had already treated dramatically the dawning of a new age and the impermanence of the discoveries that it brings in 1929 with *The Ocean Flight*;

Many say time is ancient
But I always knew this was a new time,
...
And on the laughing continents
The word gets round that the great and awful ocean
Is a tiny puddle,
Today I am making the first flight across the Atlantic
But I am convinced; by tomorrow
You will be laughing at my flight, (*PSP* 83)²

Similarly, 'The Song of the Flow of Things' added to *Man equals Man* for Brecht's 1931 production already emphasised the need for doubt which Galileo continuously refers to, although he may not be consistently doubtful himself. The Philosopher in the *Messingkauf* calls for the theatre to move 'backwards to common sense' and Brecht may already be heading for what Willett calls the compromise of the *Organum* (BOT 135) with *Galileo*, as the popularity of his 'major' plays seems to attest.

Although Brecht may have decided that the perspective taken in the *Lehrstücke* in both form and content would not help him in gaining a foothold outside Germany, and especially in New York, the perspective of the 'didactic' plays remains in the later works, albeit in an interrogative rather than a declarative mode. It is the same perspective taken in the poem 'Questions from a Worker who Reads' (c1935), written in his first years in exile:

Who built Thebes of the seven gates?
In the books you will find the names of kings,
Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?
And Babylon, many times demolished
Who raised it up so many times? In what houses
Of gold-glittering Lima did the builders live?
Where, the evening that the Wall of China was finished
Did the masons go? (*Poems* 252-3)

This type of questioning is present in *Galileo* and the plays which follow it in the perspective Brecht represents through these plays, works which were written with little immediate hope of 'epic' production. Without his own theatre Brecht seems to compromise form in order to put forward content, a practice as ambiguous and problematic as Galileo's abjuration: e.g. both Galileo

and Mother Courage capitulate and are at once celebrated and criticised for their cowardly, criminal heroism; Puntila and Ui are clever, horrible, endearing villains like Richard III and Iago; Azdak is another cowardly hero who, like Shen Teh, wins only by adopting the methods of the oppressors. The dialectic of these plays, as in Brecht's earlier works, forces the questions back on the audience because the 'reactionary' Shakespearean form Brecht returns to helps in presenting criticism as content.

Neither is taking a technical step backward in order to advance revolutionary content new to *Galileo*: e.g. *The Roundheads* grew out of an abandoned adaptation of *Measure for Measure*; *The Mother* - a *Lehrstück* to be performed by accomplished if not professional actors - uses the epic, Shakespearean form with which Brecht began and ^{which he} continued to refine. The poem 'Praise of Dialectics' which closes the play raises questions and provides some answers Brecht dramatised throughout his career:

Those still alive can't say 'never',
No certainty can be certain
It cannot stay as it is,
When the rulers have already spoken
That is when the ruled start speaking,
Who dares talk of 'never'?
Whose fault is it if oppression still remains? It's ours,
Whose job will it be to get rid of it? Just ours,
Whoever's been beaten down must get to his feet,
He who is lost must give battle,
He who is aware where he stands - how can anyone stop him moving
on?
Those who were losers today will be triumphant tomorrow
And from never will come; today, (*PSP* 117)

Galileo's fight for the recognition of the new 'truth'

and its possible consequences, as well as his criticism of those who hide it - later turned on him by Andrea and himself - are all present in this poem, as are an emphasis on doubt and the paradox that change is the only certainty. Brecht's concern with demonstrating a dialectic relationship between past, present and future may cause him to draw consciously on his earlier work as well as the work of others. In the poem 'Portrayal of Past and Present in One' (c1938), written while he was working on *Galileo*, this dialectic continuum is used to advise actors:

Give your acting
That progression of one-thing-after-another, that attitude of
Working up what you have taken on, In this way
You will show the flow of events and also the course
Of your work, permitting the spectator
To experience this Now on many levels, coming from Previously and
Merging into Afterwards, also having much else now
Alongside it, (*Poems* 307-8)

There is of course evidence of Shakespeare's previous and later work in *Hamlet*, a phenomenon perhaps unavoidable enough to be considered a certainty: e.g. like Hal in the *Henry IV* plays, Hamlet assumes a role and the line which determines whether or not he is acting at any time is blurred; Claudius is characterised by Hamlet as a Richard III who can smile and smile and be a villain; he is also an effective politician who succeeds in wooing the wife of the man he murdered. Such a list could become very long if the suggestion were followed through. The temptation to over-interpret in the face of so much possible evidence, an urge both Hamlet and Galileo strive

to keep in check, can mislead as Hamlet does Polonius when discussing the shape of a cloud. But the dramaturgy of *Hamlet* also makes it possible to see Polonius misleading or humouring Hamlet in that episode, much as Hamlet turns the tables on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

In *Hamlet* suggestion or suspicion seems to set off a process of interpretation which is always in danger of becoming circular, reaching self-verifying conclusions as Polonius, for instance, finds to his loss when seeking proof that Hamlet's madness is due to his love for Ophelia. As Barthes remarks about those who comment on Brecht being revealed as they do so, *Hamlet* 'unfolds' the characters to each other and to themselves as well as to the audience. In the opening exchange Francisco commands Bernardo 'Stand and unfold yourself' and is answered with the ambiguous 'Long live the King!'. Bernardo does not in fact 'unfold' himself until Francisco correctly identifies him; even though Francisco is expecting Bernardo to relieve him at this very hour he remains doubtful until they face each other. Francisco cannot risk a guess at Bernardo's identity and so refuses to interpret what he hears until he can see who is speaking (I.1.1-6). There are two reasons for this caution: one is the 'dreaded sight' of the Ghost (I.1.21-30) who is about to appear to the audience for the first time; the other the danger of Norwegian invasion revealed to the audience later (I.1.95-105). Like Demetrius in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Francisco provides an early model of

behaviour, refusing to jump to conclusions until he attains some measure of certainty even when expected conclusions seem to be fulfilled. In *Galileo* new discoveries in astronomy interpreted one way become the basis for a social revolution, used in another they support already established and entrenched beliefs, customs and power relationships within the same society. Like the actions taken and the opinions voiced by the characters in *Hamlet* and *Galileo* (although these are deliberately determined by the dramatist), the correspondences between these plays are open to self-revealing and self-critical speculation and interpretation.

John Fuegi (1972) for example, brings *Hamlet* and *Galileo* together in order to verify his interpretation of the changes Brecht made to his play. In discussing Galileo's change through the various versions of the play 'from forgivable and lovable rogue to ... intellectual prostitute', Fuegi suggests that 'A divided Galileo, while he might be useful for a Shakespeare in a Hamlet-like drama concerned with interior states, is of little use to a playwright who wants first and foremost in this play to stress the physical world and Galileo's potential for modifying it in a humanistic way' (Fuegi 1972a: 163-5). As with Polonius whose desire to prove a particular conclusion narrows his perspective, Fuegi's somewhat short-sighted perspective prevents him from seeing, or admitting, that an internally divided, contradictory Galileo is indeed represented as are the external causes

of Hamlet's dilemma.

Arnold Kettle (1964) also brings *Hamlet* and *Galileo* together, suggesting that Brecht's Galileo 'would have known what Hamlet was talking about when he says "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all".' Kettle finds that:

Neither Hamlet nor Shakespeare, in the year 1600, could resolve in action, even tragically, the dilemma of a young man from whose eyes the veils which shrouded so many truths about class-divided society had been torn. Shakespeare could do nothing about Hamlet's dilemma except express it with profound realism. But the 'except' is a tremendous one, pointing to the way art works and helps. (Kettle 1964: 157-8)

Kettle's reading of *Hamlet* reflects his interpretation of Brecht's desire to create 'committed art'. He finds that Brecht's conception of epic, revolutionary drama involves a commitment 'to the solving of actual problems, to the changing of the world', a reading which in turn reflects the project of the book in which his essay appears and of which he is the editor: *Shakespeare in a Changing World*. Seen in this context his reading appears to be the type of self-fulfilling prophecy both Hamlet and Galileo work hard to avoid. Kettle finds that Hamlet's dilemma stems from his seeing the subjective perspective of objective analysis (*ibid.* 158-9) and that change as it is presented in *Hamlet* and many other Shakespeare tragedies is linked with social attitudes so that 'every device of art is used to produce, not some effect beyond reality, but the deepest, most complex exploration of the actual nature of reality, its texture and its implications, its movement and its inter-connectedness' (*ibid.* 164). Kettle's

reading reveals him as a Brechtian and a Marxist, yet even within the confines of this perspective he is in agreement with other less or differently committed critics who find the debate between 'seems' and 'is' central to the meaning of the play, a reading supported by Hamlet's 'there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' (II.ii.249-50).³

In *The Comic Matrix of Shakespearean Tragedy* (1973) Susan Snyder sees 'the problem of *Hamlet*' as one of interpretation. Like Kettle, she sees Hamlet as 'a man caught between subjective surety and his own awareness that it is subjective. He is both inside his emotional conviction and outside it looking on' (Snyder 1973: 93). She notes that Shakespeare draws attention to Hamlet's awareness of his own subjective distortions, but that Shakespeare does not let this subjective view stand unqualified, as, for example, in Hamlet's speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in which he explains that 'this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory (II.ii.294-309; Snyder 1973: 94). Snyder sees Shakespeare raising questions in *Hamlet* in order to forestall any easy resolution, nurturing rather than dispelling ambiguity. For Snyder, like many other 20th century critics, ambiguity and irony are inherent in *Hamlet*, the metafictional references apparent throughout the play (Barton 1962: 142-7) a constant reminder that what is being observed is representation or the appearance of reality presented through equivocated

conflicting perspectives. Snyder finds that 'the point' of *Hamlet* is not one or the other right interpretation but the doubt; to be sure is generally to be wrong (*ibid.* 104-5). She concludes that the impulse to interpret Hamlet according to one's own concerns and fears begins inside the play itself: 'interpreting characters' interpret Hamlet's actions and in so doing reveal themselves as misinterpreters who emphasise that people 'see only what they can and want to see, not necessarily what is there' (*ibid.* 106 & 114); they remain convinced that what they think they see is what is there.

Snyder's comments are particularly useful not only because they draw attention to the search for irony and ambiguity, i.e. what appears to be the dominant theme of 20th century interpretations of *Hamlet* including Brecht's, but also because they apply equally well to Brecht's *Galileo*. Galileo's confrontation with the Florentine court scholars (Scene 4) when he is trying to persuade them and the young Duke to look through the telescope, to believe what their eyes see through the new device rather than continuing to rely on official doctrine, is one example of Brecht's dramatisation in *Galileo* of a dilemma similar to Hamlet's. However, Brecht's various readings and appropriations of *Hamlet*, including what survives of his 1931 radio adaptation, poems, fragmentary comments and the use of the play as an example for illustrating critical points, belie this emphasis on a sceptical, interrogative doubt, showing

instead - as with Kettle and Fuegi - his own subjective distortions which in *Galileo* become the subject of criticism.

III

Little survives of Brecht's radio adaptation of *Hamlet*: fragments of his own introduction and of the first and last speeches; his own fairly literal translations of Ophelia's songs from IV.v (GW 10:1051-2); and a copy of the Schlegel translation marked, underlined and glossed by Brecht and Elisabeth Hauptmann.⁴ The adaptation begins with the original ending: Fortinbras enters and hears Horatio's report:

Of acts, carnal, bloody and unnatural,
Accidental judgements, blind murder,
Of deaths, caused through force and cunning
Plans, mistakenly fallen back
On the inventor's head, (Symington 1970: 97; tr. Rossi)

The 'peal of ordnance' which ends Shakespeare's play signals Horatio's execution in the adaptation which ends with the ironic epilogue:

And so, carefully using the sound of accidental drums
Picking up the battle cry of lustful, unknown butchers
Finally free, through such a chance,
Of his so human and rational inhibition,
He butchers, in one absolute terrible frenzy
The King, his mother and himself,
Justifying his successor's claim
That had he been put on, he
Would have proved most royal, (*ibid.*)

In Shakespeare's play of course Hamlet kills neither himself nor his mother, and although such radical changes often do occur when a play is adapted for particular, ideologically motivated reasons as appears to be the case with Brecht, this change persists in his later readings

of *Hamlet*, most notably in paragraph 68 of the *Organum*. The meeting with Fortinbras' army on their way to Poland (IV.iv) also persists as 'Hamlet's turning point' in Brecht's understanding of the play, as illustrated in his sonnet 'On Shakespeare's Play *Hamlet*' (c1938), another poem written around the time he was working on the first version of *Galileo*. In this poem the 'introspective sponger in a shirt' seemingly lost 'among his steel-clad kind' hesitates in avenging his father's murder:

Till they bring drums to wake him up again
As Fortinbras and all the fools he's found
March off to battle for that patch of ground
'Which is not tomb enough ... to hide the slain'.

At that this too, too solid flesh sees red,
He feels he's hesitated long enough,
It's time to turn to (bloody) deeds instead,
(*Poems* 311)

Before completing the *Organum* in Switzerland in 1948, Brecht had been working on the American productions of *Galileo* with Laughton. This is reflected in his use of the play and those productions as examples for illustrating the practical application of various theoretical points. *Hamlet* figures as an example as well, though not as frequently; its main function is to serve as material for demonstrating committed reinterpretation:

After at first being reluctant to answer one bloody deed by another, and even preparing to go into exile, he meets young Fortinbras at the coast as he is marching with his troops to Poland. Overcome by his warrior-like example, he turns back and in a piece of barbaric butchery slaughters his uncle, his mother and himself, leaving Denmark to the Norwegian. (*BOT* 202)

Brecht's reading is again simplistic and inaccurate on several points, emphasising the barbarism just beneath the surface in both the character and the play while

neglecting to treat it historically. But instead of dismissing it for those reasons it is worth examining for what it shows about the context in which it is presented and the motivations behind Brecht's use of the play in this way. Eric Bentley wrote Brecht in 1949 criticising his reading of *Hamlet* in the *Organum* mostly on the grounds that Hamlet kills neither his mother nor himself (Bentley 1985: 100-2). Brecht offered the following correction for the *Organum*:⁵

'and in a barbaric bloodbath butchers his uncle, his mother and himself' must be changed to 'and in a barbaric bloodbath puts his uncle, his mother and himself to death', (*Letters* 480)

Brecht also suggests that a footnote be added to further explain his reading:

We regard Act IV, Scene 4 ('A Plain in Denmark'), in which we encounter Hamlet for the last time before his return 'in the flesh' and he speaks the long monologue in which he entrusts his father to Fortinbras' army, as the turning point, ('O, from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth,') True, the letter to Horatio in the scene after next announces that Hamlet has nevertheless boarded ship for England, but here there is no room for acting and the account he gives Horatio of the King's plot against him (V,2) does not supply the actor with a moment in which to take a decision, (*ibid.* 480-1)

It is not mere pedantry which makes Bentley insist that this reading still contradicts the events represented in Shakespeare's play, and Willett too notes 'Brecht's somewhat circuitous self-justification' (*ibid.* 659). But as Brecht reminds Bentley, the context of his reading within the *Organum* must be considered: 'This interpretation of Hamlet is only an example of *interpretation*. In other words, shifts of accent, transpositions, possible cuts and even (not in this case) occasional additions are needed' (*ibid.* 481). Some days after the above answer to

Bentley, Brecht writes to him again to explain further:

I think I have kept within the limits of interpretation. Few textual changes are needed. It is true that after the heating of his reason and his blood, after his 'storing up (of) warlike spirit' during his meeting with Fortinbras, it still takes the discovery that his own life is threatened to bring on Hamlet's final offensive. But this discovery is only spoken of; after the monologue (in praise of action) the actor has nothing more that he can show on stage. Thus it is quite a matter of course that this monologue becomes the centre of gravity. (And the rest can definitely stand). In short (to put it somewhat more pointedly); It can be argued that *without* the meeting with Fortinbras Hamlet's subsequent discovery of the king's plot would not in itself induce him to clean out the Augean stable, (*ibid*, 481-2)

In his answer Bentley takes Brecht to task for blurring the distinction between interpretation and adaptation, the latter a technique not dealt with in the *Organum*, and suggests that, if carried through, Brecht's reading of *Hamlet* would make the play as different from its source as is *The Threepenny Opera* from *The Beggar's Opera*.

