THEORY OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

according to Bertolt Brecht

as interpreted from some of his major works

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INTRODUCTION

Herr K. zog die Stadt B. der Stadt A. vor. "In der Stadt A.", sagte er, "liebt man mich; aber in der Stadt B. war man zu mir freundlich. In der Stadt A. machte man sich mir nützlich; aber in der Stadt B. brauchte man mich. In der Stadt A. bat man mich an den Tisch; aber in der Stadt B. bat man mich in die Küche."

Bertolt Brecht was a man so obsessed by his commitment, that his writings and personal life both exemplify the paradoxical nature and extent of his engagement. When undertaking to study Brecht, one is confronted with propagandistic terminology and dialectics of the Marxian philosophy to the degree that isolating Brecht's personal ideology from his sycophantic loyalty to the party's understandings brings one nigh to hysteria. However, it is to be hoped that Brecht retained some private identity of his own in the midst of his confrontation with and defence of the ideology. The purpose of this study is not to elucidate the myth of one, Bertolt Brecht, but to delve momentarily into the dilemma presented by his theory and practice of one aspect—that of the human condition, or involvement—in some of his major works.

In order to avoid trite, romantic carvarks like "mysterious", "paradox", or "mythical", let us rather ponder the poet, Brecht, as a man characteristic of, influenced by, and deeply involved in his times. It is not ours to question why, rather to consider the effect which Brecht had, or even further the reason for his PROTO HUM effect. Martin Esslin, one of the most notable Brecht biographers, calls Brecht a "failure", but admits THAT IS NOT his importance as a writer.

Let us also avoid petty arguments as to whether Brecht "really was", or was not, a card-carrying member of the Communist Party, and concern ourselves as to how his writings were influenced by Marx, especially with respect to Brecht's theory of humanism.

In an attempt for objectivity, it is to be aspired that popular and sometimes politically confusing nomenclature, like proletariat and bourgeoisie, may be avoided; however, in most cases, and for clarification, this is sometimes wholly inevitable. And as the title of this paper is Brecht's theory of the human condition as interpreted by this writer in some of his major works, and due to the fact that Brecht's theory of the human condition was almost completely influenced by what Esslin calls "Marxian humanism", this terminology will be resorted to.

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3 Ibid. p. 235.
In an attempt to intimate the influences and aims of Brecht's writings, the Marxist method of literary interpretation will be to a certain extent employed, i.e., a biographical sketch of the man and his experiences follows; so that the reader, hopefully, receives an understanding of Brecht's situation. Also as a means of clarification, and due to the fact that the two are inseparable, some attempt at clarification of Brecht's theory of the theater is likewise sequel.
Germany of the 1920's--vivid experiences of war, revolution, and economic collapse. (p. 66) Sport was the culture of this mythical world, jazz its music, the Salvation Army the most intriguing religion. (p. 68) Boxing, wrestling, racing became the symbolic forms of struggle, whisky and ale the drinks, "Virginia" the correct brand of cigar. (p. 68)

This was Germany after the First World War, with its bloated and ignorant nouveaux riches, its stock-exchange gamblers and black marketeers, and all the prostitution and degradation that surrounded them. This was the world that George Grosz depicted in his devastating drawings. And this world Brecht attacked with the weapon of his newly discovered Marxist analysis. (p. 161)

Born February 10, 1898 in Augsburg into a family of a mixed Catholic-Protestant marriage, young Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht took pride in following the lead of his grandmother as a rebel against the social order, and class-bourgeoisie--which brought about the war. He interrupted his medical studies at the University in Munich to serve as a medical orderly in the army. Brecht, deeply disturbed by the horrors of the war, in the revolution of November, 1918 in Bavaria, sympathized with the communists.

In 1921 Brecht accepted the position of Dramaturg in the Munich Kammerspiele, but threw over this job and moved in 1924 to Berlin, which being an example of a den of iniquity of the times, attracted and allured him. BB as he came to call himself loved being taken for a "dangerous fellow" and delighted in affronting "polite society"

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid. p. 56.
with his appearance: "He wore waistcoats with cloth sleeves, a leather tie, a mechanic's or lorry driver's leather jacket and a dirty visored cap. He was still unshaven... His hair was combed forward in a fringe, and the steel-rimmed glasses... were the most prominent feature of his face."\(^6\)

In Berlin, Brecht published his poems and plays and took glee in every scandal his works caused amongst the "bourgeoisie". When in 1930 his lawsuit against Nero Film for their version of his *Dreigroschenoper* was lost, Brecht considered his point won, as the rights of the author, and artist, to veto variations on a work came to the public's attention. His "boundless ambition [was] to have influence"\(^7\) as Esslin puts it, and Brecht, his collaborators and friends delighted in making his name and theory of experiment in the theater known. However, Brecht's influence was not so great, as due to his communist and anti-Nazi sympathies, he was forced to flee Germany on February 28, 1933. There follows the story of his flight through Europe: Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, France, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and even lastly, America. Brecht's plight was even more severe than his German author compatriots as he needed a theater to try his theory and produce his plays--in German. His only means of livelihood was thwarted in that the new public could not support his German-spoken works.

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In the course of the Cold War surge of communists in America, Brecht was forced to leave America, which had not supported him very well anyway as he did not even care for the eating habits. The fiasco of his appearance before the Un-American Activities Committee in Washington was another feather in Brecht's cap as it brought more public attention to him. He left America for Switzerland to consider his next step, having made his mark upon university theaters in America.

Brecht with his residence in Switzerland travelled to Germany (East) for productions of his plays. One dilemma faced him: whether to return to Germany—East or West: "the choice between lavishly subsidized but severely restricted working conditions in a Communist state and the limitations imposed on the artist by a free, but commercial society." Brecht's decision here was to be purely a personal one, as his political influences dictated the East. At another level this decision of Brecht reflected the paradoxical situation of the individual against society. The question is of dialectic importance as one could interpret it one of two ways: either Brecht would join the side of the competitive society which would result in the suppression of his individual ego and consequential destruction of his id by the pressures of the same society (Marxian interpretation); or, he could subject his individuality, i.e. ego, to the totalitarian society and its masses (non-Marxian interpretation). The question

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8 Ibid. p. XVII.
becomes purely rhetorical when one considers that Brecht's would-be influence in the non-Marxian West was never tested and also further becomes rhetorical, depending upon the reader's personal view. The fact that Brecht was not terribly favorably impressed with the East German society remains:

He was appalled by what he found on his return to Germany [East]: the bureaucracy of the authorities, the vulgar, petty bourgeois tastes of the population, the horrible tastelessness of the goods offered for sale—and eagerly bought by the people....[Brecht's] argument [was] that people of a class that has just come to power desire first an abundance of the things they had seen in the homes of the class they displaced....from these realities the members of the ruling clique in East Germany were mercifully isolated; they had no contact with the people or with popular feeling.

On the other hand, what Brecht found and feared in West Germany was also not altogether promising.

It is not the aim of this paper to explain Brecht's decision to settle in East Germany, but one might consider that Brecht's measures to insure his own security in East Germany such as his Austrian passport, his Swiss bank account, and his West-German publisher were to compromise his freedom to experiment in his own state-supported theater in East Germany. In March of 1954, Brecht and his troupe, the Berliner Ensemble, took up residence in the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in East Berlin.

Brecht enjoyed his scandals and arguments with the party functionaries in East Germany as much as the earlier ones in West Germany. With his Schéikian philosophy and humor of surrender to pressure (whither it threatened) with the utmost drive being that of survival through the crisis,

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10Esslin, p. 96.
Brecht fought in East Berlin for his rights and managed to make the most of his situation. Naturally he received some setbacks and his plans were at times thwarted, but one might question who received the most from the arrangement. Brecht produced his "old" plays and continually annoyed the authorities by his failure to produce a propaganda play on the problems of East Germany, but he obsequiously accepted all prizes and grants offered him by the government. Upon receiving the Stalin Peace Prize in 1955 for his work against the re-militarization of West Germany, Brecht, rather cautiously and perhaps mockingly, placed his winnings in his Swiss bank account.

BB died August 14, 1956 of a coronary thrombosis in East Berlin. Brecht with his typical irony and humor dictated his obituary as follows: "Write that I was an uncomfortable person, and that I intend to remain so after my death." Whether earmarked as an "anarchist", a "nihilist", a "cynic", a "sentimental romantic revolutionary", or a would-be "teacher and liberator of men", Brecht remained an individual who fought against both kinds of society for the opportunity to make one voice and opinion heard. He remained a human being dedicated to changing the human condition and reforming society, whether for the better or not is a personal decision of the reader, and an assessment of one individual by another.

11 Ibid. p. 204.
12 Ibid. p. XVII.
Because Brecht's theory of the theater is not to be divorced from his works, it is necessary for the reader to have some understanding of the Brechtian theory. There follows a lengthy resumé of the "epic" theater which is drawn most heavily from Martin Esslin's clearly and informatively written book, *Brecht: The Man and His Work*.

"Brecht's general concept of the theatre... is a means of teaching and transforming society. The object was not so much to preach the political slogans of the moment as to query the rules under which men lived. It was no longer to shock, but to make men think." Brecht's theater was therefore an experiment in changing society. His aim was to incite the spectators into THINKING, not just about their personal situation, but about the condition of society itself, how it was wrong. It has been pointed out by numerous critics that Brecht's theater was negatively oriented as he only pointed out the ills of society and then had no basis for reconstruction, no suggestions as to HOW society and the individual human condition might be improved for the better.

In the event that the reader is totally unacquainted with the effect of Brecht's "epic" theater, one might refer to Erwin Piscator's form of the "epic" theater as the basis for Brecht's idea:

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14 Esslin, p. 75.
He [Piscator] put these spectacles on a constructivist stage and used graphs of statistics, explanatory captions, lantern slides of photographs or documents, newsreels, and documentary film sequences to convey the political or sociological background of the play, while the propaganda lesson was drawn by choruses, spoken or sung, on stage or in the auditorium, so that the spectators were inevitably drawn into the action.

Therefore, the total effect of Brecht's theater was a juxtaposition of varied media to offer support for the plot which developed in the work on stage.

In analyzing the theater of Brecht, one is confronted with terminology such as "epic" theater, Verfremdungseffekt, dialectics, Schrödinger characters etc. These elements reflect and explain the theory itself and at the same time these influences under which Brecht composed his works. One of the most important philosophies of Brecht's theater is that of Verfremdung, which simply is a process of non-identification, "alienation", or "estrangement", as it has been translated by many writers, with that which occurs on stage. In fact, "the audience must be DISCOURAGED from losing their critical detachment by IDENTIFICATION with one or more of the characters. The opposite of identification is the maintenance of a separate existence by being kept apart, alien, strange....the meaning of the famous Verfremdungseffekt" (italics Beolin's). It must be quite clear to the reader that this process of "detachment" was necessary for the critical audience in Brecht's theater.

16 Ibid. p. 132.
in a theatre, listening to an account (however vividly presented) of things that have happened
in the PAST at a certain time in a certain place. They are to sit back, relax, and reflect on the
lessons to be learned from those events of long ago, like the audience of the bards who sang of
the deeds of heroes in the houses of Greek kings
or Saxon earls, while the guests ate and drank.
Hence the term EPIC theatre.... The "epic" theatre
is strictly HISTORICAL; it constantly reminds
the audience that they are merely getting a report
of past events.18 (italics, quotes and parentheses Berlin's)

Dialectic, to the best of this writer's knowledge,
is a term from Hegel, adopted by Marx, and adapted by
Brecht. One definition would be that of "coining" or
"turning" a phrase. Dialectic is sprachbewusst; that
means that it depends most heavily on the nuances that
might be interpreted from the juxtaposition of seemingly
inconcurrent, likewise seemingly CONCURRENT, phraseology.
The writer refers the reader to the "Geschichte von Herrn
Keuner, Zwei Städte" as quoted on page 1 of this paper.
Brecht, his co-workers, and the Ensemble collaborated and
amended the text of Brecht's plays so that EACH AND EVERY
word might convey the EXACT meaning they felt best re-
flected the situation. Many times dialectics, or the
irony, of Brecht's writings may escape the reader by
his misunderstanding of what Brecht meant to convey;
therefore, the importance of SEEING one of Brecht's
plays to observe the dramatic quality of the Hegelian
dialectic: "For Brecht this ambiguity of all things,
the idea that nothing is really what it seems, consti-
tuted the essence of drama and poetry."19

The "Schweikian" hero is a character "borrowed"
by Brecht from Hašek whose main characteristic is one
of servility. "Schweik is more than a mere character;
he represents a basic human attitude. Schweik defeats

18 Ibid. pp. 131-2.
19 Ibid. p. 173.
the powers that be, the whole universe in all its absurdity, not by opposing but by complying with them. He is so servile, so eager to please and to carry out the letter of any regulation or command, that in the end the stupidity of the authorities, the idiocy of the law are ruthlessly exposed.\textsuperscript{20} Brecht prided himself on his own personal Schweikian tendencies in the face of opposition which he received from all quarters, even in the East. Perhaps his decision to settle in the East was a Schweikian one in that his aim was a selfish one of that of survival of himself and his kind of theater. Irregardless, Schweik belongs to Brecht's theater and his theory of the human condition if for no other reason than that of the instinctual one of survival.

As a point of further discussion and inquiry on the behalf of the reader, it may be interesting to relate Brecht's other influences upon his writing, besides Marx. As has already been referred to, Brecht chose his words with great care so as to present his arguments. Ernest Borneman has been quoted as follows regarding the four main sources of Brecht's language:

1) the daily speech of southern (i.e. Bavarian) Germany,
2) an anti-renaissance poetry of colors, textures, and other concrete images,
3) bureaucratic jargon,
4) Arcadianism and exotic expressions.\textsuperscript{21}

Other sources as quoted in Osling's work are as follows:
Luther's Bible—i.e. "the juxtaposition of contrasted half-sentences, parallelism, repetition, and inversion" (p. 112) (consider dialectics here); the Berlitz or street

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p. 37.
ballad, used by Brecht "in protest against the gentility and respectability of the bourgeois society he abhorred" (p. 112); Austrian (i.e. Carinthian) and Bavarian folk theatre; English pantomime (p. 113); Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare (p. 114); Dickens, W. H. Auden, and Kipling (p. 115); Swift, Genet, Victor Gollancz, Jack London, Chicago stories of the 40's, novelist J. V. Jones (The Steel), Dickens, innumerable crime stories, and gangster films (p. 115). From these varied sources and with the variety of media at his disposal, Brecht patched together his plays and poems for the delectation, i.e. mental, of the audiences.