Although Brecht does mention 'textual changes' in the letters to Bentley, this strategy, as Bentley points out, is neither pursued in the *Organum* nor is it necessary for Brecht's reading included there. Brecht thus can be partially justified in defending his distortion of *Hamlet* as an example of interpretation, referring it back to the context in which it was made and the effect he wished to achieve.

In the *Organum* (and elsewhere) Brecht explains that 'the new technique of acting' must show the fixing of the 'not ... but ...' in all decisions a character makes; this is necessary if the *V-effekte* are to be effective (*BOT* 191 and 197; also 137 and 144). The paragraphs in the *Organum* immediately preceding the one concerning *Hamlet* deal with the need to make the general remarkable

in order to enable the audience to see from the outside:
'Everything hangs on the "story"'; its social *Gestus* must
be brought out through creative use of the *V-effekt*
according to 'the exposition demanded by the entire
episode' in question. In a later paragraph he states
that 'The exposition of the story and its communication
by suitable means of alienation constitute the main
business of the theatre' (*ibid.* 202). Brecht's reading,
or misreading of *Hamlet*, like other practical examples of
Verfremdung, depends on a familiarity with what is being
made remarkable, what is being re-examined from a
different perspective. His commitment to change makes
him interpret the play for use in 'the dark and bloody
period' in which he writes according to the needs of his
theatre: i.e. the process of interpretation 'is where the
theatre has to speak up decisively for the interests of
its own time' (*ibid.* 200-1). His comment to Bentley
concerning the latter's unfavourable reaction to *The Days
of the Commune* - included in one of the letters also
concerned with *Hamlet* - suggests that Shakespeare worked
in much the same way: 'To accept *Hamlet* or *Troilus and
Cressida* mustn't one accept the attitudes of Montaigne or
Bacon?' (*Letters* 482). By obviously distorting *Hamlet*
Brecht hoped to reveal the subjective distortions present
not only in Shakespeare's treatment of the material but
in the interpretation and presentation of material in all
aspects of 'people's lives together'. This attitude is
also reflected in the earlier fragmentary 'Notes to

Shakespeare', as is the historical fluctuation of interpretation:

The middle ages would have seen weakness in Hamlet's famous hesitation, and in the final fulfilment of the deed they might have seen a satisfying end. Nowadays we see these hesitations as reason and the atrocity at the end as a relapse. Nowadays these relapses are still threatening, and their outcomes have become even stronger. (6V 15; 334; tr. Rossi)

Before the exchange with Bentley, Eisler, after reading the *Organum*, recommended that Brecht read Hegel on Shakespeare, which Brecht did and seemed to value. But he begins the entry in his journal which mentions this (25 Nov. 1948) with a private joke that shows how frustrating Eisler's criticism was to him: 'I've had eleven teeth pulled in order to create *tabula rasa* for false ones since I've had too much difficulty in speaking recently' (AJ 861; tr. Rossi). Brecht expresses himself somewhat more clearly and accurately concerning *Hamlet* here than in the *Organum*:

What a work, this *Hamlet*! The interest which it has sustained for centuries probably arises from the fact that in this play a new type, fully formed, appears entirely estranged and alienated [*verfremdet*] in a medieval environment which has remained almost messy. The cry for revenge, which had been ennobled in the Greek tragedians, then disqualified by the Christians, is in *Hamlet* still loud enough, reproduced with enough fire, to make the new doubting, testing, planning surprising or displeasing [*befremdend*], (*ibid.*)

The new type Brecht mentions is different from the 'new human type' Galy Gay may represent in *Man equals Man*. Here Brecht posits a past for Hamlet, as he had done in his *Hamlet* sonnet, and sees Shakespeare deliberately placing Hamlet outside his society in order to represent both as remarkable. The blend of pagan and Christian attitudes towards revenge Brecht sees in Shakespeare's

Denmark allows him to construct a critical examination of the new way of thinking Hamlet had learned at Wittenberg and tries to use in his barbaric homeland. Brecht does make this point in the *Organum*, but Bentley neither challenges nor mentions it in his letters to Brecht:

These events show the young man ... making the most ineffective use of the new approach to Reason which he has picked up at the university of Wittenberg. In the feudal business to which he returns it simply hampers him. Faced with irrational practices, his reason is utterly unpractical. He falls a tragic victim to the discrepancy between such reasoning and such action, (BOT 202)

Although this does not entirely redeem Brecht for deliberately misrepresenting the play or, as Bentley suggests, for blurring the distinction between interpretation and adaptation in order to make his point, it does suggest aspects of *Hamlet* which were useful to Brecht, especially in the writing of *Galileo*. His appropriations of *Hamlet* in the *Organum* and elsewhere demonstrate that interpretation and judgement are always problematic, a position he dramatised throughout his career, using the *V-effekt* to make past truths - in this case an older play and the critical and popular receptions of it which he places himself against - remarkable.

IV

Brecht's concern with the representation of the Ghost in *Hamlet* suggests a way of understanding the play in relation to his 'theatre for the scientific age' and his working out of ideas associated with it in *Galileo*. The *Arbeitsjournal* entry concerning the Swedish production of *Hamlet* describes Shakespeare's stage practice as 'surrealistic, although admittedly without the shock

effect which surrealism aims for, it is an innocent surrealism (For instance the field headquarters of two hostile armies on *one* stage simultaneously.)' (AJ 210; tr. Rossi). Although he uses *Richard III* V.iii as his example, similar effects are evident in *Hamlet*, especially concerning the Ghost. In 'Notes to Shakespeare' Brecht mentions the importance of the representation of the Ghost, suggesting that any production must show it as metatheatrical rather than as a theatrical effect:

The basic *Gest* of the first scene of *Hamlet* could be expressed in the title: 'At the castle of Elsinor a ghost is spotted.' The scene represents the theatricalising [*Theatralisierung*] of the rumours which have been circulating at the castle concerning the death of the king. Every production in which the Ghost causes horror as ghost detracts of course from the main point. (GW 15:335; tr. Rossi)

The dispersal of doubt in the first scene hinges on visual verification but the appearance of the Ghost soon throws doubt on this means of dispelling ambiguity as well, as Marcellus, Bernardo and Horatio stand amazed at the sight of their seemingly otherworldly visitor. The theatrical reality of the Ghost, the awareness of the subjective distortion of theatre rather than a realism based on *mimesis*, makes the Ghost seemingly otherworldly: given Shakespearean stage conventions - an understanding of which itself depends on an historically distanced interpretation of evidence - the Ghost would appear to be just as substantial as the other characters on stage to an audience viewing the play in daylight in a theatre using minimal effects or in a hall at a university or the

court (Beckerman 1962: 200-4). When contrasted to an Aristotelian derived *mimetic* theory of representation, a dramaturgy which shows itself to be conscious of its own theatricality increases the ambiguity which the scene and the entire play produce. For Brecht the Ghost must be as substantial or as theatrically real as the other characters, mysterious but not fantastic, metafictional rather than fictional, thereby supporting the ambiguity surrounding old Hamlet's death rather than undermining it through emphasis on theatrical effect.

The effect of the palpable theatrical reality of the Ghost is suggested in the closet scene when the 'all that is' which Gertrude sees includes Polonius' bleeding corpse and Hamlet's wild stare but not the 'questionable' embodiment of a disembodied spirit who walks onto the stage. The play on 'nothing' in the exchange between Gertrude and Hamlet increases the ambiguity while parodying the conventional presentation of ghosts:

Ham, Do you see nothing there?
Queen, Nothing at all; yet all that is I see,
Ham, Nor did you nothing hear?
Queen, No, nothing but ourselves, (III,iv,132-3)

The Ghost is apparently visible and audible only to the audience and to Hamlet who in turn is apparently as blind to the body of the dead diplomat as Gertrude is to the Ghost while the Ghost is on stage. But the combination of wordplay and the use of live actors to represent a living man, a living woman, a dead man and the ghost of a dead man in the closet scene, as well as the consciousness of theatrical performance in the entire play,

suggests what Brecht calls a 'winking with the eye', a kind of parody which draws attention to the unresolvable ambiguity in the play between 'seems' and 'is'. The audience is confronted with conflicting, incomplete perspectives, interpretations of events from the points of view of the characters who in the process of interpretation 'unfold' themselves as the play itself unfolds.

Another example of the surrealism Brecht remarks on is evident in Johnson's observation that 'Hamlet is through the whole play rather an instrument than an agent' (Johnson 244). This is restated by Graham Bradshaw (1987) when he refers to what he calls the Pirandellian effect of *Hamlet*, suggesting that Hamlet is 'trapped in a play and forced to perform' (Bradshaw 1987: 105). Bradshaw goes further, suggesting that Shakespeare too is trapped by the old play and forced to perform within it while 'grafting' his Prince onto the existing structure. Speculative reconstructions of the first audience of *Hamlet* suggest further that this audience, whether at court, in the universities or in the public theatre, would have been familiar with what is now called the *Ur-Hamlet*^s, giving Shakespeare's use of an old, seemingly popular play important significance. Bradshaw suggests that a 'first' audience would have known from the old play that Claudius was a murderer and that they would be concentrating on the 'deliberate and intriguing departures' of the new play from the old (*ibid.* 111-2).

Brecht also refers to the presence of an older play in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

The older play shows through everywhere and nevertheless the crude butcheries have the effect of being twice as crude because the intrigues that were at the root of them have seemingly been erased out of the newer piece in order to make room for philosophy and reflection. It really is the crudest plot which Shakespeare has ever adapted (not counting *Titus Andronicus*), ... *Hamlet* was for Shakespeare's time already a fairy story, a wild and bloody thing, with spirits and ghosts and poison swords and armies running about and so on. The climax, although it may well have been a compromise with Kyd's *Hamlet* drama, is nevertheless a monstrous act of daring from Shakespeare's standpoint; all this thinking and planning, all these pangs of conscience end uncertainly, fortuitously, in a chaos of intrigues and planlessness. Still waiting for the confirmation of his suspicion that people were planning to take his life, Hamlet dies, himself a multiple murderer. This melancholy butchery completely without any moral, this self-destruction of a clan, only the Elizabethan theatre could have produced something like this, (AJ 210-1; tr. Rossi)

If as is widely accepted the older play really does unfold itself or 'show through' in the new - and since the text has not been found this remains conjectural - then the ironic, metafictional awareness of Hamlet that he is imprisoned not only in 'Denmark' but in the play which uses Denmark as its setting suggests again Brecht's comments that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is on some level a parody. When Marcellus, referring to the Ghost, asks Horatio 'Is it not like the King?' and Horatio answers 'As thou art to thyself' (I.i.59) the metafictional irony can be as farcical and comic as it is conventional, depending on the interpretation 'grafted' onto the scene. When read in relation to Kydian tragedy *Hamlet* can become a farcical parody - with the Prince as sardonic fool - as can its close contemporary *Troilus and Cressida* when viewed alongside *The Iliad*. Marx's joke that everything in history happens twice, once as tragedy, once as farce,

can support such a reading, as does the structure of *Hamlet* itself: e.g. Claudius as compared to old Hamlet through Hamlet's eyes; Polonius' advice to Laertes in I.iii compared with Laertes' to Ophelia earlier in the scene; Polonius' orders to Reynaldo at the beginning of Act II compared with the Ghost's to Hamlet in I.iv. All these repetitions parody their original and are somewhat farcical in comparison. But the line of logic involved in following Marx's ironic comment which begins 'The 18th Brumaire' does begin to break down when Kydian tragedy is viewed as the source of *Hamlet*: Kyd's relationship with Senecan tragedy could equally lead to an understanding of Kyd's drama as farce, as could another view which considers Seneca and his predecessors.

Although the prospect of interpreting *Hamlet* as parody or farce can be as alarming as Brecht's interpretation of the play in the *Organum*, it can also be as instructive because it involves a circular, self-fulfilling argument of the type practised by several of the main characters. But a similar problem also arises when a more conventional view of the play is adopted: read as tragedy *Hamlet* represents interpretation itself as deadly, a reading Brecht supports by means of a Marxist perspective: viewing the Elizabethans between the decline of feudalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie, 'Hamlet's new bourgeois way of thinking is part of Hamlet's sickness. His experiments lead straight to disaster' (*MD* 60). Brecht expands on this in his journal

entry for 7 Jan. 1948:

Considered from the feudal standpoint the new love (Romeo, Antony), the new thinking (Hamlet, Timon), the new relations to one's relatives (Lear), the new drive to freedom (Brutus), the new ambition (Macbeth), the new self-esteem (Richard III), are all deadly. From the bourgeois standpoint however, it is the feudal limitations set on these things that are deadly, and the new form of behaviour triumphs by means of its indifference towards death in the face of the peacefulness which the new manner of behaviour offers. (AJ 815; tr. Rossi)

For Brecht, both the feudal and the 'bourgeois' perspective portray Hamlet's dilemma, as well as those of other Shakespeare characters, as deadly. Contrary to the critical process outlined in 'The Doubter' this self-verifying interpretation returns to its starting point, disregarding its own distortions as well as the dialectical structure of the play.

Considering *Hamlet* as tragedy in Brecht's use of the term draws attention to the end of the play. Johnson found the disconnected, providential ending of *Hamlet* somewhat unsatisfying, accusing Shakespeare 'of having shown little regard to poetical justice [or] ... probability'. Feeling that Hamlet is convinced of Claudius' guilt after the play within the play scene, Johnson complains that Hamlet makes no attempt to punish the king, whose death 'is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet has no part in producing':

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity than a stroke of art.

...

The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained but by the death of him that was required to take it.... (Johnson 1989: 244)

The Dramturg in *The Messingkauf* is less troubled by the ending; as in many of Brecht's other readings he

finds the play interesting as an adaptation of an older, very successful piece about 'the cleansing of an Augean stable.' His remark that 'the last act is evidently meant to be the climax'⁷ suggests that Brecht, like Johnson and many others, found the ending arbitrary, a feature of the old play Shakespeare was forced to retain in his adaptation. Always concerned with finding the possibility of collaboration and with uncovering practical, everyday explanations for seeming mysteries, Brecht sees Shakespeare deepening the plot in cooperation with his fellow actors, building in 'Cascades and rapids' in order to accommodate Burbage whom he describes as 'stout and short of breath', thereby making the play 'so much more interesting':

it looks as if they must have remodelled and readapted it on the stage as far as Act IV, then found themselves faced with the problem of how to bring this hesitant Hamlet up to the final ranting bloodbath that was the hit scene of the original play, Act IV contains a number of scenes each of which represents one possible solution, The actor may have needed to use the whole lot; or perhaps he only needed one, and the rest were none the less included in the book, They seem like so many bright ideas, (ND 59-60)

As in many of his comments on *Hamlet*, Brecht is concerned with representing Hamlet's predicament as deadly; e.g. Hamlet's lack of commitment denies action until it is too late. By making the meeting with Fortinbras' army the turning point of the play - for Brecht a confrontation between feudal and 'bourgeois' ideals - he is able to demonstrate that neither ideological perspective is capable of providing a positive, productive answer to the question 'how does one act?'.