It may be known to some readers that Brecht had been accused of plagiarism in more than one instance, but as Esslin puts it "Brecht loved to adapt and to modify the work of others. He needed the challenge of another mind to get the best from his own talent." Brecht may have "borrowed" from some of these sources, or he rather was "influenced" by them at one time or another, but his personal mark is evident in all of his works; he managed to introduce his own originality into all of his "interpretations": "his originality consisted of his uncanny ability to absorb and assimilate the most diverse and seemingly incompatible elements." The fact remains that Brecht's "epic" theater was one dedicated to social change and one of depicting the
"study of human RELATIONS."\textsuperscript{25} (italics Esslin's) The object is no longer one human being, rather "man's relation to society now stands at the center."\textsuperscript{26} Therefore the importance of the critical audience who should be prepared to "think along" with Brecht's works and reflect on the social condition. This was the aim of the theater of Brecht:

He thought that the "epic" theatre which aimed at awakening the spectator's critical faculty, which concentrated on showing mankind from the point of view of social relationships, would serve as an instrument of social change, a laboratory of revolutionary enlightenment: in other words, that the "epic" theatre was the Marxist theatre per excellence.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. p. 130.
\textsuperscript{27} Esslin. p. 130.
for the transformation to the morally perfect society; however, as a dramatist, and NOT a philosoher, he succeeded in bringing to light the problems. To his theory belongs the hope that the laws, being man-made, society—would provide the method in re-construction of society itself.

Brecht points out that "The poet resists within Brecht] always had to hide behind the Marxist." This statement seems to be doubly important as it may be interpreted to elucidate Brecht's alterations to his scripts to reflect the party ideology, or it may also be interpreted as the conscious, perhaps subconscious, attempt to reconcile his artistic inclinations with communism. It is a fact that Brecht's extreme preoccupation with discipline, order, and scientific method was fulfilled by the self-discipline practices of Marxists. Due to his absorption with social change, Brecht transformed this introspection into his dramas by the artistic flaunting of "polite society". Brecht adhered closely to the Marxists teachings when it came to the problems of discipline and order; he infected society with his exaggerated self-built in rational and reconstructive for the "pure" society logic as a process for the "social ills."

Brecht, the rationalistic-Marxist, could not be pleased with the ideology of Marxists. Despite his own personality flaw, his human nature rebelled at some of the Marxists' strictures. With his rectifying re-examining of ideology, Brecht would save the red孱fille. 

78bid... etc.
exploiting the system. He never yielded his personal freedom to the communist state; with Schelling's ad-
herence to party dictates, Brecht succeeded in his personal fight for "Communism with a Human Face".\textsuperscript{9}

Unfortunately, Brecht failed to impart this dialectic secret to his audience. The unraveling of unity between
Brecht and Marx persists as one between a realistically inclined artistic personality striving for individual
rights and social freedom as opposed to a totalitarian, idealistic mass ideology of the classless society.

Acting under the influence of the Fenollosa interpretation of the Hegelian thesis on religion—"a pheno-
menon of human estrangement"—\textsuperscript{30} Marx formulated his social theory around the alienated man's struggle for self-
realization. The epic theater of Brecht with its Ver-
freundung theory was an especially suitable exemplification of this idea of social consciousness. The "theater of
illusion" being the antithesis of epic theater subse-
quently had to be destroyed, for "awareness of illusions
[was] the condition for freedom and human action."\textsuperscript{31}

This is not the existentialist's engagement, rather it is an inverted force exerted by society upon the individual
inhibiting his consumption. The "estranged" or "alienated"
man must be educated to his emancipation, and THIS Brecht
hoped to achieve in his revolutionary dramas for con-
sciousness of the self and society.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid. p. 231.


\textsuperscript{31}Fromm, p. 110.
"If history was merely the outcome of human struggles, and the laws that governed these were known, the fate of mankind could be controlled." 32 This Marxist challenge was pursued by Brecht in his effort to make the audience conscious of the central element in their power. The basic Brechtian drama theory, as earlier referred to, is one of social change dependent upon the critical awareness of the individual of his incapability for self-realization through analysis and successive unmasking of the problem. Coinciding with Marx's assertion of "History [gives the] career to man's self-realization," 33 the concept of the epic theater and Brecht's defense of this kind of theater being the true representative of the Marxist social theory (see note on page 15).

Then defining labor in its original or non-alienated form as 'life activity', 'productive labor', 'productive activity', and then succeed to define the alienated labor and consciousness of man as 'free conscious activity' (from being 'natural activity'). In alienated labor the free and conscious activity of man becomes extended into alienated activity and that 'life itself' ceases only as a 'CERT. OF HATE.'... 'Alienation is for "love, the sickness of man."' (italics, quotes, and parentheses Fromm's)

The above quotation then considered philosophically or socially rather than economically, is essential in the education of man to self-awareness and the Marxist-Brecht social theories. The alienation of man by society is superimposed onto the individual existence, so that man becomes alienated from himself. The superego (society)
undermines the id (instinct) causing a change to occur in the instinctual realm and structural center of drives, so that the instincts themselves are altered; the ego (identity) is skirted entirely, thus no opportunity for its realization exists.  

Marx proposed the solution for man's frustrated drive for self-attainment in his social theories. This same perspective was adapted by Brecht in his aim for social consciousness. Socialism is "the cure for modern man; it is a society in which man becomes the conscious subject of history, experiences himself as the subject of his powers and thus emancipates himself from the bondage to things and circumstances."  

This process is another definition of the famous Verfremdungseffekt. The fact that the individual is currently psychologically exploited rather than purely physically exploited was foreseen by both Marx and Brecht; however, society has so perfected its means to reduce man to a consuming slave, that it denies him a chance for consumption. The self-alienated man (i.e. society) has not attained the stage in his emancipation to overcome these continuous threats to self-attainment. Although socialism was to be the cure for this problem, the inhibition of self-realization by society continues to plague alienated man due to the imperfections in the execution of the theory. "Because the alienated person has transformed his own functions of feeling and thought to an object outside he is not himself, he has no sense of 'I', of identity."  

By awakening the critical analysis powers within an audience, Brecht strove to offer man the chance to realize his identity.
What is "human condition”? Human condition is people orientation. To be trite for a moment, the human element is too often forgotten! Not just the relation of one person to another or society is understood here, but what are people and life all about anyway? TRY NOT? There follows no discussion on the purpose of life, but to root out a perspective on humanity from everyday life, as much as it is taken for granted, seems intelligibly insurmountable. People-orientedly speaking, "human condition" encompasses: freedom, harshness, family, politics, business, and religion.

Naturally the above explanation is rather over-simplified, but it is to be hoped that the reader has enough patience to consider it as an introductory attempt, as the following section concerns Brecht’s interpretation as based on some of his major works. The writer proposes to handle the above topics in each work as they are emphasized by Brecht. That is to say that every topic is not to be found in each work. Therefore, those ideas which are enunciated in each work will be discussed, and those which otherwise are to be found will be summarized according to their importance as they were included by Brecht.

The plays used in the following discussion are considered to be works of major importance written by Brecht. From the perhaps erroneous premise that major works reflect a generalized view of the author concerning a theme, these works were selected and NOT selected for their coincidental specificity with respect to the human condition.
Summary:

Superficially this drama concerns the freedom of (scientific) inquiry. Galilei is threatened by the inquisition due to his heretical writings and proofs which displace man and earth itself as the center of the universe. In the new age of truth the institution of the church and its customary authority becomes questionable; in actuality, the perspective of mankind is so altered that the common man, in his early 18th century, demands his human rights. Tortured with torture instruments, Galilei, being a typical oecum, yields to force and publicly renounces his beliefs. A "necrocrat" of the church until his death, Galilei is forced to call upon for the critical behavior of sacrificing the truth and the deed of his research to save his own skin; he is cleared a criminal guilt with having betrayed "man's freedom and the battle for identity."

Here and elsewhere we could re-encounter the reality of the "Christian" church spirit. "Galilei became a criminal because to the Catholic he has "establish" the condition of the scientific's obedience to the state--the tradition that, according to freud reached its culmination in the production of the atomic bomb."

The concepts and ideas the human condition raised in this drama consist of those of freedom, and man's relation to religion in addition to the eternal identity crisis.

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*Caslin, p. 267-8.*
Galilei's own personal freedom to pursue his career challenges the control of the church, which further impedes the liberation of the common man. With the publication of his findings, especially in the language of the people, Galilei emphasizes the power of the masses through his stress on man's rationality. Suddenly every man is capable of governing his own existence and taking part in controlling his personal destiny, therefore society's also—the institution of society is threatened by the individual's freedom of thought. "Denn die alte Zeit is herum, und es ist eine neue Zeit....Was nie bezweifelt wurde, das wird jetzt bezweifelt." 39

"[Galilei's] most powerful instinct is curiosity. His greatest sensual pleasure is the pleasure of discovery.... The urge for knowledge, the most rational side of human endeavor, science itself, is shown as merely another of man's basic, instinctive urges, just as deeply rooted in the irrational as the instinct for procreation." 40

Galilei's personal task was that of enlightenment; it simultaneously satisfied his personal drives and likewise served humanity as a liberating force. "Dazu, daß man es begreift, arbeite ich und kaufe die teuern Bücher, statt den Milchmann zu bezahlen." 41 Therefore when thwarted by time limitations due to obligations at the university, Galilei rebels against the exploitation of his freedom to pursue self-attainment: "Herr, ich habe zu viele! [Privatschüler] Ich lehre und lehre, und wann soll ich lernen?...Wann soll ich forschen? Herr, meine Wissen-

40 Esslin, p. 267.
schaft ist noch wissbegierig!

A Brechtian addition to this justifiable complaint of Galilei is his natural anger at financial exploitation as well, which is also imposed by the institution of the university (i.e. state of Padua):

"Dein Schutz der Gedankenfreiheit ist ein ganz gutes Geschäft, wie? Endlich ihr darauf verweist, daß wunders
die Inquisition herrscht und brennt, nicht ihr hier billige
gute Lehrrkräfte. Den Schutz vor der Inquisition laßt ihr
euch damit verzehren, daß ihr die schlechtesten Schüler
sucht."

"It's the shift of emph sis to man's rational nature,
"die sanfte Gedicht der Vernunft", a revolution amongst
two waves in the form of a questioning of the fairness of
the status and a search for liberation from the catalytic
force of the church breaks out:

Es [das Gedicht der] Böttner sich: Die
erzwecklosen [kunde und] keinen des term
[Galilei's] Hälfte Galilei vor ein Vor-
tescuch [der Ordnung].

le bein [beste] Wucht nur, das sich
ein jährlich ein

Vichter, oder, das bester ist die er.

Das, ich sehen sich, ist die [harte Ordnung;
ordndum, die die humane Gesellschaft ade;
ren, oder der], die noble der [noble, mor-
ität, ich lehre die, verstehst

als Schule der [theor].

Dem [dich, dem] Rektor Galilei....

Hat sich [mehr]: Nichts steht!

Ich will [kennen] die ordnung da.

ich [muß] mich [daraus] heraus.As

und [also] auch sein: Das ist noch ein.

"Das ist noch ein...

Der hier die unbürokrat [mehr] rein al per

sehr und fahrend?"

The church's one severe concern was the threat of the

\[\text{Thid. p. 15,}\]  \[\text{Thid. p. 21,}\]
\[\text{Kern. p. 18.}\]  \[\text{Thid. p. 24-5.}\]
inquisition. Galilei, a hero of the present century, was brought to trial. His decision was to be crucial for mankind as should be recognized, each individual would lose his right for expression of the self, so nearly joined as a result of Galileo's publications; and should he chose to become a martyr, then the first vital sacrifice for and step towards liberation would be made. The pupils of Galilei entrained in his teachings of the validity and force of the truth were confident in the victory of truth and reason over the power of the church:

Und mit Gewalt kann man nicht unesehen machen,
was gesehen wurde....Also: es geht nicht mit
Gewalt! Sie kann nicht alles! Also: die Tor-
heit wird besiegt, sie ist nicht unverletzlich!
Also: der Mensch fürchtet den Tod nicht! Jetzt
beginnt wirklich die Zeit des Wissens. Das ist
die Geburtsstunde....Aber es ist alles verändert
heute! Der Mensch hebt den Kopf, der Gepeinigte,
und sagt: ich kann leben. So viel ist gewonnen,
und sagt! 46

The victory seems assured and the battle for human rights is free to realize its course in destiny--BUT Galilei renounces! Galilei, the Schweikian hero, retracts his findings. Galilei's only defence offered is that the time was not yet ripe for the victory of reason over the institution: "Unglücklich das Land, das Helden nötig hat..." 47

All appears to have been in vain--man's fight for self-attainment, until at the end a new ethic is suggested which pleads for patience in the ensuing battle: "Sie versteckten die Wahrheit. Vor dem Feind. Auch auf dem Felde der Ethik waren Sie [Galilei] uns um Jahrhunderte voraus....Mit dem Mann auf der Straße sagten wir: Er wird sterben, aber er

46 Ibid. p. 111-2.
wird nie widerrufen.--Sie kamen zurück: Ich habe widerrufen, aber ich werde leben.--Ihre Hände sind befleckt, sagten wir.--Sie sagen: Besser befleckt als leer."48

The question of God is brought into focus with Galilei's appalling proof that the earth and man are not the centers of the universe, God's creation. The revolutionary idea that God, a Being, was not to be found amongst the heavenly bodies was stupefying, and humanity titillated in expectation of the next promised answer. Galilei's reply that God was to be found in man, or never "In uns oder nirgends!"49--reflects the Marxian-Brecht viewpoint concerning religion:

RE conosc soro distress is at the same time the EXPRESSION of real distress and the PROTEST against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of an unspiritual situation. It is the OPTIMUM of the people. The abolition of religion as the ILLUSORY happiness of the people is required for their REAL happiness....Religion is only the illusory seen, which revolves around man as long as he does not resolve around himself. [cf. alienated man] 50 (italic's Fromm's)

The most elucidating quotation regarding the control of the church over man, the consequential alienating effect, and the plight of common man in his search for expression of the self follows in length as Brecht expressed it in Galilei:


48 Ibid. p. 192.
49 Ibid. p. 33.
geschwärzt hat, und ich sehe genau ihre alten abgearbeiteten Hände und den kleinen Löffel darin.
Es geht ihnen nicht gut, aber selbst in ihrem Unglück liegt eine gewisse Ordnung verborgen. Da sind diese verschiedenen Kreisläufe, von dem des Bodenaufwuchses über den der Jahreszeiten im Ölfeld zu den der Steuerzahlung. Es ist regelmäßig, was auf sie herabstößt an Unfällen. Der Zicken meines Vaters wird zusammengezogen nicht auf einmal, sondern mit jedem Frühjahr im Ölfeld sehr, so wie auch die Geburten, die meine Mutter immer geschlechtsleser gemacht habe, in einem bestimmten Abstand erfolgten. Sie schönten die Kraft, ihre kleine schweißströme den steirigen Wind hinauszuschieben, wie es zu gehören, in zu essen aus dem Gefühl der Gleichheit und Notfallsigkeit, der von tiefer dem Boden, der jede Jahreszeit neue wärmende Flut, die kleine Kirche und die Anhöhe der der äußeren Welt, die Pelle die ihnen verleihen werden, was ist ihnen verdeckt werden, die man von der Welt und der letzten, die sich am schweigend und der Schauer, die sich nicht, die Schwere, die sich aus einer großen klaren, leeren und dieses Wettstreit, die Leute zu, in die es im weiteren, in die sich und einer kleinen Heilungen gebieten, die sich verständig bilden in einem der großen Zick, die sich die Dinge, die sich die Dinge, die sich sich verzogen und betroffen schließen, das liegt also keiner auf uns, sonst ein, die wissen, ob uns selber so, verbolkt, als und verbrochen, die war sich? Wovon hat uns eine Rolle ausgerichtet außer dieser individuellen, körperlichen auf einem dritten Gestein, das gar unselbständig ist, um das sich nichts drückt? Heil ein liegen in unserm Glück, Hunger ist eben nicht notwendigerweise, keine Kraft rohe: Anstrengung ist eben nicht notwendigerweise. Verstehen Sie die, daß ich aus dem Dekret der Heiligen Konkordat eines mittlerlichen Mitleid, eine große Seelen-güte herauslesen?  

51 Galilei. pp. 75-6.
Galilei's reply to this delivery is equally as enlightening in that he challenges the individual to cast off the socio-mental bonds of suppression and rise to a new state of existence and freedom of action: "Zum Teufel, ich sehe die göttliche Geduld Ihrer Leute, aber wo ist ihr göttlicher Zorn?" This question of man's relation to religion will be discussed once again in the section dealing with the work Mutter Courage, but the writer asks the reader to stop momentarily and consider the progress made in the liberating search for identity since the writing of those powerful words!

One further question evolved from Galilei is a potpourri blend of the responsibility of science towards humanity entwined with alienated man's search for self-realization. The following quotation refers the reader to theelin quotation on page 22 of this paper, which explains the criminality of Galileo and the terrifying results sometimes obtainable when the human element is ignored:


[...]

Zum Teufel, ich sehe die göttliche Geduld Ihrer Leute, aber wo ist ihr göttlicher Zorn?"
The role of the political and economic structure in the development of social and economic forces is critical in understanding the consequences of these developments. The conclusion of the analysis concludes with the theme that political and economic forces influence the social and economic conditions of the society. This conclusion highlights the importance of understanding the role of political and economic forces in shaping the future.
Love, justice, honor and their dialectic opposites—charity, impartiality, and cunning—are the polarities in this drama in which the protagonist, the prostitute Shen Te, is selected by the "gods" on the basis of her virtuous charity for mankind to be the savior of the world. The only commandment to which she must adhere for salvation for all is to remain "good"—in the philanthropic rather than moral sense of the word—in the face of all opposition. Due to the great amount of misery in the world based on man's indifference for his fellow being, Shen Te undergoes a schizophrenic transfiguration in attempting to fulfill her obligations to the "gods". Humanity exploits her unique goodness to the extreme that Shen Te must maintain her Shui Ta personality, or perish. "In order to realize his goodness man must renounce his goodness. His tragedy is that he can never effectively be what he naturally is." In the struggle to remain "good" at both the personal level and for mankind's sake, Shen Te fails as she, too, must renounce her goodness in the Schweikian self-preservation conflict.

Is happiness obtainable, or are we all obligated to serve humanity at the expense of personal happiness? Shen Te namely sacrificed her happiness, in fact her


marriage out of social consciousness. Although the religion in this drama is, comparatively speaking, religious, the universal concern for humanity definitely is an integral part of the drama. Another concept which comes to light in Senach is that of politics, though not of a particular party, rather that of a sociological nature.

The relationship between the classes, those who have, and those who have not, is referred to, though strictly a-political; the accent of the drama of these who have is discussed in this play.

"Society, the condition of human existence, defeats the in Moses, religious and consciousness of m."

The idea in this passage, is the inevitability of becoming the whole of men and is for the reminder:

"We in the manner that is not as in the so

morally."

Surely still that a sound of humanity the absolute Nothing and depth; at least in the idea that could be described by the use in Senach: "[Moa] need to understand and be self-aware: its existence, and the reality of an inner existence: idealistic against the final; ....versed in the contradiction between the idea to maintain and its like situation. [Moa] accepting or not liberate itself from the transplantation of being [.e. in the situation]." "In the very spiritual battle the idea in the Senach view of the religious state of mind, is substantially the idea in the Senach which is closely and clearly elucidation of the conflict in more to show the situation. Thus it, however, harbors too.
feelings towards her neighbors, so she suffers the consequences—those being the loss of shop, home, and fiancé: "Ich verstehe nicht warum Sie nicht mit Messern und Zähnen um Ihren Laden kämpfen.....Also alles hin! Kein Mann, kein Tabak, keine Bleibe! So kommt es, wenn man etwas Besseres sein will als unsereins. Wovon wollen Sie jetzt leben?" 58

The Barber, Shu Fu, exhibits his villainous character in bullying and manhandling Wang until he one day breaks Wang's hand with the curling iron. The common people advise Wang to sue Shu Fu, but they all, fearing vindictive measures of the Barber, refuse to testify in Wang's behalf: "Ich will nichts mit der Polizei zu tun haben....Sie haben nur Furcht, weil der Barbier zu mächtig ist." 59 

Frau Mi Tzü's lascivious depravity is also displayed in her insistence for having Sun as an "administrator" of her concerns in exchange for a housing contract for Shui Ta's new tobacco factory; the working conditions of the folk are not important to her, only her selfish desire to "have her fat knee tickled" 60 by young Sun need gratification.

The people found on earth by the visiting "gods" are not the most humane, but are very human in their predicament of trying to rise above the situation, i.e. become "good", and therefore liberate themselves from their in-human existence. Through the inhuman exploitation of Shen Te's goodness by the masses, Brecht offers proof that the common man is not morally good, or perhaps he has been subjected to this degenerative process imposed by society

59 Ibid. p. 60.
and is therefore not good; in any event, the need for social consciousness is stressed in Shen Te's seemingly impossible task of liberating humanity through charitable actions. The people of Sezuán have the opportunity to become good should they develop the necessary responsibility to one another for social advancement.

The state of being happy is simplified in Mensch to that of happiness in love, in luck in pursuit of business, and in harmony with fellow man. The good deeds of Shen Te began with distribution of rice among the hungry and giving shelter to a family of nine in her tobacco shop, which she purchased with the money given her by the gods. With the times, however, Shen Te's well-meaning efforts had to be stopped as she had no financial means to meet her obligations to creditors; there occurred the metamorphosis of the gentle-spoken Shen Te into her alter ego Shui Ta, the hard-headed businessman. One cannot in all honesty say that Shui Ta was inhuman, rather he firmly put a stop to the exploitation of his "cousin" by the haunters-on.