Although Brecht skews the play in order to emphasise its barbaric qualities for his own purposes, the suggestion of open-endedness in the conclusion he reaches is consistent with the effect of Shakespeare's play. In a very short piece entitled 'The *Life of Galileo* is not a Tragedy' (1939) Brecht notes that the 'keynote' of the play is not to be found only in 'Galileo's "Salutation to the New Age" in scene 1 or in certain parts of scene 14' but rather in the juxtaposition of both. This is due to the dialectical, episodic structure of the play (*Galileo* 1980: 117-8). In the case of *Hamlet*, the behaviour of Francisco in the first scene and of Horatio throughout the rest of the play is contrasted with that of other characters whose interpretations of the events they are faced with contradict the scepticism which in the play is not portrayed as tragically fatal. Hamlet is also a model but an ambiguous one, described by the exasperated Actor in *The Messingkauf* as 'very hesitant, but also very inclined to act too hastily' (MD 61). When Hamlet hears the Ghost's story of murder and incest and cries out 'O my prophetic soul' (I.v.40) he still refuses to act, behaving, as Harry Levin (1959) describes him, as 'the very personification of doubtfulness' (Levin 1959: 74) until the dying Laertes publicly confesses his and the King's guilt in plotting against the prince, finally giving Hamlet reason to act. But there are still cries of 'treason' as Hamlet stabs Claudius, a reminder that doubts about this action remain.

Brecht's all important question 'how does one act?' is answered several times by Hamlet who takes opportunities as they arise, killing Polonius by mistake and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern by design; he kills Claudius at the last opportunity, revenging the immediate deaths but not his father's, he merely calls Claudius 'incestuous' as he pours the poison down his throat. Although Hamlet seems appeased in killing Claudius since Laertes' confession implicates the King in the deaths of the prince, his mother and Laertes himself, Claudius dies with a call for defence on his lips rather than publicly confessing the crimes Hamlet suspects him of and which he has confessed to himself and the audience, denying Hamlet complete revenge and leaving Brecht's question unanswered in this regard. The conclusion is abrupt and Hamlet remains uncertain not only about how his actions will be received but about the question he seeks to answer throughout the play, exclaiming to Horatio 'what a wounded name, Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!' (V.ii.336-7). It would appear that Hamlet's concern lies in his own unexplained behaviour, including the killing of Polonius, and his uncertainty that the king was also responsible for his father's death; but the lack of proof about the Ghost's assertions also denies Hamlet a firm position from which to act on them. The ambiguity caused by Hamlet's concern is unresolved and Horatio is left with the task of justifying these deaths as well as much else to Fortinbras and the rest of

Denmark through what is little more than a ghost story with a fortuitous, almost accidental ending. That Brecht has Horatio executed in his adaptation of the play underscores the dubious causes behind this series of events.

In the poem 'In Praise of Doubt' (c1939), written shortly after Brecht had finished the first version of *Galileo*, he describes a situation similar to Hamlet's which rather than attempting to appropriate the play poses questions Brecht finds in it:

What use is the ability to doubt to a man
Who can't make up his mind?
He who is content with too few reasons
May act wrongly
But he who needs too many
Remains inactive under danger, (*Poems* 336)

Finding the answer to such a taut, dynamic predicament involves verification rather than interpretation, a process made more problematic by Brecht's insistence that scepticism and self-criticism temper commitment. The 'new thinking' or reason Hamlet depends on through most of the play does not effectively deal with the irrational, bringing him no nearer to verifying rather than interpreting what the Ghost tells him before he acts. This is also the problem facing Galileo; he is caught between the feudal authority of the Church and the new thinking in science, supported in turn by commercial interests. Without a clear ideological position his reason cannot help him to deal with the irrational practices of the Church or with the various ethical problems he is faced with in the different versions of

the play. Faced with irrational practices Galileo's reason, like Hamlet's, is 'utterly unpractical'. As a model of critical thinking he is as ambiguous as Hamlet, hesitant yet hasty with a trace of 'that kind of sixth sense for history' Brecht seeks to instil in his audience: the ability to see from the outside, to observe from different perspectives.

V

The two line third page of the poem 'In Praise of Doubt' - published in the notes to the Methuen edition rather than with the main body of the text because the editors feel it to be 'quite apart from the rest of the poem, both in sense and in form' - simply poses an unresolvable dilemma:

Sweat pours off the man who is building a house he is not going to
live in
But the man who is building his own house sweats too (*ibid*, 576)

Such contradictions expressed through juxtaposition can only be resolved through ethical or political commitment; when these are missing the contradictions remain suspended. Esslin finds that the problems posed by Brecht's confrontations cause only a 'deep emotional impact on the audience', a 'tangle of misunderstandings and misconceptions', which serve primarily as 'illuminating example[s] for the often noticed, but rarely so fully documented, phenomenon of the cleavage between an author's professed, conscious intention and its actual impact on the audience, a mystery which lies at the very base of all creative activity' (Esslin 1959:

202). Esslin's own intentions are to prove that Brecht cannot keep 'the intuitive' out of his 'rational' (political) works, that unlike Pirandello's characters 'who were in search of an author', Brecht's constantly run away from him and assume independent existences 'of which he strongly disapproved' (*ibid.* 203). Esslin's biographical-psychological approach, his commitment to a particular interpretation of the mysterious forces operating behind the creation of 'great art', is itself 'an illuminating example' of the circular arguments encountered when a position is taken, a problem dramatised strikingly in both *Hamlet* and *Galileo*. Esslin avoids readings centring around Brecht's political intentions, using them only to demonstrate how limited such readings can be, but his emphasis on 'intentional' and 'unintentional' content when discussing the plays, as well as his apparent aversion to Brecht's theories, affords him only one perspective, preventing him from seeing the dialectical interplay and engagement between perspectives Brecht learned from Shakespearean dramaturgy.

Notwithstanding Brecht's criticism of the technique of *Galileo*, form and content are inseparable in this play: the distance provided by historicising the material and the ambiguous, open-ended perspective of its dialectical episodic structure allow the audience to observe from the outside in the way that Galileo and his associates perform their experiments and observations on

stage. The episodic structure encourages the audience to consider the actions and emotions represented rather than being carried along with them; doubt permeates not only the subject matter of the play but the dramaturgy used in organising its material. An undated note of Brecht's describes this double use of the *V-effekt* in portraying Galileo's character:

What gives this new historical character his quality of strangeness, novelty, strikingness, is the fact that he ... looks at the world of 1600 around him as if he himself were a stranger. He studies this world and finds it remarkable, outdated, in need of explanation, (*Galileo* 1980; 120)

When Galileo gives Andrea the astrolabe in Scene 1, the young student examines it according to the accepted doctrine; but rather than seeing the wonder of the system he concludes 'we're so shut in'. Encouraged by Andrea's astute remarks Galileo describes for him the new age, outlining the critical method which has allowed it to blossom:

What is written in the old books is no longer good enough, For where faith has been enthroned for a thousand years doubt now sits, Everyone says; right, that's what it says in the books, but let's have a look for ourselves, That most solemn truths are being familiarly nudged; what was never doubted before is doubted now, (*ibid*, 7)

Brecht's Galileo is well aware of the revolutionary potential behind this description, taking a materialist view of everything around him: prelates and princes are only human, the heavens empty. His response to this upheaval is 'Cheerful laughter' and he envisions astronomy in the marketplace, a demand for education from all classes and a new delight with novelty. The new astronomy will set the earth in motion, freeing it from

the 'crystal vault' in which it has been imprisoned so that it can 'soar through space without support' (*ibid* 8).

Galileo's demonstrations of the new system in Scene 1, first with Andrea in the chair and later with the apple, reveal not only what he believes to be the theoretical 'proof' of the new system but the limitations of his own perspective. The historical perspective of the play presents to the audience a demonstration of the impermanence of truth: although he is quick to point out the trap or confinement of the Ptolemaic system, Galileo is not able to see that gravitational forces will replace the crystal spheres as an authoritative metaphor for holding the universe together. His reliance on the pebble that he lets drop from hand to hand or occasionally to the floor in order to prove his theories to reactionary sceptics is also a constant reminder to the audience that truths are historical rather than permanent, that Galileo's proofs are subject to progressive doubt and refutation. In the confrontation with the Florentine scholars in Scene 4 Galileo defends his position with self-criticism; in applying his scientific method to history he demonstrates his knowledge of the impermanence of his proofs which contrasts sharply with his unswerving reliance on them elsewhere:

Truth is born of the times, not of authority, ... I have had the unimaginable luck to get my hands on a new instrument that lets us observe one tiny corner of the universe a little, but not all that much, more exactly, Make use of it, (*ibid*, 42)

Even when displaying an acute historical sense, Galileo exposes his contradictoriness, showing already that he is willing to turn over the new knowledge to the authorities, making convincing arguments in order to ensure he is allowed to continue his research without considering the consequences. His failure to remain completely open is represented in his initial exposure to the telescope which he rejects out of hand as 'kids' stuff' along with proportional compasses and his other useful, money-spinning inventions. It is only after he improves it that Galileo realises the potential of the new instrument for providing a new way of seeing which will help to usher in the new age. Yet in spite of his questioning, experimental attitude, Galileo quickly convinces himself he is right; once he has seen a pragmatic proof of the Copernican theory through the telescope he insists that people need only believe the evidence of their eyes - albeit altered by the telescope - to behold the truth.

Commenting in the introduction to his edition of the American version of *Galileo* (1966) on the historical perspective of the play, Bentley makes the obvious point that *Galileo* is far from historically accurate. He finds that 'Brecht was all wrong about the seventeenth century in general and about Galileo Galilei in particular' especially regarding 'the new cosmology' and Brecht's summarisation of 'the new scientific attitude' by means of the pebble, an historically inaccurate example which

'does not characterize the stage to which physical science was brought by Galileo'. Nor does this summary cover, according to Bentley, Galileo's initial use of the telescope as 'a matter of looking through lenses and believing your own eyes'. He suggests that since science becomes more abstract after Galileo, the 'down-to-earth' metaphors and imagery Brecht uses actually contradict the sensory experience Galileo relies on, as illustrated by his demonstrations to Andrea in Scene 1. Thus for Bentley, 'Brecht is no nearer to the kind of truth that interests a biographer than he is to the kind that interests a historian of science' (*Galileo* 1966: 9-10). Taking Brecht's cue that *Galileo* represents a technical step backward, Bentley sees Brecht following Aristotle (and Shaw in *St. Joan*) in making fiction more plausible than historical truth, not only by making Galileo a coward but by having his foes proceed from the logic of their situation in the play rather than from the implausible, chaotic truth of history (*ibid.* 11-2).

The question Bentley leads up to is why Brecht purports to put history on stage when what he writes is fiction (*ibid.* 13). His answer is that Brecht is not writing a history play about the 17th century but a political play about the 20th, using the historical setting merely to draw attention to modern events. He sees Shakespeare doing much the same thing in his English History plays which he finds are about the 16th rather than the 15th century (*ibid.* 33-4). Dickson tacitly

supports Bentley's view, noting the incongruity of Galileo's statement 'Got rid of heaven' as well as Barberini's anachronistic quotation from Voltaire, 'If God didn't exist we should have to invent him' (Dickson 1978: 82). Dickson goes on to remark on Brecht's invention of a social revolution in revising the play only to blame Galileo for betraying it, and that Brecht, realising that determined audiences may still empathise with this fallen hero and wanting to elicit a critical response, falsifies Galileo's private life in order to make his character more negative (*ibid.* 92-3). But Dickson also points out that Brecht is no stranger to deliberately creating historical inaccuracies: his rewriting of history 'represents an attempt to break down the reader's conditioned response to tradition' (*ibid.* 70). This comment goes some way to explicating Brecht's technique of historicisation: as in his readings of *Hamlet* where the *V-effekt* caused by his version jarring against Shakespeare's (as Shakespeare's supposedly jars against Kyd's) highlights the ideological perspective given to records of past historical events, the freedom he shows in his treatment of the static facts Bentley accuses him of falsifying exposes their vulnerability to interpretation.

Although Bentley's question is important in that it draws attention to Brecht's broad use of the *V-effekt* in *Galileo*, his conclusion is too facile and dismissive of plays he does not hesitate to call great works,

although it does suggest Brecht's reasons for finding *Galileo* opportunist. As in the debate over Brecht's reading of *Hamlet* in the *Organum*, Bentley is critical of Brecht's commitment for what he finds to be its detrimental effect on drama, which Bentley in turn judges by his own interpretation of Aristotelian standards. Basing his understanding of the play in its several versions (1937 and 1945 only) on a conception of Brecht's immediate political intentions, Bentley's criticism is undercut by the dialectical structure of the play itself which challenges declarative interpretations by equivocating contradictions, thereby exposing how susceptible to interpretation are the biographical or historical truths with which Bentley is so concerned. For instance, when pointing out Brecht's historical inaccuracies in *Galileo*, Bentley notes Galileo's love for his children - especially one of his daughters - yet he says nothing of whether the scientist actually encouraged any of them to follow in his footsteps. He also fails to mention that Brecht's treatment of the telescope is equally inaccurate: the historical Galileo did improve the instrument after learning of it, devising a new method for checking the curvature of the lenses which allowed him to improve the instrument to a power of 32, but he did this without pretending to have invented the instrument himself. There followed a large demand specifically for his improved version. Rather than being concerned with the accuracy of truth, *Galileo* is

concerned with its interpretation and appropriation. Galileo's emphasis on proof in the play demonstrates that the presentation of truth is as important as the facts which are used to define it.

Bentley's criticism also fails to account for Brecht's dramaturgical practice in *Galileo* which represents a critical attitude as the object as well as the subject of the play. Like Shakespeare in the *Histories*, Brecht is writing neither biography nor history *per se* - nor is he writing political propaganda although his technique has political significance - but a work which demonstrates historical significance both in its content and in the way it represents the production of history. Brecht's alteration of historical fact, his rewriting of history to suit his own purposes - e.g. 'The truth about the telescope' supposedly revealed in Scene 2 - demonstrates how subjective distortions are assimilated and accepted as fact. By historicising fiction Brecht demonstrates how history is fictionalised, portraying it as an arranged, interpreted account of facts similar to Galileo's proofs, as Shakespeare does in representing the story of Antony and Cleopatra from a Roman perspective within that play. The narrative perspective of *Galileo* is characterised by its sceptical, austere materialism, its debunking of the mysterious and of the idealist point of view, but its dialectical structure shows the fracture points between these opposing perspectives. For example, discovering physical similarities between the earth and

the moon, Galileo hastily concludes 'that there is no difference between heaven and earth' (*Galileo* 1980: 24). This 'unbelievable' discovery is immediately juxtaposed to another as Priuli rushes in to reveal that despite assurances of a Venetian monopoly, Dutch telescopes were now widely available all over Italy for a few scudi. Galileo's and Priuli's discoveries are *made equivalent*, portraying Galileo as a man who will do what he must in order to pursue the truth while simultaneously demonstrating how quickly truth can be both distorted and overturned.