With the assumption of the new personality came an understanding of the evils underlying the insurmountable human condition: "Der Feudalism behält darin, daß die Tat der einzelnen Staat zu profi t; die Tat ein einzelner Mensch hat schweren Kri chtes." 61

Shen Te encountered love and was "dazzled" by him, so that she quickly proves to aid him in his efforts to obtain a job of Chin in Tobacco; hence she became one of financially supporting the "dissolute and unfair" affairs of securing the position, so that she had to sell her shop.

61 Bart, p. 369.
It gives rise to the erroneous idea that "the end of
bad is good". That is, that "good" should be defined
as a "humane" act to divert "suffering" in a
limited and defective way.

In essence:
Kommunismus ist eine "gute" Tat. Sie wirkt mehr
als gut. Sie ist durch die "guten" Tat nicht
vernichtet, dagegen ist es es, in dem das
Verbrechen geschieht. ... Die "guten" Tat ist die
ersten Schritte, die wir gemacht haben, um
kleine und große Taten zu erledigen.

An ethics of the system is represented in China as a
socially but not morally, not clearly the opposite of what
should be. A "good" act practiced for their own
satisfactions by society and "humanized" by the "gods" with
its own tendency to alleviate the evil in the system; when if the
"gods" would destroy the evil, then the "good" could be free to
realize their love for man and unhindered. The society
is so corrupted that "goodness" is a weakness to be ex-
posed: "Eure Schwäche war auch absichtlich... Was
ist das für eine Welt?". It is a false promise that one
would act might nullify all the evil in the world, but
the "gods" are aristocratic in Shun Fe's conscience to direct
her and others to charity. According to the dialectics of
the "gods", one flicker of humanity in the whole of
the human race is enough proof that mankind in general need
NOT to be destroyed, instead given the chance to seek
happiness in being "good".

63 Ibid. p. 73.
The "gods" charge Wang with the task of demanding "goodness" of Shen Te, as her happiness lies in being "good" to others, and only through being "good" may she obtain happiness: "Bezeig du Interesse an ihrer Güte, denn keiner kann lang gut sein, wenn nicht Güte verlangt wird."64 Trouble arises when demands for "goodness" pour in from all quarters. Even in her love must Shen Te check happiness due to the doubt that Sun may be "bad". Her radiating love is not enough to conquer Sun's tendencies towards evil deeds; on the evening of her wedding she fears to allow herself to be joyous due to doubts that her own powers of "goodness" may not influence Sun: "Werde ich stark genug sein, das Gute in ihm anzurufen? Now on the way to the wedding, I shiver, I shudder."

Upon discovering the truth regarding Sun's nature, Shen Te's search for happiness seems quite thwarted; she sought happiness with Sun "die Götter haben auch gewollt, dass ich zu mir gut bin,"66 but this premise seems false as she is not rewarded with Sun's love; and as an added punishment ever, she loses her shop. It may seem that man's search for happiness is to be found in helping others, but happiness at the "norm" level is not obtainable—a very Axial theory! Having realized that attempts to join happiness with Sun are useless, "Shen Te, the ideal of "goodness" turned over again to search for fulfillment of happiness: "Tell all sitter die Christlichen, Mit meinem Mit in den Tempel, die Liebe, die ich schon..."
was the "mother" and worker, and she who enters
her world, and in some subtle manner into the
social consciousness, and who is in the mother.

As a mother, she is a part of social consciousness in her
self-sacrifice, for she is convinced of a larger sort to
give happiness to others; still, even, this same, too,
her role under the common rule of "mum's" upon her.

And in the mother of God in our view to make
sacrifices, as in the world, in reality, after her own
sacrifice, "this" is "her" and "there" is "her" and "hers".
And, even, could ever realize in "her" role in the "red". The
sacrifice of the "red" is especially clear in a protest of
alcoholism of the "red" which occurs as an act
of the generation of man's search for self-sacrifice.

Too little of her role and "mum's" more even too acting
a child. There's no protest having to be extended to others.
The question is enough to who may she be saved: her
child, the others, or herself? She takes the heroic path,
especially her women feelings for humanity and her
search for her issues for the sake of her unborn child
that she may have it easier in the imperfect world:

So wurde ich
"The woman has quelled [inc] verteidigen
und gi"stern ich
"Ich Einer作った..."

"Here to " verteidigen" in denTagen, meiner Zeitgen
Call as dir diesen, "the", they dir
Hill ich get saved, and "die" in..."dir
zu alle anderen, don't select on. It's
a nest saved.

7Thid. p. 20.

6Dom. p. 10.
The control of any individual, whether as "builder" or de "fellow" must be by a belief in its function.
Life does not mean the end, but a belief in the end.
Belief in the use of an individual in some material thing.

We must believe that the end is to live.

If we live, the "uses" are the set, but... As Our Lord said.

But our self and seek another
For it is the end of this world to live, the self, and the world.
We must believe that the end is to live.

Our is God and God is God.

And we live, therefore we live.

And we love, we live, and God is God.

The end is God and God is God.

There is the end of the world, and God is God.

And we love, we live, and God is God.

The end is God and God is God.

And we live, therefore we live.

And we love, we live, and God is God.

The end is God and God is God.

And we love, we live, and God is God.
Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder

Written 1958/59

SUMMARY:

Morality, one of Brecht's favorite subjects, results in this drama from the social upheaval war: "Krieg bringt Moral mit sich." With her wagon loaded with goods, the shrewd, hardheaded businesswoman, Mutter Courage, blackmarket ers a course through the Thirty Years War. As there is no place for virtues in the new morality, her three children guilty of possessing virtues like bravery, honesty, and unselfishness fall victims of the conflict, while she herself transacts business. Not committing herself to show allegiance, Mutter Courage indiscriminately bargains with soldiers from both sides following whichever army is momentarily in the best position to pay. Her mercantile preoccupation is revealed in the sixth scene as she rather unfeelingly dismisses the death of the field commander while taking inventory of her stock—the parallelism of the scene is a superb example of the Brechtian irony. An even more brutal example of her commercial obsession is brought into sharp focus in the senseless sacrifice of her second son, Schweizerkas, while Courage dickers with haggling soldiers and a prostitute attempting to gain the most edge and emerge with both the spoils and her son. When the older son, Emil, is abducted into the army, she is protecting her interests; and when Kattrin, the last of her children is murdered, she is "in town getting her cut." In a Schweikian perpetration of war (i.e. social evils) Mutter Courage

71 Geissler, p. 36.

becomes the murderer of her own family due to her inhumanity, yet emerges from the conflict with her most prized possession--the wagon--intact. With her business acumen ever sharper, she enters once again into infinite undertakings of profit, accomplice to the very code of life which cost her the lives of her children. She too realistically shrugs off grief and drags her wagon after the vestiges of the army--a very tragic figure due to her inability and unwillingness to extricate herself (earlier the family also) from the web of circumstances (i.e. inhuman existence) which simultaneously cost them all their lives and estrange them from one another along with the rest of humanity.