Galileo's almost blind faith in reason and proof serves not only to expose his contradictory character but the dramaturgical strategy of the entire play. Convinced he has proven the Copernican theory by observing the disappearance of one of Jupiter's moons, he goes on to conclude that the planet is 'another sun.' The sceptical and careful Sagredo warns Galileo against 'thinking too quickly' to which an excited Galileo replies 'Stop standing there like a stuffed dummy when the truth has been found' (*ibid.* 27). Galileo's insistence on proof and human reason paradoxically becomes the abstract ideal when compared with Sagredo's more practical questions concerning the many consequences of their discoveries. He tells Galileo, 'Forty years spent among human beings has again and again brought it home to me that they are not open to reason. ... try making one rational statement to them, and back it up with seven proofs, and they'll

just laugh at you.' Galileo counters that he believes reason holds a 'gentle tyranny over people', that finally it cannot be refuted:

Nobody can go on indefinitely watching me ... drop a pebble, then say it doesn't fall. No human being is capable of that. The lure of a proof is too great. Nearly everyone succumbs to it; sooner or later we all do. Thinking is one of the chief pleasures of the human race, (*ibid*, 29)

Galileo feels that with time he can organise the 'wretched odds and ends' of his proofs into irrefutable truth, pinning his hopes on the power reason has over people like the sea captain who allows for storms and doldrums when laying in stores, and other practical minded people such as Mrs. Sarti and The Little Monk. But as the play progresses it becomes evident that Galileo is completely unprepared for the, to him, irrational behaviour of the authorities and their own appropriation of the truth. In the final speech of Scene 3 Sagredo sums up not only Galileo's character, but a dilemma central to the play:

It is a disastrous night when mankind sees the truth, And a delusive hour when it believes in human reason, ... How could the people in power give free rein to somebody who knows the truth, even if it concerns the remotest stars? ... You may be a sceptic in science, but you're childishly credulous as soon as anything seems likely to help you to pursue it. You don't believe in Aristotle, but you do believe in the Grand Duke of Florence, (*ibid*, 33)

Sagredo's practical, prudent yet sceptical outlook is like Horatio's before Hamlet speaks with the Ghost (I.iv.58-ff) and later before the contest with Laertes (V.ii.200-ff); Sagredo's caution counters Galileo's haste, drawing attention to doubts and possible consequences before action is taken. Also like Horatio,

Sagredo's warnings go unheeded: Galileo goes to Florence prepared to take the 'eminent scholars' of the court 'by the scruff of the neck and force them to look through the telescope' (*ibid.*). The exposure of Galileo's contradictory character brought out in the exchange with Sagredo is repeated in the scholarly disputation between Galileo and the Florentine scholars (Scene 4), in the 'scientific discussion among friends' between Galileo, Bellarmine and Barberini (Scene 7), in the conversation with the Little Monk (Scene 8), and finally between Galileo and Andrea (Scene 14). If Galileo is sometimes hasty and belligerent there is also the coolness he displays in his scientific professionalism when examining the stars or floating bodies and while Clavius, the chief astronomer of the Collegium Romanum, is checking his findings.

Galileo's decision to go on the attack in order to force through the truth is similar to what Hamlet attempts with *The Murder of Gonzago*. The exchange between Andrea and the young Duke Cosimo at the beginning of Scene 4 parallels much of Scene 1. Andrea takes the part of Galileo, repeating his words ('This place is getting like a pigeon loft' (*ibid.* 11 & 35)) and adopting his teacher's seemingly uncontrollable desire to teach and so spread the truth. But Andrea is less even-tempered with his student than Galileo had been with him, reflecting Galileo's new determination. While Cosimo is examining the Ptolemaic model, Andrea takes the

Copernican model from out of its hiding place to show to him. Cosimo is as interested as Andrea had been in Scene 1 but points out that he is never allowed to see Galileo, even when 'the old man' comes to dinner. This hint of the belligerent ignorance of authority is too much for Andrea who demands that Cosimo give the model back; his insulting comment 'you can't even understand that one' parallels Galileo's earlier remark to Andrea, 'You can see, indeed! What can you see? Nothing at all. You just gawp' (*ibid.* 36 & 9). In the ensuing brawl between Andrea and Cosimo the Ptolemaic model is broken. When the scholars and Galileo finally go upstairs to where the now quiet boys have been fighting, the Theologian notices the broken model with suspicion and a short dumb show follows:

*Cosimo quickly stoops down and politely hands Andrea the model,
Meantime Galileo unobtrusively shifts the other model to one side.
(ibid, 38)*

This short bit of stage business is the *Gest* which illustrates not only what will happen in the rest of this scene but in the remainder of the play. The performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* in *Hamlet* serves much the same function: through the play Hamlet confronts Claudius with what the Ghost has told him, pointing out who is the murderer, who the potential avenger; the poison the Player King's nephew Lucianus pours into his uncle's ear is at once an illustration of Hamlet's challenge to Claudius in this scene, of the King's crime against Hamlet's father and of Hamlet's eventual killing of

Claudius with the envenomed sword and the poisoned drink. The 'truth' is simultaneously revealed and hidden in Claudius' ambiguous exit.² In the remainder of Scene 4 of *Galileo* the scholars will not be forced into looking through the telescope, and the new truth is at once obscured in their refusal - as it had been earlier from Cosimo whom Andrea would not let near the telescope - and revealed in their doubts. By the end of the play the Church will have twice handed the truth Galileo has broken back to him and forced him to hide the new: once at the ball in Bellarmine's house (Scene 7) and finally with his abjuration before the Inquisition in Rome (Scene 13).

Galileo's determination to force through the truth also parallels The Young Comrade's hasty, emotionally motivated actions in *The Measures Taken* (1930). After failing in his attempts to spread propaganda among workers and later to arm them, The Young Comrade, believing that action must be taken immediately, finally reveals himself to the oppressed, thus betraying the mission:

I have seen too much,
Therefore I will stand before them
As no one but myself, and tell them the truth,
(*The Measures Taken* 29)

Like The Young Comrade, Galileo has 'seen too much' to remain silent and his search for scientific truth finds him working against the revolution he alludes to. What is present in the *Lehrstücke* that is missing in *Galileo* and plays of Brecht's which are similarly constructed is

a commitment to a position from which to make judgements and to act accordingly. It is clear from the negative reaction of the workers and the action taken by The Four Agitators that The Young Comrade's methods for furthering the revolution are not effective answers to the question 'how does one act?' and he is eliminated. But the final words of *The Measures Taken* pose a question beyond the unambiguous political commitment so compellingly represented in this play, drawing attention to the problem of Brecht's commitment to representing paradox and contradiction as metaphors for 'reality':

And yet your report shows us what is
Needed to change the world;
Anger and tenacity, knowledge and indignation
Swift action, utmost deliberation
Cold endurance, unending perseverance
Comprehension of the individual and comprehension of the whole;
Taught only by reality can
Reality be changed.
(*ibid*, 34)

The Shakespearean dramaturgy Brecht employs in his traditional drama (as opposed to that of the *Lehrstücke*) juxtaposes the 'reality' represented in *The Measures Taken* to other perspectives, exposing the limitations of each. In *Galileo* the revolutionary content of the *Lehrstücke* is represented in what Brecht calls a reactionary form, and this goes further than making the content more palatable, more suitable for consumption in the culinary theatre: it exposes the content to dialectical criticism by revealing paradoxes and contradictions without demonstrating solutions. The commitment to representing change, and in Brecht's case

to a dialectical drama perpetuated by a critical scepticism affecting both form and content, can only explore, examine and interrogate; it cannot prove.

The changes Brecht made to Scene 14 of *Galileo* enhance the examination of the interplay between doubt and commitment in the play rather than decisively damning the physicist as *The Measures Taken* damns The Young Comrade. The 'hero' of the early version who carried on his work after recanting and who conspired with the stovefitter to smuggle the *Discorsi* out of Italy is replaced by the 'villain' of the later versions who only gives the *Discorsi* to Andrea after he has turned it over to the monks. In the final version too Andrea credits Galileo with the creation of a 'new ethics' as well as a new science, quoting his former teacher's response to his colleagues' disgust at his abjuration, 'Better stained than empty', to which Galileo responds, 'Sounds realistic. Sounds like me. New science, new ethics' (*Galileo* 1980: 106). The additions Brecht made to Galileo's lengthy, self-damning speech point to Galileo's lack of ethical and political commitment at a time when he was as powerful as the Church; but this is juxtaposed within the speech to Galileo's disgust at his past behaviour and his warning to Andrea not to fall victim to similar weaknesses. Still a teacher even though he no longer considers himself to be a member of the scientific community, Galileo tells Andrea that in spite of the setbacks for which he is responsible he still believes a

new age has started; the continuation of the battle Galileo refused to fight is represented in the final scene. Along with Andrea's final, conciliatory words to his teacher and an echo of his comments about the creation of a new ethics in the song the children sing at the beginning of Scene 15, 'Bespattered don't mean tattered' (*ibid.* 110), a final judgement against Galileo is impossible.

Brecht realised that his portrayal of Galileo was ambiguous and contradictory, as his self-criticism in 'The Doubter' insists. In 'Building up a Part' (1947), his essay on Laughton's Galileo, he emphasises that the portrayal of the physicist should not arouse audience sympathy or empathy, that instead it should encourage the audience 'to adopt a deliberate attitude of wonder and criticism. Galileo should be portrayed as a phenomenon of the order of Richard III; the audience's emotions will be engaged by the vitality of this strange figure' (*ibid.* 138). Like Richard II, Richard III, Henry IV or Henry V, Macbeth, Hamlet or Coriolanus, Galileo is at once a hero and a criminal. Discussing Galileo's long, self-effacing speech in Scene 14, Brecht emphasises the contradictory response he tried to achieve, itself dependent on the interplay between empathy and abhorrence:

The theatrical content of the speech, in fact, is not directly concerned with the ruthless demonstration of bourgeois science's fall from grace at the beginning of its rise - its surrender of scientific knowledge to the rulers who are authorised 'to use it, not use it, abuse it, as it suits their ends'. The theatrical content derives from the whole course of the action, and the speech should show how well this perfect brain functions when it has to judge its owner. That man, the spectator should be able to conclude, is sitting in a hell more terrible than Dante's, where the true function of intellect has been gambled away, (*ibid.* 158)

In notes made during work on the Berliner Ensemble production Brecht writes that Galileo's damning self-analysis should on no account 'endear the hero to the audience':

All it does is to show that his brain is unimpaired, never mind what area he directs it to, Andrea Sarti's final remark in no sense represents the playwright's own view of Galileo, merely his opinion of Andrea Sarti. The playwright was not out to have the last word, (*ibid*, 130)

Brecht's opinion is buried in the ambiguity caused by the juxtaposition of contradictory perspectives in the final exchange between teacher and pupil: Galileo's abjuration is a crime not to be compensated for by his work (*ibid*. 131).

Brecht points out in the *Organum* in the paragraph immediately following his reading of *Hamlet*, that representing positive solutions is not the only way to represent change:

Whether or no literature presents them as successes, each step forward, every emancipation from nature that is scored in the field of production and leads to a transformation of society, all those explorations in some new direction which mankind [*sic*] has embarked on in order to improve its lot, give us a sense of confidence and triumph and lead us to take pleasure in the possibility of change in all things. (*BOT* 202)

Thus even the ambiguous, contradictory representations of historical events such as are provided by *Hamlet* and *Galileo* are useful - especially to those who have 'learnt to think dialectically' - as these plays represent not only the dialectical movement of history but through their dramatic structures the critical method Brecht finds necessary for the understanding of the production of history.

NOTES

1. For summaries of textual problems see Arden, New Cambridge and Oxford editions; see also P. Davison (1983). For the textual history of *Galileo* see the Introduction and Editorial notes to the 1980 Methuen edition.
2. This poem, like the poem from *The Mother* cited below, is quoted in its new translation published in *Poems and Songs from the Plays*.
3. Cf. C. S. Lewis (1942); H. Levin (1959); S. Booth (1969); J. Calderwood (1983).
4. The BBA holds what survives of Brecht's radio adaptation of *Hamlet* and his notes (item numbers 4051-4). Symington reprints prologue and epilogue (Symington 1970: 97).
5. This correction has neither been made nor alluded to in *BOT*. Cole (1960: 100-1) includes Willett's translation of the *Organum* edited by Bentley with the exchange of letters discussed here.
6. Cf. L. Winstanley (1921); J. Dover Wilson (1935); J. McManaway (1940); D. James (1951); H. Gardner (1959); E. Prosser (1967); R. Ellrodt (1975); S. Chaudhuri (1981); P. Davidson (1983); J. Donawerth (1984); R. Frye (1984).
7. See Rose (1972) for an examination of scenic construction in Shakespeare with special emphasis on *Hamlet*.
8. Although Bradshaw emphasises that the murderer Lucianus is the King's nephew, not his brother, Jenkins remarks in his notes to the Arden edition that Claudius is at once confronted with a representation of his own crime and its potential avenging.

I

If Brecht's years of exile can be characterised as a period of intense creative writing, his final years following his return to Europe in 1947 can be seen as a time of intense stage production, an attempt to realise the dramaturgy of 'the great plays' and the *Organum* as well as the application of similar strategies in the adaptation and staging of the works of other playwrights, e.g. Sophocles' *Antigone*, Molière's *Don Juan*, Goethe's *Urfaust*, Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*, Lenz's *The Tutor*, Grieg's *The Defeat* (the basis for *The Days of the Commune*) and Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. The difficulties he encountered with government arts authorities still under the influence of Georg Lukács and Stanislavsky and with the Education Ministry which funded the Berliner Ensemble, coupled with his desire to show solidarity with the Communist movement while rebuilding the German theatre, led to the postponement or suppression of productions and the inevitable dramaturgical compromises. Willett notes Brecht's 'negative' view of German history, the innate pacifism and formal originality of his drama and his 'potentially subversive' attitude to criticism (*Letters* 436) as the main fracture points between Brecht and the East German authorities. As an enthusiastic student of dialectics Brecht no doubt took such friction in ^{his} stride and these new battles must have had a familiar

ring to them. By the time of his death he was definitely winning the war if still losing the occasional skirmish.

The *Coriolanus* adaptation may serve as a model for examining Brecht's work with his Berliner Ensemble colleagues in their attempts to revitalise and redirect theatre in postwar Berlin. The principal differences between original and adaptation have to do with perspective and Brecht's relationship with government arts policy makers appears to be a contributing factor to the undialectical treatment Shakespeare's play is given. He began work on the *Coriolanus* adaptation in April 1951, but had not completed the text by the time of his death 14 August 1956. It is apparent that Brecht became unhappy with the work that he had completed, coming to the realisation that the material necessary for the type of production he had in mind was already represented in Shakespeare's play:

Preparing some examples for *Dialectic in the Theatre*, I am again analysing the first scene of *Coriolan* and asking myself whether a production without additions or corrections (which I already made two years ago) might be possible, or one with very few, just through successful direction, (AJ 1022 (18 July 1955); tr. Rossi)

There is a suggestion here that Brecht had stopped work on *Coriolan* some years earlier. This chapter cannot answer with certainty why Brecht did not complete the adaptation - it may be only that he had hit a block which he did not get over before he died, that other projects or commitments may have taken priority, or he may have become unhappy with the work he had done once his position with the Ministry of Culture had sufficiently

improved, thus enabling him to produce Shakespeare's dialectical, self-critical drama without substantial changes. Examining some of the fundamental differences between *Coriolanus* and *Coriolan* may go some way towards explaining why Brecht became dissatisfied with his adaptation and so left it unfinished.

II

The interrogative perspective afforded by the dialectical dramaturgy of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* exposes contradictions in the ideologies expressed through the characters within the opposed groups. Arguing that Shakespeare's interest lies in the welfare of the whole state rather than with any particular class, J. E. Phillips (1940) finds the expressions of contempt for the plebeians in the play are balanced by the justification of their resentment of Marcius and the sympathetic presentation of their grievances, concluding that Marcius' tragedy reflects 'the disastrous consequences of violation of those principles by which a healthy political society is maintained' (Phillips 1972: 148-9). This equivocal interplay of perspectives is effected by a taut structure Bullough calls 'the most economical and closely designed of all Shakespeare's plays ... structurally one of his finest achievements' (Bullough V:494). Commenting on the complexity of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, Brian Vickers (1976) finds that the play withholds 'explicit judgement' while analysing 'the evaluation of action and value, the

process by which human behaviour is seen by others, reported on by them, given an agreed status or meaning'. He argues that the play forces one 'to think critically about politics and about such issues as the manipulation of a democracy and the pressurization of the individual' (Vickers 1976: 7-9), suggesting the presence of a critical attitude in the play sought by Brecht in his own work. Yet the changes Brecht makes to the play undermine this potential by adopting a doctrinaire rather than a self-critical Marxism, a perspective which focuses on the class struggle as the dynamic mechanism of history and sees the ruling ideas of an age as the ideas of the ruling class.