The human condition represented in this play is that in the rather special situation of war--defined in Brechtian terminology as an alienated society's search for equilibrium. The morality at the base of as well as the morality resulting from the conflict emerge as equally mendacious methods of relating to one another; therefore, the mother-child constellations are perverted into confrontations between the businesswoman Matter Courage and her children. The religious element in this drama is represented as everything political and foul which correlates to the Marxian-Brecht religious tradition of the alienated man. The perilous blend of religion, business, and morals reflects Brecht's interpretation of capitalism, which further influences his interpretation of parental and filial discourse in a capitalistic society. Therefore, in the highly specialized not very objective state in the drama, Brecht comments on three elements of the human condition, namely religion, family, and business. As there is no illusion or pretense of happiness or freedom in this play, these elements of the human experience must be discarded as incapable of existing in such a circumstance--or alienated out of existence.
Religion in Mutter Courage represents a power which exploits and threatens man's very existence. The forces at work in this drama in no way personify Christianity or known humane doctrines. Brecht chose the Thirty Years War for the background to parody the more popular forms of religion as practiced in the world in his times. He considered religion more than superfluous, in fact it served as an alienating force (see page 26 of this paper for Fromm's explanation of the Marxian-Brecht interpretation). The religious forces in Mutter Courage are guilty of supporting a society of war-mongers and profiteers like Mutter Courage herself who take advantage of the "common people", who are also at the mercy of the priests, bishops, and "God":


Religion, the supposed saving force of man, threatens his very existence and causes him to be subservient to and mistrustful of the next man; therefore, "God" also. Mutter Courage echoes this thought when trapped near the Catholic forces with a Protestant clergy and cashbox from the Protestant troops:


The curious blend of religion, morals and business was once alluded to; however, in this drama one finds many powerful examples of the fatal mixture. Due to man's utter subjection to militaristic forces (i.e. religion), he has learned as Mutter Courage, that he as an individual has no control whatsoever over his fate and actions. Indeed it is not

73 Ibid. p. 76.
74 Ibid. n. 12.
only the Lessing question of "Kein Mensch muß müssen", rather seasons
and weather forces in the control of "God" do not seem to be controlled
or predestined in the turmoil:

Es ist jetzt Oktober, und da kann's leicht Herbst werden,
ich sag ausdrücklich nicht muß, denn ich hab gelernt,
nix muß kommen, wie man denkt, nicht einmal die Jahres-
zeiten. 15 (italics mine)

The most fatal blow at man's supremacy over the animal kingdom and his
personal individuality is dealt with Brecht's choice of vocabulary in
the above passage. Man is no longer responsible enough to think or
trust his thoughts. The corrupt society is exemplified time after time
by the character of Mutter Courage, but being a realist, she knows how
to "work around" society to obtain her ends. The crass inhuman nature
of Mutter Courage is revealed in her bargaining with the life of Schweizer-
kas. Perhaps the metaphor that mankind is as bribable as "God" is merci-
ful is more due to Brecht's general interpretation of the Protestant Ethic
than his denunciation of capitalism:

Gott sei Dank sind sie bestechlich. Sie sind doch keine
Wölfe, sondern Menschen und auf Geld aus. Die Bestechlich-
keit ist bei die Menschen dasselbe wie beim lieben Gott
die Barmherzigkeit. Bestechlichkeit ist unsere einzige
Aussicht. 16

The chaplain with his "god-given" gift of "gab", who is capable
of hypnotising men by causing them to lose their senses to sacrifice
their lives before the enemy, is humanly horrified at the thought of war
and profiteering, but he truthfully admits as do the soldiers in scene
one that "war" is necessary to establish order. In the chaplain's
"Praise of War" monologue, the reader may interpret Brecht's fear of
battle which culminates in the Galilean-like subjection of peace and
happiness to the demands of conflict and continuing of war:

75 Ibid. p. 30.
76 Ibid. p. 54.

Religion, war, and morality provide all the order and sustenance necessary to maintain life—the question Brecht posed was what kind of existence though?

Kattrin, like her mother, does not share the misplaced faith of the common people in "God", rather she, existentially, takes matters into her own hands—exhibits virtue, morality (call it what one may)—and must perish for her human independence. The prayer of the farm people once again reflects the weakness of the "little or common" people and their inability to act independently within the religious conflict:

77 Ibid. pp. 73-5.

As if the ultimate control practiced over all by the war is not sufficient, Mutter Courage implies that war, symbolizing religion in this instance once again, exerts its power over man until his death where it then abandons him for the living; therefore, making religion's concern for man in the "this" life rather than the after:

Der Krieg, er zieht sich etwas hin.  
Der Krieg, er dauert hundert Jahre  
Der g'smeine Mann hat kein Gewinn...  
Das Frühjahr kommt! Wach auf, du Christ!  
Der Schnee schmilzt weg! Die Toten ruhn!  
Und was noch nicht gestorben ist  
Das macht sich auf die Socken nun. 79

In the introduction to the play, Volkmar Sander interprets the Brechtian idea of the ammorality of religion which alienates man from himself and forces him to lead a sinful, meaningless life: "The basic moral remains the same: that in the existing social situation man can survive only by committing misdeeds." 80

Tucker in the Marx-Engels Reader adroitly explains the Marxian-Brecht relationship between religion and business: "The spirit was not alienated from man, rather man was alienated from himself in a material world." 81 Mutter Courage is drawn to be the personification of

79 Ibid. p. 119.  
80 Ibid. p. xv.
mercantilism, and her experiences reflect the fatality in such a blend.
In order to dispel any doubts about the motherly nature of Mutter Courage, one need only consider her wagon as an example of all she values in the world and remember how she struggles to maintain possession: "Ein Requisit, der Wagen, beherrscht das ganze Stück---er rollt, ist instabil wie die Welt der Courage, er drückt aus, woran die Courage sich klammert, um durchzukommen: den Handel." Brecht meant to point out the latent danger in superimposing commercial over human values, so he wrote Mutter Courage continually in a position of business undertakings when her children were caused to be killed. As if these examples were unclear, Brecht includes a religious-political interpretation of business and how everyone is eager to share in the profits:

Beseiget werden kann er [Swedish king] nicht, warum seine Leut glauben an ihn. Wenn man die Großköpfe reden hört, führen die Krieg nur aus Gottesfurcht und für alles, was gut und schön ist. Aber wenn man genauer hinsieht, sind nicht so blöd, sondern führen die Krieg für Gewinn. Und anders würden die kleinen Leut wie ich auch nicht mitmachen.

Mutter Courage not only is sharp to protect her business interests at the expense of her children, but at the rest of humanity also. The chaplain takes four of her "officer's shirts" to use as bandages, but to no avail as the wounds only bleed through the precious material. Mutter Courage unconcerned with the loss of human life bewails the loss of her shirts more, and feels threatened with financial disaster in the face of human misery.

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83 Courage, p. 37.
84 Ibid. pp. 67-8.
The fact that Mutter Courage is wholly dependent upon war for sustenance is made evident in many accounts not just when the chaplain aptly names her a "hyena of the battlefield," but her total surrender and dependence upon war for support is exemplified in the mercantile song of war:


With this song, Mutter Courage re-commits herself to the business of profiteering, cost what it may—ultimately it could only cost her her own life, but her philosophy is that those who are settled are the first to go; so she ruthlessly dives once again into battle.