In his comparison of Shakespeare's play and Brecht's adaptation, Arrigo Subiotto (1975) deduces that 'the idea of "speciality of rule" was for Shakespeare and his contemporaries a tacit assumption underlying their political attitudes, conducive therefore to a maintenance of existing structures and a hindrance to change'. He cites Brecht in support of this view:

Shakespeare treats the plebs as an 'immature class'. These are the arguments of today's bourgeoisie; the proletariat is not mature enough for leadership. In our country it is necessary that the plebs be in the position to take power, (BBA 650/03, Subiotto 1975: 164-65; tr, Rossi)'

This brief statement shows exactly the perspective Brecht takes in his adaptation: i.e. a deliberate rejection of the dialectical, interrogative structure of Shakespeare's play in favour of an unqualified hierarchy of discourse which privileges the citizens and their tribunes. The

examination of the first scene of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* below suggests that far from representing the citizens as an 'immature class' Shakespeare's First Citizen demonstrates his ability to lead; Menenius recognises this and so acts to preserve the *status quo* with the fable of the belly. Contrary to Subiotto's view, the equivocation of conflicting perspectives in Shakespeare's play exposes Menenius' action in the first scene - as well as that of the other patricians, the tribunes and the plebeians throughout the rest of the play - to criticism, questioning rather than condoning his action. Brecht, however, finds Shakespeare favouring the ruling class, adopting a dogmatic rather than a critical conception of Marxist history; he thus recasts the material according to his own conception of the perspective of the 'lower classes'. Believing that 'The historiography of Plutarch and of Shakespeare's play have something of the same tendency', he feels a 'biased action' or reinterpretation of Shakespeare's text is needed to 'help the peoples' party' because 'The attitude of both writers directs them against the plebs; the tribunes are plotters' (BBA 650/01 and 93/25, Subiotto 1975: 166 and 164; tr. Rossi). Brecht hoped that his reinterpretation would *verfremd* the original, exposing the distortions he finds in Shakespeare's play by emphasising that of his own interpretation of the material. His adaptation thus affirms rather than questions, upsetting the balanced interrogation evident

in Shakespeare's play.

A hint as to the direction Brecht's adaptation would take appears in *The Messingkauf* in the Philosopher's comments on the concept of 'class' which he says:

embraces a great number of individuals and thereby deprives them of their individuality. There are certain laws that apply to class. They apply to the individual only in so far as he coincides with his class, i.e. not absolutely; for the concept of class is only arrived at by ignoring particular features of the individual. (MD 80)

The Philosopher undermines the 'bourgeois' concept of the unified individual, replacing it with one which treats human beings as products of the class struggle who nonetheless exhibit individual and therefore typical characteristics. The *Arbeitsjournal* entry for 16 October 1943 offers another view of the strategy Brecht would be using in adapting the plays he would produce with the Berliner Ensemble. The rhetorical question 'Are the Shakespeares and the Tolstoies^[sic] of this world to be treated as apologists of their class or of humankind?' is given an ideologically inflexible answer:

A dialectician would find no difficulty in the dispute about whether the great bourgeois writers represent humanity or their own class. They represent both humanity and the bourgeoisie since they are both bourgeois and human at the same time, i.e. they are contradictory creatures. They represent humanity as bourgeois and the bourgeoisie as members of the whole of humanity. (AJ 636; tr. Rossi)

The ideological distortions he perceives in Shakespeare are used later to justify his own reinterpretation: 'I do not believe that the new formulation of a question would have stopped Shakespeare from writing *Coriolan*. I believe that he would have done it more or less the same way as we do it, in the spirit of the time, probably with

less conviction but with more talent' (GW 17: 1253, (c1951); tr. Rossi). In the journal entry for 5 May 1951, during the time spent on adapting *Coriolanus*, Brecht notes the ambiguity evident in Shakespeare's representation of the rebellious citizens:

As far as Shakespeare's supposed hatred of the 'plebeians' goes, Brandes is perhaps right in saying that Shakespeare was presenting his own English class comrades rather than the plebeians - moreover, not necessarily because he was confusing one thing with another, but rather because the Londoners were more interesting than the Romans - however, the theatrical correction by corporal punishment of the common man does not necessarily lead, as Brandes thinks, to some kind of snobbish hate of the common man, (*ibid*, 947)

In another note from the same period Brecht shows that the reactionary tendency he perceives in the play is present only in its characters and therefore not necessarily supported in the text as a whole: Marcius, he writes,

wants to re-erect the monarchy, i.e. to return to an outmoded social order; he was therefore *personally reactionary*. This motif makes him the adversary of both Rome and Antium. He must flee from Rome and fail in Antium, (BBA 650/07-f, Subiotto 1975: 170; tr. Rossi)

The strategy of the adaptation is thus set according to the epochal progressions of Marxist history rather than the self-critical method employed by Brecht in earlier plays. His comment that Shakespeare's realism is a two-edged sword that can work against him shows Brecht to be aware of the problems involved in making *Coriolanus* into a declarative didactic statement and so he insists on a dialectical process of adaptation which at once attempts changes while remaining close to the original:

We must remain very close to Shakespeare if we don't want to mobilise all of his merits and obvious strengths against us. So it

seems the best thing to do is to make out of the injured pride of Coriolan another significant attitude which is not all that alien to Shakespeare, namely the belief of Coriolanus in his own irreplaceability. It is this which destroys him and robs the community of a valuable man, (AJ 948 (20, May 1951; tr. Rossi)

To immobilise these 'merits and obvious strengths' Brecht must upset Shakespeare's dialectical structure; the balanced dynamic of the original's ironic juxtapositions is dispersed in Brecht's adaptation as Marcius and the patricians become class types rather than contradictory characters, as do the citizens and their tribunes. Subiotto suggests that 'It is inaccurate to argue that Shakespeare was vindicating in *Coriolanus* the aristocratic form of government, and that Brecht reversed this by promoting the plebs; instead he introduced bias where it was absent in Shakespeare by exploiting the latter's powerful realism' (Subiotto 1975: 161). In seeing *Coriolanus* as 'really the only halfway contemporarily relevant Shakespeare which we can halfway succeed in taking over', Brecht admits that 'Of course we will have to change the plebs' attitude' (AJ 947; tr. Rossi) and so transforms the citizens into savvy revolutionaries while attempting to maintain historical accuracy:

It is self-evidently a mistake if the people, through the role which they play in *Coriolan*, somehow recall the Shakespearean mob scenes. On the other side the Roman plebs, for historical reasons, cannot easily be portrayed as an advanced, strongly class conscious proletariat. Although the class contrast in ancient Rome (through their lawful establishment) is sharper than in modern capitalism where it is defined as only semi-lawful, semi-economic and semi-established, one can nevertheless ask dignity from an ancient mass in Italy in the fifth century B.C., if not political clarity. (BBA 672/67-f Subiotto 1975: 174; tr. Rossi)

But Brecht is not so concerned with historical accuracy

in transforming Marcius into the uncontradictory character of his adaptation in order to create out of the material a play about the class struggle. In Brecht's hands Marcius becomes overproud and made to believe in his own indispensability;

The adaptation changes the *Tragedy of the Individual* to the *Tragedy of the Belief in Indispensability*. It emerges that the belief in indispensability in fact destroys the individual, but not that easily the people. It is possible for a great number of people to enter a tragic situation - they must then rid themselves of that individual that revolts against them, (BBA 650/01 Subiotto 1975: 166; tr. Rossi)

Brecht's adaptation is thus an attempt to emphasise what he finds to be already apparent in the original, exploited through the representation of the events from a unified perspective. Where Shakespearean dramaturgy subverts unified perspectives such as the Tudor-moral or Roman-moral interpretations of events through interrogative, metafictional strategies which expose limitations, Brecht's *Coriolan* privileges the perspective of the citizens and their tribunes by destroying the balance of the original. The ideological limitations of his adaptation actually force Brecht to write a 'bourgeois' or 'Aristotelian' play instead of one that is 'epic' or 'dialectic'. While his adaptation does succeed in decentring Marcius, he replaces Shakespeare's 'hero' with his own: i.e. the tribunes, and to a certain degree the citizens, become the heroes of the new play in the attempt to immobilise the 'merit and obvious strength' of Shakespeare's original in order to achieve his own ideological ends. What follows is a scene by scene

comparison of the two plays which examines the omissions and additions Brecht made in his unfinished adaptation.

III

Brecht's *Coriolan* uses approximately one half of Shakespeare's text, relying more on omission than alteration through addition.² This is in keeping with his thoughts on adapting 'classical' works:

Concerning the act or process of abbreviating classical style: If I omit enough on a page I nevertheless still receive for the single word *night*, for instance in the sentence 'when the night came', the full exchange value in imagery called up in the mind of the reader. Inflation is the death of every economy. In the best cases the words leave their retinue behind and appear face to face with one another [step up against one another] with as much dignity or value as they can muster out of themselves. (AJ 144 (9 Aug. 1940); tr. Rossi)

But while Brecht's additions may be few they are significant. The small shifts of emphasis and changes in tone give the adaptation the declarative distortion necessary for Brecht's project, although the result contradicts his concern with instilling a critical attitude in his audience.

Brecht's adaptation begins with a slight change from the original which sets the tone for his entire project. After asking the citizens if they are 'resolv'd rather to die than to famish', Shakespeare's First Citizen says 'First, you know Caius Marcius is the chief enemy of the people' (I.i.4-6).³ This would seem to be his first and foremost concern; with Marcius out of the way their starvation would cease: 'Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price' (I.i.9-10). This places Marcius at the centre of the conflict, establishing also his

place at the centre of the play: with him out of the way the Republic is secure, a view which is countered with the realisation that he is necessary for the security of the Republic by virtue of his military prowess. Brecht's First Citizen has different priorities: 'You are prepared not to turn back until the senate has granted that we citizens determine the price of bread? ... And the price of olives?' (2397). For Brecht the central concern becomes the class struggle and the economic base upon which it is built, i.e. the oppression exerted by the nobility on the citizens through the setting of food prices. Marcius is thus decentred, remaining the people's main enemy only because he is the nobility's best soldier: 'War is still his business - especially his' (BOT 263). The exchange between Shakespeare's First and Second Citizens reaffirms Marcius' central position in the dispute:

2 Cit. Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?
1 Cit. Against him first; he's a very dog to the commonalty.
(I,i,25-26)

Brecht's citizens, on the other hand, while affirming that Marcius is 'chief enemy of the people', see him more as an obstruction to their own freedom, a manifestation of the repression they suffer under the rule of the patricians in the form of their military representative:

FIRST CITIZEN Caius Marcius will oppose us with force of arms, Will
you run away or will you fight?
CITIZENS We will kill him, - He is the chief enemy of the people,
(2397)

Brecht's adaptation omits Shakespeare's Second Citizen, so the exchange between First and Second

Citizens which reveals that Marcius is nonetheless valuable despite his faults is cut. This exchange in Shakespeare demonstrates that the citizens are a group of individuals rather than a homogenous, like-thinking mass. It also prepares the audience for the examination of the unresolvable problem of Marcius' pride including the insights into how and why it is constructed. The Second Citizen says Marcius' 'nature' may be interpreted as showing him to be proud and covetous, but that drawing this conclusion may be the result of malicious intent on the part of the accuser (I.i.33-41). Brecht replaces this debate with one between his First Citizen and a new character, 'The Man with the Child' (*passim* The Man) who, although he shows as the Second Citizen does in the original that there is some disagreement among the citizens as to how they should deal with the problems at hand, is in no way a replacement for Shakespeare's Second Citizen. The Man is given entirely new speeches in this scene with the exception of one speech which he takes over from Shakespeare's First Citizen ('We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good ...' (I.i.13-24)). The Man is the voice of dissent among the citizens but Brecht separates him from this group. He is given a 'name' Brecht associates with the 'eternally human', uncritical bourgeoisie - 'Man with a capital "M"' - rather than being identified as a 'number' in the mass, and his child is given a proper name. Rather than showing any willingness to fight for a better city, The

Man flows with events, taking the path of least resistance, hoping that will do him the most good, rather like Galy Gay or Baal, characters which for Brecht could provide a negative example only to those who have learned to think dialectically.

The dialogue between Brecht's First Citizen and The Man helps to establish further the class conflict at the centre of Brecht's adaptation. Drawn from events mentioned in Plutarch (Bullough V:510), The Man wants to see how much the rebels are able to achieve. If they fail he will 'emigrate with those from the third district' to settle on a 'stone slab' outside of Rome where they will have 'water ... air and a grave', more than they now have, concluding 'There we will at least not have to conduct wars for the rich'. Labelled by the First Citizen as a 'cowardly dog' - a term Marcius often hurls at the citizens - he bids him 'clear out and quickly ... but leave the child here; we will win a better Rome for [him]' (2397-8). Although Marcius is mentioned in this exchange, he is in no way seen as the central problem facing the citizens. This perspective shows Brecht's desire to steer away from 'The tragedy of the individual man [which] of course interests us far less than the tragedy of the community set in motion by the individual man ' (AJ 948; tr. Rossi).

As in Shakespeare, the entrance of Menenius is preceded by off stage shouts which cut short the citizens' discussion. Where Shakespeare's citizens see

him as 'one honest enough' that 'hath always lov'd the people' (I.i.51 and 50), Brecht's speak of him as 'the smooth talker' who 'has a weakness for the people' (2398). In both texts Menenius speaks in verse while the citizens continue to speak in prose until the 'pause' in the fable of the belly, when in both texts the First Citizen begins speaking in verse, continuing to do so for the remainder of this scene. There is little change in this section: in Shakespeare the First Citizen agrees to hear the fable, but warns Menenius that he 'must not think to fob off our disgrace with a tale' (I.i.92), whereas in Brecht he reveals a condescending contempt for Menenius:

This is hardly a time for fairy stories, But I for my part have
long wished to learn to speak beautifully, and that can be learned
from you, Agrippa, Shoot! (2400)

Coming from the mouth of the leader or at least the spokesman of the rebels, Brecht's First Citizen gives a glimpse of the self-serving nature characteristic of Shakespeare's tribunes, but it is only a glimpse, and as will be seen below, Brecht's tribunes are completely without this characteristic.

The pause before the belly's answer is marked in Shakespeare by a brief debate on order between Menenius and the First Citizen. Challenging the citizens with smile and speech while telling them of the belly's smiling, taunting reply 'To th'discontented members, the mutinous parts That envied his receipt', Menenius is interrupted by the First Citizen who mockingly begins a

speech on the hierarchy represented by the analogy
between the body politic and the body natural:

The kingly crowned head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps,... (I.i.113-116)

Menenius reveals his faith in this ordering of society by his outburst: 'What then? Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? What then?' (I.i.117-118). The exchange demonstrates early in the play a contradiction central to its dialectic structure. As David Hale (1971) has pointed out, the analogy between the body politic and the body natural was already a dead metaphor by the time Shakespeare used it in *Coriolanus*, i.e. one which, through overuse, no longer has any analogous effect or relevance. Hazlitt too comments that the play 'is a store house of political common-places' (Hazlitt 1969: 214). Part of the dialectic force of the play lies in its revealing how the analogy between the body natural and the body politic has collapsed. Menenius' concern is that the present ordering, with his class at the top, be maintained, even though and quite possibly especially because the First Citizen shows signs of being a qualified leader. Menenius' appeal is the familiar one that civil war must be averted at all costs, and it is apparent that this serves Rome only through its service to his class. At the same time it is also apparent that without some ordering system society cannot exist. The metaphor may be dead, but it is still useful and effective dramatically as Shakespeare uses it. Its

ineffectiveness in this scene - 'It was an answer' (I.i.145) - coupled with the portrayal of aristocratic and non-aristocratic leaders throughout the play questions the validity of natural, organic metaphors used by leaders regardless of their class origins.

Confidence in the fable is further shaken later in the scene where Marcius speaks disparagingly of the 'other troop' of citizens' weak proverbs which contain other dead metaphors:

They said they were an-hungry; sighed forth proverbs -
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods sent not
Corn for the rich men only, With these shreds
They vented their complainings,... (I.i,203-207)

This criticism reflects on Menenius' fable, questioning the validity of his attempt to explain a complex situation through convenient, organic analogy (Hale 1971: 202). The hierarchy expressed in the fable of the belly as Menenius tells it has its own internal contradictions as well: the senators are the belly, taking in the wealth of nourishment and distributing it amongst the other members. M. J. B. Allen (1984) argues that Menenius' version of the fable is incorrect, even 'dangerously heretical' because 'any allegory that elevated the stomach over the heart or head was obviously portraying a topsy-turvy, chaotic vision of things where the great chain of correspondences had been swept aside by the wolf of appetite' (Allen 1984: 16). Having Menenius utter an inconsistent analogy certainly questions its validity, and even though no character draws attention to this

there is a problem with Menenius' portrayal of the top of the hierarchy. There is also a problem at the base of his vision. The citizens are placed at the bottom with Menenius calling the First Citizen 'the great toe' because 'being one o'th'lowest, basest, poorest, Of this most wise rebellion, thou goest foremost' (I.i.154-156). Carrying the analogy further and using another dead metaphor, it is apparent that without the citizens Rome does not have a leg to stand on; the ambiguity portrays the citizens at once as 'base' and 'the base' on which the state stands. Put another way, without the citizens the rulers have no feet to 'trod' upon. Fulke Greville makes use of a similar pun between the lower orders and their 'base' position which exploits this ambiguity. Addressing the House of Commons in 1593, he stated that if they 'knew their strength as well as we know their oppression, they would not *bear* as they do' (Hill 1974: 187; emphasis added).

When in Brecht's adaptation Menenius asks Marcius about the 'other troop', the soldier answers,

It is dissolved,
I drove it apart,
...
Then when I took action
They shouted while leaving 'We will emigrate!' I called
After them 'Have a good journey', (2403)

This radical change heralds Brecht's almost complete reworking of the remainder of this scene. In Shakespeare, Menenius asks about the other troop and Coriolanus answers 'They are dissolv'd' but not before they were granted the petition calling for 'Five

tribunes, to defend their vulgar wisdoms, Of their own choice' (I.i.202 and 214). A messenger then enters and announces that the 'Volsces are in arms' (I.i.222). In Brecht a messenger enters after the speech just quoted and whispers in Marcius' ear. Marcius then tells Menenius that tribunes have been granted. A Second Citizen, bearing no resemblance to Shakespeare's, then runs in announcing to the crowd's delight the granting of tribunes and the new powers that go along with it.

Brecht follows Shakespeare in placing the entrance of Cominius, Titius Lartius, other senators and the tribunes at this point, but with another important difference: the tribunes are greeted by the citizens and noted by Marcius. During a passage of the 'Study of the First Scene of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*' (1953) which concerns this part of the play, the 'discussion' runs:

Forgotten something?
R, Yes, Sicinius and Brutus, the new People's Tribunes, came on
with the Senators.
B, No doubt you forgot them because they got no welcome or
greeting, (BOT 254)

In altering this situation Brecht helps to deflect empathy away from Marcius onto the tribunes: when Menenius announces the arrival of 'The worthy fathers', Marcius comments

And the newly baked
Foremen are with them already, Faces
Like those cut down from the gallows! (2404)

In Shakespeare Marcius says 'See, our best elders', and the arrival of the tribunes does indeed go unnoticed. They are invisible within the ranks of elders regardless

of difference in dress. The audience does not know who they are until all characters except the tribunes leave the stage 25 lines later, and then they speak in verse, as the ruling class had done. Brecht has his citizens cheer them and has Marcius utter 'You worthy fathers, horrible news I've heard And I see horrible sights -' (2405). The invisibility of the tribunes in Shakespeare equates them with the elders, helping to set up the balance in the coming conflict between the nobility and Marcius versus the tribunes and citizens which dominates much of Shakespeare's play.

After arrangements are made for the coming war, Shakespeare leaves the stage to the tribunes who discuss Marcius' pride at length, appalled at his treatment of them:

Bru, Mark'd you his lip and eyes?
Sic, Nay, but his taunts!
Bru, Being mov'd, he will not spare to gird the gods,
Sic, Bewock the modest moon, (I,i,252-255)

Sicinius wonders how Marcius' 'insolence can brook to be commanded Under Cominius', and Brutus explains that fame cannot 'Better be held nor more attain'd than by A place below the first; for what miscarries Shall be the general's fault'. Sicinius adds that 'if things go well, Opinion, that so sticks on Marcius, shall Of his demerits rob Cominius' (I.i.260-270). Their own pride is obvious in these lines, but more revealing is that they place Marcius in a position exactly like their own: they are 'a place below the first' in the ruling hierarchy of Rome; if their work miscarries, it will be seen as the fault of

either the rulers or - taking the pun on 'general' further - the people; at the same time if all goes well the tribunes can claim the credit. Shakespeare makes use of such contradictions throughout the play, a critical use of ambiguity voiced most strongly in Aufidius' 'So our virtues Lie in th'interpretation of the time' (VI.vii.49-50).

Brecht has the citizens remain along with the tribunes, rather than having them 'steal away' after Marcius invites them, albeit mockingly, to join him in the war against the Volscians (I.i.249). Brecht's tribunes advise the citizens to follow Marcius, to 'Be good soldiers for a good Rome!', and the citizens exit in patriotic eagerness (2406). The tribunes then discuss Marcius only very briefly, outlining his hatred of the people and his superior soldiership. Unlike Shakespeare's tribunes Brecht's are exemplary patriots: Sicinius worries that Marcius is 'More dangerous for Rome than for the Volscians'; Brutus is sceptical of his partner's remark: 'I do not believe that. Such a man's sword Is worth more than his vices harm' (2407). This is rather weak compared to what Shakespeare sets up in the parallel dialogue, a result of Brecht's declarative strategy which must smooth over such contradictions.

Shakespeare's brief second scene, set in Corioli, is cut by Brecht. Here Aufidius has intelligence from Rome which he imparts to his senators; there is evidence of Volscian spies within Rome which Shakespeare makes use of

later and which is discussed below. The scheming in this scene parallels that of the citizens, nobility, and tribunes in I.i.

Brecht's second scene is drawn from Shakespeare's third. Characteristic of the adaptation, speeches are shortened, in some cases even truncated, and small yet significant details are changed; e.g. rather than having Volumnia and Virgilia seated on low stools while sewing at Marcius' house, Brecht has them '*look from the balcony after the departing soldiers*' while '*Martial music*' is played, a setting similar to *Troilus and Cressida* I.ii. Volumnia's speeches are shortened, but their content is roughly the same. The 'Gentlewoman' in Shakespeare who announces that Valeria has come to visit is a 'servant' in Brecht, and must wait six lines before being allowed to speak. Valeria is given no other greeting than 'How is your little son?', then launches into the story about Young Marcius catching and killing a butterfly which Brecht leaves intact. Brecht also shortens the leave taking and Virgilia's excuses.

It was Brecht's intention to combine Shakespeare's battle sequence (I.iv-x) into one large battle scene for I.iii of his adaptation. He had planned to work out dialogue and choreography during rehearsals, thinking it necessary first to study the positions and movements of the actors. He did not live to complete this work; thus the text for this section of the adaptation is Tieck's translation of Shakespeare (2409). Brecht found this

sequence to be the most important for defining Marcius' character: 'Marcius must be shown as a patriot'; 'It's one of those parts which should not be built up from his first appearance but from a later one. I would say a battle-scene for Coriolanus, if it hadn't become so hard for us Germans to represent great wartime achievements after two world wars' (*BOT* 260 and 263).

The examination of pride Shakespeare begins at the end of I.1 is taken up again in II.1. Menenius enters with the tribunes, and there is a comradeship in their prose conversation notwithstanding Menenius' dominance as 'elder statesman' which again points to a dramatic if not a sociopolitical equivalence. Even this private conversation between political representatives centres on Marcius. The tribunes suggest to Menenius that Marcius is 'poor in no one fault, but stor'd with all. Especially in pride. And topping all others in boasting' (II.1.16-18). In turn Menenius bids them 'turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! ... then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates - alias fools - as any in Rome' II.1.35-41). He then proceeds to offer a critique of their working methods at the capital. As is true of the tribunes in Act I, in criticising them here Menenius reveals his own pride and prejudices: e.g. he equates 'the city' with his own class, describing himself as honest, straightforward and hard-drinking. Again the balance afforded by Shakespearean dramaturgy

questions the validity of a character's discourse: Menenius discredits himself while discrediting the tribunes.

Brecht's treatment of this episode is clipped with the emphasis placed on discrediting only Menenius and his peers. The tribunes' discourse is privileged, forcing the audience into empathy with them. The tribunes enter on their own, without Menenius, discussing news of the war. Brutus is given a line similar to Menenius' opening line in Shakespeare, but Brecht subverts the reference to fortune-telling by changing 'The augurer tells me we shall have news to-night' (II.1.1) to 'The augurs, I hear, have received news this morning from the field'. Sicinius' own 'prophecy' is that, regardless of the war's outcome, the news will be bad 'Because either the Volscians have won, then they will be lords in Rome, or Caius Marcius has won, then he will be lord' (2426). Brutus' terse 'That is true' is not undercut as Brecht continues to portray them as model, patriotic citizens. Menenius enters, and his long, eloquent and self-contradictory speeches are cut to a few insults hurled at the tribunes to which Brutus replies, 'Now we know what the news is. Marcius has triumphed. The fellow would not otherwise be so impudent' (2427).

Brecht's scene proceeds now as Shakespeare's except that it is shortened. There is less discussion of Marcius' wounds for Brecht does not invest as much dramatically in them as does Shakespeare. The scene

continues in prose, as in the original, until the trumpets herald the entrance of Marcius (now Coriolanus) and the victorious army. An example of Brecht's shortening of dialogue is illustrated by Volumnia's final speech before Marcius' entrance. Shakespeare's

These are the ushers of Marcius,
Before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears;
Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie,
Which, being advanc'd, declines, and then men die (II,i,149-152)

becomes

And it trembles under the step of the powerful
The same earth in fear and in lust,
And many are no more, and home returns the victor, (2428)

Volumnia's switch from prose to verse in Shakespeare centres on Marcius as the embodiment and executor of the 'Death' which gives life to Rome. Brecht continues to decentre his 'hero' by expanding the focus on Marcius outward to include 'the powerful' as a group and referring also to all involved and affected by war.

Brecht's truncating of the first part of this scene renders Marcius' procession a celebration only. Without the dialogue concerning Marcius' pride which Shakespeare includes early in the scene, Marcius' 'Enough, enough, I beg you' has no contradictory effect. Shakespeare has 'All' - presumably those already on stage plus the army, the citizens are not mentioned - greet Marcius with 'Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!' to which he answers 'No more of this, it does offend my heart' (II.i.158-159). In Brecht the greeting is given to Menenius, and Marcius' somewhat curt reply is stripped of the balance Shakespeare strikes between pride and

humility. The ambivalence of Marcius' last lines in this scene is likewise diffused by Brecht's treatment. The change from 'I had rather be their servant in my way Than sway with them in theirs' (II.i. 193-194) to 'I would rather be their slave in my way Than in theirs their lord' (2430) is subtle but important to Brecht's project. Besides being stripped of the ambivalence concerning Marcius' own pride by the removal of the earlier exploration of it, Brecht removes the image of leaders swaying, and more importantly, swaying *with* the populace. Shakespeare's continued use of the image of 'the mob' as a malleable, disunited 'mass' - as in *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Julius Caesar* - takes on new emphasis here as Marcius projects the image of a leader swaying as much as the people. Brecht has no use for such ambiguity: his Marcius must proudly believe in his indispensability in order to heighten the class conflict. The blending of shared characteristics across class lines which Shakespeare uses to blur the sources of the conflict is at odds with Brecht's goal of telling the story from a doctrinaire Marxist perspective, so he must diffuse it.

The scene ends with the tribunes discussing Marcius' return and their plans for future action. In Shakespeare Brutus begins speaking disparagingly of the citizens for celebrating Marcius' victory:

All tongues speak of him and the bleared sights
Are spectacled to see him, Your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats him; the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,
Clamb'ring the walls to eye him,... (II.i,195-211)

Brecht cuts this speech and inserts two others. The first is a dialogue which portrays Marcius as a natural predator ruled only by himself and points out an effect of his victory:

SICINIUS His orders were to drive off the Volscians
No more, You might as well order the wolf
To frighten the fox from the hen house but do no more,
He has taken Corioli,

BRUTUS And so provokes the Volscians
Against us for decades, (2430)

The second is a short speech which address a cause of patriotism rather than describing the grimy scene of the original:

SICINIUS And listen how now a Rome drunk with triumph
Echoes to the praises of that insolent man!
Today every saddler announces to his wife that
He has acquired Corioli, They plan,
Where they would put two, three marble villas
In their cellar, We are only spoilsports, (2430)

Brutus then talks of Marcius' reluctance to appear before the people in the gown of humility, the messenger enters summoning the tribunes to the capital and the scene ends. The speeches in Shakespeare concerning the tribunes' plans for turning the citizens against their war hero, thus rekindling the class conflict - e.g. 'We must suggest to the people in what hatred He still hath held them'; 'This, as you say, suggested At some time when his soaring insolence Shall touch the people ... will be his fire To kindle their dry stubble (II.1.233-249) - are cut as Brecht has no desire to show that the tribunes are as manipulative as other social and political leaders devoted to their own cause. Instead, he continues to

show them as exemplary patriots, making little of their own class prejudice. From Brecht's perspective they are zealous egalitarians rather than skilful promoters.

As officers prepare the stage for the meeting in the Capital (II.ii), they discuss Marcius and his attitude to the citizens. Shakespeare's Second Officer argues that since the people have often loved without reason they may hate without reason; and since Marcius does not care how they feel about him, he 'manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition' and is honest about it (II.ii.7-14). Brecht retains this speech barring the mention of Marcius' honesty as 'noble carelessness', cutting the rest of this interlude which includes discussion of the contradiction in Marcius seeking the people's hate 'with greater devotion than they can render it him', his class conscious pride in his desire to leave 'nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite', yet his deserving 'worthily of his country', his honesty, and the fact that 'he hath so planted his honours in their eyes and his actions in their hearts that for their tongues to be silent and not confess so much were a kind of ingrateful injury' (II.ii.15-32). This is an instance of realism that exposes contradictions Brecht admires in Shakespeare but which he feels he must immobilise so that it does not undercut his didactic purpose.

Brecht makes only minor changes to the remainder of this scene, but they continue to undermine the ambiguity

and contradictions evident Shakespeare's play. Marcius does not remain standing after his ceremonial entrance to sit only after Menenius announces the purpose of the meeting. Brecht cuts this detail which in Shakespeare shows Marcius willing to attend to certain ceremonies not distasteful to him. Cutting this also lessens the effect of Marcius rising several lines later. Brecht changes 'I had rather have my wounds to heal again' (II.ii.67) to 'I would rather heal my wounds' (2433), giving an image of Marcius still bleeding during this meeting. Brutus' self-proud 'Sir, I hope My words disbench'd you not' (II.ii.68-69) is retained, as is Marcius' reply, and there are no serious differences until Marcius re-enters. In Shakespeare Menenius tells Marcius that the senate 'are well pleas'd To make thee consul' (II.ii.130-131), whereas in Brecht he announces perfunctorily 'Coriolanus, the senate unanimously elects you to the office of consul' (2435). The important exchange concerning Marcius fulfilling the custom of wearing the gown, showing his wounds and asking for votes is as in Shakespeare with one important shift of emphasis: in the original Marcius observes that this custom 'might well Be taken from the people' (II.ii.143-144); in the adaptation he says 'One should take such spectacles from them' (2436). Brutus' interjection 'Mark you that?' in Shakespeare shows that the tribune is unwilling or unable to see any wisdom in Marcius' remark which, together with the Officers' observations at the beginning of this

scene, suggests that such ceremonies perpetrate the *status quo*. This is reinforced later when Marcius fulfils these requirements. Without the Officers' debate behind Marcius' observation Brutus's 'Hear, hear' in Brecht's scene emphasises Marcius' low opinion of the citizens without contradictory impulse.

Brecht cuts to one line the tribunes' brief post-meeting discussion which in the original continues to portray them as capable politicians intent on destroying Marcius by misrepresentation: 'You see how he wants to treat the people' (2436). This is not a big change, but it serves to emphasise the class conflict while continuing to portray the tribunes as flawless crusaders rather than contradictory leaders.

Brecht has to make substantial changes to II.iii in order to change the attitude of the citizens who in Shakespeare display a jovial, intelligent ambivalence towards themselves and the ceremony they are about to participate in. Following Marcius' criticism in the previous scene, the Third Citizen's 'We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do' reveals a contradiction in the ceremony which lends tacit support to Marcius' statement that the custom 'might well be taken from the people', although for different reasons: here the ceremony is seen as ineffective rather than as a tool used by the rulers to maintain power. Brecht retains this line, but shortens the remainder of this speech which in Shakespeare

emphasises the ambiguous nature of the ceremony:

Ingratitude is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful
were to make a monster of the multitude; of the which we being
members should bring ourselves to be monstrous members, (II.iii.4-
ff)

This speech by the Third Citizen and those immediately following emphasise, as the Second Citizen did in I.i by voicing disagreement, that the citizens do not consider themselves to be a homogenous 'mass' but rather a group composed of individuals whose 'wits are so diversely colour'd' that let loose they would fly 'at once to all the points o'th'compass' (II.iii.17-24). This discussion is cut by Brecht who does little to individualise his citizens. His version of the First Citizen's speech quoted above is more sarcastic: 'if he shows us his wounds and recounts his noble deeds, we must show him a halfway noble appreciation too' (2437). Rather than discussing their part in the ceremony and so expressing their individualities, the contradictions are reduced to a discussion of Marcius' pride and usefulness:

FIRST CITIZEN ... He's indispensable,
SECOND CITIZEN Like a neck with a goitre,
FIRST CITIZEN What do you mean by that?
SECOND CITIZEN A neck is indispensable even if it has a goitre. The
goitre is his pride,
FIRST CITIZEN I maintain as well that if he were approachable you
could not give me a better man, (2437)

Brecht gives a different emphasis to disagreements between the citizens which is not pronounced enough to express their individualities. There is a typifying similarity as well as solidarity among the citizens; even the dissenter gives Marcius his voice along with the others. Brecht is concerned with showing the citizens as

united rather than as individuals:

I don't think you realize how hard it is for the oppressed to become united. Their misery unites them - once they recognise who has caused it, ... Think how reluctantly men decide to revolt! It's an adventure for them; new paths have to be marked out and followed, ... To the masses revolt is the unnatural rather than the natural thing,... (BOT 252)

Brecht's citizens recognise that the nobility are the cause of their misery and that Marcius, as their greatest soldier, is their greatest weapon. He glosses over differences among the citizens represented in the original in order to unite the movement against the nobility.

The brief dialogue between Marcius and Menenius is as in Shakespeare, but by careful reworking Brecht highlights Marcius' pride rather than his distaste for the ceremony. The original's 'Hang 'em! I would they would forget me, like the virtues Which our divines lose by'em' (II.iii.56-57) is changed to 'Let them forget me! As they always forget decency and gratitude! Hang 'em!' (2438). Brecht does not alter the first exchange between Marcius and the citizens (II.iii.61-81), but as these citizens exit Brecht brings on The Man with the child who gives Marcius his vote because he fulfils the custom and 'because he has captured one more city for Rome' (2439). Again The Man is the voice of dissent within the mass but separated from it. His reference to Marcius' plain toga without pockets to keep him from buying votes (2439; see Bullough V:518) is inverted by Brecht's Third Citizen who - parodying *Julius Caesar* I.i.16-27 - reminds the audience of the Sicinius' lament in II.i that people such

as The Man support only those who make or give them money (2440). Brecht then gives his Fifth Citizen lines from the Gardeners' scene from *Richard II* (III.iv) to explain to Marcius that pride hinders growth, to which he sarcastically replies 'Thanks for the explanation' (2441).

The adaptation now picks up the original from II.iii.83 and again Brecht shortens and shifts the emphasis of an important speech. In Shakespeare the citizens tell Marcius he has 'not indeed loved the common people', to which he answers 'You should account me the more virtuous, that I have not been common in my love'. He then frankly admits to them that since 'the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart. ... I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers (II. iii.91-100). Brecht reworks this so that Marcius challenges the citizens' assertions while underscoring his superficial compliance with custom rather than incorporating the broader view of the original which also criticises the custom itself:

you mean I have not made myself common with my love for the common people? I understand. There are certain needs, and for them you need public institutions and public men. Now, if you build more on my hat than on my heart, I want to tear out my heart and pull down my hat and humbly beg you; let me be consul. (2441)

At this point Brecht has Marcius launch into a song about 'the gratitude of the she-wolf' in which he actually shows the citizens his wounds while echoing Christ's words to the Apostles: 'I beg you, gentlemen,

... Put your finger in my wounds'. He works himself into a frenzy soliciting their votes, frightening them into capitulation. He then takes a low bow as the senators and tribunes enter (2442). The song uses several lines from Shakespeare's scene (II.iii.109-129), but in the original Marcius again focuses on the custom, its prostitution of him - 'Better it is to die, better to starve, Than crave the hire which first we do deserve' (II.110-111) - and its arbitrary nature - 'Let the high office and the honour go To one that would do thus' (II.119-120); Brecht omits these observations. Rather than being frightened by his behaviour Shakespeare's citizens are convinced Marcius 'has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice' (II.130) and they exit as Menenius and the tribunes enter, returning after Marcius leaves with Menenius. The tribunes hear the citizens' complaints, deciding Marcius has, far from complying with custom, had contempt for it, the people, and 'the humble weed'. They chastise the citizens for not performing as they were taught and coach them on their future behaviour. All this is important to Shakespeare's project of pitting the citizens against Marcius in the power play staged by the tribunes and the nobility. This strategy, however, works against Brecht's intentions and he cuts this and the beginning of the following scene (III.1) where Marcius hears that Aufidius is still waiting for the right time to challenge Rome. He also learns in this scene where Aufidius is living and

wishes he 'had a cause to seek him there' (III.1.1-19).

Brecht's II.iii continues, picking up Shakespeare's text roughly at this point, drastically compressing the remainder of the original III.1. Sicinius declares that before Marcius' election can be confirmed he must be questioned before the people concerning 'His program and his general opinions'. Menenius complains that this is 'not provided in the charter', to which Sicinius replies,

The tribunes
Are not mentioned in the charter either, The people
Have won new law in the war, and want now to use
The victory, your honours, (2443)

These lines are interesting in that Sicinius' metaphor shows that the tribunes are seeking for the people what the nobility have in Marcius: they want to transfer victory in war into dominance in government. Brecht picks out events in Shakespeare to highlight Marcius' hatred of the people and his danger to the state. His reasons for denying free grain to the people are severely pared, but Brecht has him ask 'Why then don't you go to Greece? This city is called Rome' (2445). In the original, Marcius is accused of stealing the spoils of Corioli. The accusation of treason for expressing his desire to repeal the tribunate is retained, but when his arrest is imminent, he draws Cominius' sword as Menenius - not Cominius as in Shakespeare - tells Sicinius 'Hands off, old man!'. Menenius' 'Down with that sword!' (III.1.226) is given to an anonymous senator further increasing the harsher characterisation Brecht gives him. Brutus re-enters here with the aediles ordering them to

seize Marcius, then the citizens - not the Second Senator as in Shakespeare - call for weapons. Brecht's text has '*The patricians crowd around Coriolanus*', there is no mention of their drawing weapons, and the lines 'You will take him only over our dead bodies!' is ambiguous on this point (2448): it could be a dare to murder in cold blood or a challenge if they too have drawn weapons. The struggle continues until '*The patricians push the distraught Coriolanus out. The citizens follow*', the scene ending with Brutus crying 'Seize the viper Who wishes to depopulate a city to be Its one and all' (2449). Sicinius has lines similar to these in Shakespeare when he, Brutus and 'the Rabble' re-enter at line 263. This is also the first scene in which Shakespeare refers to the citizens as '*the Plebeians*'; Brecht refers to them as such in most of his notes on the adaptation yet calls them *Bürger* throughout the play.

Also missing from Brecht's treatment of this scene are the temporary truce worked out by Menenius and the contradictory juxtapositions which highlight the similarities between the opposed factions. One striking example of the effect of these elements in the original is in the following speech from Cominius:

That is the way to lay the city flat,
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all which yet distinctly ranges
In heaps and piles of ruin, (III,i,204-207)

Sicinius' 'This deserves death' completes the last line, and though presumably aimed at Marcius, because of its content and position in the text it sounds like the

completion of Cominius' speech, blurring the division between each faction's leaders, increasing the visible confusion. Such strategies hamper Brecht's attempt at clearly focusing on the class struggle from the plebeian point of view.

Brecht's III.1 is a compressed version of Shakespeare's III.11. What he omits is due to cutting in the previous scene: i.e. the parallel between the nobility coaching Marcius here, which he retains, and the tribunes coaching the citizens in Shakespeare's previous scene, cut from Brecht's II.111. He also cuts the tribunes' instruction to the Aedile in Shakespeare's III.111 where it is used to reinforce the parallel, from the beginning of his own III.11, replacing it with official language which again represents the tribunes as commendable heroes. His cutting throughout this scene portrays the tribunes as calm, sensible and businesslike. By cutting the scenes in which they are coached, Brecht's citizens become a united front acting on their own to condemn Marcius after Sicinius accuses him of treason a second time. Marcius' harangue in Shakespeare (III.111.111-116), is much more abusive in Brecht, e.g. 'And here remain with your uncertainty!' (III.111.126) becomes 'Stay here in Rome, shaking with Fear, shitting yourselves, when a plume Of unfamiliar colour appears at the gate' (2459)). Shakespeare ends this scene with more coaching of 'the Plebeians' from Sicinius, who also demands a personal body guard (III.111.140-143). Brecht

cuts this, ending his scene with the citizens flinging their headgear in the air while chanting 'The enemy of the people is gone, is gone!' (2460).

Brecht's III.iii and III.iv are basically the same as Shakespeare's IV.i and IV.ii; however he completely transforms Shakespeare's IV.iii to begin his fourth act. Instead of Shakespeare's disguised Roman spy meeting his Volscian contact to inform him of recent events in Rome, Brecht portrays the meeting of two old friends: a Roman tanner and a Volscian rope maker. Brecht constructs a scene of harmony and trade between the two cities where nothing changes much ('We sleep, eat and pay taxes' (2465)). They are both happy Marcius has been exiled, and the scene ends as they go their separate ways followed by '*a disguised man coming from the direction of Rome. It is Coriolanus*' (2466). Although Shakespeare's IV.iii seems gratuitous, it shows an instance of Roman espionage referred to at I.ii.6-16 and also sets up the following scene in which Marcius appears in disguise. The chance meeting of spy and informer on the road is parallel^ed by Marcius finding himself outside the house he is seeking when he asks a passing citizen for its location. This prompts his speech on chance (IV.iv.12-26). Brecht's adaptation of Shakespeare's IV.iii is as seemingly gratuitous, but it does serve as an isolated incident showing solidarity between working people despite enmity at the government and military level. It does not help to set up the next scene as Shakespeare's

does, but there is a parallel between these workmen and the servants in the following scene. Brecht in no way emphasises this point through the text, but working as they do for Aufidius, the servants are gruff, bullying and impatient; they are not as happy nor as friendly as the pair of workmen.

Brecht's IV.ii is a combination of Shakespeare's IV.iv and v. There is the usual compression, but only two points are worth noting. In Shakespeare Marcius says 'I have deserv'd no better entertainment In being Coriolanus' (IV.v.9-10) while alone on stage. Brecht on the other hand has him declare to the Second Servant 'All right. I deserve no better reception: I am Coriolanus' (2467). This remark goes unnoticed. Brecht ends his scene with Aufidius inviting Marcius in, cutting the Servingmen's dialogue in which they discuss their surprise that the muffled man was Marcius, his enthusiastic reception even to his being given charge of one half of Aufidius' force, and their preference for war rather than peace (IV.v.148-233). This last point leads directly to Sicinius' speech which begins Shakespeare's next scene.

Brecht's IV.iii is based on Shakespeare's IV.vi. Here again Shakespeare shows the tribunes to be as proud and self-loving as they accuse Marcius of being in a brief exchange with some passing citizens and the discussion which follows it (IV.vi.19-37). Brecht removes all trace of this parallel, maintaining his

portrayal of the tribunes as exemplary heroes until the Messenger enters to inform them of a slave's news that Marcius has joined the Volscians. As in Shakespeare, Brecht's tribunes insist that the slave be whipped as a provoking rumour monger (2474). This is the only instance where Brecht's tribunes show a bad side to their characters. There are a few minor changes: Marcius conquers Corioli a second time - 'Corioli is in flames' (2475); 'Your franchises, whereon you stood, confin'd Into an auger's bore' (IV.vi.87-88) becomes 'Now you can take your beloved Attested rights and stuff them in a couple mouseholes In the old part of town' (2476). The most significant change concerns the citizens: in Shakespeare they are anxious to the point of changing their minds about banishing Marcius in the face of the present danger; in Brecht they show concern but no sign of panic, in fact quite the reverse: 'I would rather show A weapon than courage' (2478).

Brecht retains the discussion between Aufidius and his Lieutenant (Brecht has '*a captain*') concerning Marcius' power and Aufidius' plans for using it against him making no changes of note. His changes to V.i are also small, serving to bolster Brecht's portrayal of the tribunes as heroes, the nobles as villains. Where Shakespeare shows all citizens lamenting the present dangerous state Rome is in, Brecht has only the nobles lamenting while his tribunes stand firm. He follows Cominius' statement that Marcius will answer to no name

'Till he had forg'd himself a name i'th'fire Of burning Rome' (V.i. 14-15) with Sicinius' 'Or fails' (2481). Brecht's tribunes exit after demanding that arms be distributed among the citizens and do not beg Menenius to visit Marcius. There are also references to smoke which would signal Rome's surrender. He ends his scene with Cominius' 'He will not hear him either' (V.i.62), which becomes much more desperate given the new context.

Brecht compresses Shakespeare's V.ii for his adaptation of this scene, adding only the stage direction '*Coriolanus looks to see if smoke rises*' after his entrance (2484). Brecht reverses the order of events represented in Shakespeare's V.iii and iv, but his own V.iii bares little resemblance to its original. Shakespeare begins V.iv with Menenius and Sicinius, while Brecht has Menenius enter to Cominius and senators who await him. He tells them of his failure to convince Marcius to spare Rome, using lines he delivers to Sicinius later in Shakespeare (V.iv.13, 17-19 and 24). Brecht gives Sicinius' line 'The gods be good unto us' (V.iv.30) to Cominius. He brings the tribunes and citizens on stage, rather than the messenger who enters in Shakespeare; he also has Menenius and the senators exit at this point, with Cominius remaining. There is no mention in the adaptation of the tribunes needing to fear for their lives (V.iv.34-38). Brecht then adds several lines of dialogue in which Brutus chastises the cowardly nobles, a citizen reports that 'The majority [of

citizens] have reported for military service' and that the rest will also report now that Menenius has failed, to which Brutus replies 'Why should masons not defend their walls?' (2486). Cominius joins the citizens in their planned defence of the city, announcing 'You shall be given weapons' to shouts of praise from the citizens (2487). It is announced too that Volumnia along with four other noble women 'request permission to see Caius Marcius'. During the debate which follows Brecht gives Cominius a line based on the one Shakespeare gives Menenius to open the scene: 'Do you see that projection on the Capital, the cornerstone?'. This conversation continues for a few lines as in Shakespeare until Brutus answers that Volumnia will be able to tell Marcius that the citizens and some of the nobility will fight against him, concluding 'That stone you see there is immovable. An earthquake, and perhaps I will move it after all' (2487). It is decided that the women be allowed to go to Marcius in order to gain some time, but a trustworthy serving woman is to be sent with them to report their conversation. The scene ends with Brutus declaring that he and many others believe Rome without Marcius is a city 'worth defending Perhaps for the first time since it was founded' (2488).

Brecht's V.iv is a truncated version of Shakespeare's V.iii with a few small additions. He begins with another reference to smoke. Aufidius is anxious and suspicious. Omitted are the vow Marcius utters just before the women

enter (V.iii.17-20), all emotion between Marcius and Virgilia, and the symbolic kneeling of Marcius and Volumnia. Brecht's Volumnia asks Young Marcius to kneel, but his father prevents him. Her first long speech is shortened although its content remains close to the original. However, Brecht completely rewrites her final speech. As Marcius rises saying 'I have sat too long' Volumnia responds:

Not only before us, Forget the
Petty hardship, that it is awkward for me -
Because your father did not make me accustomed to it -
To wrap my face in my scarf now when I
Go out of the house, leave childish emotion, know
That you march on a very different Rome
From the one you deserted, Irreplaceable
You are no more, only a deadly
Danger to all, Wait not for the smoke
Of submission! If you see smoke
It will be rising from the smithies, which now forge
Swords against you, who wishes to set his foot on the necks
Of his own people and for that
Submits himself to his enemy. But we
The splendour and nobility of Rome
Must now thank the mob for salvation from the Volscians or
Your Volscians for salvation from the mob! Let us go,
The man has a Volscian for his mother
His wife is in Corioli, this child
Resembles him by chance, (2492)

With that the emissaries leave and the scene ends with Marcius' 'Oh, mother, mother! Oh! What have you done?'. He does not silently hold her by the hand before these lines, nor are there any lines from Aufidius. Marcius capitulates because of the new situation in Rome rather than through filial piety. Brecht's transformation of this scene is outlined in the following note:

Volumnia does not beg her son to turn around, she does not kneel, she shows him only the hopelessness of the situation, Rome is not dependent on his return, the plebs will defend the state - democracy will succeed whatever. The wielding of power by the aristocracy alone is finished, Coriolan is blamed for the downfall

of his class.

Coriolan does not turn back because of filial piety, but because he knows that he has overestimated himself, (BBA 650 24, Subiotto 1975: 158-9; tr, Rossi)

Subiotto comments that 'the ground of this important scene is shifted from emotion to reason and its dimensions are scaled down, with a resultant change in quality', noting also a reduction in Marcius' heroic stature (Subiotto 1975: 158). There is a balance in Volumnia's pleading in the original: she sues for a peace both sides can be happy with. When this fails she bids Young Marcius speak: 'Perhaps thy childishness will move him more Than our reasons' (V.iii.157-158). But her reasoned pleading is undercut by her characterisation as a manipulative dissembler who had earlier bid her son speak, 'But with such words that are but roted in Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables Of no allowance to your bosom's truth' (III.ii.55-57). Shakespeare mixes reason with emotion in her final speech and in the entire scene whereas Brecht includes only reason, as any emotion would allow empathy with Marcius or the nobility.

Shakespeare's V.v is a seven line scene celebrating the return of the victorious emissaries. Menenius, Sicinius and the two messengers from V.iv could still be on stage as the procession passes above and thus be included in the 'All' which shouts a welcome to the ladies. Brecht's V.v consists of these four lines:

MESSENGER News!

The Volscians withdraw and Marcius with them!

BRUTUS The stone has moved, The people raise

Weapons, and the old earth trembles, (2493)

The people fighting for their cause is the earthquake Brutus spoke of in V.iii. This scene builds upon the changes made to Volumnia's speech in V.iv, and continues to decentre Marcius to the benefit of the tribunes.

Brecht's V.vi is approximately half the length of Shakespeare's. There are no conspirators, Aufidius taunts Marcius with 'mummy's boy', they argue until an Officer shouts 'That means death!' at which point Aufidius orders his officers to kill Marcius, which they do to the citizens' shouts of 'He killed my son. - My Daughter ... My Father' (2495-6). There is no ironic oration from Aufidius, no dead march: Marcius is killed and the scene ends.

Brecht's final scene portrays daily business in the senate of the new Roman Republic. A consul announces in clipped, official language that lands taken from the inhabitants of Corioli have been restored to them, a motion instigated by the tribunes. As a senator moves that a new aqueduct be built a messenger brings in a note, read by the consul, announcing the death of Marcius. Silence follows. Menenius then moves that his name be inscribed on the capitol, but he is cut off by Brutus who moves that the senate continue with its daily business. The consul then reads the rest of the note which says that Marcius' family ask permission to wear mourning in public to which Brutus replies 'Denied' (2496-7).

The final word in Brecht's play - 'Denied' - contrasts sharply with Shakespeare's final 'Assist'. The ironic closure of Shakespeare's tragedy gives some support to Shaw's tongue-in-cheek description of *Coriolanus* as one of Shakespeare's greatest comedies. Marcius' end is exasperating and somewhat ridiculous; Aufidius' tribute is hollow and contrived as if he, like so many others in the play, had been coached beforehand. The unrelenting questioning of Shakespeare's play soils processes and personal integrity to such a degree that Marcius seems the only character worthy of respect, but he too is as contradictory as the other characters and the concepts by which they live.

The rather gloomy Rome of *Coriolanus* is transformed by Brecht into a city filled with united, revolutionary citizens who fight to create a Rome which is worth fighting for. Their utopia-like world still has a hollow ring to it, but one different from Shakespeare's. Brecht dismantles the dialectical structure of Shakespeare's hero until there is nothing left but an evil and arrogant soldier modelled after Hitler. Public mourning would only serve to glorify his memory; the new Rome does not need such heroes or their personal tragedies:

His new tragedy: Coriolan will not, as he hoped, be recalled to Rome, but the state has armed itself against him. The magnetic hold of his indispensability is over. It emerges that everyone, even he, is dispensable. He was useful as a hero, but his price - the submission of Rome - is too high for society. Coriolan's tragedy is thereby elevated from the private - the conflict between mother and son - to the social level: the usefulness of individuals for society. (BBA 650 24, Subiotto 1975: 159; tr. Rossi)

The adaptation transforms unremitting interrogation

into unrelenting affirmation, and it is for this reason that Brecht's adaptation works only as a parody which *verfremds* the original and cannot stand on its own as an example of dialectical drama. His Marcius is not a complete character according to Brecht's own definition; on the contrary, he fits his definition of the bourgeois hero:

The bourgeois theatre's performances always aim at smoothing over contradictions, at creating false harmony, at idealisation. Conditions are reported as if they could not be otherwise; characters as individuals, incapable by definition of being divided, cast in one block, manifesting themselves in the most various situations, likewise for that matter existing without any situation at all. If there is any development it is always steady, never by jerks; the developments always take place within a definite framework which cannot be broken through, (BOT 277)

The contradictions present in Shakespeare's Marcius are missing in Brecht's portrayal; there is no contradiction between what the nobility say about Marcius and what he does: Brecht makes him the sadistic killing machine Shakespeare's nobles create only through hyperbolic encomium. As Brecht portrays him he is the same in every situation, unchanging, moving steadily toward his own death as the spirit of the new age overtakes him.

In addition, Brecht's tribunes are - with only one small exception - paragons who lead their people to victory. They too are without the dialectical contradictions of Shakespeare's portrayal which shows their manipulative tactics and self-esteem to be as advanced as that of the nobility. Brecht creates a false harmony between the people and their tribunes and among the people themselves, idealising their battle for

democracy until the outcome is inevitable: when the people unite and take up arms against their oppressors, their power assures their victory as inevitably as an earthquake moves mountains. It is not a matter of fixing the 'not ... but ...' but of stating 'it could not be otherwise'. For this reason Brecht's adaptation can be considered neither epic nor dialectic. And, except for its support of a doctrinaire interpretation of Marxism focusing on the class struggle, it cannot be considered Marxist in the sense of demonstrating the critical and ultimately self-critical attitude Brecht sought. In a letter to Ferdinand Lasalle concerning his drama *Fritz von Sickingen* (19 April 1859), Marx criticises the playwright for being unhistorical and unrevolutionary. His comments illustrate what makes Brecht's *Coriolan* both un-Marxist and un-Shakespearean. Marx tells Lasalle that Sickingen and Hutten imagine themselves as revolutionaries who also represent

the interests of a reactionary class. The *aristocratic* representatives of the revolution - behind whose watchwords of unity and liberty there still lurked the dream of the empire and of club-law - should, in that case, not have absorbed all interest, as they do in your play, but the representatives of the peasants (particularly these) and of the revolutionary elements in the cities ought to have formed a quite significant active background. In that case you could to a much greater extent have allowed them to voice the most modern ideas in their most native form, whereas now, besides *religious* freedom, civil *unity* actually remains the main idea. You could then have been automatically compelled to write more in *Shakespeare's* manner whereas I regard your gravest shortcoming the fact that *à la Schiller* you transform individuals into mere mouthpieces of the spirit of the time. (Marx *et al.*, 1976: 99-100)

Brecht also transforms individuals into mere mouthpieces and although he grants the citizens and their tribunes a

large portion of 'interest', his treatment of them does not present contradictions for examination, nor does it question existing or privileged ideologies; on the contrary, it smooths over contradictions in order to privilege a chosen perspective.

In attempting to smooth over contradictions Brecht is subject to his own criticism and it can thus be argued that his adaptation actually subverts its own aims. Brutus becomes the tyrant he feared Marcius would be, pre-empting debate in the senate by acting as the voice of 'the people' and dominating the proceedings. His denial to Marcius' family of permission to mourn in public contrasts sharply with his professional behaviour in the rest of the play where it is continually justified by the correctness of the cause he has fought for and won. An anachronistic 'dictatorship of the proletariat' replaces the dictatorship the citizens thought Marcius was seeking, prefiguring later Roman 'dictators' such as Caesar as well as more modern examples like Hitler and Stalin. Thus the problematic question of whether Brecht is consistently interrogative remains unresolved as do questions concerning why he abandoned work on *Coriolan*. The adaptation is potentially critical of the Soviet influence in Germany, but without the rigorous criticism available through Shakespearean dramaturgy it can only offer what the Philosopher in *The Messingkauf* calls 'Feeble criticism' because the chosen point of view makes 'genuine criticism' impossible: the audience is drawn

towards identifying with the citizens, coming to terms with the world and 'the world stayed as it was' (*MD* 27); in the case of the Rome of *Coriolan* one group of smug, uncompromising rulers is replaced by another.

Brecht's narrowing perspective is also evident in the selections he made from among his own plays for production by the Berliner Ensemble as well as the changes he made to them prior to and during production. The contradictory perspectives represented in *The Good Person of Szechwan* were thought to be too difficult and the play was left unrevised and unperformed by the Ensemble until after Brecht's death. An *U1* production was discussed while Brecht was preparing the text for publication in 1953 but he felt that a production of *Fear and Misery* would have to come first in order to prepare German audiences - including his Ensemble colleagues - for the satire of his gangster play. In sharp contrast to *Coriolan* where the citizens take an active role in determining their own destiny or in writing their own history, in *U1* 'the people' are virtually absent, a fact the East German critic Lothar Kusche did not fail to point out. Brecht agreed with Lothar on this and several other points but argues that 'it is possible to object to the term "the people", as used to signify something "higher" than population, and to show how the term conjures up the notorious concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*, or a "sense of being one people"' that links the oppressed with the oppressor (*U1* 107). These comments

suggest another reason for Brecht's turning from *Coriolan* to other projects.

Of the plays he did produce with the Ensemble, the relatively few shifts of emphasis in *Mother Courage* attempt to bring out her short-sightedness and to *verfremd* audience sympathy. Similar changes were made to *Puntila*: all 'bourgeois' characters with the exception of Puntila's daughter wore 'more or less grotesque masks and moved in a foolish, regal manner.' Brecht argues that any suggestion that these changes 'amount to symbolism would be unfounded. ... The theatre is simply adopting an attitude and heightening significant aspects of reality, to wit, certain physiognomical malformations to be found in parasites' (*Puntila* 122-3). If Brecht was adopting a less flexible dramaturgy he was at least maintaining his sense of humour. The reasons for these changes are made clear in an introductory note for the 1949 production of *Puntila*:

Our new audience, being engaged in building a new life for itself, insists on having its say and not just accepting what happens on the stage ('That's how things are and what's to change them?'); it doesn't like having to guess the playwright's viewpoint, (*ibid*, 118)

Where this viewpoint had once been problematic and self-critical, it looked to be becoming cautiously supportive of a more dogmatic ideology. But if one of the aims of the Berliner Ensemble was to rebuild the German theatre in order to find 'the way to Shakespeare, the way back' as Brecht saw in 'the realistic and yet grand style' of *Der Hofmeister* (*AJ* 916 (5 Mar. 1950); tr. Rossi), then

Brecht's work in his last years should be seen as a process of educating the 'new audience' in order to prepare them again for the dialectical dramaturgy Brecht himself learned through studying Shakespeare.

NOTES

1. The passages from the BBA taken from Subiotto's study, which is concerned with the differences between Brecht's text as he left it and the Berliner Ensemble production, are used here in a different context to his. His views are included where context coincides.

2. Subiotto calculates that they amount to only 17% of the published text, not including in his calculation the incomplete I.iii which corresponds to Shakespeare's I.iv-x (Subiotto 1975: 150).

3. References from Shakespeare's play are cited by line number, whereas those from Brecht's are by page number in *GW* 5-6. All quotations from Brecht's play are in my own translations.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN BIBLIOGRAPHY

<i>BH</i>	:	<i>Brecht Heute/Brecht Today</i>
<i>CL</i>	:	<i>Comparative Literature</i>
<i>CQ</i>	:	<i>Cambridge Quarterly</i>
<i>ELH</i>	:	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>ELR</i>	:	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
<i>ELS</i>	:	<i>English Literary Studies</i>
<i>GLL</i>	:	<i>German Life and Letters</i>
<i>GR</i>	:	<i>German Review</i>
<i>KR</i>	:	<i>Kenyon Review</i>
<i>MD</i>	:	<i>Modern Drama</i>
<i>MLR</i>	:	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>RD</i>	:	<i>Renaissance Drama</i>
<i>SEL</i>	:	<i>Studies in English Literature</i>
<i>SJ</i>	:	<i>Shakespeare Jahrbuch (West)</i>
<i>SQ</i>	:	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>SS</i>	:	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
<i>SUAS</i>	:	<i>Stratford-upon-Avon Studies</i>
<i>TDR</i>	:	<i>The Drama Review (formerly Tulane Drama Review)</i>
<i>UTQ</i>	:	<i>University of Toronto Quarterly</i>

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