The "slogan of Mutter Courage—take part and keep aloof" applies not only to her dealings with the war, but also to her relationship with her children. Rischbieter interpreted that "Die Händlerin Courage geht durch den Krieg, die Mutter wird vom Krieg getroffen." This interpretation is rather questionable though when one studies the dialogue exchanged between Mutter Courage and her children. One early example in the text alludes that Courage might have some concern for the children, but the question is whether it is due to their useful purpose of pulling the wagon and picking up supplies for her, or whether it is due to parental concern:

Du willst vom Krieg leben, aber dich und die Deinen willst du draußen halten, wie?.... Will vom Krieg leben Wird ihm wohl müssen auch was geben.
The most elucidating test of values for Mutter Courage is proven when in scene three she allows her second son to be killed rather than surrender her wagon and business. The family picture represented in this drama is perhaps atypical, but in other of the Brecht plays, Der kaukasische Kreidekreis for example, one sees that Brecht's families do not exhibit the "norm" of love and devotion. Therefore, the family of Mutter Courage is not a special instance, rather provides the opportunity for the protagonist to heroically and at great personal expense to save the family. If the reader is disappointed that such does not happen, then he must remember that Brecht, a moralist, was trying to prove a point in this drama and interpreted characters' actions and the end result from his own theories regarding human relations. One question the reader may derive, precisely the one which Brecht would have wished, might be whether it was the sick society at the root of these conditions as presented in Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder, or whether the conditions made the society (i.e. people) act and react as it did.

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90 Ibid. p. 56.
Der kaukasische Kreidekreis
Written 1944/45

SUMMARY:

Esslin calls this drama "the outstanding example of the technique of the 'epic' drama. It is one of Brecht's greatest plays."91 Due to the dual plot in the play, the setting of a dispute in Russia over a tract of land and the background plot the "Chinese Chalk Circle", this play is epitomized as "epic". Set in the utopia of the pure communist state in Russia, a dispute over a grassland which previously boasted several goat herds was to be returned to the original owners for further production of goat products, or turned over to fruit growers for irrigation of the valley. In an idealistic political discussion about whom the rightful owners might be, the decision reached is the people who are to derive the most production from the land, presumably for the state. Therefore, the fruit farmers are accorded the valley, and the goat herders are recompensed with a moralistic play of Chinese origin destined to exemplify the wisdom of the decision made.

In the legend of the Chalk Circle, a child of a governor ousted in a civil revolution is abandoned by his mother to a kitchen maid, Grusche, who at great personal sacrifice, raises the child as her own. As time would have it, the biological mother returns to claim the child as her own in order to profit from his inheritance. The foster mother, Grusche, protests and fights in court to keep him as her own. Not being willing to rend the child into in a physical fight with the biological mother, Grusche shows her "motherly love" in the decision of the peasant judge and is accorded the child. The legend and decision being proven in both instances, Grusche is allowed to marry her fiance and live blissfully with a borrowed child as the fruit farmers with the valley.

91 Esslin, pp. 319-20.
Due to the limited scope and highly political idealized nature of this drama, elements of the human condition which surface are influenced by the politics of the plot. The family element may be interpreted to be a precursor of the socialized motherhood now existent in the Communist states. Brecht perhaps at his most idealistic writes the most virtuous state of motherhood for the character Grusche, though for plot sequential reasons this is not divulged until the end: "Und jetzt sag ich dir's: Ich hab ihn genommen, weil ich mich dir verlobt hat an diesem Ostertag. Und so ist's ein Kind der Liebe." The child, Michel, BELONGS to Grusche for the reason that she "raised him and he knows her" as a mother; therefore, there is no question of who the correct mother is. The family element is not just idealized, but oversimplified to lend more weight to important political theory expressed in this drama.

If the reader has followed the train of thought regarding individuality in Brecht's theory of the human condition, then the following discussion of politics might seem confusing or even contradictory. However, Brecht's dialectics are not to be forgotten. Esslin succinctly points out the element of truth amongst the dialectics which led Brecht to conflict with the communists as his theory regarding the human condition ACTUALLY differed from theirs: "The Caucasian Chalk Circle preaches that--things should be given to those who make the best use of them--a dangerous doctrine in any Communist country, where the waste and inefficiency of the authorities are in constant evidence." 

All differences of opinion are not avoidable in the pure communist state, in fact privileges are sacrificed: The goat herders who have

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93Ibid. p. 117.
94Esslin, p. 231.
been underway for three days to come to the trial are upset when the
decision and arguments are to be presented in a half-a-day's time. The
reply is: "Genosse, wir haben nicht mehr so viele Dörfer und nicht mehr
so viele Arbeitshände und nicht soviel Zeit. Alle Vergnügungen müssen
rationiert werden, der Tabak ist rationiert und der Wein und die Diskussion
auch." The people cannot come to an example of agreement until they
emotionally embrace each other in memory of the revolutionaries who
fought for the homeland. Once unity exists, the decision is quickly
formulated and all seem resigned.

As a warning to capitalists (functionaries too), the governor of
Grusin is forcibly removed from his position, his family is dispersed,
and he himself is murdered. As a further warning to the "common people"
about following the "wrong" sort of political power, Brecht points out
that the lives of the little people are in jeopardy when the demigods
perish:

Wenn das Haus eines Großen zusammenbricht
Werd die Kleine erschlagen.
Die das Glück der Mächtigen nicht teilt
Teilen oft ihr Unglück. Der stürzende Wagen
Reißt die schmutzenden Zugtiere
Mit in den Abgrund.

However, with the new times resulting from the change in political
craft, the "little people" no longer must fear the wrath and vengeance
of dictators, rather the "people" come into control and meet out justice:

Eine neue Zeit ist gekommen, die über dich
Hinwegdonnern wird, du bist erledigt, Polizisten werden
ausgerast, pfft. Alles wird untersucht, aufgedeckt.
Da meldet sich einer lieber von selber, warum er kann
dem Volk nicht entrinnen.

95 Kreidekreis, p. 8.
96 Ibid, p. 23.
97 Ibid, p. 81.
The fact that policemen are superfluous in the "new society" does not change the reality in which Brecht resided in the Eastern sector. Though the "judge"--representing the "people"--may shrink from using "material possessions as proof of humanity", the fact that justice in the new state was still capable of being purchased, even though not always by the materially wealthy; the corruptness of justice is not changed even when the "judge" deserts his chair. Brecht was perhaps not as interested in supporting a political theory in this drama as experimenting with the flexibility of his dramatic theory. Due to the idealism and inconsistency with Brecht's experience, it would seem to the writer that this drama was more important from its theatrical effect rather than the content.

\[98\] \textit{Ibid.} p. 111.
CONCLUSION

'Human situation' is [the] same for all of us; that we all live under the illusion of the separateness and indestructibility of each one's ego...that we all suffer because this answer to life is a false one, and that we can get rid of the suffering only by giving the right answer—that of overcoming the illusion of separateness, of overcoming greed, and of waking up to the fundamental truths which govern our existence.

Brecht, dialectically optimistic, a revolutionary philanthropic social dramatist concerned with the human question occupied himself with aiding mankind in overcoming his alienation—to an understanding of self-realization by analysis of those threats imposed upon him by society. Brecht's task was to change society, and THAT, he maintained, involved individuals working together. "This is...the attitude of the humanist who believes that 'man does not have to remain the was he is', and 'who acknowledges our involvement in human weakness, yet refuses to accept the involvement as final..."100

Brecht, therefore, accused of reflecting many radical opinions remains a humanist interested and INVOLVED with mankind. One may search through Brecht's biographers, such as Esslin, for proof that Brecht LIVED his theory as well as he applied it to his social dramas, or one may resort to his alter ego, Herr Keuner, for verification of his concern for the human condition:


99 Fromm, p. 28. 100 Sander, p. xii. 101 Keuner, p. 28.
Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:


Bibliography contd.


Tape:


Speech: