INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

THE MOTHER OF ALL WARS:

A CRITICAL INTERPRETATION OF BERTOLT BRECHT'S

MUTTER COURAGE UND IHRE KINDER

by

KENNETH R. FOWLER

Department of German Studies, McGill University, Montreal

August, 1996

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

© Kenneth R. Fowler, 1996

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Acquisitions et services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-44651-4

Canada

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation interprets Brecht's *Mutter Courage* through its protagonist. Most interpreters have derived Courage's meaning from only one term of the contradiction of merchant and mother that constitutes her, either blaming the inhuman, war-mongering merchant for her participation in war, or defending the vital, productive, and nurturing mother for that same (unavoidable) participation. Some have stressed instead the unity formed by Courage's contradiction, without being able to elucidate its meaning. The present interpretation, proceeding from a clue given in scene 7 to the meaning of the text, draws parallels between the drama and Brecht's view of the world, and shows that the world of *Mutter Courage* is the symbolic representation of capitalism as Brecht knew it during the rise of fascism and the approach of the Second World War. Courage is then shown to be a concentrated form of this symbolic representation; indeed, she turns out to be a representation of capitalism in its "totality". This representation is inseparable from the invocation, through Courage, of the Great Mother archetype. The Great Mother describes a contradictory capitalism that is both a Good Mother in its promising productivity, and a Terrible Mother in its destructive warring and oppression; but she, as the symbol of Nature, also describes a capitalism that had begun to seem even to Brecht like a second Nature. Courage also represents the totality of capitalism (as the Marxist Brecht saw it) by embodying both its "affirmative" aspect (as a merchant who engenders soldiering sons), and (undermining the archetype of the Great Mother) its "critical" aspect as the representation of the resistance of the oppressed to their warring world (as the outlaw who engenders a daughter who rebels against war). The meaning of the drama, then, is the story of Courage as the incarnation of the dialectic of capitalism, a dark tale whose conditions seem eternal, but which contains the promise of something better, a promise which Brecht hoped the audience would redeem.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse interprète la *Mère Courage* de Brecht à travers sa protagoniste. La majorité des interprètes ont vu le sens de Courage dans un seul des aspects contradictoires qui constituent ce personnage (la cantinière et la mère). Ainsi, certains reprochent à la cantinière belliqueuse et inhumaine de participer à la guerre, tandis que d'autres défendent cette participation (inévitable) de la mère énergique et nourricière. D'autres encore insistent sur l'unité que forme cette contradiction sans pour autant avoir pu lui trouver un sens. En décelant une clef du texte dans la septième scène, la présente interprétation établit des parallèles entre le drame et la conception brechtienne du monde. Elle montre que l'univers de *Mère Courage* constitue une représentation symbolique du capitalisme tel que Brecht l'a connu durant la montée du fascisme et à l'approche de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Courage sera vue ensuite comme une condensation de cette représentation symbolique. En fait, elle est une représentation du capitalisme dans sa "totalité". Cette représentation ne peut être séparée de l'évocation, à travers Courage, de l'archétype de la *Mater magna*. La *Mater magna* représente les contradictions du capitalisme: à la fois *Mater bona* par sa productivité pleine de promesses et *Mater terribilis* par son oppression et sa destruction. Cependant, étant un symbole de la Nature, cette *Mater magna* représente aussi un capitalisme qui avait commencé à ressembler, même pour Brecht, à une "seconde Nature". Courage représente aussi le capitalisme dans sa totalité (comme le marxiste Brecht le voyait) en montrant non seulement l'aspect "affirmatif" du capitalisme (une marchande qui produit des fils soldats), mais aussi, en sapant l'archétype de la *Mater magna*, son aspect "critique" par la représentation de la résistance des opprimés à la guerre et à l'autorité (une hors-la-loi donnant naissance à une fille qui se rebellera contre la guerre). Le sens du drame se trouve alors dans l'histoire de Courage comme incarnation de la dialectique du capitalisme, une histoire sombre dont les conditions paraissent éternelles, mais aussi une histoire pleine de promesses, promesses que, selon Brecht, les spectateurs devront réaliser.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

To the Mothers:

Alexandra, Soffia, Carol

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must first express my appreciation to the Inter-Library Loans departments of both the McLennan Library at McGill University, and the Elizabeth Dafoe Library at the University of Manitoba. Without their assistance my research would not have been nearly so thorough. In particular, I would like to thank for their ingenuity and persistence Maria De Souza of McGill University, and Mary Ann McCuaig and Barbara Bennell of the University of Manitoba. My thanks also go to Dr. Peter M. Daly, Chair of the Department of German Studies at McGill, not only for his encouragement over the years, but also because he thoughtfully, and most tactfully, put into my hands that most important of scholar's tools, without which I would still be typing revisions to the roar of an electric typewriter. I am indebted to the friendly assistance of Dr. Paul Peters of McGill, who read this work and offered both stimulating criticisms and useful suggestions for improvements, some of which I was wise enough to incorporate here. I must also thank my advisor, Dr. Trudis E. Goldsmith-Reber, for seeing me through this adventure. Suffering with good humour through more drafts than we care to remember, she was always ready with provocative comments, insights, and timely advice, an advisor who encouraged and nurtured creativity without seeking to diminish or chain it. Words of thanks, however, are too few and too small against the contribution of Ruth Epp. Throughout this long journey she has been my most constant and truest friend, unstinting with support intellectual, material, and emotional. This work is as much hers as it is mine.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

Die Meisterwerke leben, weil in ihnen die Wiedergabe der Welt alle Widersprüche derselben aufweist, und sie leben am kräftigsten, wo sie das kräftigste Leben zeigen, das Leben, bewegt von den kräftigsten Widersprüchen.

Bertolt Brecht *BF* 23:420

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

PREFACE xix

CHAPTER 1. THE HYENA 1

CHAPTER 2. THE MOTHER 25

CHAPTER 3. PAPER WAR 49

BRECHT ON COURAGE 51

COURAGE CRITICIZED 79

COURAGE DEFENDED 93

The Vitalist Defense 93

The Historical Defense 101

The Metaphysical Defense 105

CHAPTER 4. BUSINESS AS USUAL 117

WAR IS BUSINESS 118

THE TROUBLE WITH ANALOGY? 126

BRECHT ON CAPITALISM 131

THE TRACES OF BUSINESS 135

The Engine of Profit 137

Universal War 138

Morality and Ideology 147

Ordered Chaos 163

Quantification 169

COURAGE AS SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION . 179

CHAPTER 5. THE OUTLAW 193
FIRST 'PRINCIPLES' 196
KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS 198
Paternalism Resisted 199
Paternity Denied 208
Law and Order 209
Provision for the Flesh 210
Pater Noster 215
Witch 221
ELECTIVE AFFINITY 224
The Combination 225
Cracking the Combination 232
Traces of History 232
Historical Roles 234
Exploited and Doubly Exploited 235
Objects Privilege the Material 238
Cooking up Trouble 242
Freedom 243
Old Rebellions: A New Lens 246
THE VIRTUES OF WAR 249
Evil Times, Evil Lands, Evil Rulers 250
Honour 255
Heroism 263
Nationalism 266
COURAGE AS 'REVOLUTIONARY' 274
Great Men 275
Criticism of Authority 278
Insurrection 283

CHAPTER 6. THE GREAT MOTHER 291
THE GREAT MOTHER AND BRECHT 291
COURAGE AS THE GREAT MOTHER 296
Nurturer and Forsaker 297
The Encourager and Diminisher of Life 298
Wisdom and Madness 303
The Omniscient One 307
The Eternal One 309
The Priestess of Life and Death 312

CHAPTER 7. RETURN TO HISTORY 319
CAPITALISM AS THE GREAT MOTHER 320
Dark Times and Prehistory 325
The Dark Ages and the Soviet Union 328
A TALE OF VIRTUE 343
Virtue itself 343
The *Salomon-Song* 354
THE HOPE OF HISTORY 374
The Little People 375
Kattrin 376
Courage 383

CONCLUSION 391

WORKS CONSULTED 397

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AJ Bertolt Brecht. *Arbeitsjournal*. Ed. Werner Hecht. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974 (entry dates given).

BF Bertolt Brecht. *Werke: Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*. Eds. Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, and Klaus-Detlef Müller. 30 vols. (projected) Berlin and Frankfurt: Aufbau and Suhrkamp, 1988-.

GW Bertolt Brecht. *Gesammelte Werke*. 20 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967 (the *Werkausgabe*; this includes also: *Texte für Filme*. Eds. Wolfgang Gersch, and Werner Hecht. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969, referred to as volumes I and II; and *Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß*. 2 vols. Ed. Herta Ramthun. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982, referred to as volumes III and IV).

HK Bertolt Brecht. *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*. Ed. Jan Esper Olsson. Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1981.

MC *Brechts 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'*. Ed. Klaus-Detlef Müller. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982. (Note that this work includes a reprint of the *Couragemodell 1949* on pages 124-191.)

MEW Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels. *Werke*. 42 vols. Berlin: Dietz, 1960-1983.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

PREFACE

Bertolt Brecht was 41 years old and nearing the close of his seventh year in exile from Hitler's Reich when, between late September and early November 1939, he wrote *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder.*[1] The outspoken Marxist poet may have already contemplated writing a drama like *Mutter Courage* while still in Denmark, his first land of exile (1933-1939), but it was only while he was in Sweden (1939-1940) that the outbreak of the Second World War finally triggered its creation. The drama had to wait until April 1941 before its world premiere in Zurich (when Brecht was in Finland 1940-1941), but from that moment the lines were drawn for two competing interpretations: one which, like Brecht, blamed the merchant for her participation in war, and one which seemed implicitly to excuse the mother for that same participation.[2] As we will see in Chapter 3, the scholars have been stuck on this see-saw ever since (with some even sitting on both ends). The present interpretation hopes to offer something better.

---

[1] For the genesis of *Mutter Courage* see *BF* 6:377-381 and *HK* 4-25. In this work all dates for Brecht's works are taken from the *BF*, though it should be kept in mind that we are not told how the editors arrived at these more "exact" or "narrow" dates. Perhaps, after all, we will discover that the less exact dates from the *GW* are more "accurate".

[2] See for example the reviews by Bernhard Kissel and Bernhard Diebold in Monika Wyss, ed., *Brecht in der Kritik: Rezensionen aller Brecht-Uraufführungen sowie ausgewählter deutsch- und fremdsprachiger Premieren* (Munich: Kindler, 1977) 204-210.

In contrast to those who see in Courage only part of the meaning of the drama,[3] or who, like Klaus-Detlef Müller, think there is nothing "falscher, als eine Interpretation der Stücke von den Figuren her,"[4] the present interpretation of *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* holds that the meaning of the drama lies concentrated in the figure of Mutter Courage, the dominant figure and symbolic centre of the drama. In turn, the meaning of Mutter Courage, and so of the drama, can only be gained when we are attentive to the contradiction, or better, contradictions, that constitute her. As we will see in Chapters 1-3, neither seizing upon only one of their terms for Courage's meaning, nor standing by helplessly before their conjunction, can do justice to those contradictions. Rather, Chapters 4-7 will show us that we must uncover the symbolic content of those contradictions and elaborate the specific unity that they comprise if we are to approach the meaning of Courage. Once this has been done (wherein lies the original contribution of this work, though there may be some lesser claims to originality),[5] we will see that the contradiction between merchant and mother, at

---

[3] Dieter Thiele, *Bertolt Brecht: Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1985) 46.

[4] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion der Geschichte im Werk Bertolt Brechts: Studien zum Verhältnis von Marxismus und Ästhetik*, 2nd ed. (1967; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972) 156.

[5] See for example Chapter 1, where Courage's hyena is discovered lurking in the refrain to her *Geschäftslied*; Chapter 2, where it is demonstrated that Helene Weigel's famous "silent scream" is inherent in the text; Chapter 3, which contains the first detailled treatment of Brecht's views on Courage, including his contradictions; Chapter 4, where we see how thoroughly inscribed in the text its symbolic referent is (and how this content is contained distilled in the sergeant's speech; indeed, Chapters 4-7 show that we find in the first scene all the basic concepts of the symbolic content of the drama); Chapters 4 and 5, which reveal how the "most brutal form of capitalism," as Brecht called it, is encoded into the text; Chapter 5, which shows both how Courage is a hyena in a positive — and even "feminist" — sense, and how great a "rebel" she is, a lusty one and a "witch" as well, and where we learn (all this to an extent not yet done) how this rebellion is suggested and what it means (in essence, that revolution even here is female for Brecht), just as we learn the importance of Courage's concept of the "langer Zorn"; Chapter 6, which shows how complete is Courage's evocation of

least as it has so far been understood, is a false dichotomy, and earlier interpretations will seem hasty and partial. But it must be said that, without the truths revealed by such "partial" interpretations, the present "improved" interpretation may not have been possible. For they had already described all the elements essential to an adequate understanding of *Mutter Courage*. What had not so far been done was to attend properly to the underlying meaning of those elements or to properly synthesize them, omissions which the present work hopes to have made good.

If no previously undisclosed information, but only the more adequate treatment of information already available, was needed for this new interpretation, it is also true that it required no radically new methodology. Indeed, it has not been necessary to go further than Brecht himself, for we will see that his drama is a symbolic transformation of his reception of history. The present work only uncovers this latent content and reveals its meaning for *Mutter Courage*. The paradox is that this attention to Brecht and his historical moment results in an interpretation which in some ways goes beyond Brecht's own.

At this point the reader may expect a summary of the work to come and a "survey of the literature". However, to fulfil these expectations would frustrate the rhetorical strategy of this work, which includes smuggling some small suspense into a study on an author who eschewed the device. The "survey of the literature" is better undertaken in Chapter 3; and a reader who misses the summary may wish to turn to the Conclusion for satisfaction. Since the argument of this work is sufficiently clear in the body of the text, this space will be used instead to deal with some technical matters.

---

the Great Mother; Chapter 7, where the Great Mother is seen to be a reference to Brecht's historical moment (and to include a "revenge" taken on Stalinism by his text), and where a new interpretation of Courage's children is offered by way of a new look at Brecht's views on virtue, which includes a novel interpretation of the *Salomon-Song*.

As this is a specialized study, it is presumed that the reader is familiar with both *Mutter Courage* and the outline of the life and times of Bertolt Brecht. Therefore, no summaries will be given either of *Mutter Courage* or of Brecht's biography and historical context. They could only be hopelessly inadequate. For a "life and works", Frederic Ewen's introduction to Brecht is to be recommended.[6] This basic information can be supplemented and corrected by reading together the biographies by Klaus Völker and Werner Mittenzwei.[7] Finally, for competent introductions to *Mutter Courage*, the reader may consult the recent studies by Dieter Thiele and Edgar Hein.[8]

The text which this work uses as its main reference is that printed in volume 4 of Brecht's *Gesammelte Werke* (1967; referred to as *GW*). This is the text most often discussed by scholars, and it has the advantage of taking into account Brecht's latest corrections to the postwar editions of his drama.[9] The text printed in volume 6 of the recent (and not yet completed) *Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe* (1988- ; known hereafter as *BF*), is no improvement on the former, since it relies on an earlier uncorrected edition of *Mutter Courage*.[10] Jan Esper Olsson's most useful critical edition of *Mutter*

---

[6] Frederic Ewen, *Bertolt Brecht: His Life, His Art, and His Times*, (1967; New York: Citadel, 1985).

[7] Klaus Völker, *Bertolt Brecht: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Hanser, 1976); Werner Mittenzwei, *Das Leben des Bertolt Brecht, oder Der Umgang mit den Welträtseln*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987).

[8] For Thiele see footnote 3; Edgar Hein, *Bertolt Brecht — "Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder": Interpretation* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994). See also *Brechts 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'*, ed. Klaus-Detlef Müller (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982).

[9] See *HK* 3-4.

[10] *BF* 7:377; see *HK* 58. The numerous notes in the *BF* are also no significant improvement or sign of a critical edition. Reinhold Grimm's criticisms of the errors, superfluities, and "schulmeisterisch" quality of notes for other volumes in the edition could apply to volume 6 as well; see Reinhold Grimm, "Betrachtungen eines Unbeteiligten: ein paar ausgewählte Kommentare zur neuen 'kommentierten' Brecht-Ausgabe," *Annali: Sezione Germanica, Filologia Germanica 1991* 1.1/2 (1992): 273-288; see also Gerhard Seidel's objections to the *BF* in "Der 'edierte

Courage (referred to here as *HK*) has also been consulted with profit. If it does not, for reasons of space and convenience, carry out the excellent suggestions of Gerhard Seidel for an edition of Brecht, it at least affords us more than a glimpse into the genesis of the drama.[11] (A small objection to Olsson's work is that he makes the first draft of *Mutter Courage* assume too great an importance as a sort of *Urtext*, when the true first *version* is that which Brecht had copied and distributed to others — the text Olsson calls "M", the *Matrizentext*.)[12]

Olsson's work reveals the striking similarity between the first reproduced version of 1939 and that printed in the *Gesammelte Werke* (except for those changes pointed out by Brecht, see *GW* 4:1439-1443).[13] This leads to a secondary question about the relationship between the present interpretation and the various versions of *Mutter Courage* as represented by the *GW*, the *BF*, and the *Matrizentext*. Though it may seem at the outset an offense against the specificity of the work, and though it cannot be argued in detail here, the interpretation offered here holds essentially for all these versions of *Mutter Courage*. This is due less to the ingenuity of the interpreter than to the deep consistency between the versions of Brecht's drama, despite the much-trumpeted "changes" made in 1948-1949. While they might sharpen Courage's criminal aspect, and while they establish a certain aesthetic and conceptual consistency (Eilif's loss, for example, by being tied more closely to Courage's business,

---

Text' als Repräsentation und Reduktion des Werkes: Zur Wahl der Textgrundlage bei Brecht," *Textkonstitution bei mündlicher und bei schriftlicher Überlieferung*, ed. Martin Stern (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991) 209-213.

[11] *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Jan Esper Olsson (Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1981); on Gerhard Seidel's proposals, see his *Bertolt Brecht - Arbeitsweise und Edition: Das literarische Werk als Prozeß* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977) 31-52; compare with *BF* 6:381-392.

[12] See Michaela Didyk, "Schwierigkeiten einer Brecht-Edition: Jasper [sic] Olssons historisch-kritische Ausgabe von *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* Sonderheft 105 (1986): 181-193.

[13] The date for the production of the *Matrizentext* is not certain, but Olsson tells us that it was made immediately after the typescript of *Mutter Courage* was finished; see *HK* 55.

repeats more obviously the motifs of the deaths of his brother and sister), nevertheless these changes do not affect the essence of the drama.

Why interpret *Mutter Courage*, Brecht's "best known" work,[14] a work that at least once every decade has called forth a German "study guide"? There is of course an intrinsic value to decoding a drama that has been so difficult to "crack". But when we look around us, at our recent past and our present, when we consider, for example, the most obvious facts of the Gulf War,[15] the misery of Chechnya, the devastation of the "former Yugoslavia", then releasing the meaning of *Mutter Courage* may yet be worthwhile, for it is clear that there are still many who are willing to trundle their wares to war in the hope of profit, even if it means sacrificing their children.

---

[14] Thiele 49; Franz Norbert Mennemeier, "Brecht: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*," *Das deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1962) 2:391.

[15] The Gulf War seemed to have made the drama newly meaningful to Claire Gleitman, "All in the Family: Mother Courage and the Ideology in the Gestus," *Comparative Drama* 25.2 (1991) 165-166.

CHAPTER 1

THE HYENA

A soldier rams something into a child's mouth and leaves her mute except for hoarse cries that will always echo his attack; other soldiers crush a paymaster's thumbs to learn the hiding place of his strongbox; still others cut to pieces those who will not recognize their invading liberators;[1] and everywhere troops carry off the country's meat and grain, destroying what they cannot take, trampling crops, slaughtering livestock — until the land is barren, and then famine strikes: hungry soldiers chase all day the few uneaten rats, starved peasants and townsfolk are reduced to gnawing on boiled leather — or the bones of their children;[2] homeless, the hungry roam the countryside along with

---

[1] I describe the war as it appears in *Mutter Courage*. The wounded child is Kattrin: "stumm ist sie auch nur wegen dem Krieg, ein Soldat hat ihr als klein was in den Mund geschoppt" (*GW* 4:1408). The paymaster is Schweizerkas: "Er hat gestanden, daß er die Schatull gehabt hat, sie haben ihm die Daumenschrauben angelegt" (*GW* 4:1389). The King of Sweden invaded Poland and Germany, the chaplain says, in the name of freedom: "Unser König hat nur die Freiheit im Aug gehabt" (*GW* 4:1374). The king is not gentle toward the ungrateful Germans: "und dann hat er die Deutschen noch einsperren und vierteilen lassen müssen, weil sie an ihrer Knechtschaft gegenüber dem Kaiser festgehalten haben" (*GW* 4:1374).

[2] Throughout the drama we see the resources of the land consumed by war, but perhaps its earliest expression occurs in the opening dialogue of the work, where the sergeant joins war with requisitioning: "Nur wo Krieg ist, ... kommt das Schuhzeug in Ballen und das Korn in Säck, wird Mensch und Vieh sauber gezählt und weggebracht..." (*GW* 4:1350). In scene 2 Eilif gives an example of

marauders who are worse than wolves; every creature competes with the other and all are filled with fear, suspicion, and distrust: spies abound, friends distrust friends, to be lovers is to be enemies, family members deny each other, peasants betray the neighbouring town to a sneaking attack;[3] and nothing seems what it should: freedom becomes a slogan to enslave, priests preach soldiers deaf and blind so that they will die for their king, religions proclaiming brotherly love

---

the seizure of livestock (*GW* 4:1363-1364); a (narrowly avoided) slaughter of livestock by soldiers occurs in scene 11 (*GW* 4:1431). In scene 4 we learn that a commander ordered the trampling of crops, which later causes starvation of his own men as well (*GW* 4:1393). Courage tells us the result of this destruction: "Es wachst nix mehr, nur Dorngestrüpp" (*GW* 4:1423). The hunger caused by war is a constant theme. On men and rats Courage says: "Ein Feldratt kriegen Sie vielleicht, vielleicht sag ich, weil die aufgefressen sind, fünf Mann hoch sind sie einen halben Tag hinter einer hungrigen Feldratte her" (*GW* 4:1361). Of the starving peasants she says: "die schlecken sich die Finger nach einem gekochten Lederriemen" (*GW* 4:1361; which also is our source for gnawing boiled leather). Hunger is always with the soldiers: Eilif murders out of hunger (*GW* 4:1419), and Courage attributes their viciousness to hunger: "Sie kriegen wochenlang nichts zu fressen, und wenn sie dann kriegen, durch Plündern, fallen sie über die Frauenzimmer her" (*GW* 4:1377). A soldier complains in scene 4 of hunger while his officer has plenty: "Der verhurt mein Trinkgeld, und ich hab Hunger" (*GW* 4:1393). As for cannibalism: "Im Pommerschen solln die Dörfler schon die jüngern Kinder aufgegessen haben..." (*GW* 4:1423).

[3] On razed villages see the title for scene 9 (*GW* 4:1422); Courage tells us of the homeless: "Was soll ich mit Bettfedern? Die Leut haben keine Häuser" (*GW* 4:1410). Peasants warn of marauders: "Da sind die Wölf, und was schlimmer ist, die Marodöre" (*GW* 4:1437). On spies: Schweizerkas is found out by one in scene 3, the same one who surprises the chaplain at the latrine: "Sie haben Spitzel. Gestern früh ist einer vor mir aufgetaucht aus dem Graben, wie ich meine Notdurft verrichtet hab" (*GW* 4:1380). Friends distrust friends: the classic example is an armourer's reason for not trying to sell illegal goods to an armourer from another regiment: "Weil ich ihm nicht trau, wir sind befreundet" (*GW* 4:1369). Note also Courage's first response to her son's greeting: "Was will er denn, ich hab kein Geld übrig" (*GW* 4:1372). On lovers as enemies, see Yvette's description of her relationship with the cook: "Da waren viele Feinde / Und mein Feind war ein Koch / Ich haßte ihn bei Tage / Und nachts, da liebte ich ihn doch" (*GW* 4:1371). The denial of family: Courage denies Schweizerkas before and after his death (*GW* 4:1382-1383, 1391). In scene 11 peasants assist the attack on Halle to spare their livestock.

bless atrocities committed in their name;[4] and everywhere there is death in its most terrible forms: murder, starvation, plague, and it strikes all, whether they be soldier, peasant, burgher, general, or king; in the end, half of Germany's population will perish.[5]

This is the tale of war told by *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder.* It is a story of cruelty, barbarism, and unfreedom, of a crime against humanity perpetrated so that one ruler can take from another.[6] It is that story which Hobbes told us in his classic description of war, where no benefit is had from human industry, but all live in continual danger and fear of violent death, and "the life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[7]

---

[4] Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, uses Freedom as a slogan to mask his subjugation of Poland and Germany (*GW* 4:1374). The chaplain preaches the soldiers senseless, until the enemy seems "wie eine Hammelherd" and the soldiers consider life "ein alter verstunkener Fußlappen" (*GW* 4:1406). Again, the chaplain justifies Eilif's brutal murder of peasants and theft of their oxen. When Eilif ends his story with "Not kennt kein Gebot" and the commander asks the chaplain's opinion, he answers: "Strenggenommen, in der Bibel steht der Satz nicht, aber unser Herr hat aus fünf Broten fünfhundert herzaubern können, da war eben keine Not, und da konnt er auch verlangen, daß man seinen Nächsten liebt, denn man war satt. Heutzutage ist das anders" (*GW* 4:1364). On this see also Helmut Jendreiek, *Bertolt Brecht: Drama der Veränderung* (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1969) 168-169, 171.

[5] The general is Tilly and the king Gustavus Adolphus; "ÜBER DIE HÄLFTE SEINER BEWOHNER HAT DEUTSCHLAND EINGEBÜSST" (*GW* 4:1422).

[6] "Wenn man die Großköpfigen reden hört, führens die Krieg nur aus Gottesfurcht und für alles, was gut und schön ist. Aber wenn man genauer hinsieht, sinds nicht so blöd, sondern führn die Krieg für Gewinn" (*GW* 4:1375).

[7] "In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." From Part 1, Chapter 13 of Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946) 82. Of course, Hobbes describes here the condition of people "out of civil states," but

In this terrible place dwells Mutter Courage, from it she hopes to reap her reward. A sutler who lives from war and feeds its engines, she helps to perpetuate war and its misery.[8] A partner of war, and so of death, she well earns the epithets "criminal" and "hyena of the battlefield".[9] The crime itself, her business with war, cannot be denied, for her participation is there for all to see.[10]

Since her crime is obvious, it is more important to stress that she is neither an innocent victim of war nor a hapless bystander, that her actions are neither accidental nor unavoidable; rather, Courage is an accomplice of war, her part in the crime is deliberate, persistent, and unrepentant.[11]

Courage has no illusions about war. She knows the misery it causes, its violence and starvation.[12] She knows too that it is a lie, that the ideals for which it is allegedly fought, such as the defense of the faith or the cause of freedom, are mere pretexts for the real aim of the rulers: self-aggrandizement. She knows that it is a business waged by rulers for profit only.[13]

More important, Courage also knows that truth about the war which refutes her own purpose. She counts herself among the little people, and she knows that the little people never gain from war but pay both for defeat and victory.[14] The truth of this knowledge is represented in the decline of her

---

its appropriateness to war between "civil states", or of war as the negation of civil states, is at once apparent.

[8] Hein 64.

[9] Both the chaplain ("Sie sind eine Hyäne des Schlachtfelds!"; *GW* 4:1414) and Brecht ("In der Szene auf dem Schlachtfeld ... war sie wirklich die Hyäne..."; *GW* 16:896) call Courage a hyena. For Brecht on the criminal see *GW* 17:1148.

[10] Jendreiek 153, 173-174, 183.

[11] *MC* 132, 189-190, 251; *GW* 16:895.

[12] When the cook voices the general suspicion that the peasants are hoarding their produce, Courage reveals the truth: "Sie haben nicht" (*GW* 4:1361). As for death, we will see later on that she knows how deadly war is.

[13] See footnote number 6; also *GW* 17:1150.

[14] "Die Sieg und Niederlagen der Großkopfigen oben und der von unten fallen nämlich nicht immer zusammen, durchaus nicht.... Im allgemeinen kann man

wagon, the symbol of her business, and in the loss of her children, who are "taxed" from her by war.[15] Courage must know, then, that her attempt to identify with the rulers, her hope to profit as they do from war, is doomed.

Not only does Courage know that the little people pay for war, she knows also the price they pay: death. This is the message of her fortune-telling ruse.[16] There the sergeant and each of her children draw lots to see what awaits them in war, and, appropriately for a lottery conducted from a warrior's helmet, they all draw death. It is true that Courage prearranges this result, to distract the soldiers from recruiting her sons and to dissuade her children from getting too close to war. Yet the fraud is true: if you get too close to war, nothing will save you from death. Thus the sergeant, who thinks he will see old age if he keeps to the rear of battle, discovers he was undone simply by joining the army.[17]

Courage utters the same truth elsewhere. She compares the recruiter's invitation to her son with the angler's to the worm; getting too close to war, she says, is like lambs going to slaughter;[18] a song which she seems to have taught her son tells us that a soldier's only reward is death;[19] she does not call the

---

sagen, daß uns gemeinen Leuten Sieg und Niederlag teuer zu stehn kommen" (*GW* 4:1379). See *MC* 67, 130; *AJ* 22.4.41.

[15] On the wagon: Jendreiek 158; Alfred Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip des 'Nicht-Sondern' in neueren Stücken Bertolt Brechts: Literarästhetische Untersuchungen zur 'Politischen Theorie des Verfremdungseffekts," Diss. Pädagogische Hochschule Potsdam, 1962, 140; on the children: *MC* 253.

[16] *GW* 4:1355-1358.

[17] "SCHWEIZERKAS Ein Schwarzes Kreuz hat her gezogen. Hin geht er. / .... / DER FELDWEBEL *heiser*: Du hast mich beschissen. / MUTTER COURAGE Das hast du dich selber an dem Tag, wo du Soldat geworden bist" (*GW* 4:1356).

[18] "Komm, geh mit angeln, sagt der Fischer zum Wurm" (*GW* 4:1355); "Möchten ihrer Mutter weglaufen, die Teufel, und in den Krieg wie die Kälber zum Salz" (*GW* 4:1357).

[19] On being a soldier, Eilif says to his commander: "Meine Mutter hat mich gewarnt deshalb. Da kann ich ein Lied" (*GW* 4:1366). The song is *Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten*. The parallels between Courage and Eilif and the old woman and soldier in the song, that the song immediately follows mention of

soldiers' march into battle a road to glory (even the sergeant uses "glory" only as a euphemism for death), instead she calls it a march into the maw of Hell.[20] Clearly, Courage knows the real meaning of war. That she nevertheless participates in war only adds to her guilt.[21]

Some have argued that Courage has no choice but to participate in war since it is the ineluctable condition of her existence.[22] It is possible that Courage's guilt might be lessened if she could not avoid war — but the text tells us that she can avoid it and will not;[23] moreover, she seeks war and will not leave it; indeed, she fears its end and welcomes its renewal.

The classic proof of Courage's active participation in war, of her search for it as her place of business, is the exchange between her and the sergeant in scene 1. The sergeant notes that Courage is far from "home": "Du bist aus Bamberg in Bayern, wie kommst du hierher?" Courage shows her impatience to be with war: "Ich kann nicht warten, bis der Krieg gefälligst nach Bamberg kommt."[24]

A very late addition to the text, these lines mean to strengthen the case against Courage by emphasizing her deliberate pursuit of war.[25] A similar

---

Courage's warning, together with the fact that Courage completes the song suggests that this is her song. The old woman tells the soldier: "Ihr vergeht wie der Rauch! ... / Und uns wärmen nicht eure Taten" (*GW* 4:1367)!

[20] "Ihr Hauptleut, eure Leut marschieren / Euch ohne Wurst nicht in den Tod," and "Doch sind sie satt, habt meinen Segen / Und führt sie in den Höllenschlund" (*GW* 4:1351); The sergeant on "glory" : "Immer halt ich mich dahint. Einen sicheren Platz, als wenn du Feldwebel bist, gibts nicht. Da kannst du die andern vorschicken, daß sie sich Ruhm erwerben" (*GW* 4:1359).

[21] See Jendreiek 161, 178.

[22] Keith A. Dickson, "History, Drama and Brecht's Chronicle of the Thirty Years War," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 6 (1970): 265.

[23] *MC* 189-190.

[24] *GW* 4:1353.

[25] This passage is not found in any version up to and including the new Berlin production of 1951 (according to the promptbook), nor is it found in Suhrkamp's first 2 editions — or Aufbau's first 6 editions — of Heft 9 of the *Versuche* (which is why it is also missing from the text of the *BF*, which is based on the 2nd ed.

change had been made earlier for the Berliner Ensemble production of 1951: Courage's business song, performed with her first appearance after the opening dialogue, was moved to the very beginning of the drama as a kind of musical introduction. In its new place the song was meant to portray Courage's "langer Weg", that is, the long road she travels for the sake of war, which, it was felt, would highlight her active participation in war.[26] Both revisions, one retained and one abandoned in the "final" text, respond to the audience's apparent immunity to the notion that Courage's active participation in war is her crime. And both make all too obvious what is already inscribed in the text.

For Courage's deliberate and active participation in war is plain from her very first entrance: it is she who approaches war (or rather, its representatives who are recruiting in Sweden), and it is she who hails war: "Ihr Hauptleut, laßt die Trommel ruhen / .... / Mutter Courage, die kommt mit Schuhen."[27] In the first scene Courage's account of her children, who were born at various theatres of war, suggests that she has travelled far and wide, from Germany to Switzerland to France to Scandinavia, so that she may be with war.[28] Later, in scene 3, this impression is reinforced when we learn that Courage has flown a Protestant flag for 25 years.[29] If she were operating in peace this would have

---

of Suhrkamp's *Versuche*; see *BF* 6:377). The passage is found in volume 7 of the early editions of Brecht's *Stücke* (1957), but I have not yet found an explanation for its inclusion. Olsson's notes suggest that it was not one of the corrections written by Brecht or his assistants (during the 1949 production at the Deutsches Theater) into his copies of the 1949 edition of Suhrkamp's *Versuche* (documents 1006 and 2146). See *HK* 58, 71-72, and WA 10.

[26] For an account of this failed experiment see the sections "Vorspiel" and "Der lange Weg in den Krieg" in the *Couragemodell*, reprinted in *MC* 130-132. The change was suggested by Helene Weigel; see Fritz Hennenberg, *Das Große Brecht-Liederbuch*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984) 3:421.

[27] *GW* 4:1350; see Friedrich Wölfel, "Das Lied der Mutter Courage," *Wege zum Gedicht*, eds. Rupert Hirschenauer, and Albrecht Weber (Munich: Schnell und Steiner, 1963) 539.

[28] On children born at theatres of war, see *MC* 133. Eilif is a Finn (though he takes after a French "father"); Schweizerkas is Swiss; Kattrin is German; see *GW* 4:1352-1353.

[29] "Boshe moi! Mir fällt die [Fahne] schon gar nicht mehr auf. Fünfund-

been an unnecessary sign, and so it means a very long service in war indeed. Since Courage demonstrates a long involvement with war (which was possible, as seventeenth-century Europe saw only 4 years of peace),[30] we cannot give ourselves over to the idea that Courage simply is caught up in the general conflagration of the Thirty Years War.

Courage, then, deliberately follows war. And, since she must seek it out, we may infer that war is not ubiquitous. Therefore Courage must also be able to choose *not* to follow war.[31] The drama tells us in scene 9 that she does indeed have such a choice. The cook has learned that he has inherited an inn at Utrecht. Weary of the privations suffered in war, he decides to offer a partnership to Courage. Utrecht, apparently, stands outside the turmoil of war. Certainly Courage understands it as an escape from war, as a place "wo nicht herumgeschossen würd," and where she and her remaining children might have "ein paar ruhige Jahr."[32] But Courage rejects Utrecht. True, the cook forces a cruel choice on her: desert Kattrin and come with him to Utrecht, or stay with her daughter in the war. Still, Utrecht would remain a place outside war; and if Courage will not accept the cook's offer, there is no reason why she could not make Utrecht a goal for herself and her daughter independently of the cook. Nevertheless, Courage's choice, as always, is in favour of war. That Courage rejects a possible escape from war only compounds her guilt.

It might seem that Courage, when she rejects the cook's offer and remains with her daughter, demonstrates motherly self-sacrifice, that, when she reassures Kattrin that they will yet profit from war, she merely puts a brave face on their

---

zwanzig Jahr hab ich die" (*GW* 4:1377-1378).

[30] "War was more common in Europe during the seventeenth century than ever before: only four complete calendar years were peaceful over the whole continent." in Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith, introduction, *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Geoffrey Parker, and Lesley M. Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 14.

[31] *MC* 69, 189-190.

[32] *GW* 4:1423.

predicament. Her choice, however, reflects her real preference for war over peace, a preference which she had revealed earlier after Kattrin's assault: "Ich laß mir den Krieg von euch nicht madig machen."[33] Even when she has lost all her children, she is unrepentant and drags her wagon off in war's train. Two moments in particular demonstrate Courage's love of war.

The first is found in scene 6. The death of General Tilly has made Courage uneasy about the future of the war, and she looks to the apologist of war, the chaplain, for reassurance that it will still continue. She is not worried that an end to war may mean her remaining goods will be devalued; rather, she frets that an end to war will mean she cannot take on new wares, that she cannot continue her business.[34] This counters the view that Courage is the incarnation of some kind of vital adaptability. If she was extremely flexible in wartime, so that she was undismayed at her capture by Imperial troops and simply adapted her business to the new Catholic customers, now she is at a loss.[35] For her the end of the war is no new opportunity; indeed, she cannot even conceive of business in peacetime.[36] Rather, for Courage the end of war means the end of her business, so that her connection with war becomes extremely close, for war is her existence, its end hers.[37]

The second clear demonstration of Courage's affection for war is found in scene 8. In that scene the war whose health had so worried Courage expires. The Church announces peace with a joyful ringing of bells. Courage, however, is allergic to the sound of peace as is a vampire to the sun; irritated, she

---

[33] *GW* 4:1409; Thiele 45.

[34] Courage to the chaplain on why she asks whether war will end: "Sie, ich frag Sie das nicht nur aus Hetz, sondern weil ich mir überleg, ob ich Vorrät einkaufen soll, ... aber wenn der Krieg ausgeht, kann ich sie dann wegschmeißen" *(GW* 4:1401).

[35] Courage on their "capture": "Wir sind gefangen, aber so wie die Laus im Pelz" (*GW* 4:1379).

[36] Which must seriously limit the ability to adapt which Jendreiek claims for Courage (175).

[37] See Thiele 34.

complains about the racket: "Was ist das für ein Geläut mitten in der Woch?"[38] Nor does her mood improve when she learns that peace has come: "Sagen Sie mir nicht, daß Friede ausgebrochen ist, wo ich eben neue Vorräte eingekauft hab."[39] For Courage peace is no deliverance, but a calamity which "breaks out". Even her thankfulness at having brought two of her children alive through the war is ambivalent, for when she decides to go to church in memory of Schweizerkas and calls: "Kattrin Friede! Zieh dein Schwarzes an!"[40] we are unsure how to take her black clothing: does she mourn Schweizerkas and give thanks for peace, or does she mourn the death of war? Yet, even if her change of clothes does not signify her sorrow at the demise of war, still, by the time Courage reemerges in churchly black, her original impulse has reasserted itself, and she says to the newly arrived cook: "Koch, Sie treffen mich im Unglück.... / .... / Der Friede bricht mirn Hals."[41] The chaplain well describes Courage's reception of peace when he says that she unwillingly takes hold of it between thumb and forefinger as though it were a filthy rag.[42]

Peace, though, soon vanishes; it does not even survive the scene in which it is announced. War returns, and with it return Courage's high spirits. Instead of going to church she had gone to town to get rid of the wares that peace had made worthless. Now she returns breathless with excitement and announces the good news: "Koch, der Frieden ist schon wieder aus! ... Ich hab mein Zeug noch nicht losgeschlagen gehabt, wie ichs erfahrn hab. Gott sei Dank!"[43] If Courage postponed her thanksgiving when peace arrived, she loses no time in offering thanks for war. And we note how this last exclamation gives rise to an ambivalence that further emphasizes Courage's love of war, since it is

---

[38] *GW* 4:1410; see *MC* 170.
[39] *GW* 4:1410.
[40] *GW* 4:1411.
[41] *GW* 4:1412.
[42] "Ich [seh] Sie den Frieden entgegennehmen ... wie ein altes verrotztes Sacktuch, mit Daumen und Zeigefinger..." (*GW* 4:1414).
[43] *GW* 4:1420; See *MC* 173.

immediately followed by: "In der Stadt schießen sie sich mit die Lutherischen." The exclamation is a hinge between its neighbouring statements and we alternate between the two readings: "Ich hab mein Zeug noch nicht losgeschlagen gehabt, wie ichs erfahrn hab. Gott sei Dank!" and: "Gott sei Dank! In der Stadt schießen sie sich mit die Lutherischen." This ambivalence is caused especially by Courage's exultation at the resurrection of a war she wishes were everywhere.[44] If she was dejected at war's end, now she is bursting with energy, and war, that is, death, has made her strangely animated. She has no time to lose: "Kattrin, packen!" She is relieved and ready to go on: "Ein kurzer Frieden wars, und schon gehts weiter."[45] As she leaves to join the army she breaks into a song that is at once a hymn and an advertisement recruiting for both war and her business:[46]

> Von Ulm nach Metz, von Metz nach Mähren!
> Mutter Courage ist dabei!
> Der Krieg wird seinen Mann ernähren.
> Er braucht nur Pulver zu und Blei.
> Von Blei allein kann er nicht leben
> Von Pulver nicht, er braucht auch Leut!
> Müßts euch zum Regiment begeben
> Sonst steht er um! So kommt noch heut!

In scene 1 Courage maintained she was merely a peace-loving merchant trying to sell her wares. What we have seen so far causes us to doubt her love of peace, just as the sergeant doubts it at the sight of the knife she pulls in her son's defense.[47] There is good reason for doubt, for Courage gives abundant evidence of her own inhumanity, and so of her affinity for war.

---

[44] *GW* 4:1370.

[45] *GW* 4:1420-1421.

[46] *GW* 4:1421.

[47] When Courage pulls her knife and says, "Ich stech euch nieder, Lumpen! ... Wir verkaufen ehrlich Leinen und Schinken und sind friedliche Leut," the sergeant replies: "Das sieht man an deinem Messer, wie friedlich ihr seid" (*GW* 4:1355).

Inhumanity is integral to Courage's business.[48] As a sutler Courage depends upon war for her profit. We have seen that war means misery. Therefore, Courage's business is bound up with the misery of others.[49] In fact, the idea that one's happiness is purchased at the price of the unhappiness of another is clearly part of Courage's thinking. It is the "murderous thought" which Brecht says underlies the lullaby sung by Courage to the dead Kattrin.[50] There Courage consistently associates the happiness of her own children with the unhappiness of others. Her children are happy while others weep; her children have cake while others have barely a crust; her children dress in satin while others are in rags.[51] These may represent wishes more than realities, but they are for all that no less barbaric. And Courage gives many clear examples of her inhumanity.

We see for example that Courage tries to profit from the misfortune of others. When Courage wants to mortgage her wagon for her son's life, she preys on the fears of Yvette, the camp prostitute.[52] Earlier, when still part of the Protestant camp, Yvette was downcast because knowledge of her diseased state had caused business to drop off.[53] When the Imperial troops capture Yvette along with the rest of Courage's camp, her "reputation" (since she is *unknown*) is restored. Courage points out to Yvette, who considers buying the sutler's wagon, that her upturn in business will not last, and so she should not haggle over the price of Courage's wagon, especially since Yvette relies for its purchase on the purse of a current customer: "Es ist eine Gelegenheit für dich, Yvette, wer

---

[48] Jendreiek 174.

[49] Jendreiek 186.

[50] "Der Gedanke, der dem Lied zugrunde liegt, ist ein mörderischer: Das Kind dieser Mutter sollte es besser haben als andere Kinder anderer Mütter" (*MC* 187).

[51] "Nachbars Bälg greinen / Und meine sind froh. / Nachbars gehn in Lumpen / Und du gehst in Seid"; and "Nachbars han kein Brocken / Und du kriegst eine Tort" (*GW* 4:1436-1437).

[52] *GW* 4:1386-1387.

[53] *GW* 4:1370.

weiß, wann du so eine wiederfindest und einen lieben Freund hast, der dich berät, ists nicht so?"[54] (That Yvette in turn tries to use Courage's fear for Schweizerkas's life to reduce the price does not lessen Courage's brutality.) In scene 2 Courage exploits the general starvation at the siege of Walhoff to extort from the cook an exorbitant price for her capon. Courage knows of the cook's fear of his brutal commander, who even in famine expects the cook to provide or become himself a sacrifice (hence the significance of the cook's name): "Zu essen, Lamb, du Kochbestie, sonst erschlag ich dich."[55] To encourage his purchase of the capon, Courage reminds the cook: "Der Feldhauptmann wird Ihnen den Kopf abreißen, wenn nix aufm Tisch steht."[56] Finally, in scene 11 those living in Halle know that the town is in danger and so they try to sell off their possessions before they flee. Courage exploits their fear and desperation to purchase the goods cheaply.[57]

Courage also shows that her desire for profit knows no compassion. At the sack of Magdeburg (scene 5), Courage refuses to give up her shirts for bandages. Her reason for refusing humanitarian aid to the wounded: they cannot pay.[58] In scene 2, when mother and son are reunited, Courage strikes Eilif. But not because he has brutally slaughtered peasants to steal their oxen. The peasants are nothing to her — presumably since they are not customers. Rather, she slaps Eilif because he did not surrender when outnumbered.[59] In Courage's business song in scene 1 she seems sympathetic to the needs of the soldiers; she tells the

---

[54] *GW* 4:1386.

[55] *GW* 4:1363.

[56] *GW* 4:1361.

[57] The peasants tell us Courage "ist in der Stadt, einkaufen. — Für ihren Warenhandel, weil viele fliehn und billig verkaufen" (*GW* 4:1430).

[58] "Ich gib nix. Die zahlen nicht, warum, die haben nix" (*GW* 4:1397); *GW* 16:896.

[59] When Eilif asks if he is punished, "Weil ich die Ochsen gefangen hab?" Courage replies: "Nein. Weil du dich nicht ergeben hast, wie die vier auf dich losgegangen sind und haben aus dir Hackfleisch machen wollen! Hab ich dir nicht gelernt, daß du auf dich achtgeben sollst" (*GW* 4:1368)?; Jendreiek 187.

officers to give the men a rest while she provides shoes, sausage, and wine.[60] This sympathy is illusory; she is only interested in the soldiers as customers, and when they can buy no longer she says to their leaders: "Habt meinen Segen / Und führt sie in den Höllenschlund."[61] Similarly, Courage seems to sympathize with the soldiers when she reprimands their armourer for selling the men's ammunition to keep his officer in wine.[62] But her moral indignation at the resulting danger for the soldiers is seen to be only a ploy to buy the ammunition at a better rate: "Heeresgut nehm ich nicht. Nicht für den Preis."[63]

Courage's criminality, her preference for war over peace, death over life, extends even to her own children. Each time that war closes on them she is absent on business, that is to say, she chooses her partnership with war and death over the lives of her children — which puts the lie to her desire to bring her children through the war.[64]

The recruiter intends to steal Eilif; Courage's spirited defense of her son shows that she knows this; she knows too that her son is attracted to the profession that killed his father;[65] and we have already seen that she knows that coming too close to war means death. Nevertheless, when the sergeant dangles before her the chance of profit she scrambles with unseemly haste from her wagon to make the sale, she forgets her wariness and she places herself in the hands of war's representative.[66] Thus she abandons her son, whom she only moments before had been ready to defend with her knife.[67] So wary is she of

---

[60] *GW* 4:1350-1351.

[61] *GW* 4:1351.

[62] "Ihr verkaufts die Kugeln, ihr Lumpen, und die Mannschaft hat nix zum Schießen vorm Feind" (*GW* 4:1369).

[63] *GW* 4:1369.

[64] Courage's aim: "Auf was ich aus bin, ist, mich und meine Kinder durchbringen mit meinem Wagen" (*GW* 4:1406); *MC* 251-253; Jendreiek 187.

[65] When the sergeant says they will take Eilif, "der wird uns Soldat," Eilif adds: "Ich möchts schon, Mutter" (*GW* 4:1356-1357).

[66] *GW* 4:1358.

[67] *MC* 139, 251-253; *AJ* 25.11.48.

war as her customer that she tests his coin,[68] so solicitous is she of the unease of war's representative at his foretold death that she soothes him with free brandy,[69] so blind is she now to her son's danger and deaf to the warning croaks of her inarticulate daughter: "Gleich, Kattrin, gleich. Der Herr Feldhauptmann zahlt noch."[70] Given the choice between her child and profit, between protecting her children and business with war and death — Courage chooses death.

Her choice is echoed later when Eilif is taken to his execution.[71] Now, when death as war exacts its final payment from Eilif, Courage is again absent. At his moment of need when Eilif's last wish is to see his mother, she is away at town selling off her stock. (Of course, Courage has no idea that Eilif is in the vicinity and about to be executed. Rather, this is a symbolic rehearsal of her previous abandonment.)[72]

It is the same with her second son, Schweizerkas, who pays sooner than Eilif his admission to the theatre of war. Again Courage, despite all she knows, without protest allows a son to get too close to war, in the form of a paymaster.[73] Lest it be thought that this position is safer than that of a regular soldier, or that recruitment is itself not the same as mortal danger, it should be remembered that the sergeant was no better protected for keeping to the rear, that he had cheated himself of his life simply by joining war (as Courage well knows, see page 5).

With the capture of Courage and the Finnish camp by the Imperialists, Schweizerkas too must pay the final price. As paymaster, Schweizerkas feels it

---

[68] Courage bites the coin and says: "Ich bin mißtrauisch gegen jedes Geld. Ich bin ein gebranntes Kind, Feldwebel" (*GW* 4:1359).

[69] "So sollst du dirs nicht zu Herzen nehmen.... Da, nimm einen Schluck Schnaps, Mann" (*GW* 4:1359).

[70] *GW* 4:1359.

[71] *GW* 4:1418-1420; Jendreiek 187-188.

[72] See Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 150.

[73] Courage: "Der Schweizerkas ist Zahlmeister beim Zweiten geworden;... ganz konnt ich ihn nicht heraushalten" (*GW* 4:1367); *MC* 22.

his duty to protect the regimental cashbox from the Imperial army. Courage, who has always had advice for him, is now ambivalent. She first tells him to abandon the money, but when she finds that the cashbox is stored in her wagon she says it is even more dangerous to get rid of it.[74] She, who had always advised her simple son, now has no effective plan of action, and is in this way "absent". Instead, once captured, she has only the prophetic and brutal: "Wenn du nicht wärst, Schweizerkas, wärs leichter."[75]

She soon gets her wish. Schweizerkas is recognized and arrested. Brought before his mother, she denies knowing him.[76] If this denial seems criminal, there is a still greater crime that Courage commits: she sacrifices her son to her business.[77]

It is true that Courage at first intends to sell her wagon to ransom Schweizerkas's life. Yet, hardly uttered, this intention is taken back and she tells Yvette, who wants to buy the wagon, that she did not mean to sell the wagon, but to mortgage it.[78] Still she appears truly to care for her son when she snaps at the chaplain, who suggests that she keep some of the money from the mortgage for herself and offer only a portion of it for her son: "Ists Ihr Geld? Ich bitt mir aus, daß Sie sich draußen halten."[79] But Courage is only dissimulating until Yvette, who hopes to keep the wagon since Courage is unlikely to find the funds to redeem it, is safely out of the way. Then Courage shows how even now, with her child in mortal danger, she remains coldly calculating. She reassures the chaplain: "Ich rechn mit der Regimentskass, Sie Siebengescheiter."[80] She intends to use Yvette's money to rescue her son, and then to use the money from the strongbox

---

[74] *GW* 4:1377.
[75] *GW* 4:1378.
[76] *GW* 4:1382.
[77] *MC* 253.
[78] *GW* 4:1385-1386.
[79] *GW* 4:1388.
[80] *GW* 4:1388.

to recover her wagon (and very likely hopes to have some money left over).[81] Then Courage discovers that Schweizerkas's strongbox lies unretrievable at the bottom of the river. Now she must choose: her business or her son. Courage's inhumanity asserts itself: she bargains for her son and wastes precious time trying to lower his price. In the end Courage agrees to the full amount, but it is too late; her real choice was made when she first refused to sell the wagon and so reduced her son's value.[82] There remains only the final denial of Schweizerkas's body by his hardened mother, and his corpse ends up on the garbage heap, an offering to scavengers.

Kattrin's case is a remarkable demonstration of Courage's preference for war over the health and happiness of her children. We turn first to scene 6 where the chaplain reassures Courage that there will be no end to the war: "Nein, der Krieg findet immer einen Ausweg, was nicht gar. Warum soll er aufhören müssen?"[83] This prediction means different things for mother and daughter. For Courage peace means disaster, the end of her business. For Kattrin, however, peace means the necessary condition set by her mother for her daughter's marriage; the necessary condition, that is, for Kattrin's emotional and sensual fulfilment. Kattrin's desires in that regard are plain from her attempt at seductive behaviour in a prostitute's hat and shoes, and from her many demonstrations of maternal behaviour, evidenced in her care for wounded animals and her rescue of an infant from a burning hut, to name only two instances.[84] Now Kattrin overhears Courage and the chaplain and learns that war will never end, that her hopes will never be realized. Kattrin learns too that her mother's promise is a lie,

---

[81] Jendreiek 189.

[82] Jendreiek 190; *MC* 22, 155, 253.

[83] *GW* 4:1403.

[84] Kattrin's seductive behaviour: "*Kattrin hat begonnen, mit Yvettes Hut auf dem Kopf herumzustolzieren, Yvettes Gang kopierend*" (*GW* 4:1375). On Kattrin and wounded animals, Courage says: "Die leidet am Mitleid. Neulich hab ich bei ihr wieder einen Igel versteckt gefunden, wo wir überfahren haben" (*GW* 4:1425); on the rescued child see *GW* 4:1398.

for Courage does not even want the peace which she uses as bait to keep Kattrin with her. Her hopes dashed, Kattrin revenges herself on her mother's business by throwing a basket of bottles to the ground. Courage's response? She laughs: "Kattrin! *Lacht.* Jesses, die wart doch auf den Frieden. Ich hab ihr versprochen, sie kriegt einen Mann, wenn Frieden wird."[85]

There is a pendant to this laugh, and it too follows an injury to Kattrin. Immediately after Courage's insensitive reaction to her daughter's unhappiness, she puts Kattrin in danger.[86] As in the case of Eilif, Courage is "absent"; she forgets her knowledge of the dangers of war, she forgets the brutish behaviour of the soldiers and the risk it represents to Kattrin, a risk which earlier had caused Courage to smear her daughter's face with ashes while she explained: "Ein Soldat, besonders ein katholischer, und ein sauberes Gesicht, und gleich ist die Hur fertig."[87] In spite of her knowledge, for the sake of her business Courage sends Kattrin to town for new wares accompanied only by an untrustworthy scribe. Even the chaplain recognizes the danger and questions Courage's decision: "Können Sie sie mit dem Schreiber gehn lassen?" Courage only dismisses his reasonable query with a weak excuse: "Sie ist nicht so hübsch, daß sie einer ruinieren möcht."[88]

Courage's indifference toward her daughter in the interest of business is repaid here as surely as when she abandoned Eilif for a belt buckle: Kattrin is assaulted and permanently disfigured (a fateful wound that forces Kattrin to stay in war, since it makes her unmarriageable and is one reason why the cook will not take her along to Utrecht).[89] Courage knows she is to blame for her daughter's suffering. With guilty conscience she tries to right the wrong by giving

---

[85] *GW* 4:1403; see also Sarah Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*," *The Brecht Yearbook* 12 (1985): 56-57.

[86] *GW* 4:1403-1404.

[87] *GW* 4:1377.

[88] *GW* 4:1404.

[89] *GW* 4:1408, 1424.

Kattrin back the prostitute's red shoes which she had earlier confiscated — symbols of a desire no longer capable of fulfilment, and so an insensitive offering. Kattrin knows the meaning of what has happened to her; she refuses the shoes and with this throws the blame onto her mother.[90]

At the end of this scene Courage is suddenly overcome by maternal feeling and she curses the war for the injury done her daughter and her other children: "Der Krieg soll verflucht sein."[91] However, no sooner has she uttered this curse than she recants.[92] The very next scene begins with Courage's defiant retraction: "Ich laß mir den Krieg von euch nicht madig machen." She defends her continued faith in war against both the chaplain, who with good reason had questioned the wisdom of letting Kattrin go out unaccompanied, and against Kattrin, whose wound is a silent reproach to her mother. Courage refuses to hear any evil of war; indeed, newly wealthy (with coin and with new wares) she praises war and identifies with it: "Nur, der Krieg nährt seine Leut besser."[93] (This remarkable sequence of injury to her child followed by riches suggests a causal relationship, especially when we remark that another upswing in Courage's business follows Eilif's execution).[94] Courage's words show once again how she treasures war more than her daughter, for she does not take account of Kattrin's injury any more than she sympathizes with her daughter's disappointment at discovering that she will see neither peace nor happiness. Courage's praise of war after Kattrin's assault echoes the laugh with which she had previously greeted her daughter's betrayed hopes.

---

[90] *GW* 4:1407-1408; see also *MC* 165, 168.

[91] *GW* 4:1408.

[92] The swiftness of her retraction is emphasized by a temporal ambiguity, for this scene seems to occur immediately after the previous one since no date is given to it as in most of the previous scenes.

[93] *GW* 4:1409.

[94] *GW* 4:1419-1421.

But Courage's "abandonment" of Kattrin in scene 6 is only a prelude to the final abandonment of her daughter in scene 11.[95] There, we remember, the inhabitants of Halle know that their town is in danger; those who can are desperately trying to escape. In this time of crisis Courage leaves her daughter outside the town with strangers. The reason for Courage's neglect: she wants to buy up wares cheaply from the terrified people in Halle (see footnote 57). Once again Courage chooses business (and so war and death) over her daughter, and for one last time her choice is repaid with the death of her child. This time, however, the victim can offer no reproach to her mother — except through the brute fact of her body (and Courage, just as she refused to recognize the reproach contained in Kattrin's wound, now refuses to acknowledge the criticism contained in her child's body: "Vielleicht schlaft sie mir ein.").[96] The role of criticism falls instead to the peasants who blame Courage for Kattrin's end: "Wenns nicht in die Stadt gegangen wärn, Ihren Schnitt machen, wärs vielleicht nicht passiert."[97] (It could even be said that Courage abandons her daughter in death, since she leaves her daughter's burial to strangers.)

Three times we have seen Courage demonstrate her preference for war over her daughter; three times, then, she reveals the real content of a disturbing remark that she made in scene 2 as she described her children to the cook, for of Kattrin she said: "Die Tochter ist nix."[98]

Not one child escapes Courage's inhumanity. Not one remains to mitigate her guilt. In every case Courage, in order to pursue her business with Death in warrior's guise, forgets all she knows and abandons her child. Though it was a soldier's bullet that ended each child's life, it was Courage who established the condition for their destruction, who brought them to war and showed them the abyss.

---

[95] *MC* 253.
[96] *GW* 4:1436; *MC* 186, 189.
[97] *GW* 4:1437.
[98] *GW* 4:1363.

In an earlier scene, when Courage protests that she is a peaceable merchant, the sergeant says he can see how peaceable she is from her knife.[99] So we can say of Courage, who declares that she only wants to bring her children through the war, that we can see from the bodies of her children what kind of mother she is.

We have seen how Courage must bear responsibility for her participation in the war. She abhors peace and is war's deliberate and willing collaborator. This is her crime. Her criminality is written into her own inhuman behaviour, which mirrors the barbarism of war. Her criminality destroys her children for the sake of her business. We can see then why the chaplain and Brecht call Courage a hyena.[100] Just as legend tells us that the hyena scavenges from the lion's kill, so Courage scavenges from the "trade of kings"; just as the hyena earned universal revilement through its association with death and corruption, so Courage draws our criticism through her truck with the corruption and death of war.[101]

But this hyena which is Courage does not need to wait upon the chaplain's words or Brecht's commentary in order to make its entrance. For the hyena is already present with Courage's first appearance, in her business song.[102] We have already seen the inhumanity revealed by this song when Courage's apparent concern for the needs of the soldiers turns out to be a concern for them only

---

[99] *GW* 4:1355.

[100] The chaplain: "Sie sind eine Hyäne des Schlachtfelds" (*GW* 4:1414). Brecht: "In der Szene auf dem Schlachtfeld ... war sie wirklich die Hyäne..." (*GW* 16:896).

[101] See Hans Kruuk, *The Spotted Hyena: A Study of Predation and Social Behaviour* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972) 106. See also Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*, vol. 4 of *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*, eds. J. A. Smith, and W. E. Ross, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910) 594^{b}; or Pliny's *Natural History*, ed. H. Rackham, 10 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1947) VIII:106.

[102] As noted by John Fuegi, *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 117; and Gleitman 154, though not in the way I show here.

while they remain customers, after which she consigns them to the pit. This is not yet the hyena; its lair is found in the refrain:[103]

> 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.

More specifically, the hyena lurks in the last line of this refrain.[104] On its own "auf die Socken machen," which means to leave, to take to one's heels, is not terribly striking or original. It would seem only a visually concrete image of the wounded making their way off the field of battle, leaving it to the dead who ignore the call to Resurrection. Yet this line, seemingly innocuous, is pregnant with a monster. Had Brecht written "auf die Beine machen" the hyena would not appear. It is the more concrete "auf die Socken machen" which raises the beast. The image it invokes is a specific condition: being without shoes. It is a condition of lack, one which raises a question: How did this particular lack come about? Some no doubt never had shoes — their leaders were never overly particular about the needs of their men. But some, just as they came to lack their health by having it taken from them in battle, must have lost their shoes to another. Through this image of the wounded quitting the field less their shoes we are led to another, that of the time-honoured tradition of the battlefield when the day's work is done: the stripping and looting of the dead and dying. And it seems hardly a coincidence that within the same song this lack should be met with its opposite. For if the wounded have no shoes, there is someone who has more than she herself needs, and our attention is drawn to these shoes since they are the first items she offers to the soldiers: "Ihr Hauptleut, laßt die Trommel ruhen / .... /

---

[103] *GW* 4:1351.

[104] For another view of the refrain, see Klaus Kienzler, "Bertolt Brecht — ein Gegenstand der Theologie?" *Bertolt Brecht: Aspekte seines Werkes, Spuren seiner Wirkung*, eds. Helmut Koopmann, and Theo Stammen (Munich: Vögel, 1983) 104-105.

Mutter Courage, die kommt mit Schuhen."[105] Now Courage's business becomes a grisly circular dance, one in which former customers "return" their shoes to Courage who sells them to new customers about to make the same infernal journey "in den Höllenschlund."[106] Now we see how closely bound Courage's business is to death. Now we see Courage for what she is, a creature who "battens on the dead," who scavenges in the graveyard which is the battlefield, who is the human form of that beast which robs even tombs for its delicacies.[107] Courage is truly a hyena, a creature of death.

---

[105] *GW* 4:1350.

[106] *GW* 4:1351. I feel my suggestion is not too extreme because of an incident during discussions for the film version of *Mutter Courage* in 1950. There it was Brecht who suggested a scene in which Eilif pulls the boots off a corpse and then has them taken by Courage to add to her wares. The idea was shunned by others as "Leichenfledderei"; see *Brecht im Gespräch: Diskussionen, Dialoge, Interviews*, ed. Werner Hecht (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975) 102-103.

[107] Not unlike that State described by Brecht in the *Legende vom toten Soldaten* (though this anticipates our discussion in Chapter 4) which in its own way lives off the dead by returning its exhumed heros to the battlefield (*GW* 8:256-259). Richard Scheuchner's production of *Mutter Courage* in New York caught this meaning in regard to Courage (and made it rather crudely obvious) when he had the sutler strip Kattrin of her overclothes after the lullaby. See John Fuegi, "Gespräch mit Richard Schechner über seine New Yorker Aufführung der *Mutter Courage*," trans. Jost Hermand, *Brecht-Jahrbuch* 6 (1976): 176.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

CHAPTER 2

THE MOTHER

Courage is a creature of death? Such an assessment intolerably reduces the figure of Courage and shows that it cannot adequately account for even the first thing about the drama. For in that "first thing", the title, is revealed at once that aspect of the figure which is apparent at every moment in the play and on every page of the drama: Courage is a mother.

The concept of mother invokes the principles of creativity and the affirmation of life.[1] Far from being life-destroying, Courage, as a mother, is the very source of life, a notion which is emphasized by the effective absence from the drama of that other half of the biological pair necessary to create life. For Courage's men, though they remain present to memory, seem almost incidental to the resulting group of mother and child; and, while Courage's energy is undiminished or — in the form of her children — is even augmented, her men have succumbed to time and death like so many drones with the coming of winter.[2] In this way Courage's maternal creativity is enhanced; for in the drama, it would seem, there is only Mutter Courage — and her children.

Courage is not only a source of life. In no way a creature indifferent to the young it has spawned, Courage tries throughout the drama to maintain the life

---

[1] See Dickson, "History, Drama" 271; Bernard Fenn, *Characterisation of Women in the Plays of Bertolt Brecht*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982) 204.

[2] Compare Fenn 164-165; Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology" 46.

that she has created. True, she tries to wrest from war the means to nourish that life, which is unfortunate, but it is difficult to see how this could be considered a crime, since the conditions of war in which she finds herself are "eternal".[3] Eternal because there is no place in this drama which is "outside" of war, and so "outside" the necessity of securing life at the cost of others. Courage's children were born at theatres of war, yet they are older than the six-year-old war in which we first meet them. Courage says that the peasants have nowhere to go to escape war, and later that the only escape from war is an early grave.[4] Even distant Utrecht is not free from this "war", for the cook's good fortune (he inherits an inn in Utrecht) results from misfortune: his mother's death from cholera (just as Yvette's fortune results from the death of her husband).[5] The war is eternal, too, because in this drama there is no time "before" or "after" the war; war begins before the action of the drama, and there is no sense within the drama of an original peace. Courage's *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*, for example, describes the world of her youth, which is no less militaristic than that of the drama's action. Nor is there a sense of the war's end (which would take a "miracle" as the last stanza of the drama tells us); for, even if the Thirty Years War is known to have ended in 1648, or twelve years after we last see Courage, the closing song causes the war to stretch into eternity: "Der Krieg er dauert

---

[3] See Wölfel 538; Mennemeier 392, 397; Bjφrn Ekmann, *Gesellschaft und Gewissen: Die sozialen und moralischen Anschauungen Bertolt Brechts und ihre Bedeutung für seine Dichtung* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1969) 233-234; Dickson, "History, Drama" 259; John Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner: The 'Second Optimism' of Bertolt Brecht* (Bern: Lang, 1974) 130, 133; Fenn 167; Reinhold Grimm, "Zwischen Tragik und Ideologie," *Das Ärgernis Brecht* (Stuttgart: Basilius, 1961) 112-113; Laurence Ryan, "Bertolt Brecht: A Marxist Dramatist?" *Aspects of the Drama and the Theatre: Five Kathleen Robinson Lectures delivered in the University of Sydney 1961-1963* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1965) 102-103; Keith A. Dickson, *Towards Utopia: A Study of Brecht* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) 107. These will all be discussed in Chapter 3.

[4] *GW* 4:1397, 1409.

[5] *GW* 4:1422, 1416-1417.

hundert Jahre."[6] The deliberate extension of the war by Brecht is captured in the very genesis of this line. Originally the text referred to the historical limits of the Thirty Years War: "der krieg, er dauert 30 jahre" (we note that this is a reference to the *original* duration of the war, and not to the more naturalistic expression to which the fictional year of the drama's close might give rise, such as "der krieg er dauert 12 jahre"). Soon this first duration was extended — and in the simplest way — by adding a zero to the number; thus, with "der krieg er dauert 300 jahre," the war is extended into eternity — as far as individual human experience is concerned. The later change to "hundert", which had already taken place before the first duplicated text was produced, is not truly a reduction of the eternal aspect of the war. In that 100 years can represent eternity for human life as easily as 300, this revision is simply a more elegant expression of endlessness.[7] Nor should we overlook the eternal aspect lent war symbolically by identifying it with nature: in the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten* war is associated with threatening waters, and in the *Lied von der Bleibe* it appears as the "Schneewind".[8]

With neither temporal nor spatial limit to the war, Courage cannot reasonably be held responsible for her participation in it. She must operate within its theatre, and to survive she must exploit whatever chances it offers her, for if she were merely to endure the war, as do the peasants, she would perish with them.[9] Indeed, to hold that Courage is a creature of death for her attempt to maintain life within war is the same as saying that the lioness who must kill to feed her young is also a creature of death.[10]

---

[6] *GW* 4:1438.

[7] For this genesis, see *HK* U172; see also Walter Hinck, *Die Dramaturgie des späten Brecht*, 2nd ed. (1959; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 83.

[8] *GW* 4:1366-1367, 1429.

[9] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 129; Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology" 46.

[10] Compare Fenn 166.

Courage's commitment to life is evident from her ceaseless struggle to maintain it in such difficult circumstances.[11] This vitality, the sheer power to continue to exist, is first apparent in the very presence of Courage's children, who are extensions of her own existence; but it is also revealed in Courage's resistance to those forces which would limit or channel her life.[12] Thus Courage is chafed by the constraints placed upon her activity by bureaucratic regulations. She mocks the sergeant's request for papers, a bureaucratic means of limiting her freedom.[13] Instead of showing him identity papers and licences that turn her from a living being into a more manageable paper cipher, she subverts the term "papers" by showing him papers which, in their own way, are no less a (partial) record of her existence, while at the same time remaining, for the bureaucracy, enigmatic: she presents the sergeant with a missal whose pages will wrap pickles, a map of a land to which she may travel, and a certificate of health for her dead horse.[14] Her rejection of bureaucratic control is made even clearer when the sergeant demands the licence which would allow her to conduct business in the area controlled by the army. She replies: "Meine Lizenz beim Zweiten Regiment ist mein anständiges Gesicht, und wenn Sie es nicht lesen können, kann ich nicht helfen."[15] Here she counters the bureaucratic licence with her own irreducible phenomenality: her face; and she rejects the control implied by the licence by refusing to allow that she be turned into a mere object: "Einen Stempel laß ich mir nicht draufsetzen."[16]

---

[11] See Fenn 164; for one of the first interpretations of this sort see the review of the 1941 world premiere by "E. Th." (reprinted in *MC* 58); see also Mennemeier 232-233.

[12] Compare Max Spalter, *Brecht's Tradition* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967) 185; Gisela Fuhrmann Ritchie, *Der Dichter und die Frau: Literarische Frauengestalten durch drei Jahrhunderte* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1989) 268.

[13] Hein 63.

[14] *GW* 4:1351-1352.

[15] *GW* 4:1352.

[16] *GW* 4:1352.

No less life-affirming is the rejection of moral restraints by Courage's powerfully vital sexuality.[17] If her rejection of bureaucratic regulations causes the recruiter to remark disapprovingly: "Feldwebel, ich spür einen unbotmäßigen Geist heraus bei der Person,"[18] she soon confirms his opinion with an account of her many and varied liaisons, three of which resulted in her children. When the sergeant, scandalized by her promiscuity, utters his sarcastic censure: "Eine nette Familie, muß ich sagen,"[19] Courage is uncowed. She becomes even more brazen and, with a comment which suggests that her account only represents the tip of the iceberg, she proudly replies: "Ja, ich bin durch die ganze Welt gekommen mit meinem Planwagen."[20]

It should not be imagined that these sexual exploits represent merely a youthful wildness which has since been succeeded by a desexualized, matronly attitude. For Courage's sexual vitality is not diminished with age, which, no doubt, would have further scandalized the sergeant (just as the thought may even now scandalize our own Euro-American culture with its fetish of youth, at least to judge from the frequency with which Courage's mature sexuality is overlooked).[21] Her still active libido is apparent in scene 3 in her flirtatious

---

[17] See Kathleen L. Komar, "Paradigm change: the Female Paradigm in Brecht's *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* and Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*," *Euphorion* 82 (1988): 118. "E. Th." may be referring to this vitality when she (or he) says that Courage is in those mature years when "Frauen- und Muttertum sich am ungehemmtesten entfalten" (*MC* 58).

[18] *GW* 4:1352.

[19] *GW* 4:1353.

[20] *GW* 4:1353.

[21] Those who (explicitly or implicitly) consider Courage to be asexual include: Iris Smith, "Brecht and the Mothers of Epic Theater," *Theatre Journal* 43.4 (1991): 496; Sara Lennox, "Women in Brecht's Work," *New German Critique* 5.2 (1978): 86; Fritz J. Raddatz, "Ent-weiblichte Eschatologie: Bertolt Brechts revolutionärer Gegenmythos," *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht II* (1973): 155; Sue-Ellen Case, "Brecht and Women: Homosexuality and the Mother," *The Brecht Yearbook* 12 (1985): 66. Those who recognize Courage's sexual aspect include: Ute Wedel, *Die Rolle der Frau bei Bertolt Brecht* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1983) 159; Komar 118; Hein 67.

invitation to the visiting cook and chaplain, an invitation first offered after Courage has heard both the cook's dream of her and the chaplain's salacious wit; almost in reply she offers them that universal unbuttoner of moral rectitude: "Ich werd euch was zu trinken geben müssen, sonst macht ihr mir noch einen unsittlichen Antrag vor Langweil."[22] Courage's interest in the cook begins at this point and her later assessment of him, "Er war ein netter Mensch," confirms this attraction.[23] This is no chaste matronly interest, for when she discovers that the cook is the legendary "Don Juan" who seduced Yvette and so many other women, she sees in him a vitality akin to her own, and her estimation of the cook is not lowered, "Im Gegenteil. Wos raucht, ist Feuer, heißts."[24] Perhaps the clearest evidence of Courage's sexual interest in the cook is found in a bit of Freudian symbolism. For Courage keeps the cook's "pipe" in her "pocket" — and, as the shocked chaplain exclaims, she has even used it! ("Und draus geraucht!")[25]

Courage's elemental vitality is also apparent in her ceaseless pursuit of the business which sustains her family.[26] She does not idly wait for fortune to knock on her door, but is always on the move looking for business opportunities. When she replies to the sergeant, "Ja, ich bin durch die ganze Welt gekommen mit meinem Planwagen,"[27] she not only celebrates her sexual exploits, but also, by intimately combining her travels with her wagon, shows that her energy (unlike that of Hartmann's Erec) is not dissipated in bed but remains undiminished and available for her tireless quest for profit.

Never (not even when she is in danger) does Courage cease to direct energy into her business: when soldiers threaten to steal Eilif from her, still she

---

[22] *GW* 4:1373; in the *Couragemodell* Brecht says Courage "[kokettiert] mit dem Koch und dem Feldprediger" (*MC* 145).

[23] *GW* 4:1405.

[24] *GW* 4:1421.

[25] *GW* 4:1417.

[26] Mennemeier 396; Fenn 167.

[27] *GW* 4:1353.

tries to sell a belt buckle; when Schweizerkas's life is imperilled, still she prepares for her evening's customers; when she has been captured by Imperial troops, she is not downcast and idle like the chaplain, but starts up business with her captors; when General Tilly is buried and everyone has a holiday, she is busy taking stock; when peace arrives she decides against unproductively spending time in church, and prefers instead to liquidate the stock which peace has devalued; and when night falls and most are at rest, Courage is in Halle seeking new merchandise.[28] Fatigued and footsore as she may be, so that, as she says to Eilif: "Am Morgen komm ich halt schwer in die Schuh," she never gives in to her weariness, but always struggles onward.[29]

Life-affirming, too, is the association of the figure of Courage with nurturing, which is essential to the symbolic content of the mother.[30] Of course, as a mother one might expect Courage to be associated with nurturing, but this quality is also extended to her other fundamental aspect. Indeed, as a sutler, her livelihood depends on supplying strangers with food and other necessities.[31] So important is she as "nurturer", as sutler, that the Imperial troops wink at her former attachment to the Protestant army.[32]

So powerful, too, is Courage as nurturer that even when all are either starving or reduced to eating offal, as during the siege in scene 2, Courage herself still has meat to sell. The cook certainly knows that Courage is a source of food in hard times: when peace has arrived and he is unemployed and hungry, it is to her camp that he returns.[33] And with good reason, for one scene later,

---

[28] *GW* 4:1358, 1389-1390, 1378-1379, 1400, 1417, 1430.

[29] *GW* 4:1367.

[30] Fenn 167.

[31] "Mutter heißt sie so in einem tiefen Sinn: indem sie Schuhe besorgt, sorgt sie" (Wölfel 548); see Fenn 164.

[32] Courage on the Imperial troops' reception of her pretended Catholicism: "Sie habens mir nicht ganz geglaubt, aber sie haben keine Marketender beim Regiment. So haben sie ein Aug zugedrückt" (*GW* 4:1378-1379).

[33] "Ihren männlichen Kameraden ... ist Mutter Courage eine Art Nähr-

when the situation has become so bad that villagers have turned to cannibalism,[34] and the cook seems ready to give up hope of finding food at a parsonage, it is Courage who knows where there is a meal to be found: "Aber ein Pfarrhaus. Und zum Glockenläuten muß er aus den Federn kriechen. Dann hat er eine warme Supp."[35] True, this is no bounteous cornucopia, but it is the image of life sustained in even the hardest of times.

Courage's nurturing aspect can be seen when she encourages Schweizerkas to eat; "Iß!" she insists when her son worries instead about how he will return his cashbox to his former commander;[36] and Courage makes sure in scene 9 to bring Kattrin her share of the meal from the parson.[37] But Courage also nurtures others: she gives her brandy without charge to those who are sympathetic to her, as in scene 3 when she offers it to the cook and the chaplain; she gives it to those whose spirits need reviving: to the sergeant who is demoralized by the prediction of his death, to a peasant woman overcome by the unexpected advent of peace, and to the downcast cook whom peace has left unemployed.[38]

Inseparable from maternal nurturing is protectiveness, for the energy spent on nurturing would be wasted if the life sustained were not shielded against injury. And so Mutter Courage tries to protect her children.[39]

Emblematic for all other examples of Courage's protectiveness is that moment when Eilif is threatened with recruitment and Courage draws her knife

---

mutter..." (*MC* 59).

[34] "Im Pommerschen solln die Dörfler schon die jüngern Kinder aufgegessen haben..." (*GW* 4:1423).

[35] *GW* 4:1422.

[36] *GW* 4:1379.

[37] *GW* 4:1428.

[38] "So sollst du dirs nicht zu Herzen nehmen.... Da, nimm einen Schluck Schnaps, Mann" (*GW* 4:1359); "Gebt ihr einen Schnaps!" (*GW* 4:1411); "Hol ein Glas Branntwein fürn Koch, Kattrin!" (*GW* 4:1412); see also Fenn 165.

[39] *MC* 58.

on the soldiers. Toothed and clawed, she is a tigress protecting her cub.[40] If Courage's protectiveness is never again so dramatically realized, still the content of this gesture is manifested throughout the drama. Courage, for example, tries to keep the naive Schweizerkas from associating with a scheming armourer, who would like to have a closer relationship with her son's cashbox: "Der ist keine Gesellschaft für mein Schweizerkas."[41] Indirectly Courage warns Schweizerkas by admonishing the armourer: "Und lernens ihm nicht Ihre Kniffe!"[42] Similarly, Courage protects Schweizerkas from Eilif, who hopes to get money from his simple paymaster brother. Courage snaps: "Der [Schweizerkas] ist nicht seinem Bruder sein Zahlmeister."[43] To protect Schweizerkas she even dips into her own pocket and gives Eilif the money she at first denied having.[44] Even when Schweizerkas has been arrested by Imperial soldiers looking for the Protestant money chest and Courage is forced to deny knowing him, still she cannot entirely repress her protective impulses, and she chases after the soldiers as they drag her son to his interrogation, crying: "Und renkt ihm nicht das Schulterblatt aus!"[45]

Her denial of Schweizerkas may recall Peter's betrayal of Christ,[46] but by it Courage is also taking a protective measure. After all, to admit that Schweizerkas is part of her camp, which the Imperial soldiers know to be Protestant, is to confirm their suspicion of her son. Her denial, then, tries to make the arresting soldiers unsure of their catch. When it becomes clear that they do not intend to release Schweizerkas, then Courage adopts a new protective strategy, and immediately decides to sell her business to ransom her son. A moment later, however, the chaplain points to her dilemma: "Und wovon wollens leben?" Courage decides not to sell her business but to mortgage it. After all,

---

[40] Compare Fenn 166.
[41] *GW* 4:1370.
[42] *GW* 4:1369.
[43] *GW* 4:1372.
[44] "Was will er denn, ich hab kein Geld übrig" (*GW* 4:1372).
[45] *GW* 4:1384.
[46] Thiele 32.

what good is it to save her son's life only to destroy it by taking away the means to life? For it is her business which sustains her family.[47] Torn, Courage tries both to save Schweizerkas and keep at least part of her business. But she never entirely gives up her son, and even her harshest critics must admit that in the end she genuinely decides to sacrifice everything for him: "Sag ihm, ich geb die zweihundert. Lauf."[48] She may have bargained too long, but she does offer the full price for her son. Given all these signs of protection, and given her final willingness to sacrifice her business, it is inconceivable that one should say, as does Marie Luise Kaschnitz, that Courage loves Schweizerkas less than her other children.[49]

Just as Courage protects Eilif and Schweizerkas, so she protects Kattrin. Most often she shields her daughter from sexual activity that could make Kattrin unmarriageable. To this end she tries to keep from Kattrin the story of Yvette's seduction by Pfeifenpieter and subsequent descent into whoredom: "Nur fang jetzt nicht wieder mit deinem Pieter an und wie alles gekommen ist, vor meiner unschuldigen Tochter,"[50] and warns her daughter not to take up with soldiers.[51] Similarly she guards Kattrin from the lecherous chaplain. When he asks of Kattrin who this captivating person might be, it is Courage who answers: "Das ist keine einnehmende sondern eine anständige Person."[52] So she protects Kattrin from

---

[47] Fenn 164.

[48] *GW* 4:1390; see Jendreiek 176.

[49] "Die Redlichkeit war auch einmal Liebesgegenstand, aber Wärme ist da nicht viel zurückgeblieben, nicht viel für den Schweizerkas, dessen Wesensart der der Courage eigentlich in allem widerspricht. Ein mütterliches Gefühl der Verantwortung hat sie auch diesem Sohn gegenüber, aber ihre Liebe gehört den andern Kindern...." from Marie Luise Kaschnitz, "Mutter Courage." *Zwischen immer und nie: Gestalten und Themen der Dichtung* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1971) 198. Of course, Kaschnitz may base her interpretation on the performance by Giehse in Munich, in which Giehse as Courage did show that Courage loved Schweizerkas less; see *BF* 24:266-267.

[50] *GW* 4:1370.

[51] *GW* 4:1372.

[52] *GW* 4:1373.

other men as well, by confiscating the hat and red shoes which Kattrin stole from Yvette, a theft reflecting her daughter's awakening desires, desires which Courage fears will be too apparent to men: "Was machst du mit dem Hurenhut? ... Sollen sie dich entdecken und zur Hur machen?"[53] Finally, when the Imperial troops attack, Courage tries to obscure the enticing innocence of Kattrin's unblemished face by smearing it with ashes.[54]

But Courage's protection of Kattrin also takes other forms. When Courage denies knowing the arrested Schweizerkas, she not only protects herself and her son, she also protects Kattrin (along with the other members of her party).[55] The ruin which an admitted association with her son would bring, if it did not lead to more immediate brutal treatment, would make it almost impossible for Courage to bring her most vulnerable child — as a mute and a woman — safely through the war. In that light we see it is also partly a desire to prevent Kattrin's ruin that moves her in scene 4 to give up her grievance about the rough treatment she has had at the hands of the Imperial troops. Courage's most important, and perhaps most memorable, protective gesture comes when she refuses the cook's offer of refuge in Utrecht — on the condition that she give up her daughter. Realizing, as she says, that to leave Kattrin alone in the war would mean her daughter's destruction, "Koch, wie könnt sie allein mitn Wagen ziehn? ... Sie verträgts nicht,"[56] Courage answers the cook decisively: "Ich brauch nix zu überlegen. Ich laß sie nicht hier."[57]

Courage's maternal protectiveness extends not only to her children; but to others as well. She protects even the chaplain, whom she does not find particularly sympathetic. When the Imperialists fall on the Finnish camp Courage

---

[53] *GW* 4:1376.
[54] *GW* 4:1377.
[55] Mennemeier 398.
[56] *GW* 4:1424.
[57] *GW* 4:1427; see Ekmann 241; Fenn 166; Walter Hinck, "*Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*: ein kritisches Volksstück," *Brechts Dramen: Neue Interpretationen*, ed. Walter Hinderer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984) 165.

gives him a cloak to cover his Evangelical robes so that he might escape the Catholics.[58] And when the chaplain tries to defend Schweizerkas before the arresting soldiers and so draws their unfriendly attention ("Und wer bist du?"), Courage prevents the exposure of the chaplain; she explains: "Das ist nur mein Schankknecht," and further distracts them with an offer of drink: "Und ihr seid sicher durstig, ich hol euch ein Glas Branntwein...."[59]

Maternal protection is also integral to Courage's role as advisor. In this role Courage tries to preserve her children by giving them counsel based on her greater experience and understanding of the world. Thus Courage uses her fortune-telling trick to impress upon her children that any closer relationship with war means death, no matter what their particular virtue might be.[60] Eilif gives another example of his mother's advice when he says that she warned him against being a soldier.[61] And when he sings the *Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten* it is clear that Courage is the older and wiser woman, the "Weib", of the song, and that the advice contained in this song, which warns against the uselessness of soldierly heroism, is actually hers. This is revealed by the fact that it is Courage who sings the last stanza, which portrays the deadly end (and dead-end) of soldiering, and by the coincidence of this advice both with her earlier warnings against getting to close to war and with her censure of Eilif's "brave deed".[62]

Courage advises Schweizerkas as well, telling him to remain upright as a child and, when he is a paymaster, to keep his figures in order and not to think of stealing the regimental cashbox.[63] Even in the smallest of matters she offers

---

[58] *GW* 4:1376.
[59] *GW* 4:1383.
[60] *GW* 4:1357.
[61] *GW* 4:1366.
[62] *GW* 4:1367-1368; see also Walter E. Schäfer, "War der Weg über die Lieder ein Umweg? Bertolt Brecht — *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*," *Wirkendes Wort* 14 (1964): 411.
[63] *GW* 4:1358, 1369.

her advice: "Und die Hos verleg nicht."[64] When more serious matters arise with Schweizerkas's arrest, Courage is once again present with her counsel. Indirectly she advises him as she speaks to his captors: "Er [Schweizerkas] würde sie [die Regimentskasse] doch herausgeben, wenn er sonst hin wär. ... Red doch, du dummer Hund, der Herr Feldwebel gibt dir eine Gelegenheit."[65] Kattrin, too, receives her share of Courage's counsel, when her mother gives her paradoxical warning about the perils of love, especially with soldiers: "Die Liebe ist eine Himmelsmacht, ich warn dich."[66]

Nor is Courage selfish with her life-saving advice, but spends it freely on others. When it is clear that the chaplain cannot rejoin the Swedish army Courage counsels him: "Zieh den geistlichen Rock ab, Feldprediger, sonst kennen sie dich trotz dem Mantel!"[67] When Protestant soldiers risk their lives to rescue their cannon, Courage scolds: "Laß sie doch stehn, du Esel, wer zahlts dir? Ich nehm sie dir in Verwahrung, und dich kostets Leben."[68]

The most important example of Courage counselling a stranger to his advantage is found in scene 4 at the tent of the Imperial commander. There she advises an angry young soldier not to press his grievance against the commander. She points out that his only reward would be a term in the stocks — at least, this would be the result if his anger were not sufficiently long-lived. Her suspicion that it is not — and so her better knowledge of the world — is borne out by the soldier's continuing obedience; the scribe tells him to sit, and he sits, and Courage says: "Er sitzt schon. Sehen Sie, was hab ich gesagt. Sie sitzen schon. ... und im Sitzen gibts kein Aufruhr."[69] Courage's role as worldly-wise counsellor is highlighted in this very scene by making it the underlying attitude

---

[64] *GW* 4:1369.
[65] *GW* 4:1383.
[66] *GW* 4:1372.
[67] *GW* 4:1377.
[68] *GW* 4:1376.
[69] *GW* 4:1394.

of one of the drama's most memorable moments, the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*, in which the seasoned Courage advises the raw youth to give up his claim since everyone has to give up their aspirations to survive: "Man muß sich nach der Decke strecken!"[70]

There can be no doubt then that Courage shows her affirmation of life through her vitality, nurturing, and protectiveness. Indeed, it can be said that Courage's most serious crises arise, not when she takes the side of death and war, as might seem the case when she leaves her family to do business, but instead when she finds in conflict two of her life-affirming functions: nurturing and protecting.[71] In each case Courage seems faced with the choice either to secure the means to nurture while losing the life she would maintain, or to protect that life, only to lose it by forfeiting thereby the means to sustain it.

Of these two possibilities, the protective is relatively the more quiescent and fatalistic. For it relinquishes future life in order to guard that which it already has, and which as a result will diminish through lack of resources. On the other hand nurturing is more active and, since it is oriented toward the future, hopeful; it seeks the means to support life even if it means risking what has already been achieved. In the majority of cases our life-affirming Courage opts for the more active choice.

In this way, even when Eilif has become the object of the recruiter's attentions, and Courage may be expected to be wary, still she relaxes her protective stance in order to make a sale and so engage in the business that sustains her family. Likewise her protectiveness gives way before the need to secure new wares when Courage sends Kattrin to town on that ill-fated journey which disfigures her daughter. And when Courage makes use of an opportunity

---

[70] *GW* 4:1396; see Mennemeier (393) on Courage's maternal compassion for the soldier's "little capitulation"; see also Spalter 185.

[71] This is reminiscent of Scheler's definition of the tragic: "Tragisch ist der 'Konflikt', der innerhalb der positiven Werte und ihrer Träger selbst waltet"; in Peter Szondi, *Versuch über das Tragische* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1961) 50.

to improve her family's lot by cheaply purchasing new wares in Halle, she once again relaxes her protective attitude toward Kattrin — an attitude which was only shortly before dramatically expressed when Courage rejects the cook's partnership in Utrecht at the cost of her daughter.

The conflict between Courage's nurturing and protective impulses is most clearly represented in the scene of Schweizerkas's arrest. No sooner does she utter the possibility of saving her son by selling her business than she is torn by the question, raised by the chaplain but echoing her own thoughts: "Und wovon wollens leben?"[72] From this moment on she tries to balance her protective and nurturing impulses, but her hope both to secure her means to life and save her son is dashed when she finds that the cashbox, which she needed to recover the mortgaged wagon, lies at the bottom of a river. She tries to keep her son's price low enough so that she might continue business on a reduced scale, but then must acknowledge that her attempt is hopeless. At this point she decides for protection and agrees to pay the full ransom for Schweizerkas, only to discover that her hesitation between nurturing and protection has cost her son's life.[73] Still, she has kept the wagon at least, and she doggedly struggles on, nurturing those who remain.

These examples show how difficult it is to blame Courage. She is placed in a hopeless situation. She cannot escape the war; she must operate within it and according to its rules. When she is forced to choose between two apparently life-affirming principles, nurturing and protection, neither one alone can keep her children alive and her means to life intact, and yet she cannot choose both because they are presented as mutually exclusive possibilities. To blame Courage in such a situation is like blaming the she-wolf who leaves the pups at the den while she hunts for food and loses one to an eagle; or like the lioness who must move her cubs from danger one at a time and so loses one to the threat.[74]

---

[72] *GW* 4:1386.

[73] See Mennemeier 398.

[74] Compare Spalter 185; Fenn 165-166; see also Karl Brinkmann,

Here we have concentrated on qualities which could be called inherent to the function of a mother. For if a mother is defined as one who has created life or taken life under her care, then integral to this are those attributes which are friendly to life, such as vitality, or which seek to sustain life, such as nurturing and protectiveness. Yet a concentration on these basic functions commits an omission not unlike that committed by Freud, who, it has been rightly remarked, concentrated on the mother's function as a provider of food while ignoring the attendant emotional side of that function. Feeding, after all, is inseparably bound up with an affective social act, with touching.[75] In other words, still to be considered here, under the discussion of Courage as mother, and so as a friend to life, is the affective bond between mother and child.

Certainly Courage shows no lack of caring. This is already demonstrated by the examples of her nurturing and protectiveness, and since she nurtures and protects others, she also cares for others. One incident will serve to remind us how Courage's care is not confined to her own: when the armourer in scene 3 tries to sell her the soldiers' ammunition to buy his commander liquor, Courage expresses her concern for the soldiers: "Ihr verkaufts die Kugeln, ihr Lumpen, und die Mannschaft hat nix zum Schießen vorm Feind."[76] However, Courage's caring is especially evident toward her own children.

The lullaby sung by Courage to the dead Kattrin reveals with pathos a mother's love.[77] To be sure, pathos is present in the "pietà", the moving image of a mother with her dead child. But pathos is present also in the basic content of the song: a mother's fond hopes unfulfilled. For the lullaby reveals both what Courage had wished for her child, and that she could not realize that wish. This

---

Erläuterungen zu Bertolt Brechts 'Mutter Courage' und 'Der kaukasische Kreidekreis' (Hollfeld: Bange, 1961) 56.

[75] Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1978) 64-65.

[76] *GW* 4:1369.

[77] *GW* 4:1436-1437.

content is conveyed by the form of the song and its immediate context, for it is a lullaby sung to a dead child, that is, it is a song of comfort sung to one beyond all comfort. This content is also conveyed by the words together with the larger context, for the drama has shown that not one of Courage's wishes has been realized: her child has had no fine clothes, cake has not been her fare, she has not been happy but frustrated, as now she is not gay but dead. The pathos is intensified when we realize that, in a certain sense, one of these promises has been more than fulfilled, in a way a mother could not have expected or wished. Courage offers her daughter the satin dress of an angel: "Und du gehst in Seid / Ausn Rock von einem Engel," a fond hope when measured against the rough clothes actually worn by Kattrin. And yet Courage, as if she had been too bold, reduces her wish by adjusting the heavenly garment to mortal form: "Ausn Rock von einem Engel / Umgearbeit'." Yet this lessening of expectation, this moderation, is unwarranted, for now Kattrin can properly fit angelic robes.

Whatever else this song may represent, it also demonstrates the powerful emotional and caring bond between Courage and her children. We find yet other examples of her caring: Courage welcomes peace, even if it ruins her, because she has brought at least two of her children safely through the war: "Ich bin froh übern Frieden, wenn ich auch ruiniert bin. Wenigstens zwei von den Kindern hätt ich also durchgebracht durch den Krieg."[78] With peace she anticipates a reunion with her remaining son: "Jetzt werd ich meinen Eilif wiedersehen."[79] The affective bond is also apparent when Courage gives as her main reason for rejoining the Protestant army her hope of seeing Eilif again: "Vielleicht seh ich den Eilif schon heut nacht. Das ist mir der liebste von allen."[80]

We have already seen expressions of Courage's care for Schweizerkas; for example, when she chases after his captors and tells them not to hurt him. But

---

[78] *GW* 4:1411.
[79] *GW* 4:1411.
[80] *GW* 4:1421.

this care is evident even when he is no longer with them, for, when peace seems to have arrived, Courage decides to go to mass in his name: "Kattrin, Friede! Zieh dein Schwarzes an! Wir gehn in Gottesdienst. Das sind wir dem Schweizerkas schuldig."[81]

Courage's care for Kattrin is plain when she cries after her daughter, who rushes into a burning hut to save an infant: "Haltet sie zurück, das Dach kann einfallen."[82] It is Courage who comforts the assaulted Kattrin: "Das ist nicht schlimm, die Wund ist nur eine Fleischwund. Ich verbind sie dir, und in einer Woche ist sie geheilt."[83] And it is Courage who, in true motherly fashion, inverts the usual hierarchy of history, with its glorification of "great men", and shows how important her daughter is to her: "Mir ist ein historischer Augenblick, daß sie meiner Tochter übers Aug geschlagen haben."[84] Finally, Courage's care for her daughter prevents her from even considering the cook's proposal that she desert Kattrin: "Ich brauch nix zu überlegen. Ich laß sie nicht hier."[85]

These examples of Courage's love for her children, of her affective bond with them, supplement the examples of her nurturing and protectiveness, which also imply an affective bond with her offspring. However, the true depth of Courage's care for her children is seen in her reaction to their deaths.[86]

Communication is essential to Courage. The sheer quantity of her utterances outweighs those of all other characters. Courage is expansive and free-spoken; throughout the greater part of the drama she can be found counselling, advising, expounding her world-view, arguing, and criticizing. This aspect of her character is established with her first entrance, marked by a powerful verbal

---

[81] *GW* 4:1411.
[82] *GW* 4:1398.
[83] *GW* 4:1407.
[84] *GW* 4:1408.
[85] *GW* 4:1427; see Ekmann 241; Fenn 166; Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 165.
[86] Ekmann 241.

expression, her *Geschäftslied*, which is in turn followed by spirited exchanges with the recruiter and the sergeant.

With the loss of a child, however, Courage's attitude is transformed. She does not rage, wail, gnash her teeth, or tear her hair.

She implodes.

This reaction is first seen with the loss of Eilif, whose recruitment, we remember, may well stand for his death since Courage, both in her fortune-telling ruse and in her *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten*, predicts that death awaits those who get too close to war. Following hard on Courage's loquacious prophesying and her negotiations for the sale of a buckle comes the announcement that Eilif has gone with the recruiter — and her voice is gone: "MUTTER COURAGE *steht ganz still....*"[87] When her voice returns, for Courage will never be utterly repressed, it is "strangled", terse. To Schweizerkas she says only: "Du einfaltiger Mensch"; to Kattrin: "Ich weiß, du kannst nicht reden, du bist unschuldig."[88] Now Courage does not rise to the sergeant's gloating over her loss, her wit is absent, and her only reply is to Kattrin: "Jetzt mußt du mit deinem Bruder ziehen, Kattrin."[89] She remains silent during her exit, leaving the last word to the sergeant.

The same transformation occurs when Courage loses her remaining children. Next to the dead Kattrin, for instance, faced with her daughter's body, the talkative merchant becomes close-lipped.

Compared with Courage's speech in the rest of the drama, her speaking parts here are reticent, seeming only to punctuate the peasants' lines.[90] Confronted with her daughter's body and told she must leave, she says only: "Vielleicht schlaft sie." After the lullaby she says to the peasant: "Sie hätten ihr nix von die Kinder von Ihrem Schwager sagen sollen." When the peasant blames

---

[87] *GW* 4:1359.
[88] *GW* 4:1359.
[89] *GW* 4:1360.
[90] *GW* 4:1436-1438.

her for Kattrin's death she ignores him and muses: "Jetzt schlaft sie." When she is contradicted and told once again she must go, she replies: "Ja." Asked if she has anywhere to go or someone to whom she can go she answers: "Doch den Eilif." And when the peasants offer to bury Kattrin she has only a brief business-like reply: "Da haben Sie Geld für die Auslagen." It is only when Kattrin's body has been removed, and (characteristically) when she has hitched herself to her wagon, that she becomes more talkative: "Hoffentlich zieh ich den Wagen allein. Es wird schon gehn, es ist nicht viel drinnen. Ich muß wieder in'n Handel kommen," and she answers the sound of the pipe and drum with: "Nehmts mich mit!"

In a superficial sense, through the sheer number of its words, Courage's lullaby would seem to contradict the view that the sutler has become silent. But it is incorrect to combine these two orders of speech, the lyric and the prosaic; rather, lyric speech should be compared with lyric speech and prose with prose. When we do so, we see that the song is no less terse in its own way than Courage's prose.

In fact the lyric moment only increases the sense of desolation which accompanies Courage's grief-stricken terseness. It does this first by invoking notions of lack and absence, in the forms of Courage's unfulfilled hopes and her loss of Eilif and Schweizerkas. It also conveys desolation by its constraint; it will not directly touch on the death which has given rise to it, which rehearses Courage's attempt to repress the fact of Kattrin's death: "Vielleicht schlaft sie."[91] Instead the lullaby deals with Courage's hopes for her children, introducing death and loss only at the end, and even there Kattrin's death is only implied by analogy with the loss of her brothers.

Desolation is also inscribed in the formal elements of the song. For, in apparent contradiction to the whole thrust of the lyric moment, this song is itself close-lipped. This is true in an obvious but effective way for the spectator. Unlike

---

[91] *GW* 4:1436.

those central statements issuing from Courage, the *Geschäftslied* and the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*, this lullaby-cum-dirge is also bereft — of musical accompaniment. Yet this musical solution, as telling as it is, is only a reproduction of the loss and desolation already built into the content of the song. For here the lines, in contrast with the other lyric moments of the drama, are themselves terse, in that each line has fewer stresses than the lines of Courage's earlier songs. While previously her songs never had less than three accents to a line, her lullaby establishes the basic pattern of two stresses with the opening "Éia popéia". Moreover the opening dactyls cause lines which could conceivably scan with more stresses, such as: "Náchbars Bálg gréinen / Únd méine sínd fróh," to scan: "Náchbars Bälg gréinen / Und méine sind fróh"(/--/--/--/). (This sparseness naturally carries over to the periods as well, so that Brecht's usual period of eight stresses in Courage's songs: "Ihr Hauptleut, laßt die Trommel ruhen / Und laßt eur Fußvolk halten an," becomes in the lullaby periods of four stresses: "Nachbars Bälg greinen / Und meine sind froh.")[92]

Finally, at the first great climax of the drama, the scene in which Schweizerkas is executed, comes also the moment of Courage's most blackly intense silence.[93] From the moment when Schweizerkas is shot, marked by the end of a drum roll and the return of light to the darkened stage, Courage is "mute". Her only words are in reply to Yvette's query whether Kattrin knows that Schweizerkas has been shot: "Sie weiß. Hol sie."[94] Otherwise she does not speak. To Yvette's reproaches she says nothing. To Yvette's question whether she should keep Kattrin away from the sight of Schweizerkas's body, Courage answers with a shake of her head. Courage is made to look on the bullet-ridden

---

[92] For another view of this lullaby, see Walter Hinck, "Metamorphosen eines Wiegenlieds: H. L. Wagner, Heine, G. Hauptmann, Toller, Brecht," *Zeiten und Formen in Sprache und Dichtung: Festschrift für Fritz Tschich zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Karl Heinz Schirmer, and Bernhard Savinski (Cologne: Böhlau, 1972) 303-305.

[93] Fenn 166.

[94] *GW* 4:1391.

body of her son, and the sergeant asks whether she knows Schweizerkas. She shakes her head. Again he asks. Again she shakes her head.

Normally garrulous, unrestrained, Courage, when she is wounded by the death of her child, becomes laconic.[95] Lessing in his *Laokoon* remarked (in regard to the *Iliad*) that the civilized Greeks could express their grief and yet remain brave, while the barbaric Trojans needed to smother every sign of humanity in order to keep their resolve.[96] Similarly one might say here that, in barbaric times like Courage's, grief must be repressed; by displaying her feelings at Eilif's recruitment, Courage would make herself vulnerable to the sergeant's gloating, by recognizing Schweizerkas's corpse she would expose herself to the soldiers' threats, by surrendering to grief before her daughter's body she would place in jeopardy her own resolve to carry on.[97]

Mute with grief, Courage in such moments inevitably invokes that mythological figure with whom Brecht refused to associate his sutler; we are reminded of Ovid's lines on Niobe before the bodies of her children:[98]

> Her hair no breeze can stir; her cheeks are drained
> And bloodless; in her doleful face her eyes
> Stare fixed and hard — a likeness without life.
> So too inside; that tongue of hers congeals;
> Her palate's hard; no pulse beats in her veins;

---

[95] Her silence, then, is not a sign of the unemotionalism of the epic theatre, as we are told by Werner Heinitz, "Das Epische in der Sprache Bertolt Brechts," *Neue Deutsche Literatur* 5.4 (1957): 52; nor is it a sign that Schweizerkas's death had for Courage "keine Epoche gemacht," as we are told by Hans Egon Holthusen, "Versuch über Brecht," Holthusen, *Kritisches Verstehen: Neue Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Munich: Piper, 1961) 76, (except in a very special sense which we will consider in Chapter 6, "The Priestess of Life and Death"). On Courage's "dumb grief" see also Robert L. Hiller, "The Sutler's Cart and the Lump of Gold," *The Germanic Review* 39.2 (1964): 143.

[96] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Werke*, ed. Herbert G. Göpfert, 8 vols. (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1970-1979) 6:15; see also *MC* 110-111.

[97] See Gleitman 162; also Thiele 32.

[98] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 130; see also Fenn 166.

> No way for neck to bend nor arms to wave
> Nor feet to walk; and all within is stone.

Unable to vent her grief, a powerful tension arises between the normally communicative Courage and the silent wounded Courage, so that the expected natural response, the emotional release, by its very absence, by its repression, is present perhaps with even greater force. Her silence screams her wound. We remember, then, that famous moment in Helene Weigel's realization of Courage in the classical production by the Berliner Ensemble, the moment of the "silent scream", which has been so well described by George Steiner:[99]

> As the body was carried off, Weigel looked the other way and tore her mouth wide open. The shape of the gesture was that of the screaming horse in Picasso's *Guernica*. The sound that came out was raw and terrible beyond any description I could give of it. But, in fact, there was no sound. Nothing. The sound was total silence. It was silence which screamed and screamed through the whole theatre so that the audience lowered its head as before a gust of wind. And that scream inside the silence seemed to me to be the same as Cassandra's when she divines the reek of blood in the house of Atreus. It was the same wild cry with which the tragic imagination first marked our sense of life. The same wild and pure lament over man's inhumanity and waste of man.

It is clear now that Weigel's silent scream is no "addition" to the meaning of the text, but an insightful realization of what already inheres in the text.

It can hardly be disputed, then, that Courage throughout the drama manifests an attitude which counters any attempt to place her in the camp of death. Her profoundly maternal aspect, displayed in her creativity, fecundity, and vitality; her commitment to life by nurturing and protecting it; her affective bond with life through her children; all this must question the rightness of criticizing her as a partner of death and destruction.

---

[99] George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (1961; New York: Knopf, 1968) 354; see Alfred D. White, *Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays* (London: MacMillan, 1978) 96.

And yet it is only at the end that Courage's commitment to life manifests itself with all its power. For at the end, just as she did after losing Eilif to the army, after losing Schweizerkas to the firing squad, and now, after losing Kattrin to the Imperialists, she continues her struggle; though her business is a mere shadow of its former self, though she is surrounded by the devastation of a war seemingly without end, still she remains a vital force.[100] Infinitely powerful is the image of Courage struggling forward in the face of all that she has suffered; and it is our last image of her. Courage asserts in the end the power of Eros over Thanatos; her struggle means life and hope.[101] In this activity directed toward future life, this manifestation of hope, Courage, a symbol of the elemental continuance of life, is in the most profound and truest sense a mother.

---

[100] Certainly, the text does not allow us to describe her as "destroyed" (Mennemeier 392), or as a "drained Ibsenian zombie," in the words of Darko Suvin, *To Brecht and Beyond: Soundings in Modern Dramaturgy* (Sussex: Harvester, 1984) 64.

[101] See Kaschnitz 200; Steiner 348; Spalter 189; Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 132; W. A. J. Steer, "Brecht's Epic Theatre: Theory and Practice," *Modern Language Review* 63 (1968): 647; see also reviews of the world premiere of 1941, such as that of Bernhard Kissel who says that Courage is "als Ruine noch stärker als der Tod. Im Sterben noch Leben gebärend — die drei unsterblichen Kinder Mut, Wahrheit und Liebe," in Wyss 206; and "E. Th." who sees in Courage an example of heroic survival: "Am Schluß des Stückes zieht Mutter Courage, von jeder Hilfe entblößt, aber ungebrochen — wie Millionen von Müttern der Gegenwart! — neu hinaus in das harte Leben" (*MC* 59). Kissel and "E. Th." stand in contrast to the view that Courage is at the end no mother; see Klaus Völker, *Brecht: Kommentar zum dramatischen Werk* (Munich: Winkler, 1983) 197.

CHAPTER 3

PAPER WAR

In the Preface I stated that Courage was central to our understanding of Brecht's drama. And yet in the last two chapters we have seen his text support equally two conflicting portraits of the sutler. One paints Courage as the hyena, the willing and culpable merchant of death; the other as a mother and a friend to life caught in a deadly situation she can neither influence nor escape. Forty years of exegesis have not got beyond this contradiction between a life-giving mother and a death-dealing merchant, except to give rise to a third interpretive tendency (to be discussed briefly at the end of this chapter), one which takes the potentially fruitful position that the contradiction is integral to Courage and so refuses to choose between merchant and mother, but which does not develop this insight to advance our understanding of Courage and the drama. For the most part interpreters have been content to advance now one, now the other, of these opposing interpretations, to defend or criticize Courage, and so conduct a scholarly "paper war". In this chapter I examine these rival interpretations as a prelude to presenting my own.

However, a word ought to be said about these interpretations as a whole before examining them in more detail. Though a great number of works on Brecht mention *Mutter Courage*, it has been correctly remarked that the drama

has played no large role in the critical literature.[1] This is certainly true in the sense that there have been relatively few studies whose primary object is the interpretation of either Courage or the drama. Indeed, with one or two exceptions, there have been no sustained, coherent, and closely argued interpretations. Most often the interpretations examined in this chapter form a lesser part of some other project or, if they focus on the drama, offer no detailled or rigorous argument. Interpretation, at least as it regards *Mutter Courage*, may be too big a word for such works. Nevertheless, I have included in my discussion the more interesting positions even if it has meant reconstructing a particular argument, insofar as it pertains to *Mutter Courage*, according to its underlying logic. I trust I have minimized the resulting distortion.

I will begin with Brecht's interpretation. This is the natural place to begin, not only because he is the author, not only because he wrote interpretive commentary before scholars had got hold of his work, but also because Brecht had early given a sign of that ambivalence inherent in his text, which he in 1948 hotly denied — only to recognize it later that same year by revisions intended to block unwanted interpretations.[2] Brecht's views, of course, though they have special status as a statement of the author's intent, have no legislative authority here, but must be critically tested.

---

[1] Thiele 40; this is still so as of 1996.

[2] Early in 1948 Brecht writes in his journal: "a[rmin] kesser ... wirft die frage auf, wie tief die mißverständlichkeit meiner stücke in ihnen steckt.... ich antwortete, daß der bürgerliche darstellungsstil alles aus altertum, asiatischem bereich, mittelalter und alles antibürgerliche aus der neueren zeit dem bürgertum als das seine verkaufen kann" (*AJ* 7.1.48). Compare this with Brecht's revisions in November 1948: "wir haben die erste szene der COURAGE zu ändern, da hier schon angelegt ist, was bei der züricher aufführung den zuschauern erlaubt hat, sich hauptsächlich von der dauerhaftigkeit und tragfähigkeit der gequälten kreatur (des ewigen muttertiers) erschüttern zu lassen — wo es doch damit nicht eben weit her ist" (*AJ* 25.11.48).

BRECHT ON COURAGE

Interpretive comments by Brecht on *Mutter Courage* can be found in two collections of commentary (the *Couragemodell*[3] and *Theaterarbeit*),[4] and in remarks for newspapers, theatre programmes, loose notes, letters, and journal entries. Their production spans a period of 17 years, 1939-1956, the greater number being written after October 1948, or after Brecht had begun preparations for the German premiere of 11 January 1949 (his debut in the theatre of the Soviet Zone of Germany). There is a wealth of detail in these notes, but even those in the *Couragemodell*, the largest single collection of Brecht's remarks on his drama, hardly constitute a systematic interpretation. Indeed some of his interpretations require interpretation! Yet one thing is clear from all his commentary: Brecht consistently tends toward a critical view of Courage.

Brecht's censure of Courage's business with war is the most important criticism, because that activity defines her being (indeed, her very name derives

---

[3] After the German premiere (11 January 1949) Brecht initiated the creation in the Spring of 1949 of the *Couragemodell*, a documentation of his production of *Mutter Courage* with photographs by Ruth Berlau and Hainer Hill, which was to be used as a model for all later productions. Though Heinz Kuckhahn produced, with Brecht's corrections, the first notes, it seems Brecht wrote the notes for the final form of the model, which was further modified after productions in Munich in 1950 (photographs by Ruth Berlau and Ruth Wilhelmi) and a new production in Berlin in 1951. In 1956 Brecht reworked the notes for the *Couragemodell* (with editorial assistance from Berlau and Peter Palitzsch); it was first published posthumously as: *Couragemodell 1949* (Berlin: Henschel, 1958). (Though it should be stressed that the notes were available in the model offered to theatres; also some of the notes were published earlier in the *Theaterarbeit*.) See *BF* 25:516-520 (which reprints the *Couragemodell* in 25:516-541). Since the *Couragemodell* will often figure in this discussion, I remind the reader that it is also reprinted in *MC* 124-191, which is my reference for this work.

[4] *Theaterarbeit: 6 Aufführungen des Berliner Ensembles*, eds. Ruth Berlau, Bertolt Brecht, Claus Hubalek, Peter Palitzsch, and Käthe Rülicke (Dresden: Henschel, 1952). Another attempt to promote epic theatre, this documentation printed 52 (one in part: "Die Landsknechte der Neueinstudierung") of the 142 discrete texts which finally appeared in the *Couragemodell* in 1958.

from her courageous rescue of wares during a bombardment of Riga). Now, since Brecht considers war a crime,[5] so he considers Courage's participation in war a crime. "Die Verbrechen der Courage," Brecht tells us, consist in "ihr Mitmachen, ihr Am-Kriegsgeschäft-mitverdienen-Wollen."[6]

Since Courage's participation in war is a crime, Brecht naturally insists on her responsibility by maintaining that her participation is no unavoidable "fate". He will not have Courage portrayed as a tragic figure, as a Niobe unable to protect her children "vor dem Verhängnis Krieg."[7] He rejects the idea that her activity is "eine ganz natürliche 'ewig menschliche' Verhaltungsweise" that implies Courage had no "Ausweg".[8] He dismisses "das Bild des Krieges als einer Naturkatastrophe und eines unabwendbaren Schicksals."[9] He points instead to Courage's deliberate perpetration of her crime. She is no "Repräsentantin der kleinen Leute, die 'unschuldig und hilflos in einen Krieg verstrickt sind,'" but is instead a "Geschäftsfrau, die im Krieg mitmacht, um ihren Schnitt zu machen."[10] He emphasizes her "aktive und freiwillige Teilnahme am Krieg,"[11] and demands this "aktive Beteiligung der Courage am Krieg" be taken seriously.[12] Consequent with this, Brecht asserts (as perhaps he must) that Courage need not take part in the war. In both an early note and in the *Couragemodell* Brecht tells us that Courage did have a choice: "Selbst für die ebenfalls kleinbürgerliche Courage war jedoch im Stück immerzu die Entscheidung 'Mitmachen oder nicht mitmachen' offen gelassen...."[13]

---

[5] "Aber der Krieg ist nicht nur ein Verbrechen, sondern eine Dummheit" (*GW* 20:246).

[6] *GW* 17:1148.

[7] *GW* 16:895.

[8] *MC* 190.

[9] *MC* 189.

[10] *MC* 251.

[11] *MC* 132.

[12] *GW* 16:895.

[13] *MC* 189-190; *MC* 69 (an ambiguity in this note will be discussed later); see also: "Tatsächlich kann ja heute der Kleinbürger nicht mehr, wie die Courage es

Because Brecht considers Courage a responsible individual who could choose whether or not to commit her crime, he rejects attitudes and interpretations which might mitigate her guilt or lessen criticism of her. For instance, he will not allow that sympathetic empathy which "die übliche Darstellungsart" promotes, one which gives the spectator an abstract and passive pleasure: "den [eigentümlichen] Genuß ... eines Triumphs über die Unzerstörbarkeit einer lebenskräftigen, durch die Unbilden des Krieges heimgesuchten Person."[14] Similarly, if he does not ban pity for Courage, he will not have a pity which excuses her; on the contrary, "Das Mitleid, das wir erzeugen wollen, ist Mitleid mit der Dummheit und Abgestumpftheit, der sozialen Abgestumpftheit der Unbelehrbarkeit, Mitleid mit dem Nicht-Wissen."[15] In other words, Brecht will only admit a critical pity for Courage because of her blind and incorrigible belief that she can profit from war.[16]

Brecht also dismisses interpretations that abstract from Courage's concrete situation and deeds, from her crime, and make her a representative of either the "human condition", or of the "dauerhaftigkeit und tragfähigkeit der gequälten kreatur,"[17] a creature whose behaviour is a completely natural "'ewig menschliche' Verhaltungsweise...."[18] He rejects too any mythological or biological reduction of Courage to a sort of Niobe (symbol of grieving motherhood and punished hubris), or to an embodiment of the maternal creature.

---

konnte, aus dem Krieg bleiben" (*MC* 190).

[14] *GW* 16:895.

[15] *MC* 122.

[16] This is the sort of pity he thought he saw in the audience of the preview (9 January 1949) before the official premiere of *Mutter Courage*: "sie können die kleinbürgerin objektiv anschauen (und doch bemitleiden)..." (*AJ* 28.1.49). I presume, given its contrast with "bemitleiden", that "objektiv anschauen" means here "kritisch anschauen". See also *AJ* 17.1.49. Perhaps it is this critical attitude to which he refers when he says that Weigel's portrayal of Courage permitted the audience to admire her as mother and yet criticize her as *Händlerin* (*GW* 16:918).

[17] *AJ* 25.11.48.

[18] *MC* 190.

Courage, he objects, should not be portrayed so that her business with war disappears from view and she appears "hauptsächlich als Mutter"; she is no "loblied auf die unerschöpfliche vitalität des muttertiers," no symbol "des ewigen muttertiers."[19]

As war is a crime and Courage's part in it is a crime, so Brecht makes it clear that Courage knows the nature of the thing in which she takes part. If Courage mistakenly believes that she can profit from war, she at least has no illusions about the fundamental nature of war: "Die Courage ... erkennt ... das rein merkantile Wesen des Kriegs: das ist gerade, was sie anzieht."[20] The critical tone here is unmistakable when one appreciates that the commercial aspect of the war is just what the rulers mask with religious ideals. As Courage says:[21]

> Wenn man die Großkopfigen reden hört, führens die Krieg nur aus Gottesfurcht und für alles, was gut und schön ist. Aber wenn man genauer hinsieht, sinds nicht so blöd, sondern führn die Krieg für Gewinn. Und anders würden die kleinen Leut wie ich auch nicht mitmachen.

There is something unseemly, then, about this mercantile aspect of war. But Courage knowingly embraces its truth, and so embraces the truth of her crime (and also puts herself on the side of the rulers, whose business interests are the cause of war, but more on this later).

Brecht emphasizes Courage's guilt when he points out that Courage, who knows the nature of her crime, also positively desires this crime. When peace arrives in scene 8 Brecht tells us: "Die alte Frau scheint freudig bewegt, die Courage nicht."[22] In remarks for the end of the same scene Brecht further stresses Courage's preference for war over peace: "Die Courage kommt erschöpft vom Rennen, aber strahlend darüber, daß wieder Krieg ist...."[23] (Courage's

---

[19] *GW* 16:895; *AJ* 7.1.48, 25.11.48.
[20] *GW* 17:1150.
[21] *GW* 4:1375.
[22] *MC* 170.
[23] *MC* 173.

enthusiasm for war becomes more inhuman when we take into account Brecht's view that her business with war causes her children's deaths, for then it is as if Courage desired their destruction.)

This picture of Courage as criminal is supported by Brecht with examples of inhumanities that reveal her affinity with the crime in which she participates. And each inhumanity is usually connected in some way with her business, which reinforces the idea that her business with war is a crime (just as it suggests a necessary connection between business and war). For example, Brecht suggests that Courage's business interests offend against human feeling in scene 2. Courage, he says, surrenders to her joy at seeing her Eilif again, but "nicht so hemmungslos, daß sie nicht mehr aus dem Auftauchen Eilifs ein Geschäft machen könnte...."[24] Similarly, when Helene Weigel as Courage counts out coin for Kattrin's burial, but economizes even here and takes one back, which gives "noch einmal einen Hinweis auf den Charakter der Courage,"[25] we again hear a censure in the remark, "daß die Händlerin in all ihrem Schmerz nicht das Rechnen ganz vergißt...."[26] When Courage denies her dead son, even a hardened soldier displays his surprise, "indem er erstaunt über solche Härte sich zu seinen Leuten umblickt."[27] A lullaby no less, when it issues from Courage, reveals her barbarism, for "der Gedanke, der dem Lied zugrunde liegt," namely, "Das Kind dieser Mutter sollte es besser haben als andere Kinder anderer Mütter," "ist ein mörderischer...."[28] In scene 4, when Courage recommends that a young soldier capitulate to his oppressors, Brecht tells us: "Die Schlechtigkeit der Courage ist in keiner Szene größer als in dieser...."[29] Courage's refusal of bandages to the

---

[24] *MC* 141.
[25] *MC* 187.
[26] *MC* 189.
[27] *MC* 155.
[28] *MC* 187.
[29] *MC* 159.

wounded at Magdeburg Brecht calls an example of "Unmenschlichkeit", in that scene, she is "wirklich die Hyäne...."[30]

Finally, Brecht makes Courage responsible for the destruction of her children. Most important is that he makes this crime a result of her original crime. He tells us, "daß das Geschäft mit dem Krieg sie alle Kinder gekostet hat...";[31] and: "Ihr Händlertum hält sie für Muttertum, aber es zerstört ihre Kinder, eines nach dem anderen";[32] and finally, as he most plainly puts it: "Diesem Geschäft opfert sie ihre drei Kinder."[33]

Brecht blames Courage's business in their individual cases as well. Of Eilif he says: "Die Courage verliert ihren Sohn an den Werber," as he variously puts it, "weil sie sich dem Verkauf einer Schnalle nicht versagen kann," or "weil sie, vertieft in den Verkauf einer Gürtelschnalle, nicht bemerkt, daß ein Werber ihn wegzieht," or "weil sie sich in ein kleines geschäft verstricken läßt."[34] There may also be an accusation implied in Brecht's commentary to scene 8, for he joins Courage's joyous reception of renewed war, and so new business prospects, with the execution of Eilif by this warring society that Courage so loves: "Sie wird über sein Grab fahren."[35]

While Brecht sometimes blames Courage's advice to remain "redlich" for Schweizerkas's death,[36] he more often credits her business. He blames Courage for allowing her son too close to war: "Anscheinend hat sie nichts dagegen, daß der zweite Sohn als Zahlmeister zur Armee ging.... Wäre er mit der Armee nicht

---

[30] *MC* 163; *GW* 16:896.

[31] *GW* 16:856, n.1.

[32] *GW* 17:1150.

[33] *MC* 251; also "Die Hoffnungen der Händlerin Courage / Sind den Kindern tödlich" (*GW* 9:793).

[34] *MC* 139, 251-253; *AJ* 25.11.48.

[35] *MC* 173.

[36] "Seine Mutter verbirgt den unredlichen Handel nicht vor ihm, ermahnt ihn aber, seinerseits redlich zu sein, da er einfältig ist. Die Befolgung des Rats wird ihm [sic] das Leben kosten" (*MC* 148).

verbunden gewesen, wäre er nicht umgekommen."[37] (And he would not have joined the army, we infer, if he had not been brought to war by his mother's business.) But we also see Brecht hold Courage and her business more directly responsible for Schweizerkas's death when she hesitates to ransom him: "Ihr hartnäckiges Feilschen um ihren Wagen kostet dem Sohn den Hals."[38] Or, as he says in another place, she loses him, "weil sie sich nicht entschließen kann, ihren Wagen zu verkaufen, wenn sie dadurch den Sohn retten könnte."[39] This lapse he brands "den Verrat der Courage an ihrem Sohn."[40]

Brecht does not always squarely blame Courage's business for Kattrin's death (perhaps because of the tenuous causality). Instead he puts the blame in the mouth of a third party, though with the implication that he agrees with it. He tells us, for example: "Die Courage ... überhört geflissentlich den Vorwurf der Bauersleute, sie sei am Tod schuld";[41] and: "den groben Vorwurf der Bauersleute, sie sei schuld an Kattrins Tod, nimmt sie nicht zur Kenntnis."[42] But elsewhere Brecht openly accuses Courage: "Die Tochter verliert sie, weil sie sie allein läßt, um die Not einer gefährdeten Stadt geschäftlich auszunutzen."[43]

The deaths of her children might seem only further examples of the inhuman results of Courage's involvement in war. Brecht means them to be much more than that. Courage's children and business are bound up in her aims: "Auf was ich aus bin, ist, mich und meine Kinder durchbringen mit meinem Wagen."[44] Thus, when Courage's crime, her business with war, kills her children, this is a refutation of all that Courage represents. The children's deaths are the chief evidence that the little people, as Brecht so often tells us, cannot

---

[37] *MC* 22.
[38] *MC* 22.
[39] *MC* 253.
[40] *MC* 155.
[41] *MC* 186.
[42] *MC* 189.
[43] *MC* 253.
[44] *GW* 4:1406.

profit, but only lose, from war.[45] Brecht makes this clear when he tells us that Courage sacrifices her children to her business, and then from this concludes: "So zeigt das Stück, daß die großen Geschäfte in den Kriegen nicht von den kleinen Leuten gemacht werden."[46]

Some have found it difficult to accept Brecht's blame of Courage and her business for the deaths of her children. They point out, for example, that Courage only loses Eilif to the army, not to death; or that the connection between Courage's business and the destruction of her children is accidental, not necessary. As far as understanding Brecht's interpretation goes (if not agreeing with it), these objections fail to take into account two premises which underly Brecht's position and give unity to his various remarks, but which he does not always make explicit in his commentary for *Mutter Courage*.

The first premise is that war is an evil. Ernst Jünger's approving paraphrase of Heraclitus: "Der Krieg, aller Dinge Vater, ist auch der unsere...," would not have found Brecht's approval.[47] Indeed, in a note written before the Second World War Brecht produces a motto which must be read as a rejection of a view such as Jünger's: "Wäre zum Beispiel der Krieg der Vater aller Dinge, so müßte man zum Vatermord aufrufen."[48]

Brecht's comments on *Mutter Courage* make his criticism of war especially clear. Whereas Jünger, for example, positively esteems war as a

---

[45] *AJ* 22.4.41; *MC* 67, 130.

[46] *MC* 253. Another refutation of Courage's way of life could be seen in Brecht's production of the drama. He tells us that the soldier who orders Kattrin's death is the same one Courage advised to capitulate in scene 4, so that Courage's lesson, together with others, has made him brutal and led to Kattrin's death; see *MC* 185; see also Jendreiek 182.

[47] Ernst Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis," *Werke*, 10 vols. (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1960) 5:11. The essay was written in 1922 and revised in 1926.

[48] *GW* 18:252; for another discussion of Brecht and Jünger, see Frank Dietrich Wagner, *Bertolt Brecht: Kritik des Faschismus* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989) 113-116.

moment of nobility and creativity, at least for one part of humanity ("Der Kampf ist nicht nur eine Vernichtung, sondern auch die männliche Form der Zeugung...."), Brecht, on the contrary, calls *Mutter Courage* realistic because it demonstrates this truth: "kriege sind für die völker katastrophen, nichts sonst, keine erhebungen und keine geschäfte."[49]

War is not creative for Brecht, it is a place of sheer destruction. War is a "riesiges feld" that no strategy can hope to survive: "alle berechnungsarten des individuums, gezogen aus erfahrungen des friedens, versagen ... alles bringt untergang."[50] Where war sits, there sits corruption;[51] war eventually causes demeaning behaviour ("Jammern, Betteln und Denunzieren") to take on fixed forms ("zu festen Formen [erstarren]");[52] in corrupting war even virtue becomes deadly.[53] Accordingly, Brecht considers war "rein negativ".[54]

Brecht's criticism of war, his view that the world will become "unbewohnbar ohne Frieden,"[55] leads him to say: "daß für die Bekämpfung des Krieges kein Opfer zu groß ist";[56] and this is given special force because he dismisses the idea that war is natural disaster, biological necessity, or fate. This is implicit in his belief that the people have it in their power to end, not only particular wars, but all war.[57] And *Mutter Courage*, according to Brecht,

---

[49] Jünger 53-54; *AJ* 22.4.41.

[50] *AJ* 5.1.41.

[51] "Die winzige Szene zu Beginn von 3, in der Heeresgut verschoben wird, zeigt die allgemeine, natürliche Korruption in den Feldlagern des großen Glaubenskrieges" (*MC* 148).

[52] *MC* 182.

[53] War makes "die menschlichen Tugenden tödlich ... auch für ihre Besitzer" *(MC* 130).

[54] When criticizing the "übliche Darstellungsart" in regard to *Mutter Courage*, Brecht cites one point of agreement between that mode of theatre and his own: "Er [der Krieg] ist auch hier rein negativ..." (*GW* 16:895).

[55] "Der Anblick der ungeheuerlichen Verwüstungen erfüllt mich nur mit einem Wunsch: auf meine Weise dazu beizutragen, daß die Welt endlich Frieden bekommt. Sie wird unbewohnbar ohne Frieden" (*MC* 67).

[56] *MC* 130.

[57] "Das Proletariat als Klasse kann den Krieg abschaffen, indem es den

contributes to this because it shows that war must be fought at all costs.[58] The idea that war is not fate, but a human product within human control, informs Brecht's branding war a stupidity and a crime.[59]

Not that Brecht is an idealistic pacifist. He accepts the possibility that force may be needed to end war. In the poem, "Lied gegen den Krieg," from the collection *Svendborger Gedichte* (1939), the workers who have been drawn into their masters' war revolt with the words:[60]

> Dreck euer Krieg! So macht ihn doch allein!
> Wir drehen die Gewehre um
> Und machen einen anderen Krieg
> Das wird der richtige sein.

This "richtiger Krieg", revolution, is for Brecht a war against war, just as Frau Carrar, when she takes up arms against the fascists, becomes in Brecht's eyes "eine Kämpferin für Gewaltlosigkeit" and "eine Kämpferin für Abschaffung der Kämpfe."[61] The idea of revolution as the proper answer to war brings us to Brecht's second premise.

The second premise, which is linked to the first, is that capitalism is an evil. By this I refer not only to Brecht's well-known criticism of capitalism as an inhuman, exploitative system, but also, and more especially here, to his view that capitalism is an inherently warring society and so a cause of war. I will consider these ideas in more detail in Chapter 4; here I want only to emphasize that, for Brecht, capitalism and war are inseparable.

Kapitalismus abschafft" (*MC* 190).

[58] *MC* 130.

[59] "Aber der Krieg ist nicht nur ein Verbrechen, sondern eine Dummheit" (*GW* 20:246).

[60] *GW* 9:651.

[61] *GW* 17:1101; it is in this sense that Brecht says socialism "fights" for an end to violence (*GW* 12:553) and that the truth is "etwas Kriegerisches" (*GW* 18:230); also: "Wir werden erst von den Naturgewalten befreit sein, wenn wir von menschlicher Gewalt befreit sind" (*GW* 16:539; Brecht as "Der Philosoph").

We need not look far to find Brecht bring war and capitalism together. In 1939 he calls capitalism a "kriegshafte Wirtschaftsordnung."[62] This view he never changes. In 1952, for example, he says that capitalism needs war, that it is a system based on the "Kampf aller gegen alle, der Großen gegen die Großen, der Großen gegen die Kleinen, der Kleinen gegen die Kleinen."[63] In 1955 he not only tells us: "Das ganze Leben kämpfen die Menschen im Kapitalismus um ihre Existenz — gegeneinander"; but also connects this social war with international war: "Wie sollten da am Ende nicht die Völker mit den Völkern kämpfen!"[64] Capitalism, then, carries the same stigma as war, just as the reverse is also true.

The idea of the unity of war and capitalism is important for us because variations on this theme occur in Brecht's remarks on *Mutter Courage*, in the form of the unity of war and "business". That is to say, when Brecht tells us in the *Couragemodell* that war is "eine Fortführung der Geschäfte mit andern Mitteln,"[65] or "eine Summe geschäftlicher Unternehmungen aller,"[66] when he insists, "die Verschmelzung von Krieg und Geschäft kann nicht früh genug etabliert werden,"[67] then he alludes by way of the term "business" to his views on the fundamental and necessary connection between war and capitalism.

Brecht himself suggests this associative level to his commentary on *Mutter Courage* when he says in "Gespräch mit einem jungen Zuschauer": "Ja, der Dreißigjährige Krieg ist einer der ersten Riesenkriege, die der Kapitalismus über Europa gebracht hat."[68] It is scarcely credible that Brecht, who was informed on this historical subject, should seriously have called this bid by the Hapsburgs for European hegemony against the rest of feudal Europe a *capitalist* war.

---

[62] *GW* 19:469.
[63] *GW* 17:1149.
[64] *GW* 20:345.
[65] *MC* 130, see also *MC* 22.
[66] *MC* 132.
[67] *MC* 136.
[68] *GW* 17:1149; this can hardly be called a "Marxist" view as Kenneth Knight does in "*Simplicissimus* und *Mutter Courage*," *Daphnis* 5 (1976): 704.

However, it is precisely in the magnitude of the distortion that his message lies. Since he cannot possibly be telling us that the Thirty Years War was capitalist, he must be telling us that *his* Thirty Years War, the Thirty Years War of *Mutter Courage*, represents the war of capitalism.[69]

This conclusion is supported by the *Couragemodell*. There, we have seen, Brecht repeatedly refers to the connection between business and war. If we have missed his point, the antepenultimate text reveals the true referent of "business":[70]

> Bei dem Teil der Zuschauer, der dem Proletariat angehört, der Klasse, die wirklich gegen den Krieg selber handeln und ihn überwinden kann, ist ... die Einsicht in den Zusammenhang von Krieg und Kommerz freizulegen: Das Proletariat als Klasse kann den Krieg abschaffen, indem es den Kapitalismus abschafft.

Here two pairs of terms are presented: *Krieg/Kommerz* and *Krieg/Kapitalismus*. (We note again the inseparability of war and capitalism, since to eliminate one is to eliminate the other.) Clearly *Kommerz* and *Kapitalismus* are equivalents. However, *Kommerz* itself is only one of a string of equivalents in this particular text, which refers as well to the *Handeltreiben* of the "petty-bourgeois" Courage, and to the "Geschäfte, aus denen der Krieg besteht." In other words, capitalism, which is inseparable from war, is the referent not only of *Kommerz*, but also of *Geschäfte*, and even of Courage's *Handeltreiben*.

When we take into account Brecht's underlying criticisms of war and capitalism, and his view of their interdependence, together with his own joining of these with *Mutter Courage*, then we see that Courage is for him doubly cursed. Courage is cursed first because of her involvment in war; but she is also cursed because of her business, not only because she thereby supports the crime of war, but also because Courage's business carries for Brecht the stigma of capitalism. It is this association which underlies Brecht's (somewhat inconsistent) claim that

---

[69] So that one must be careful not to judge the drama as though it were a historical portrait; see Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 98-101.

[70] *MC* 190.

Courage is not simply "die Vertreterin der 'kleinen Leute'" or a "Repräsentantin der kleinen Leute," but is instead a "Geschäftsfrau" and "Händlerin".[71] It is this association which underlies Brecht's suggestion that Courage's business, like capitalism, is an inseparable union of war and business, as when he tells us that Courage's "totem", her wagon, is a "Zwischending zwischen einem Militärfahrzeug und einer Krämerbude."[72] In other words, for Brecht, Courage's business is damnable *as business*.[73]

Only when we recognize this can we adequately understand some of Brecht's comments. For example, Brecht adds to the description of Courage "als Geschäftsfrau, die im Krieg mitmacht, um ihren Schnitt zu machen," this parenthesis: "Sie wird kaum je ohne ihr Geschäft, den Wagen gesehen!"[74] This is not only an exclamation at Courage's obsessive attachment to her business, it is also a censure of the thing to which she is attached. The force of his accusation, conveyed by the exclamation point, would be senseless if he considered business a neutral activity; but he does not, it is part of that phenomenon, capitalism, against which Brecht fought his own "Thirty Years War".

Again, only a recognition of the stigma adhering to business adequately explains why Brecht's first blame for the destruction of Courage's children goes to their mother and her business and not to the war, as in this passage:[75]

> Den einen Sohn verliert sie, weil sie, vertieft in den Verkauf einer Gürtelschnalle, nicht bemerkt, daß ein Werber ihn wegzieht, den anderen, weil sie sich nicht entschließen kann,

---

[71] *MC* 132, 251.

[72] *MC* 130; Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 88; on the wagon see Jendreiek 158.

[73] This may be represented indirectly when Brecht, through Courage, seems to characterize merchants as vermin, as when Courage talks of her capture, which she intends to use for new business: "Wir sind gefangen, aber so wie die Laus im Pelz" (*GW* 4:1379).

[74] *MC* 251.

[75] *MC* 251-253.

> ihren Wagen zu verkaufen, wenn sie dadurch den Sohn retten könnte. Die Tochter verliert sie, weil sie sie allein läßt, um die Not einer gefährdeten Stadt geschäftlich auszunutzen.

Now we see that Brecht does not exaggerate when he uses "loss" for all three children. For him, on a certain level, it is no matter that two of the children are killed, while one is "only" inducted. The "loss" caused by business, as the union of capitalism and war, ultimately means the same thing: death. Similarly, the unity of business and war causes Brecht to posit, not an *accidental*, but a *necessary* connection between Courage's business dealings and her children's deaths. Thus his blame of Courage and her business, his accusation that a child is "lost" *because* of their mother's business activity, is not based upon a legal notion of causality, but on a symbolic assignment of blame.

Of course, it must be stated that this explanation of the underlying premises which inform Brecht's interpretation, and their meaning for his statements, remains somewhat speculative, since Brecht nowhere states his interpretation of Courage in quite these terms.

At this point it should be said that Brecht's interpretation, even if it displays a definite tendency, is not without contradiction or inconsistency. Yet it should not be thought that these contradictions, which can be found in both published and unpublished notes, is a result of Brecht's supposed lack of aptitude for systematic thought.[76] Nor are these contradictions mere lapses. Rather, these contradictions, which concern some of the chief points of Brecht's interpretation, are symptoms of a larger problem.

A relatively minor contradiction is found when Brecht, who otherwise is concerned to emphasize Courage's criminality, hardness, and inhumanity, on

---

[76] The source of this formulation is Fritz Sternberg, *Der Dichter und die Ratio: Erinnerungen an Bertolt Brecht*, ed. Reinhold Grimm (Göttingen: Sachse & Pohl, 1963) 12.

some occasions seems instead to soften her portrait and so increase the chance of sympathy for her.

Consider a pair of ideas that not only increase the chance of sympathy for Courage by diminishing her apparent hardness, but could also take away from her responsibility for her actions. First we are told that Courage in scene 5 refuses bandages, that she "defends her wagon", because she has sacrificed her son to it: "Durch hartes Handeln hat sie sich verhärtet."[77] At the same time we are told that Courage at the beginning of the same scene drinks schnapps. Two reasons are given: "sie braucht Schnaps für ihre Härte angesichts des Elends," and: "Dies genügte [Weigel] als ein mildernder Umstand für das Feilschen, Keifen und Toben der Courage durch die ganze Szene."[78] Now, the first of our examples may be no true contradiction. After all, it only tells us that people are hardened by their own cruel actions. Yet it could also imply that Courage was not hard before Schweizerkas's death, which would in turn imply that Courage's business itself is not inhuman. Not only does this contradict Brecht's comments about the necessary connection between war and business, it also contradicts the evidence of the text itself (as we will see in Chapter 4).

And what of the schnapps? It would seem superfluous, for if Courage has been hardened by the sacrifice of her son, why does she need schnapps to prepare herself for the cruel refusal of bandages? And if Courage's business with war is from the beginning criminal, which means that she is already "hardened", why is drink introduced as a "mitigating circumstance"? Surely this would tend to shift the responsibility for hardness from Courage to the drink, and so increase the chance of sympathy for her since it implies that she must steel herself against this inhuman behaviour, that her hardness is somehow not part of her but comes from elsewhere (even though she does not seem to need it in scene 1, when she sends

---

[77] *MC* 162.
[78] *MC* 161-162.

soldiers to their deaths).[79] In this particular case, I believe that we see evidence of Brecht, against the text, bowing to the opinion of Helene Weigel, as the phrase, "es genügte *ihr*" suggests. That is, Weigel has not grasped the message of the text, namely that Courage as businesswoman is hard from the beginning. Instead Weigel tries to find some other more "naturalistic" explanation for the cruelty of this mother.[80]

In another note we are told that Courage refuses the cook's offer out of compassion for her daughter: "Mitleid mit der Tochter hält sie im Krieg."[81] Later, in the *Couragemodell*, Brecht refers to that same incident and describes how Courage, when she ascribes selfish motives to her self-sacrifice, provides a touching demonstration:[82]

> Während [Courage] ... die letzten Tropfen der Suppe in den Löffel laufen ließ, zeigte sie ... die unbeholfene Höflichkeit vieler kleiner Leute, welche den Opfern, die sie bringen, eigensüchtige Motive unterschieben, um anderen die Demütigung zu ersparen, die Opfer annehmen zu müssen.

Instead of preserving the ambiguity of the text, which does not choose for us either the real self-sacrifice by Courage or an equally real desire to resume the search for profit in war, both our examples lay the emphasis on Courage's sacrifice, and so increase the risk of sympathy for her.[83]

A final example is found in that moment when Weigel as Courage counts out coins for Kattrin's burial, only to hesitate and take one back. This seems

---

[79] *GW* 4:1351.

[80] This is not the first instance of such a "lapse" with Weigel, as we can see from a discussion which Brecht, Weigel, and Ernst Busch held on Grusche from *Der Kaukasiche Kreidekreis*. Brecht says they discussed "die meinung der weigel, mütterchen grusinien könne naiv sein (man müßte nur nicht sagen, daß der heilige banditus ihr schwager ist). wir finden aber doch, ... daß mütterchen grusinien unschuldig nur in den augen des azdak ist" (*AJ* 4.6.54).

[81] *MC* 23.

[82] *MC* 177.

[83] Thiele recognizes this ambiguity (45), though he also seems to overlook it (38).

calculatingly hard-hearted at first, until we are told the gesture shows, "daß die Händlerin in all ihrem Schmerz nicht das Rechnen ganz vergißt, da ja das Geld so schwer zu erwerben ist."[84] Now the hardness becomes a difficult choice forced by necessity, by the scarcity of money, something which could excuse Courage's behaviour.[85]

Perhaps these contradictions, almost all of which refer to realizations of Courage by Weigel and Therese Giehse, do no real harm. The schnapps may be only a scarcely felt addition of hardness to a substantial hardness already present. The compassion of Courage in scene 9 need not nullify her many brutalities. Scarcity explains, but does not necessarily excuse, Courage's calculating behaviour in regard to Kattrin's burial. Certainly there is no logical reason why we cannot feel sympathy for Courage and still criticize her for her part in the war and the deaths of her children. After all, in one note Brecht admits the possibility of admiring Courage as mother while criticizing her as sutler.[86] But given the sympathy verging on identification to which the audience was already predisposed, and of which Brecht was well aware since he revised the text and wrote commentary to counteract this tendency, it seems peculiar that he would undo his own efforts by increasing the likelihood of sympathy for Courage.

A more important contradiction concerns the possible retraction of the charge that Courage is responsible for the deaths of her children. In Eilif's case, for instance, we saw how Brecht repeatedly referred to the "loss" of Courage's son, a loss which was mentioned in the same breath as the "loss", that is, deaths of her other children. Yet in the *Couragemodell* we come across this remark on the recruiter's "seduction" of Eilif: "Der Sohn ist nicht eben verloren, wenn er Soldat wird, er ist lediglich gefährdet."[87] Yet, against itself, this text still recalls

---

[84] *MC* 189.

[85] Smith says that "motherhood" comes easier to those who can afford it (493).

[86] *GW* 16:918.

[87] *MC* 140.

Brecht's main view when the quoted passage is immediately followed by: "Und [Courage] wird Kinder noch *verlieren*" (emphasis added). But we have just been told that Eilif is not (exactly) lost! Clearly the sentence only registers an obvious "naturalistic" truth, namely, that Eilif is not yet dead but only endangered. However, this confuses the message Brecht elsewhere promotes, and which Courage succinctly puts to the sergeant: "[Beschissen] hast du dich selber an dem Tag, wo du Soldat geworden bist."[88] This text seems an infelicitous naturalistic qualification that forgets both the symbolic truth of the text and Brecht's general interpretive tendency.

On occasion Brecht seems to take away from the blame of Courage by instead crediting the deaths of her children to their own "virtues": "der kühne und kluge sohn stirbt an der kühnheit und klugheit, der redliche dumme sohn an der redlichkeit und dummheit, die stumme karin, weil sie trommelt."[89] Kattrin (at this early stage — around 1939 — called Karin) is only an apparent exception. For the virtue which causes her to drum, and with which Brecht would later explicitly associate her, is compassion.[90] In another early note Brecht tells us that Courage's daughter perishes because of her compassion, her bold son falls because of his boldness, and her upright son is killed because of his uprightness.[91] In the *Courage modell* Brecht seems to say much the same thing when he notes that war makes virtues deadly to their owners.[92]

---

[88] *GW* 4:1356.

[89] *MC* 25.

[90] See footnote 91.

[91] "Zu den Kindern: Beim ersten Sohn fürchtet sie seine Kühnheit, zählt auf seine Klugheit. Beim zweiten Sohn fürchtet sie seine Dummheit und zählt auf seine Ehrlichkeit. Bei der Tochter fürchtet sie ihr Mitleid und zählt auf ihre Stummheit. Nur ihre Befürchtungen werden sich als berechtigt erweisen.... Anscheinend hat sie nichts dagegen, daß der zweite Sohn als Zahlmeister zur Armee ging. Sie hält bei ihm nur Ehrlichkeit für nötig. Diese bringt ihn um.... Der [zweite] Sohn fällt, weil er die Prinzipien des Krieges im Frieden anwandte.... Die Tochter geht unter durch ihr Mitleid mit fremden Kindern" (*MC* 22-25).

[92] "*Was eine Aufführung von 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder' hauptsächlich*

This is, perhaps, no serious contradiction. It could be argued, for example, that among the causes of the childrens' deaths their virtues play a subordinate role, though one more important than the causes represented, say, by the actions or bullets of the soldiers. Thus, while their virtues may be deadly in war, it is Courage who has brought them into the condition which makes their virtues deadly, and so her cause takes precedence as a "final" cause, while virtue could be called the "efficient" cause. Yet, if we are able to resolve this contradiction, still, it bears mention since it shows that Brecht does not establish an explicit hierarchy of causality for a series of events most important for his interpretation, namely the destruction of Courage's children.

The most important contradiction which we encounter lessens Courage's responsibility for her participation in war. This not only touches on Brecht's chief criticism of Courage, but could also absolve her of responsibility for the deaths of her children. One example is an undated fragment:[93]

> zu einer zeit, wo kriege vermeidlich geworden sind und zwar dadurch, dass eine neue, unkriegerische, nicht auf unterdrückung und ausbeutung gegründete gesellschaftsordnung möglich geworden ist, zeigt der stückeschreiber, wie die 'kleinen' leute in einem unvermeidlichen krieg nichts gewinnen, warum tut er das? wenn die mutter courage nichts tun kann, dass ein krieg vermieden wird, warum dann zeigen wie sie vom krieg ruiniert wird? er ist ihr schicksal, warum lassen wir sie von ihm zermalmen? nun ist es, zur ersten entschuldigung des stückeschreibers gesagt, richtig, dass sie auch andere geschäfte betreiben könnte, weniger lukrative, aber auch weniger gefährliche. dies ist aber noch nicht die antwort des stückeschreibers.

Here an anonymous questioner first implies that war is Courage's "fate" since she cannot prevent its occurrence, and second questions the use of this narrative in an age when war is avoidable and a new unwarlike society possible.

---

zeigen soll ... Daß der Krieg, der eine Fortführung der Geschäfte mit andern Mitteln ist, die menschlichen Tugenden tödlich macht, auch für ihre Besitzer" (*MC* 130); see also "Kinderlied" from 1956 (*GW* 10:970).

[93] *MC* 69.

Brecht's first reply is to deny that Courage is fated, since Courage could have chosen another course of action. (We note in passing that the claim that other "business" would have been a way out would work against the necessary connection between business and war.) So far this reply fits into Brecht's interpretation. But then he goes on to say that even though Courage could have chosen another business, this is *not* the playwright's answer. In one and the same text, then, Brecht seems to affirm the possibility of Courage's choice, only to deny that this is as important as other remarks have so far led us to believe. We cannot know exactly what Brecht may have intended here, for at this point the text breaks off (possibly because its author rejected the line of argument, or was not himself sure on this point).

Another example is found in the *Couragemodell*. There Brecht calls Courage's counsel of capitulation in scene 4 her evil at its worst. But he qualifies this evil: "es ist nämlich nicht die Schlechtigkeit ihrer Person so sehr als die ihrer Klasse."[94]

Some might take this for a form of absolution: Courage's evil is not her personal evil but that of a higher instance, her class, something about which she can do nothing and for which she cannot be held responsible. Ultimately this raises the question of determinism, but I will postpone that question for the moment, since this emphasis on Courage's class evil can be explained without recourse to that notion.

Marx has given us an example very like Brecht's. In *Kapital* he admits: "Die Gestalten von Kapitalist und Grundeigentümer zeichne ich keineswegs in rosigem Licht," but assures us, "es handelt sich hier um die Personen nur, soweit sie die Personifikation ökonomischer Kategorien sind," for he does not hold the individual capitalist responsible for "Verhältnisse, deren Geschöpf er sozial bleibt...."[95] And yet this in no way softens his criticism: he flays capitalists for

---

[94] *MC* 159.
[95] *MEW* 23:16.

the conditions in which they force labour to work and live; he brands their chief activity, the accumulation of surplus value, "theft" and "robbery"; he implies that they are monsters by associating that accumulation with vampirism and lycanthropy.[96]

In the case of both Marx's capitalist and Brecht's Courage the references to a "class evil", in my opinion, are not meant to remove blame from either party. Given the assumption that agents who are products of a historical set of determinations are also fit objects for criticism (which will be discussed below), these remarks have a quite different purpose. They emphasize only that the evil which is discovered is not a personal flaw of character but the expression through the person of a social evil, and therefore that this evil cannot be eliminated by a personal reform of character, but only by a change of social conditions.

Another remark (intended for publication) qualifies Courage's responsibility.[97] In it Brecht complains that the "übliche Darstellungsart" presents the drama with a view to indulging in a "peculiar" pleasure, that of a sense of triumph at witnessing the indestructibility of a vital person beset by the trials and tribulations of war. He then goes on to produce this curious statement: "Die aktive Beteiligung der Courage am Krieg wird nicht wichtig genommen, er ist eine Erwerbsquelle, möglicherweise die einzige."[98]

No sooner is Courage's active participation in war, and so her responsibility, affirmed, than it is denied by a suggestion that she had no other source of income available, and so, we infer, no choice. It could be argued, since Brecht deals here with a mistaken interpretation, that the first clause comprises Brecht's complaint, while the second part of the statement presents the erroneous thought advanced by the "übliche Darstellungsweise", which claims Courage has no choice. Yet, if this were intended, which is unlikely, it would again be

---

[96] *MEW* 23:191, 622, 247, 280.
[97] *GW* 16:895-896.
[98] *GW* 16:895.

contradicted in the same note by an even stronger statement of Courage's historical fatedness:[99]

> Die dem Publikum tief fühlbare Tragik der Courage und ihres Lebens bestand darin, daß hier ein entsetzlicher Widerspruch bestand, der einen Menschen vernichtete, ein Widerspruch, der gelöst werden konnte, aber nur von der Gesellschaft selbst und in langen, schrecklichen Kämpfen.

With the concept of the tragic, which could imply tragedy, Brecht creates serious difficulties for his main tendency, and gives ammunition to those who oppose his interpretation with their own tragic visions.

It is clear that Brecht here tries to explain the reason for the appearance of tragic interpretations of Courage, by pointing to the historical limits of his drama (though he elsewhere notes its symbolic or parabolic character).[100] History, after all, as past events whose possibilities are spent and extinguished, could seem fated in retrospect. And it is true, as Brecht notes, that there was no chance in the seventeenth century for a revolutionary change of the kind he envisaged. So the historical limitation of the Thirty Years War may cause Courage's story to seem "tragic".

But by accounting for interpretations of Courage's disaster as a tragedy, by using this tactically to point from the unchangeable aspect of the past to the possibility of the present, Brecht concedes too much. He forgets the possibility which he built into the drama (such as Utrecht, perhaps, to name a place which seems outside war, not to mention Kattrin as the alternative to Courage); he forgets, too, his insistence within this same note on Courage's responsibility.

It should be remarked how uncharacteristic it is that Brecht should touch on the notions of the tragic or tragedy, which he otherwise rejected as concessions to the irrational belief in fate or in the uselessness of human intervention in history.[101] Of course, he did once call Schweizerkas's end a

---

[99] *GW* 16:896.

[100] For example, *MC* 247.

[101] "Das Erregen tragischer Empfindungen im Zuschauer wäre doch nur

tragedy; but this, if it is not a loose use of "tragedy" to mean only an unhappy event, may simply indicate, given Courage's introduction of her children to war, that his virtue must inevitably be destroyed by war.[102] In general, however, tragedy is a concept which Brecht handles gingerly, and so its appearance here is odd since it undermines his own interpretation.

In another remark Brecht implies that Courage is like the masses who, so long as they remain the object of history and not the subject, can only understand their situation as fate:[103]

> Es geht [Courage] nicht einmal auf, daß man eine große Schere haben muß, um am Krieg seinen Schnitt zu machen. Die Zuschauer bei Katastrophen erwarten ja zu Unrecht, daß die Betroffenen daraus lernen werden. Solang die Masse das *Objekt* der Politik ist, kann sie, was mit ihr geschieht, nicht als einen Versuch, sondern nur als ein Schicksal ansehen....

Of course, Brecht is only saying that Courage could not conceive of her experiences as anything but fate, and not that she actually has no alternative. But, by depriving her of a vision of an alternative, it seems that she is also actually

---

gestattet, wenn die Unentrinnbarkeit des Helden wirklich garantiert wäre, denn nur dann kann man sich ungestraft an seinem Schmerz beteiligen, wenn man ihm keinen praktischen Vorschlag machen kann. Die Unentrinnbarkeit darf also beileibe keine soziale sein, also eine, die in unserer gegenwärtigen Gesellschaftsordnung besteht, die doch wahrlich keine ewige Kategorie ist, der selber man nicht entrinnen kann" (*BF* 21:358). "Tragisch war für die Bourgeoisie der Rest von Qual, der durch die herrschende Gesellschaftsordnung, die ja für die bestmögliche gelten muß, nicht mehr wegorganisiert werden konnte, also unheilbar, schicksalhaft, ewig aussah. Es gab viele Tragik in ihrer Weltordnung" (*BF* 21:384). See also the articles "Über experimentelles Theater," especially *GW* 15:301; "Dreigespräch über das Tragische," especially *GW* 15:311; and the first section of "Das Interesse an Kunst," especially *GW* 18:258-259. On this topic see Grimm, "Zwischen Tragik und Ideologie" 110-112; and Hans Kaufmann, *Bertolt Brecht: Geschichtsdrama und Parabelstück* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1962) 146.

[102] Brecht is speaking of the chaplain, who "auf Grund seines Phlegmas zeigt... keine übertriebene Teilnahme an der Tragödie des redlichen Sohns" (*MC* 154).

[103] *GW* 17:1150.

deprived of that choice, no matter how objectively present it may be. Once again Brecht works against his own insistence upon Courage's responsibility.

These four examples, by attaching to Courage concepts similar to fate, appear to contradict Brecht's claim that she could act otherwise. I have tried to explain these statements so that they might still operate within Brecht's interpretation, a task the interpreter must attempt, out of respect for the object, before a statement is finally classed as a logical contradiction. To that end, there is another way to bring these apparent contradictions involving Courage's responsibility in line with Brecht's interpretive tendency.

In Courage's case the question takes the following form. Let us suppose that all of Brecht's references to fate, the tragic, and lack of possibility concern only a historical "fatedness"; that he means to say only that, given her historical situation, Courage is fated since no true alternative existed for this seventeenth-century sutler. Now, if Courage is an expression of her historical conditions, does not this determination, this "historical fatedness", absolve her of responsibility for her actions? Indeed, it would seem that Brecht is caught in a contradiction since he embraces some form of determinism (as is necessary to Marxist thought), even as he invokes personal responsibility by criticizing Courage for her actions. A look at the Marxist concept of determinism will show that this contradiction may well be illusory.[104]

One variety of determinism available to Brecht derives from the idea that, once the Marxist critique reveals the "iron laws" of the capitalist mode of production, all else, including historical actions, follow from these "iron laws". This line of thought, which one could call "hard" determinism, so abstracts

---

[104] For this discussion on determinism I have relied heavily on Raymond Williams's discussion in his *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 83-89; and on the useful article by Roy Bhaskar in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. Tom Bottomore, 2nd ed. (London: Blackwell, 1991) 139-141. I also recommend Williams's discussion in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1984) 98-102.

history from human action that the historical process appears to proceed irrespective of human agency. Especially when regarding past events (such as our Thirty Years War), such a determinism risks giving the erroneous impression that an event, because it was historically caused within a specific set of determinations, was in a sense bound to happen as it did *before* it was caused (a form of predetermination). Such a view could make the criticism of agents for their actions pointless.

And yet a position may still be conceived from which a proponent of this kind of determinism could still criticize an agent. Capitalism, for instance, is understood by the Marxist critique as a necessary step in the historical progress of humanity. Insofar as capitalism, besides being a less free form of social organization from an earlier stage of human development, becomes a fetter on that development and maintains itself in the face of changes which it necessarily brings about, and which make a fundamental transformation necessary (and, according to this view, inevitable), then capitalism becomes objectively "evil".[105]

Thus, to turn once again to Marx's dark portrait of the capitalists, even if Marx concedes that capitalists are the result of their material conditions, still he could criticize them from the position outlined above for their objective contribution to unfreedom.

So it is with Courage. Even if she could not, given her historical moment, act otherwise, still she contributes to an objective evil, war. She is herself, then, "evil" and a fit object for criticism.

The second kind of determinism available to Brecht derives in part from Engels's famous letter to Joseph Bloch in 1890, in which he says: "Wir machen unsere Geschichte selbst, aber erstens unter sehr bestimmten Voraussetzungen und

---

[105] This answers Ekmann, who says that Brecht contradicts himself when he blames capitalists even though their behaviour is determined (290-291).

Bedingungen."[106] A materialist determinism is still suggested when he says that history is made under definite conditions; but with "we make history ourselves" the importance of human agency is restored. Now history is made in virtue of human action and not despite it. This tension between agency and the laws of a process describes a "soft" determinism, a more scientific determinism that says laws do not determine "uniquely fixed results", but instead set the limits or tendencies of a process.[107]

It could be said, then, given the real possibility for Brecht of an alternative to capitalism in its developed stage, that the capitalist can be criticized for persisting in reproducing unfreedom. And in Courage's case, given that she, at least in Brecht's view, has a real alternative to her participation in the war, when she does not choose that alternative she chooses evil and so lays herself open to criticism.

I have briefly touched on the difficult issue of determinism only to show how seemingly contradictory statements by Brecht, which blame Courage for her active participation in the war and simultaneously suggest that she had no choice, can be contained within a single coherent explanation. Either of the determinisms available to Brecht at the time could account for his remarks, so long as he does not use the concepts of the tragic or fate in their narrow senses. Either form of determinism could have been assumed by Brecht, which might explain why he seems oblivious to these apparent contradictions.[108] But Brecht never touches

---

[106] *MEW* 37:463; see also Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 85.

[107] *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* 139.

[108] Brecht seems in 1941 to favour what I have called a "soft" determinism, when he recommends that a dramatic figure have about it "etwas Konkretes, Einmaliges" but also "die Möglichkeit, innerhalb bestimmten soziologischen Grenzen auch anders zu handeln..." (*GW* 15:403). This contradicts Schöne's view that Brecht favours determinism at the expense of the individual; see Albrecht Schöne, "Bertolt Brecht: Theatertheorie und dramatische Dichtung," *Euphorion* 52 (1958): 276-277. Other times Brecht favours deterministic thinking, but also anticipates what came to be known as "overdetermination" when he notes that the real problem facing determinism is establishing how that determination is effected

on his understanding of determinism in this matter, nor does he explain the relationship between his apparently contradictory remarks. Therefore, the arguments I have presented on his behalf must remain exceedingly speculative.

A last contradiction remains. We have seen that Brecht rejected any attempt to reduce Courage's story to an allegory on the "eternal" human spirit, to read Courage as an expression of some kind of mythological mother figure. In 1949 Brecht said he revised his text to counter the bourgeois journalists' talk about the vitality of the maternal creature and a Niobe-like tragedy (presumably at the time of the Swiss premiere on 19 April 1941).[109] With this Brecht unwittingly led some scholars to believe erroneously that journalists in Switzerland first conjured up Niobe.[110] But Niobe was first associated with Courage *before* the world premiere in Zürich, by none other than — Bertolt Brecht.

The first instance is enigmatic. It is found in an early note, from around 1939, which describes the plot of *Mutter Courage*:[111]

> Die Finnische Niobe
>
> mutter courage hat 3 schützlinge: den kühnen und klugen sohn, den redlichen und dummen sohn, die stumme karin. der kühne und kluge sohn stirbt an der kühnheit und klugheit, der redliche dumme sohn an der redlichkeit und dummheit, die stumme karin, weil sie trommelt....

---

since there are a multiplicity of determining factors (see *GW* 12:446; *AJ* 23.3.42).

[109] "Die Uraufführung von *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* in Zürich während des Hitlerkrieges... ermöglichte es... der bürgerlichen Presse, von einer Niobetragödie und von der erschütternden Lebenskraft des Muttertiers zu sprechen. Hierdurch gewarnt, machte der Stückeschreiber für die Berliner Aufführung einige Änderungen" (*GW* 4:1439).

[110] An error occasionally repeated even now, though it was corrected some time ago, if not before, at least since Knopf's handbook was published; see Jan Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch: Eine Ästhetik der Widersprüche, Bd.1, Theater*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980) 188. A possible example of a continuation of the error is found in Gleitman 149; see also Komar 123.

[111] *MC* 25.

Two of the three children seem to die because of their "virtues". But Brecht's title appears instead to give Courage the reponsibility, since Niobe's hubris led to the destruction of her children, just as Courage's "hubris", her belief that she can also profit from the wars of the powerful, can be said to destroy her children.[112] Or is this merely a loose association, say, of two mothers who lose their children? We cannot be certain what this title means; but when Brecht joins Courage with this truly tragic mythological figure, then something of the latter's fatedness seems to transfer to Courage as well. Or not? Brecht does not enlighten us on this matter.

The second instance is no less a riddle. Brecht is speaking of the projected titles for the scenes:[113]

> bei dem aufstellen des *titulariums* zur COURAGE wird alles psychologische völlig vernachlässigt, sogar der plot wird kaum berücksichtigt (die niobehandlung). ganz zu schweigen vom zeitkolorit.

Is Brecht's reference to the plot ironic or seriously meant? How is the plot a "niobehandlung"? In that it represents children whose destruction is caused by their mother? No doubt this would agree with Brecht's interpretation, but once again Brecht's view of Courage's responsibility would be questioned by the association with a figure from the realm of myth and all that it entails of timelessness and fate.[114]

It is, then, as though Brecht himself, with these various contradictions, criticizes his own interpretive tendency; as though, against himself, Brecht

---

[112] Niobe, a Theban queen from Greek mythology, refused to worship the goddess Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis. She declared that, as a mother of fourteen children, she was more worthy of worship than Leto, who had only two. Apollo and Artemis revenge their outraged mother and punish Niobe's hubris by slaying every one of her children. Niobe is frozen with sorrow and is transformed into a weeping rock, a symbol of eternal motherly grief.

[113] *AJ* 18.12.40.

[114] On mythological time, see Ernst Cassirer, *Mythical Thought*, Vol.2 of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955) 105-106.

recognizes Courage's maternal, nurturing aspect, her "fatedness", and her mythic, symbolic content. These contradictions are no sign of intellectual inconsistency, but, as we will see, are forced on him by the content of his own text. In that sense, one could say he is truer to his text than those who followed him.

COURAGE CRITICIZED

The least popular position for interpreters of *Mutter Courage* has been Brecht's own. Some who might have supported Brecht no doubt felt his *Couragemodell* was the last word from that perspective. Others who might have wished to support Brecht may have found his position untenable given the contradictions of the drama. Nevertheless, scattered among the interpretations of *Mutter Courage* are those which emphasize Courage's "evil", if only to rescue from her defenders an aspect of the text which cannot be simply wished away.

Common to most interpretations critical of Courage is that Courage is somehow to blame for one or more of the following: her participation in war, her inhumanity, and the destruction of her children. What distinguishes one interpretation from another is the degree to which they understand Courage as a symbolic and not merely a "narrative" figure. Of course, it is safe to say that no scholar has missed the fact that Courage in some way "stands for" business, or capitalism, or the bourgeoisie. Yet this recognition of the scope of Courage's symbolic role, which in my view is crucial for an understanding of the drama, has not yet found adequate expression in existing interpretations.

Some scholars treat Courage on a primarily literal level of the text. In such cases, even when the scholar gives a nod to the symbolic level, Courage is criticized, much as Brecht often seems to, or as did our first chapter, for her various inhumanities and crimes as a participant in war, without asking what these might represent and how that might affect the interpretation. Kenneth Tynan, the theatre critic, summarizes such a view when he says that Courage "has battened on the Thirty Years' War, and must suffer for her complicity by losing her

daughter and both her sons."[115] Similarly Kathleen Komar, for whom the sutler's mere survival is not admirable, censures Courage, who pursues her own "self-interest" at the cost of her children.[116] Laureen Klein Nussbaum, too, follows a similar line and describes Courage, a "living contradiction" between "harsh cynicism" and "motherly love",[117] as a "business woman" who destroys her children by placing business before them, as someone who stands on the side of wrong when she counsels a young soldier to capitulate rather than stand up for his rights, as a "zestful participant in the prevailing inhuman system," and, with reference to Brecht's poem, "Deutschland", as a "Gespött oder eine Furcht."[118] Finally, Claire Gleitman, though she says that the war of the drama represents the "natural condition of European capitalism" (why does this American limit it so?), though Courage represents for her the philosophy "of the marketplace, of capitalism and business-as-usual," does not really integrate this into her view of Courage.[119] Instead she concentrates on the literal level of the drama and stresses Courage as hyena, as one who has no illusions about the war in which she participates, and whose natural feeling for her family is surpassed by the "lure of lucre."[120] (Gleitman later retreats somewhat from this portrayal when she says that Courage is an ambivalent character, but she gives us no idea how this affects her understanding of the figure.)[121]

Other scholars develop to a greater degree the idea that Courage is more than a seventeenth-century sutler. Herbert Reichert, for example, even if he notes Courage's vital maternal aspect and her representation, on the literal level, of the

---

[115] Kenneth Tynan, *Curtains* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1961) 453.

[116] Komar 122 (mistaken admiration), 118-119 (destroys children).

[117] Laureen Klein Nussbaum, *The Image of Woman in the Work of Bertolt Brecht*, diss., University of Washington, 1977 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1977) 386.

[118] Nussbaum *Image* 387-389, 395 (responsible for deaths of children); 391 (soldier's rights); 397-398 (participation in war and "Gespött").

[119] Gleitman 149, 166.

[120] Gleitman 154-156.

[121] Gleitman 156.

little people, says that a correct understanding of Courage must recognize that Brecht's art is in the main symbolic.[122] And on the symbolic level, he says, Courage is a portrayal of the bourgeoisie (or the petty bourgeoisie).[123] As such she is "despicable because her very existence is predicated on war," and "in this symbolic sense," Reichert points out, Courage is "despicable at every moment and not only in those crises ... when her bourgeois mentality led her to place material things over supreme human values" (as when her mercenary attitude destroys her sons).[124] (Reichert, despite his opinion that Brecht's art is in the main symbolic, then suggests that it is an uneasy combination of the "realistic" and the "symbolic", which is his way of dealing with the apparent contradiction of a representative of the bourgeoisie who is also, even if only as one of the petty bourgeoisie, one of the little people.)[125]

More interesting is the interpretation of Klaus-Detlef Müller.[126] Proceeding, apparently, from Brecht's statement that *Mutter Courage* shows that the little people, contrary to Courage's belief, cannot profit from war, Müller tells us that central to the drama is the critique of Courage's false belief, as a critique of petty-bourgeois ideology.[127] This critique, which implies that Courage represents the petty bourgeoisie, is exemplified in the drama by the treatment of the problem of virtue (a theme which will be taken up again in

---

[122] Herbert W. Reichert, "Hauptmann's Frau Wolf and Brecht's Mutter Courage," *The German Quarterly* 34.4 (1961): 439 (maternal aspect); 442 (represents little people on "realistic" level); "Brecht's art ist still in the main symbolic and only by a recognition of this fact can Mutter Courage be correctly understood" (442).

[123] "Audiences ... have not infrequently taken Mutter Courage to represent 'the little people ...', a point of view which disturbed Brecht as he meant her to be, above all, a symbol of the bourgeoisie.... The play itself demonstrates this fact clearly" (440); see also 443 (petty bourgeois); 442 ("realistic level" and "symbolic level").

[124] Reichert 442-443, 441.

[125] Reichert 443.

[126] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 56-57.

[127] *MC* 130.

Chapter 7).[128] Thus for Müller the key text of the drama is the *Salomon-Song*, in which the virtues of Courage and her children have their counterparts in the historical models of the song (Solomon's wisdom being equivalent in Müller's opinion to Courage's *Weltklugheit*).[129] The destruction in the song of the historical paragons of virtue is supposed to reflect on the destruction of Courage and her children as the bearers of virtue, specifically as bearers of virtues which are "den historisch-gesellschaftlichen Gegebenheiten (der Welt) unangemessen," since "Tugend ist das von der Sache her geforderte richtige Verhalten, sie ist Mittel zum Zweck und vom Zweck her legitimiert."[130]

While this critique also applies to Courage's children, Courage is a special case of the "Kleinbürgermentalität", of the "ideological" transfer of the problem of scarcity to the domain of personal "virtue" (as though a sufficient quantity of personal virtue and its attendant personal achievement, would solve the problem of scarcity).[131] Her belief that her own virtues and those of her children might permit them to survive the war is what brings her family to war in the first place, and so makes possible the deaths of her children, which are her refutation: "Damit ist die Courage an ihrer Schlauheit gescheitert: ihren Versuch, den Krieg dadurch zu überleben, daß sie ihm positiv deutete und akzeptierte, bezahlt sie mit dem Leben ihrer Kinder."[132]

In a later work Müller more directly blames Courage's business for the loss of her children, and adds to her false belief the petty bourgeois illusion of a common purpose with fascism and capital, which strengthens the idea that she

---

[128] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 56.
[129] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 56-57.
[130] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 57, 59.
[131] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 56-57.
[132] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 56.

is a symbolic representation.[133] In that later work Müller declares that Courage fails both as merchant and as mother.[134]

Since I will consider the question of virtue in Chapter 7, and since the main disadvantage of Müller's view, as of all those critical of Courage, will be taken up at the end of this section, I will limit myself to a specific weakness of this interpretation. Müller seems to suggest that Courage is criticized for putting stock in the virtues of herself and her family. If this is so, then he must explain why Courage fears her children's virtues, which she calls "schreckliche Eigenschaften."[135]

Alfred Bergstedt introduces familiar criticisms of Courage: she and her business are responsible for the deaths of her children (though he also suggests they perish because they fail to recognize the objective limits to their virtues);[136] she falsely believes that she can somehow control her own conditions within war, that she can, even if a little person, profit from the war of the great (a belief which, if tragic, compounds her guilt when she maintains it even after she loses business and children and despite her knowledge, which should have corrected her belief, that nothing is secure or need occur as one hopes).[137]

---

[133] In Jörg-Wilhelm Joost, Klaus-Detlef Müller, Michael Voges, *Bertolt Brecht: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung*, ed. Klaus-Detlef Müller (Munich: Beck, 1985) 281-284; "Denn wenn der Geschäftsgeist sich aus dem Bestreben legitimiert, die Kinder heil durch den Krieg zu bringen, so führt die Tüchtigkeit der Händlerin doch praktisch dazu, daß sie ihre mütterlichen Interessen vernachlässigt: Eilif kommt ihr abhanden, als sie durch ein Geschäft abgelenkt ist; Schweizerkas findet den Tod, weil sie zu lange handelt; Kattrin wird verunstaltet und um ihre Lebenschancen gebracht, weil sie einen Auftrag der Händlerin ausführt, und sie stirbt, als die Courage in der belagerten Stadt ihren 'Schnitt' zu machen versucht" (Joost 282). On common purpose with fascism and capital see Joost 281.

[134] Joost 282.

[135] *GW* 4:1357.

[136] Alfred Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip"; on responsibility for children see 158, 147; on virtues see 156; on individual cases of virtue see 149-150 (Schweizerkas), 150 (Eilif), 155 (Kattrin).

[137] Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 141-142, 157-158 (false belief); "Ihr Irrtum ist tragisch: Sie glaubt den Krieg zu beherrschen, aber

Attached to this criticism of false belief is one of Bergstedt's innovations. Brecht suggested the drama was a parable warning both little people and Scandanavia against hoping to profit unharmed from Germany's war.[138] Bergstedt tells us, and so explicitly extends the symbolic aspect of the text, that Courage herself represents the egoistical fellow-travellers of the fascists and their capitalist backers.[139] Thus the ruin of Courage, Bergstedt's argument leads us to infer, is an implicit criticism of capitalism with its "murderous alienation" and its tendencies toward war, imperialism, and fascism, a criticism which Bergstedt believes will lead the spectator to consider alternatives to that system.[140]

To this, however, comes an idea foreign to Brecht's interpretation: Bergstedt does not blame Courage for her deliberate participation in war. Indeed, he thinks that she could not have remained outside war or saved her children (the reason, perhaps, for his use of the term "tragic").[141] Capitalism is not blamed

---

unbewußt fügt sie sich seiner tödlichen Herrschaft" (158); 141-142 (continued belief after loss); 148 (Courage knows world unpredictable).

[138] *MC* 130, 247.

[139] "[Brecht] will die 'glückverheißende' Teilnahme der verführten Massen am Kriegsgeschäft der Faschisten und ihrer kapitalistischen Hintermänner entlarven und die furchtbaren Folgen zeigen, die den kleinen Profitspekulanten daraus erwachsen. Die große Zahl solcher egoistischen 'Mitläufer' individualisiert er in der Bühnenfigur einer Marketenderin (aus dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg), mittels deren er die Gefährlichkeit des bevorstehenden 'Geschäftsunternehmens' zeigt" (Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 141).

[140] Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip": "Indem die Triebkräfte der Gestalten, so individuell sie auch immer motiviert erscheinen, sich als gesellschaftliche offenbaren und in den Anachronismus der kapitalistischen Grundstruktur, der in allen neueren Bühnenwerken transparent wird, ihre letzte Erklärung finden, können sie nicht beliebig kritisiert werden, sondern zwingend nur mit der Zielrichtung auf die Veränderung eben dieser gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse hin, in denen sie verwurzelt sind" (287); see also 284; 96 (*mörderische menschliche Entfremdung*); 96,99-100 (tendency to war); 99-100 (imperialism); 71-72, 75-76 (fascism as a form of capitalism).

[141] "Wie das Stück zeigt, kann Mutter Courage sich und ihre Kinder weder ganz aus dem Krieg heraushalten noch vermag sie zu verhindern, daß sie sich — um *leben* zu können — immer *tiefer* mit ihm einlassen müssen" (Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 156).

in the *person* of Courage, rather, its effect on her and her family is the evil result which casts blame onto that system, as the symbolic referent of Courage's war. In a sense, as later chapters will show, this association is an advance in our understanding of *Mutter Courage*. But it creates difficulties for Bergstedt. What, then, are we to make of his use of more direct criticisms of Courage? Are they mentioned, not in order to criticize Courage's actions, but instead as more demonstrations of the evil effects of that system? Or is Courage still the object of criticism despite her determined behaviour, in the sense described in our earlier discussion of determinism? Bergstedt never gives us the information needed to make a decision on these points.

Helmut Jendreiek's interpretation is one of the most interesting and it does Brecht and his text a great service.[142] As part of a larger project to remind us of the inalienable political content of Brecht's work, with its criticism of a warring and irrational capitalism and its encouragement to people to make a more rational, humane, and socialist society, Jendreiek's interpretation takes seriously Brecht's intentions. The result: Brecht's interpretation, only more distilled and concentrated than in the *Couragemodell*. Indeed, even in his innovations Jendreiek is more Brecht than Brecht.

The landscape is familiar. We see a war for the rulers' gain, which the little people are induced to carry out, blinded by propaganda or motivated by a desperate self-interest, even though they ultimately pay the price both in defeat and in victory.[143] We see a war which is neither natural disaster nor fate, but a human product that can be eliminated (and whose possible end Jendreiek believes is already indicated when Courage stresses that the rulers are dependent on the little people to realize their aims, which implies that the little people, once

---

[142] Jendreiek 153-208.

[143] Jendreiek 160-162 (business at cost of little people); 158-159, 165-171 (ideological smoke-screen); 158-159 (appeal to egotistical interests of little people).

they realize this, can withdraw their services and so put an end to their rulers' schemes).[144]

We see, too, the sutler whose participation in war is not tragically unavoidable (just as her survival is not heroic); instead her participation is a crime, a deliberate choice of and preference for war, even though she knows its nature.[145] (Courage's alternative, in Jendreiek's opinion, is not the cook's tavern in Utrecht, which he considers merely an escape and no "principled" answer to war.[146] Rather, Jendreiek sees Kattrin's self-sacrifice for others as Courage's alternative.)[147]

---

[144] Jendreiek 154, 157-158 (war is not fate); 156, 158, 172 (possibility of change); (rulers dependent on little people) 161; another example comes from the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*, in which traces of "activist" consciousness, found in phrases such as: "Der Tüchtige schafft es, wo ein Wille ist, ist ein Weg," signal for Jendreiek the possibility of the people changing the world (182). Jendreiek finds a revolutionary undertone in the cook's exhortation before the last stanza of the *Solomon-song*: "so ist die Welt und müßt nicht so sein!" (184).

[145] On Courage's participation in war as no tragic fate, see Jendreiek 153: "Der Mutter Courage Tragik anzudeuten, widerspricht dem Gestus des Stückes."; nor is her continuation at the end a "heldische Auflehnung gegen ein überwältigendes unausweichliches Schicksal..." (Jendreiek 185). For more against fate see Jendreiek 183. On her participation in war as a crime: "Daß die Mutter, die ihre drei Kinder an den Krieg verliert, nach aller Leiderfahrung am Ende dennoch den Krieg will, um ihr Geschäft zu machen, läßt sich nicht mit tragischer Verblendung und schicksalhafter Unausweichlichkeit erklären, sondern muß der Courage als 'Schlechtigkeit' und 'Verbrechen' schuldhaft zugerechnet werden, auch wenn Schlechtigkeit und Verbrechen Ausdruck der herrschenden Zustände sind" (Jendreiek 153); see also 161, 173-174, 183. On Courage's criminal desire for war see Jendreiek 153, 177-179. That she knows the nature of the war: "Daß die Courage so hellsichtig vom Krieg sprechen kann, weil sie ihn durchschaut hat, macht ihre Schuld am Ende nur gewichtiger und zeigt, wie sie trotz aller Erfahrung und allen Wissens in den merkantilen Mechanismus der kapitalistischen Welt verstrickt ist..." (Jendreiek 161).

[146] Jendreiek 185.

[147] "In Kattrin zeigt Brecht die auch der Courage offenstehende andere Möglichkeit: die Möglichkeit eines sozialen Daseins gegen das bürgerlich-kapitalistische Dogma, die bestehende Gesellschaftsordnung und mit ihr das kommerziale System und der Krieg seien notwendig und unabänderlich" (Jendreiek 192); see also 197.

Like Brecht, Jendreiek highlights Courage's inhumanity, which distinguishes her as a creature of war.[148] He points to her murderous lullaby, her calculating reunion with Eilif (used to sell her capon with advantage), her suspicious reaction to her son's greetings in scene 3 (she first thinks he must want something).[149] Jendreiek is not satisfied with these examples culled from Brecht's *Couragemodell*, but calls up more to support his case against the hyena. He points out that Courage does not scold Eilif for his brutal slaughter of peasants, but for unwisely risking his life;[150] that Courage does not consider leaving war for any principled reason, but only because her business is ruined;[151] that an unscrupulous business attitude, not motherly love, moves Courage to keep her children with her (presumably Jendreiek means she keeps them to exploit their labour).[152] Courage's desire to save Schweizerkas is criticized as a purely "merkantile Operation"; her apparent sacrifice of Schweizerkas for Kattrin's sake only disguises her loss of interest in her son's fate when his rescue no longer promises profit (by way of the cashbox).[153] Jendreiek, though he admits that Courage's self-sacrificing refusal of the cook's

---

[148] "Der in der Courage wirksame kapitalistische Geist skrupelloser Erwerbsgier wird als Geist der Inhumanität gezeigt..." (Jendreiek 174).

[149] On the murderous lullaby see Jendreiek 207; on the capon 187; on suspicion see 187.

[150] Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 151-152; Jendreiek 187.

[151] Jendreiek 163.

[152] "Ihre Versuche, die eigenen Kinder aus dem Krieg herauszuhalten, sind nicht Ausdruck reiner Mutterliebe, sondern die persönlich-familiäre Form ihres skrupellosen kommerzialen Weltverhaltens, dem alles recht ist, was Vorteile einbringt" (Jendreiek 186). This was already suggested by Fritz Erpenbeck in 1949, with respect to Kattrin; see *MC* 83.

[153] "Was zunächst wie echte mütterliche Opferbereitschaft für den vom Tod bedrohten Sohn aussieht, gibt sich sehr bald als rein merkantile Operation zu erkennen. Die Courage rechnet damit, daß sie nach dem Freikauf des Sohnes in den Besitz der von ihm versteckten Regimentskasse gelangt. Als er unter der Folter gesteht, er habe die Kasse in den Fluß geworfen, ändert sie ihre Taktik. ... Plötzlich hat sie es nicht mehr eilig.... Sie ist bereit, für die Differenz zwischen Angebot und Forderung den Sohn zu opfern. Ihre Verhärtung kaschiert sie mit ihrer mütterlichen Sorge um Kattrin" (Jendreiek 189).

inn for Kattrin's sake is a true instance of motherly love, diminishes it all the same, first, by pointing to Courage's initial indecision, and so lack of motherly feeling (for which he must go to the *Couragemodell*, since this view cannot be supported by reference to the text); and second, by calling it only a "purely personal sacrifice" not made for a "higher" purpose (*Interesse*).[154]

Some of these additions deserve comment. While there is good reason to point to Courage's inhuman unconcern for the slaughtered peasants, and to her business interests as far as her children's labour and Schweizerkas's ransom are concerned, he makes the case too simple. Courage here is not only motivated by profit, she is simultaneously motivated by maternal concern. An adequate interpretation must take this more complex reality into account. Further, given his sensitivity to the businesswoman in Courage, it is surprising that Jendreiek does not notice that Courage's decision to remain with Kattrin is not only motivated by maternal love, but also by a hope for profit in war (however improbable her chances). Again, why denigrate Courage's "unprincipled" material reason for leaving war? It is precisely this material aspect emphasized by Brecht, who otherwise sets the standard for Jendreiek. Brecht tells us, for instance, that it is the workers' concern with their paycheck, with their share of their production, and not some chiliastic vision, which marks the beginning of their critical opposition (*vernünftiges Denken*).[155] Jendreiek's idealistic moralizing is foreign not only to Brecht, but also, as we will see in Chapter 5, to the drama.

Finally, Jendreiek sees Courage as one who is not "mother enough", who sacrifices her children to her business, a sacrifice which, together with her own financial ruin, is the refutation of all she claims to represent.[156]

---

[154] Jendreiek 190-191.

[155] *GW* 20:94.

[156] "Alle drei Kinder verliert die Courage während sie mit ihrem Handel beschäftigt ist" (Jendreiek 187). On her responsibility for the loss of Eilif see Jendreiek 187, 188; of Schweizerkas 187, 190; of Kattrin 187, 206. That Courage is not mother enough can be seen from Jendreiek's suggestion that she should have taken the path of motherly self-sacrifice; see for instance Jendreiek 190,

If the above is, for the most part, a rehearsal of Brecht's main tendency (with some additions), Jendreiek also innovates, though very much in Brecht's spirit. For Jendreiek makes explicit what remains implicit with Brecht. That is, he makes plain almost from the start that war and business in this drama are one and the same, and further that business means the life-negating order of capitalism.[157] What is more, Jendreiek does not consider Courage a fictional *person*, for him, and this underpins his whole treatment, Courage is a *personification* of capitalism. She is, he tells us, a "Repräsentation des kapitalistischen Weltverhaltens," a "Repräsentation der unlöslichen Verschmelzung von Krieg und Geschäft und damit der herrschenden bürgerlich-kapitalistischen Weltordnung"; she incarnates "Kapitalismus und seine Daseinsgesetze.... Ihr Wesen ist das Wesen des Kapitalismus, ihre Schuld ist

---

where he says in regard to Schweizerkas: "In dem Widerspruch zwischen ihrem Empfinden als Mutter und ihrem Gestus als Geschäftsfrau hat sich im entscheidenden Augenblick die Geschäftsfrau als die stärkere erwiesen. Das kommerziale Weltverhalten demaskiert sich einmal mehr als mörderisch-inhuman." On her ruin: "Die von ihr selbst gewählte Bindung ihres Geschicks an den Planwagen enthüllt mit dem fortschreitenden Ruin des Wagens ihr unbeirrbares Interesse am Geschäft selber als ruinös." (Jendreiek 158); also, Courage's destruction through her loyalty to the capitalistic view "soll nach Brecht als Widerlegung dieses Menschenbildes begriffen werden: es ist menschenfeindlich und führt zur Zerstörung des Daseins" (Jendreiek 175-176). Similarly, Jendreiek's words on Kattrin's murder can be applied to her other children: "Die Ermordung ihres letzten Kindes gerade durch den Soldaten, dessen kriegerische Verrohung sie selbst verschuldet hat, wird zum Gericht über sie und ihre opportunistische Taktik der Kapitulation" (182). He is referring to the fact that a production referred to in the *Couragemodell* had the young soldier of scene 4 become the officer who orders Kattrin's death; see *MC* 185.

[157] "Wenn die Courage den Krieg will, weil er 'die beste Zeit für den Handel' ist, so wird in ihr der Kapitalismus als eine Weltordnung vorgesetellt, die durch den Willen zum Krieg geprägt ist. Der Hyänengeist der Courage ist der Geist des Kapitalismus. Die Lebenswidrigkeit dieser Weltordnung zeigt Brecht in dem 'entsetzlichen Widerspruch' zwischen Händlerin und Mutter in der Courage" (Jendreiek 172). Brecht had also pointed to capitalism as to "einem lebensfeindlichen gesellschaftlichen System" (*GW* 15:359); on war as business see Jendreiek 157-158, 160, 180.

kapitalistische Schuld."[158] This is a bold and, I think, a correct step because it begins to do justice to the symbolic content of the drama. For example, it reveals that Courage's guilt for the deaths of her children is symbolic and not based on a strict view of causality. That is, Jendreiek, makes explicit what I earlier suggested is contained in Brecht's interpretation. He does not try to blame Courage as a person for particular deeds (such as leaving Kattrin alone) which result in the deaths of her children. Rather, Courage as capitalism is seen by Jendreiek as the principle whose elaboration entails death, represented by the destruction of Courage's children. Yet, apparently because Jendreiek does not realize its implications, this bold step creates difficulties for his interpretation.

Brecht's interpretation, for instance, reproduces an actual ambivalence in the text. Deliberately or not, it emphasizes Courage now as *Geschäftsfrau*, now as little person, now as "exploiter", now as "exploited". Jendreiek's stubborn emphasis on Courage as hyena, as capitalism, though it develops a tendency favoured by Brecht, cannot avoid contradictions.

Jendreiek, for instance, criticizes under its own name as well as under the forms of "adaptability" and "capitulation", Courage's "opportunism".[159] Opportunism could mean one of two things here, and Brecht used the term in both senses. First it could mean the desertion by the oppressed of their real interests for illusory or transient gains at the side of their objective enemy. Thus, in 1938, while speaking of *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe*, Brecht says that the tenant farmer Callas, when he embraces the fascism of Iberin (his objective enemy) in order to get the horse of his racially stigmatized landlord, and when he thus deserts the cause of the little people (which transcends racial boundaries),

---

[158] Jendreiek 153, 156, 172.

[159] When Jendreiek discusses this aspect of Courage, he most often refers to her "art of adaptability" (180), or to her ability to adapt or exchange one opinion for another (175). However, he ties this adaptability to her attitude of capitulation in the interest of her business, a capitulation he calls an "opportunistische Taktik" (182) and "eine absolute Gesinnungslosigkeit und opportunistische Willfährigkeit gegenüber den Ansprüchen des Augenblicks" (181); see also Jendreiek 188, 197.

displays "[einen] verräterischen Opportunismus."[160] Or opportunism could mean an unseemly ability to adapt to any and every situation, which is the meaning used by Brecht in 1927 to describe Galy Gay from *Mann ist Mann*.[161] This could also be used to censure the oppressed if they adapt to their own oppression. Either meaning could apply to Courage — *if she were one of the little people* (especially the first, since Brecht sometimes implies that Courage's case demonstrates the main thesis of the drama, that the little people cannot profit from their rulers' wars).[162] But if Courage is the representation of capitalism this criticism loses force. For the aim of business is profit, and if the "tolerance" of capitalism means that it knows no sides, which is what Courage demonstrates with her "opportunistic" switch from Protestant to Catholic customers, a message reinforced by the fact that the drama never distinguishes one side from the other except in name, then business in being opportunistic only obeys its own logic. To accuse Courage of opportunism, then, is like accusing a capitalist of being a capitalist.

The same could be said for Jendreiek's censure of Courage's self-interest or egoism, whose counterexample is found in Kattrin's self-sacrifice for a supraindividual social purpose.[163] Brecht, who, as I have said, often sets the standard for Jendreiek, distinguishes between an unacceptable asocial egoism and a commendable social egoism that promotes individual fulfilment over the deferral of life. Jendreiek makes no such distinction, but seems to censure egoism itself, as can be inferred from his praise of Kattrin's "erasure of self".[164] If this is so,

---

[160] *GW* 17:1084.

[161] *GW* 17:977.

[162] *MC* 130.

[163] "[Kattrin] vergißt den eigenen Vorteil, verhält sich nicht egozentrisch im Stile ihrer Mutter, sondern gibt das eigene Interesse preis, um sich für andere, die in Not sind und Hilfe brauchen, einzusetzen."; "Kattrin zeigt die Opferbereitschaft, zu der ihre Mutter nie fähig war. Sie ist bereit zum Wagnis des eigenen Lebens für einen überpersönlichen sozialen Zweck..." (Jendreiek 193).

[164] "[Kattrins] Ich mit seinen emotionalen Bindungen ist ausgelöscht, es gibt für sie nur noch die eine Verbindlichkeit der höheren sozialen Verpflichtung"

then it would be appropriate to cite a criticism by Brecht (which exposes my "theft" in the previous paragraph): "Einem Kapitalisten Egoismus vorwerfen, heißt ihm vorwerfen, daß er ein Kapitalist ist."[165]

Other problems could be mentioned, such as Jendreiek's dismissal of Courage's curse on war, not because Courage does not act on this curse or retracts it in the next scene, rather: "Der spontane Aufschrei der Courage: 'Der Krieg soll verflucht sein', entspringt nicht einer prinzipiellen Veränderung ihres Denkens, sondern einer mütterlichen Emotion."[166] Jendreiek means, of course, that there is no substance to Courage's curse. But his manner of expressing this, first, posits too great a distance between an emotional and a rational critique; and second, verges on a patriarchal dismissal of "feminine" emotion. A similar patriarchal reflex might be seen in his glorification through Kattrin of a traditional role granted women by the patriarchy: self-sacrifice.[167]

But the most important criticism of Jendreiek's interpretation is one which holds for the others discussed in this section. Namely, his emphasis on the hyena, important as it is for revealing part of Courage's content, forgets everything in her that contradicts the hyena. Jendreiek's recognition of Courage's symbolic role, if he had conceived it broadly enough, could have led him to a fruitful synthesis, but he only uses his insight to press the attack on the sutler's evil. Against his apprehension of those moments in Courage which even he must call "subversive", Jendreiek, like others who single-mindedly criticize her — including Brecht, produces a Courage too poor in parts and too wholly hyena.[168]

(Jendreiek 194).

[165] *GW* 14:1465 (in the words of the worker Kalle, from the *Flüchtlingsgespräche*).

[166] Jendreiek 178.

[167] Jendreiek 190.

[168] "Die Darstellung des Krieges durch die Courage [*GW* 4:1400-1401] gibt sich naiv und erweist sich hintergründig als kritische Analyse der wahren Kriegsverhältnisse. Die mutterwitzige Summierung ihrer Erfahrungen wirkt

COURAGE DEFENDED

Those who defend Courage greatly outnumber those who criticize her. However, all their arguments can be reduced to three basic strategies, which will be called here the "vitalist", the "historical", and the "metaphysical" defenses. The boundaries between these strategies are fluid, but this somewhat artificial division serves to clarify the main tendencies encountered in Courage's defense.

THE VITALIST DEFENSE

The vitalist defense is quite simple. According to it Courage's maternal attributes, her ability to survive, in short, her life-affirming qualities take precedence over any of her supposedly negative qualities. (I use "vitalist" only to indicate the overriding importance of Courage's affirmation of life, not as a reference to the philosophy of vitalism.)

Walter Hinck produces a sort of vitalist defense when he protects Courage from the critical views of Brecht and Weigel.[169] Hinck recognizes that Courage is a fellow-traveller of war, but he prefers instead to derive her meaning from her positive traits. Courage is for him a plebeian hero not unlike Schweyk, she cunningly criticizes authority and contains the "Weisheit des Volkes".[170] Hinck refuses to see a relationship between Courage's guilt and the destruction of her children.[171] Instead he emphasizes her maternal qualities and tells us she is no hyena.[172]

A somewhat more interesting version of the vitalist defense is found in Gisela Fuhrmann Ritchie's *Der Dichter und die Frau*. Ritchie rejects the

---

subversiv und ironisiert die Zusammenhänge, sie werden überschaut und durchschaut" (Jendreiek 161).

[169] Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 165-166.

[170] Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 166-167.

[171] "Aber das Verhängnis, das die Courage trifft, der Tod aller drei Kinder, steht doch in keinem rechten Verhältnis zu ihrer Schuld" (Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 163).

[172] Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 165.

reduction of Brecht's repertoire of female figures to the patriarchal cliches of the virgin, mother, and whore.[173] She professes to see in Brecht's oeuvre figures — such as Courage — who also burst patriarchal constraints.[174] In the course of her feminist correction Ritchie produces a vitalist defense of Courage.

We are told that Courage's positive aspect manifests itself in her opposition to war, in her exposure of the ideology of war, in the fact that she is not shut up in domesticity but is independent and participates in "history" (as Ritchie calls the war), in Courage's criticism of authority, and in her alleged sympathy with the poor.[175] In all this Ritchie sees evidence that Courage is a representative not only of Brecht's views, but also of those of the socialist feminists Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin.[176] (Later Ritchie will make the unrhymed assertion that Courage's "egoism" in family and business matters makes her a representative of bourgeois feminism, while Kattrin's self-sacrifice for others signals a socialist feminism of the "ideal" sort.)[177]

Ritchie, in keeping with a vitalist defense, also stresses Courage's nurturing and life-affirming motherhood to the exclusion of her hyena-aspect.[178]

---

[173] She is responding to the arguments of Lennox, and Wedel (157-158). For another criticism of such reductions see Laureen Nussbaum, "The Evolution of the Feminine Principle in Brecht's Work: Beyond the Feminist Critique," *German Studies Review* 8 (1985): 217-244.

[174] Ritchie 358.

[175] Ritchie: opposed to war (269-270), exposes ideology (268), participates in history (267), criticism of authority (268-269), sympathy with poor (270).

[176] Ritchie 268-270.

[177] "Bei genauer Betrachtung der feministischen Haltung der Courage ebenso wie Kattrins lassen sich jedoch Unterschiede feststellen. In ihrer totalen Bezogenheit auf sich selbst und ihre Kinder, in ihrer oftmals egoistischen Einstellung bei ihrem Handeln erscheint die Courage als eine Vertreterin des bürgerlichen Feminismus. Aber in ihren Reden ist sie marxistisch. Im Gegensatz zu der Mutter verkörpert Kattrin in ihrer Sorge und ihrer Aufopferung für andere einen sozialistischen Feminismus idealer Art. Somit kann konstatiert werden, daß Brecht in diesem Stück Feminismus und Marxismus nicht nur dialektisch gegenüberstellt, sondern in der Gesamtschau von Mutter und Tochter vereinigt" (Ritchie 283).

[178] Ritchie 271, 273-274.

Even her descriptions of the "socialist feminist" Courage can be viewed as part of a vitalist defense. For Courage's resistance to an exploitative patriarchal authority is also a resistance to the "social death" which submission to that authority means for women (and for the "poor" with whom Courage is said to sympathize). Finally, Courage's opposition to war and its senseless destruction of life is manifestly life-affirming.

That Ritchie's portrayal of Courage is intended as a defense of the sutler can be seen from the apologetics to which she is moved by Courage's deliberate participation in war. These apologetics are also a sort of vitalist defense. For example, when Ritchie defends Courage's participation by pointing to the need to maintain herself and her family, then Ritchie puts Courage's support of life before every other consideration, even before Courage's paradoxical partnership with death (through war).[179] When Ritchie defends this same participation by maintaining that, at that time, a sutler was the only role that allowed Courage independence, then she makes the life-affirming freedom of woman take precedence over the field — in this case the field of death — within which that liberated woman operates.[180]

Ritchie's point that Brecht's female figures have been confined within too narrow a scheme of classification is well taken. Her emphasis on Courage's support of life is necessary to any interpretation of the figure. Her repeated accentuation of Courage's "socialist-feminist" subversiveness (however problematic or superficial her attempt to associate this with the views of Luxemburg and Zetkin) correctly rescues — if it inadequately develops — what has too often been seen merely as a sort of earthy folk wisdom. But there are also difficulties with Ritchie's interpretation.

---

[179] Ritchie 273-274.

[180] Ritchie tells us that the sutler was the only profession in the Middle Ages which gave women the same rights as the burgher, apparently to suggest that Courage had no other choice if she would be independent (267).

For instance, it is not clear how Ritchie reconciles Courage as a representative of the views of Luxemburg and Zetkin with the opinion that a closer inspection reveals her to be a representative of bourgeois feminism. It is also unclear from Ritchie's interpretation how Courage can be at once against war and a representative of socialist feminism, and yet be absolved of guilt for her participation in war on the grounds that she must do it to survive. Ritchie seems to see no difficulty in the idea that Courage participates in a war which she opposes "from the beginning", nor with fact that this participation in death is coupled with an allegedly life-affirming feminist independence. It can also be objected that Courage does not actively participate in "history", unless that be extended to mean being the object of history as Courage clearly is. And if the explosion of patriarchal constraints is positive, then Ritchie would need to explain how Kattrin's self-sacrifice for others represents socialist feminism instead of the patriarchal cliche of motherly self-sacrifice, a value which has legitimized many a woman's domestic imprisonment.

Furthermore, if opposition to war is a positive attitude, and if it is one shown by Courage "from the beginning", it is difficult to see how Courage's participation in war can be defended as a strategy for survival. After all, could not even those who were the antithesis of Luxemburg and Brecht, namely the collaborators of the fascists, maintain that they only participated "in order to survive"? And, to take up Brecht's views, do not the capitalists exploit workers and destroy competitors so that they and their own families may survive? Moreover, if Courage's sympathy with the poor is positive, then Ritchie must explain Courage's evident lack of sympathy with the poor when she refuses bandages and drink to those who cannot pay. And if Courage's participation in war is excused because she must support her family, Ritchie must tell us why the destruction of Courage's family by war does not refute this excuse.

Ritchie does not seem to see these difficulties, much less answer to them. I will not deal with them in any detail here. Suffice it to say that these difficulties

follow from a fundamental flaw in the vitalist defense, one which we will take up at the end of this section.

In his *Characterisation of Women in the Plays of Bertolt Brecht* Bernard Fenn takes issue with Jendreiek's "unsympathetic condemnation" of Courage.[181] Courage, Fenn says, is "courageous and not to be condemned."[182] The substance of his defense, we will see, is the vitalist defense raised to a new level.

In his eagerness to rescue Courage's reputation, Fenn cannot resist arguments in her defense which are at best peripheral to his main point. Thus he tells us, apparently to defend Courage against Jendreiek, that Courage's business with war, when war "engulfed the entire nation for a long period," when war "was not totally condemned," was "only an accepted way of life in which a woman like Mutter Courage could see no iniquity."[183] The deaths of Courage's children, Fenn maintains, are not the fault of their mother; after all, it is impossible to expect her to "keep an eye on her three children all the time."[184] It is "inevitable" that Eilif sometime fall prey to recruitment, and the loss of Kattrin is only a natural risk, as when a hunting tigress loses one of her young in her absence.[185] (The notions of "inevitability" and "nature", we will see, have a connection to Fenn's main defense; but in regard to absolving Courage of blame for her children's destruction, it is noteworthy that he never directly discusses Schweizerkas's case, surely the most obvious example of Courage's responsibility.)

Fenn must deny Courage's part in her children's deaths, because, in keeping with the defensive strategy I call vitalist, he considers Courage as mother the embodiment of the affirmation of life. In the main he emphasizes her struggle

---

[181] Fenn 163.
[182] Fenn 164.
[183] Fenn 167.
[184] Fenn 165.
[185] Fenn 165, 166; the tigress is first mentioned by Brecht (*MC* 162).

to support life against all odds.[186] For him this role is symbolized by her guardianship of the "staff of life" when she risks her life to carry bread out of Riga, a deed which earns her her name.[187] Courage's motherly affirmation of life is further evidenced in her nurturing offer of brandy to the sergeant in scene 1, and in her provisioning of the soldiers, "without which the soldiers cannot march to their death."[188] (The irony escapes him.) To support the argument for Courage's maternal nature — and so her support of life — Fenn tells us that she is not ruthless, but displays maternal care, in her sympathy for Kattrin's suffering (in scene 6 when she tells the chaplain of Kattrin's dreams), and in her sacrifice of a partnership with the cook for the sake of her daughter.[189] Nor is it guilt which seals Courage's lips at the death of Schweizerkas, but her (presumably motherly) horror before the "infinite cruelty" of war.[190]

So far Fenn's emphasis on Courage's maternal affirmation of life is very like Ritchie's, minus the feminist perspective. But Fenn's ultimate defense takes us from the political level of Ritchie's interpretation into the realm of "eternal myth". For Courage is not only someone who displays the "instincts of the mother animal."[191] Her "main function" as nurturing mother points to a symbolic "Mutter-Tier" (sic), whose aim is to maintain "life itself" (symbolized by her wagon).[192] Courage is a contribution to that image of woman which Fenn believes emerged in Brecht's work after *Trommeln in der Nacht*, namely the image of the "Universal Woman, a mother-figure, a matriarch, never malevolent," a "primordial goddess".[193] Courage achieves "almost mythical dimensions" as one "engaged in the ceaseless struggle of sustaining the continuity

---

[186] Fenn 167.
[187] Fenn 167.
[188] Fenn 165, 164.
[189] Fenn 166.
[190] Fenn 166.
[191] Fenn 51.
[192] Fenn 164.
[193] Fenn 54, 52.

of life against tremendous odds which threaten to stifle life."[194] As the "sustainer of life" Courage is an example of Brecht's "archetype of woman embodying the vital life principle itself."[195]

Here is the real foundation of Fenn's defense of Courage. As the primordial goddess of life, Courage puts herself beyond "rational explanation"; since she belongs to the "mythical" and not the "ethical" realm, she cannot be judged by "conventional morality".[196]

Courage is the life principle in maternal form. This is all that matters for Fenn, and any rational attempt to question this positive force, to blame her for the deaths of her children, or for her participation in war, dissolves into nothingness before the power of this vital force. In this sense, then, Eilif's inevitable loss and Kattrin's death as a natural risk are integral to Fenn's defense of Courage since they are "natural" events and so logically fall within the purvue of the representative of the "vital force" (though it should be said that Fenn does not make this connection). Clearly Fenn could have saved himself the trouble of his other excuses, for as the primordial goddess, as he says, Courage is beyond judgment. (It is telling that Fenn, without showing why it does not alter his view of altruistic motherhood, should compare Courage to a tigress, a feared predator with a legendary appetite for human flesh.)[197]

Fenn's argument is useful. He properly stresses Courage's nurturing and life-affirming side, just as he correctly identifies a real symbolic content of Courage in the Goddess, or as I will later call her, The Great Mother. This was a content already sensed in the early journalistic and belletristic reception of *Mutter Courage*.[198] Fenn, however, is handicapped by his preconceptions of

---

[194] Fenn 167.

[195] Fenn 204.

[196] Fenn 167, 57.

[197] Brecht uses this image when Shen Te describes her fierce protection (at the cost of others) of her child-to-be (*GW* 4:1572).

[198] See, for example Bernhard Kissel, who conjures up (at least implicitly) such a goddess when he says Courage is "jeder Blutstropfen unsterbliches Leben,

motherhood as solely altruistic and nurturing, so that he is unable to deal with Courage's deadly aspect, except to deny its importance. This is all the more surprising since he sometimes shows that he understands Courage as anything but altruistic, as when he associates her independent motherhood with those species where the dominant female drives away or even consumes the male once he has fufilled his procreative role;[199] or when he associates Courage with a hunting tigress.[200]

If Fenn misses the relationship between his goddess and Courage's negative side, he also misses the socio-historical connection, because of course, as his interpretation shows, he believes that the mythical cancels the historical. Thus his portrayal of Courage as the goddess guardian of the staff of life neglects to take into account either that she guards the staff of life in *commodity form*, or that she guards it in order to perpetuate war as its provisioner. By these omissions he implies that society is natural since the social forms, such as commodities, are not distinguished from the nature which Courage represents as primordial goddess. Also, because he is uninterested in social reality, Fenn does not explain how Brecht taps into the form of the Goddess, except to give a psychological explanation (centring on Brecht's respect for motherhood),[201] and a somewhat mystical view that Brecht as an artist "could not have escaped the allpervasive

---

jeder Atemzug lebendige Liebe,... als Ruine noch stärker als der Tod. Im Sterben noch Leben gebärend — die drei unsterblichen Kinder Mut, Wahrheit und Liebe" (Wyss 206). A certain "E. Th." writes: "Wie der Prototyp der Urmutter umfängt die Mutter Courage alles, was in ihre Nähe kommt, mit mütterlicher Fürsorge...."; in *MC* 58. Marie Luise Kaschnitz, too, sees Courage as one who approaches the "legendary", who in the end becomes an expression of an archetype since she transcends the realm of natural laws: "Mit diesem letzten Aufbruch wird die Marketenderin zur legendären Gestalt — zu einer, die nicht stirbt und die nicht aufhört, Männer zu lieben und Kinder zu gebären" (Kaschnitz 200).

[199] Fenn 164-165.

[200] Fenn 166.

[201] Fenn 60-2,72,76,78.

influence of man's timeless myths."[202] Fenn misses, then, potential keys to understanding Courage, an omission which will be made good in this work in Chapters 6 and 7.

Other objections could be raised. For example, is Fenn prepared to accept the implications of excusing Courage because war was ubiquitous and participation was an accepted way of life in which Courage saw no iniquity? Would he excuse then the criminals of the concentration camps or the gulags because they were surrounded by inhumanity, because they only took part in an "accepted" way of life, a life in which, perhaps, they saw no iniquity?

But the most important objection to Fenn, and to the vitalist defense in general, is that it is unable adequately to deal with Courage's negative aspect, which we saw detailed in Chapter 1. To name only one example: Courage may indeed demonstrate maternal care in scene 6 when she sympathizes with Kattrin, but Fenn must tell us then how to understand her lack of care in that same scene, for she sends Kattrin without proper accompaniment on a potentially dangerous task which destroys her daughter's future. The vitalist defense can only assert or imply that Courage's negative side is of no importance next to her nurturing, a tactic which is always weakened by the indelible image of Courage as the hyena. Whatever local insights such an interpretation may yield, it cannot do justice to the complexity of Courage.

THE HISTORICAL DEFENSE

The historical defense argues that Courage cannot be blamed for her participation in war because her historical moment, the Thirty Years War of seventeenth-century Europe, permitted no solution or alternative. (Though this does not necessarily imply that Courage is blameless for her children's deaths, we will see that our main example of this defense suggests just that.)

---

[202] Fenn 55.

Such a defense was suggested by Laurence Ryan, who said that the audience saw the "historical conditionedness" of Courage's situation and therefore also saw that there was no "way out" for Courage, nor any hope of a "large anger".[203] And Alfred White tells us that Courage is a tragic figure because she has no choice once she has joined war (which surely means she has a prior choice?).[204] But the tragedy for White consists in the fact that Courage "participates in the tragedy *of her era* in that she does not and *cannot* know better" (emphasis added).[205] Keith A. Dickson revises an earlier opinion, which I will discuss below (see page 110), and now embraces the historical defense. He recognizes both hyena and mother in Courage (and also the rebel, which we will call the Outlaw in Chapter 5), but this is no neutral description of her contradictions.[206] Rather, Dickson, even if he sees in Courage's will to survive "the real guarantee of ultimate victory" (of socialism? of humanity?),[207] effectively excuses Courage because within the limits of the Thirty Years War she had no "viable alternative".[208]

John Milfull provides a somewhat more developed form of the historical defense. He tells us that *Mutter Courage*, since it shows no way out or alternative model for Courage's world, since it also gives no grounds for optimism (though he also thinks it somehow implies a "Marxist conclusion"), leaves us with the image of a war which can be neither escaped nor changed, a war which is simply the state of the world.[209] In Milfull's view, however, it is Brecht's historical model which operates against Brecht's intentions and forms the basic problem of

---

[203] Ryan 102-103 (the "large anger" refers to *GW* 4:1393-1396).
[204] White 93.
[205] White 95.
[206] Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 106-107.
[207] Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 109.
[208] Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 107.
[209] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 132-133, (war as the state of the world) 130.

the drama.[210] That is, since the Thirty Years War represents an "early stage of the historical dialectic," it does not even potentially contain the sort of social solution envisaged by Brecht.[211] In fact, Milfull says, not only does this historical period provide no proper analogy for Brecht's intended content,[212] but the technique of suggesting an analogy between the past and the present conflates the two, so that (against Brecht's intentions) a "timelessness" and "universality" of Courage's world is suggested.[213] The best Brecht's text can do, since it can give no solution, is to portray the situation as intolerable.[214]

The fundamental situation of the text, Milfull implies, absolves Courage of guilt for her part in the war. She has no right decision to make;[215] as an individual (and for Milfull she is an individual and not a representative of a class) she can change nothing.[216] To this basic defense of Courage Milfull adds others to cancel the hyena. Courage, for example, is a focus of sympathy (which apparently contributes to her defense), because she "belongs to the class of the 'plebeian heroes'" who are able to survive the "dark times" of history (even though, we have just been told, Courage is not "the representative of a class or a period" but "an individual").[217] Milfull implies a defense against the charge of inhumanity when he calls Courage "a wise woman who has to act against her inclinations in order to 'make her way,'" (though he does not tell us how he discerns these "inclinations").[218] Finally it is not Courage who is responsible for the destruction of her children; rather, they are destroyed by their virtues and by the fact that they are not so shrewd as their mother.[219] (But how shrewd is she,

---

[210] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 133.
[211] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 130.
[212] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 133-134.
[213] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 134-135.
[214] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 133-134, 136.
[215] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 129.
[216] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 132, 130.
[217] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 132.
[218] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 138.
[219] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 130.

since she cannot realize her main aim, namely that she bring her children through the war with her wagon?)

Several good points are made by Milfull. He draws attention to a basic problem of the parable and of analogy in general, namely the non-identity of the representation and the thing represented. In this case he says that the dissimilarity between the historical period of the drama and its twentieth-century referent obstructs Brecht's message. He recognizes, too, that Courage somehow goes beyond a portrayal of a class, say, the petty bourgeoisie, when he points to her aspect as a "plebeian hero", and when he says she does not represent a class (not *just* a class?). He correctly points to what I would call the image of war as the ultimate horizon of the drama, though he incorrectly understands this as a portrayal of a situation without solution.

However, Milfull does not develop his insights. He does not ask why Courage seems not to represent a class, or why, despite her superficial social position as sutler, as one of the petty bourgeoisie, she appears to be a "plebeian hero". Instead he thinks the latter negates the former, and so misses a chance to explore Courage's complexity.

Furthermore, Milfull seriously errs with his historical defense, and this error is integral to that defense. For while it is certainly true that there can be no representation of a socialist uprising or vision of a socialist goal within the confines of the seventeenth century, there is no reason why such things cannot find symbolic representation in the drama. In that sense Milfull is mistaken when he asserts that there is no possibility of an alternative in Courage's time. For during the Thirty Years War there were several peasant uprisings against those who bled them for the war. One such revolt, in the spring of 1626, found a leader in the small farmer, Stephan Fadinger. Eventually the rebellion grew to 70,000 strong and marched against Maximilian of Bavaria's governor of Upper Austria. Under black banners bearing death's heads they twice defeated the imperial troops before a greatly reinforced imperial army of seasoned veterans

finally crushed the uprising in November 1626.[220] Thus there most certainly was at least a symbolic alternative to Courage's world and her behaviour. The real question, which I will consider in Chapter 7, is why Brecht makes no use of such a model.

Milfull also overlooks actual suggestions of resistance and their symbolic value in the drama. These forms of resistance, which I will discuss in Chapters 5 and 7, show Milfull to be hasty when he maintains the drama (in 1939) represented Brecht's "pessimism" and offered only a "metaphysical hope" in a new humanity.[221] Again, we will see in Chapter 7 that Brecht did have a "dark" view of things, but not one which could be called pessimistic.[222] (As for Milfull's view that Brecht's drama was changed from a pessimistic outlook in 1939 to an optimistic one in 1948, this is utterly mistaken.[223] The only important changes in 1948 were those which aimed to sharpen Courage's hyena-aspect, and even they represent no fundamental change but instead an intensification of what was already present in the drama, as my interpretation will show.)

THE METAPHYSICAL DEFENSE

The metaphysical defense might also be called the "tragic defense", for it holds that Courage is a tragic figure who cannot escape her fate in a terrible world which cannot be changed. This pessimistic view (sometimes projected onto Brecht) effectively removes blame from Courage, whether it be for her participation in war, for her part in the deaths of her children, or for any other crimes or inhumanities. This defense, then, has the advantage that its proponent

---

[220] Cicely Veronica Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years War* (1938; London: Jonathan Cape, 1968) 214-216; for other examples of revolts see 118, 322, 352, 413, 494.

[221] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 131.

[222] As Jendreiek saw (197).

[223] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 131.

need not defend Courage against any particular charge (though many do), since any crime can be admitted without weakening the main defense.

Franz Norbert Mennemeier's interpretation exemplifies the metaphysical defense. He is careful, of course, to draw our attention to Courage's apparently positive aspects, such as her motherly compassion, her critical stance toward the rulers, and her courageous struggle for survival.[224] But he also points to those aspects which make Courage less admirable. He is perfectly willing to admit with Brecht that Courage is no Niobe, he finds her hard and her greed repellant, her actions affirm war, her siding with business puts her on the side of corruption, and (apparently to inhibit sympathy with Courage on the basis, say, of her being a plebeian hero) he tells us she is no "proletarian" but a *Geschäftsfrau*.[225]

These admissions, however, are always tied to a defense of Courage, a defense derived from Mennemeier's opinion of the sort of world portrayed by the drama. It is a dark world indeed: the 12 years of Courage's story he finds "doppel drückend", "weil keine sinnvolle ... Entwicklung die gewaltige Erstreckung der Zeit ... rechtfertigt...."[226] "Das scheußliche Bild eines immer weiter sich dehnenden Krieges..." signifies for him "eine lähmende Wiederkehr des Gleichen...."[227] It is a world in which human plans are bound to fail,[228] a world in which the decline of Courage's wagon reveals "die dem Sein eingepflanzte ... Tendenz zum Untergang."[229]

This tragic outlook, according to Mennemeier, is supported by that remark which we already considered in "Brecht on Courage," in which Brecht said that Courage's "entsetzlicher Widerspruch" and the historical impossibility of its solution evokes "die dem Publikum tief fühlbare Tragik der Courage und ihres

---

[224] Mennemeier 393, 396.

[225] Mennemeier 392 (Niobe), 396 (hard), 392 (greed), 398 (affirms war), 396 (sides with corruption), 395 (businesswoman).

[226] Mennemeier 402.

[227] Mennemeier 402.

[228] Mennemeier 393.

[229] Mennemeier 395.

Lebens."[230] Indeed, through this drama, Mennemeier thinks he discovers Brecht's allegedly more fundamental attitudes of profound pessimism and "biblical sorrow".[231] For Mennemeier there is a "metaphysical" level to the drama, one which comprises a "Klage um die Vergänglichkeit des Daseins und die Nichtigkeit menschlicher Werke, der guten wie der schlechten."[232] This "philosphical foundation" of the drama is revealed in two key songs, the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation* and the *Salomon-Song*. The *Lied von der großen Kapitulation* shows "den Gang des Lebens als unaufhaltsame Desillusionierung allen individuellen Drangs 'nach Höherem', als unaufhaltsamen Verschleiß aller Sonderwünsche auf Glück."[233] With its denial of a superhuman guide ("Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt — / Keine Red davon!"), this song presents "das Bild einer Welt ... in der die kleinen, menschlichen Pläne scheitern, weil es dem Ganzen an Planung und Lenkung gebricht."[234] The *Salomon-Song* transforms the moritat "zur unsäglich schwermütigen, hintergründig-humoristischen Litanei von der geschundenen Kreatur und der Sinnlosigkeit des menschlichen Strebens."[235]

All this for Mennemeier portrays no historical and transient epoch, rather, it is a "Darstellung des unmenschlich-unfühlenden Zustands dieser Welt, gegen den es für den einzelnen keine Auflehnung gibt...."[236] In such a world full of terror and uncertainty, which makes even the rich poor ("ob sie es wissen oder nicht"),[237] a world unchanging and unchangeable, it is clear that Courage, who cannot avoid the war, is no hyena.[238] Courage may collaborate with the war,

---

[230] *GW* 16:896; Mennemeier 392.
[231] Mennemeier 394.
[232] Mennemeier 395.
[233] Mennemeier 393.
[234] Mennemeier 393.
[235] Mennemeier 394.
[236] Mennemeier 392.
[237] Mennemeier 396.
[238] Mennemeier 397.

she may even lose her son because of this collaboration,[239] but for Mennemeier this participation is a sign of the "Selbstverteidigung und der elementaren Existenzbewältigung ... und nicht der sittlichen Schuld."[240] As he tells us: "Das Mitmachen ist die eigentliche 'Courage' der Courage."[241]

There are numerous variations on the metaphysical defense. Friedrich Wölfel, for example, finds the "ideological" interpretation (such as Brecht's) which blames Courage inadequate (*unzulänglich*).[242] His interpretation of Courage's *Geschäftslied* reveals Courage's world to be one of unresolvable contradictions;[243] the refrain, with its liturgical rhythm, descending vowel sounds, the downward pull of its fricatives, together with the last couplet's mechanical rhythm and banal cliches verging on meaninglessness, indicates Brecht's true "Weltdeutung": resignation.[244] Even the promise of a revolutionary "Wunder" in the third stanza is dragged into the mood of resignation by the liturgical rhythm of the refrain (Wölfel takes the song to comprise the two stanzas of scene 1 and a third from the end of the drama).[245] The silence which allegedly follows this last stanza reveals: "die *Vergeblichkeit* des Daseins.... Aller Aufschwung ist vergeblich, Fortschritt Täuschung, Steigerung Illusion."[246] Courage, who seems at once to have "ihr Herz bei den Leuten" and yet to represent the attitude of "Menschenverachtung",[247] is, not surprisingly, unfree in such a world. She cannot change her "Dasein", but is bound to her wagon, to her "Existenz", she is "ein Symbol kreaturlicher

---

[239] Mennemeier 398.
[240] Mennemeier 396.
[241] Mennemeier 396.
[242] Wölfel 542.
[243] Wölfel 543-544.
[244] Wölfel 545.
[245] Wölfel 545.
[246] Wölfel 546.
[247] Wölfel 539-540.

Gebundenheit an die eigene Existenz."[248] Clearly no criticism of Courage is meaningful for this viewpoint.

Benno von Wiese also rejects Brecht's criticism of Courage, a criticism which he implies is not present in the drama itself, since the "impartial" spectator, he thinks, perceives a quite different message.[249] A tragic figure, Courage "kann an den elementaren Katastrophen, die ihr zustoßen, nicht das Geringste ändern."[250] Rather than a lesson on the consequences of the social process, Wiese asserts, the spectator experiences (*erlebt*) "die eherne Fatalität des Ablaufes, das menschliche Leid, das weit über alles Verschulden noch hinausgeht, die Tragödie unseres Daseins überhaupt...."[251]

Max Spalter seems to defend Courage by showing how Brecht's view, even if it is present in the drama, can be countered by an equally plausible view of Courage as admirable, because of her wisdom, her pacifism , and her "healthy scepticism" toward authority.[252] If her children die while she haggles, Spalter argues, this does not mean that they die *because* she haggles.[253] At the end Courage is for Spalter no "unteachable harridan" but the image of the "hunger for survival."[254] Yet this interpretation, which approaches the vitalist defense, is better understood as part of the metaphysical defense when we consider that Brecht (and so his work) belongs, in Spalter's opinion, to a tradition for which "the world is such a cesspool that it *must* be changed and that the world is such a cesspool that it *cannot* be changed."[255]

---

[248] Wölfel 538.

[249] Benno von Wiese, *Zwischen Utopie und Wirklichkeit: Studien zur deutschen Literatur* (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1963) 266.

[250] Wiese 266.

[251] Wiese 266.

[252] Spalter 185.

[253] Spalter 185.

[254] Spalter 189.

[255] Spalter xii.

Keith A. Dickson, in the earlier interpretation to which I referred, and which he later revised (see page 102), sees in *Mutter Courage* Brecht's view of the "tragic relationship of man with man."[256] The last three scenes, which "reflect faithfully that growing sense of chaotic confusion and despair," culminate at the end, with the prophesy of a war lasting a hundred years, in a view of war as "more or less continuous, an apparently ineluctable condition of human society."[257] Courage, "whose will to live is paradoxically productive and destructive at one and the same time,"[258] is, no less than the soldiers, a victim of circumstance; she is an example of "blind and tragic heroism," since, able to choose war or not (if she cannot change it), she supports it but is crushed anyway.[259] Brecht's vision, Dickson asserts, is tragic, indeed, it is "pantragic".[260]

Ronald Gray abandons an earlier, more neutral interpretation that stressed the contradictions of Courage.[261] Now, besides offering naive excuses for Courage (such as asserting that Kattrin's destruction could have happened even with Courage present),[262] Gray tells us that *Mutter Courage* leaves us with an "irremediable awareness of a tragic situation."[263]

The popularity of the metaphysical or tragic defense is attested to by the many critics who have adopted it, such as Karl Brinkmann,[264] Curt Riess,[265]

---

[256] Dickson, "History, Drama" 259.
[257] Dickson, "History, Drama" 264-265.
[258] Dickson, "History, Drama" 271.
[259] Dickson, "History, Drama" 270.
[260] Dickson, "History, Drama" 272, 271.
[261] Ronald Gray, *Brecht the Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
[262] Gray, *Brecht the Dramatist* 128.
[263] Gray, *Brecht the Dramatist* 136-137.
[264] "Bei Brecht ist der Krieg nur Situation, in der sich das Schicksal der kleinen Leute abspielt, das, eben weil es ganz allgemein ist und von der Zufälligkeit dieses Krieges gar nicht abhängt, ebenso gut in jedem anderen Krieg so ablaufen könnte" (Brinkmann 53). Brinkmann says that Courage is no symbol of the "*Kriegsgewinnler*" and that we should see, "daß hier eine brave Frau sich

René Wintzen,[266] Bernt von Heiseler,[267] Charles R. Lyons,[268] Hans Egon Holthusen,[269] and Henri Dumazeau.[270]

---

müht, sich und ihre Kinder über den Krieg zu retten, daß nicht so sehr die Gier nach dem großen Geschäft, als der nackte Lebenserhaltungstrieb treibender Faktor ist" (56).

[265] Curt Riess, *Sein oder Nichtsein: Der Roman eines Theaters* (Zurich: Arche, 1963). For Riess Courage is "ein Mensch, dessen Schicksal der Krieg ist" (270). The drama, in his opinion, is a truly great "Tragödie" (271).

[266] René Wintzen, *Bertolt Brecht: Une étude* (Paris: Seghers, 1964) 114-120. Overriding his positive view of Courage as an image of "the people" and his criticism of her for the deaths of her children (116,119), is Wintzen's view of the mother figure as "ecartelée, douloureuse, tragique, épique" (114); and his view of the drama as "l'immense, l'interminable et farouche complainte du petit que frappe le destin, qui est sans défense devant la crauté, la misère, la violence de l'époque, à la merci des événements, de la volunté de puissants, des riches, de ceux qui commandent le monde; le cri de l'animal blessé, torturé, à l'agonie; la prière païenne de l'homme guidé pars ses instincts; en un mot, le drame du peuple qui se déroule tout entier sous nos yeux, sans sacrifier un seul instant aux bienséances, aux convenances, aux règles du savoir-vivre et de la comédie sociale" (118). The only end of this "comedy", he says, is death (118).

[267] Berndt von Heiseler, "Bert Brecht. Mutter Courage," *Gesammelte Essays zur alten und neuen Literatur*, vol.2 (Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf, 1967) 141-144. *Mutter Courage* shows us: "es war der Krieg und die Not und die Elendigkeit; die das Menschendasein überhaupt und zu jeder Zeit bestimmen" (142).

[268] Charles R. Lyons, *Bertolt Brecht: The Despair and the Polemic* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968). For Lyons the drama is a variation on the story of the futile attempt of the human will to assert itself "in a free act" (97, xv).

[269] Hans Egon Holthusen, "Bertolt Brecht. Mutter Courage — Oder das Prinzip der nächsten Dinge," *Das deutsche Drama vom Expressionismus bis zur Gegenwart: Interpretationen*, ed. Manfred Brauneck (Bamberg: Buchner, 1970) 141-149. Courage, he says, "ist Opfer einer verhängnisvollen Verstrickung," and her world incapable of change: "Hätte denn der Dichter der Courage die Courage-Welt als unveränderlich gezeigt, wenn er nicht wüßte, daß sie unveränderlich ist" (141)?

[270] Henri Dumazeau, *Mère Courage — Brecht: Analyse critique* (Paris: Hatier, 1972). In his view the war is a natural calamity and Courage is a symbol of suffering humanity which eternally believes it can escape death, but instead precipitates its own destiny — presumably death (5). One could also mention here Arnold Kettle, *Shaw and Brecht: 'Major Barbara', 'Saint Joan', 'The Life of Galileo' and 'Mother Courage and her Children'* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1977), who seems to suggest this is a tragedy when he notes

Relatively minor objections could be raised against specific points of the interpretations summarized here. Since, however, these objections will be noted in the course of my interpretation, I will instead deal with the main point of the metaphysical defense, namely, that Courage cannot escape her fate in a world which admits no change. This defense is important, for it recognizes, and calls its opponents to account for, the fact that the war seems endless and all-powerful. But this interpretation could only hold if the war truly were the ultimate horizon of the drama. In Chapters 5 and 7 we will see that this *impression*, strong as it is, is not the whole truth. We will discover contradictions in Courage's world, instances of resistance which suggest the possibility of change, possibilities which are present even in Courage, once she is properly understood, that make the metaphysical defense untenable. Then it will be apparent that the metaphysical defense of Courage can only see a tragedy in *Mutter Courage* if it ignores the real content of the drama.

*** *** ***

Before I conclude this chapter, I should remark that not all interpreters feel compelled to emphasize only one of Courage's aspects, to blame or defend her. A respectable number keep Courage's contradictions in suspension, and so also suspend their judgment of her — or blame her as hyena even as they admire

---

that Aristotelean tragedy places its flaw in the protagonist's character, while here (in this tragedy?) it is found in the social situation (51). See also Gong Boan, "First Performance of Brecht's Dramatic Work in China: The Production of *Mother Courage* and its Stage Design," *Brecht and East Asian Theatre: The Proceedings of a Conference on Brecht in East Asian Theatre*, trans. Ping-leung Chan, eds. Anthony Tatlow and Tak-wai Wong (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1982) 65-71. Gong Boan was the set-designer for the first performance of *Mutter Courage* in Shanghai in 1959. He also tells us that the drama is a tragedy, though not enough is said for us to know what he might mean by this (67). Finally, see Gerold Koller, *Der mitspielende Zuschauer: Theorie und Praxis im Schaffen Brechts* (Zurich: Artemis, 1979) 39-45.

her as mother (a possibility sanctioned by Brecht).[271] Of course, not all preserve Courage's contradictions in the same way. Some do so because they produce descriptive overviews;[272] some because they seem driven into irresolution by the contradictions of the drama.[273] More important for us are those who recognize that Courage's contradictions are integral to the figure and must be preserved in order to give a true account of the text.[274]

---

[271] *GW* 16:918.

[272] Such as: Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch Bd.1.* 189-190; Karl Heinz Schoeps, *Bertolt Brecht* (New York: Ungar, 1977) 256-258; Völker, *Brecht: Kommentar* 201.

[273] Such as: Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). Lindenberger seems to lean in Bergstedt's direction, since he stresses Courage's dark side while directing blame at the system within which she operates (151). Yet in a footnote he takes away from that blame when he says Brecht leads us (as liberal bourgeois, he assumes) to criticize Courage, while our "own ability" leads us to ignore the "radical absolutes" to which Brecht's text points (180, n.9). Sarah Bryant-Bertail, in "Women, Space, Ideology," may only achieve a balance by chance in her essay. See also Nussbaum, "The Evolution," who implies a criticism when she says that Courage is "punished" by the war (232), and that Courage's "middle class motherliness" is inadequate in war's general destruction (233); but this may also be a leaning towards the "vitalist defense". If so, it is not decisively so, and I place her in the "neutral" camp. See also Donald L. Cleary Jr., *Effects of Dialectic Materialism on Selected Works by Bertolt Brecht and Theodor W. Adorno*, diss., Ohio University, 1991 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1991): "Mother Courage is seen as a victim of circumstance but also as one who is ultimately reponsible for the destruction of her family since her desire for materialistic success ultimately leads to her family's destruction" (71). Bruno Schärer, *Bertolt Brechts Theater: Sprache und Bühne* (Zurich: Juris, 1964), sees in Courage's counsel to capitulation to, and collaboration with, an "Ordnung, deren Prinzip die Vernichtung ist," Courage's "Schuld" (97); but he also tells us: "So wird die Mutter Courage, obwohl sie Opfer ist, schuldig" (96).

[274] See: Bernard Dort, *Lecture de Brecht* (1960; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), who tells us we cannot privilege one aspect, but must emphasize the coincidence within the figure of both maternal goodness and mercantile harshness (137-138). Ronald Gray, *Brecht* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961) presents Brecht's argument, followed by its counterargument, without choosing between them (96-104); his view can be summed up thus: "Brecht did not intend Mother Courage to be either only praised or only condemned" (99). Francis Fergusson,

The advantage of such deliberately "neutral" interpretations is that they do not erroneously dismiss one side of Courage while stressing another. Indeed, in this they are "truer" to Brecht's text. But they are also less interesting. This is because they have not adequately explained these contradictions or plumbed their mystery. They leave us where the text leaves us, except that the latter is a more fascinating journey.

Paradoxically, the interpretations which blame or defend Courage, and so are "disloyal" to the complexity of the text, turn out to be more interesting. This is because they, if only from one side at a time, highlight the major problems of the text; each of them calls upon their adversaries to take account of their opposing evidence. Unfortunately, this has not yet been done; until now we have been left, as we have seen, with either neutral or unjustifiably one-sided interpretations, all of which suffer from the same fault: they cannot adequately account for the contradictions in Courage. In my opinion, these earlier interpretations have been crippled by their unwillingness to interrogate more closely the rich symbolic aspect of Courage and her world (an "unwillingness"

"Three Allegorists: Brecht, Wilder, and Eliot," *The Human Image in Dramatic Literature*. (1957; Garden City: Doubleday, 1969) summarizes Brecht's view (45), but also says one could follow Courage's story with sympathy (48); Brecht's theatre, he says, "produces puzzling and contradictory impressions" (49). See also Hiller 137-144; Helmut John, "Helmut Baierls *Frau Flinz* als 'Gegenentwurf' zu Bertolt Brechts *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Pädagogischen Hochschule Potsdam* 12.4 (1968): 655-671. Finally, see Ekmann, whose lengthy attack on Brecht the Marxist contains a fair account of the content of *Mutter Courage*; Ekmann sees in the text a balance between understanding and condemning Courage (236); he agrees that the *drama* portrays no tragedy (234-236), that the possibility of an alternative is raised in the maternal relation (239); he agrees that Courage is portrayed as inhuman (237) and responsible for the deaths of her children (241), that she represents capitalism (244), which the drama shows to be the source of war and destruction (238,240), but Ekmann also recognizes that Courage paradoxically represents the little people (244), that she is critical of war and its values such as morality and heroism (239), that she has positive aspects in her sensuality (242) and her maternal love (241).

whose social and historical roots cannot be examined here). I try to make good this omission in the chapters to follow. There we will explore the symbolic content of Courage and discover a more satisfactory interpretation of the central figure of the drama, and so achieve a better understanding of *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

CHAPTER 4

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Kattrin has been assaulted. Sent out by her mother on business, she has come back scarred for life. Bitter, Courage turns on her employer: "das ist der Krieg! Eine schöne Einnahmequell!" Reminded of an earlier assault on Kattrin, mindful of the ruin this one means for her daughter — "einen Mann kriegt sie nicht mehr" — Courage ends the scene cursing her patron: "Der Krieg soll verflucht sein."[1]

Next we see a country road. Little time seems to have passed, yet before us is a very different Courage.[2] Now she defends war. Hung with a chain of coin, as her wagon is hung with new wares, Courage is proof of her assertion: "der Krieg nährt seine Leut besser." Now she will hear no evil of war; the weak, she says (casting the blame onto the victims — and so onto her daughter), would perish in peacetime as well. She sings: "Und geht [der Krieg] über deine Kräfte / Bist du beim Sieg halt nicht dabei." From this struggle for the survival of the fittest, she continues, there is no escape. Those who look for a retreat, "ein Schlupfloch," find only an early grave: "Die Seßhaften sind zuerst hin."

---

[1] *GW* 4:1408; the *Feldwebel* called war her "Brotgeber" (*GW* 4:1355).

[2] In contrast to the titles of 5 of the 6 previous scenes, no record of the passage of time is recorded here, which makes Courage's change in attitude seem abrupt; see Jendreiek 179-180.

Embedded in this confession of faith, in this defense and affirmation of war, we discover a key to the drama and its central figure, in the lines:[3]

> Der Krieg ist nix als die Geschäfte
> Und statt mit Käse ists mit Blei.

WAR IS BUSINESS

"Der Krieg ist nix als die Geschäfte": This parody on Clausewitz's famous phrase is no assertion that war is good for business, or that war and business have an elective affinity for one another.[4] It is no simile which explicitly compares two different things while maintaining their individual integrity (though there is ever so slight a nod in that direction with the qualifying phrase: "statt mit Käse ists mit Blei").[5] The intensifying *nix als* warns us from such paths and points to the copula, insisting that we take the text "at its word": war *is* business.[6]

"War is business," joining as it does two different domains, proclaims itself a metaphor.[7] Moreover, since the parts of this metaphor comprise the basic elements of the drama: namely war, which informs every aspect of the world of the drama; and business, which is not only the defining activity of Courage (not least because it gives her her name), but also generates war for the rulers' profit (so that war and business are already inseparable); since, then, these elements are the very stuff of the drama, this metaphor is important for our understanding of

---

[3] *GW* 4:1409; Hans Kaufmann called the drama "eine warnende Veranschaulichung" of these lines, in his *Bertolt Brecht* 159; Thiele notes their importance, but does not develop them as I do (36).

[4] "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political discourse, carried on with other means." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 87; Brecht parodied this earlier in the *Dreigroschenroman* (1934), see *GW* 13:1056.

[5] Which alludes to the "equivalence" to which Marx said the exchange principle reduces all commodities; see *MEW* 23:50-52; Jendreiek 180.

[6] On the identity of the two for Brecht, see Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 88.

[7] As Lyons early noted (*Bertolt Brecht* 99).

both the drama and its central figure. It tells us that every reference to war, such as "Ohne Ordnung kein Krieg" and "Der Krieg, er dauert hundert Jahre," always means business as well.

Yet this metaphor only releases its full meaning when we recognize that "Geschäfte" itself has another referent, one different from, if related to, the business of Courage and her rulers. That is, "Geschäfte" refers to Brecht's own world, to capitalism. Thus "war is business" means both that the war of Courage's world is capitalism, and that war is capitalism. In other words, to take up I. A. Richards's terminology, "war" or the "vehicle" of this metaphor, an extended metaphor that informs the whole drama, has for its "tenor" capitalism.[8]

Those who recall Brecht's aversion to symbols may wonder at my hypothesis.[9] However, we need not go into the details of Brecht's understanding of symbolic writing to see that, in practice, he did produce symbolic work. For he was a writer of parables which, like metaphor, have their cognitive base in analogy.[10] Even *Mutter Courage*, Brecht said in so many words, was a parable designed to show Scandinavia and the "little people" of his world that they could not expect to do business unscathed with Hitler's war.[11] This implies, of course, an analogy between the world of Courage and Brecht's own world, which implies in turn that *Mutter Courage* has a symbolic level.

My hypothesis is also supported by evidence of Brecht's tendency to posit a sort of equivalence between war and capitalism, and by his own suggestion that the "business" of *Mutter Courage* ultimately refers to capitalism. Before turning to this evidence, however, we must be clear about Brecht's understanding of

---

[8] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936) 97.

[9] See, for example, *GW* 15:455 and his *Briefe*, ed. Günter Glaeser, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981) no. 414.

[10] On Brecht and parables see Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 190-218; on analogy and metaphor, see Keith J. Holyoak, and Paul Thagard, *Mental Leaps: Analogy in Creative Thought* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995) 220-223.

[11] *MC* 246-249.

capitalism at the time he wrote *Mutter Courage*, more specifically, we must be clear about his understanding of the relation between capitalism and fascism (I will summarize Brecht's general views of capitalism further below).

For Brecht there was only a distinction of degree to be made between fascism and capitalism.[12] Occasionally he may give the impression that fascism is only a tool used to advantage by capitalism, but more often Brecht rejects the relative distance between the two which this implies, and holds that fascism is somehow a necessary result, outgrowth, or variant of capitalism, whether as a stage of monopoly capitalism (a description early canonized by the Comintern), or as a product of the "wildgewordener Kleinbürger".[13] Unchanging for Brecht

---

[12] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 70-89; see also Wolfgang Emmerich, "*Massenfaschismus* und die Rolle des Ästhetischen: Faschismustheorie bei Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht," *Antifaschistische Literatur: Programme, Autoren, Werke*, ed. Lutz Winkler, 3 vols. (Kronberg: Scriptor, 1977) 1:223-290; for one of the best recent discussions of Brecht's understanding of fascism, see Frank Dietrich Wagner's *Bertolt Brecht: Kritik des Faschismus*, in particular on the continuity between capitalism and fascism see 51-58.

[13] Two examples from the "orthodox" Marxist interpretation: In 1929 Otto Wilhelm Kuusinen, Secretary of the Communist International, presented the thesis that fascism was a development of the bourgeois state; in 1933 a document of the Communist International calls fascism "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital."; from *The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents*, ed. Jane Degras, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) 3:40, 296. (Brecht's agreement with this tendency is obvious in all his work, as one sees in the "Aufsätze über den Faschismus" — title by Werner Hecht — in his collected works, *GW* 20:180-265; see especially there 188, 192-194, 199, 215, 227-228, 235, 238, 242, 245, 250, 254, 257; see also *AJ* 14.4.41, 22.3.42.) Trotsky, to name an opposition "orthodox" Marxist, also held fascism to be a form of capitalist rule, not of finance capital, but of the *wildgewordene Kleinbürger*; see Isaac Deutscher's summary in *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky 1929-1940* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) 132-137. Brecht seems to consider this possibility in 1933 when he writes: "Nach mancherlei Enttäuschungen, die ihnen innere und äußere Feinde bereitet hatten, entschlossen sich die Kleinbürger meiner Heimat, die sehr zahlreiche Kaste der Kleingewerbetreibenden, Schullehrer, Ladenbesitzer, Subalternoffiziere, Anstreicher, Studenten und so weiter, nunmehr große Taten zu verrichten" (*GW* 20:182); see also *AJ* 27.2.42. As for the heterodox Marxists: Herbert Marcuse in 1934 analyses key elements of "totalitarianism", his code

is the idea that fascism is no aberration alien to bourgeois society, but instead a more intense version of capitalism. Indeed, for Brecht fascism was the "nacktester, frechster, erdrückendster und betrügerischster Kapitalismus."[14]

This view of fascism and capitalism as two versions of the same thing has special bearing on evidence for the symbolic "identity" between war and capitalism in *Mutter Courage*. Throughout this work it must always be kept in mind when considering evidence that there is no criticism of fascism by Brecht which is not simultaneously a criticism of capitalism.

Brecht's view of capitalism as a system consisting in universal social war and tending toward war would have found support in, if it did not receive its impetus from, Marx's description of capitalism, whose class struggle Marx called a veiled civil war, while the competition between capitalists he characterized in Hobbesian terms as a war of all against all.[15] On occasion Marx even drew an analogy between military order and the organization of capitalist industry, saying that the crowds of workers collected in factories were "soldatisch organisiert," that they were placed, as the privates of an industrial army, "unter die Aufsicht einer vollständigen Hierarchie von Unteroffizieren und Offizieren...."[16]

Brecht shared this general view both before and after writing *Mutter*

---

word for fascism, and sees in its drive towards social "unification" and in its universalism expressions of monopoly capitalism; see his *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1968) 21-22; also 18, 125, 128. Finally, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno give a more poetic account of the birth of fascism and its irrationality from the womb of capitalism's rationality: "With the extension of the bourgeois commodity economy, the dark horizon of myth is illumined by the sun of calculating reason, beneath whose cold rays the seed of the new barbarism grows to fruition."; from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1944; New York: Continuum, 1972) 32.

[14] *GW* 18:227; this statement is from "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit" (1934; *GW* 18:222-239) which, together with his "Rede auf dem I. Internationalen Schriftstellerkongreß zur Verteidigung der Kultur" (1935; *GW* 18:24-246), are Brecht's most important and characteristic statements on fascism; see also *GW* 19:469-70, and *GW* 20:192-198, 238-9, 270, 298, 314.

[15] *MEW* 4:473; *MEW* 23:377.

[16] *MEW* 4:469; see also *MEW* 23:351.

Courage. In 1937 he described capitalism as a social system that both gives rise to war and needs war.[17] In 1939, the year in which he wrote *Mutter Courage*, Brecht joined the two more closely and labelled capitalism a thoroughly crisis-ridden and warlike (*kriegshaft*) economic system.[18] And in 1955 Brecht characterized capitalism as a system of production based on a destructive and warlike principle.[19] These characteristic statements show that Brecht held war to be integral to capitalism, and he expressed this same idea in his creative works.

In *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar*, for instance, the narrator meets one Afranius Carbo, a jurist who represents a business trust.[20] Carbo tells us that Roman business is not second to the military might of Imperial Rome:[21]

> Sieht man das Heroische nur im Krieg? Wenn ja, ist Handel kein Krieg? Wörter wie 'friedlicher Handel' mögen strebsame junge Kaufleute begeistern. Sie haben keinen Platz in der Geschichte. Der Handel ist nie friedlich. Grenzen, welche die Waren nicht überschreiten können, werden von den Heeren überschritten.

---

[17] Brecht compares fascism to "ordinary" capitalism: "Ein nationalsozialistisches Deutschland ist effektiv stärker als ein Deutschland, das keine Kriege führen zu müssen glaubt, aber an einer Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftsform festhält, die Kriege erzeugt" (*GW* 20:238); also: "Das kapitalistische System benötigt Kriege. Es ist ein internationales System der Wirtschaft, in dem zuweilen einige Staaten keinen Krieg und andere einen Krieg benötigen. Genau, wie die herrschenden Klassen innerhalb der Völker einen permanenten Krieg gegen die nicht herrschenden Klassen führen müssen, um sich an der Herrschaft zu halten" (*GW* 20:262).

[18] "So wie der Kapitalismus seine zyklischen Krisen braucht ... so braucht er seine Kriege: Er ist durch und durch eine krisenhafte und kriegshafte Wirtschaftsordnung" (*GW* 19:468-469).

[19] "Nicht so ist es, daß ein zerstörerisches kriegerisches Prinzip immer wieder die friedliche Produktion unterbricht, sondern die Produktion selbst gründet sich auf das zerstörerische kriegerische Prinzip" (*GW* 20:344-345).

[20] Written 1938-1939; here may be another historical allusion, since Germany was one of the most heavily cartellized industrial nations before World War II; see V. R. Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 103; Detlev J. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (1987; New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) 114.

[21] *GW* 14:1201; compare *GW* 14:1430.

> Zum Handwerkszeug des Wollspinners gehört nicht nur der Webstuhl, sondern auch das Katapult. Und darüber hinaus hat der Handel noch seinen eigenen Krieg. Einen unblutigen Krieg, ja, aber nichtsdestoweniger einen tödlichen, meine ich. Dieser unblutige Krieg tobt in jeder Ladenstraße während der Geschäftszeit. Jede Handvoll Wolle, die unten an der Straße verkauft wird, löst einen Schmerzensschrei oben an der Straße aus.

At other times Brecht suggests an identity between war and capitalism by unifying their agents. In the poem, *Das Lied vom Klassenfeind*, for example, a worker names the constituent members of his class enemy: the Industrialist, the Landowner, and the representative of overt force in this inwardly and outwardly warring society — the General:[22]

> Denn wir sind Klassenfeinde
> Was man uns auch immer sagt:
> . . . . . .
> Fabrikant, General und Junker
> Unser Feind, das bist du!

By grouping the individual members of the class enemy under a singular noun and a singular pronoun ("Unser Feind, das bist du!"), by naming them therefore as parts of an indivisible whole, Brecht establishes an identity between them, a sort of "Threefold Unity" of Capital.

The identity of war and capitalism is strikingly depicted in a later poem whose title asks, "Was ist geschehen?"[23] "Die Revolution hat ihre erste Schlacht gewonnen," is the answer, referring to the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War, and so to its continuing survival as a visible alternative to capitalism. Brecht implies that this victory has increased the prestige of both the Soviet Union and the social and political solution it represents. In response to this threatening alternative the privileged groups of the West are driven to positively eccentric behaviour. Hence the question, "Was ist geschehen?" Namely, in order to minimize social differences the rich man now sits in comradely fashion beside

---

[22] *GW* 9:439.
[23] *GW* 10:931.

his chauffeur, the landlord repairs the tenants' plumbing, and doctors expose the ills of the health insurance system.[24] A long list of the privileged of society and their agents, such as industrialists and bureaucrats, policemen and professors, now modify their behaviour in order to appear more democratic. Only the generals deviate from this tendency. Unlike the others they do not alter their behaviour; instead they change their clothes. Yet with this attempt at disguise Brecht discloses the sameness of war and capitalism: "Die Generäle ziehen Zivilkleider an *und sehen aus wie Bankleute*" (my emphasis).

In another poem Brecht suggests an identity between war and capitalism by the device of substitution. This involves Marx's well-known prediction from the *Communist Manifesto* that the development of capitalism, and so the enrichment of the capitalists, would lead to the ever greater impoverishment of the workers.[25] Brecht substitutes war for capitalism in this formulation, and thus establishes an implicit parallel between them:[26]

> Im Krieg wird sich vieles vergrössern.
> Es werden größer werden
> Die Besitztümer der Besitzenden
> Und das Elend der Besitzlosen
> . . . . . .

Finally, after the war Brecht continued to make the connection between war and capitalism, as he did in the poem, *Nicht so gemeint*. The subject of the poem is partly the unwelcome support given by the West to the Akademie der Künste as it tried to secure creative freedom from the East German bureaucrats. In Brecht's view the freedoms entertained by the West and the Akademie der Künste differ. He has the West utter what he considers to be the true content of

---

[24] Here is one more identification of capitalism with war and fascism, for the great man who deigns to sit with his chauffeur was part of the image cultivated by Hitler; see David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933-1939* (1966; New York: W.W.Norton, 1980) 58.

[25] *MEW* 4:473.

[26] *GW* 9:734.

their freedom in a series of telling and biting associations between the agents of capital and war:[27]

> Freiheit! erscholl es. Freiheit den Künstlern!
> Freiheit rings herum! Freiheit für alle!
> Freiheit den Ausbeutern! Freiheit den Kriegstreibern!
> Freiheit den Ruhrkartellen! Freiheit den Hitlergenerälen!
> . . . . . .

As I said earlier, Brecht himself suggests a symbolic level to *Mutter Courage*. We saw this in Chapter 3, with *Gespräch mit einem jungen Zuschauer*, when he says in regard to *Mutter Courage*: "Ja, der Dreißigjährige Krieg ist einer der ersten Riesenkriege, die der Kapitalismus über Europa gebracht hat."[28] He does not mean, as I pointed out, that the Thirty Years War was truly capitalist, but that his portrayal of the Thirty Years War is a portrayal of capitalism. Important here is that he makes this association at the same time that he describes capitalism as a system which requires war: "Dieses Wirtschaftssystem beruht auf dem Kampf aller gegen alle, der Großen gegen die Großen, der Großen gegen die Kleinen, der Kleinen gegen die Kleinen."[29] In Chapter 3 we also saw Brecht, in a single text from the *Couragemodell*, bring capitalism together with both the *Geschäfte* of the drama and Courage's *Handeltreiben*, which suggests that the "business" of *Mutter Courage* and capitalism are the same.[30] And in the *Couragemodell* Brecht again posits a close relationship — one approaching identity — between war and capitalism, by describing war as "eine Fortführung der Geschäfte mit andern Mitteln," and saying that war and business are related by fusion: "Die Verschmelzung von Krieg und Geschäft kann nicht früh genug etabliert werden."[31]

---

[27] *GW* 10:1008; see also the eleventh stanza of *Der anachronistische Zug* (*GW* 10:945).

[28] *GW* 17:1149.

[29] *GW* 17:1149 (1952).

[30] *MC* 189-190.

[31] *MC* 130, 136.

To conclude, in both his theoretical and creative works Brecht shows a distinct tendency to posit at least a necessary relation, and occasionally even an identity, between war and capitalism.[32] He also does this in remarks on *Mutter Courage*, remarks that also suggest that "business", and so the business of the rulers and the sutler of the drama, refers to capitalism. There is good reason, then, to hold that the statement, "Der Krieg ist nix als die Geschäfte," refers with "Geschäfte" to capitalism.

THE TROUBLE WITH ANALOGY?

Of course, as we saw in Chapter 3 in our discussion of John Milfull's "historical defense", the weak point of "analogic" or associative thought, is that the domains associated are obviously not identical.[33] Thus it is always possible to argue that the differences between the domains joined by analogy are more important than their similarities. And it must be admitted that the historical world to which Brecht's *Mutter Courage* seems to refer was very different from the capitalism which I say is the ultimate referent of the war and business of the drama.

The world which the drama seems to represent, for example, is not capitalistic, but feudal. Its rulers are not the bourgeoisie, but kings, emperors, and popes. Its producers are not industrial workers, but peasants. Its order is not based on the notions of a social contract and legality, that is, the rulers do not make contracts with the producers such as exists more or less between the capitalist and the worker, but in effect take what they desire at the point of the

---

[32] Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 88; Frank Dietrich Wagner understates the case when he says that Brecht thought that war was only potentially contained in capitalism (109), for his criticism of Müller, see (110-111).

[33] I take the term "analogic" from Holyoak and Thagard 2; on the problem of parables, with their generalizing and inability to portray specific situations, see Kaufmann, *Bertolt Brecht* 159-161.

sword.[34] Wealth for the aristocratic lord comes not from profits resulting from either advantageous exchange (as the liberal economist would say), or from the extraction of surplus value by exploiting workers (as the Marxist would say), but from more or less openly plundering the inhabitants of either his own or another's territory ("taxation" is only a disguised form of this pillage). As for Courage's business, she is not a capitalist but a merchant, a sutler, and so does not extract surplus labour, but remains entirely in the sphere of distribution. Above all she seems a poor candidate to represent with her business the system of capitalism. At the very least the smallness of her capital (she is after all a *petty* bourgeois) makes her social standing ambivalent, if it does not place her relatively closer to the little people, since she is always in danger of being pauperized. The differences could be enlarged upon, but it would be beside the point because we would only confirm what is obvious, namely that feudalism is not capitalism, and that a seventeenth-century sutler is no capitalist. The symbolic translation then, is hardly self-evident.

On the other hand, *Mutter Courage* is not a historical portrayal of life in the seventeenth century at the time of the Thirty Years War. The world of *Mutter Courage* is a particular portrayal or "translation" of the Thirty Years War, one which emphasizes specific attributes (with the aim, I maintain, to invoke the attributes associated with capitalism). For example, the social relations characteristic of this late feudal society are hardly foregrounded in the work. More than feudalism, the system, the "mode of production", of the drama, is war — albeit in a feudal setting. To this point may be added a curious agreement between the social structure in the drama and Marx's view of bourgeois society, an agreement which might already suggest the possibility that capitalism, seen

---

[34] The romantic notion that some sort of contract existed between the nobility and the peasants, whereby the peasants provided for the nobles, who in turn protected the peasants, forgets that the aristocracy was based on the coercive power of the rulers over those who worked the land; see Jonathan Powis, *Aristocracy* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1984) 25, 43-44.

from Brecht's Marxist perspective, is the referent of the world of the drama. I am speaking here of the general social division portrayed by the drama. For instance, in the sergeant's speech in scene 1 (see this chapter, page 136) we see that there is a group which presumes to prescribe a morality, and a group which must suffer this morality be prescribed for them; there is a group which has the power to carry off someone else's goods, and a group which must suffer that their goods be seized. Here is the broad social division characteristic of the drama, a division into the powerful and the powerless, the great and the small; with the great represented here by the aristocracy and the military, and the little people by the peasants (supplemented by the soldiers, Courage's family, and some few others). This general division, given the ostensible historical period, is peculiar.

Feudal society, broadly speaking that society which preceded capitalist hegemony in Europe, was extremely complex (more so than this brief summary can convey).[35] A minority of aristocrats and nobles stood over against peasants, serfs, and vassals of various degrees who formed the overwhelming majority of the population. Within the secular and religious nobilities were further divisions downward from emperor, pope, and king, through a myriad of lesser titles. In the towns, which protected the relatively small number of people who were neither peasant nor noble, we find another complex hierarchy, only to name that between the guilds, and within these between the masters, the journeymen, the apprentices, and the day labourers.

There is little trace of this complexity in *Mutter Courage*. True, we have the names of various roles, such as emperor. king, pope, general, sergeant, chaplain, sutler, prostitute, peasant, and so on. Yet the drama fosters the

---

[35] This is the unspecialized use of the term "feudalism" to which Marc Bloch objected, a usage which has its roots in the Enlightenment (and which appears in Marx as well), as represented by the decree of August 1789 in which the National Assembly of the French Revolution said it had abolished utterly the "feudal régime"; from Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon (1940; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961) xviii; see also 441-452.

impression of a division into two opposed groups, the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless. This broad division is reinforced by omitting any but the most general mention of the townspeople, whose imitation of feudal relations within the towns might have complicated the picture. A similar division in the active roles in the drama highlights this "split", for there is a decided emphasis on the powerless. Except for the *Feldhauptmann* of scene 2, and the briefer appearance in scene 3 of another aristocratic officer, the *Obrist*, all the active roles are held by the "little people". The soldiers may act in the name of their aristocratic leaders, but their actual position (including that of the "middle management" of the army, such as the sergeant) is that of the little people. Even the chaplain is only a servant to the rulers, as is made clear in scene 2 when he ingratiates himself with his commander by twisting a biblical story to justify Eilif's brutality, only to be mocked by the officer for his trouble. This emphasis on the little people reinforces the impression of a broad social division, especially since the representations of the aristocracy lack differentiation. Whether king, general, or aristocratic officer, none, beyond an occasional historical name, are given any concrete distinction in regard to their social station; they seem merely counters for the notion "member of the ruling class".

Courage herself reinforces this general social division. Whenever she discusses social relations she consistently portrays a world split into two camps. We see her in scene 3 divide the world into the "Großkopfigen" who create wars and the "kleine Leut" who go along with them;[36] in scene 4 she describes a world fundamentally divided, with a "they" who order, and a "we" who have been bought off and are powerless ("Uns haben sie allen unsre Schneid abgekauft");[37] in scene 6 she twice speaks of a pair of rulers — in each case mentioning the pair in a single breath as though there were no difference between

---

[36] *GW* 4:1375.
[37] *GW* 4:1394.

a general and an emperor, between an emperor and a pope, as when she talks of the plans of a general or emperor and the "common folk" who must execute those plans,[38] or when she says of the little people: "Daß sie einen Kaiser und einen Papst dulden, das beweist unheimliche Courage, denn die kosten ihnen das Leben."[39]

Brecht's drama, if it attempts a description of feudal society, would seem not to take its cue from Marx. For Marx, on the contrary, emphasized the complexity of feudal society:[40]

> In den früheren Epochen der Geschichte finden wir fast überall eine vollständige Gliederung der Gesellschaft in verschiedene Stände, eine mannigfaltige Abstufung der gesellschaftlichen Stellungen. Im ... Mittelalter [haben wir] Feudalherren, Vasallen, Zunftbürger, Gesellen, Leibeigene und noch dazu in fast jeder dieser Klassen wieder besondere Abstufungen.

Or does Brecht's text follow Marx's lead? For the general social division of the drama does in fact resemble that which Marx said distinguished bourgeois from feudal society:[41]

> Unsere Epoche, die Epoche der Bourgeoisie, zeichnet sich jedoch dadurch aus, daß sie die Klassengegensätze vereinfacht hat. Die ganze Gesellschaft spaltet sich mehr und mehr in zwei große feindliche Lager, in zwei große, einander direkt gegenüberstehende Klassen: Bourgeoisie und Proletariat.

In other words, the distinction made by Marx between feudal and capitalist societies is rehearsed by Brecht's text in the distinction between historical feudal society and that portrayed in *Mutter Courage*. In this general social division, then, there may already be a hint that the drama actually refers to capitalism. (Neither Marx nor Brecht, of course, was unaware of the real complexity of social stratification in capitalism.[42] This simplification only describes what was

---

[38] "mir tut so ein Feldhauptmann oder Kaiser leid..." (*GW* 4:1400).
[39] *GW* 4:1404.
[40] *MEW* 4:462-463.
[41] *MEW* 4:463.
[42] See, in Brecht's case, *Die proletarische Dialektik* (*GW* 20:150).

for Marx the fundamental relation to the means of production, namely, whether or not one owned them.)

Though not in itself sufficient to force a hermeneutic treatment of the type proposed here (just as a detailed social portrait of feudalism would not preclude it), the emphasis on war as the "mode of production" of this ostensibly feudal society, together with a broad social division reminiscent of Marx's vision of bourgeois society, at least lends further support to the hypothesis of a symbolic level to the text by preventing the establishment of a seamless "identity" between the text and its apparent historical referent. We will see that this hypothesis is further supported by parallels between the world described by the drama and key elements of Brecht's view of capitalism. First, however, we should review Brecht's description of capitalism.

BRECHT ON CAPITALISM

Brecht's view of capitalism is informed by the Marxist critique, as the following description, culled from Brecht's theoretical writings from 1932-1939, demonstrates, a description which is reflected in his creative works as well (though they are not cited here, since they would require greater explanation and contextualization). For Brecht, then, capitalism is a barbaric,[43] inhuman,[44] oppressive,[45] unjust,[46] and unfree system,[47] in which a privileged clique[48]

[43] Barbaric in both its "normal" and its "fascist" forms, according to Brecht. Capitalism, he says, comprises the "Besitzverhältnisse, die Barbarei [i.e. fascism] erzeugen..." (*GW* 18:227); "Die Roheit kommt nicht von der Roheit, sondern von den Geschäften, die ohne sie nicht mehr gemacht werden können" (*GW* 18:244). The "gesellschaftlichen Zustände," Brecht says of capitalism, need barbarism (*GW* 18:246). Barbarism, that is, fascism, is needed to uphold bourgeois social relations (*GW* 19:331). "Argumentiert man auf der Grundlage, daß dies oder jenes Brutale für die kapitalistische Wirtschaft 'nicht nötig' sei, so wird man mit sehr guten und unangreiflichen Argumenten belehrt, *wie* nötig es ist..." (*GW* 19:468).

[44] Brecht calls the capitalists an "unmenschliche Clique", and says of the capitalist: "Der dem Menschen ein Wolf ist, ist kein Mensch, sondern ein Wolf" (*GW* 20:80).

[45] "Unterdrückung" is necessary to capitalism (*GW* 19:331); capitalism needs

keeps the majority, that is, the workers, by means of force, economic compulsion,[49] and ideological restraint,[50] in a deadly dependence on their exploiters,[51] since the capitalists own the means to production, and so the means

---

oppression, "und zwar zunehmende Unterdrückung" (*GW* 19:477).

[46] On the capitalists: "Sie haben nicht 'recht' von ihrem Standpunkt aus: das Unrecht besteht in ihrem Standpunkt" (*GW* 20:80); Brecht elsewhere refers to the "Ungrechtigkeit des bürgerlichen Systems der Konsumtion" (*GW* 20:106-107).

[47] The worker is "unfrei" in capitalism (*GW* 20:337); there is no freedom in capitalism, "denn es gibt keine Freiheit irgendwelcher Schichten auf dem Rücken anderer Schichten" (*GW* 19:473). Compare *MEW* 23:674-675, where representative passages for many of Marx's views on capitalism can be found; that capitalism is unjust and inhuman for Marx is clear from his scathing description of its misery and degradation for the workers crushed under the "juggernaut" of capital; inhumanity is combined with unfreedom when Marx tells us that it is not the worker who uses the means of production, but the means of production which use the worker. Inhumanity is clearly an attribute of capitalism when Marx associates the activity of capitalists with vampires (*MEW* 23:247) and werewolves (*MEW* 23:280).

[48] Brecht calls the capitalists a "kleine Schicht" and "Clique" (*GW* 20:80); capitalism is "ein ökonomisch-politisches System, das den Mangel der vielen zum Vorteil der wenigen macht" (*GW* 20:239).

[49] Capitalists use "Gewalt" (*GW* 20:80); "Die Wahrheit ist, daß die bürgerliche Herrschaft verschiedene Formen der Gewaltanwendung benutzt, in den Demokratien stille und in den faschistischen Staaten laute Formen" (*GW* 19:439); capitalism is "eine blutige, kriegerische Produktionsweise" (*GW* 19:470); economic force is suggested when Brecht calls the "Gewalt" of capitalism "eine wirtschaftliche, so unkenntlichere, stillere, und unblutige..., denn der Hunger tötet und vergewaltigt auch, aber es fließt kein Blut dabei" (*GW* 19:439). Marx suggests the same economic force when he tells us that the workers are "free", that is, "los und ledig frei," since they, who do not own the means to production, are forced to work for the capitalist, who does (*MEW* 23:183). Elsewhere Marx tells us that surplus labour ("Mehrarbeit") is always forced labour ("Zwangsarbeit") (*MEW* 25:827). Engels tells us, in "Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats," that the state keeps down the workers and so implies forced compliance with the bourgeoisie (*MEW* 21:166-167).

[50] See in this chapter the section "Morality and Ideology."

[51] Brecht describes "die tödliche Abhängigkeit riesiger Menschenmassen von einigen Leuten, welche die Werkzeuge aller in Form gewaltiger Fabriken in ihren Händen halten..." (*GW* 20:83). Compare Marx: "In altzivilisierten Ländern ist der Arbeiter, obgleich frei, naturgesetzlich abhängig vom Kapitalisten..." (*MEW* 23:798); see also *MEW* 23:743 where the relation of the worker to capitalist is

to life.[52] The capitalists, driven by profit,[53] exploit the workers,[54] indeed, they *steal* the workers' labour since surplus value, the source of profit, comes from unpaid labour.[55] Capitalism maintains itself through the ruin of labour,[56] caused not only by exploitation, but also by a labour process that alienates[57] and dehumanizes work and workers.[58] The reason of capitalism, such as it is, is

---

implied to be a "Knechtschaft".

[52] *GW* 20:83; *MEW* 4:462n.

[53] In capitalism the forces of production stand under the "Geißel des Profits" (*GW* 19:470). Marx says of the capitalist, the "Fanatiker der Verwertung des Werts": "Aber soweit sind auch nicht Gebrauchswert und Genuß, sondern Tauschwert und dessen Vermehrung sein treibendes Motiv" (*MEW* 23:618); see also *MEW* 23:621.

[54] *GW* 20:238, 337; *GW* 19:439, 477. Marx describes the development of capitalism as a steady increase of the degree "des Elends, des Drucks, der Knechtschaft, der Entartung," but also "der Ausbeutung... der Arbeiterklasse" (*MEW* 23:790-791).

[55] The capitalist knows, Brecht tells us, "daß das, was er hat, solang er etwas hat, die Arbeitskraft der Arbeiter ist" (*GW* 20:95; see also *GW* 12:446); see *MEW* 23:622. On the theft of labour see *GW* 20:80, where Brecht says the capitalists, when they defend themselves, defend "den Raub"; see also *GW* 15:456; this theft is implied in stronger terms when Brecht in another place calls the relationship between capital and labour a terrible "Vergewaltigung" (*GW* 20:215). Marx implies this idea of theft when he says, "daß Aneignung unbezahlter Arbeit das Geheimnis der Plusmacherei ist" (*MEW* 23:622); see also *MEW* 23:556, 231.

[56] Of the workers Brecht says: "ihr Untergang [erzeugt] den Wohlstand der *anderen* [meaning the capitalists]" (*GW* 20:236). The methods of the capitalists, Marx tells us, "verstümmeln den Arbeiter in einen Teilmenschen, entwürdigen ihn zum Anhängsel der Maschine, ... entfremden ihm die geistigen Potenzen des Arbeitsprozesses...." and in general, as already noted, increase the worker's share "des Elends, des Drucks, der Knechtschaft, der Entartung, der Ausbeutung..." (*MEW* 23:674-675).

[57] Brecht says of the worker in capitalism: "Außer seinen [sic] Lohn am Ende der Woche hat er nichts zu erwarten; was er produziert hat, geht ihn nichts an...." (*GW* 20:94); Brecht may be referring to alienated labour when he says of the work process in capitalism: "Arbeitsprozeß und Arbeitsprodukt merzen alles Individuelle aus" (*GW* 18:274). See *MEW* 23:200, where the worker's labour seems no longer his or her own; alienation is suggested when Marx says, "Der Arbeiter selbst produziert daher beständig den objektiven Reichtum als Kapital, ihm fremde, ihn beherrschende und ausbeutende Macht..." (*MEW* 23:596).

[58] *GW* 19:298, 315-316, 322, 468; *MEW* 23:674-5.

found in its ledgers,[59] otherwise it is organized chaos or chaotic order,[60] an order which irrationally destroys its own productivity in recurring economic crises.[61] Capitalism is a warring system, one built on antagonism, on the struggle between workers for jobs,[62] between workers and capitalists for a greater share of the social product,[63] between capitalists themselves for a greater share of the market,[64] and between competing nation states for a greater share of the world market.[65]

---

[59] "Den Kapitalismus zur Vernunft rufen, heißt ihn auffordern, seine Kontobücher durchzulesen" (*GW* 19:469).

[60] Production in capitalism is "anarchisch" (*GW* 20:106); capitalism is "ein System der Willkür, systematische Willkür" (*GW* 20:261). Marx: "Während die kapitalistische Produktionsweise in jedem individuellem Geschäft Ökonomie erzwingt, erzeugt ihr anarchisches System der Konkurrenz die maßloseste Verschwendung..." (*MEW* 23:552). (Which suggests, as Brecht does, that the reason of capitalism is found only in its "ledgers"; see also *MEW* 23:526).

[61] *GW* 18:244; Capitalism needs "seine zyklischen Krisen ... zur Einstampfung seiner Überproduktion..." (*GW* 19:468). See *MEW* 4:467-468, where Marx discusses the periodic crises of capitalism, which represent barbarism and "Widersinn", that is, the "irrationality" of want paradoxically created by overproduction, which is then "remedied" by destroying a portion of both products and productivity.

[62] See *GW* 17:1149, which I will discuss below in "Universal War". Compare *MEW* 23:665-666, where Marx tells of the pressure put upon labour by the unemployed, a structural necessity of capitalism which he calls the "reserve army of labour."

[63] "Die herrschenden Klassen," Brecht tells us, carry out "einen permanenten Krieg gegen die nicht herrschenden Klassen ... um sich an der Herrschaft zu erhalten" (*GW* 20:262); he also calls the relation of capital to labour "die unaufhörlichen räuberischen Angriffe der herrschenden Klasse auf die beherrschte..." (*GW* 20:273). "Der Kampf zwischen Kapitalist und Lohnarbeiter," Marx says, "beginnt mit dem Kapitalverhältnis selbst" (*MEW* 23:451); see also *MEW* 4:470.

[64] The lesson that one can destroy another through competition ("niederkonkurrieren"), Brecht tells us, can be had from capitalism (*GW* 20:238); this struggle is also implied when Brecht notes that capitalism tends to proletarianize everyone, including small capital ("der kleine Geschäftsmann"; *GW* 20:262). Marx: "Die größeren Kapitale schlagen ... die kleineren" (*MEW* 23:654); "Je ein Kapitalist schlägt viele tot" (*MEW* 23:790); on competition as a law of capitalism, see *MEW* 23:618.

[65] This question will be developed later in the chapter, but reference can be

THE TRACES OF BUSINESS

Now that Brecht's view of capitalism has been outlined, we are prepared for a second key text of the drama. This is the opening dialogue (whose core is the sergeant's speech), a passage extraordinarily dense with meaning.[66] The recruiter complains to the sergeant of a moral decline in the peasants, the symptom being their refusal to enlist:[67]

> Bis zum Zwölften soll ich dem Feldhauptmann vier Fähnlein hinstelln, und die Leut hier herum sind so voll Bosheit, daß ich keine Nacht mehr schlaf. Hab ich endlich einen aufgetrieben und schon durch die Finger gesehn und mich nix wissen gemacht, daß er eine Hühnerbrust hat und Krampfadern, ich hab ihn glücklich besoffen, er hat schon unterschrieben, ich zahl nur noch den Schnapps, er tritt aus, ich hinterher zur Tür, weil mir

---

made here to *GW* 20:238, 247, 262, and *GW* 19:469, 474-475. This particular idea was especially developed by Lenin; see Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline," *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 trans. Yuri Sdobnikov, ed. George Hanna (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964) 185-304. Using the world oil market as an example, Lenin notes: "we see plainly here how private and state monopolies are interwoven in the epoch of finance capital; how both are but separate links in the imperialist struggle between the big monopolists for the division of the world" (251); a division which sooner or later calls for war, since peace through "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances are "*inevitably* nothing more than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars..." (295). Similar views, probably familiar to Brecht, appeared in documents of the Comintern. In November 1939 Dimitrov, secretary-general of the Communist International, said: "Throughout all the years following the first world imperialist war the communists, basing themselves on the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, incessantly explained to the working people that capitalism, by its very nature, gives rise to wars, that the contradictions between imperialist countries were not eliminated by Versailles and by other imperialist peace treaties, but, on the contrary, that these contradictions would break out after some time with new and still greater force.... Now, as in 1914, the war is being waged by the imperialist bourgeoisie. This war is a direct continuation of the struggle between the imperialist Powers for a new repartition of the earth, for world domination" (*The Communist International* 3:448-449).

[66] As Hans Mayer noted (in a somewhat different way) in *Anmerkungen zu Brecht* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1965) 7-9; see also Gleitman (149-151).

[67] *GW* 4:1349-1350.

> was schwant: Richtig, weg ist er, wie die Laus unterm Kratzen. Da gibts kein Manneswort, kein Treu und Glauben, kein Ehrgefühl.

The sergeant replies:

> Man merkts, hier ist zu lang kein Krieg gewesen. Wo soll da Moral herkommen, frag ich? Frieden, das ist nur Schlamperei, erst der Krieg schafft Ordnung. Die Menschheit schießt ins Kraut im Frieden. Mit Mensch und Vieh wird herumgesaut, als wärs gar nix. Jeder frißt, was er will, einen Ranken Käs aufs Weißbrot, und dann noch eine Scheibe Speck auf den Käs. Wie viele junge Leut und gute Gäul diese Stadt da vorn hat, weiß kein Mensch, es ist niemals gezählt worden. Ich bin in Gegenden gekommen, wo kein Krieg war vielleicht siebzig Jahr, da hatten die Leut überhaupt noch keine Namen, die kannten sich selber nicht. Nur wo Krieg ist, gibts ordentliche Listen und Registraturen, kommt das Schuhzeug in Ballen und das Korn in Säck, wird Mensch und Vieh sauber gezählt und weggebracht, weil man eben weiß: Ohne Ordnung kein Krieg!

These speeches, particularly the latter, are significant because they touch on recurring motifs integral to Brecht's understanding of capitalism, motifs which point, then, to the symbolic translation of capitalism. That these motifs appear at the beginning of the drama is important, because then we are prepared from the beginning for their reoccurrence (as in the metaphor from scene 7 with which I began this chapter) which in turn reinforce their first appearance. This is not to say that any motif is in itself sufficient to convince us that capitalism is the referent of the drama. Rather, the constellation formed by these themes establishes the analogy between the world of the drama and Brecht's understanding of capitalism. The motifs are: (1) profit or accumulation as the motor of the world; (2) the universal war (of exploitation and competition); (3) the ideological justification of social inequity (together with the criticism of this ideology); (4) the world as organized chaos; and (5) the process of quantification which reduces people and things from their incommensurable phenomenality to a sheer quantitative existence.

THE ENGINE OF PROFIT

In his speech the sergeant refers obliquely to the moving force of his world. War, he says, is order, it is the order upon which his world is founded. All the world's resources are dedicated to this order, to the prosecution of the rulers' war. The wealth of the village does not remain with its producers, but is "gezählt und weggebracht," seized by the rulers for their war. With this seizure the sergeant reveals the motive of war, as an officer later does when his concern for the souls of the peasants turns out to be a craving for their livestock: "Wir sind gekommen, ihnen ihre Seelen zu retten, und was tun sie, als unverschämte und verdreckte Saubauern? Uns ihr Vieh wegtreiben!"[68] That is, with the forced transfer of property by which the ruler *gains* while the little people *lose*, the sergeant foreshadows what Courage makes plain in scene 3: the rulers carry out war for only one thing — *Gewinn*.

Gewinn is a venerable term which can mean either business profit or gain in general. As such it serves as a point of contact between the "feudal" social setting of the drama and capitalism as its symbolic referent, for just as profit is undeniably the goal of business, so gain was the goal of feudal war. But, when Courage in scene 3 ties this notion to her own profit-making as merchant, when in scene 7 she says that war is nothing but business, she charges *Gewinn* so that it gravitates toward the idea of business profit.

Profit, then, is the true engine of the war, and so of the world of the drama. With this we have an essential connection between the world of the drama and capitalism. For profit or the accumulation of capital is also the motor of capitalism. "Akkumuliert, Akkumuliert! Das ist Moses und die Propheten!"[69] With this Marx means to say of the capitalist: "nicht Gebrauchswert und Genuß, sondern Tauschwert und dessen Vermehrung [sind] sein treibendes Motiv."[70]

---

[68] *GW* 4:1362.

[69] *MEW* 23:621.

[70] *MEW* 23:618; also: "Das Kapital hat aber einen einzigen Lebenstrieb, den Trieb sich zu verwerten, Mehrwert zu schaffen, mit seinem konstanten Teil, den

Scarcely 6 months before he wrote *Mutter Courage* Brecht not only reminded us that capitalism is "eine blutige, kriegerische Produktionsweise," but asserted that it is so, "damit die Produktivkräfte sich unter der Geißel des Profits halbwegs auslaufen können."[71]

UNIVERSAL WAR

Brecht's *Gespräch mit einem jungen Zuschauer*, as we saw in Chapter 3, depicts capitalism as a universal war. It describes capitalism as a war of the great against the great, the great against the small, and the small against the small. Each of these wars is present in *Mutter Courage*.

By the war of the great against the great Brecht means the internecine warfare between capitalists in their competition for profit. This clearly parallels the competition between the aristocratic rulers of Courage's world for *Gewinn*. In capitalism this war is essential ("im Kapitalismus ist [der Krieg] nötig"),[72] and is ever created anew by the necessary competition of the ruling class.[73] So it is also with the rulers of Courage's world. Their hostilities may end through an oversight, as the chaplain says, but, he assures us — and the drama confirms his view — the rulers do their best to keep war alive: "die Kaiser und Könige und der Papst wird ihm [dem Krieg] zu Hilf kommen in seiner Not. So hat er im ganzen nix Ernstliches zu fürchten, und ein langes Leben liegt vor ihm."[74]

Produktionsmitteln, die größtmögliche Masse Mehrarbeit einzusaugen" (*MEW* 23:247; see also *MEW* 23:532).

[71] *GW* 19:470.

[72] *GW* 17:1149.

[73] "Außerdem macht die Entwicklung der kapitalistischen Produktion eine fortwährende Steigerung des in einem industriellen Unternehmen angelegten Kapitals zur Notwendigkeit, und die Konkurrenz herrscht jedem individuellen Kapitalisten die immanenten Gesetze der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise als äußere Zwangsgesetze auf. Sie zwingt ihn, sein Kapital fortwährend auszudehnen, um es zu erhalten, und ausdehnen kann er es nur vermittelst progressiver Akkumulation" (*MEW* 23:618).

[74] *GW* 4:1402.

The war between the great and the small, the "class struggle", has two aspects. In this drama the struggle of the small against the great, the exploited against the exploiter, receives no great treatment. We may, though, see a sign of this class struggle in scene 4 when a young soldier protests at not being rewarded for saving the commander's horse, or in scene 1 when the peasants refuse to enlist, or in scene 11 when a young peasant encourages Kattrin's intervention in the Imperial attack on Halle.[75] That this "war" between exploiter and exploited is taken for granted can be seen from the answer that Schweizerkas expects from his officer when he returns the regimental strongbox: "Du hast mich angenehm *enttäuscht*, Schweizerkas, wird er sagen, ich vertrau dir die Kass an, und du bringst sie zurück" (my emphasis).[76] However, the portrayal of the war of the great against the small emphasizes the action of the great, that is, the fundamental exercise of power by the rulers over the ruled, otherwise known as exploitation.

Symbolic translations of the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist are discovered in the drama where the little people are forced to give up their products and property to their aristocratic rulers, and in the privation they suffer as a result. In the drama this expropriation, as the sergeant's example shows, has the character of theft, and so at first glance might seem incompatible with the relation between employer and employee. But it is typical of Brecht's work that exploitation should appear as theft (see page 133). Marx already laid the groundwork for such a notion when he spoke of surplus value as the unpaid labour of the worker appropriated by the capitalist.[77] In Brecht's case one need only recall his tendency to depict capitalists as gangsters or criminals, such as Peacham and Macheath from the *Dreigroschenroman*.[78] Characteristic for

---

[75] *GW* 4:1392-1393.

[76] *GW* 4:1381.

[77] "Das Kapital ist also nicht nur Kommando über Arbeit.... Es ist wesentlich Kommando über unbezahlte Arbeit" (*MEW* 23:556; see also *MEW* 23:231).

[78] See especially *GW* 13:949, 999, 1015, 1108, 1129, 1147; also 5:2150, 12:563, 15:473.

Brecht's view of the elective affinity between the bourgeois and the bandit is the remark in his *Anmerkungen zur Dreigroschenoper*: "Die Vorliebe des Bürgertums für Räuber erklärt sich aus dem Irrtum: Ein Räuber sei kein Bürger. Dieser Irrtum hat als Vater einen anderen Irrtum: Der Bürger sei kein Räuber."[79] Moreover, in 1932 Brecht calls the relation of capitalist to worker "die unaufhörlichen räuberischen Angriffe der herrschenden Klasse auf die beherrschte"; and in 1933 he says that capitalists, when they defend themselves, defend "den Raub".[80] As we have seen, the sergeant of scene 1, when he talks of carrying off the peasants' goods, depicts no equitable exchange between producers, but instead a seizure or theft of products in the name of the ruling class.[81] Other representations of exploitation can be found: in scene 2 we hear that the Swedish King taxes peasants in order to pay for his war; in scene 8 peasants are about to lose their home to war taxes; in scene 3 the army wilfully destroys peasants' crops — which is no less an appropriation; in scene 11 the army is ready to induce compliance from the peasants by consuming — that is, slaughtering — their livestock.[82]

The position of the common soldiers resembles that of the peasants. Indeed, the soldiers are the most obvious translation of the workers of capitalism. For just as the workers labour unpaid for the capitalist when they produce surplus value, so the soldiers have their labour stolen from them. The officers and rulers make money hand over fist, we hear; in contrast the common soldier hardly ever sees his pay.[83] Instead "the regiment", which is to say the officer, steals the soldier's wages ("Sein halben Sold stiehlts Regiment").[84] One commander justifies keeping his men unpaid, saying as this is a holy war the soldiers have to

---

[79] *GW* 17:994; see also Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 265; and Joost 191-192.
[80] *GW* 20:273, 80.
[81] *GW* 4:1350.
[82] *GW* 4:1410, 1374, 1364, 1393.
[83] *GW* 4:1417.
[84] *GW* 4:1438.

fight it for him gratis.[85] While the officers live in comfort and sell their soldiers' ammunition or consume their men's wages with their drinking and whoring, the soldiers starve and must risk their lives for uncertain rewards that might give them the means to eat.[86] What Brecht says elsewhere of the fascist army holds true for this army as well, despite the pretense of a common purpose between ruled and ruler: "In den Schüsseln ist / Zweierlei Essen."[87] (Nor does "peace" mean an improvement since the soldiers starve both when they "work" in war and in peacetime as well. In scene 8 both the cook and Eilif have been let go unpaid. Hungry, one makes a long trek to Courage for food,[88] while the other pays with his life for trying to fill his belly in the manner to which his king's army had accustomed him — murdering peasants and stealing their livestock.[89] Peace for the soldiers is only unemployment. Indeed, if war in this drama is capitalism, then this temporary peace may represent the periodic crises of capitalism.)[90]

When Brecht tells us the little people do not gain from their rulers' wars, he alludes again to exploitation.[91] That is, whatever the outcome of war, neither worker nor soldier, as victims of exploitation, benefit from their labours in the interests of their parasitic rulers.[92] When a soldier following orders tries to rescue the regimental cannon, Courage impresses upon him how little he will gain by it: "Laß sie doch stehn, du Esel, wer zahlts dir? Ich nehm sie dir in Verwaltung, und dich kostets Leben."[93] Here we see exploitation or forced loss

---

[85] *GW* 4:1400.

[86] *GW* 4:1360, 1369, 1392-1393.

[87] *GW* 9:638.

[88] *GW* 4:1413.

[89] *GW* 4:1419-1420.

[90] See *GW* 19:468-469; on peace as unemployment, this time in relation to Brecht's novel on Caesar see *AJ* 19.2.39.

[91] *MC* 130; also: "So zeigt das Stück, daß die großen Geschäfte in den Kriegen nicht von den kleinen Leuten gemacht werden" (*MC* 251-253); see also *MC* 67-68, 190; *AJ* 22.4.41; 9:651 (stanza 4).

[92] See *GW* 20:344; see also 19:486.

[93] *GW* 4:1376.

expressed as death. So a soldier takes his pleasure with brutal haste: "Ein Schnaps, Wirt, schnell, sei g'scheit!" — "Dein Brust, Weib, schnell, sei g'scheit!"; he must, for his service, "Muß für den Kaiser streiten," has as a reward his ultimate loss: "Muß für den Kaiser sterben."[94] The *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten* repeats the message, for its soldier benefits neither himself nor his own. As the old woman says to him: "uns wärmen nicht eure Taten." Instead, as she predicts, the soldier's only salary is death: "Ihr vergeht wie der Rauch!"[95] In scene 1 as well, Courage reveals the "benefits" accruing to war's worker. The sergeant angrily denounces her prediction of his death: "Du hast mich beschissen." Courage retorts, "Das hast du dich selber an dem Tag wo du Soldat geworden bist."[96] These soldiers are only so many lambs to the slaughter, as are the workers in capitalism, as Brecht makes clear in *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* when a worker becomes canned flesh at the factory of the meat king, Pierpont Mauler.[97]

Finally, this symbolic translation of the universal war of capitalism includes the war of the small against the small. First we note a parallel between the drama and capitalism in the source of this particular war. The Marxist description of capitalism sees in unemployment a structural element, by which the price of labour is kept down as workers compete with each other for too few jobs.[98] That is, the scarcity of the means of life — which is the meaning of a scarcity of jobs — forces workers to war with one another. In the drama, too, scarcity (part of the war of the great) causes the war of the small against the small. When the chaplain defends Eilif's slaughter of the peasants for their oxen — an example of the war of the small against the small in the form of soldier

---

[94] *GW* 4:1402; see Jendreiek 203.

[95] *GW* 4:1367; see also no.44 of the *Kriegsfibel* (*GW* 10:1043), and "Der Führer wird euch erzählen" (*GW* 9:737).

[96] *GW* 4:1356.

[97] *GW* 2:689; see also 9:447 where the "Kalb" is the German worker, while the "Metzger" is Hitler.

[98] *MEW* 23:665-666.

against peasant — he puts his finger on the reason for Eilif's asocial behaviour: "unser Herr hat aus fünf Broten fünfhundert herzaubern können, da war eben keine Not, und da konnt er auch verlangen, daß man seinen Nächsten liebt, denn man war satt. Heutzutage ist das anders."[99] In other words, scarcity forces people to compete for the means to life, and so puts an end to "brotherly love". (So Eilif starves fellow soldiers to motivate them to kill peasants — other little people — to steal their oxen.)[100] Courage says much the same thing when she points to the cause of the soldiers' brutal plundering: "Sie kriegen wochenlang nichts zu fressen, und wenn sie dann kriegen, durch Plündern, fallen sie über die Frauenzimmer her."[101] In other words, Courage says of the soldiers' barbarism, as Shen Te said of her lover's brutality: "Es kommt alles von der Not."[102]

In the drama the war of small against small assumes various forms: unpaid and hungry soldiers compete with the peasants to satisfy their needs, stealing food from them as in Eilif's theft of oxen;[103] peasants in scene 11 assist in the destruction of their neighbours in Halle in order to protect their own means to life (their livestock); unpaid soldiers in scene 3 extort money from and plunder Courage (by her own definition one of the little people);[104] in scene 8 the cook and the chaplain compete for a place with Courage, their breadwinner, the cook disparaging the chaplain's business advice and work ethic, the chaplain condemning the cook's immorality.[105]

When the sergeant speaks of seizing another's labour, he not only alludes to the universal war and exploitation which constitute capitalism, he also defends the brutal atomization of human community which such universal war implies. He

---

[99] *GW* 4:1364.
[100] *GW* 4:1364.
[101] *GW* 4:1377.
[102] *GW* 4:1567.
[103] *GW* 4:1362.
[104] *GW* 4:1391.
[105] *GW* 4:1412-14, 1416-17.

points to a world, as Brecht said of capitalism, where people are to one another as wolves.[106] In such a world, "Wer niemandem schädigt / Kommt in unserem Lande unter die Räder";[107] people may rescue a child about to fall under the wheels of an automobile, but they have no feeling for their fellows: "Aber hier liegen viele unter dem Wagen, und es gehen viele vorüber und tun nicht dergleichen."[108] Since everyone is a competitor, individuals become isolated monads, concerned only for themselves and without regard for others. Indeed, where everyone is a competitor, it follows that the individual's advantage is predicated upon a competitor's misfortune.[109] In this situation any intimacy between monads may reveal a weakness to be exploited, so that even friendship becomes a cause for distrust. The armourer answers, when Courage asks him why he does not sell his contraband to another: "Weil ich ihm nicht trau, wir sind befreundet."[110] Yvette echoes this when, in connection with her disease (another injury associated with "business"), she blames her reduced circumstances on familiarity: "Beim Zweiten Finnischen kennen mich alle."[111] We are reminded of another parable on capitalism, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, in which Shen Te is warned, when she reveals she has a friend: "Dann nimm dich nur in acht vor ihm."[112] *Mutter Courage* abounds in examples of the brutality to which such social atomization leads: soldiers trample peasants' crops without regard for the starvation to which they expose their victims; Eilif "bargains" with peasants, that

---

[106] Implied when Brecht says socialism is that place "in dem der Mensch dem Menschen kein Wolf ist" (*GW* 10:865).

[107] *GW* 9:720-721, 720.

[108] *GW* 9:738.

[109] On people profiting from others' misery in capitalism, see *GW* 2:690, 705; 12:557.

[110] *GW* 4:1369. This is a refinement probably introduced as Brecht prepared for the German premiere in 1948. In earlier versions Brecht, as expected, wrote: "Wir sind verfeindet." By contradicting expectation with the revision he expresses more strikingly a truth about the nature of friendship in a universally warring society. See *HK* 52-53, and U42-W42.

[111] *GW* 4:1370.

[112] *GW* 4:1525.

is, he deceives and massacres them for their oxen; peasants sacrifice the people of Halle for the sake of their livestock; the same peasants help the army silence Kattrin; the chaplain questions the wisdom of paying the full price for Schweizerkas; the cook refuses to take Kattrin to Utrecht, and so condemns her to remain in the war; even the cook's inn is a windfall resulting from his mother's death (as Yvette's wealth results from her ancient husband's demise).[113] Two examples in particular demonstrate the brutality of relations in *Mutter Courage*.

Yvette provides a grisly demonstration of the asocial. In scene 3 she has just arranged that her protector advance her money for the purchase of Courage's wagon (made possible by Schweizerkas's threatened execution, and so one more example of benefitting from another's misery). No sooner have the details been arranged than Yvette climbs into the wagon to claim her wares. Impatient that Yvette bargain for her Schweizerkas, Courage pulls Yvette down and out from the wagon with the reproach: "Du Hyänenvieh, es geht um Schweizerkas."[114]

Yvette is the first in the drama to be branded a hyena, and the epithet is fitting. Not only because she calls to mind the hyena's famous ghoulishness when she takes advantage of her friend's plight, but also because her actions mimic the creature. Half-buried in the wagon whose wares are given up to her grasping, she recalls the hyena which, when the prey is large enough, dives into the still-warm carcass in its haste to gorge on the innards.[115]

Scene 10 also presents a tableau of the asocial.[116] Courage and Kattrin drag their wagon past a farmhouse and stop to listen to a song which comes from within:[117]

---

[113] *GW* 4:1393 (crops), 1363-1364 (livestock and Eilif), 1430 (peasants and livestock), 1434-1435 (peasants and Kattrin), 1386 (chaplain and Schweizerkas), 1424 (cook and Kattrin), 1422 (cook and inn), 1416-1417 (Yvette).

[114] *GW* 4:1387-1388.

[115] Kruuk 124-125.

[116] Jendreiek 191-192, 206.

[117] *GW* 4:1429.

Uns hat eine Ros ergetzet
Im Garten mittenan
Die hat sehr schön geblühet
Haben sie im März gesetzet
Und nicht umsonst gemühet.
Wohl denen, die ein Garten han.
Sie hat so schön geblühet.

Und wenn die Schneewind wehen
Und blasen durch den Tann
Es kann uns wenig g'schehen
Wir habens Dach gerichtet
Mit Moos und Stroh verdichtet.
Wohl denen, die ein Dach jetzt han
Wenn solche Schneewind wehen.

A voice sings a hymn to its solitary comfort: "Wohl denen, die ein Dach jetzt han," which it enjoys even in these evil times of "Schneewind" or war. Well-being is represented by images of protection (*Dach*) and sensual pleasure (*Ros*). It is a contentment which receives its fullest meaning only in the dramatic context, for Courage and her daughter are the counterexample: by standing in the "Schneewind" they represent the misery of those with neither roof nor garden.[118] But this is not only a fable about preparedness ("Wir habens Dach gerichtet") and endeavour ("Haben sie im März gesetzet / Und nicht umsonst gemühet"). It is also a song about comfort secured by excluding the world, by caulking up the chinks through which the "Schneewind" might come ("Wir habens Dach gerichtet / Mit Moos und Stroh verdichtet"). It is a "closure" which requires that others — like Courage and Kattrin — be left exposed to the elements.

Moreover, in this song the garden itself is a sign of the asocial. In fact the garden — at least before 1948 — was for Brecht often an image of exclusive ownership and privilege (in a rebellion against his father he defended those who

---

[118] See Eric Bentley, "The Songs in *Mother Courage*," *Varieties of Literary Experience: Eighteen Essays in World Literature*, ed. Stanley Burnshaw (New York: New York University, 1962) 46.

had stolen apples from the neighbouring fenced garden saying: "was Bäume machen, gehört niemand.")[119] Thus even the garden and its product, the rose, represent a private and asocial paradise. A bourgeois paradise is signalled since this is no mere hut or cottage before us, but a house (*Bauernhaus*), which raises the image, not of the poor subsistence farmer who also works for others (like the *Häusler*), but of the relatively privileged large farmer who hires others. It is a paradise founded on the opposition between those who have (a house and garden) and those who have not. In this way the song develops the theme of the asocial met one scene earlier, in the image of the locked parsonage which kept the "Schneewind" from a preacher of "Nächstenliebe". The song also comments on Courage's own asocial behaviour, especially as it is revealed in her lullaby with the "murderous thought" that happiness requires the misery of others.[120]

MORALITY AND IDEOLOGY

The sergeant lashes out at the dissolution in this land, at the "Schlamperei". For him the chief evidence of the peasants' moral decline is:

---

[119] Mittenzwei, *Das Leben* 27. Mittenzwei relies on a reminiscence of Brecht's younger brother Walter to describe this, "einen dieser frühen Vorfälle." However, this incident, which Mittenzwei's account seems to place in Brecht's "Volksschulzeit", is also reported in Brecht's diaries, dated 15 September 1920, and so significantly later; see *Tagebücher 1920-1922 — Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1920-1954*, ed. Herta Ramthun (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975) 65. See "Der Kirschdieb" (*GW* 9:816); "Wiegenlied" No. 2 (*GW* 9:430) with its "Kohlenberge / Mit 'nem Zaun drum" (*GW* 10:861); "Garden in Progress" which says of Charles Laughton's private paradise, "Leider ist der schöne Garten ... / Auf brüchiges Gestein gebaut" (*GW* 10:886). It is not clear in "Der Pflaumenbaum" (*GW* 9:647) whether the *Gitter* is protective or to be associated with notions of oppression and deprivation, such as "too little sun".The fenced garden of "Der Blumengarten," one of the "Bukower Elegien" (*GW* 10:1009) seems a positive interpretation of the motif; yet, this was written after the uprising of June 17, 1953, so that the garden could be seen as a metaphor for a sealed and secured East Germany, as a miniature "Socialism in One Land" in which the flowers (i.e. socialism) might bloom, a notion which is not indisputably positive (compare Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 28).

[120] *GW* 4:1436-1437; *MC* 187; Jendreiek 206.

"Jeder frißt, was er will...." This is chaos, disorder, it is — peace. What these people need, the sergeant says, is war, that is, order and morality. "Wo soll da Moral herkommen, frag ich? Frieden, das ist nur Schlamperei, erst der Krieg schafft Ordnung."

In the name of order he invokes "morality", a general principle that he does not define but which implies universal validity. Yet the sergeant does reveal the specific content of this vague morality which he calls up to defend order. It is firstly an ascetic morality which rejects pleasure, rejects "eating as one will", and would have the good things of life, so immorally enjoyed by the people, put away, "das Schuhzeug in Ballen und das Korn in Säck." Secondly, it is an exploitative morality, for it promotes the seizure of goods from their (evidently powerless) producers by a powerful non-producer (the goods are seized at the order of an aristocratic officer — Oxenstierna — for use by the Swedish King — apparently the rulers may consume the goods without becoming immoral). This sort of morality is encountered again in scene 2 when Eilif's commander equates teaching peasants *mores* with slaughtering them and stealing their oxen.[121]

Morality, then, is an *ideal* (of apparently universal application) used to conceal or legitimize the *reality* of social inequity, the exploitation of the producers by the rulers. The rulers' use of morality resembles their use of religion to obscure the truth that the war of faith is really a war of plunder for their benefit.[122] In the sergeant's presentation of an ideal, together with its exposure as an idea which veils real conditions, we have a reference to bourgeois ideology, as well as to that unmasking of ideology common to the projects of both Marx and Brecht.

I do not propose here to debate the nature of ideology, for example, whether it be all the products of consciousness, "false consciousness", illusion,

---

[121] Eilif's commander on the "verdreckte Saubauern" murdered by Eilif for oxen: "du hast ihnen Mores gelehrt" (*GW* 4:1362).

[122] See Courage on this, *GW* 4:1375. Brecht in one note calls morality a sort of hypnotic spell cast by the ruling class; see *GW* 15:325.

or propaganda, whether it was or is appropriately understood in a "positive" or "critical" sense. Rather, I intend here with the notion of the Marxist critique of ideology to recall Marx's constant effort to demystify social appearance in order to arrive at social reality, to expose the truths concealed by the ruling ideas of society, which he said were the ideas of the ruling class.[123] This project of demystification was a continuation of the Enlightenment's project of the exposure through science and reason of "the prejudices and lies fostered by priests and kings to bolster their own power,"[124] except that Marx intended to expose the "prejudices and lies" of the "kings" of his own epoch: the bourgeoisie.[125] This intention can be clearly seen in a quotation from Marx's magnum opus, in which he exposes the capitalist illusion that the price of labour *power* is the same thing as the price of *labour* (which in Marx's opinion supports the erroneous notion that the worker is paid for all he or she produces). Speaking of this appearance or illusion, he says:[126]

> Auf dieser Erscheinungsform, die das wirkliche Verhältnis unsichtbar macht und grade sein Gegenteil zeigt, beruhn alle Rechtsvorstellungen des Arbeiters wie des Kapitalisten, alle Mystifikationen der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise, alle ihre Freiheitsillusionen, alle apologetischen Flausen der Vulgärökonomie.

Brecht takes up the method of historical materialism and in his own way continues Marx's project. His writings show that, on this at least, he is in agreement with Georg Lukács in opposing historical materialism to "ideologies, religions, moral and other forms of 'false consciousness,'" in order to "deliver a precise judgement on the capitalist social system, to unmask capitalist society."[127] Brecht, like Lukács, attacked with historical materialism the

---

[123] "Die Gedanken der herrschenden Klasse sind in jeder Epoche die herrschenden Gedanken..." (*MEW* 3:46).

[124] David McLellan, *Ideology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) 5.

[125] McLellan 10-20.

[126] *MEW* 23:562.

[127] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist*

"ideological frills" with which "the bourgeoisie had concealed the true situation," he used historical materialism "to focus the cold rays of science upon these veils and to show how false and misleading they were and how far they were in conflict with the truth."[128] As Brecht said in 1935, it was up to the intellectual who sided with the working class to expose, "durch die Säure der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung ... die nackten Interessen der Bourgeoisie," with this purpose: "die bürgerliche Ideologie zu durchlöchern."[129]

One could expect, then, that Brecht would be suspicious of "ideals" put forward by the rulers or their agents, for as he put it, "Im Maul des Kapitalismus wird das schöne Ideal wie so manches andere Ideal zu einer idealen Gelegenheit, mehr Menschen als bisher auszubeuten...."[130] This scepticism is found in the drama as well, for the sergeant unmasks himself with his own words, by recommending renunciation while he robs others for his king, he exposes on the dramatic level the "lie" (of morality) that bolsters the king's power, and on the symbolic level the "lie" that supports the exploitation practiced by the bourgeoisie, and so he rehearses Brecht's exposure of bourgeois ideology. But this symbolic content is also signalled by the value promoted under the guise of morality, for it is one especially important to capitalism: renunciation.

It is no accident that renunciation should be singled out in this key text. Renunciation provides a meeting point between the literal and symbolic levels of the text. After all, the renunciation of the material world, the idea that the people should reject low materialism, is integral to the teachings of Christianity, which provides the philosophical ground for the ostensible historical moment of the

---

Dialectics, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983) 224. On Brecht and ideology see Heinz Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik und soziale Revolution: Versuche über das Verhältnis von Kunstproduktion, Marxismus und literarischer Tradition in den theoretischen Schriften Bertolt Brechts* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1973) 129-130.

[128] Lukács 224.

[129] *GW* 20:54; see also *GW* 15:474.

[130] *GW* 20:336.

drama. Thus the praise of renunciation which comes from the sergeant is quite at home in the period of the Thirty Years War.

Renunciation is also a value integral to capitalism. As Max Weber demonstrated, the capitalist ethic is necessarily an "inner-worldly asceticism", since survival requires that the capitalist not consume profits (in contrast to the feudal lords' conspicuous consumption),[131] but instead throw profits back into the war of the marketplace.[132] In the drama the Swedish king practices this sort of renunciation since the goods which he seizes are not for his immediate use, but are "reinvested" in his competitive struggle in the war. Here, however, I am more interested in renunciation as a value used to reconcile the exploited to their exploitation.

"Den Arbeitern wird von ihren Aussaugern unaufhörlich Sittlichkeit gepredigt."[133] This statement from Brecht's *Verurteilung der Ethiken* (*Me-Ti*) anticipates by three years the sergeant's words. This *Sittlichkeit* too denigrates the lowly material (to protect the exploiters from the desires of the exploited): "Als niedrig gilt, was für die Niedergehaltenen nützlich ist. Niedrig gilt die ständige Sorge um das Sattwerden...."[134] Thus, in a well-known story by Brecht the exploiters (*Haifische*) recommend to the exploited (*Fischlein*): "Vor allen niedrigen, materialistischen, egoistischen und marxistischen Neigungen müßten sich die Fischlein hüten...."[135] A classic exhortation to renunciation that mirrors that of the sergeant is found in Brecht's *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*, in

---

[131] Powis 25-27.

[132] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958) 95-126. In Marx's words: "Während der klassische Kapitalist den individuellen Konsum als Sünde gegen seine Funktion und 'Enthaltung' von der Akkumulation brandmarkt, ist der modernisierte Kapitalist imstande, die Akkumulation als 'Entsagung' seines Genußtriebes aufzufassen" (*MEW* 23:620; see *AJ* 8.3.41).

[133] *GW* 12:476; examples of this are especially clear in *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, see *GW* 2:674-675, 705.

[134] *GW* 18:235; see also *GW* 9:633.

[135] *GW* 12:395.

which Puntila, the representative of landed capital, recommends to his employee:[136]

> sei bescheiden, es dient zu deinem eigenen Besten. Mit der Begehrlichkeit fängt es an, und im Kittchen endet es. Einen Dienstboten, dem die Augen herausquellen vor Gier, wenn er zum Beispiel sieht, was die Herrschaft ißt, kann kein Brotgeber leiden. Einen Bescheidenen behält man im Dienst, warum nicht? Wenn man sieht, daß er sich abrackert, drückt man ein Auge zu. Aber wenn er nur immer Feierabend haben will und Braten so groß wie Abortdeckel, ekelt er einen einfach an und raus mit ihm!

Brecht rejects such renunciation; he defends "die Lust des Menschen am Sattessen und Trockenwohnen" (pleasures ultimately fulfilled, in his opinion, when the workers finally control their own affairs);[137] he condemns capitalism, that "Organisation des Hungers" with its "Disziplin der Ausgebeuteten."[138]

The criticism of renunciation in *Mutter Courage* also repeats Brecht's attack on the renunciation preached by the Nazis, a self-denial which, as in capitalism and the sergeant's world, is meant only for the workers, for in the Third Reich the Nazi leaders and German capital used the Spartan life of the producers for their own enrichment.[139] Brecht rejects the fascist slogans "Kanonen vor Butter" and "Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz" and their glorification of renunciation — for the worker:[140]

---

[136] *GW* 4:1634; see also *GW* 14:1473-1474.

[137] *GW* 10:865.

[138] *GW* 8:406; note that Macheath in *Dreigroschenroman* embodies just that renunciation which mirrors the bourgeoisie (and Hitler), see *GW* 13:814, 1121.

[139] See *GW* 20:232-233; see also William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960) 231-232. Thus we see here, and will see in the following pages, that it is hasty to say, as Detlev Schöttker did, that National Socialism plays no role in *Mutter Courage*, or that we have here "zeitübergreifende Modelle menschlicher Verhaltensweisen"; see his "Das Nationale als theoretisches Defizit: Bertolt Brecht und die deutsche Geschichte," *Dichter und ihre Nation*, ed. Helmut Scheuer (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993) 446.

[140] *GW* 20:233; see also *GW* 12:442; *GW* 14:1423, 1434; *GW* 18:243.

> Der Anstreicher Hitler predigte den Arbeitern, welche doch in Wahrheit die ganze Nation bekleideten, ohne selber bekleidet zu sein, nährten, ohne selber genährt zu sein, unterbrachten, ohne selber untergebracht zu sein, sie könnten nicht einen wirklichen Staat erlangen, wenn sie nicht opferwillig wären und hartnäckig fortführen, an Essen, Kleider und Wohnen zu denken.

Brecht attacks the renunciation and self-sacrifice promoted by fascism (as an outgrowth of capitalism), a morality whose function was described by Herbert Marcuse in 1934 in terms with which Brecht could have agreed:[141]

> In order to paper over this contradiction [between the real tensions in society and their illusory resolution by decree in fascist Germany], a radical devaluation of the material sphere of existence, of the "external riches" of life, is necessary. They are "overcome" in the "heroism" of poverty and "service," of sacrifice and discipline. For heroic-folkish realism, the fight against materialism is necessary in both theory and practice. It must disavow, in favor of "ideal" values (honor, morality, duty, heroism), the worldly happiness of men that the social order it upholds can never bring about. This tendency toward "idealism", however, is countered by another very strong trend. For monopoly capitalism and its political situation demand from men the utmost exertion and permanent tension in the provision of "worldly" goods that are to be produced. It follows from this that all of life is comprehended under the categories of service and work — a pure "inner-worldly" asceticism.

Here Marcuse cites other "ideal values" besides morality, such as honour, duty, and heroism. This reminds us of the virtues whose absence the recruiter bemoaned as a sign of moral decline: *Manneswort*, *Ehrgefühl*, *Treue*, and *Glaube*. These values show us that it is not only the sergeant's morality, or renunciation, which refers to capitalism. For the recruiter's virtues refer to the ideals of what Brecht called the most brutal form of capitalism.[142] *Manneswort*, for example,

---

[141] From *The Struggle against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State*, in *Negations* 27; see also Marcuse, *Negations* 16, 27-9, 128. See Frank Dietrich Wagner for Brecht's criticism of sacrifice (through productivity as self-realization) as a pillar of his criticism of fascism and capitalism (28-31), and for Brecht's criticism of the fascist glorification of renunciation (145-147, 350).

[142] On Brecht and fascist values see Frank Dietrich Wagner 129-164.

with its suggestion that only a man's word has value, could be said to be an oblique reference to the decidedly "masculine" bent of Nazi values with their exaltation of "soldierly virtues".[143] More important for us, however, are the other virtues named by the recruiter.

Honour, which we will consider again in Chapter 5, was an important term for fascist propaganda.[144] It was a match used to light explosive nationalist resentments against the lost war and the so-called Versailles *Diktat*. The "honour of the German people" was conjured up in order to justify militarization, rearmament, and imperialist tendencies. Racist decrees were promulgated by the Nazis in defense of German blood and honour.[145] Brecht would have no truck with the honour defended by fascism. He simultaneously criticizes the fascists, their notion of honour, and nationalism, when he writes: "Weiß man doch, was für ein Gesindel sich herandrängt, die Ehre eines Volkes verteidigen zu dürfen!"[146] Honour and honours, Brecht tells us, are simply a means with which to fob off the exploited and deflect them from their real interests: "wie verschwenderisch verteilen die Satten Ehre an die, welche sie sättigen, selber hungernd."[147] Brecht rejects honour as an abstraction which obfuscates the real situation of people: "Besser als das Wort *Ehre* ist das Wort *Menschenwürde*. Dabei verschwindet der einzelne nicht so leicht aus dem Gesichtsfeld."[148] And in the drama we see that the recruiter, who apparently supports honour, at the

---

[143] Schoenbaum 53; Detlev J. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everydaylife*, trans. Richard Deveson (1982; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) 148, 176.

[144] Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*, trans. Jean Steinberg (1969; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) 65-66, 149, 230, 251, 339; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 106.

[145] Berghahn 172.

[146] *GW* 18:232.

[147] *GW* 18:232.

[148] *GW* 18:232.

same time calls it into question by his own dishonest trickery which traps peasants into enlisting in the army.

Treue was part of the fascist glorification of an almost feudal loyalty to authority.[149] Characteristic is a speech by Goebbels in 1932 in which he urges loyalty to a series of abstractions that culminate in the leader: "Für dieses Volk opfern wir ... Treue dem Volk, Treue der Idee, Treue der Bewegung und Treue dem Führer!"[150] Brecht rejected such loyalty, which in his view only prolonged the rulers' competitive struggle at the cost of the little people.[151] He mocked *Treue*, especially targetting fascists and their sympathizers, as when he "quotes" Hindenburg: "Treue ist doch det Mark der Ehre!" and continues ironically: "Det sagte schon der olle Hindenburg, und der mußte det doch wissen! Denn wen war der nicht allet treu. Den Kaiser Willem und de Republik und denn den Führen ooch noch."[152] Or when in the same work he says of Göring: "der is treu bis übern Tod hinaus. Det is een Charakterzug von ihn, da kann er ja nischt machen!" In the *Dreigroschenroman* the corrupt chief of police praises *Treue* and tells us what this virtue really means: "Von einem, der treu ist, heißt es: mit dem kann man Pferde stehlen."[153] The recruiter himself calls into question the *Treue* he recommends when he demonstrates his own loyalty by cheating his king with unfit soldiers.[154]

Finally, *Glaube*, or the unquestioning belief in authority, was another virtue in the Nazis' system of values, founded as it was upon the glorification of the uncritical surrender of reason before the Race, the Nation, the State, and,

---

[149] Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany* 148, 162.

[150] Joseph Goebbels, *Goebbels-Reden*, ed. Helmut Heiber (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971) 50.

[151] As he reveals in this passage, in which he criticizes empathy in the theatre since it embraces suspect values: "Wir kriechen.... in den *Wallenstein*, denn wir müssen frei sein für den Konkurrenzkampf und loyal, sonst hört er auf" (*GW* 16:677).

[152] *GW* 20:358.

[153] *GW* 13:977.

[154] See Hein 46.

especially, the Führer.[155] Such a surrender required, as Ernst Bloch put it at the time, "das Vertrauen zu Hitler, im Sinn eines allemal irrationalen Glaubens."[156]

Brecht abhorred such uncritical attitudes; they were a "vice" to him.[157] Indeed, his historical materialist viewpoint was at its core a relentlessly critical theory that reflected its founder's favorite motto: *de omnibus dubitandum.*[158] Brecht's advocacy of critical thought (which was not limited to the criticism of capitalism)[159] is represented by his encomium, *Lob des Zweifels.*[160] For Brecht critical thought meant progress, belief meant regression, as his Galileo reveals when he replaces religious faith with scientific reason: "Denn wo der Glaube tausend Jahre gesessen hat, eben da sitzt jetzt der Zweifel."[161] For Brecht, in contrast to the fascists, there was nothing more useful than "der Zweifel am Führer," especially "wenn er ins Unglück führt."[162] And Brecht attacks the *Glaube* of the fascists in his demystification of the Nazi pimp-become-martyr,

---

[155] Bracher 10, 21, 47, 251, 148.

[156] Ernst Bloch, *Politische Messungen, Pestzeit, Vormärz* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970) 114.

[157] "Kritiklosigkeit" was listed among other vices, such as brutality, fanaticism, nationalism, and the desire for war; see his *Me-Ti*, *GW* 12:519; see also *GW* 9:626; 12:527; 16:567; 18:235, 237; 19:393; see Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 163; Frank Dietrich Wagner 106-108.

[158] Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York: Ungar, 1965) 257; see also Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik* 132-134.

[159] He also cast a critical eye on his "own". In his *Me-Ti*, for instance, he refuses simply to believe all that was charged at the Moscow Trials, and demands proof: "Wenn man von mir verlangt, daß ich etwas Beweisbares glaube (ohne den Beweis), so ist das, wie wenn man von mir verlangt, daß ich etwas Unbeweisbares glaube. Ich tue es nicht" (*GW* 12:538). And in 1938 Brecht, even if he welcomed what he called "die Gläubigkeit der proletarischen Klasse an ihren Endsieg" (in his estimation the correct inference to draw from the historical process), still he was disturbed by the workers' too easy acceptance of other things told them (presumably in this case by the Communist Party): "Ihre damit eng verbundene Gläubigkeit an so manches andere, was man ihnen sagt, beunruhigt mich allerdings" (*GW* 19:414).

[160] *GW* 9:626.

[161] *GW* 3:1233.

[162] *GW* 18:235.

Horst Wessel, when a fascist laments: "Die Kommunisten sind Leute, die überhaupt keinen *Glauben* haben und denen man immer Beweise liefern muß," and then presents his own view of faith in authority: "Aber feine Leute, anständige Leute müssen einander nicht immer Beweise bringen, daß sie anständig sind: sie *glauben* sich das einfach."[163]

The recruiter once again undermines his own value. He endorses *Glaube*, but his own dishonesty and trickery show how unwise it is to believe uncritically in either those who wield power or their agents.[164]

If the sergeant and the recruiter first draw our attention to the question of ideology, it is the chaplain who is the representative ideologue of *Mutter Courage*.[165] He is also a meeting place for the world of the drama and its subtext. For in the Church Brecht saw an ideological support for the prevailing society, whether feudal or capitalist.[166] The Church, like all ideologues, Brecht thought, supports the current ruling class by obscuring the real state of affairs. This was Brecht's position even in his "nihilistic" phase. In his early *Legende vom toten Soldaten*, for instance, where the German state, during World War I, sends an exhumed soldier back to the front to die a second "hero's" death, a priest blesses the deed by creating a fog of incense, "daß [der Soldat] nicht stinken kann."[167] Later, in *Leben des Galilei*, a repressive Church (which represents both ruling class and ideologue) hides and anathematizes the truths discovered by early empirical science: "die kirche (dh die obrigkeit) verteidigte die bibellehre ausschließlich, um sich, ihre autorität, ihre möglichkeit zu

---

[163] *GW* 20:215.

[164] Again, see Hein 46.

[165] See Thiele 150-151.

[166] Jendreiek 165-166, 171; a classic example of the Church or religion supporting the ruling class is found in *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, especially *GW* 2:674, 720-721, 746, 770; see Jendreiek 130-138; Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 132-133, 139.

[167] *GW* 8:257; see also *GW* 9:645.

unterdrücken und auszubeuten, zu verteidigen."[168] That the role of the Church is the same in capitalism can be seen from *Das Lied von eurem Pfund und unserm Pfund*. There a priest sanctions capitalism (and obscures its injustice) by means of the parable of the talents: "Wer mit dem Pfund nicht wuchert, das der Herr ihm gab / Sprach der Pfarrer, dem nimmt es Gott krumm."[169] This priest's function, like those of his fellows, Brecht might have said, is to make others "dumm".[170] This is precisely the function of the chaplain in *Mutter Courage*, for when he brags that he can make the troops believe their armed foes a mere "Hammelherd", and think their lives "ein alter verstunkener Fußlappen, den sie wegwerfen in Gedanken an den Endsieg," then he is saying: "Ich predig, daß ... Hören und Sehen vergeht."[171] He must preach the little people senseless, otherwise they might notice that he, like the sergeant, delivers a message full of hypocrisy.

For the chaplain, like the sergeant, and in keeping with the ostensibly other-worldly Church he represents, stands for renunciation; he makes life seem, as he said, "ein alter verstunkener Fußlappen." His message is the same "Geschwatz der Pfaffen," which Brecht said maintained, "daß der schreckliche Hunger gestillt werde, wenn die Mägen verfault sind."[172] Here again is the sergeant's morality of hunger. The chaplain too, pretends to frown on "solche niedrigen Bedürfnisse" such as menial labour (*Holzhacken*) and eating (*Essen*).[173] Yet it is the chaplain who is the epicure of this drama. When the starving cook reminisces about the "good old days" in the army, and remembers how they might have enjoyed "einen fetten Kapaun ... in Senfsoße mit bissel gelbe Rüben," it is the chaplain, as connoiseur, who corrects the cook's taste:

---

[168] *AJ* 6.4.44.

[169] *GW* 9:590; compare *GW* 13:1153-1165.

[170] *GW* 9:590; see also "Tödliche Verwirrung" *GW* 9:498.

[171] *GW* 4:1406; see Jendreiek 171.

[172] *GW* 10:865; on the otherworldliness of the Church as anathema for Brecht, see Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 133.

[173] *GW* 4:1406.

"Rotkohl. Zum Kapaun Rotkohl."[174] And when, along with the rest of Courage's camp, he has been captured by Imperial troops, and Courage tries to keep her business alive, and Schweizerkas's hidden strongbox endangers them all, the chaplain has this assessesment of their predicament: "Die Milch ist gut. Was die Quantitäten betrifft, werden wir unsere schwedischen Appetite ja jetzt etwas einschränken müssen. Wir sind eben besiegt."[175] Courage exposes the "inner-worldly appetite" of this voluptuary when she likens him to a divining-rod for meat: "So wie der kann keiner Fleisch aussuchen, wie im Schlafwandel, so sicher."[176]

Courage's declaration is ambiguous; *Fleisch* may refer to delights other than food — delights about which the chaplain is no less hypocritical. Indeed, "fornication" is his real object when he censures "solche niedrigen Bedürfnisse." He has just proposed a "closer relationship" with Courage. When she proves reluctant, he assures her: "was ich mit *enger* mein, das ist keine Beziehung mit Essen und Holzhacken und solche niedrigen Bedürfnisse."[177] The chaplain also denounces sexual appetites when he condemns the cook's promiscuity.[178] But in the text it is he who approaches Kattrin with the groping question: "Und wer ist diese einnehmende Person?"; and it is his own preoccupation with the flesh that leads him to entertain the cook with lewd jokes.[179]

The chaplain, then, mimics the rulers and their representatives when he pretends to esteem "higher" values while pursuing "lowly" material objects. He is hypocritical: like the officer who justifies keeping his soldiers' pay by pointing

---

[174] *GW* 4:1418.

[175] *GW* 4:1379.

[176] *GW* 4:1379; On the chaplain as a connoisseur of flesh, see Hein 79.

[177] *GW* 4:1406; Herbert Frenken notes how Brecht's imagery of pleasure often associates eating and sexual relations, see his *Das Frauenbild in Brechts Lyrik* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1993) 116.

[178] *GW* 4:1417.

[179] *GW* 4:1373.

out that they must fight this war of the faith for him for nothing;[180] like the officer who invokes his "ideals" and simultaneously unmasks them when he says of the peasants: "Wir sind gekommen, ihnen ihre Seelen zu retten, und was tun sie, als unverschämte und verdreckte Saubauern? Uns ihr Vieh wegtreiben!";[181] like the king who, in the name of morality, has the labour of others seized for his own use. In other words, the chaplain represents the same morality of renunciation that we have seen is integral to the ideology of capitalism.

The chaplain supports a morality of renunciation for the little people, while obscuring his and his masters' neglect of that virtue; implicitly, then, he defends the want suffered by the little people at the hands of their lords; in this way he indirectly legitimizes the rulers' war (and so on the symbolic level, like his confrère in *Das Lied von eurem Pfund und unserm Pfund*, legitimizes the expropriation of the worker by the capitalist). But he also directly supports that war.[182] The chaplain, for instance, gives religious sanction to the war, he raises the war to a "higher" plane by asserting that it is "kein gewöhnlicher, sondern ein besonderer [Krieg], wo für den Glauben geführt wird, und also Gott wohlgefällig."[183] Courage gives the lie to this statement when she tells us that the real motive for the rulers' war is not righteousness and "alles, was gut und schön ist," but profit.[184] The chaplain tells the cook it is a blessing to die in a war of the faith; yet he himself will not be a martyr, for when the Imperial troops attack, he immediately tries to cover up his clerical robes, worrying: "Wenn ich einen Mantel über hat."[185] In defense of his master's war, the chaplain is ready even to distort a story from the Bible: in order to justify Eilif's slaughter of peasants for their oxen the chaplain says: "unser Herr hat aus fünf Broten

---

[180] *GW* 4:1400.
[181] *GW* 4:1362.
[182] Jendreiek 168-171.
[183] *GW* 4:1373.
[184] *GW* 4:1375.
[185] *GW* 4:1376.

fünfhundert herzaubern können, da war eben keine Not, und da konnt er auch verlangen, daß man seinen Nächsten liebt, denn man war satt. Heutzutage ist das anders."[186] The officer then demonstrates the baleful effect of the ideologue by following his lead. He justifies Eilif's deed, pointing to the food that Courage's son has given his soldiers, and cites scripture: "Heißts nicht in der Schrift: Was du dem geringsten von meinen Brüdern getan hast, hast du mir getan?"[187] (We note the criticism that lies in the ambiguity of the phrase "least of my brothers". Are they the men Eilif feeds, or the peasants he massacres?)

Even an apparently humane act by the chaplain turns out to veil the truth to the advantage of the rulers. Thus, when the chaplain has Eilif's execution concealed from Courage, he not only spares her terrible pain, but simultaneously "blinds" her (as he blinds the soldiers) to the result of her involvement in war, and so hides from her that the real meaning of war is death not profit.[188] (We remember that Courage at the end gathers hope from the idea that Eilif still exists, and that she has someone to whom she may go.)[189]

As a last comment on ideology we note that bourgeois ideology in Brecht's view also makes the existing social system seem the end of history, so that no further fundamental change can be entertained. For the bourgeois, Brecht said, "es hat eine Geschichte gegeben, es gibt jetzt keine mehr."[190] The attempt to give their ideas an aura of "finality" (Marx would have said the status of a law of nature)[191] Brecht credited to the desire of the bourgeoisie "sich Dauer ... und den Anschein von Endgültigkeit zu geben."[192] The chaplain, then, is an

---

[186] *GW* 4:1364.

[187] *GW* 4:1364.

[188] *GW* 4:1419-1420; compare Roy Pascal, *Brecht's Misgivings: The 1977 Bithell Memorial Lecture* (London: The Institute of Germanic Studies, 1977) 5.

[189] *GW* 4:1437.

[190] *GW* 20:151; see *MEW* 4:139.

[191] *MEW* 4:478.

[192] *GW* 20:160; see also, on the appearance of nature assumed by bourgeois society, *GW* 15:297, 459; 16:538.

ideologue who perpetuates the existing state of affairs by proclaiming war eternal (which could also refer to the Nazis' own claims to eternal presence with their Thousand Year Reich).[193] He bases his view partly on a cynical assessment of the soldiers at Courage's tent: "Mit denen da draußen zum Beispiel, die ihren Branntwein im Regen saufen, getrau ich mich hundert Jahr einen Krieg nach dem andern zu machen...." (He presumes that their "brutishness" is their nature, but does not consider that war may be to blame for their behaviour.) He goes on to allow that war may accidentally meet with interruption, but defeats the hope of change by assuring Courage that war is endless: "So hat [der Krieg] im ganzen nix Ernstliches zu fürchten, und ein langes Leben liegt vor ihm."[194]

This may be the place to comment on an apparent reform of the chaplain. In scene 8 the chaplain asks the cook not to drive him out of Courage's camp; he claims that he has become a better person and unable any longer to preach to others. In the *Couragemodell* Brecht writes: "Seine Angst, den Arbeitsplatz zu verlieren, verlieh ihm eine neue Würde."[195] Brecht's statement may lend support to the idea that the chaplain is indeed reformed, but it is difficult to believe in this improvement. For shortly afterward, when he discovers that the cook is a notorious Don Juan, the chaplain, once more his old self, self-righteously casts a slur on the cook's character in order to drive this rival mouth out of Courage's camp.[196] And, though he assured the cook that he had become a better person and could no longer preach, he swiftly changes back into his clerical robes when peace arrives; that is, he reaffirms his position as cleric, and so as preacher. Furthermore, when he follows Eilif to the latter's execution he not only acts as pastor, but also returns in his robes of office to his former regiment, and so presumably to his job as ideologue (especially since war begins

---

[193] See also *GW* 9:627; Frank Dietrich Wagner 158-162.

[194] *GW* 4:1401-1402; Pascal believes these lines reflect the chaplain's indignation and despair (5).

[195] *MC* 172.

[196] *GW* 4:1416-1418.

again).[197] Others have tried to see a more humane side to the chaplain, citing his care for the wounded outside Magdeburg and his compassion toward Kattrin (even though it is he who first suggests that Courage's daughter is a burden).[198] However, the chaplain's allegedly humane deeds must always be set against his promotion of a system that makes such "humane" actions necessary in the first place.[199]

In sum, the sergeant signals with "morality" the general question of bourgeois ideology, a question that is elaborated through the particular values which he and the recruiter invoke, values which Brecht criticized as part of his attack on capitalism and fascism. In *Mutter Courage* these values are criticized as well, since the text reveals the contradiction between these values and the truth of social inequity which they mask and legitimatize. Furthermore, the exposure of bourgeois ideology is performed on the chaplain, the chief ideologue of the drama. As ideologues of war, the sergeant, the recruiter, and the chaplain are also ideologues of capitalism.

ORDERED CHAOS

Peace, says the sergeant as the advocate of war, is "disorder" (*Schlamperei*), it is chaos: "erst der Krieg schafft Ordnung." He does not mean that war creates order with a concluding peace, since peace itself is the disorder in which humanity runs wild: "die Menschheit schießt ins Kraut im Frieden." He does not rehearse here the familiar *ex bello pax, ex pace ubertas*,[200] for

---

[197] Hein (81) is mistaken to say, of his accompaniment of Eilif, that the chaplain has become a true "Seelsorger" after leaving the profession, for he has not left his calling; see also Pascal 5; Thiele, however, is right to say: "für den Feldprediger bleibt alles beim alten, indem er sein Priestergewand wieder anlegt..." (37).

[198] When he says to Courage, as she considers ransoming Schweizerkas: "Sie haben eine erwerbsunfähige Tochter aufm Hals" (*GW* 4:1388).

[199] See, for example, Pascal 4-8.

[200] See Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, eds., *Emblemata: Handbuch zur*

according to the sergeant it is the plenty — at least when in the hands of its producers — wherein lies the problem. Rather, the sergeant means to say: "war is order". Not only is war order, he concludes, but order in effect creates war: "Ohne Ordnung kein Krieg!" Order and War, then, are for him twinned notions opposing Disorder and Peace.[201]

How does war make order? Does this passage simply mean that war is order in that it calls for an orderly marshalling and disposition of resources? This is an obvious interpretation, for the sergeant is indeed talking about collecting recruits, clothing, and food, and organizing them in lists, sacks, and bundles for use in war. But the interpretation, though partially correct, omits an aspect essential to this order.

Namely, the order which the sergeant defends is based on the expropriation of the producers, upon seizing what others have made. This arrogation implies that the producers are deprived in some way, since the sergeant's seizure of goods in the name of morality — yet another "order" — robs the peasants of the food they so "sinfully" enjoy. This expropriation implies a second privation in the form of a loss of freedom, for we infer that the dispossessed must be subject to their expropriators when they do not oppose the confiscation of their own products. Further, we see that this confiscation means that the many are forced to suffer want so that the few may enjoy the ensuing gains, since both peasant and soldier, the drama tells us, starve while their rulers gorge. The sergeant's order, then, expropriates the many for the few, the peasants for the nobility.

This expropriation is clearly another form of the exploitation which we have seen is common to both the feudal world of the drama and its subtext, capitalism. That is, the action which creates order for the sergeant, is also that

---

Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967), particularly the emblems by Andreas Alciat (col.840) and Mathias Holtzwart (cols.1499-1500).

[201] See Thiele 50.

which for Brecht creates the order of capitalism. Capitalism, Brecht tells us, is "ein ökonomisch-politisches System, das den Mangel der vielen zum Vorteil der wenigen macht...."[202] Similarly Brecht alludes to capitalist order in *Leben des Galilei* when the title figure asks: "Warum ist die Ordnung in diesem Land nur die Ordnung einer leeren Lade, und die Notwendigkeit nur die, sich zu Tode zu arbeiten."[203] The connection to capitalism is plainer when we consider that Ziffel in the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* tells us that fascism (and thus capitalism), "wo eine besondere Ordnung herrscht," is also a place where something else rules (for the ruled): "Knappheit".[204]

Force is implied in the expropriation of the peasants, and it is also implied in the expropriation of the workers by the capitalists. In *Die Horst-Wessel-Legende* Brecht dissolves the outlines of business, prostitution, and National Socialism, among other things in order to demonstrate the character of this force.[205] The pimp and Nazi hero Wessel, we are told, is like a small entrepreneur (he is after all no Krupp): "Er läßt jene für sich arbeiten, die auf keine andere Weise, als indem sie sich verkaufen, ihr Leben machen können, und der preßt Profit für sich heraus bei dieser Arbeit."[206] The prostitute (a metaphor for the worker) has no freedom, she must work for the pimp (see footnote 234). He controls access to the "means of production"; she has nothing else to sell but herself, her own "labour power". The passage reminds one of Marx's comment on the peculiar nature of the worker's freedom. The worker, he says, is free "in dem Doppelsinn, daß er als freie Person über seine Arbeitskraft als seine Ware verfügt, daß er andrerseits andre Waren nicht zu verkaufen hat, los und ledig, frei

---

[202] *GW* 20:239.

[203] *GW* 3:1295.

[204] *GW* 14:1390; In the poem, "Der Kriegsgott," whose title figure obviously represents both the German Right and Hitler, this god of war and "großer Ordnungsmann" recalls the requisitioning sergeant when he tells "wie er die Scheunen überall ordnete, indem er sie leerte" (*GW* 9:733).

[205] *GW* 20:209-219.

[206] *GW* 20:210.

ist von allen zur Verwirklichung seiner Arbeitskraft nötiger Sachen."[207] In other words, in order to live the "defenseless" worker (*los und ledig*) is compelled to labour for the one who owns the means of production.[208] Given this unfreedom, this social coercion, Brecht describes in *Die Horst-Wessel-Legende* the "Vereinigung von Kapital und Arbeit" (to continue the metaphor of prostitution) in terms which might also describe the sergeant's confiscations, namely as a "schreckliche Vergewaltigung".[209]

The nature of the sergeant's order and its symbolic referent is revealed. Once again war (as order) is seen to be "business" or capitalism; for war and business are both orders based on forced expropriation.[210] But there is something peculiar about this order which is war: it is chaos. The drama contradicts the sergeant; we see that war does not create order, on the contrary, war is social and economic disorder, it is hunger, and misery for all except the privileged few. In other words, war as organized misery is orderly chaos — or chaotic order.

This, in fact, is how Brecht sees capitalism. Liberals in the Weimar Republic might have worried that their order would give way to chaos (typically worrying more about the threat from the left than the right);[211] Brecht rejects their assumption; he holds that even a liberal democratic system would be no order, for capitalism is no order. "Zum Umsturz aller bestehenden Ordnung aufzurufen / Scheint furchtbar," Brecht says of the communist call to revolution, "aber das Bestehende ist keine Ordnung."[212] Capitalism is for Brecht "the

---

[207] *MEW* 23:183.

[208] *MEW* 23:603.

[209] *GW* 20:215.

[210] On Brecht's association of war, order, and exploitation, see White 102.

[211] See Bracher 71; Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic*, trans. P. S. Falla (1984; London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) 12, 35; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 29-32, 50-51, 68; Berghahn 79.

[212] *GW* 9:503.

organized chaos of our time," it is at once "ein System der Willkür" and "systematische Willkür."[213]

Brecht's ideas on capitalism as organized chaos are informed by what Marx called one of the fundamental contradictions of bourgeois society, namely that capitalism, which requires an ever greater rationalization of production within a particular enterprise, operates within the greater chaos of the free market:[214]

> Während die kapitalistische Produktionsweise in jedem individuellem Geschäft Ökonomie erzwingt, erzeugt ihr anarchisches System der Konkurrenz die maßloseste Verschwendung der gesellschaftlichen Produktionsmittel und Arbeitskräfte....

Therefore, if with "der Krieg schafft Ordnung" the sergeant says that war is the essence of the order of capitalism, that disorder is essential to that particular order; with "ohne Ordnung kein Krieg," he says in effect, "without the order of capitalism there can be no war." In other words, the sergeant (against his "will") produces a different form of the thought uttered by Brecht in the *Couragemodell*: "Das Proletariat als Klasse kann den Krieg abschaffen, indem es den Kapitalismus abschafft."[215]

Since Brecht sees in fascism a form of capitalism, it would be remiss not to consider another meaning of this joining of war, order, disorder, and capitalism. For the fascist is unmistakable in that military figure who bemoans the degeneracy of peace and yearns for war to restore order and morality.[216]

---

[213] "Zweifellos ist ja bei dem organisierten Chaos unseres Zeitalters die Rechnung oft eine Milchmädchenrechnung..." (*GW* 19:370); The phrase occurs in a discussion of realism from 1940; its larger context is of no importance for our discussion; "Die bedrückenden Maßnahmen sind also nicht einfach *Unsinn*; innerhalb des kapitalistischen Systems sind sie kein Unsinn. Unsinnig ist das kapitalistische System. Das *Willkürliche* der Maßnahmen wird ganz und gar unwillkürlich in einem Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftssystem, das ein System der Willkür ist, systematische Willkür" (*GW* 20:261); see also *GW* 20:67, 106, 335; 2:671, 781; 8:398, 406; 9:463; *AJ* 4.10.41.

[214] *MEW* 23:552; see also *MEW* 23:526.

[215] *MC* 190.

[216] On Brecht's criticism of order in regard to fascism, see Frank Dietrich

The German Right saw in the peace of the Weimar Republic a manifestation of disorder and dissolution, of "Schlamperei".[217] Among other things, this peace meant for them: the Treaty of Versailles with its seizure of German territory and assets and the assessment of punitive reparations;[218] the shameful pacifism of the German parliamentary government represented, for example, by the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the myth of the *Dolchstoß*;[219] the decline of the family with its loving and devoted mother, obedient children, and father in undisputed authority (even though this ideal family had never existed in German society);[220] the disturbing appearance of the "new woman", who was moving from traditional domestic employment both into areas once the domain of male workers and into the new white-collar jobs that had appeared after the war (though this was largely an exaggerated image of the "new woman" created in the mind of the public by the mass media);[221] the moral deterioration evidenced by a greater openness to discussions of sexuality, and by campaigns against laws that made crimes of abortion (§218) and homosexuality (§175);[222] the drastic drop in population growth, the so-called *Volkstod*, which seemed to indicate a degeneration of the reproductive health of the Nation;[223] the unsettling gains of the workers as represented by the 8-hour day and compulsory legal arbitration guaranteed by the Republic (even though the

---

Wagner 350.

[217] Kolb tells us that the Right viewed the Weimar Republic (a view still in vogue shortly after World War II) as "a morass of corruption, degeneracy, national humiliation...." etc.; Kolb 130.

[218] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 42-46, 121-122.

[219] Kolb 35-37.

[220] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 92, 93, 105.

[221] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 86, 96-101, 105-106.

[222] Kolb 90; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 104, 144, 244; Berghahn 32-33.

[223] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 101-102.

average worker scarcely experienced an improvement in the standard of living before 1929);[224] and finally, economic stagnation and disaster, especially with the advent of the Great Depression.[225]

When the sergeant cries out against the "Schlamperei" of peace, he echoes the German Right. And when he prescribes the healing sword of war he also echoes the Right which desired war as a means: to create colonies, *Lebensraum*, new markets, and an economic boost, to put woman back in her place as housewife and mother and restore to his rightful place the "masterful warrior male", to end social tensions through a "total mobilization" of society under authoritarian guidance; in short, war was to establish the Order fit for the German People in the eyes of National Socialism.[226]

This, then, is the content of the sergeant's discourse on peace and war, order and disorder. It is a convergence of war, order, and disorder which has capitalism and fascism as its ultimate referents.

QUANTIFICATION

War, the drama tells us, means death for the little people, death in every sense; not only are they put to the sword, but, subject to the rulers and their military creatures, brutalized by the war of all against all, forced by their rulers to endure privation, the little people suffer death by diminishment. Robbed of their freedom to self-determination, of their human dignity, they "die" as human beings only to be reincarnated in lesser forms, as beasts and objects.

Marx describes such a "death" for the workers in capitalism, one brought about not only by their subjugation to the capitalist who exploits and controls them, but also by the work process itself:[227]

---

[224] Kolb 79-81; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 123, 125; Berghahn 105-106, 108.

[225] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 66, 115-117.

[226] Kolb 99-100; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 105, 227, 229-230, 241-244.

[227] *MEW* 23:674.

> Innerhalb des kapitalistischen Systems vollziehn sich alle Methoden zur Steigerung der gesellschaftlichen Produktivkraft der Arbeit auf Kosten des individuellen Arbeiters; alle Mittel zur Entwicklung der Produktion schlagen um in Beherrschungs- und Exploitationsmittel des Produzenten, verstümmeln den Arbeiter in einen Teilmenschen, entwürdigen ihn zum Anhängsel der Maschine....

Marx saw this dehumanization even at the beginning of capitalism:[228]

> [Die Manufaktur] verkrüppelt den Arbeiter in eine Abnormität, indem sie sein Detailgeschick treibhausmäßig fördert durch Unterdrückung einer Welt von produktiven Trieben und Anlagen, wie man in den La-Plata-Staaten ein ganzes Tier abschlachtet, um sein Fell oder sein Talg zu erbeuten. Die besondren Teilarbeiten werden nicht nur unter verschiedne Individuen verteilt, sondern das Individuum selbst wird geteilt, in das automatische Triebwerk einer Teilarbeit verwandelt und die abgeschmackte Fabel des Menenius Agrippa verwirklicht, die einen Menschen als bloßes Fragment seines eignen Körpers darstellt.

Brecht also draws attention to this debasement of workers. In capitalism, he says, the masses are dehumanized:[229] "Menschen werden da wie Äcker betrachtet oder wie Rinder."[230] How "like cattle" people become in capitalism is gruesomely portrayed in *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* when an industrial accident transforms a worker into canned meat (so that he represents both the beast usually made into meat, and the commodity or thing which he already was for the capitalist).[231] Then there is Puntila, who buys his labour at a market as though at a stockyard,[232] and who points up the loss of humanity inherent in dependent labour when he says to his employee: "Bist du ein Mensch? Vorhin hast du gesagt, du bist ein Chauffeur. Gelt, jetzt hab ich dich auf einem Widerspruch ertappt!"[233]

---

[228] *MEW* 23:381-382.
[229] *GW* 19:298; see also *GW* 2:671.
[230] *GW* 16:538.
[231] *GW* 2:689.
[232] See scene 4, *GW* 4:1633-1641.
[233] *GW* 4:1614.

In *Mutter Courage* Brecht refers to this dehumanization through one of his favourite metaphors for the reduction of a worker to a thing in capitalism: the prostitute.[234] As we saw in the previous section, the prostitute represents the worker who must sell her very self, for all she has to trade on the market is her "labour power"; she is the commodity, the incarnation of labour alienated from itself.[235] In this case the prostitute of *Mutter Courage* underlines her "thinghood" in a simile that not only alludes to her infection, but also associates her with an object that is at once commodity and beast: "alle gehen um mich herum wie um einen faulen Fisch."[236] Another example of dehumanization is found in scene 1 where a representative of business treats people "wie Rinder", for Courage's sons are her draft animals, a point which the recruiter underlines when he mocks Eilif and Schweizerkas: "Ihr solltet lieber Jakob Ochs und Esau Ochs heißen, weil ihr doch den Wagen zieht."[237] However, the dehumanizing aspect of capitalism is signalled in another way in *Mutter Courage*.

Since everything in capitalism is calculated according to profitability, Max Weber noted, everything becomes reduced to a money value.[238] This idea was further elaborated by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Bourgeois society, they said, is "ruled by equivalence" which "makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities." Thus the phenomenal world is reduced by instrumental reason (*Verstand*), and it does so

---

[234] On the prostitute as Brecht's "prototype" of capitalist reification, alienation, and division of labour, see Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 82; Nussbaum, *The Image of Woman* 78-136.

[235] Compare *GW* 20:212 note 1.

[236] *GW* 4:1370.

[237] *GW* 4:1353. Walter Boeddinghaus has examined the animal metaphors used in the drama, and he also sees in this image an expression of dehumanization, though not as a result of capitalism, but only as a result of war, which he says makes human and beast one and the same (83). The second role of animal metaphor, in his opinion, is to show that the subhuman realm [Kattrin] is the source of a new humanity (81). See his "Bestie Mensch in Brechts *Mutter Courage*," *Acta Germanica* 2 (1967): 81-88.

[238] Max Weber 18-19.

in the name of utility, for the "Enlightenment [which is the equivalent term in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* for instrumental reason and bourgeois society] behaves towards things as a dictator towards men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them."[239] The effect of this instrumental reason on human products is that use-values, such as beef and leather, which are incommensurable (as the peasant forced to eat his leather straps would confirm),[240] are made comparable as various quantities of exchange value.[241] This sort of "equality", however, is a loss, for in their reduction to number these products lose what is specific to them.

Nor do human beings escape this reduction in capitalism. The worker is simply one quantity among others for the capitalist to manipulate.[242] In capitalism the incommensurable agent of labour is reduced to a quantitative measurement of labour power, to a packet of exchange value; the human being, then, is reduced to mere number. In the words of Adorno and Horkheimer, "where the evolution of the machine has already turned into that of the machinery of domination," the technical and social tendencies "converge in the total schematization of men," and the masses are reduced to "mere objects of the administered life."[243] (The "administered life" describes what Herbert Marcuse would later call the "totalitarian universe of technological rationality," a world permeated by commodification and so by instrumentalization with its reduction of the world in the name of the exchange principle; its synonym is monopoly or late capitalism.)[244]

---

[239] Horkheimer and Adorno 9.

[240] Courage in scene 2: "Ich hab welche gesehn, ... die schlecken sich die Finger nach einem gekochten Lederriemen" (*GW* 4:1361).

[241] *MEW* 23:50-52.

[242] "Von dem Augenblicke, wo [der Arbeiter] in die Werkstätte des Kapitalisten trat, gehörte der Gebrauchswert seiner Arbeitskraft, also ihr Gebrauch, die Arbeit, dem Kapitalisten.... Der Arbeitsprozeß ist ein Prozeß *zwischen Dingen*, die der Kapitalist gekauft hat, zwischen ihm gehörigen Dingen" (emphasis added; *MEW* 23:200).

[243] Horkheimer and Adorno 35, 38.

[244] See Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984) 38,

Brecht alludes to this quantification of human beings when he says of work in capitalism: "Die Arbeit bedroht das Individuum. Arbeitsprozeß und Arbeitsprodukt merzen alles Individuelle aus."[245] And we hear overtones of Marx when Brecht says that the masses in capitalism become crippled, "one-sided", and emptied of their content (*entleert*).[246] With "*Entleeren*" Brecht captures the essence of the reduction of quality to quantity, in which the person is "emptied" of content only to become, as a receptacle of exchange value, an abstraction. But Brecht also refers more directly to the idea of quantification.

For example, despite his belief in science, in the beneficial aspect of "number" as the means to wrest freedom from necessity,[247] despite his mockery of romantic humanists who were unprepared for truth in a more sober, scientific form as something "Zahlenmäßiges, Trockenes, Faktisches,"[248] despite, that is,

---

124; Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 1990) 30; Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1964) 123, 32. We see signs of the administered world in *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*. There we encounter a "totalitarian" coercion into uniformity, in which the individual is absorbed and eliminated in a whole which is regimented and militaristic (*Kapell / marschieren*). This suggests not only the bureaucratic administered society of monopoly capitalism, but also the *Gleichschaltung* of Hitler's Germany (see for example the "Kapelle" or the fascist "Iberin-Choral" in *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe*, which is ordered: "Alles mitsingen! Spontan!"; *GW* 3:929). In scene 3 we may even see a sign of this bureaucratic and militaristic regimentation in an instance which recalls the regimentation even of leisure as described by Adorno and Horkheimer. In Yvette's *Lied vom Fraternisieren* we see that the cook, as a member of the army, has both his professional and private life regulated by the regimental drum in a manner not unlike that of the factory whistle. For the drum not only controls official action: "Dann wurd getrommelt... / Dann ist der Feind, mein Liebster auch / Aus unsrer Stadt marschiert."; it also regulates less official actions: "Dann wurd getrommelt... / Dann nahm der Feind uns hintern Strauch / Und hat fraternisiert"(*GW* 4:1371).

[245] *GW* 18:274.

[246] *GW* 19:316.

[247] See on beneficial number, for example, his *Leben des Galilei*, *GW* 3:1322.

[248] *GW* 18:224.

his continuing allegiance to the Enlightenment, Brecht could sense the "dark side" of number when in the thrall of exchange value.[249] For example, like Adorno and Horkheimer, Brecht draws our attention to the reduction to number effected by instrumental reason, as when *die Oberin* from *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* denies her horse any particular existence, it could just as well be "Käse oder Stiefel," for: "was dort / Mit seinen Hufen scharrt, sind hundert Pesos!"[250] And a most clear reference to the quantification I have been discussing, one which refers to people, comes from an earlier work, *Die Maßnahme*, where a merchant sings: "Ich weiß nicht, was ein Mensch ist / Ich kenne nur seinen Preis."[251]

It is this fetish of number, born of instrumentalization and quantification, in the name of the exchange principle and in the name of the domination of nature and people, that informs the sergeant's words: "Wie viele junge Leut und gute Gäul diese Stadt da vorn hat, weiß kein Mensch, es ist niemals gezählt worden."

This is no simple report. The sergeant, we remember, is outraged at the immorality of these people who eat as they like. But this is not the only symptom of the vice and moral turpitude of these people, another is that they have never counted their youth and horse. This, too, offends the sergeant. Why? Because everything in his order must take its place in "ordentliche Listen und Registraturen," everything must be "sauber gezählt". It is as if these things had no reality until they had been transformed into numbers.[252] Goethe's Mephistopheles might have said to the sergeant as well: "was ihr nicht rechnet, glaubt ihr, sei nicht wahr."[253]

---

[249] Brecht's attachment to the Enlightenment can be gauged from his plans for a Diderot Society; see *GW* 15:305; see also Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik* 269-272.

[250] *GW* 3:991.

[251] *GW* 2:651.

[252] "That which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion" (Horkheimer and Adorno 7).

[253] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Faust II," in vol.3 of *Goethes Werke*, ed.

"Ich bin in Gegenden gekommen, wo kein Krieg war vielleicht siebzig Jahr, da hatten die Leut überhaupt noch keine Namen, die kannten sich selber nicht." This appears at first a comic portrayal of rural idiocy, for without names, one thinks, these yokels can know neither one another, nor even themselves.

Reflection, however, reveals that names for the sergeant are equivalent to numbers. And he is right. For names do not more fully represent a person; on the contrary, names are abstractions. "Der Name einer Sache ist ihrer Natur ganz äußerlich. Ich weiß nichts vom Menschen, wenn ich weiß, daß ein Mensch Jacobus heißt," as Marx said.[254] Adorno and Horkheimer also suggest that "naming" — in the form of scientific classification (for which the grand project of Linnaeus may stand as example) — is an abstraction which (no less than the reduction of the world to abstract quantity) enables domination and exploitation.[255]

Names and numbers, then, are equivalent; in this text they both represent reductive instrumental reason. And what is so scandalous about their absence?

> Nur wo Krieg ist, gibts ordentliche Listen und Registraturen, kommt das Schuhzeug in Ballen und das Korn in Säck, wird Mensch und Vieh sauber gezählt und weggebracht, weil man eben weiß: Ohne Ordnung kein Krieg!

Here is the trespass. Instrumental reason has one goal: instrumentalization. Bourgeois society, Adorno and Horkheimer say, can only know things in so far as it can use them, and this requires their reduction to abstract quantity. Ziffel the physicist tells us no less in Brecht's *Flüchtlingsgespräche* when (of capitalism as fascism) he says: "Alles, was weggeschmissen wird oder verdirbt oder zerstört wird, muß aufm Papier stehen und numeriert sein, das ist die Ordnung."[256] The

---

Erich Trunze, 4th ed., 14 vols. (Hamburg: Christian Wegner, 1959) line 4920.

[254] In regard to the uninformative names of currencies, *MEW* 23:115.

[255] "Disqualified nature becomes the chaotic matter of mere classification, and the all-powerful self becomes mere possession — abstract identity" (Horkheimer and Adorno 10). One thinks of Adam's naming of the beasts as the enabling act to his God-given dominion over them (Gen. 2:19-20).

[256] *GW* 14:1388.

sergeant, the advocate of War and Capital, also wants all things to take their place as ciphers in his lists — so that they may be carried off for his king's war. But the sergeant comes up against something unheard of — a place not ruled by instrumental reason. Unnamed and unnumbered, the things and people of this village obstruct him, they insist on their irreducibility (even as the fulfilment associated with their resistance — "Jeder frißt was er will" — questions the self-evidence of an ascetic morality). They call into question the instrumental reduction which is second nature to the sergeant. Faced with a radical challenge to an unquestioned part of his being, the sergeant can only respond with indignant incomprehension and condemnation.[257]

A text from Brecht's *Couragemodell* supports my interpretation of the sergeant's remarks:[258]

> Die große Unordnung im Krieg beginnt mit der Ordnung, die Desorganisation mit der Organisation. Die Sorgenbringer haben noch Sorgen. Wir hören Beschwerden, daß, den Krieg in Gang zu bringen, Verstand nötig sei. So sind die Kriegsleute Geschäftsleute. Der Feldwebel hat ein Büchlein, das er zu Rate zieht, der Werber hat eine Landkarte gegen die Landschaft. Die Verschmelzung von Krieg und Geschäft kann nicht früh genug etabliert werden.

Again we see war and business inseparably fused through the identity of their agents: "So sind die Kriegsleute Geschäftsleute." Again we discover disorder based on "order", the code for capitalism. Again we discover war and capitalism as a unity associated with misery, for it is to both the "Kriegsleute" and the "Geschäftsleute" that the term "Sorgenbringer" applies. But these associations of business, war, misery, and disordered order are tied here to yet another important notion: *Verstand.*

Instrumental reason or *Verstand*, we saw above, is that rationality which Adorno and Horkheimer said underlies the reduction in capitalism of the world

---

[257] As we hear in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, "whatever does not conform to the rule of computation and utility is suspect" (Horkheimer and Adorno 6).

[258] *MC* 136; see also *MC* 22.

and people to number in the name of the exchange principle. In contrast to dialectical reason or *Vernunft*, which is speculative and synthetic, instrumental reason is practical and analytic; it is the reason of traditional science and the Enlightenment, that splitting and dissecting reason so repellent to Goethe.[259] Instrumental reason breaks up the world into isolated, finite monads and conceives them in fixed relationships.[260] Though essential for the mastery of the world, for the human project of securing freedom from necessity, instrumental reason, we have seen, also carries with it the threat of domination and oppression.

To return to Brecht's note. We are told that *Verstand* is necessary to begin the war, *therefore* the agents of war are agents of business. Rationality as *Verstand*, then, is a determining instance for these bringers of misery; that is, rationality becomes a determinant of misery in the form of the unity of war and business. We find a similar idea in two notes by Brecht, one which associates capitalistic rationality ("Rationalisierungsprozeß") with loss ("Verarmungsprozeß"),[261] while the other couples this rationality with the misery of the working class: "der wirtschaftliche Prozeß [brachte] gleichzeitig eine sogenannte Rationalisierung ... eine Durchvernünftigung, die diesen Schichten schwere Opfer auferlegte...."[262] True, Brecht is a notoriously unsystematic thinker, and his use of specialized terminology sometimes lacks precision (in the second of the notes just mentioned he later uses the term *Vernunft* in a context where precision would have called for *Verstand*); yet, in

---

[259] The opposition of *Verstand* and *Vernunft* has its roots in Hegel. For a brief description of *Verstand* and *Vernunft* see Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941; Boston: Beacon Press, 1960) 44-48; See also Jay 37, 72-73; Richard Friedenthal, *Goethe: Sein Leben und seine Zeit* (Munich: Piper, 1963) 362.

[260] Recent science has begun to question the linear, analytic assumptions of traditional science; see for example James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin, 1988) 181, 185, 298-299.

[261] *GW* 15:273.

[262] *GW* 20:164.

light of the above evidence, it is probably no accident that Brecht's note from the *Couragemodell* describes a rationality that is oppressive and brings misery with precisely that term which names the instrumental reason of capitalism: *Verstand*.[263]

Furthermore, we see that the agents of war and business are not only tied to instrumental rationality through use of the term *Verstand*. Immediately after establishing this association, and in order to illustrate it, Brecht attaches to these "Sorgenbringer" two emblems and tools of instrumental reason: the book and the map. Accounting (*Listen*, *Registraturen*) and cartography were both important to historical progress, yet at the same time they represent the "dark side" of the Enlightenment, they too reduce the world to abstract quantity: the map flattens the world into a two-dimensional schema on which the recruiter plots his thieving expropriations; the sergeant's book or ledger reduces resources and human beings to ciphers.

The meaning of Courage's assertion, "der Krieg ist nix als die Geschäfte," is clear. Business and war are inseparable, they are "the same thing". Furthermore the analogies between the world of the drama and capitalism, especially analogies such as "ordered chaos" and "quantification", but also the universal war with its exploitation and brutalization, the unmasking of ideology, and the engine of profit which drives the world; all these analogies form a constellation of notions that point unmistakably from the text, from the fusion of

---

[263] A good example of Brecht's use of terminology is found in "Rede über die Widerstandskraft der Vernunft" (1937) *GW* 20:254. Here again he names the rationality placed at the service of war *Vernunft*, when it would be more aptly called *Verstand*, if he were using the terminology derived from Hegel: "Die Quantität der Vernunft, welche die herrschenden Schichten benötigen, um die laufenden Geschäfte zu führen, hängt nicht von ihrem freien Beschluß ab; in einem modernen Staatswesen ist sie beträchtlich, und sie wird beträchtlicher, wenn diese Geschäfte mit anderen Mitteln fortgeführt werden müssen, nämlich im Krieg. Der moderne Krieg verschlingt enorm viel Vernunft."

war and business, to capitalism as Brecht understood it. Capitalism, then, is the symbolic referent of the world of *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder.*

COURAGE AS SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

War is business implies that business is war. Thus Courage logically implies that her own business is war. In a superficial sense this is plainly true, for she makes war her business. But Courage's business is war in a deeper sense as well. We will see that Courage's behaviour reproduces the chief characteristics of the war as they have been described in this chapter; that is, Courage reproduces the world of the drama. And, as the world of the drama represents capitalism, so Courage represents, or better, incarnates, capitalism.[264]

By splitting Courage off from the drama in this way my interpretation threatens itself to succumb to "instrumental reason". For, even if this separation assists my interpretation, still it forgets that Courage cannot be separated from the world of the drama. The war is always seen in conjunction with Courage's business, the war is always refracted through Courage. It is as though the war only existed in order to tell us Courage's tale, as though the war were only Courage's story writ large. However, this separation is only temporary, and already at this point a synthesis has begun.

The correspondences between Courage and the world of the drama as the fusion of war and "business" occur throughout the drama. But, as in the case of the parallel between the world of the drama and capitalism, these correspondences are first disclosed at a most sensitive moment — the beginning. For Courage this means her entrance song, which follows hard on the important dialogue of the sergeant and the recruiter. A few words about this formal arrangement are in order.

---

[264] And so offers supplementary evidence for the thesis that the world of the drama represents capitalism.

The opening dialogue, we have seen, first establishes the parallel between the world of the drama and capitalism. In other words, the fusion of war and "business", which Brecht said needed to be fixed as early as possible, is already established in the text at the earliest moment. But it is developed from one side only. Superficially representing war, the soldiers in their dialogue reveal the identity between themselves and business. It is only after this that Courage, the superficial representative of business, enters and establishes the identity between herself and war. The opening dialogue, then, is the first section of a conceptual chiasmus which is completed only with Courage's entrance. More than this, the opening dialogue sets the context for Courage's song, and so for Courage herself not only as a dramatic, but also as a symbolic, figure. For the soldiers' dialogue sounds themes which reappear in Courage's song, and these shared themes are mutually resonated. Therefore, when the dialogue closes with the appearance of Courage's little band and the sergeant asks: "Wer seid ihr?", the answer, "Geschäftsleut", requires as its sequel the song, which defines Courage as a representative of the unity of business and war.

This reveals how misguided, if well-intentioned, it was to uproot Courage's introductory song and place it even before the soldiers' dialogue as a kind of prologue.[265] This shift, it was hoped, would help initiate a criticism of Courage by underlining her "long road" to, and so her deliberate participation in, war. The real result — for it failed in its aim — was to obstruct the important task of the song: defining Courage, and turn it instead into a conventional overture that merely signals "the show is about to begin."[266] This dislocation "de-epicizes" the song since it no longer intrudes on the relatively naturalistic prose of the soldiers, and so no longer draws attention to its content as it would if left in its original position. Brecht's thoughts on this displacement may be

---

[265] Thiele, on the other hand, believes that the song is loosely placed (54).

[266] See the section "Der lange Weg in den Krieg" in the *Couragemodell*, in *MC* 130-132; see also Hennenberg, *Das Große Brecht-Liederbuch* 3:421.

reflected in the fact that no text authorized by him for publication included this revision. Instead Brecht's text places the song, as it should, after Courage has identified herself as "Geschäftsleut":

Ihr Hauptleut, laßt die Trommel ruhen
Und laßt eur Fußvolk halten an:
Mutter Courage, die kommt mit Schuhen
In denens besser laufen kann.
Mit seinen Läusen und Getieren
Bagage, Kanone und Gespann -
Soll es euch in die Schlacht marschieren
So will es gute Schuhe han.
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.

Ihr Hauptleut, eure Leut marschieren
Euch ohne Wurst nicht in den Tod.
Laßt die Courage sie erst kurieren
Mit Wein von Leibs- und Geistesnot.
Kanonen auf die leeren Mägen
Ihr Hauptleut, das ist nicht gesund.
Doch sind sie satt, habt meinen Segen
Und führt sie in den Höllenschlund.
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.

"Geschäftsleut": this is Courage; and, as this answer is like the headword of a dictionary entry, so the song is its definition.[267] To be a business person, it says, is to be like Courage: a dealer in war. The song shows us that Courage chooses between the two groups into which the population of the drama is divided, the great and the small, and she chooses the great, the rulers. That is, she sides with those whose interests are represented by war. It is a choice revealed when she addresses, not the common soldiers, but their officers, the

[267] See Jendreiek 173, 200.

"Hauptleut".[268] Courage's identification with the rulers is only appropriate, for as a sutler, as a businesswoman, she like the rulers, is involved in war only "für Gewinn."[269]

Courage's "engine", like the rulers', is profit. This, as so much else, is first revealed in Courage's entrance song. There we see that she is not concerned that the soldiers have food and drink; rather, she is interested only in their money; when they can no longer buy, she dismisses them: "Doch sind sie satt, habt meinen Segen / Und führt sie in den Höllenschlund." Once again Courage establishes a connection to the interests of the rulers when she blesses (*Segen*) their project. (She also reveals her link to the capitalist, whose "treibendes Motiv," Marx says, is not "Gebrauchswert und Genuß," but "Tauschwert und dessen Vermehrung.")[270] In reality, then, Courage supplies in the first place not the soldiers, but the rulers and the war, she prepares the soldiers for their leaders, for the march "in den Tod".

Her interest in profit alone, and not in the alleviation of need is also evident in her later actions. She is not interested in the needs of people, to a parched soldier she says: "Kein Geld, kein Schnaps"; to a rain-drenched soldier who asks for brandy she replies: "Ersts Geld!"[271] Even those in dire need fall victim to her hunger for profit: she will not give up shirts as bandages — because the wounded cannot pay for them: "Ich gib nix. Die zahlen nicht, warum, die haben nix."[272]

A further sign that Courage's interest in war is only as a source of profit is found in her indifference toward it as a war of religion. She discounts religion as a motive for the war, both for herself and for the rulers, as we saw above when she said that war was not carried out "aus Gottesfurcht und für alles, was

---

[268] Compare Wölfel 539.
[269] *GW* 4:1375.
[270] *MEW* 23:618.
[271] *GW* 4:1397, 1401.
[272] *GW* 4:1397.

gut und schön ist," but for "Gewinn". Nor does she have a stake in the religious solution, since, as she later informs the chaplain: "Ich hab ... keine Seel."[273] Her lack of interest in the religious question is also evident in her smooth shift from supplying the Protestant forces to provisioning the Catholics, a representation, perhaps, of the capitalist's economically motivated "tolerance". As Courage says: "Ich frag keinen, wie er heißt und ob er ein Heid ist; wenn er zahlt, ist er kein Heid,"[274] or: "Ein Händler wird nicht nach dem Glauben gefragt, sondern nach dem Preis."[275]

The bond between Courage and the rulers, one which follows from their mutual interest in war, is reinforced by their shared hope that war endures. The chaplain tells us a war which falters will soon be revived and given a long life by the rulers.[276] Courage, too, wishes war a long life: in scene 6 she fears that it will end and put a stop to her business, in scene 8 she is unenthusiastic about the coming of peace and rejoices at the return of war, and at the end of the drama she still places her hopes in war and follows it without reluctance. Nor should we forget that Courage hopes, for the sake of "gute Geschäfte", that all countries be dragged into the war.[277]

Courage has something else in common with the rulers. She "oppresses" and "exploits" others. We have seen, for instance, that she converts her children into draft animals; in this way and in others they contribute their labour to her project, much as the soldiers contribute their labour to the project of their rulers.[278] It is true that Courage does not obviously inflict the same sort of suffering on her children as the rulers do on their soldiers (though one could see a sign of this in the injury and death they suffer from Courage having brought

---

[273] *GW* 4:1404.
[274] *GW* 4:1382.
[275] *GW* 4:1379.
[276] *GW* 4:1402.
[277] *GW* 4:1370.
[278] Jendreiek 186; Hiller 141.

them into war). Still, we may see oppression in Courage's domination of her children. Like the soldiers in the drama, the children have no say either in the business of the world or in their own lives. Courage tells Eilif whether or not he will fight the recruiter or join the army, she tells Schweizerkas how to conduct his affairs, she orders Kattrin to halt when the latter is about to run off. That the children are oppressed is evident from their desire to "escape" their mother, the sons into the army, Kattrin into marriage. But Courage's imitation of the exploitation carried out by the rulers is also a reproduction of another characteristic of the world of the drama: the universal war.

A sign of the universal war is found in Courage's wariness. She trusts no one, not customer, not friend, not even her child. When the sergeant gives her a coin she tests its metal saying she has been cheated before;[279] when she tries to sell her wagon to Yvette, it is only with the intention of tricking her "friend" out of it with the money from Schweizerkas's cashbox;[280] when the chaplain brings her son's greetings, her first reaction is suspicion: "Was will er denn, ich hab kein Geld übrig." [281]

In this universal war the destruction and misery of others is the price for one's own gain. This, as I have said before, is the "murderous" content of Courage's lullaby, in which her hopes for the happiness of her children ("meine sind froh") means that others must suffer ("Nachbars Bälg greinen").[282] A similar idea underlies Courage's portrayal of her youthful egoism in the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*. For when she thinks that she is "was ganz Besonderes," and not "wie jede beliebige Häuslertochter," she implies that she has the right to something better, not because it is hers as it is everyone else's, but because she

---

[279] *GW* 4:1359.

[280] *GW* 4:1386-7.

[281] *GW* 4:1372. See Jendreiek 187.

[282] *GW* 4:1436; Nussbaum calls Courage's exclusive love for her children a "typical middle-class approach to life" (*The Image of Woman* 390).

is better than someone else. In other words, someone must be diminished so that she may benefit.

Further examples of Courage's asocial behaviour, familiar to us from Chapter 1, can be briefly mentioned. She has no sympathy for others: no concern for the soldiers' welfare keeps her from buying their ammunition from the officers, no concern for the wounded causes her to give up her shirts as bandages, no sympathy for the child in the burning hut moves her to do anything but try to keep Kattrin from rushing in to its rescue.[283] The misfortune of others is her profit: starvation drives up the price of her capon, fear in Halle gives her cheaply bought goods, renewed war (and so renewed misery) revives her spirits, Yvette's uncertain future as a diseased prostitute spurs Courage to mislead her friend about the sale of her wagon.[284]

Courage echoes, then, the asocial attitude already encountered in the images of the locked parsonage in scene 9 and the sealed house in scene 10.[285] She lives from the war, yet hopes to keep herself and her children from the misery and destruction which war visits on its participants. But the true enormity of her asocial behaviour, as we saw in Chapter 1, is represented by the purchase of her survival as sutler with the sacrifice of her children, just as the rulers in the drama purchase their existence with the lives of their subjects. It remains only to be said that this universal war and its resultant dehumanization is also first encountered in Courage's entrance song when she brutally consigns the soldiers to Hell at the hands of their officers: "habt meinen Segen / Und führt sie in den Höllenschlund."[286]

We have seen how the sergeant, the recruiter, and the chaplain act as ideologues for their masters' war. Courage, too, can be seen as an ideologue for

---

[283] *GW* 4:1368-1369, 1397.

[284] *GW* 4:1360-1363, 1430, 1420, 1386-1388.

[285] On scene 10 see Jendreiek 206.

[286] She is, then, a hyena from the beginning, contrary to Hein's opinion (38-39).

this war, for she helps to maintain it as the status quo, and not only by provisioning it. Just as the soldiers and the chaplain recommend that the little people renounce pleasure and endure expropriation and exploitation at the hands of their rulers, so Courage advises renunciation to the exploited. In the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation* Courage uses herself as an example of someone with great hopes, who expected her "Suppe ohne Haare", to teach an unrewarded soldier to swallow the bitter pill, to accept "auf dem Arsch und auf den Knien" his unjust treatment and get along as best he can: "Man muß sich nach der Decke strecken." In other words, she teaches resignation before an oppressive "coordination", submission to the march "in der Kapell / Im Gleichschritt"; she teaches that there is nothing to be done, that each of the little people is of little moment with a voice that amounts only to an impotent "kleiner Ton".[287]

The sybaritic chaplain hypocritically counsels asceticism to the little people; Courage does no less. She, whose liaisons demonstrate no self-restraint, would keep her daughter from pleasure, warning her against love, especially with those she herself so often favoured: the soldiers.[288] (Courage's involvement with soldiers shows how she is bound — even libidinally — to war.) Her advice to Kattrin also echoes her desire to participate in war yet have her children do otherwise. This may seem protective, but it is also evidence of her hypocrisy and her withholding of freedom from her grown children.

Like the recruiter, Courage invokes virtues which she has no interest in practising. She warns Schweizerkas to remain honest — even as she engages before his eyes in an illegal trade in ammunition.[289] She makes a token nod towards respect for authority when she reprimands the soldiers who have stolen away from their general's funeral to drink at her wagon — only to serve them

---

[287] *GW* 4:1394-6. See also Jendreiek 182.

[288] "Laß dirs also zur Lehre dienen, Kattrin. Nie fang mir was an mit Soldatenvolk. Die Liebe ist eine Himmelsmacht, ich warn dich" (*GW* 4:1372).

[289] *GW* 4:1368-9.

anyway: "Eine Schand, daß ihr euch vom Begräbnis von eurem toten Feldhauptmann drückt! *Sie schenkt aus.*"[290]

Ideology, we have seen, is unmasked in various ways in the drama as "untruth", as a "lie". Thus the chaplain "lies" when he causes the soldiers to see only sheep where there is an armed and dangerous foe.[291] Courage also lies in that she misrepresents both war and her interest in it. Courage lies to Kattrin when she pretends to an interest in peace (for which she insists her daughter wait before marrying) only to reveal in scene 6 (and again in scene 8) that she has no desire for peace (and so no interest in her daughter's independence). She lies again in scene 6 when she refuses to tell Kattrin the extent of her disfigurement — thus hiding from her daughter one result of her mother's involvement in the war (just as the chaplain refuses to reveal to Courage another result of her pact with war: Eilif's execution). One could even call the promises of her lullaby "lies", including the idea that happiness can be had from war and misery, lies which are refuted by her dead children.

Even Courage's role as ideologue is first raised in her business song, and in a way that alludes to her fellow ideologue, the chaplain. For the wine that Courage brings to soothe the soldiers' fears ("kurieren / Mit Wein von Leibs- und Geistesnot"), like the Word which the chaplain pours into his listeners' ears, only robs them of their senses and makes them manageable tools for their rulers.

Organized chaos is one element which is not so easily localized in any particular moment in Courage's case. It may be seen in the contrast in scene 6 between Courage's rational inventory of her goods and the total impression received from its circumstances: soldiers drinking in the rain outside a city whose churches have been destroyed, while their general, killed through his own blunder, is buried. It may be indicated in scene 2 in Courage's rational bargaining over the price of her capon while surrounded by general starvation. But

---

[290] *GW* 4:1400.
[291] *GW* 4:1406.

Courage's relation to organized chaos is best seen in the general contrast (as in capitalism) between the rational organization that underlies her business activity and the irrational and chaotic ground upon which that business is based: war.

In the sergeant's speech we saw how people and resources are reduced to mere numbers and things. In ways that clearly allude to the reduction by business of everything to abstract quantity according to the exchange principle, Courage also carries out such Circean transformations.[292] The first instance, once again, is found in her entrance song. There we see that the soldiers are for Courage not people with needs, but solely a source of money. That is, as customers they are for Courage mere packets of exchange value. Once their value has been absorbed Courage has no use for them and can "erase" them from her ledger: "Doch sind sie satt ... führt sie in den Höllenschlund."

A temporary reversal of this reduction is found in scene 2. If the soldiers in Courage's song are converted into mere number, in scene 2 a commodity briefly becomes much more than number, which only highlights its subsequent decline into abstract quantity. "Sie, das ist kein gewöhnlicher Kapaun," begins Courage's sales pitch to the cook. The fowl, she boasts, was a cultivated creature — it would eat only when serenaded, and it had its own "Leibmarsch". But there is more to this talented beast. "Es hat rechnen können, so intelligent war es." (But not enough, apparently, to avoid its fate.) And what becomes of this feathered figurer, when it falls into Courage's hands? — "Vierzig Heller."[293]

Even her sons become only bearers of "exchange value" for Courage. In scene 1, for example, the exchange of a belt buckle for money between Courage and the sergeant has sinister import. For the true object of this exchange for the army is not the buckle, but Eilif, and the exchange is the enabling act which ends the expository first scene and initiates the drama proper.

---

[292] See Jendreiek 175.
[293] *GW* 4:1361.

"Es ist nur eine Geldsach." On the surface this estimation by Courage of Schweizerkas's situation after his arrest suggests only that his affair can be easily settled, as it requires simply that money change hands.[294] But we learn differently from Courage's behaviour. For when, by her hesitations and bargaining, she compares her son's value unfavourably to that of her wagon, a reckoning which ultimately destroys him, we discover that even Schweizerkas is for her "nur eine Geldsach."[295] (And when Schweizerkas is for the soldiers no longer a bearer of "exchange value" in the form of a ransom, and thus is present only as a human being? He is eliminated and thrown on the garbage heap, just as Courage delivers her one-time customers to the pit.)

*** *** ***

Within the figure of Courage, then, are reproduced the same elements in the drama which point from its literal meaning to its symbolic meaning, from the world of the drama to capitalism. As war is business, and business is war, so Courage and her world — and Courage and capitalism — are "the same".[296] That is, Courage is not only a dramatic figure, a representation of a seventeenth-century sutler in the Thirty Years War, she is also a symbolic representation of capitalism. Her reproduction of those elements fundamental to Brecht's understanding of capitalism demonstrates how well-founded is the opinion of critics such as Jendreiek who see in her such a symbol. However, her reproduction of these elements shows that the critics need not rely for this interpretation on authorial approval, since the association is inscribed in the text itself.

An important deduction follows from the recognition of Courage's symbolic role. As the representation of the fusion of war and business Courage

---

[294] *GW* 4:1385.

[295] See Thiele 31-32.

[296] So that war is not, as Walter Hinck thought, Courage's "Gegenspieler" (*Die Dramaturgie* 38).

cannot escape war. It is no use, then, to criticize Courage (as Brecht and Jendreiek did) for her deliberate participation in war, for on the symbolic level — which here interferes with interpretations that try to remain on the literal level — Courage's business, like all business, the drama tells us, is inseparable from war. As a representative of business, she brings war with her. We see, then, that there is no purpose to discussing Courage's inhumanity (as we did in Chapter 1) as though it had only to do with her choice to do business with war instead of another partner. In so far as business is war, Courage is necessarily inhuman.

This in turn leads to a curious problem. At the beginning of Chapter 2, the reader will remember, I called attention to the substantial evidence supporting the argument that the war of *Mutter Courage* is "eternal", that there is no place outside of war, no identifiable beginning to war, and no sense of an end to war, short of a "miracle". This argument, one used by many others, if not in so detailed a form, was used to defend Courage, to show that she was not responsible for her participation in war. If war is ubiquitous, that participation is unavoidable.

Now we have learned that Courage's "participation" in war is indeed unavoidable, since she incarnates the fusion of war and business. We see Courage's symbolic content reinforce the impression of an "eternal" war, and yet this comes, not with a denial of the Hyena, but with the recognition that Courage as businesswoman at every moment recreates war and its misery. By closely examining the symbolic content of Courage, we have seen the truth of Jendreiek's assertion that she is capitalism, but paradoxically we have shown that this content undermines Jendreiek's condemnation of Courage's deliberate participation in war. There is an answer to this dilemma, but we have not yet sufficiently developed the content of the figure of Courage to entertain it.

And so the Hyena has returned to centre stage. But she returns in a more developed form than that encountered in Chapter 1. There she was a Hyena because as a dramatic figure she participated in the inhumanity of war. Now we see that she is a Hyena because she incarnates the inhumanity which Brecht's text

portrays as integral to the fusion of war and business, and so integral to capitalism. She is the Hyena, in other words, because she represents Business as Usual.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

CHAPTER 5

THE OUTLAW

"Im Lager da brauchen wir Zucht."

"Ich dacht Würst."[1]

This exchange, in which the recruiter recommends morality while Courage counters with material pleasure, exposes a conflict between Courage and her world which causes the recruiter to warn: "Feldwebel, ich spür einen unbotmäßigen Geist heraus bei der Person." Here is condensed Courage's revolt, one might even say her revolutionary impulse. If in the last chapter Courage seemed a friend to the war and the incarnation of an eternally warring capitalism, if she thus *affirmed* her world, here we will see that she *negates* and subjects to sharp criticism that same world. We will see too that the recruiter has a fine nose, for it turns out indeed that his true enemy is *Wurst*.

*** *** ***

Before proceeding to the content of Courage's rebellion, something ought to be said about its formal placement. The last chapter showed how important the opening is for a correct understanding of the symbolic content of the drama. We saw how the elements of war and business, represented by the soldiers and Courage respectively, formed a chiasmus establishing the identity of business and

---

[1] *GW* 4:1352.

war (as well as the association of this fusion with capitalism). Moreover, through elements introduced with Courage's entrance, she was discovered herself to be a symbolic concentration of the associations of war and business, and so a representation of capitalism. Up to this point she seems in perfect accord with her world and almost unreservedly the Hyena.

How appropriate, then, that this agreement between Courage and her world should be followed by a portrayal of her threat to that very order. It is true that vague intimations of this rebellion can be found in the business song which presents Courage the Hyena. But their full import is only revealed by the insolent exchange between Courage and the two soldiers that follows her song. And in that exchange each of Courage's rebellions finds expression.

This proper sequence of events is disrupted by a formal revision which, if not backed by the "authorized" text, is given some support in the *Couragemodell*, a revision to which I will refer one last time.[2]

I am speaking, of course, of the displacement of Courage's business song from its rightful place in the first scene to the very beginning of the drama as a musical prologue. Now we can gauge how completely this revision disrupts the content of the drama. Not only does this destroy the conceptual chiasmus so important to the symbolic content of the drama, a chiasmus both echoed and illuminated by later moments such as Courage's assertion: "Der Krieg ist nix als die Geschäfte"; not only does this remove the elaboration of the meaning of "Geschäftsleut", used by Courage to identify herself; but now, with the loss of the initial instance of Courage as Hyena, we first meet instead Courage the brazen malapert, and an undue emphasis is given that aspect, so that Courage's symbolic complexity is sacrificed at a crucial moment. Indeed, this revision may have unwittingly contributed to the sympathetic reception of Courage, since it emphasizes her life-affirming and subversive side at the expense of the life-negating, complicitous, and ghoulish Hyena. Since however we have already

---

[2] *MC* 132.

firmly established the Hyena, we can afford now to concentrate on the "subversive" side of Courage.

Courage's revolt is complex. Its several components are not clearly set off from one another like layers of stratified rock. Rather, they are bonded and "in solution" in the drama. Only reflection momentarily precipitates these inseparable elements out of solution for examination. Yet, if Courage's revolt is complex, its essence is "simple": it is materialist. It is materialist first, because it privileges material life over its renunciation. An example of this was already met when Courage counters *Zucht* with *Wurst*. A similiar example was found in Chapter 2 in the "materialist" Mother who answers the death and destruction of war with her life-affirming productivity and nurturing. In fact, the Mother may be considered one of the elements that makes up the revolt of Courage, though I will not consider it in detail here, since it was already sufficiently elaborated in the earlier chapter.

To begin with I am more interested in another component of Courage's materialist revolt. Indeed, this particular revolt could be termed the revolt of the material itself, since with it a historical "object" claims independence and self-determination as a subject. But this object does not establish itself as a subject by denying its materiality; rather, the proud subject makes the privileging of the material integral to its revolt. This second component of Courage's rebellion is the revolt of the "feminine principle".[3]

---

[3] The following pages criticize the views of Lennox, who, tied to a too literal understanding of texts, says Brecht portrays no woman as powerful or a threat to the prevailing order (89-91); of Case, for whom Brecht's central mother roles are "traditional and negative" (73); and of Wedel, who sees no emancipatory image in Brecht's female figures (162).

FIRST 'PRINCIPLES'

The masculine and feminine "principles" are the synthesis of the historical assignment of attributes deemed appropriate to each gender. On the most general level, the masculine stands to the feminine as the subject to the object, which reflects man's long history of social and economic domination of woman. As a result man as subject, as the holder of power and active agent in the world, came to be identified with consciousness, will, and spirit. That is, the masculine became associated with attributes held to distinguish the properly human from nature. To be fully human, in effect, was to be male. Dominated by man, woman on the other hand came to be identified with that which opposed the human, with that Other on which man exercised his will, namely nature or non-conscious matter. (This association was reinforced by the analogy between the mysterious productivity of the earth and that of woman — as evidenced by parturition, lactation, and menstruation.)

The various qualities assigned to the masculine and feminine principles can be seen as a logical elaboration of the notion of man as subject and woman as object. Man, therefore, becomes Spirit to Woman as World, Consciousness to her Matter, Activity to her Passivity, Transcendence to Immanence, Rationality to Emotion, Law to Anarchy, Order to Chaos, Word to the Body, the Unity and Permanence of the Idea to the Flux and Diversity of Nature, the Linear Directedness of History to the Cyclical Stasis of the Natural World, and Technique and Reason to Magic and Superstition.[4]

---

[4] I derive my description of the gender principles (or as she calls them on page 65, "values") from Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (1949; New York: Knopf, 1971) 69, 73-74, 80; for woman as object of man's power see Beauvoir xvi, 73; I have also used Marilyn French, *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* (New York: Summit, 1981) 20-31. Beauvoir's work was published some time ago now, but I still consider it the best description of the fundamental situation of women in our world, and it remains even yet unsurpassed in its depth and breadth, in its acuity and elegance.

From the point of view of the patriarchy, the attributes of the feminine principle may have either a friendly or a threatening aspect.[5] That is, to take up the metaphor of Nature so long a part of the definition of the feminine, the feminine principle can manifest itself as either cornucopia or cataclysm.

Thus, to the discomfiture of the patriarchy, this object, the female and her associated feminine principle, does not present only a single face to the world. To be sure, the feminine principle has a side benevolent to the male, a domesticated side which submits to him and supports his projects, for which submission the female is glorified — if she remains no less subordinated. Mary, for instance, kneels before her Son as God, and for her renunciation of the Flesh and submission to the Spirit she becomes Queen of Heaven and — next to God — sovereign of "mankind".[6] On a more mundane level we have the wife as domestic and helpmate, who obediently and tirelessly sacrifices herself for her husband and "his" progeny, the ever-giving mother who, if she is Nature, is no *locus terribilis* but instead a *locus amoenus* for her weary warrior's recuperation, a creature whose (potentially disruptive) emotions are tamed, sympathy for example becoming a compassion that is at once complement and ornament to the male's hardness in the daily struggle.[7]

But woman, as Simone de Beauvoir said, never quite loses her "magic".[8] There remains always some part of her unconquered by the male, a part that may rebel at any time. This aspect of the feminine principle which remains

---

[5] Patriarchy: "The universal political structure which privileges men at the expense of women...."; in Lisa Tuttle, *Encyclopedia of Feminism* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986) 242.

[6] Beauvoir 170-1.

[7] French 24; on women as the custodian of morality see Roberta Hamilton, *The Liberation of Women: A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism* (London: George Allan & Unwin, 1978) 19-20.

[8] Beauvoir 80.

undomesticated, which threatens patriarchal law and order, has been aptly named the "outlaw feminine principle".[9]

With this evocative term Marilyn French, the American feminist author and cultural guerilla, signals all those qualities of the feminine principle which resist and challenge patriarchal power. In essence the Spirit and the "light" of Reason of the masculine principle is menaced by the refractory Material and the chaotic "night" of the Body represented by the outlaw feminine principle. The outlaw feminine principle, for example, always threatens to subvert the transcendent goals of the male with the pleasure of the body, that dangerous pleasure whose moment he might have linger — "Verweil doch! du bist so schön" — but which would bring a halt to the striving of his spirit.[10]

Courage is this outlaw. To the "idealism" and the "spirituality" of the sergeant and the recruiter, she replies with her "materialism". The sergeant invokes order and morality; Courage points to the soldiers' need for food and clothing. The recruiter invokes moral discipline, Courage answers with physical pleasure. They say Spirit, she says Body; they say *Zucht*, she says *Wurst*. Next, we will examine Courage's materialist, feminist revolt in detail.

KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

If Courage as woman represents Nature in a patriarchal world, then hers is the rebellion of Nature against the overlordship of the Spirit, against the limitations set for nature by the alien authority of the masculine principle. As Nature Courage resists any diminishment of the power of the material through strategies of asceticism, self-sacrifice, or other-worldliness. Consequently, Courage rejects anything that propagates antimaterialistic values, for this necessarily entails her own devaluation as nature, as material, and means to rob

---

[9] French 23-24.
[10] French 23-24.

her of her self-determination. She resists any such arrogation of her freedom, any encroachment upon her independence, any attempt by a domineering patriarchy to turn her into "dumb" matter.

PATERNALISM RESISTED

Courage's independence alone defies the patriarchy: she will not be nature confined. With the apparent exception of her "solid" husband or consort, who at any rate has disappeared along with the rest of her men, Courage is subject to no man.[11] Nor does she hide this "disgrace" in seclusion, like so many unmarried women (and especially unmarried mothers) before and after her. Instead she parades her independence by travelling widely and conducting her own affairs. Proudly she boasts of her liberty: "Ja, ich bin durch die ganze Welt gekommen mit meinem Planwagen."[12]

In this Courage follows her seventeenth-century namesake.[13] Neither she nor Grimmelshausen's Courasche care to remember with Antigone's sister that they are "born women, as who should not strive with men."[14] Both Courage and Courasche transcend the purely domestic realm and act in the world of affairs, and so encroach on what the patriarchy held to be the prerogative of the male.[15] For Grimmelshausen this was a trespass which he underlined by deriving Courasche's name from a euphemism for the symbol of male power: dressed as a man she thrashes a male combatant who, ignorant that she is a woman, had tried to grab her "courage".[16] Brecht's creation derives her name differently, but

---

[11] *GW* 4:1413.

[12] *GW* 4:1353.

[13] Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Lebensbeschreibung der Ertzbetrügerin und Landstörzerin Courasche*, ed. Wolfgang Bender (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967).

[14] Ismene in Sophocles's *Antigone*, in *The Complete Greek Drama*, trans. R. C. Jebb, eds. Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill Jr., 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1938) 1:424.

[15] Volker Meid, *Grimmelshausen: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung* (Munich: Beck, 1984) 159-161.

[16] I was quite surprised to discover that something I had taken for granted,

and on which my above remarks are based, was not at all universally acknowledged by experts on Grimmelshausen, namely that "Courasche" refers not to female, but to *male* genitalia. It seems to me most peculiar that "courage", a masculine virtue in a patriarchal society, should be assigned to a female's genitals. But one need only look at Grimmelshausen's text to see that mine is the more likely interpretation (the relevant passages are found in Grimmelshausen 23-24). First we note that Courasche says that her male combatant grabbed at that "Geschirr ... das ich doch nicht hatte" (23). The "Geschirr" which she *does not have*, of course, are male genitals, a favourite target for battling men. Then, when Courasche, still as a lad, must explain to her commander why she so severely drubbed her opponent, she says it was because he had tried to take her by the "Courasche", "dann ich wolte es verzwicken / und nicht so grob nennen / wie die Schwaben ihre zusammen gelegte Messer..." (24). Grimmelshausen here reminds us, by bringing the terms *Courasche* and *Messer* together with *Geschirr* that the latter derives from *scheren*; that is, *Geschirr* (as we should know already, since it refers to that which Courasche does not have) refers not to a *vessel*, but to a *utensil* or a *tool*, namely male genitals. I believe that the erroneous interpretation that holds "Courasche" to mean "female genitalia" arises first, because it is forgotten that Courasche is speaking as a lad when she makes the association; second, because the masterful and swift transition made by Grimmelshausen from Courasche as the young lad explaining himself to the young woman baring her breasts to her master, causes one to forget that a young lad refers to his "Courasche"; and third, perhaps, because *Geschirr* is today more usually associated with vessels such as jars and pots. (Incidentally, a goldmine for the Freudian interpreter lies in this fascinating joining of male and female genitals with utensils and knives.) The research on Courasche seems to take three paths. First there are those who avoid any speculation on the meaning of Courasche's name, such as Meid. Then there are those who prefer to keep the problem unsolved, like Günther Weydt, who in his *Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen* 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974), says only that "Courasche" was used to euphemistically describe "das Genital" (83). Then there are those like Hans Speier, who in the notes to a translation of the novel (*Courage, The Adventuress and The False Messiah*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964) says "Courasche" refers to female genitals (100); (though he says the word in his text is "Fündli-Messer", which I have not found among the variants of Bender's edition). Even Mathias Feldges, in *Grimmelshausens "Landstörtzerin Courasche": Eine Interpretation nach der Methode des vierfachen Schriftsinnes* (Bern: Francke, 1969), despite the fact that his book everywhere shows how Courasche usurps masculine behaviour, despite his knowing that Courasche's name refers in her case to "Tapferkeit" and "Mannhaftigkeit" (56), despite his being aware that the *Messer* joined with *Courasche* has masculine associations (*Bauernmesser*, he says are called *Hegel*, which refers to a *Zuchtstier*; while another lexicographer he

just as Grimmelshausen's Courasche usurps male power with her name, so Courage seizes the male sceptre.[17]

(And it may be noted here that, just as the two authors differently derive the names of their protagonists, so do their texts differently judge them. Grimmelshausen, the patriarchal moralist, seems to see in Courasche's aggressive activity, in her switch in gender roles, one more symptom of the moral disorder of the world, of which the Thirty Years War is also a symptom.[18] "Unnatural" in her behaviour, Courasche is made even more unnatural, and so her behaviour is condemned, when her author deprives her of her "god-given" female attribute; against nature she is barren and — what is more scandalous — boastful of it.[19]

---

cites saw these knives as references to the penis) (56, note 173); despite all this, Feldges spends his time trying to prove that "Courasche" refers, via "Kürsch", to a woman's pubic hair (55-56). In other words, he misreads Grimmelshausen as well. Even Linda Ellen Feldman, in "The Good *Hausvater*: Patriarchal Elements and the Depiction of Women in Three Works by Grimmelshausen, diss., McGill University, Montreal, 1986, though she shows how Courasche is a "phallic woman" (179-184) who "incongruently" displays the "male quality" of courage (173), though she sees that the "zusammengelegte Messer" refer to male genitals (326), overlooks that Courasche's "phallic" aspect extends even to her name. The commentators on Brecht perpetuate the erroneous notion that "Courasche" refers to female genitals; see *BF* 6:378 and Thiele 24. Of course, interpreters who want to believe that "Courasche" refers to female genitals may find support in the *Grimm Wörterbuch* 1854 ed., which tells us that "zusammengelegte Messer" is a Swabian idiom referring to female genitalia, though this is hardly authoritative since its only illustration of this idiom, about which it says nothing else is known, comes from — Grimmelshausen's *Courasche*. I am at least reassured by Robert L. Hiller and John C. Osborne, who in the introduction to their translation, *The Runagate Courage* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), say (without arguing the point) that her name is a euphemism for the *male* genitalia (20).

[17] Courage earns her name when she drives through the defensive fire of Riga in order to sell her wares (*GW* 4:1351).

[18] In *Courasche*, as in Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*, the author shows the moral perversion of the world; see Meid 108, 111, 131, 159-161.

[19] The boast cannot be missed when she celebrates having made Simplicissimus believe that a child she delivered to him was his own: "Es ist nicht zu glauben / wie hertzlich mich dieser betrug / erfreuete / sonderlich da ich hörete / daß er dessentwegen von sein Obrigkeit so trefflich zu Straff gezogen

In contrast, Brecht's amazon seems to be more positively judged by her author, for she is proudly fecund.)[20]

Courage's independence is no accident of war. She is critical of any relationship that subjects woman to man, including marriage. This is implicit in the absence of a husband despite her many liaisons, but it also receives explicit comment. One example follows the *Lied vom Fraternisieren*, which describes the early experiences of Yvette, the camp prostitute:[21]

> Ich war erst siebzehn Jahre
> Da kam der Feind ins Land.
> Er legte beiseite den Säbel
> Und gab mir freundlich seine Hand.
> Und nach der Maiandacht
> Da kam die Maiennacht
> Das Regiment stand im Geviert
> Dann wurd getrommelt, wies der Brauch
> Dann nahm der Feind uns hintern Strauch
> Und hat fraternisiert.
>
> Da waren viele Feinde
> Und mein Feind war ein Koch
> Ich haßte ihn bei Tage
> Und nachts, da liebte ich ihn doch.

---

worden / und daß ihm diesen Fund sein Weib alle Tag mit Merrettig und Senff auf dem Brod zu essen gab; Item / daß ich den Simpleln guten Glauben gemacht / die Unfruchtbare hätte gebohren!" (Grimmelshausen 131).

[20] Helga Kraft suggests that Grimmelshausen does not condemn Courasche, but positively evaluates her. This correctly registers a textual ambiguity, while naively ascribing a positive evaluation to Courasche's author (on the ambiguity see Meid 159-161). To do this Kraft must ignore Grimmelshausen's social context, his other works, and the negative evaluations found in the work itself, such as Courasche's barrenness. The real source of the "positive evaluation" is not authorial intention, but that fascinating and liberating critical element at the heart of many an ostensibly negative figure (Mephistopheles is an example). See Helga Kraft, "Töchter, die keine Mütter werden: Nonnen, Amazonen, Mätressen: Hildegaard von Bingen, Mechthild von Magdeburg, Grimmelshausens *Courasche*, Gotthold E. Lessings Marwood in *Miss Sara Sampson*," *Mütter-Töchter-Frauen: Weiblichkeitsbilder in der Literatur*, eds. Helga Kraft and Elke Liebs (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993) 47-48.

[21] *GW* 4:1371.

Denn nach der Maiandacht
Da kommt die Maiennacht
Das Regiment steht im Geviert
Dann wird getrommelt, wies der Brauch
Dann nimmt der Feind uns hintern Strauch
Und's wird fraternisiert.

Die Liebe, die ich spürte
War eine Himmelsmacht.
Meine Leut habens nicht begriffen
Daß ich ihn lieb und nicht veracht.
In einer trüben Früh
Begann mein Qual und Müh
Das Regiment stand im Geviert
Dann wurd getrommelt, wies der Brauch
Dann ist der Feind, mein Liebster auch
Aus unsrer Stadt marschiert.

The content of this song cannot be entirely subsumed under the tired notion of the "war of the sexes".[22] The coupling of this tale of seduction and desertion with the war of the drama already suggests that Yvette's story may refer to the universal war as it was described in our last chapter. Light is shed on this by another poem from the same period, in which one member of a pair of lovers says: "Wir waren miteinander nicht befreundet / Als wir einander in den Armen lagen." The title, *Liebeslied aus einer schlechten Zeit*, tells us why this is so: bad times, not the nature of the relationship between man and woman are to blame; and bad times, we have seen, meant for Brecht capitalism (and fascism).[23] But this song also shows how women in patriarchal society ruin their lives when they submit to man; for Yvette is no less "wounded" by the cook even though he had laid aside his sabre, since she, no longer a virgin, is unfit in the eyes of her society for either marriage or the parental home, and so is condemned to sell herself to live. Courage uses Yvette's story to teach her daughter about the relationship between man and woman:[24]

---

[22] Or the old theme of betrayed love (Mennemeier 403).
[23] *GW* 9:748.
[24] *GW* 4:1372.

> Laß dirs also zur Lehre dienen, Kattrin. Nie fang mir was mit Soldatenvolk an. Die Liebe ist eine Himmelsmacht, ich warn dich. Sogar mit die, wo nicht beim Heer sind, ists kein Honigschlecken. Er sagt, er möcht den Boden küssen, über den deine Füß gehn, ... und dann bist du sein Dienstbot.

Slavery under the male follows his courtship, and this Courage will not accept. This is why she interrupts the chaplain's "courtship" of Kattrin when he asks: "wer ist diese einnehmende Person," and answers that her daughter is not captivating but respectable.[25] She will not have Kattrin courted only to become the chaplain's servant.[26]

That Courage correctly understands the hidden agenda of the chaplain, a representative of the patriarchy, is demonstrated in scene 6. There the chaplain suggests to Courage that they establish a more intimate relationship. Courage rejects him. With this she rejects the slavery that hides behind the chaplain's "courtship", and so herself follows the advice that she gave her daughter. We know that slavery lies in the proposition, because the chaplain prefaces it with the complaint that preaching is his métier, not chopping wood. He apparently hopes with his courtship to establish a "closer relationship", one that would allow him to assert his position as head of the household so that Courage would become his *Dienstbot* — and wood chopper.[27] Courage herself seems to think this is his purpose, for her refusal is bound up with an express intention to maintain a more equitable division of labour: "Ich denk [die Beziehung] ist eng genug. Ich koche Ihnens Essen, und Sie betätigen sich und machen zum Beispiel Brennholz."[28] Clearly Courage has no intention of finding herself in the "historical position" of women, "auf dem Arsch und auf den Knien," that is, in the subjugation she describes in the *Lied von der großen Kapitulation.*[29]

---

[25] *GW* 4:1373.

[26] See how marriage makes Grusche a servant in *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* (*GW* 5:2058).

[27] Hein 80.

[28] *GW* 4:1406.

[29] *GW* 4:1395; in *Der Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti* Schmuggleremma

The exploitation and the abuse that dwells in the chaplain's proposal is also exposed by Courage when he approaches her and pleads: "Lassen Sie Ihr Herz sprechen, verhärten Sie sich nicht"; Courage points out the instrument that symbolizes the kind of "tenderizing" to which he refers: "Kommen Sie nicht mitn Beil auf mich zu. Das wär mir eine zu enge Beziehung."[30]

Intent on remaining independent, Courage allows no man to dictate to her. In the cockfight between the chaplain and the cook in scene 8, where each tries to secure a place in Courage's camp by ousting the other, both wrongly assume the norm of patriarchal authority. The cook, when he hears that Courage has restocked on his rival's advice, ascribes a position of power to the chaplain and says to her: "So, [der Feldprediger] führt bei Ihnen jetzt das große Wort."[31] The chaplain in turn assumes that the cook controls Courage when he says to her: "Ich hab nicht gewußt, daß Sie eine so enge Freundin von dem [Koch] sind und ihm Rechenschaft schuldig sind."[32] Courage leaves them with no illusions about who is in power in her camp. To the cook she describes the chaplain's real role: "Er hat mirs Geschirr gewaschen und ziehn helfen."[33] To the chaplain she says: "der Koch sagt nur seine Privatmeinung."[34] When the chaplain counters that she follows the cook's advice because they have a special relationship ("Weil der Koch es sagt!"), she answers that, on the contrary, she accepts the cook's advice because it is "ein ganz vernünftiger Rat."[35]

That Courage will allow no man, not even one to whom she is attracted, to prescribe for her can be observed in scene 9. The cook reveals that he has inherited an inn and offers her a partnership — but insists that she desert Kattrin

---

calls her sitting in the dust being "in der historischen Position" (*GW* 4:1672).

[30] *GW* 4:1406; Hein 81.

[31] *GW* 4:1412.

[32] *GW* 4:1414.

[33] *GW* 4:1412.

[34] *GW* 4:1414.

[35] *GW* 4:1415.

because the business is too small to keep three people. At first Courage tries to manoeuvre for bargaining room: "Ich sag nicht, was du sagst, is unvernünftig, aber wars dein letztes Wort?" The cook will allow no discussion, but presents an ultimatum: "Mein letztes. Überlegs dir."[36]

Courage will not abandon her daughter: "Ich brauch nix zu überlegen. Ich laß sie nicht hier." The mother speaks in this instance, of course; but it is equally true that Courage rejects that this man should lay down the law to her. Nor should it be overlooked that this ultimatum would fix at the outset the nature of their partnership. If it were accepted, Courage might find that this first submission has signalled her descent from the cook's equal to his *Dienstbot*.[37]

Even at this low point in her fortunes, then, Courage will not countenance any limit to her self-determination. Nor will she tolerate a similar encroachment in the future. This is the real meaning of the phrase she utters in the same scene when she casts the cook out of her life: "So, der ist draus aus unserm Geschäft, und ein anderer kommt mir nimmer rein."[38] She does not reject new liaisons, but specifically bans any man from her future business affairs (*Geschäft*).

*** *** ***

Paradoxical as it may seem, Courage's usurpation of "masculine" independence, gives her another reason to claim the title of Hyena.

When Brecht and the chaplain brand Courage a hyena, we may be certain that they refer to the hyena's infamous appetite for carrion, a predilection that led it, so the legend goes, to rob even graves for its meals.[39] Brecht and the

---

[36] *GW* 4:1427.

[37] See, for example, how Shen Te is robbed of her property by her lover Sun (*GW* 4:1541). As for Courage and the cook, she is not his "boss" since she does not dictate to him as she does to her children.

[38] *GW* 4:1428.

[39] For the legend see E. P. Evans, *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture* (London: W. Heinemann, 1896) 139-141; also see Florence McCullough, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: University of

chaplain, then, associate Courage with an attribute that led to the "public distaste for hyenas and the use of their name as an insult."[40] Medieval moralists, with their aversion to the material world, saw in this characteristic an allegory of "vice feeding on corruption."[41] As someone who feeds on war, Courage certainly reproduces this fiendish aspect of the hyena.

The hyena, however, inspired revulsion in medieval moralists with yet another of its attributes, one calculated to unsettle devotees of a markedly patriarchal religion such as Christianity. Namely, the hyena does not respect the proper division between male and female. Not only is the female hyena, in contrast to most animals, the dominant sex of her species and the largest and most aggressive of what is already an aggressive animal; but, more shockingly and much more directly than either Grimmelshausen's Courasche or Brecht's Courage, the hyena has usurped male authority: for she herself displays those symbols of power of which the human male is so proud — she sports both penis and testes! At least, so it seems (even to experts, from a distance). In reality her scrotum is made up of fused labia mimicking the male organ. And her penis? It is a clitoris capable of an erection at least equal that of the male. (The display of erections is important in the greeting ceremonies of the hyena.)[42] Christian interpreters of the Book of Nature, horrified by this lack of propriety, saw in this sexual ambiguity the very incarnation of the unclean.[43] And so Courage can lay

---

Northern Carolina Press, 1962) 130-132.

[40] Kruuk 106.

[41] Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973) 112.

[42] Kruuk 210, on female dominance see 234.

[43] See the various versions of the *Physiologus*, as in Friedrich Mauerer, *Der altdeutsche Physiologus: Die Millstätter Reinfassung und die Wiener Prosa (neben dem lateinischen Text und dem althochdeutschen Physiologus)* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967): "Danne zelt Phisiologus, daz ez zwei geslehte habe sus; / undirstunden ist ez der er, da nach diu si ein vrist, da von ez unreine ist." (19); "Phisiologus hinc narrat, quod duas naturas habeat. Aliquando quidem masculus, aliquando quidem femina est, et ideo immundum animal est." (78-79). The fable was congenial to the moralists, since they maintained it even though the ancients

claim to the epithet of Hyena by reason of her rejection of traditional gender roles and her exercise of a "masculine" independence.

PATERNITY DENIED

"Name." The sergeant wants names for his book, he wants to reduce Courage to a cipher along with all the others in its pages. This is one way for him to declaw this "unbotmäßigen Geist": "Ich werd dir deine Frechheit austreiben."[44] But behind this question is another chastisement directed at Courage, since the name she utters will, he assumes, remind her that she is not her own person, but her husband's, just as that name will also recall the true owner of Courage's products (her children). But the tables are turned, the sergeant unwittingly prepares the ground for a new offense to his sense of (patriarchal) order when he presumes that Courage's children all have the same name. Unwary, he comments on Courage's reply that she is Anna Fierling with: "Also dann heißt ihr alle Fierling?"

Courage explodes the assumption, and with it all the patriarchal values of legitimacy and ownership it implies.[45] They are all her children she admits, "aber heißen sie deshalb alle gleich?" Her children have each one a different name, but even these names are no concession to paternity, for they have nothing to do with the fathers (a kick at the notion of continuing the father's "line"). In fact, Courage cannot even clearly recall the names of her men. She calls her son Eilif Nojocki but she says: "sein Vater hat immer behauptet, er heißt Kojocki

---

had revealed it to be untrue; see Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* 579b and Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* VIII: xliv.

[44] Unless otherwise noted quotations from the drama for this section are found in *GW* 4:1352-1353.

[45] See Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970) 35; Beauvoir 79. Values that persist, it seems, for Thiele, though he says that Courage as "Privatperson" appears an "emanzipierte, ihrer sexuellen Freiheiten bewußte Frau," also thinks that her children from various fathers is evidence that she sold herself (45). As Hiller noted long ago, Courage may be promiscuous, but she is no prostitute (141).

oder Mojocki." Nor does she remember the name of that particular "father" whom Eilif still remembers so well, "ein Franzos mit einem Spitzbart" (again she offends the patriarchal desire for perpetuation of the father by pointing out that Eilif remembers one of his social fathers and not his biological father). Courage introduces her half-German daughter as Kattrin Haupt, but there is no word about her father, unless we infer that his name is "Haupt", and Eilif's case tells us that we should not make such assumptions. As for Schweizerkas, his name is "Fejos, ein Name, der nix mit seinem Vater zu tun hat." Again Courage offends patriarchal proprietorship when she says that Schweizerkas takes after, not his biological father, but another of her consorts: "Der Junge ist nach [einem Ungarn] geraten." The sergeant, dismayed, contradicts: "Aber der war doch gar nicht der Vater?" Undeterred Courage retorts: "Aber nach ihm ist er geraten."

Courage's record of her children brings disorder into the order of the sergeant's patriarchal world; her indiscriminate fruitfulness resembles that creativity of nature which mocks with its "chaos" the "ordentliche Listen" of the patriarchy. But this is not the only threat that Courage brings to the law and order of the masculine principle.

LAW AND ORDER

"Wo sind eure Papiere?"[46] The sergeant demands an orderly account of Courage's activities, which for him consists of those ciphers that detail her privileges and trace her life's path.

"Papiere?"

This is not the guilty, stalling response of a person caught without identification. It is a questioning of the papers themselves. Papers? Courage has no need of papers! "Das ist doch die Mutter Courage," Schweizerkas explains. But the sergeant insists, and so Courage mockingly obliges with a pile of

---

[46] Unless otherwise noted quotations from the drama for the section on "papers" are found in *GW* 4:1351-1352.

"papers" tumbled out of a tin box: a missal whose leaves will wrap pickles, a map of a land she is not sure to visit, a certificate of health for a dead horse. Far from setting the record straight, her papers only thwart the sergeant's administrative purpose and deride his sense of order, just as her account of her children confuses his register and unsettles his assumptions.[47]

The sergeant makes another attempt to bring her to order: "Du weißt, daß du eine Lizenz haben mußt."

In this we hear once more the recruiter's call for *Zucht*. Again Courage replies with *Wurst*. For she refuses to be part of this order, to be reduced to a "number" for the convenience of the sergeant and his "law and order". Instead of this abstraction, she presents him with her "body": "Meine Lizenz beim Zweiten Regiment ist mein anständiges Gesicht...." Nor will she allow him to turn this *Gesicht* into a cipher, to reduce her Body to an Idea: "Einen Stempel laß ich mir nicht draufsetzen."

PROVISION FOR THE FLESH

In the sergeant's desire for "order", for a *Lizenz*, as in the recruiter's call for *Zucht*, we hear the struggle of the Spirit against unruly Matter, against the Body. It is the struggle of the masculine against the feminine principle. True to the masculine principle, the sergeant wants to constrain the flesh. He recommends (to the little people) the renunciation of pleasure, of *Speck*, *Käse*, and *Weißbrot*, and promotes morality, that is, abstinence. Courage, on the other hand, as the outlaw aspect of the feminine principle, embraces the material world, she flaunts her *Gesicht* in place of the *Lizenz*, she dangles her *Wurst* before the call to *Zucht*. Courage, in contrast to the sergeant and the recruiter of scene 1, privileges the flesh and its appetites.

For example, while in his speech — which we considered in detail in the last chapter — the sergeant calls for self-sacrifice in the king's name, Courage

---

[47] See Hein 63.

arrives and details the misery of this renunciation, she draws attention to the common soldier's *Läusen*, *Getieren*, and *die leeren Mägen*, sufferings which the little people, in the name of the sergeant's morality and the holy war, must stoically endure. Courage undermines such denial; she brings comfort and pleasure, she brings *Schuhe*, *Wein*, and, of course, *Wurst*. She may supply the war, but there is also a veiled threat in her offer. When she says: "Soll es euch in die Schlacht marschieren / So will es gute Schuhe han," and: "eure Leut marschieren / Euch ohne Wurst nicht in den Tod," she implicitly warns the rulers that the soldiers, if their material needs are not met, may not bend themselves to the allegedly "transcendental" goal of their superiors (winning the war of the faith).[48]

Courage is no more friendly to the criticism of the flesh offered by the chaplain. When he tries to impress Courage with the seriousness and high-mindedness of his proposal of a "closer relationship", and assures her: "was ich mit *enger* mein, das ist keine Beziehung mit Essen und Holzhacken und solche niedrigen Bedürfnisse," she refuses his offer — and so his morality — and prefers instead those lowly "Bedürfnisse".[49] She says to him: "Hacken Sie uns das Brennholz, dann haben wir abends warm, das ist schon viel in diesen Zeiten."[50] (If her rebuff seems unfriendly to the physical pleasure concealed in the chaplain's proposal, then it should be remembered that his offer hides also the threat of servitude that negates pleasure.)

The chaplain's professed "otherworldliness" is meant to deny another fundamental material pleasure: sexual relations. As the representative of a religion which, in its hostility to the material, tries to control and stigmatize "fornication", the chaplain reminds us how the patriarchy, in the interests of male reason and

---

[48] *GW* 4:1350-1351.

[49] *GW* 4:1406.

[50] *GW* 4:1407. So Courage also rejects the "asceticism" of her "solid" husband, who sells her children's blankets, and who objects to her musical pleasures: "meine Mundharmonika hat er unchristlich gefunden" (*GW* 4:1413).

ownership, tries to corral and limit female sexuality, which had been forever condemned in Eve.[51] Brazenly Courage flaunts her sexuality (which ought to be taken into account by those who believe she is asexual).[52] As with her other attacks on the patriarchy, Courage's criticism of patriarchal limitations on the Female Body, and on the Body in general, first occurs in scene 1.

"Willst du mich auf den Arm nehmen?" the sergeant indignantly asks, not amused by Courage's mockery of his demand for papers. Courage takes up his phrase and gives it new meaning in order to distract him, but with the new content she also for the first time offers us a glimpse of her sensuousness: "Reden Sie anständig mit mir und erzählen Sie nicht meinen halbwüchsigen Kindern, daß ich Sie auf den Arm nehmen will, das gehört sich nicht, ich hab nix mit Ihnen."[53]

Here is one hint of Courage's sexual vitality, another is found in scene 3. Courage has just heard that the cook dreamt of her: "Bloß daß ich ein Glas Branntwein krieg von schöner Hand, nix Schlimmeres" (a claim belied by the fact that he lights his pipe as he utters it, but more on this in a moment).[54] Courage has just heard, too, of the chaplain's randy wit which caused even the cook to blush. Her answer? "Ich werd euch was zu trinken geben müssen, sonst macht ihr mir noch einen unsittlichen Antrag vor Langweil." She appears to divert their overheated thoughts with humour and drink, but in reality she encourages them — and especially the cook — not only because she responds to the sexual interests

---

[51] James A. Brundage has written a fascinating study which is not limited to the medieval period, but also shows how medieval views even now influence Western views of women and sexuality; see his *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 1-9, 67, 74-75, 80-81, 173-174, 301, 350, 427, 492; see also Beauvoir 97, 104, 167-169.

[52] The reader is reminded of those mentioned in Chapter 2 who consider Courage to be asexual: Smith 496; Lennox 86; Raddatz, "Ent-weiblichte Eschatologie" 155; Case 66; and those who recognize her sexual aspect: Wedel 159; Komar 118; Hein 67.

[53] *GW* 4:1352; Thiele 32.

[54] *GW* 4:1373.

of the men with an offer of drink, which clouds reason to the advantage of sensuality, but also because this very action fulfils the cook's dream. (We note that, against her usual practice, she offers the brandy free of charge, another sign of her primarily sensual interests in this instance.)

The offer of drink to the men and the ribald twist she gives to the sergeant's phrase reveal a lusty rather than a chaste matron. But an even greater moral "abyss" yawns before the sergeant in Courage's account of her family. Here is a woman whose appetites are so great that she cannot even remember the names of her consorts, certainly she is no "model" woman whose first sexual partner (her husband) is also her last (till death do them part).[55] This image of a sexuality uncontrolled by man, indeed, entirely consuming men (for none till now have survived her), is another reason for the sergeant's censure: "eine nette Familie, muß ich sagen." Courage's fruitfulness, attested to by her children, suggests that the text does not share the sergeant's judgment. Nor does Courage; unchastened, her reply to this censure: "Ja, ich bin durch die ganze Welt gekommen mit meinem Planwagen," is, among other things, the proud display of her appetites.[56]

The cook's pipe also demonstrates how Courage privileges the flesh. Before it comes into contact with Courage, it has already been given a sexual content. Yvette says of the cook (though Courage does not know until scene 8 that her cook and Yvette's are one and the same), that he was called Pfeifenpieter: "weil er die Pfeif nicht aus dem Maul genommen hat dabei, so beiläufig wars bei ihm."[57] Again, though the cook denies any sexual content to his dream of Courage ("Bloß daß ich ein Glas Branntwein krieg von schöner Hand, nix Schlimmeres"), he simultaneously lights his pipe, and, with this joining of brandy, *schöner Hand*, phallic imagery (the pipe), and kindling a fire

---

[55] Brundage 175, 225.
[56] *GW* 4:1353.
[57] *GW* 4:1369-1370.

(*entzünden*), he negates his denial and contributes to the further sexualization of his pipe.[58]

The pipe, then, is already charged with meaning when in scene 6 the chaplain spots a familiar object in Courage's hands: "Was ist das für ein Stummelpfeif?"[59] It is the cook's pipe, a "pipe" which Courage has kept safe in her "pocket" since she was separated from the cook by the Imperial attack. The sexual symbolism is obvious; Courage's personal interest in the cook is represented by the pipe in her pocket, and this interest is underlined when the chaplain later exclaims that she has not only kept it, but "draus geraucht!"[60]

The chaplain uses his discovery of the pipe to discredit the cook. He draws attention to its stem, which is nearly bitten through, and warns: "Ein Gewaltmensch." Courage disagrees: "Ich seh nix. Gebraucht ist sie."[61] The signs of physical pleasure repel the chaplain, he uses them to moralize, and so confirms his poor opinion of "solche niedrigen Bedürfnisse." In contrast Courage sees in the pipe its experience (alluding unknowingly to the cook's extensive sexual experience — which parallels her own); she sees no reason to abandon either pipe or cook: "Er war ein netter Mensch."[62]

Once again Courage privileges the flesh over the spirit. Given the choice in scene 6 between the chaplain's "respectable" offer and the cook's "pipe", Courage chooses the pipe. Her assessment holds even in scene 8 when the chaplain tries to shock her and undermine his rival by revealing that the cook is

---

[58] *GW* 4:1373.

[59] *GW* 4:1404.

[60] *GW* 4:1417. Ernst Busch missed the meaning of the cook's pipe when he had the *Pfeifenpieterlied* (apparently an "old Dutch tune") added in 1951 (though Brecht never included it in his printed text). This song, a good example of self-absorption if the Freudian interpretation of the pipe has any validity, shows a man reject the world (woman, money, friendship) in favour of his "Stummelpfeif" (see *MC* 238 or *HC* 71).

[61] *GW* 4:1405.

[62] *GW* 4:1405.

the infamous seducer, Pfeifenpieter.[63] Courage not only laughs at the discovery, but on learning this hints at her interest in him: "Sie, Ihre Pfeif hab ich aufbewahrt."[64] By the end of the scene, as if to dramatize her sympathies, the chaplain is no longer part of her band. Instead, Courage offers the cook a place with her; and we learn that she is not interested only in firewood and dishwashing, for when the cook tries to excuse his reputation she replies (alluding again to his "pipe"): "Die [Geschichte mit der Yvette] hat Ihnen nicht geschadet in meinen Augen. Im Gegenteil. Wos raucht, ist Feuer, heißts."[65]

PATER NOSTER

Since Courage so positively assesses the material and the sensual, it should not surprise us that she should have no use for one of the chief ideological props of asceticism: the Church. With its division of body and soul and its privileging of the spirit over matter, with its belief that the ties of the flesh are evil, the Church would have little in common with the earthy Courage.[66] Simply being a woman would make Courage a target for the Church, since she as the Other, as Nature, as a Daughter of Eve, would be associated with the flesh and its sin.[67] She would be considered, as Tertullian said, the "gateway of the devil";[68] she would find her proud fecundity stigmatized as an ignominy (thus medieval

---

[63] *GW* 4:1417.

[64] *GW* 4:1417.

[65] *GW* 4:1421.

[66] "To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6); "Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.... And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:19-24); Beauvoir 167; Brundage 173.

[67] Brundage 85, 591.

[68] Tertullian, "De cultu feminarum," *Tertulliani Opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954) 343.

Fathers of the Church insisted upon the virgin birth of Christ, sparing him the "defilement of being born"); she would find herself permanently subordinated to man by the Church.[69] Small wonder, then, that Courage has only criticism for the Father, His Word, His Church, and His agents.

The Church is implicitly criticized by Courage in the person of the chaplain. In scene 6, as we saw in the last section, she rejects the ascetic morality that he represents and chooses the "lowly needs" he pretends to abhor. She exposes the hostility to life of the chaplain's views when she refuses slavery under him, when she unmasks the violence at the heart of his morality by pointing to his peculiar courtship with axe in hand ("Kommen Sie nicht mitn Beil auf mich zu. Das wär mir eine zu enge Beziehung"),[70] when she reveals that the violence he would lodge with the cook resides instead in himself: "Hacken Sie mir nicht meinen Hackpflock durch."[71]

Courage also criticizes the Church through the chaplain when she shows that his censure of "lowly needs" is mere pretense. When the cook tells Courage of the obscene jokes with which the chaplain regaled him, Courage ironically chastises the chaplain and draws attention to the contradiction between his behaviour and that which his station represents: "Und im geistlichen Gewand!"[72] But his real voluptuousness (he is after all the first to respond to her offer of a drink with: "Das ist eine Versuchung, sagte der Hofprediger, und erlag ihr") does not endear him to her.[73] For it is pleasure with a "bad conscience", one which hides behind a morality of renunciation and abstinence, a pleasure wrapped in guilt and unfreedom. Guilty pleasure is obviously out of the question for Courage. And so she criticizes the chaplain by exposing his "hypocrisy", by pointing to the real appetites hidden under his priestly robes when she says of

---

[69] See Beauvoir 167, 98.
[70] *GW* 4:1406.
[71] *GW* 4:1405.
[72] *GW* 4:1373.
[73] *GW* 4:1373.

him: "So wie der kann keiner Fleisch aussuchen, wie im Schlafwandel so sicher."[74]

She exposes a further hypocrisy when she reveals that his profession of peace has no foundation. When the chaplain takes on the role of a lover of peace and condemns Courage as a hyena of the battlefield who lives from war, she points out that he too lived from her business — and so from war (which he also did as the rulers' ideologue).[75]

When she exposes the hypocrisy of the chaplain, Courage takes part in the critique of his role as ideologue. From our last chapter we remember that this role consists in a devaluation of life: the chaplain makes the soldiers esteem life "wie ein alter verstunkener Fußlappen"; he robs them of their connection to the material world, preaching so that "Hören und Sehen vergeht." Courage condemns this hostility to material life when she answers: "Ich möcht gar nicht, daß mir Hören und Sehen vergeht."[76] Courage's opinion of the chaplain's function can be seen when, instead of showing deference to his preaching, she puts him to useful work chopping wood.[77]

Courage's criticism of the Church, as an ideological support of the devaluation of life and the legitimation of death (in the form of asceticism and war), also finds expression outside the figure of the chaplain. As she reveals the hypocrisy of the chaplain in his "concupiscence", so she exposes the cant of the Church when she points out that the rulers (among whom she includes the popes) do not, as they claim, carry out this war for the faith, but for profit.[78] Religious leaders are also among those whom Courage holds to be bad for the health of the little people: "Daß sie einen Kaiser und einen Papst dulden, das beweist

---

[74] *GW* 4:1379; Hein 79.
[75] *GW* 4:1415.
[76] *GW* 4:1406.
[77] *GW* 4:1406.
[78] *GW* 4:1375.

unheimliche Courage, denn die kosten ihnen das Leben."[79] Her disregard for the religious question which ostensibly underlies the war is clear when she provides without distinction for both Catholic and Protestant.[80]

It is this criticism of the Church as an ideologue of war which underlies Courage's disrespect for "religion". The first clear example of this disrespect appears, of course, in scene 1, where she produces among her "papers" a missal whose leaves will not be used to follow mass, but are destined instead "zum Einschlagen von Gurken."[81] In other words, like the chaplain, the uselessly otherworldly missal will be put to practical work. Similarly, in scene 3 she warns Kattrin against love, which ends in slavery for woman, saying it is "eine Himmelsmacht", once again confronting a supposedly "higher" spiritual power with its baleful material effect.[82] When Imperial troops fall on her camp in scene 3 she takes down the regimental flag with the cry: "Um Himmelswillen, die Fahn!" yet it is precisely not for "heaven's sake" that she denies belonging to the Protestant camp, but for her own.[83]

Courage's disregard for the Church is also evident during General Tilly's funeral. The rites are of no more importance for her than the warrior honoured by the patriarchal Church: she chastises soldiers truant from the service only as a formality before she serves them; she herself spends the time counting her wares.[84] Courage's final comment on the Church, though, comes when she is faced with the decision to go either to Church or to market: "es ist nix mit der Kirch, stattdem geh ich aufn Markt."[85]

Nor is respect shown by this representative of the outlaw feminine principle for heavenly Father and Son. When she bargains for Schweizerkas's life

---

[79] *GW* 4:1404.
[80] *GW* 4:1378-1379.
[81] *GW* 4:1351.
[82] *GW* 4:1372.
[83] *GW* 4:1377.
[84] *GW* 4:1400.
[85] *GW* 4:1417.

she barks at the chaplain who stands dumb: "stehn Sie auch nicht herum wie Jesus am Ölberg, tummeln Sie sich, waschen Sie die Gläser aus...."[86] (This is hardly a reference to Christ's agony in the garden, but to the fact that Christ waited for his captors instead of escaping while he still could, just as the chaplain stands by uselessly idle.)[87] After Courage and the chaplain have been captured by Imperial troops, the chaplain is resigned and consoles himself and the others with the phrase: "Wir sind eben jetzt in Gottes Hand."[88] Courage will have none of it: "Ich glaub nicht, daß wir schon so verloren sind...."[89] Nor is she solaced when Schweizerkas's life is in danger and the chaplain mouths: "Der Herr wirds zum Guten lenken." Her reply: "Trocken sollen Sie sie reiben," refers only to his dishwashing and so reveals his words to have been mere noise for her.[90] Given Courage's rejection of God we may suppose that she shares the indirect criticism of prayer found in scene 3, (a criticism found again when Kattrin counters the peasants' impotent prayer for the safety of Halle with effective action).[91] Namely, the chaplain, in scene 3 tells of being surprised at the latrine by a Catholic spy: "Sie haben Spitzel. Gestern früh ist einer vor mir aufgetaucht aus dem Graben, wie ich meine Notdurft verrichtet hab. Ich erschreck und kann grad noch ein Stoßgebet zurückhalten."[92] Here the *Stoßgebet*, a quick prayer pressed (*stoßen*) from the believer in moments of need or surprise, becomes intimately mingled with other products forced from the body by fear. The scatological association implies a criticism of prayer — and so of its addressee. Courage shares this critical view of God and supplication addressed to him, and the reason

---

[86] *GW* 4:1388.

[87] "Anspielung auf die Angst Jesu vor dem Tod." *BF* 24:406; this is misleading and would have been better omitted, with only the scriptural reference (Matt. 26:30-54) retained.

[88] *GW* 4:1432.

[89] *GW* 4:1378.

[90] *GW* 4:1390.

[91] *GW* 4:1431-1432.

[92] *GW* 4:1380.

is given one scene later in her *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*: "Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt. / Keine Red davon!"[93]

Courage's materialism contains a rejection of the transcendentalism of Christianity. There is no divine guidance, no divine plan: "keine Red davon!"; there is no consolation in the Church: "es ist nix mit der Kirch." And so it is only consistent that Courage should dismiss two other transcendental notions associated with the Church, both of which tend to devalue the materiality of the here and now: resurrection and the soul.

Resurrection is denied in the refrain of Courage's business song. "Das Frühjahr kommt," we are told, the time of renewal has arrived, the Christian fallen in the holy war is called to join in the rebirth: "Wach auf du Christ!" But, though spring is come, only the wounded stir. And the dead? "Die Toten ruhn."[94]

Even the soul, the Christian's most precious treasure, is denied by Courage. We remember that Courage in scene 6 refuses the chaplain and his morality in favour of the cook and his well-used pipe. The chaplain complains: "Ich bin eigentlich Seelsorger und nicht Holzhacker." Courage rejects the chaplain's cure of souls by dismissing the very thing over which he supposedly watches; she replies: "Ich hab aber keine Seel. Dagegen brauch ich Brennholz."[95]

Once again Courage confronts an abstraction with material reality. Just as she had confronted *Zucht* with *Wurst*, and the *Lizenz* with her *Gesicht*, so now she counters *Seele* with *Brennholz*, the metaphysical flame with the material fire. With this the outlaw feminine principle turns the tables on the Church. The Church identified woman with Nature, with the evil of the flesh. The Church, then, spurned woman for her stronger bond to Nature, for her lack of "soul".

---

[93] *GW* 4:1396; Jendreiek 180-181.
[94] *GW* 4:1351.
[95] *GW* 4:1404.

Now, however, in the figure of Courage Woman takes up the "lack" disparagingly imputed to her and instead proclaims it: "Ich hab aber keine Seel," and through this supposed lack simultaneously asserts her power — and in her turn rejects the Church.

WITCH

Hostile to Church and God, Courage removes herself from one of the centres of law and order in her patriarchal world; she therefore makes herself an "outlaw" and risks being branded one of those "criminals" so fiercely pursued by the Church in the seventeenth century: the witch. Nor would this be far wrong, for Courage is indeed a witch.

Courage certainly looks like a witch: for example, she is a woman, as were 80% of those prosecuted as witches;[96] like most witches she is a woman mature in years, a widow (several times over it seems), who has no male guardian over her, and so demonstrates an independence from patriarchal authority which both Church and State found suspect (as do our sergeant and recruiter).[97] Furthermore, by her open preference for material pleasure and evidence of a critical and vocal spirit Courage shows a distinct predilection for two "evils" abhorred in women by patriarchal authority, and often named as signs of a witch: sexual promiscuity and an "evil tongue".[98]

The historical situation, too, would increase the chance that a critical, rebellious, and independent Courage be suspected a witch. For the Thirty Years War was one of those periods of confessional and political unrest which saw an increase in the persecution of witches, periods in which local religious and social authority found itself challenged, and was moved to proscribe ever more

---

[96] G. R. Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) 79.

[97] Quaife 162-164.

[98] Quaife 167, 172-173.

forcefully the Other that challenged it.[99] This Other meant not only rival Christian sects, but also that threat to official religion which stubbornly persisted among the peasants: folk magic or sorcery.[100]

As a woman, Courage would have been especially vulnerable in this time of unrest to the accusation of sorcery. Women, after all, were an Other not fully integrated into the male project of transcendence — the patriarchal Church, which represented that project, saw to her exclusion. Instead, the Church continued to see in these daughters of Eve the threat of malevolent Nature to "drag the males ... into the shades of immanence."[101] In the eyes of the Church, women participated in the "unclean" mysteries of the earth through their "blood-transformation mysteries": children (the production of life), menstruation (production of blood, the seat of life), and lactation (the transformation of blood into the food of life).[102] As women shared the mystery of the earth, so they shared its "magic".[103]

Sharing the magic of the earth, however, is a dangerous pastime in a patriarchal society. While, as Simone de Beauvoir has said, a society that worships the mysteries represented by woman conceives her as priestess, as one who "controls and directs forces ... mastered in accord with the gods and the laws," a society which is antagonistic to those mysteries and seeks to subjugate and master Nature, tends to see in woman the sorceress who "operates apart from society, against the gods and the laws."[104]

As a woman who "operates apart from (patriarchal) society," who offends its "gods and laws," who flaunts her positive evaluation of the material in a

---

[99] Quaife 114-116, 121-123.

[100] Quaife 114.

[101] Beauvoir 165.

[102] Erich Neumann's term from *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, trans. Ralph Manheim (1955; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 31-32.

[103] Beauvoir 164.

[104] Beauvoir 164-165.

society officially hostile to the material, who challenges the authorities of that society with her "evil tongue", Courage would have been profoundly suspect to a patriarchal Church and society. But Courage goes further than this, she actually practises that sin likened to rebellion: divination.[105] As Schweizerkas says of his mother: "Sie hat das Zweite Gesicht.... Sie sagt die Zukunft voraus."[106]

Now, it is true that Brecht considered Courage's fortune-telling in scene 1 a dodge, intended first, to distract the soldiers from recruiting Eilif, and second, to frighten her children from participating in the war.[107] With this Brecht takes his place in the tradition of the Enlightenment and demonstrates his commitment to reason. To him, perhaps, the suggestion that Courage is a witch might have seemed a nod to that irrationality underlying metaphysical interpretations of Courage which were so unwelcome to him.

Yet, as we saw earlier, even if Courage's divination is a fraud on the dramatic level, it is a fraud that on a deeper level contains the truth. For she correctly predicts the deaths of her children. Like the sorceress who communicates with the stones and the beasts, Courage is in touch with the real forces of her world. After all, her prediction is realized, while the sergeant's prediction of fame and glory is not.[108] (Courage's prediction is echoed later in the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten* when an old woman (*Weib*) — that is, a "crone" — warns that a soldier can expect nothing from war but death.)[109] In contrast to her paradoxically magical and materialistic realism, the soldiers' assertions that war leads to glory and reward must seem the most hopeless idealism.

---

[105] "For rebellion is as the sin of divination..." (Sam.I 15:23); Quaife 42.

[106] For Courage's "sorcery" see *GW* 4:1356-1358; Frau Kopecka in *Schweyk* also sees into the future — to the disadvantage of soldiers (*GW* 5:1939, 1943).

[107] *MC* 139.

[108] *GW* 4:1366.

[109] *GW* 4:1366; Bentley, "The Songs in *Mother Courage*" 52.

Nor does Courage's "magic" stop at divination. After her capture by Imperial troops, we remember that Courage is worried by Schweizerkas's obstinate guarding of the regimental strongbox, an act that endangers everyone in Courage's camp, since the Imperial troops are after this treasure. Courage is uneasy: "schlafen tu ich doch nicht nachts." It is then that the witch once more appears. Courage casts a spell: "Wenn du nicht wärst, Schweizerkas, wärs leichter."[110] And before the scene has reached its conclusion her son has indeed "disappeared".

ELECTIVE AFFINITY

Aggression, power, domination, violence: these have been the prerogatives of the male in patriarchal society. Man is the warrior. War, Ernst Jünger said, is the manly form of creation (*Zeugung*). Confined to domestic life, kept for most of history from the world's affairs, including war, woman had become identified not only with the humanism foreign to the battlefield, but with peace itself. In much of his work Brecht, too, associates woman, especially the mother, with peace, and Courage is an example of this tendency.[111]

Simply Courage's being as mother, as life-giver and nurturer, would signal that she represents life and peace rather than death and war. In Chapter 2 we saw how her maternal aspect does indeed oppose life to war: she tries to keep her children from war as a place of death, she warns the sergeant of the danger of war in scene 1, in the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten* she warns Eilif to stay out of war. "Ich wett, dein Vater war ein Soldat," Eilif's commander says. To which Courage's son replies: "Ein großer, hör ich. Meine Mutter hat mich gewarnt deshalb."[112]

---

[110] *GW* 4:1378.
[111] See for example Frenken 145, 151, 154-155.
[112] *GW* 4:1366.

Courage's criticism of war could be pursued further under the rubric of the outlaw feminine principle, and if we did so we would see that she rejects it, as so much in the patriarchal world, as the source of various forms of death and the renunciation of life. We would see her unmask war as the source of material want; we would see her criticize a morality which recommends the soldierly virtues of war, such as renunciation, self-sacrifice, courage, honour, and patriotism.[113] We would see that even virtue itself becomes for Courage an object of criticism as the tool of a deadly world.

However, Courage's criticism of war, especially as it is depicted in scene 3, affords an excellent opportunity to introduce a last element, which together with the life-affirming mother and the outlaw feminine principle constitutes Courage's revolt. Inseparable from its allies in the drama, this element shares, in the name of life, freedom, and material fulfilment, their criticism of death in its proper form, as in its related forms as oppression, suffering, and want. This last element of Courage's revolt is the little people.

THE COMBINATION

The combination of the outlaw feminine principle and the little people is best demonstrated in scene 3 when Courage and the cook join forces and criticize war before its ideologue, the chaplain.[114] The cook begins by asking Courage for brandy, a gift in these uncertain times when he may be setting off with the regiment to his death. We see that he, like Courage, thinks not of glory or dying for an idea, but of material pleasure, of *Wurst* not *Zucht*. The chaplain, who belittles life, tells the cook not to distress himself, that it is a blessing to die in a holy war that is pleasing to God. The cook seems to agree — "das ist richtig" — only to reveal instead the sorry material reality of this war which so pleases God:[115]

---

[113] Courage, then, does not only mouth pacifistic attitudes (Gleitman 159).

[114] Jendreiek notes the cooperative effort, but does not develop it (166).

[115] Quotations from *Mutter Courage* for "The Combination," unless otherwise

> In einer Weise ist es ein Krieg, indem daß gebrandschatzt, gestochen und geplündert wird, bissel schänden nicht zu vergessen, aber unterschieden von alle andern Kriege dadurch, daß es ein Glaubenskrieg ist, das ist klar.

With this the cook initiates a criticism of the war and, by focusing on its destruction and misery, gives priority to the material over the "idea" (the faith). Now follows an interlude that has two purposes. First, the cook's material appetites are underlined, and this in regard to Courage, who, it seems had so impressed him that he dreams of her, though, as he says: "Bloß daß ich ein Glas Branntwein krieg von schöner Hand, nix Schlimmeres." Second, the request for drink turns out to be more than the hope of a handout; it is the cook's attempt to realize his dream, and Courage obligingly reciprocates the cook's interest by giving him her brandy.

By fulfilling his dream Courage "chooses" the cook, someone whose sensual appetites mirror her own, and who is also dedicated to life's "lowly needs". This common view of the material is reinforced since her choice is made several times: in scene 3, when Imperial troops attack and Courage keeps the cook's pipe; in scene 6, when she rejects the chaplain's axe, that is, his restrictive and ascetic morality, and instead chooses (and uses) the cook's "pipe" with its well-used stem; in scene 8, when she discovers that the cook is a notorious rake and, almost as a declaration of her interest, uses that moment to return his pipe;[116] finally, in scene 8, when she offers the Don Juan a place in her troop and favourably interprets his scandalous past: "Wos raucht, ist Feuer, heißts."[117] (The chaplain, on the other hand, who had tried to use the discovery of the Don Juan to alienate Courage from the cook, has lost his place with her. On the dramatic level this can be explained as a result of the chaplain's accompanying Eilif to execution, or as a result of his having made himself

---

noted, are found in *GW* 4:1373-1375; see also Jendreiek 166.

[116] *GW* 4:1417.

[117] *GW* 4:1421.

unwelcome by self-righteously and hypocritically condemning Courage as a hyena of the battlefields; but this change of men also dramatizes choices which Courage had made consistently throughout the drama.)

The cook and Courage are not only allies by virtue of their common interest in the material. As this interlude shows, they share as well a critical attitude, as Courage now demonstrates. Once behind the wagon with the chaplain and the cook, Courage takes up the criticism of war begun by the cook. He had exposed the gulf between the blessed self-sacrifice of the chaplain's holy war and the real misery of war with its murder, devastation, plunder, and rape. Courage exposes new contradictions:

> Die Polen hier in Polen hätten sich nicht einmischen sollen. Es ist richtig, unser König ist bei ihnen eingerückt mit Roß und Mann und Wagen, aber anstatt daß die Polen den Frieden aufrecherhalten haben, haben sie sich eingemischt in ihre eigenen Angelegenheiten und den König angegriffen, wie er grad in aller Ruh dahergezogen ist. So haben sie sich eines Friedensbruches schuldig gemacht, und alles Blut kommt auf ihr Haupt.

The irony is unmistakable. Clearly it is not the Poles but the Swedish king who by invading Poland has broken the peace. The glaring injustice of blaming the victims for an assault on their persons, of accusing the victims of an interest in their own affairs (which, if the accusation were admitted, would effectively recommend that the Poles submit to the Swedish king and become his "objects"), all this throws Courage's accusation back onto the head of the Swedish invader.[118]

Stung by this irony the chaplain, as the ideologue of war, is compelled to defend his king: "Unser König hat nur die Freiheit im Aug gehabt. Der Kaiser hat alle unterjocht, die Polen so gut wie die Deutschen, und der König hat sie befreien müssen." But the chaplain's defense only supports Courage's criticism,

---

[118] Jendreiek 167.

since freedom is hardly better served under the yoke of a king than that of an emperor.[119]

Now the bonds have been established between Courage and the cook, material links forged by brandy and its suggestion of other pleasures, spiritual ties created by their common criticism of the war. The cook will reinforce their common outlook, but first he addresses Courage: "Ihr Branntwein ist vorzüglich, ich hab mich nicht getäuscht in ihrem Gesicht." This further cements their bond, for he refers here not only to her brandy, but with *Gesicht*, to her attitude. (Note that the cook, in contrast to the sergeant, is able to "read her face" and does not need to reduce it to a cipher.)[120] If in this scene Courage chooses the cook because of their material and critical agreement, it is clear here that the cook equally chooses Courage because of her critical spirit. And, as Courage's choice of the cook on material grounds is made several times, so too the cook's choice of Courage for her critical spirit. It is he, for example, who comes to Courage in scene 3, and he comes (as the chaplain said) because she has impressed him.[121] The chaplain must be referring to scene 2, the one time that the cook saw her. Was he impressed only by the vitality she expressed by her ability to provide food even in times of starvation, or by the "spunk" she demonstrated by her spirited haggling over the capon?[122] No doubt these played a role, but we must consider as well that Courage in scene 2 (as we will soon see) also subjected the virtues of war to scathing criticism as the sign of evil leaders. That is, in scene 2 as in scene 3, Courage showed a critical spirit which matches that of the cook.

"Sie haben immer noch Haare auf die Zähn, aber ich schätz Sie drum."[123] The cook utters these admiring words in scene 8 after he has branded

---

[119] Jendreiek 167-168.
[120] *GW* 4:1352.
[121] *GW* 4:1372.
[122] Hein 82.
[123] *GW* 4:1413.

the chaplain *unsolide* and recommended himself as someone who is truly *solide*, that is, strong-charactered, reliable, moderate, respectable, and virtuous. Courage sees only repression and suffering in this quality and will have none of it:[124]

> Das ist nix, solid. Ich hab nur einen gehabt, Gott sei Dank, wo solid war. So hab ich nirgends schuften müssen, er hat die Decken von die Kinder verkauft im Frühjahr, und meine Mundharmonika hat er unchristlich gefunden. Ich find, Sie empfehln sich nicht, wenn Sie eingestehn, Sie sind solid.

The cook's reaction to her criticism of his pretended "solidity" cannot be adequately covered by the notion of a man admiring a woman with "spirit", though that is also contained in his remarks. Rather, the cook, whose own less than virtuous life demonstrates that he, too, has no more use than Courage for the quality *solide*, admires in her criticism not only an interest in material pleasure akin to his own, but also the rejection of oppression and the ability to see through a traditionally venerated value. In other words, once again the cook esteems Courage's critical spirit.[125]

The nature of the cook's admiration of Courage can be seen from the idiom he uses to express it, one which reminds us of his earlier appreciation of her "*Gesicht*": "Sie haben immer noch Haare auf die Zähn." Some scholars tell us that this phrase, which describes a strong, sharp-tongued person who will put up with no nonsense, is a variation on the original *Haare auf die Zunge haben*.[126] It is, they say, a glorification of male virility, expressed as a function of hairiness, as if one were so manly as to have hair even on one's tongue. It is, then, a celebration of strength and power (and, implicitly, of the ability to resist

---

[124] *GW* 4:1413.

[125] Brecht seems to share Courage's view of *solide*, for it occurs several times in the *Dreigroschenroman*, but only to characterize the business of two crooks, Coax (*GW* 13:765) and Macheath (*GW* 13:878, 886, 973), and a bank that swindles the latter (*GW* 13:817).

[126] See Hermann Paul, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Tübingen:Niemeyer, 1992); the *Duden in 6 Bänden* ed. 1977; and Heinz Küpper, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Umgangssprache* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1955). Küpper also suggests that it derived from reference to a beast that still had the hair of a combatant on its tongue.

subjugation). This neatly describes Courage's own sharp tongue, her own strength and independence, but it does not yet account for the slippage between her as a *woman* and a phrase that glorifies *manly* virility.

Oddly enough, these same etymologists are perplexed by the variation and cannot explain it. Or is it that they (unconsciously) repress the explanation? For the answer is within their grasp, since they tell us that this phrase, apparently a glorification of male virility, is most often used to describe a virago (which can be either a shrew or an amazon, depending on one's view of the empowered female).[127] Namely, in this phrase with its reference to a strong and sharp-tongued woman, with its constellation of woman, mouth, hair, and teeth, we have none other than that castrating and devouring symbol of female power, that ghastly creature which haunts patriarchal nightmares and whose own pelt mocks the attribute man would keep for himself: I refer, of course, to the *vagina dentata*.[128] As if in recognition of male fears, Courage reminds us of the usual dark abode of this horror when she exclaims at the cook's assertion: "Sagen Sie jetzt nicht, Sie haben von meine Haar auf die Zähn geträumt!"[129]

Significantly, it is the cook who conjures up this nightmare. By doing so, and by approvingly associating it with Courage, he tells us that the fears of the patriarchy, of those in power, are not his fears (the patriarchy not only means the rule of man over woman, but also the rule of the elder male over the younger — and so of the male with higher status over the one with less status). Not only is he not threatened by this *vagina dentata*, which earlier "defeated" him in the struggle over the capon, but in it he welcomes the challenges that it offers the

---

[127] Is this reference to women a shift of meaning of the phrase? If it is, perhaps it occurs with the rise of the women's movement in Germany, for in the *Grimm Wörterbuch* of 1877, in contrast to the other sources, there is no example which associates this expression with women.

[128] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 168.

[129] *GW* 4:1413.

established order, challenges that he witnessed in the criticisms of virtue in scene 2 and of war in scene 3.

It is to this creature, then, that the cook also refers when he says that he is not disappointed by Courage's *Gesicht*. And he supports his statement by once again taking up the criticism of war which he had begun and Courage continued. He demonstrates (as the chaplain unwittingly did) that the freedom brought to Germany by the Swedish king is slavery: "[der König hat] die Deutschen noch einsperren und vierteilen lassen müssen, weil sie an ihrer Knechtschaft gegenüber dem Kaiser festgehalten haben." He shows that this "freedom" means that the "liberated" become objects for the king's consumption: "Zuerst hat [der König] nur Polen schützen wolln vor böse Menschen, besonders dem Kaiser, aber dann ist mitn Essen der Appetit gekommen, und er hat ganz Deutschland geschützt." In a neat reversal within a single sentence the cook reveals that the little people pay the king's costs: "die Freiheit ... hat sich der König genug kosten lassen, indem er die Salzsteuer eingeführt hat in Schweden, was die armen Leut, wie gesagt, was gekostet hat."

Finally, the cook recalls — only to subvert — the chaplain's sanctification of the war, which had initiated his criticism of war in the first place: "[Der König] hat eins für sich gehabt, da war Gottes Wort, das war noch gut. Denn sonst hätts noch geheißen, er tuts für sich und weil er Gewinst haben will. So hat er immer ein gutes Gewissen gehabt, das war ihm die Hauptsach." We are prepared for the cook's irony, because we have seen the king profess freedom while instituting slavery, and because the cook has undermined the holiness of a war which rapes and plunders, and a king who swallows what he pretends to protect. A moment later Courage supports the cook and makes explicit what he only implies:

> Wenn man die Großkopfigen reden hört, führens die Krieg nur aus Gottesfurcht und für alles, was gut und schön ist. Aber wenn man genauer hinsieht, sinds nicht so blöd, sondern führn die Krieg für Gewinn.

"So ist es," agrees the cook. And when the chaplain in threat suggests that the cook, as a stranger under the Swedish flag, keep his opinions to himself, Courage performs a last act of solidarity with her partner and distracts the chaplain's anger with a toast: "Hie gut evangelisch allewege! Prosit!"

CRACKING THE COMBINATION

In this scene, then, the outlaw feminine principle and the little people combine to criticize the war, by exposing its truth, by undermining (to the benefit of the little people) the rulers' propaganda: they reveal that the war is paid for, not by the rulers, but by the little people; they reveal that the notions used to legitimize the war, such as freedom, only disguise an opposite reality; they reveal that the "idealism" of the holy war is only the rulers' ideological smoke-screen to hide the truth that they are interested only in a war of plunder.

This criticism is a radical act, because in war it attacks the foundation of their society.[130] And in its radicalism and its object we are reminded of Brecht. For when he attacks the warlike system of capitalism, he too attacks the foundation of his society. The resemblance is not fortuitous, for as *Mutter Courage* is a symbolic representation of capitalism, so in the drama the criticism of war, the system of that dramatic world, is a criticism of capitalism.

Traces of History

That the object of criticism for Courage and the cook is not solely the war of the Swedish king is signalled by the fact that, here as elsewhere throughout the drama, references to contemporary events continually whisper that there is more to this story than there may seem.

The most obvious historical reference, of course, is the description of the Swedish invasion of Poland, for Hitler's own invasion of Poland (1 September

---

[130] Hein notes that they are both subversive (45, 83), but does not develop his idea.

1939) occurred only 4 weeks before Brecht wrote *Mutter Courage*.[131] Also, Courage's ironic blame of the Poles for the invasion of their homeland recalls Hitler's blame of his Polish victims, for not conceding to Germany its territorial claims, and for the (fabricated) first act of aggression that Hitler used as a pretext for his invasion. The image of a ruler "hungry" for conquest, like the king who intends only to "protect" Poland, but then gets an appetite and in the end "protects" all of Germany, reminds us of Hitler's "modest" territorial claims followed by great land grabs, as when he used Danzig as a pretext to pursue his main aim of destroying Poland. (Earlier, in *Was kostet das Eisen*, Brecht represented Hitler too as one whose stomach growled for conquest, as one with *Appetit*.)[132] In the description of invasion as "protection" we have another clear reference to Nazi Germany, for "protection" was a key word used to describe its territorial expansion: Austria was annexed (11 March 1938) in order to "protect" its German population, the Sudetenland was invaded (1 October 1938) in order to "protect" German kinsmen, and Czechoslovakia and Slovakia also found themselves "protected" in quick succession (15-16 March 1939). Even a detail such as the Swedish king's salt-tax may contain, not only a contemporary historical reference, but also a sign of Brecht's tendency to equate fascism and capitalism; for a salt-tax was indeed introduced in Germany, not by the fascists, who abolished it once in power, but by the governments of Weimar, once in 1923-1926, and again in 1932 by Papen's government.[133]

Of course, *Mutter Courage* is no "*Schlüsseldrama*";[134] the historical references, too numerous to be accidental, point to the real object of the criticism

---

[131] Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch Bd.1* 184-185; Hein 45.

[132] *GW* 7:2840, 2845.

[133] *Das Kabinett von Papen 1. Juni bis 3. Dezember 1932: Akten der Reichskanzlei Weimarer Republik*, ed. Karl-Heinz Erdmann, 2 vols. (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1989) 45 (and note 11), 314, 316 (and note 7).

[134] Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch Bd.1* 185.

of Courage and the cook, namely capitalism. The particular roles which the cook and Courage represent make this symbolic reference seem even more probable.

Historical Roles

The cook, like the other soldiers a labourer of war, represents the antagonist of capital, the worker. As the worker labours for the capitalist, so the cook for his rulers, the aristocratic officers; as Brecht saw the worker exploited and dehumanized in capitalism, so the cook's commander throws soup into his servant's face and "extracts" more labour from him — namely, meat where none is to be found — by means of threats; as the worker is thrown onto the streets during the periodic crises of capitalism, so too the cook when peace occurs. The essential similarity between the cook and the worker, who both produce for another without enjoying the fruits of their labours, is expressed when the chaplain censures the cook for his criticism of war and ruler: "Schließlich essen Sie sein Brot" (that is, the bread of the king). The cook points out the reality to the ideologue: "Ich eß nicht sein Brot, sondern ich backs ihm."[135]

Courage plays several parts to the cook's worker. She is, for instance, a small shopkeeper, a member of the petty bourgeoisie, as Brecht said.[136] That

---

[135] The cook, as Brecht said elsewhere, is the "extra" mouth; see *GW* 20:233. This incidentally, is a portrayal of the worker with all his "warts": the cook, a good student of the universal war, is not above demanding that Kattrin be abandoned when he has a chance to rise to the station of an inn-keeper; as Courage says: "er hat ein Kopf fürs Geschäft" (*GW* 4:1423); we have seen, too, signs of the male chauvinism that permeated the workers' movement at the time: he is a womanizer (the dark side of his devotion to the material), he assumes male power in the struggle with the chaplain in scene 8, he presents an ultimatum to Courage on Kattrin's abandonment in scene 9. The cook may be critical and welcome Courage's own critical spirit, but we see also that unemployment and hunger cause him to yearn for the "good old days" of his exploitation, so that he remembers only the food he had and not the abuse he suffered, a regression signalled again when he forgets his criticism of war and blames the suffering of "humanity" on "sinfulness": "Die Menschheit muß hingehn durch Feuer und Schwert, weil sie sündig ist von Kindesbeinen an" (*GW* 4:1418).

[136] *AJ* 12.1.53.

is, she represents a class which capitalism, with its extension of rationalization and commodification into every realm of production, always threatens with proletarianization. Thus Brecht felt the petty bourgeoisie had more to gain by combining with the working class, and so Courage's combination with the cook forms the alliance Brecht recommended between the workers and the petty bourgeoisie.[137]

The alliance of Courage and the cook also represents that relationship which Brecht recommended between the working class and intellectuals who had taken the side of the proletariat. Certainly, with her critical intelligence Courage carries out that task which Brecht recommended to intellectuals: she pokes holes in the ruling ideology, and with the "acid" of her materialism exposes the real interests of those in power.[138] Courage does this when she shows who loses and who gains in war, who is subject to whom, and how ideology obscures the real state of affairs.

Exploited and Doubly Exploited

To the last two alliances must be added a third, one which Brecht did not specifically discuss, but which is implicit in much of his work; an alliance, furthermore, which was considered logical by both classical socialist thinkers such

---

[137] "Sie [die Mittelschichten] müssen aus ihrer Unterdrückung und Proletarisierung dieselbe Konsequenz ziehen, welche die Arbeiter daraus zu ziehen haben: daß es heißt, zu kämpfen gegen ein Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftssystem, das zum Zwecke der Ausbeutung des Menschen durch den Menschen die Unterdrückung des Menschen durch den Menschen benötigt, und zwar zunehmende Unterdrückung" (*GW* 19:477); Brecht's reference to "proletarianization" shows that he refers with his "Mittelschichten" to the petty bourgeoisie. The notion can be traced to the *Manifesto*: "Die bisherigen kleinen Mittelstände, die kleinen Industriellen, Kaufleute und Rentiers, die Handwerker und Bauern, alle diese Klassen fallen ins Proletariat hinab, teils dadurch, daß ihr kleines Kapital für den Betrieb der großen Industrie nicht ausreicht und der Konkurrenz mit den größeren Kapitalisten erliegt..." (*MEW* 4:469). See also Thiele 46.

[138] *GW* 20:54.

as Engels and Bebel, and by socialist feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir and Juliet Mitchell.[139] I am speaking, of course, of the alliance between woman (as the group exploited by the patriarchy) and worker (as the group, which does not exclude women, exploited by capital). Since they are oppressed or historical objects, the argument runs, and since they are exploited in capitalism as a function of that system (women being doubly exploited, both as woman and as worker); therefore, worker and woman would share an interest in their mutual liberation.[140] Indeed, some have maintained that the liberation of one can not be realized without the liberation of the other.[141]

---

[139] See Friedrich Engels, "Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats," *MEW* 21: 61; August Bebel, *Women under Socialism*, trans. Daniel de Leon (New York: New York Labor News Press, 1904) 1-6; Beauvoir xiv, xvii; Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate* (1971; New York: Vintage, 1973) 99; Millett 24, 38-39, 363; Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology" 44.

[140] We have seen that woman is the Other in the patriarchy; so for Brecht the worker is an "Other" in a fascist Germany which seeks "die Vernichtung, Ausschaltung oder Unterwerfung jener Menschengruppen, welche die nationale Geschlossenheit beeinträchtigen, der Juden und der Arbeiter" (*GW* 20:238).

[141] This is the opinion of Engels and Bebel as the works mentioned above will bear out. But see also Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (New Brunswick / New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976; New York: W.W. Norton, 1986). In the Introduction of this Tenth Anniversary Edition Rich, faced with the swing to the political right of the 1970s and 1980s, of the perversion of the feminist thesis that "the personal is political" to one of "the personal-for-its-own-sake," seems to have moved to the left (x, xiv-xvii). She no longer claims, as she did in the earlier edition, that "the repossession by women of [their] bodies will bring far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers" (xvii). Now she believes that this enormous social transformation "can only happen hand in hand with, neither before nor after, other claims which women and certain men have been denied for centures: the claim to personhood; the claim to share justly in the products of our labour, not to be used merely as an instrument, a role, a womb, a pair of hands or a back or a set of fingers; to participate fully in the decisions of our workplace, our community; to speak for ourselves, in our own right" (xvii-xviii). In contrast, see *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), in which Perry Anderson, while recognizing the challenge presented to Marxists by the women's movement,

Brecht may not have explicitly commented on the women's question or the logical common interest between the workers and women, between the exploited and the doubly exploited.[142] Since, however, his works show that he was aware of the exploitation and oppression of women, and since he brought woman and worker together in the image of the prostitute, it can be said that his work posits such an alliance.[143] Walter Benjamin brings out just this content in Brecht's work in his comments on *Die Mutter* when he tells us that Pelegea Wlassowa, the title figure, represents "eine zweifach Ausgebeutete: als Angehörige der Arbeiterklasse einmal, als Frau und Mutter ein zweites Mal. Die zweifach ausgebeutete Gebärerin repräsentiert die Ausgebeuteten in ihrer tiefsten Erniedrigung."[144] Just how the union of Courage's feminist revolt and the cook's revolt of the worker coincide for Brecht can be seen in the deeper meaning of their privileging of the material.

---

believes that the women's cause does not necessarily conflict with capitalism, since "the logic of profit is indifferent to sexual difference" (90).

[142] Wedel notes such a lack (111, 119); but see Sabine Kebir's *Ein akzeptabler Mann? Brecht und die Frauen* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1989), where the author says she sees in Brecht "einen Verbündeten der Frauen" (15); see also Smith, who says that Brecht probably saw in the "dilemmas facing women, as estranged and disenfranchised members of society," a chance to articulate his own views (491); and see Frenken, who considers Brecht a "Vorkämpfer" of the women's movement (177).

[143] On woman as oppressed and exploited, see *GW* 5:1843; 9:566-7; 10:976; 12:574; 15:461; 17:971; 20:212n, 233; see especially the understanding shown on the question of abortion and forced childbearing, in *GW* 8:176, 382; 15:248-249; 13:801-805; consider also that Brecht puts derogatory remarks on women that reproduce patriarchal motifs in the mouths of unsavoury figures such as Sun from *Sezuan* (*GW* 4:1545) and Macheath from the *Dreigroschenroman* (*GW* 13:986-987); On the prostitute as Brecht's "prototype" of capitalist reification, alienation, and the division of labour, see *GW* 13:830; 20:215-216; Müller, *Die Funktion* 82; see also Nussbaum, *The Image of Woman* 78-136.

[144] Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 2nd ed. (1966; Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978) 45.

Objects Privilege the Material

We have seen how Courage and the cook, these representations of the historical objects "woman" and "worker", make fundmental to the critique of their world an interest in the "lowly material needs" which their rulers try to devalue before the "Idea" of service and renunciation. This privileging of the material by the objects of history is for Brecht also essential to the rebellion of the oppressed against capitalism.

This strange Bavarian Puritan: thus Hanns Eisler half-jokingly called his friend Brecht.[145] And it is true that Brecht was abstemious when it came to the pleasures of which Eisler was fond, such as food and drink, and that his monkish appearance lent credence to the idea of his asceticism. Still, we must remember that Brecht was no ascetic, a fact that can be easily seen from his indulgence in matters nicotine and sexual (so that we may see a certain self-investment in the figures of Courage and the cook with their considerable sexual appetites, and especially in the latter, who joins the pleasures of lovemaking and pipe).[146]

Brecht, then, was not averse to pleasure.[147] His work too defends "das gute leben". This can be seen from his projected song cycle on the *Glücksgott*, which was to praise eating, drinking, good shelter, sleeping, loving, working, thinking, all of which Brecht did not call, as did the chaplain, "solche niedrigen

---

[145] Hanns Eisler, *Fragen Sie mehr nach Brecht: Gespräche mit Hans Bunge.* (1975; Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1986) 100.

[146] Brecht's love life can be glimpsed in the standard biographies by Völker and Mittenzwei; but see also James K. Lyon, *Bertolt Brecht in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) 221-231. As for cigars, they were so essential to Brecht (one scarcely sees a photograph of him without a cigar) that he, who otherwise wrote very little about his personal life, felt compelled to lament in his journal: "meine beiden produktionsmittel, die zigarren und die (englischen) kriminalromane, gehen aus und müssen rationalisiert werden" (*AJ* 25.4.41).

[147] Contrary to Ekmann's view (278). On Brecht and pleasure consider, for example, Jost Hermand, "Utopisches bei Brecht," *Brecht-Jahrbuch* 4 (1974): 9-33; and Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 133.

Bedürfnisse," but "die großen genüsse."[148] This attitude is also implicit in his criticism of the "asceticism" which, as we saw in our last chapter, was recommended to the worker by capitalism. And it is this positive evaluation of pleasure for all people which is at the heart of Brecht's comment: "Der Satz: *Das Ziel eines Menschen ist, sich zu vergnügen* ist deshalb schlecht, weil er dem guten Satz: *das Ziel der Menschheit ist, sich zu vergnügen* ins Gesicht schlägt."[149]

Indeed, Brecht mocks asceticism, whether it be represented by those gaunt revolutionaries who in practice forget the material, "die Vertreter des Diesseits, hagere und bleiche Gestalten, die alle philosophischen Systeme kennen,"[150] or the fascists, whose ascetic Führer foreshadowed for Brecht the want he would inflict on his subjects.[151] Brecht mocks the fascists who are proud of their "idealism" and, unlike the Communists, will have "nichts zu tun mit dieser niedrigen, an der Erde klebenden, materialistischen Propaganda der Kommune," a propaganda, "die eine so selbstlose Handlungsweise wie die des Wessel überhaupt nicht versteht, wie sie auch lieber Butter fürs Volk verlangt als Kanonen auf den leeren Magen."[152]

We see a similar criticism of asceticism in Brecht's creative works. One need only consider his erotic sonnets for Margarete Steffin;[153] his mockery of Dante for his abstinent praise of Beatrice: "Ach, welche Unsitt' bracht er da in Schwang / Als er mit so gewaltigem Lobe lobte / Was er nur angesehen, nicht erprobte";[154] or his recommendation of an "inductive love", that is, one which conducts physical experiments.[155] Or one might turn to his *Kinderlieder*, in which a voice, not Brecht's but the outraged voice of thrift, predicts a bad end

---

[148] *AJ* 20.7.43; see also *GW* 18:223.
[149] *GW* 20:332.
[150] *GW* 14:1394.
[151] *GW* 9:602. see also *GW* 7:2842; 8:406; 9:447, 602.
[152] *GW* 20:214. See also *GW* 2:829.
[153] *GW* 9:536-41, *GW* IV:280-283.
[154] *GW* 9:608.
[155] *GW* 9:616.

for a people given to pleasure and superfluity: "Ein solches Volk muß untergehn!" The symptom of decline? Spendthrift pleasures such as eating spread (*Brotaufstrich*) with a spoon, cooking meat in margarine, washing clothes twice a week, warming a house before winter, keeping lights on after nine o'clock, that is, the "grosse genüsse" which Brecht defended, indeed praised, as when he eulogized Charles Laughton's grand belly as a thing of beauty, a "Gedicht" that was "vortrefflich ausgeführt".[156]

Most important, however, is the fact that the necessity of pleasure, of living for "das Extra" as Brecht wrote in *Die Tage der Commune*, is ultimately revolutionary for him, as one of his songs for the *Glücksgott*-cycle demonstrates:[157]

> Ich bin der Glücksgott, sammelnd um mich Ketzer
> Auf Glück bedacht in diesem Jammertal.
> Ein Agitator, Schmutzaufwirbler, Hetzer
> Und hiemit — macht die Tür zu — illegal.

Herbert Marcuse explains the revolutionary content of the advocacy of pleasure in capitalism:[158]

> In a society that reproduces itself through economic competition, the mere demand for a happier social existence constitutes rebellion. For if men value the enjoyment of worldly happiness, then they certainly cannot value acquisitive activity, profit, and the authority of the economic powers that preserve the existence of this society. The claim to happiness has a dangerous ring in an order that for the majority means need, privation, and toil.

---

[156] *GW* 9:583 (Kinderlied); *GW* 10:875 (Laughton); for other instances of Brecht favouring the sensual, see *GW* 12:533, 576; 16:699 (§ 75); *AJ* 12.8.38.

[157] *GW* 10:894; "Mein Sohn, man lebt für das Extra" (*GW* 5:2148, spoken by the sympathetic Papa); see also: "Das Theater muß nämlich durchaus etwas Überflüssiges bleiben dürfen, was freilich dann bedeutet, daß man für den Überfluß lebt" (*GW* 16:664, from *Kleines Organon*).

[158] Marcuse, *Negations* 99-100; see also where Brecht says that the beginning of the worker's critical attitude is a concern with the paycheck (*GW* 20:109), and where he says that, unless the "lowly" concern themselves with the "lowly", they will never rise (*GW* 9:633).

Pleasure is indeed bound up for Brecht with revolution, with the exploited putting an end to the "order" of the "empty larder", and finally taking charge of their own affairs and becoming "guests at their own table."[159] This is best expressed perhaps in a late poem, conceived as a *Gegenlied* to that much earlier poem, *Von der Freundlichkeit der Welt*:[160]

> Soll das heißen, daß wir uns bescheiden
> Und "so ist es und so bleibt es" sagen sollen?
> Und, die Becher sehend, lieber Dürsten leiden
> Nach den leeren greifen sollen, nicht den vollen?
>
> Soll das heißen, daß wir draußen bleiben
> Ungeladen in der Kälte sitzen müssen
> Weil da große Herrn geruhn, uns vorzuschreiben
> Was da zukommt uns an Leiden und Genüssen?
>
> Besser scheint's uns doch, aufzubegehren
> Und auf keine kleinste Freude zu verzichten
> Und die Leidenstifter kräftig abzuwehren
> Und die Welt uns endlich häuslich einzurichten!

Their courage to speak of "lowly needs" in difficult times, their insistence on material pleasure when the rulers speak of duty, morality, and renunciation, make Courage and the cook agitators and "revolutionaries" as Brecht desired them.[161] But we should not overlook how this alliance of historical objects who

---

[159] As in this song from *Die Mutter*:

> Wenn du keine Suppe hast
> Wie willst du dich da wehren?
> Da mußt du den ganzen Staat
> Von unten nach oben umkehren
> Bis du deine Suppe hast.
> Dann bist du dein eigener Gast (*GW* 9:461).

Later in the GDR Brecht gives voice to a hope that "das goldene Zeitalter" might begin by inviting the worker: "nimm Platz am Tisch, du hast ihn doch gedeckt" (*GW* 10:961).

[160] *GW* 10:1032 (from *Die Hauspostille*, *GW* 8:205).

[161] See *Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit* (*GW* 18:222-240), especially the section, "Der Mut, die Wahrheit zu Schreiben" (222-224).

privilege the material and insist on their pleasure is reinforced by their common workplace: the kitchen.

Cooking Up Trouble

For this alleged ascetic the kitchen is extraordinarily important. It is for Brecht, as a place where the material needs of life are cared for, the seat of productivity, it is the social centre of the working class.[162] These views inform the title of the poem, *Die Bolschewiki entdecken im Sommer 1917 im Smolny, wo das Volk vertreten war: in der Küche*, and a *Keuner* story in which Herr Keuner is Brecht's self-representation:[163]

> 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."

Not only was the kitchen a place of real productivity for Brecht, it was for him and his contemporaries — as it is even today for us — largely the realm of woman. Once again, then, worker and woman are joined in this text, this time as cook. That the cook is both worker and cook is obvious. As for Courage, as one of the "little people", as woman, and as one who labours in war but only loses in it, she is part of the realm of work; moreover, her job in camp, as she says to the chaplain, is to *cook*.[164] Joined, as representatives of the oppressed and as cooks, Courage and the cook are "nurturers" who defend, on behalf of the little people, material life. And they do this by cooking up, not only food, but

---

[162] On the kitchen as the social centre of the working-class, see Albrecht Dümling, *'Laßt euch nicht verführen': Brecht und die Musik* (Munich: Kindler, 1985) 560.

[163] *GW* 8:392, 12:389; see also *Die Köchin soll den Staat lenken können*, in which Brecht, leaning on Lenin's saying that every cook ought to be able to run the state, draws the lesson: "daß es vorteilhaft ist, den Staat als eine Küche, die Küche aber als einen Staat einzurichten" (*GW* 12:569).

[164] *GW* 4:1406.

also rebellion. This is not the only time we find such a constellation of meaning with Brecht.

We need only consider Pelagea Wlassowa, the protagonist of Brecht's *Die Mutter*. "Von Hause aus ist es ihre Sache, zu kochen," Walter Benjamin says of this mother and cook turned revolutionary.[165] (She first appears in her kitchen, worrying over the meagre soup she must offer her son.)[166] Like Courage, Wlassowa finds an ally in another rebellious "cook" (a butcher who runs the company kitchen). And, as Courage encourages the cook's criticisms of war in scene 3, so Wlassowa encourages her cook's rebellion, so that he sides with those striking against the company he works for, and gives strikers the food from the kitchen while throwing out the strike-breakers.[167]

Freedom

Even this brief scene portraying the combination of the little people as woman and worker, shows parallels between their criticisms of war and Brecht's criticism of capitalism. For instance, when the cook points out that it is the little people who pay for the ruler's war, whether through his salt-tax or as the victims of his pillage and atrocities, we hear an echo of Brecht's criticism of the exploitation of the worker in the "wars" of the capitalists.[168] When we hear that an ideal, such as the "faith", is used to hide the rulers' real interest in plunder and to motivate the exploited to carry out this struggle that destroys them, then we are again faced with Brecht's criticism of ideology (which we encountered in Chapter 4, "Morality and Ideology"). In the present scene this criticism of

---

[165] Benjamin *Versuche* 46.

[166] *GW* 2:825.

[167] *GW* 2:871. Nor is Brecht the only one to see in a cook, as that person closest to the real needs of the world, one also closest to the "truth". In Ernst Toller's *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*, when an officer loudly announces three more recruits for the Great War: "Alle drei Kriegsmutwillige!" a cook's voice answers: "Drei Idioten mehr" (Amsterdam: Querido, 1933) 59.

[168] See for example *GW* 18:246; 19:468, 477; 20:336, 344.

ideology takes as its object a value Brecht criticized in regard to capitalism: freedom.

Brecht was sceptical of the freedom which the bourgeoisie claimed to represent. In the poem, *Der anachronistische Zug*, for example, a procession enters a Germany ruined by war ("Asch und Trümmerwand"), a Germany only just beginning to experience a *Frühling* or recovery.[169] The members of this procession, however, disappoint that "erstes Birkengrün" which so hopefully raised itself over the rubble, "probweis, delikat und kühn." For this procession, in contrast to the expectant green flag of the birch, carries a pair of worm-eaten panels whose "faded" legends — a sign of their actual disuse? — provide the slogans for this band: "Freiheit und Democracy." What kind of freedom this will be can be guessed from the spirits who accompany this "zerlumpter Zug" (in armoured cars provided by Industry): Oppression, Pestilence, Deceit, Folly, Homicide, and Larceny; the nature of this freedom can be gauged as well from those whom these spirits accompany: "die entnazten Nazi," the Church ("dem Kreuz dort auf dem Laken / Fehlen heut ein paar Haken / Da man mit den Zeiten lebt / Sind die Haken überklebt"), and "die ... / Grauen Herren von den Kartellen." In other words, Germany finds itself in the same hands after as before the debacle, a fact which these powers try to disguise with their mouldering slogans of democracy and freedom.

The presence of Nazis should not cause us to discount how far the presence of capitalists in this procession made Brecht doubt their freedom. For he insisted that the freedoms of bourgeois society were not all they seemed. (Thus he followed a tradition in Marxist thought that can be traced back to Lenin and to Marx's *Grundrisse*, a tradition, called "practically disasterous" by some, that tended to underestimate the specific freedoms of "liberal capitalist societies.")[170] Freedom of speech he thought of little account: the bourgeoisie was able to permit

---

[169] *GW* 10:943-949.

[170] *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* 173; see also Ekmann 278.

it because they could defuse every criticism.[171] Free elections in a bourgeois state meant only that one was free to choose one's unfreedom.[172] Freedom in capitalism is the kind which the student finds whose father prescribes his studies for him, or the woman whose father chooses for her the spouse who will imprison her, or the worker whose leaflet is torn from his hands by a policeman, or the writer whose text is mangled by an editor.[173] The only freedoms truly represented by capitalism are the "Freiheit des Wettbewerbs," "die Freiheit auszubeuten," and "die Freiheit, sich ausbeuten zu lassen."[174] This is no freedom at all for Brecht, since: "es gibt keine Freiheit irgendwelcher Schichten auf dem Rücken anderer Schichten."[175]

To return to our scene with Courage and the cook. Here, too, we see a freedom — that introduced by the Swedish king into Poland and Germany — that is not freedom, but slavery. It is, as Brecht says of capitalism, the freedom of the king to exploit, as we see in the "use" which the king makes of the conquered when he tortures them; and the conquered enjoy "die Freiheit, sich ausbeuten zu lassen." This too is a freedom "auf dem Rücken anderer Schichten," and so for Brecht by definition no freedom. And when we consider that this "freedom" is purchased by the king through the exploitation of his own subjects, then we see a parallel to a passage from the *Me-ti* which describes the freedom created by the wars of capitalism:[176]

> Zu unserer Zeit rufen die herrschenden Menschenklassen, die die andern Klassen unterdrücken und ausnützen, diese anderen Klassen auf, sie möchten die Nation befreien, d.h. ihr Freiheit zu verschaffen, andere Nationen zu unterdrücken und auszunützen. Je mehr Freiheit dieser Art entstünde, desto mehr Sklaverei entstünde.

---

[171] *GW* 20:329.
[172] *GW* 20:328.
[173] *GW* 20:110.
[174] *GW* 12:496, 543.
[175] *GW* 19:473.
[176] *GW* 12:486.

OLD REBELLIONS : A NEW LENS

We see, then, that the text that portrays the combination of Courage and the cook points to Brecht's historical moment through allusions to contemporary events (such as the invasion of Poland and the "protection" of Austria and Czechoslovakia), through parallels between that alliance and combinations which Brecht explicitly or implicitly portrayed as logical (woman/worker), desirable (intellectual/worker), or inevitable (petty bourgeoisie/worker). Furthermore, the combination of Courage and the cook enacts criticisms of the war that symbolically rehearse Brecht's own criticisms of capitalism.

With this in mind, we are now able to see Courage's rebellions as the outlaw feminine principle through a new lens. Her rebellion is not simply that of a hedonist, nor that of a small shopkeeper against bureaucratic restrictions on her movement (as might be thought if we were to view in isolation her irritation at the sergeant's demand for papers and licence); nor does she represent that sort of feminist rebellion which would retain the status quo and ask "only" that women be allowed to act within that world on an equal footing with men. The alliance of worker and woman here makes it impossible to ignore the even more radical content of the rebellions which were first attributed to the outlaw feminine principle. (The latter, of course, is not cancelled by the combination; rather, it remains one of the fundamental elements of the revolt that defines Courage as an "outlaw".)

For example, to take up once again Courage's privileging of material needs, we saw that this insistence alone is subversive in a world whose authorities preach renunciation to the exploited. Courage is subversive in this sense when she counters current belief and points out that it is the little people who suffer in the war; that there is no real difference between besieger and besieged since both starve; that the soldiers' brutality is not innate but a result of the want they suffer in war; that the soldier's heroic deeds in the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten* will not benefit his own, a point which she emphasizes by banging time to her

song — *on an empty pot.*[177] Here Courage emphasizes the material and simultaneously unmasks reality, as Brecht hoped from a discussion of "lowly needs".[178]

Our new "lens" also reveals Courage's criticism of the Church as a form of Brecht's criticism of it as an ideologue of capitalism. Thus, when Courage refuses the chaplain's exploitative "closer relationship" which was to have nothing to do with "lowly needs", she rehearses Brecht's rejection of the otherworldiness of the Church (used to resign the exploited to their suffering).[179] When Courage exposes the "low" material interests of the Church that recommends renunciation to the oppressed, by pointing to the chaplain's fleshly interests (he who had professed no interest in "solche niedrigen Bedürfnisse"), and by pointing out that the rulers (among whom she includes the popes) prosecute the war for gain and not religion as they claim, then she exposes the hypocrisy of the Church as Brecht did when he characterized priests as the "Vertreter des Jenseits, korpulente Herren, die alle Weinsorten kennen," or when he noted in regard to the financial interests of the Church: "die Kirche scheint sich nicht auf einen Tod in Schönheit vorzubereiten, eher auf einen Tod im Wohlstand."[180] When Courage, chastised by the ostensibly peace-loving chaplain for living from war, reveals that he too lived from her profits and so from war (which he also did as ideologue), then she reveals the hypocrisy of a Church which preaches brotherly love even as it promotes and battens off war (which always means capitalism as well), an idea given expression in a poem where a priest's voice only revives, "Auf! Auf! du altes Herze!" to celebrate his masters' wars: "Sing wieder Feuer und Stahl / Für

---

[177] *GW* 4:1379, 1401, 1377, 1366-1367.

[178] *GW* 18:223.

[179] In *Wenn die Haifische Menschen wären* the Church teaches the fish (the workers) that life only begins in the belly of the shark (the capitalist) (*GW* 12:395; see also 10:865, 15:388).

[180] *GW* 14:1394; 20:315. The this-worldliness of the Church becomes a byword for physical appetite and pleasure when Brecht describes a highwayman (itself a telling association) who is "wie ein Domprälat dick" (*GW* 9:584).

unserer Herren Kriege!"[181] When Courage criticizes the chaplain's fatalism, resignation, and quietism (as in scene 3), when in scene 6 she will not let his preaching make her deaf and blind, she then reproduces Brecht's own criticism of a Church whose beliefs were for him (as for Marx) an opiate for the poor,[182] which misled the poor man into thinking, "daß die Welt die beste der Welten ist und daß das Loch / Im Dach seiner Kammer von Gott selber geplant ist."[183] Finally, when Courage rejects in the "closer relationship" with the chaplain the slavery dwelling within his proposal, she rejects the Church as that ideologue of social inequity which Brecht portrayed in the figure of a priest who uses the parable of the talents to defend capitalism — and so its relations of production: "Wer mit dem Pfund nicht wuchert, das der Herr ihm gab / Sprach der Pfarrer, dem nimmt es Gott krumm."[184]

The new lens won through our understanding of the combination of Courage and the cook also tells us that Courage, each time she promotes her own freedom, strikes a blow against the unfreedoms that Brecht associated with capitalism. When, for example, Courage undermines the "law and order" of her patriarchal and warring society, when she resists those measures that would control her movements (*Papiere*, *Lizenz*), when she frustrates the sergeant's attempt to "legitimize" her children, when she obstructs as well his reduction of her and her family to "numbers" in his book, then she resists that instrumentalization and quantification which we saw Brecht criticize in Chapter 4.[185]

---

[181] *GW* 9:526.

[182] *GW* 20:241.

[183] *GW* 9:627; see also *GW* 8:257; 9:474, 498-499; 15:388; 19:353.

[184] *GW* 9:590; see also *GW* 9:507. In Brecht's unmasking translation of a Nazi speech he calls religion that "welche die Verwendung von Eigentum zum Zwecke der Ausbeutung heiligspricht" (*GW* 20:196).

[185] There may be a sign of Courage's resistence to quantification at the end of scene 3 when she refuses to give up her son's name to his executioners, and so obstructs again that desire on their part to complete their task by "seizing" his "name".

Lastly, Courage's rejection of the controlling authority of the patriarchy, her rejection of patriarchal "government" (represented by the administrative efforts of the sergeant), of husband and guardian, together with her assertion of her control over her children against the claims of paternity; all this is a symbolic expression of that most fundmental of freedoms which Brecht saw opposed by capitalism and promised by socialism, namely the control by the producers of their own products and their own affairs.[186]

THE VIRTUES OF WAR

We have seen how the criticism of the war by Courage and the cook is a criticism of capitalism, the symbolic referent of the Thirty Years War of the drama. And this in turn has revealed the criticism of capitalism which is part of Courage's revolt as the outlaw feminine principle. Now I would like to continue this exposure of the symbolic content of Courage's rebellion, specifically her criticism of the war — and so of capitalism — by considering her criticism of what I shall call the "virtues of war": honour, heroism (that is, self-sacrifice and courage), and nationalism.

I do not mean to suggest that these are the defining, or the only, or even the most important, virtues of war. Indeed, there are other virtues criticized by Courage, such as cleverness, strength, honesty, and even compassion, which could arguably be considered virtues of war. I have selected these particular virtues for discussion here because they are virtues which Courage criticizes and which at the same time were important notions used by German fascism — and so in Brecht's mind German capitalism — to promote a soldierly morality in preparation for war. Thus Courage's criticism of these particular virtues continues her undermining of fascist and capitalist ideology.[187] At the same time it should

---

[186] As seen in *Aufbaulied* (*GW* 10:955-956).

[187] Since for Brecht the rejection of capitalism means also the rejection of war, militarism, and barbarism; see *GW* 5:2146, 2153; 9: 651-652.

be noted here that her criticism of these "virtues of war", as of the other virtues, rests upon a criticism — which I think she shares with Brecht — of virtue "itself".[188] (That discussion, however, must wait until "A Tale of Virtue" in Chapter 7, when I will be ready to elaborate the relationship between Courage and her children.) Before turning to the "virtues of war", we will see how Brecht and Courage criticize the very ground which gives rise to these virtues.

EVIL TIMES, EVIL LANDS, EVIL RULERS

The *Flüchtlingsgespräche*, written almost a year after *Mutter Courage*, is a key text for the discussion of virtue in Brecht's works. The two figures of these dialogues appear to represent aspects of their author. The sceptical physicist Ziffel could be a representation of Brecht the intellectual, while Kalle, the anti-fascist worker and one-time inmate of a Nazi concentration camp, represents Brecht's political sympathies. Furthermore, like their author, they are refugees from Hitler's Reich.

Toward the end of this work, Ziffel sings a lament to unfulfilled promise.[189] Technological developments, he tells us, had made it seem, "als ob die Welt bewohnbar werden könnt," and the earth breathed a sigh of relief in the hope that there would be an end to the taxing and tiring struggle for mere existence; now one could finally be "fauler, feiger, wehleidiger, genußsüchtiger, kurz glücklicher"; now the world could reckon with "ganz gewöhnlichen Leuten in Mittelgröße."

But the world, alas, did not become "livable"; instead it became even more unlivable. This "große Zeit", as Ziffel ironically calls the time of fascist expansionism, has not made life easier, but calls instead for ever greater "Heldentaten", so that the world is "schon wieder voll von den wahnwitzigsten

---

[188] For a different opinion, see Frank Dietrich Wagner 353.
[189] *GW* 14:1496-1497.

Forderungen und Zumutungen."[190] (In contrast, Goebbels for the same reason enthusiastically praised this "große Zeit": "Neue Tugenden erwachsen überall....")[191] Now, Ziffel says, even the barest survival requires enormous virtue:

> Damit man zu einem Sack Mehl kommt, braucht man eine Energie, mit der man früher den Boden einer ganzen Provinz hätt urbar machen können. Damit man herausbringt, ob man schon heut fliehen muß oder erst morgen fliehen darf, ist eine Intelligenz nötig, mit der man noch vor ein paar Jahrzehnten hätt ein unsterbliches Werk schaffen können. Eine homerische Tapferkeit wird gefordert, damit man auf die Straße gehen kann, die Selbstentsagung von einem Buddha, damit man überhaupt geduldet wird. Nur wenn man die Menschlichkeit von einem Franz von Assisi aufbringt, kann man sich von einem Mord zurückhalten.

Such a world is unbearable to Ziffel: "Ich habe alle Tugenden satt und weigere mich, ein Held zu werden." He wants to be elsewhere: "Die Welt wird ein Aufenthaltsort für Heroen, wo sollen wir hin?" In Ziffel's opinion the best world would be: "eine Welt, in der man mit einem Minimum an Intelligenz, Mut, Vaterlandsliebe, Ehrgefühl, Gerechtigkeitssinn usw. auskommt."

What is this evil time or evil land which Ziffel would escape? Obviously the evil land is fascist Germany from which Ziffel and Kalle have fled. But Ziffel allows us to infer much more. For he also associates evil times with the technological developments of civilization: the power loom, the steam engine, the automobile, the airplane, surgery, electricity, radio, and modern medicine (*Pyramidon*, an analgetic). With this Brecht alludes to the belief in progress that accompanied the development and spread of capitalism — to which period these

---

[190] See another ironic use of "große Zeit" for fascism in *GW* 20:183.

[191] "Neue Tugenden erwachsen überall, Merkmale des revolutionären Umbruchs, dem sie entsprießen: Edelmut, Heroismus, Männlichkeit, Opferbereitschaft, Disziplin, Einordnungsvermögen, glühende Hingabe an den Staat und an die gemeinsame nationale Sache."; from a speech made on June 16, 1933 (Goebbels 121).

inventions belong. This belief, Eric J. Hobsbawm tells us, held that an economy based on "competitive private enterprise" would[192]

> not only create a world of suitably distributed material plenty, but of ever-growing enlightenment, reason and human opportunity, an advance of the sciences and the arts, in brief a world of continuous and accelerating material and moral progress.

In Brecht's text, then, fascism is not seen as an aberration, but as integral to this historical development. By associating fascism with the technological developments mentioned by Ziffel, Brecht again identifies fascism with capitalism. The subtext of this passage, then, is that Ziffel's "evil time" and the "unlivable world" is capitalism.[193] The text soon supports this interpretation.

In the next dialogue the worker Kalle is impressed with Ziffel's criticism of virtue and the conditions that require it (just as the cook is impressed by Courage's "Haare auf die Zähn"). So positively does Kalle esteem Ziffel for this that he offers the physicist a job (just as Brecht suggested that the intellectual should serve the interests of the working class). And, as Kalle in friendship offers the physicist the means to life, so he offers him a solution to the problem of virtue:

> Sie haben mir zu verstehen gegeben, daß Sie auf der Suche nach einem Land sind, wo ein solcher Zustand herrscht, daß solche anstrengenden Tugenden wie Vaterlandsliebe, Freiheitsdurst, Güte, Selbstlosigkeit so wenig nötig sind wie ein Scheißen auf die Heimat, Knechtseligkeit, Roheit und Egoismus. Ein solcher Zustand ist der Sozialismus.

Socialism, Kalle says, is the "good land" which needs no virtues and would replace the "evil land" of fascism which requires virtue. By naming the successor of capitalism as the solution to a condition which refers to the Third

---

[192] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848-1875* (New York: Scribner's, 1975) 1.

[193] On capitalism as a bad ("schlecht") state ("staatliche Einrichtungen") see *GW* 16:580; see Philip Thomson, *The Poetry of Brecht: Seven Studies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 101.

Reich, Kalle implicitly couples fascism and capitalism just as Brecht explicitly did. Kalle's words are not unique in Brecht's work, as may be seen from a passage in his *Me-ti / Buch der Wendungen.*

Me-ti, a project begun in 1934 and revived in 1939 (the year *Mutter Courage* was written), is a collection of unrevised aphoristic "essays" in which Brecht worked out philosophical and ethical positions dealing with Marxist theory and contemporary political events. In this "philosophical and ethical breviary," as it has been called, we discover "Das Land, das keine besonderen Tugenden nötig hat":[194]

> Ein Land, in dem das Volk sich selbst verwalten kann, hat keine besonders glänzende Führung nötig. Ein Land, wo nicht unterdrückt werden kann, braucht keine besondere Freiheitsliebe. Ohne Ungerechtigkeit zu spüren wird man auch keinen besonderen Gerechtigkeitssinn entwickeln. Ist der Krieg unnötig, ist auch die Tapferkeit unnötig. Sind die Institutionen gut, muß der Mensch nicht besonders gut sein. Freilich ist ihm dann die Möglichkeit gegeben, es sein zu können. Er kann frei, gerecht und tapfer sein, ohne daß er oder andere zu leiden habe.

We note once again that virtue is dependent upon "vice", that is, upon evil social conditions. Oppression gives rise to a love of freedom, injustice to a sense of justice, war to courage, and "bad" institutions to "goodness". Again we are told what "place" (*Land*) is the seat of evil institutions, of injustice, oppression, and war, by naming its replacement: "ein Land, in dem das Volk sich selbst verwalten kann." Again Brecht alludes to socialism, so that the "evil land" must be capitalism.

Capitalism and Fascism, related systems in Brecht's view, are the evil states which make virtue necessary. Courage's criticism of virtue, then, not only represents the outlaw feminine principle which objects to a life-negating war and the extraordinary exertions it requires, exertions which endanger and sour life,

---

[194] *GW* 12:520; Ewen 487.

it also represents precisely that critical spirit which informs the above passages from the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* and *Me-ti*.

We find Courage's criticism of conditions needing virtue in scene 2, at that very moment when, as I earlier said, Courage displays a critical spirit friendly to the cook's. Courage has just heard how her son risked his life in a "heroic deed" (massacring peasants for their oxen). She angers and declares Eilif's commander miserable, for if he were a good leader he would have no need of such virtues: "Überhaupt, wenn es wo so große Tugenden gibt, das beweist, daß da etwas faul ist."[195] The cook takes the usual position: "Ich dacht es beweißt, daß etwas gut ist," which serves as a foil to Courage's reply:[196]

> Nein, daß etwas faul ist. Warum, Wenn ein Feldhauptmann oder König recht dumm ist und er führt seine Leut in die Scheißgaß, dann brauchts Todesmut bei den Leuten, auch eine Tugend. Wenn er zu geizig ist und zuwenig Soldaten anwirbt, dann müssen sie lauter Herkulesse sein. Und wenn er ein Schlamper ist und kümmert sich um nix, dann müssen sie klug wie die Schlangen sein, sonst sind sie hin. So brauchts auch die ganz besondere Treue, wenn er ihnen immer zuviel zumutet. Lauter Tugenden, die ein ordentliches Land und ein guter König und Feldhauptmann nicht brauchen. In einem guten Land brauchts keine Tugenden, alle können ganz gewöhnlich sein, mittelgescheit und meinetwegen Feiglinge.

The parallel to the words of Ziffel and Kalle is unmistakable. And, if it should seem that Courage is saying merely that these soldiers need a good leader in the *present* circumstances, then we need only look to her view that an "orderly land"

---

[195] *GW* 4:1365.

[196] *GW* 4:1365-1366. Compare, also from the *Me-ti*: "Über Länder, die besondere Tugenden hervorbringen": "Me-ti sagte: Etliche loben gewisse Länder, weil sie besondere Tugenden hervorbringen wie Tapferkeit, Opfersinn, Gerechtigkeitsliebe usw. Ich selber bin solchen Ländern gegenüber mißtrauisch. Wenn ich höre, daß ein Schiff Helden als Matrosen benötigt, frage ich, ob es morsch und alt ist" (*GW* 12:518); or see, from the same work: "Es sollte in einem Lande keine besondere Sittlichkeit brauchen," in which Me-ti draws a conclusion not unlike Courage's : "Ganz allgemein sollte gelten, daß jedes Land, in dem besondere Sittlichkeit nötig ist, schlecht verwaltet ist" (*GW* 12:456).

needs no such virtues.[197] This use of "order", which we saw in Chapter 4 was an important concept for Brecht, alludes to what was for Brecht the only truly "orderly land", namely socialism (*die große Ordnung*), the answer to the "great disorder" and chaos of capitalism.[198]

Now that we have discovered that only evil times, evil lands, and evil rulers, those of war, fascism, and capitalism, need virtues, we may turn to some of those "anstrengende Tugenden", where we will once more find agreement between author and creation.

HONOUR

Brecht is allergic to *Ehre*. Perhaps, as a spiritual descendant of the Enlightenment, he found repugnant the stale breath of its feudal past; or he may have shuddered at the slavery and fear inhering in a feudal notion whose Gothic origin, *aistan*, meant "sich vor jemandem scheuen".

More likely, however, is that Brecht abhorred this notion in its fascist resurrection, for *Ehre* was one of the Nazis' vogue words. They repeatedly lamented Germany's *Ehre* besmirched at the hands of the *Diktat* of Versailles;[199] with *Ehre* they contrasted their own "idealism" to the crass materialism of the Communists and the banks: "Vor den Geldfragen aber steht für uns Nationalsozialisten die Ehre";[200] they used *Ehre* to flatter that group with whose help they hoped to achieve power, the "ehrlicher deutscher Arbeiter";[201] their own costume they christened an "Ehrenkleid".[202] Even their decrees

---

[197] See Thiele 30.

[198] Later, perhaps because of his suspicion of the repressive connotations of "order", Brecht preferred as a description of socialism the "große produktion" (*AJ* 7.3.41); see Katharina Bluhm, "Von den Schwierigkeiten der Zuspitzung: Replik auf Udo Tietz' 'hilflosen Antistalinismus des Bert Brecht,'" *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 40.6 (1992): 686.

[199] Goebbels 166.

[200] Goebbels 47.

[201] Goebbels 48.

[202] Goebbels 111.

invoked the notion, such as the "Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre" (15 September 1935), so that it was plain they were set on establishing a "Reich der Ehre".[203]

With *Ehre* so often lying with his enemies, Brecht naturally found it undesirable: "Was für ein Gesindel sich herandrängt, die Ehre eines Volkes verteidigen zu dürfen!"[204] This is not to say that he never used the notion without critical intent[205] (though even here he often enough invoked *Ehre* only in order to deny it to his enemy: "Gewiß, Hitler könnte ehrlich sein und es gut meinen und doch objektiv Deutschlands schlimmster Feind sein. Aber er ist nicht ehrlich.").[206] Yet in his attacks on fascism Brecht never glorified the notion as did Johannes R. Becher: "Ehre, Machtbewußtsein und Würde der Literatur stehen auf unserer Seite."[207] Indeed, between 1933-1943, that is, from the time the promoters of *Ehre* achieved power until the war turned finally against them, Brecht most often uses *Ehre* (and terms based on its root) as part of his criticism, not only of fascism, but also of its less virulent form, capitalism (and of their symbolic representations).[208]

---

[203] Goebbels 144.

[204] *GW* 18:232; see Frank Dietrich Wagner 151.

[205] See for example: *GW* 3:1094; 4:1611, 1661; 5:2002, 2006, 2007; 7:2839; 9:561, 571, 710; 11:307; 12:584; 17:1079; 20:61, 180, 205; and *AJ* 2.1.41.

[206] *GW* 20:199-200; see also *GW* 12:472; 20:237 (where Brecht refuses the Nazi phenomenon any "Ehrerbietung").

[207] Johannes R. Becher, *Gesammelte Werke*, 18 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau, 1977) 15:543; see also 15:465, 568, 586.

[208] My remarks are based on an analysis of 212 occurrences of words formed from the root "Ehre" and sharing in the field of meaning delimited by "honourable, respectable, worthy" etc. (namely, *Ehre*, *Ehrlichkeit*, *ehren*, *ehrlich*, *ehrenhaft*, *ehrbar*, *ehrwürdig*, *ehrenwert*, and 16 other forms, less often used, such as *Ehrung*). They are found in 150 pages of the *GW* (excluding the supplementary volumes), and in 2 journal entries, comprising over 50 works. I will not list them here; however, all 150 pages will be cited at least once in the footnotes to this section. I classified each occurrence according to Brecht's use of the term: critical ("c", meaning critical of the term or its object), uncritical ("n" = neutral), and uncertain ("u"). Specific instances are referred to in the footnotes. If we simply count occurrences (163c, 24n, 25u), then ca. 77% are

In one note Brecht tells us not to abstract *Ehre* from its function; in another he says: "[B]esser als das Wort *Ehre* ist das Wort *Menschenwürde*. Dabei verschwindet der einzelne nicht so leicht aus dem Gesichtsfeld."[209] Brecht, then, wants to draw attention to the function of *Ehre* in the hands of the fascists and the capitalists, and so to its real content. He wants to show us that *Ehre* and its cousins, with their connotations of honour, respectability, and worthiness, are being used to legitimize evil.

Ehre, for example, gives a reputable sheen to the misdeeds of both fascist and bourgeois, as when a poet calls his masters' "Viehhof der Schlachten" a "Feld der Ehre".[210] In the *Dreigroschenroman*, where bourgeois and criminal are synonyms, the confidence man — and so capitalist — Macheath praises *Ehrlichkeit*, upon which he says the bourgeoisie is founded, as necessary to make his own "größere Geschäfte" — a swindle — succeed.[211] In *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui*, when a cartel bribes a political figure, Dogsborough, so that he will act on their behalf, the bribe is called something "ein ehrlicher Mann" can always use, and Dogsborough, when he accepts the gratuity, points the moral

---

critical (with the uncertain cases counting as uncritical). This method is somewhat crude and by no means conclusive. Yet, if we eliminate from consideration those occurrences of a particular form which appear more than twice on a single page (in order to prevent too great an emphasis being put on texts which discuss *Ehre* or its constructions in more detail, and with the assumption that twice is not overmuch) then our count (122c, 17n, 25u) still shows that 74% of uses are critical. If we are even more ruthless and eliminate from the count all occurrences of any form from any pages where more than two words based on "Ehre" appear, then our count (109c, 17n, 13u) shows 78% of uses to be critical. Therefore, though this is no exhaustive study, I think we have a representative sample which shows that, in Brecht's case, we will much more often encounter a critical use of terms based on "Ehre" than an uncritical use.

[209] "Von dieser Funktion der Ehrlichkeit, den Menschenhandel zu retten, kann man die Ehrlichkeit selber nicht gut abstrahieren: Es ist keine Ehrlichkeit schlechthin" (*GW* 20:204); see also *GW* 18:232.

[210] *GW* 9:485.

[211] "Ein gewisses Maß von Ehrlichkeit und Vertragstreue, einfach von menschlicher Verläßlichkeit, war eben doch unentbehrlich, wenn es sich um größere Geschäfte handelte!" (*GW* 13:973).

for his son: "Da siehst du, Junge, Ehrlichkeit bezahlt sich / Mitunter auch."[212] Again in *Arturo Ui* the title figure, who represents Hitler, legitimizes his treacherous and murderous methods when he promises: "daß alles ehrlich / Auf Treue und Glauben vorgehn soll...."[213] (Just as a member of the SA, when his girlfriend takes him to task for stealing her money, "beschwor ... / Seine ehrlichen Absichten.")[214]

Ehre is also a mere trifle with which the exploiter fobs off those they exploit. As Brecht says in *Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit*, which attacks both fascism and capitalism: "wie verschwenderisch verteilen die Satten Ehre an die, welche sie sättigen, selber hungernd."[215] (That those who exploit know the true value of "honour", can be seen from *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar*, when Caesar — another representation of Hitler — opts for "Macht" and "Geschäft" over *Ehre*.)[216] In *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* the tenant farmer Callas finds he is mistaken to think that Iberin (yet another Hitler-figure) will support the seizure of his landlord's workhorse. Iberin sides instead with property. When Callas protests, Iberin tosses him the bauble of *Ehre*:

---

[212] *GW* 4:1736-1738. For other frauds or crimes of the bourgeoisie hidden or gilded with *Ehre* see also *GW* 4:1698, 1739; 5:1872; 7:2818; 13:772, 853, 877, 892, 990, 994, 1000, 1093, 1096, 1127; 14:1378; 20:203-204. Even the little people adopt a similar strategy: the tenant farmer Callas says he trusts Iberin (who represents Hitler) "in Ehren", which is to say, he does not trust him; *GW* 3:972.

[213] *GW* 4:1777; see also *GW* 2:494.

[214] *GW* 9:516; see also *GW* 5:2037; 13:884, 977, 1127. Similarly the little people use *Ehre* to mask their own lack thereof: see for example *GW* 3:975, where Callas points to his daughter's non-existent *Ehre* (referred to again in *GW* 17:1084).

[215] *GW* 18:232. For other examples of *Ehre* as a naught for Brecht, see *GW* 9:610, 681; 15:413 (*Ehrensache*).

[216] *GW* 14:1338, 1351. Again, in the *Keuner-Geschichten* we discover, for example, that stolen money is worth recovering, stolen *Ehre* not. (*GW* 12:401) See also *GW* 5:1931, where *Ehre* seems without substance when an officer in the SS says to one of his agents: "Wenn Sies eingestehen, nimmts Ihnen nichts von Ihrer Ehre, es ist rein persönlich, Sie sind ein Scheißer, warum es nicht zugeben?"

"Willst du für deine Ehre Pferde nehmen? / ... Du sollst dich schämen."[217] Callas later measures the worth of honour: "Die Ehre machte mir schon Spaß," he says, but: "was soll mir die Ehre dann / Wenn ich kein Brot für kaufen kann?"[218] In the *Dreigroschenroman* Fewkoombey, a soldier who has returned maimed from a war in the name of his country, is a metaphor for workers who have no benefit from the war of capitalism. Crippled and so useless now to his country, Fewkoombey finds no job and must beg. Peachum, businessman and crook, chides Fewkoombey for trying to "profit" from his wound (which competes with Peachum's rationalized begging "industry"). He impugnes Fewkoombey's patriotism, since it cavils at injury: "Als ob man nicht das Schindluder kennte, das mit dem Patriotismus der Patrioten getrieben wird! Zuerst melden sie sich alle freiwillig und dann, wenn das Bein weg ist, will es keiner gewesen sein!"[219] But it is this sacrifice, he says, which earns them the special reward from their country: "darum überhäuft man doch eben diese Braven so mit Ehren und Beifall, weil dann das Bein weg ist!"[220] In the same novel rulers, who care nothing about the conditions of those who "work" for them, send soldiers to war in ships unfit for sea. When the ships sink, however, the rulers "reward" them with a "Heldenehrung" and an "Ehrenwache".[221]

Brecht criticizes the lack of substance to *Ehre* even when it concerns people he admires. In the poem, *Die Teppichweber von Kujan-Bulak ehren Lenin*,

---

[217] *GW* 3:992 (see also 990). For other examples where *Ehre* for the fascist means the want or sacrifice of the exploited, see *GW* 9:447, 451.

[218] *GW* 3:1023. For other examples where the oppressed reveal the nothingness of *Ehre*, see *GW* 3:969; 5:1940, 1986.

[219] *GW* 13:739.

[220] *GW* 13:739; see the poem about the eel who wanted a smith to make him into an "Ehrendolch": "Es heißt, daß er's nicht überstand" (*GW* 9:510).

[221] *GW* 13:1140-1141; for other examples where *Ehre* is revealed to be nothing see *GW* 13:974; 5:1987 (where it is held to be less valuable than material goods), and *GW* 9:695, where the lowly potato points out how much more necessary she is than *Ehre*; or *GW* 13:796 (where it is again shown to be the only thing left the exploited).

we learn that many honour Lenin with busts, speeches, demonstrations, and by naming streets and cities after him. The carpet makers of Kujan-Bulak in Turkestan, however, honour Lenin more fittingly, by acting in his spirit. They take the money collected for a bust of Lenin, and instead use it to rid their land of swamp fever; they honour Lenin by improving their conditions and so by making for a better future.[222]

Ehre is also a euphemism for exploitation and oppression. In *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* labouring in Shui Ta's sweatshop is called "ehrliche Arbeit", the same term used by Arturo Ui, the representative of Hitler, to describe the exploitation of a worker.[223] (This extends to other forms of oppression as well. In *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*, armoured soldiers call the effective imprisonment of their fiancées "guarding" their *Ehre*, while Galileo, when he grovels before his prince, says he is a devoted servant, "der sich zur höchsten Ehre anrechnet, als Euer Untertan geboren zu sein.")[224] Similarly *Ehre* is credited to those who submit to their oppression, while those who resist have it denied them. In *Dreigroschenroman* those who protest the miserable conditions in Peachum's "factory" are called "unehrerbietig", while in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* Sun is called "ehrlich" when he betrays fellow workers to his employer.[225] That even the exploiter means no real praise with such a term can be learned from the *Dreigroschenroman*. When Macheath married he had the managers of his chain stores attend, to avoid the impression created by his usual friends, namely that

---

[222] *GW* 9:666-668.

[223] *GW* 4:1579, 1776. This same exploitation at the hands of the fascists is implied in *GW* 9:447; see also *GW* 13:1129, where Macheath admires the open exploitation of the "good old days" when "ehrlicher Großgrundbesitz" ruled. The oppressed also take up the idiom of their users: *GW* 4:1579, 1582. For other examples of *Ehre* used to legitimize exploitation, see *GW* 13:738, 1030; 20:211-212.

[224] *GW* 5:2034; *GW* 3:1261.

[225] *GW* 13:753; *GW* 4:1581. See also *GW* 3:1217; also *GW* 5:1855 where "ehrlich" is used to flatter workers by a member of the bourgeoisie who wants them to help him in a struggle against their employer.

he was surrounded with criminals. With satisfaction he noted that these managers, "durch ihr dämliches Aussehen unübertrefflich ehrlich wirkten."[226]

Since *Ehre* masks the crimes of fascist and capitalist, since it is a mere naught used to reward the exploited, Brecht warns us to beware those who insist upon their honour. In *Me-ti*, for example, the philosopher, when he hears of someone who defends his honour, deduces: "Er scheint keine [Ehre] zu haben." The reason: "Ehre ist Ruf, meine Ehre ist nicht, was ich euch über mich zurufe, sondern was ihr euch über mich zuruft."[227] With this Brecht not only criticizes the fascists' overemphasis of *Ehre*, but also attacks Hitler ("er ist nicht ehrlich"),[228] as he did in the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* when (in the person of Ziffel) he sarcastically says: "der Wieheißterdochgleich [Hitler] muß öffentlich Tränen vergießen nach dem Litermaß, daß ers ehrlich meint."[229]

Often Brecht exposes *Ehre* as a prettifier of evil by having the representatives of evil, namely fascist and capitalist, legitimize themselves — as Hitler did — with that notion. In the *Dreigroschenroman* a bank director who has embezzled funds and double-crossed Macheath, calls himself and the latter by the same name: "Ehrenmann".[230] So Puntila, when he tries to buy illegal alcohol from a veterinarian, calls himself and the good doctor "Ehrenmänner".[231]

---

[226] *GW* 13:824.
[227] *GW* 12:472.
[228] *GW* 20:200.
[229] *GW* 14:1423.
[230] *GW* 13:1044.
[231] *GW* 4:1628; for other examples of capitalist, fascist, and other representatives of an oppressive social authority unjustifiably calling themselves "ehrlich", see *GW* 3:1113, 1214, 1252; 4:1614, 1680, 1736-1737, 1771, 1773-1774, 1777; 5:2037, 2082; 7:2818; 9:510, 516, 517; 13:783, 853, 870, 872, 904, 915, 916, 1137, 1147; 14:1200, 1334; 20:204. For other questionable claims to "Ehrlichkeit" see *GW* 13:749-750. Social authority also includes parents who have nothing "ehrlich" about them (*GW* 4:1624); and it is also used to criticize a woman who tricks Grusche in *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* and at the same time insists that she and her family are "ehrbare Leute" (*GW* 5:2051).

Brecht's criticism of *Ehre* makes even common titles seem ironic, as when the titles "Ehren" and "Ehrwürdigen" are applied to judges who condemn right action (as in *Die Gesichte von Simone Machard*, in which Simone is condemned for destroying a store of gasoline to keep it from Hitler's army), or to judges who collaborate with the Nazis, as in *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui*.[232] In certain contexts even idiomatic phrases seem ironic, as when a judge, who tries to decide which particular miscarriage of justice he will commit to appease the Nazis, is left by a colleague with the words: "Habe die Ehre."[233]

Given this content and function, it is no wonder that Brecht should mock *Ehre*, as in *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe*, where he in effect says that this "platte Ehrlichkeit" suits *dem platten Kopfe*;[234] or that he should portray *Ehre* as a cause for sorrow, as in the poem, *Deutsches Lied*, in which a man says to his wife or girlfriend: "Sie sprechen wieder von Ehre / (Anna weine nicht)."[235] Small wonder, then, that the same criticisms of *Ehre* appear in *Mutter Courage*.

Ehre is given ironic treatment when the recruiter laments the lack of *Ehrgefühl* in the peasants (and so claims it for himself), for he is a cheat who tricks drunken peasants into enlisting in the army.[236] Even Courage's words (from her author's viewpoint) have an ironic sense when she protests to the sergeant: "Wir verkaufen ehrlich Leinen und Schinken und sind friedliche Leut," for this "respectable" or "honest" trade, we have learned, is based upon the misery of war.[237]

In her aspect as outlaw, however, Courage also criticizes *Ehre* quite in the spirit of Brecht (and also of her daughter, who in scene 11 treats as worthless the *Ehrenwort* of an officer).[238] In scene 3, when the chaplain describes their

---

[232] *GW* 5:1899, 1901; *GW* 3:1788; see also *GW* 4:1669 and 13:1079, 1122.
[233] *GW* 3:1120.
[234] *GW* 3:920.
[235] *GW* 9:641.
[236] *GW* 4:1349.
[237] *GW* 4:1355.
[238] *GW* 4:1434.

capture by Imperial troops as a defeat, Courage objects. She points out that victory and defeat are two different things for ruler and ruled. And then, in connection with defeat, she takes up the notion so prized by the military and shows what it means for the little people: "Die Ehr ist verloren, aber nix sonst."[239]

HEROISM

Based on the virtues of courage and self-sacrifice, heroism is another of the soldierly virtues invoked by fascist propaganda. Hitler insisted that the "heroic idea" of self-sacrifice must take precedence, he expected heroism of the people, it was heroism which he saw "coming forth passionately and in future [was to] shape and lead political destiny."[240] Heroism was one of those virtues which Goebbels saw springing up everywhere.[241] Heroism is also part of the ascetic morality associated with capitalism and fascism, and which we have seen Brecht reject.[242] In the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* heroism is a sign of evil times;[243] in *Wenn die Haifische Menschen wären* the heroes are those fish (workers) who destroy their fellows for the benefit of the sharks (the capitalists); in the *Dreigroschenroman* the heroism of the exploited is praised by the exploiters (and their newspapers), whether that heroism is manifested in soldiers or workers, both of whom "work" themselves to death.[244]

---

[239] 4:1379. For ironic uses of "ehrlich" see *GW* 15:315, 413. Occurrences of words based on "Ehre" whose use was neither clearly critical nor uncritical are: (*Ehre*) *GW* 9:659; 17:1106; 20:216; (*ehrlich*) *GW* 5:1938, 1949, 2044; 9:532; 13:967, 969, (possibly also 1096); 20:104, 112; (*Ehrlichkeit*) *GW* 15:382; and *AJ* 5.1.41; (*ehren*) *GW* 9:769; 15:336; (other) *GW* 9:585; 11:236; 15:336; 20:231.

[240] *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922-August 1939*, ed. Norman H. Baynes, 2 vols. (1942; New York: Fertig, 1969); "heroic idea" 485; heroism of people expected 165; heroism coming forth passionately 568.

[241] Goebbels 121.

[242] On self-sacrifice see *The Speeches of Hitler* 107 (point 24 of the party programme recommending lack of self-interest); 1556, 225, 560; See also Goebbels 121, 235, 326; on Brecht's criticism see Frank Dietrich Wagner 28-31.

[243] Frank Dietrich Wagner 336-337.

[244] *GW* 14:1496-1497; 12:395; 13:1087, 1100; on self-sacrifice see *GW*

Brecht occasionally — in later life — may have positively evaluated heroism;[245] generally, however, he put no store in it. For example, (probably with Lenin's example from the famous July Days in mind)[246] he made sure not to become a hero (that is, a martyr) himself, and so fled Germany the day after the Reichstag fire. It is clearly Brecht's voice that we hear along with Galileo's, when the scientist, after he is moved to recant at the sight of the thumbscrew of the Inquisition, answers his pupil's accusation of cowardice with: "Unglücklich das Land, das Helden braucht."[247]

Courage herself criticizes the virtue whose name she bears, one necessary to the hero, and one which she held to be necessary only in an evil land ruled by evil leaders.[248] She tells us that courage is that virtue which the little people need in order to face a hopeless situation in which they are forced to destroy one another; courage is the virtue they need in order to endure rulers who murder them.[249] In other words, courage is only a means to endure (and so to perpetuate) such conditions. Nor does she encourage heroic acts, but actively dissuades the little people from that virtue. Thus she tells the soldier to abandon the regimental cannon, urges Schweizerkas to throw away the regimental cashbox (and reveal its whereabouts when he is arrested), cautions Eilif with the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten* that his heroic deeds accomplish nothing except his death, and reveals in scene 1 that the glory of war is only death;[250] and, while Eilif is praised by his officer for his heroism, Courage only celebrates the foolhardiness

---

13:936, 941, 1130.

[245] For example, in *GW* 19:486.

[246] As he said of that time in regard to the leader of the Bolsheviks: "Lenin / Gekaufter Spion genannt, verbarg sich in einer Scheune" (*GW* 8:393).

[247] *GW* 3:1329; see Jendreiek 265-266; see also the *Keuner* story "Maßnahmen gegen die Gewalt" *GW* 12:375-376, which presents a distinctly unheroic attitude towards violent oppression.

[248] *GW* 4:1365.

[249] *GW* 4:1404; Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 166.

[250] See Hinck, *Die Dramaturgie* 44; Jendreiek 164.

of her "young Caesar" by boxing his ears.[251] General Tilly is another victim of Courage's criticism of heroism. When she says: "Es heißt, sie haben ihm natürlich die Glocken läuten wollen zum Begräbnis, aber es hat sich herausgestellt, daß die Kirchen weggeschossen waren auf seinen Befehl, so daß der arme Feldhauptmann keine Glocken hören wird, wenn sie ihn hinabsenken," she not only shows the destruction wrought by this hero, but also points out that the hero gains nothing since he cannot enjoy his honours (after all, he would not, in his condition, hear the bells even if the churches were intact).[252]

Courage also shows that General Tilly's heroic death at the front was sheer accident, and so she undermines his heroism. Tilly, she tells us, had gone to the front only to encourage his soldiers, with the intention to quit the front and retire to the security of the rear, but became a "hero" in spite of himself:[253]

> Es war Nebel auf der Wiesen, der war schuld. Der Feldhauptmann hat noch einem Regiment zugerufen, sie solln todesmutig kämpfen, und ist zurückgeritten, in dem Nebel hat er sich aber in der Richtung geirrt, so daß er nach vorn war und er mitten in der Schlacht eine Kugel erwischt hat....

Finally, as with so many of her criticisms, Courage's first criticism of the heroic ideal is found in the first scene: for there she reveals that her name has nothing to do with soldierly virtues, but — in mockery of soldierly heroism — with mere money-getting; that is, unlike the Nazis, before all else she places the *Geldfrage*:[254]

> Courage heiß ich, weil ich den Ruin gefürchtet hab, Feldwebel, und bin durch die Geschützfeuer von Riga gefahrn mit fünfzig Brotlaib im Wagen. Sie waren schon angeschimmelt, es war höchste Zeit, ich hab keine Wahl gehabt.

---

[251] *GW* 4:1376, 1377, 1367, 1355-1358, 1368.
[252] *GW* 4:1400.
[253] *GW* 4:1400.
[254] *GW* 4:1351.

NATIONALISM

A development of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, inseparable from imperialism and colonialism and growing tensions between the nation states, nationalism, which Max Weber called the (conscious) "Anteilnahme am machtpolitischen Schicksale des eigenen Staats," simultaneously includes and excludes.[255] It includes those deemed for whatever reason to belong to the nation, and it excludes other nations and peoples. Those on the Left have emphasized that such separation from the Other, which creates an illusory identity of interests within the nation, has the exploitation of the Other and the legitimation of that exploitation as its object. This notion is implicit in Marx's theory, since the end of capitalism simultaneously meant for him the end of the exploitation of one nation by another (which means the end of nationalism).[256] A rejection of nationalism is also implied by the fundamental internationalism of the socialist project, whose hymn was *The Internationale*, and which Marx expressed in the dictum: "Die Arbeiter haben kein Vaterland."[257]

Brecht embraced this internationalism and, unlike Hitler, did not consider its vision of an "international brotherhood" a "lying phrase".[258] Brecht rejected that glorification and mythologization of the Nation which played so great a role in fascist propaganda, and which was entrenched in conservative thought (not only of his "own" country).[259] For Brecht the Nation was not the highest good; on

---

[255] Max Weber quoted from Hans Mommsen, *Arbeiterbewegung und Nationale Frage: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 31; for emergence of nationalism see likewise Mommsen 15-60; also see Robert Miles, *Racism after 'Race Relations'* (London: Routledge, 1993) 56-61; and Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991) 82.

[256] Mommsen 41-42.

[257] *MEW* 4:480. But see Mommsen 43 for a different view.

[258] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (1943; Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1971) 280. On Brecht's rejection of nationalism see *GW* 12:378, 489, 519, 534; and Frank Dietrich Wagner 144.

[259] Bracher 16-22, 251; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* 49-50, 231-232; see also Goebbels 121, and *The Speeches of Hitler* 1117.

the contrary, for him nationalism (*nationale Eigenliebe*) was a vice, something inherently foreign to the workers (though they might be "infected" with it in the interests of their rulers), and an irrational reaction that deflects from real social problems.[260] Talk of nationalism is for Brecht "das Gerede, Menschen täten gut daran, etwas zu verteidigen, was ihnen nicht gehört."[261] (He means, of course, that the workers are called upon to defend a Nation that is actually in the hands of their exploiters.) Brecht's aversion to nationalism is evident in his strong censure of the concept, even when his allies use it. When, for example, he discovered an allegedly "correct" nationalism promoted by Johannes R. Becher (as opposed to the "incorrect" nationalism of the Nazis), Brecht wrote of the article: "der stinkt vom nationalismus."[262] When Brecht hears of the Nazis' extermination of the Jews in Poland he not only damns this racist atrocity, but also what is for him the related phenomenon of nationalism:[263]

> ich wünschte wirklich, daß nie mehr gesprochen oder geschrieben werde vom 'deutschen menschen'...! alle diese redensarten einer pfiffigen salesmanship von 'deutscher wissenschaft', 'deutschem gemüt', 'deutscher kultur' führen unhinderbar dann zu diesen 'deutschen schandtaten'. gerade wir sind die rasse, die den anfang damit machen sollten, unser land das land nummer 11 zu nennen und basta. deutschland muß sich nicht als nation emanzipieren, sondern als volk, genauer als arbeiterschaft. es war nicht 'nie eine nation', sondern es war eine nation, dh, es spielte das spiel der nationen um weltmachtstellung und entwickelte einen stinkenden nationalismus.

Here, too, we see Brecht's agreement with Marx that the emancipation of the workers has nothing to do with nationalism. The protagonist of *Die Mutter*, Pelagea Wlassowa, obviously gives voice to Brecht's own thoughts, then, when

---

[260] *GW* 12:519 (vice), 489 (nationalism foreign) (all from *Me-ti*); on irrational distraction see "Vaterlandsliebe, der Haß gegen Vaterländer" *GW* 12:378; see also *GW* 20:237.

[261] *GW* 20:196; see also *GW* 2:868.

[262] *AJ* 10.11.43.

[263] *AJ* 11.11.43.

she addresses to the workers a criticism of their rulers' nationalistic propaganda:[264]

> Was sind das für Führer?
> Seite an Seite kämpft ihr mit dem Klassenfeind
> Arbeiter gegen Arbeiter.
> Eure Organisationen, mühsam aufgebaut
> Mit den Pfennigen der Entbehrung, werden zerschlagen.
> Eure Erfahrungen sind vergessen
> Und vergessen ist die Solidarität aller Arbeiter aller Länder.

"Arbeiter gegen Arbeiter": this is also implied when Courage says that the little people need courage to face one another, for (under their popes and emperors): "sie müssen einander den Henker machen und sich gegenseitig abschlachten...."[265]

Nationalism is also criticized by Brecht in the form of patriotism, as we see in the *Flüchtlingsgespräche*, where *Vaterlandsliebe* is one of the "virtues" symptomatic of evil times and to be done away with in socialism.[266] In the hands of Ziffel and Kalle — that is, in Brecht's hands — nationalism loses its "naturalness" and its mystique. Nationalism becomes identified, not with gain, but with loss: "Es ist mir immer merkwürdig vorgekommen, daß man gerade das Land besonders lieben soll, wo man die Steuern zahlt."[267] Nationalism becomes, not the result of destiny, but the effect of sheer accident, and even of misfortune, for Kalle says of patriotism: "jetzt ists, wie einer nichts so sehr schätzt wie den Fensterstock, aus dem er einmal heruntergefallen ist."[268] And, when Kalle seems to make a patriotic statement by citing a poem that describes the cities and landscapes of Germany, and then closes with: "der Sinn ist, man sollte es erobern, es würd sich lohnen!" we see that this is no nationalistic cry; rather, coming as it does from a left-wing worker, it is an exhortation to the workers to

---

[264] *GW* 2:888.
[265] *GW* 4:1404.
[266] *GW* 14:1497-1498.
[267] *GW* 14:1452.
[268] *GW* 14:1452-1453.

take control of these places (which would mean, as we saw, the end of nationalism). This sense is brought home to us by the text which follows Kalle's exclamation: "Ziffel blickte Kalle verwundert an, konnte aber nichts von dem Schafsmäßigen an ihm entdecken, das alle haben, die etwas Patriotisches äußern...."[269]

As might be expected from a drama whose historical model preceded nation states, there is no exhortation to national feeling in *Mutter Courage* on the part of the powers that be, unless we hear a faint echo of devotion to one's own country in the recruiter's lament that there is no *Treue* among the peasants. This could be a historical trace since the loyalty to the Führer and to the Nation were indistinguishable in the Nazi system of beliefs. But this is not certain, and it should be added that Courage at any rate offers no explicit criticism of nationalism.

And yet Courage implicitly criticizes nationalistic devotion to any one country. We may see a sign of this in her swift and unconcerned shift from trade with the Protestants to trade with the Imperial troops; in her statement that the poor pay for war and have different interests from those of their rulers may be an oblique reference to the idea that the workers have no fatherland;[270] and her boast that she has been through the whole world with her wagon suggests that this is not the first time that she may have traded with countries other than "her own" — whatever that may be (and the ambiguity is itself a criticism of nationalism, for we do not know, to use Kalle's phrase, "out of which window" she has fallen). In this sense, then, Courage is an internationalist, and this would have been an attack on the rampant nationalisms of 1939.

---

[269] *GW* 14:1455; It is a mistake, then, to call Kalle's view patriotism, as do Frank Dietrich Wagner (353), and Schöttker 445; a better term would be "Heimatliebe". Kalle's rejection of nationalism is consistent with that attitude ascribed to the worker in *Me-ti*, see "Appell an den Nationalismus" and "Der Nationalismus der Armen" (*GW* 12:489).

[270] *GW* 4:1379.

But we see Courage's internationalism not only in the fact that she has traded with the whole world, but also in the fact that she has slept with the whole world. Her "promiscuity", then, besides offending the patriarchal attempt to control (female) sexuality, also criticizes the desire to set up national barriers, to privilege one's "own" group and exclude another — which is after all the essence of nationalism. Thus Courage has been a devoted internationalist, counting among her men (at the very least), the French, the Germans, the Dutch, the Hungarians, the Swiss, and the Finns. As inclusive as Mother Nature, Courage admits all into her fold.

The internationalism of Courage also implicitly criticizes a notion which many have considered related, and some as necessarily related, to nationalism; a notion by no means peculiar to conservative German thought, but which was entrenched there well before 1914, and which was a pillar of the Nazi state: racism.[271] For racism, like nationalism, creates an imagined unity — ostensibly on an ethnic basis — among disparate interests. To use Nazi phraseology, a *Volksgemeinschaft* or "national community" opposes those deemed to stand outside that community, which means not only the external enemy, but also the internal enemy or *Gemeinschaftsfremde*. Placed outside the community, made thus "non-human" (just as strangers were made non-human by the "xenophobia" of "primitive" societies), the "aliens" or "sub-humans" become then justifiable targets of exploitation or violence.[272]

Courage's author, who in Europe addressed his revolutionary appeal to all races: "Schwarzer, Weißer, Brauner, Gelber! / Endet ihre Schlachtereien!"; who in America blasted "die nie verschütteten, kaum je ventilierten, stinkenden Vorurteile breiter Schichten gegen die Neger, die Juden und die Mexikaner," who in drawing an analogy between styles of writing and races said, "außerdem ist es

---

[271] Berghahn 56, 109, 149-150.

[272] Ruth Benedict, *Race and Racism* (London: Routledge, 1943) 99; see also Frank Dietrich Wagner 139.

für Stile nicht weniger gut, sich zu mischen, wie für Menschen verschiedener Rasse," is clearly no friend to racism.[273] In *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* Brecht censures Hitler's anti-Semitism, an attempt to blame all Germany's misery ("Unglück dieses Lands") on a stigmatized ethnic group,[274] as an attempt to disguise the fact that the real source of social conflict is the more fundamental difference "zwischen arm und reich."[275] Indeed, Brecht saw oppressed races and workers as two forms of the Other, as when he wrote that fascism seeks to destroy those groups which threaten the "nationale Geschlossenheit", such as the Jews and the workers.[276] He also associates this racism with the nationalism he hated, since the *Stückeschreiber* of the prologue of *Rundköpfe* tells us that he saw "den weißen Mann mit dem schwarzen ringen," and "ein Finn schmiß nach einem Schweden ein Stein," all conflicts caused by the *Schädelverteiler* (Hitler).[277] Nationalism and racism are coupled in *Rundköpfe* as well when Iberin justifies imperial expansion by saying that his intended victims have the racial characteristics of slaves.[278] Finally, that the *Stückeschreiber* opposes racism can be seen from the fact that he portrays the *Schädelverteiler* as one who with his racist theories separates "Freund von Freund", which posits an original solidarity among races and nations.[279]

Perhaps the first sign of Courage's rejection of racism is found in the list of men with whom she had relations,[280] for included among them is a

---

[273] *GW* 8:369; *GW* 20:296; *GW* 19:411; see also *GW* 20:87, 19:338. On Brecht's opposition to nationalism and racism, see Frank Dietrich Wagner 137-145.

[274] *GW* 3:920.

[275] *GW* 3:910, see also Müller, *Die Funktion* 88; see also *Rundköpfe* where the poor forget their common purpose and weaken their cause by splitting on racial grounds (*GW* 3:940); and on this Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 170-171.

[276] *GW* 20:238; see also IV:308; Frank Dietrich Wagner 143.

[277] *GW* 3:909.

[278] *GW* 3:1036.

[279] *GW* 3:910.

[280] Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch Bd.1* 184.

Hungarian. This is important, because the Hungarian not only represents a nation, he also represents racial "otherness". In *Mein Kampf*, among the groups which made up that "conglomeration of races" that had so repelled Hitler in Vienna, was the Hungarian, whom Hitler considered "by nature a man of the steppe" and "as lazy as the Russian."[281] (And perhaps Courage's Finn ought to be included here since both Hungarian and Finn are related linguistically through the non-Indo-European language family of Finno-Ugric.) However, that this list of Courage's men does not encompass the whole of her international experience, that her claim to have been through the whole world may imply more outrageous transgressions against nationalism and racialism, may be inferred from an even more extreme example of her acceptance of "otherness".

We remember that the sergeant wants to "drive the cheek" out of Courage. He tries to do this, unsuccessfully, by referring to her husband and guardian when he asks for her name. But his censure does not stop there. When he begins to glimpse the extent of her freedom, of her escape from patriarchal control, when he discovers how many men from a multitude of lands she has entertained, then he determines once again to chastise her, and he does this by referring to the origins of her son Schweizerkas: "Dann ist der wohl ein Chineser?"

This is no neutral remark. With it the sergeant conveys to Courage how far he thinks she has travelled beyond the pale. For with Asia the sergeant signals what was for the European the incarnation of utter strangeness (retained perhaps in the idiom "das ist mir wohl chinesich").[282] And since the sergeant has been

---

[281] Hitler 123; *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944*, Trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953) 33.

[282] Adrian Hsia shows how Karl May, an author important for Brecht's generation, despite his greater knowledge of China continued to reproduce what can only be called rascist stereotypes of the "Ching, Ching, Chinamann", a figure that was "schmutzig, eigennützig, grausam den Menschen und Tieren gegenüber, ehr- und skrupellos, schadenfroh, diebisch, feige" and so on (50). It need only be said that this cliche did not disappear in Brecht's time. See Adrian Hsia, "Chinesien: Zur Typologie des anderen China in der deutschen Literatur mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Arcadia* 25 (1990): 44-65;

shown to represent notions associated not only with capitalism, but also with German fascism, we cannot neglect that his attempt to shame her does so by attaching to her "promiscuity" the suggestion of a dishonourable intercourse with racial "otherness". For we remember that Hitler was no more friendly to Asia — despite his opportunistic alliance with Japan — than he was to the Jews. His nightmares contained as well the spectre of Russia, an "Asiatic continent" subjugated to Bolshevism and a threat to the white race.[283] He feared a wave of these "brutes in a state of nature" would come "foaming down from Asia and surprise a Europe benumbed by civilization."[284] His views were institutionalized at the latest with the invasion of Russia, that "Asiatic steppe" in June 1941,[285] for with the early victories that summer came talk of the eastern *Untermensch*, and the *Völkische Beobachter* now began to demonize the Russian prisoners by printing photographs with captions stressing the "Asiatic, Mongol physiognomies from the prisoner of war camps" and the "degenerate-looking orientals."[286] This was only a small part of what Richard J. Evans has called "years of racist scaremongering, in which communism was portrayed as the creed of slit-eyed subhumans threatening Germany from the East."[287] These racist attitudes were already present in *Mein Kampf* where Hitler placed the German nation in uneasy

---

on May see pages 49-50. On the importance of May for the juvenile Brecht see Mittenzwei, *Das Leben* 1:33-34.

[283] *The Speeches of Hitler* 797-798.

[284] *Hitler's Table Talk* 40.

[285] *Hitler's Table Talk* 68.

[286] Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Politics* (London: MacMillan, 1957) 69-70. Dallin tells us these views were reinforced and propagated by the publication in Berlin of *Der Untermensch* (1942), which further demonized the "Eastern criminals" (70). He says also that, along with Jews and Moslems, in the East the Germans regularly liquidated Asians (418); and that it was specifically stated that prisoners with "Asiatic features" were not to be brought to labour within the Reich (412-413).

[287] Richard Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: Germany and the West* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989) 139; he is referring to the attempt by Ernst Nolte to describe the atrocities of Nazi Germany as a reaction to "Asiatic" barbarism (27-34).

proximity to those nations most visibly "distant" from her, as when he spoke of "lying phrases about an international brotherhood between Negroes, Germans, Chinese...."[288] Courage, however, good internationalist that she is, sees nothing untoward in the sergeant's remark and answers evenly: "Falsch geraten. Ein Schweizer."[289] Clearly there is no one whom she excludes, "nothing human that is strange to her," as befits one who has been "durch die ganze Welt."

COURAGE AS 'REVOLUTIONARY'

Each of Courage's rebellions and criticisms has some authority as its target. Her self-assertion and claim to material fulfilment, both for herself and (implicitly) for others, is on the dramatic level a revolt against the rulers and their agents in the military and the clergy, and, on the symbolic level, against the domination of the patriarchy and capitalism. Authority knows it is attacked; in scene 1 after the clash between *Zucht* and *Wurst* which began this chapter, the recruiter calls Courage "einen unbotmäßigen Geist"; in scene 3 the chaplain feels goaded by Courage's description of the war into a defense of his king; in scene 2, after Courage has condemned soldiering with the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten*, the commander says: "die erlauben sich allerhand in meiner Küch" (note that the kitchen again becomes a source of dangerous criticism).

Authority is right to perceive a threat in Courage, for everywhere she strips them of the myths and abstractions with which they hide their true interests from the eyes of the little people, myths of morality, duty, religion, and nationalism, to name only a few. And Courage exposes the true purposes of the rulers to the little people, to those who have the most to gain from the exposure of their rulers.

But Courage not only exposes the interests of authority, she also more directly "lays hands on" authority. Here we will consider the various ways she

---

[288] Hitler 280.
[289] *GW* 4:1353.

does this, ending with a demonstration that Courage, in a certain sense, may be a more dangerous foe of war and the rulers than is commonly thought.

GREAT MEN

We saw Courage criticize heroism as the sign of evil lands and evil leaders. Here we will see that Courage criticizes the Hero as well.[290] She does this in several ways: by questioning the "Great Man" theory of history, by diminishing the "greatness" of an actual historical "hero", and by mocking the aims of so-called "great men".[291]

The "Great Man" theory of history, according to which history is made by outstanding individuals, was long a favourite of liberal historiography, a sort of extension of the middle-class emphasis on the aristocracy of talent over feudal birthright.[292] In this notion, however, lurks an authoritarian shadow that remained latent in the theoretical democracy of the Enlightenment, traces of which shadow can be found in the continuing fascination that the monarchy held for thinkers whose ideas were otherwise anathema to feudal notions (Hegel is one name that immediately springs to mind).[293] The theory of the Great Man, though, tended to ignore the general social forces of history which were so important to Marxist historiography; it downplayed the role of social classes, and (at least tacitly) supported hierarchical relations (the great man being "worth more" than the common individual). But the emphasis on the great man was also integral to the fascist glorification of the Leader as the medium of History to

---

[290] Ewen 355.

[291] On this see Jendreiek 160-162; Schoeps, *Bertolt Brecht* 260; Joost 284.

[292] See for example Peter Burke, "Overture: The New History, its Past and its Future," *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992) 1-23.

[293] See for example his *Philosophy of Right*, trans. and ed. T. M. Knox (1952; London: Oxford University Press, 1967) § 279.

whom all owed obedience.[294] Brecht opposed both liberal and fascist views of the Great Man theory of history.

For Brecht one of the advantages of a historical-materialist understanding of history was precisely its ability to account for historical change as an effect of the interactions between, and the contradictions of, larger social forces, an approach which in his view cancelled the notion that "große Männer machen die Geschichte."[295] Thus Brecht draws attention to the role of the little people in history, to their real contribution and to the price they pay in the course of a history which had become associated with the deeds of great men. In this way the aura of great men is dimmed, and authority is implicitly attacked. An example of such a tactic is found in the poem, *Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters*, where a worker questions statements found in the history books, such as "Caesar conquered Gaul," and instead draws attention to the little people whose efforts actually realized these historical deeds.[296] And in *Das Verhör von Lukullus* (in the *Schattenreich*, which is peopled with the exploited and gives no honours to great men)[297] the Roman general's deeds are shown to rest on the labour and sacrifices of the little people, symbolized by the slaves who carry the burden of Lukullus's frieze, the record of his "accomplishments",[298] (just as the cook in *Mutter Courage* reveals that the war is paid for, not by the Swedish king, but by his subjects). Such a reversal of liberal historiography and the fascist glorification of the Leader, already implicit in the lack of "great men" on stage in *Mutter Courage*,[299] is at the heart of Courage's rebuttal of the chaplain when he says that Tilly's death is a historical moment.[300] Courage has an utterly different

---

[294] Bracher 340-350.
[295] *GW* 16:530.
[296] *GW* 9:656-657.
[297] *GW* 4:1459.
[298] *GW* 4:1447.
[299] Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 102.
[300] On Brecht's criticism of "great men" see Jendreiek 161; and Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 102, 111.

perspective: "Mir ist ein historischer Augenblick, daß sie meiner Tochter übers Aug geschlagen haben."[301]

Courage's disregard for "great men" can also be seen in her disrespectful treatment of the deceased Tilly, that venerable historical figure whose moral uprightness caused him to be known as the "monk in armour" (despite his partial responsibility for the slaughter at Magdeburg).[302] Courage does not even deign to mark his funeral, that allegedly historical event (a criticism reinforced by the fact that the funeral is only a background event for the drama); instead she attends to her daily business, counting her wares and serving drink to soldiers truant from their heroic leader's funeral (which demonstrates the distance of the little people from their leaders and so contains an implicit criticism of those leaders, just as it shows Courage's agreement with them).[303] Tilly's memory is further tarnished when Courage tells the story of this hero's glorious end while irreverently mingling the historical and the mundane: "Schad um den Feldhauptmann — zweiundzwanzig Paar von die Socken —, daß er gefallen ist."[304] As for Tilly's heroic death, Courage reveals it to be the result of confusion and blunder: lost in the fog, Tilly thinks to escape to the rear, but rides instead to the front, where he meets the bullet that christens him a hero.[305]

Finally, Courage mocks the deeds of "great men". The occasion for this is once again Tilly's funeral:[306]

> Mir tut so ein Feldhauptmann oder Kaiser leid, er hat sich vielleicht gedacht, er tut was übriges und was, wovon die Leute reden, noch in künftigen Zeiten, und kriegt ein Standbild, zum

---

[301] *GW* 4:1408.

[302] Wedgewood 121.

[303] *GW* 4:1400; just as it shows that they, like Courage, are more interested in the material (drink/wages) than in religion (funeral).

[304] *GW* 4:1399; see Reinhold Grimm, "Bertolt Brechts dramatische Kunst," *Universitas* 18 (1963): 1082.

[305] *GW* 4:1400; on Courage's ironic treatment of Tilly's death, see Mennemeier 396.

[306] *GW* 4:1400-1401.

> Beispiel er erobert die Welt, das ist ein großes Ziel für einen Feldhauptmann, er weiß es nicht besser. Kurz, er rackert sich ab, und dann scheiterts am gemeinen Volk, was vielleicht ein Krug Bier will und ein bissel Gesellschaft, nix Höheres. Die schönsten Plän sind schon zuschanden geworden durch die Kleinlichkeit von denen, wo sie ausführen sollten, denn die Kaiser selber können ja nix machen, sie sind angewiesen auf die Unterstützung von ihre Soldaten und dem Volk, wo sie grad sind, hab ich recht?

As in *Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters*, the "great man" is reduced by his dependence on the little people. And, lest we imagine that Courage here truly criticizes the little people for their "pettiness", we should remember that in scene 2 she disapproved of the need for virtues and praised a condition that allowed people to be "mittelgescheit", an opinion she has maintained throughout the drama. We remember, too, how she criticized morality for privileging the idea before the material, something "Höheres" before "ein Krug Bier". In other words, her criticism of the little people in this passage is ironic, and her true objects of criticism are the plans of the great, which contribute nothing to the lives of the small.

Another criticism of the "great man" is found in the same passage, in the words: "zum Beispiel er erobert die Welt, das ist ein großes Ziel für einen Feldhauptmann, er weiß es nicht besser." As though the "greatness" of this act were not self-evident and derived only from some limitation of its agent, Courage is compelled to explain, as a mother explains the eccentricities of her child, that conquering the world is indeed something great: "das ist ein großes Ziel," she says, "*für einen Feldhauptmann.*" And to this she adds the deliciously ambiguous morsel, "er weiß es nicht besser," which can mean, not only that there is no better thing in the view of this General, but also *that he knows no better.*

CRITICISM OF AUTHORITY

If the dignity and historical importance of authority is diminished by Courage, if she dims its aura, she also engages elsewhere in more direct, almost

political, criticism. For example, in scene 4 a young soldier complains of hunger — Courage points out that his suffering is a result of bad leadership:[307]

> Voriges Jahr hat euer Feldhauptmann euch von die Straßen runterkommandiert und quer über die Felder, damit das Korn niedergetrampelt würd.... Er hat geglaubt, er ist nicht mehr in der Gegend dies Jahr, aber jetzt ist er doch noch da, und der Hunger ist groß. Ich versteh, daß Sie einen Zorn haben.

We remember that Courage also criticized bad leadership for making virtue a necessity by leading the soldiers into "die Scheißgaß".[308] Courage, as one of the little people, has no use for these "rotten" leaders, for she tells us that these kings and popes only cost the little people their lives.[309]

Courage's criticism and mockery of the rulers, her exposure of them as the cause of the little people's suffering is bold, but her truly dangerous aspect appears when she suggests, not only that nothing need remain as it is and that there is some hope in human action, but that no improvement will come from a higher instance, that is, from those in power.

Courage's belief in human action is revealed by her own ceaseless activity. She is no fatalist: she rejects the resignation of the chaplain's phrase: "Wir sind eben jetzt in Gottes Hand";[310] she will not leave matters to Providence when Schweizerkas is in danger (as the chaplain suggests with: "Der Herr wirds zum Guten lenken").[311] Her warning: "nix muß kommen, wie man denkt, nicht einmal die Jahreszeiten," especially given her historical situation, may suggest the baroque notion of *fortuna*, but, in the context of her other rebellions and demonstrated faith in human action, it contains more radical suggestions.[312] For example, when she highlights the idea that the rulers are at the mercy of their subjects' pettiness ("sie sind angewiesen auf die Unterstützung von ihre Soldaten

---

[307] *GW* 4:1393.
[308] *GW* 4:1365.
[309] *GW* 4:1404.
[310] *GW* 4:1378.
[311] *GW* 4:1390.
[312] *GW* 4:1369; Jendreiek 157.

und dem Volk, wo sie grad sind"), she at the same time expresses the power latent in the little people. That is, the juxtaposition of the latent power of the people with the fact that their rulers only cost them their lives raises the question, why do they continue to endure their suffering?[313]

That no higher instance will provide justice is expressed in Courage's *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*:[314]

> Einst, im Lenze meiner jungen Jahre
> Dacht auch ich, daß ich was ganz Besonderes bin.
> (Nicht wie jede beliebige Häuslertochter, mit meinem
> Aussehn und Talent und meinem Drang nach Höherem!)
> Und bestellte meine Suppe ohne Haare
> Und von mir, sie hatten kein Gewinn.
> (Alles oder nix, jedenfalls nicht den Nächstbesten, jeder ist
> seines Glückes Schmied, ich laß mir keine Vorschriften
> machen!)
> Doch vom Dach ein Star
> Pfiff: wart paar Jahr!
>
> Und du marschierst in der Kapell
> Im Gleichschritt, langsam oder schnell
> Und bläsest deinen kleinen Ton:
> Jetzt kommt er schon.
> Und jetzt das Ganze schwenkt!
> Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt -
> Keine Red davon!
>
> Und bevor das Jahr war abgefahren
> Lernte ich zu schlucken meine Medizin.
> (Zwei Kinder aufm Hals und bei dem Brotpreis und was
> alles verlangt wird!)
> Als sie einmal mit mir fix und fertig waren
> Hatten sie mich auf dem Arsch und auf den Knien.
> (Man muß sich stelln mit den Leuten, eine Hand wäscht die
> andre, mit dem Kopf kann man nicht durch die Wand.)
> Und vom Dach der Star
> Pfiff: noch kein Jahr!
>
> Und sie marschiert in der Kapell
> Im Gleichschritt, langsam oder schnell

---

[313] Jendreiek 160.

[314] *GW* 4:1394-1496.

Und bläset ihren kleinen Ton:
Jetzt kommt er schon.
Und jetzt das Ganze schwenkt!
Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt -
Keine Red davon!

Viele sah ich schon den Himmel stürmen
Und kein Stern war ihnen groß und weit genug.
(Der Tüchtige schafft es, wo ein Wille ist, ist ein Weg, wir werden den Laden schon schmeißen.)
Doch sie fühlten bald beim Berg-auf-Berge-Türmen
Wie doch schwer man schon an einem Strohhut trug.
(Man muß sich nach der Decke strecken!)
Und vom Dach der Star
Pfeift: wart paar Jahr!
Und sie marschiern in der Kapell
Im Gleichschritt, langsam oder schnell
Und blasen ihren kleinen Ton:
Jetzt kommt er schon.
Und jetzt das Ganze schwenkt!
Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt -
Keine Red davon!

This is no parable on the folly of pride. It tells us of a woman, one of the "oppressed" (Zwei Kinder aufm Hals und bei dem Brotpreis und was / alles verlangt wird!), whose hopes for fulfilment are dashed (hopes predicated in these evil times on the misfortunes of others, since justified by her claim to be better than "jede beliebige Häuslertochter"); who is forcibly "coordinated" into a monstrous whole (the force indicated by the phrase: "Als sie einmal mit mir fix und fertig waren / Hatten sie mich auf dem Arsch und auf den Knien," with its connotations of prostration and violation), a whole which is no natural universe, but a human construction, a "Kapelle", whose militaristic and religious associations already imply an oppressive hierarchy. In this coordination are traces of the regimentation and standardization of monopoly capitalism and of fascism,

especially when we remember how Goebbels celebrated a *Volk* which marched behind Hitler "im gleichen Schritt und Tritt."[315]

"Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt — / Keine Red davon!" There is no divine plan, this song says, which for some makes the message of this song one of resignation. It implies, then, that there is no justice to be expected from a "higher instance" such as God represents. But this has relevance for other "higher instances", for it echoes comments made by Courage before the song. When, for example, she tells the young soldier he is mistaken to bring his grievance to the commander, since he will only suffer more injustice at the hands of authority by being placed in the stocks, she is saying there will be no justice from this "higher instance", this example of patriarchal authority.[316] (Knowing that this "higher instance" will right no wrongs, Courage gives up her own grievance as well.) Does this say only that there will be no justice in this world, just as Courage's assertion that even the seasons cannot be taken for granted would seem only to suggest the radical uncertainty of life?[317] What if her lack of faith in a guiding authority that deals out justice instead contains hope, in the same sense as did her remarks on the rulers' dependence on the little people, which implied that the little people had it in their power to refuse their compliance and end the schemes of their rulers?[318] Then it could be suggested that Courage's dismissal of the justice of authority says that the little people, instead of waiting for those who oppress them to give them satisfaction, ought to take their fate into their own hands and make their own justice. This, I think, is the deep content and the subversive message of Courage's alleged song of capitulation, but it is a message which only becomes clear when one examines more closely Courage's advice to the young soldier.[319]

---

[315] Goebbels 329.
[316] *GW* 4:1393.
[317] *GW* 4:1369.
[318] Jendreiek 181.
[319] Thus the message of the song is not just one of capitulation (Hinck, *Die*

INSURRECTION

On this we must be clear. Courage does not recommend capitulation outright. She recommends it as a last resort. She does not leave the young soldier in his present state of submission in the army, in the "Kapelle", but, with her remark to the old soldier: "Laß ihn los, er ist kein Hund, wo man in Ketten legen muß," she raises him up and releases him from his chains (do we hear an echo of the famous line in the *Manifesto*?).[320] Having justified the soldier's grievance and raised him up, as it were, from his beastly state (*Hund/Ketten*), Courage does not simply dash him down again. She does not say that there is no justice whatever to be had in the world. Rather, she gives him perfectly reasonable advice: she asks him to examine his anger: "Da haben sie recht, aber wie lang? Wie lang vertragen Sie keine Ungerechtigkeit? Eine Stund oder zwei?"[321] Shrewdly judging the situation, she concludes: "Ihre Wut ist nicht lang genug."[322] And after her song she concludes: "Darum denk ich, du solltest dableiben mitn offnen Schwert, wenns dir wirklich danach ist und dein Zorn ist groß genug, denn du hast einen guten Grund, das geb ich zu, aber wenn dein Zorn ein kurzer ist, geh lieber gleich weg!"[323] Courage's meaning here is contained in her use of a charged term in Brecht's lexicon: *Zorn*.

In 1942 Brecht praised his friend Karin Michaelis for two things, her "Liebe der Wahrheit" and her "Zorn gegen das Unrecht."[324] When Brecht reviews an exhibition of Ernst Barlach's works in 1952, he describes a sculpture of a poor and freezing woman; her face, he says, shows no anger: "aber der Bildhauer zeigt Zorn, weit mehr Zorn als Mitleid; er sei bedankt dafür."[325] And

---

Dramaturgie 44; Thiele 54), but contains critical moments; see Jendreiek 181; and Schäfer 412.

[320] *GW* 4:1392.

[321] *GW* 4:1393.

[322] *GW* 4:1394.

[323] *GW* 4:1396.

[324] *GW* 19:477-478.

[325] *GW* 19:514.

when Brecht was preparing the German premiere of *Mutter Courage* in 1948, he told a group of students: "Ich halte nichts von Mitleid, das sich nur in Hilfsbereitschaft und nicht auch in Zorn verwandelt."[326]

Zorn or anger, and not merely *Mitleid* or compassion, is the attitude which Brecht considers appropriate towards social injustice. For Brecht *Zorn* has a revolutionary aspect: the meat king Pierpont Mauler, for example, is unsettled by the poor in whom he sees a premonition of a "Zorn ... der uns alle wegfegt...."; and in *Me-ti Zorn* is combined with the figure of Lenin (referred to as Mi-en-Leh):[327]

> Mi-en-leh war nicht mitleidig. Wenn er das Elend der Ausgebeuteten und Unterdrückten sah, entstand in ihm ein Gefühl, das er sogleich [in] Zorn verwandelte. Das gleiche Gefühl wird bei unwissenden Naturen zu Mitleid. Es ist das eine dumpfe Wehmut, der Verzweiflung ähnlich. Mitleid, sagte Mi-en-leh, ist das, was man denen nicht versagt, denen man Hilfe versagt. Ich versetze mich in die Leidenden nicht, um zu leiden, sondern um ihre Leiden zu beenden.

In the same work we see how *Zorn* is joined with the interests of socialism (*die große Ordnung*):[328]

> Ohne Zorn gegen das Unrecht kann man kein rechter Anhänger der *Großen Ordnung* sein. Zorn gegen das Unrecht ist mehr als bloße Verurteilung des Unrechts oder Angst, sich an Unrecht zu beteiligen. Wer nicht fähig ist, über ein privates Unrecht, das ihm geschehen ist, zornig zu werden, der wird schwer kämpfen können. Wer nicht fähig ist, über andern angetanes Unrecht zornig zu werden, der wird nicht für die *Große Ordnung* kämpfen können. Und der Zorn muß kein schnell aufflackernder, ohnmächtiger sein, sondern ein langdauernder, der die rechten Mittel zu wählen weiß.

---

[326] *GW* 20:312. In notes on *Mutter Courage*, for example, Brecht will not permit *Mitleid* for suffering, but will allow it for stupidity; see *MC* 122; for another criticism of *Mitleid* see *Die Maßnahme* (*GW* 2:640).

[327] *GW* 2:710 (see also 696); *GW* 12:565; see also Mennemeier 393.

[328] *GW* 12:576.

The very same *Zorn* is recommended by Courage, and so she shows herself to be, as Brecht said, a true "Anhänger der *Großen Ordnung*." Courage recognizes in the soldier the ability to anger over a private injustice ("über ein privates Unrecht ... zornig zu werden), that is, she recognizes that he meets the first criterion for an effective struggle against injustice. She recommends to the soldier the next quality Brecht said was needed by a revolutionary, a *long anger* ("langdauernder Zorn"); she shows too that she knows "die rechten Mittel zu wählen" when she says that the soldier, should he have a long anger, ought to remain "mitn offnen Schwert." Furthermore, she demonstrates the other quality needed of a revolutionary, namely the ability "über andern angetanes Unrecht zornig zu werden," for she also tells the soldier that, if his anger should be long enough, then: "Zerhacken Sie den Hund, möcht ich Ihnen dann raten...."[329] Courage would urge that hands be laid on authority, she in effect incites to a rebellion that she would support. In other words, after Courage raises the young soldier from the station of a chained beast, after she agrees that his grievance is just and reveals that his suffering comes from bad leadership, she recommends both a fundamental critique ("long anger") and the collective action (symbolized by her willingness to join the soldier in a long anger) that describes the "social revolution" which is the deeper content of all her rebellions.[330]

*** *** ***

Before proceeding to the conclusion, it may not be out of place to review the argument of this chapter, given its length and detail. I began by stating that Courage not only affirmed her world but also "negated" or criticized it. This "revolt" privileged *Wurst*, that is, the material, which is not surprising since the elements of Courage's revolt represent the oppressed of patriarchal capitalism, that is the "objects of history": woman (represented by the mother and the outlaw

---

[329] *GW* 4:1394.

[330] Jendreiek 202; compare Thiele 32.

feminine principle), and the worker (represented by the little people). Since Courage's resistance as mother to the life-destroying world of war was sufficiently developed in Chapter 2, and since it is implied in the outlaw feminine principle, I then concentrated on the latter, whose feminist rebellion opposed a patriarchy, a system of violence and domination, that would rob Courage of her freedom and her products. Thus Courage, as outlaw feminine principle or "witch", resists paternalism, paternity, a paternally bureaucratic law and order, the patriarchal denigration of the material, and Church and religion as another patriarchal authority that hypocritically stigmatizes the material and recommends renunciation and fatalism to the objects of history.

Courage also resists war as the outlaw feminine principle, but I chose this particular revolt to illustrate how her third element of revolt as one of the little people is highlighted by an alliance with another representative of that same element: the cook. I showed that the criticism of war and their world by the little people represents the criticism of capitalism by the oppressed of that system, a symbolic content suggested by historical allusions, by realizations of alliances that Brecht wished for, by the criticism of a false freedom that mirrored Brecht's criticism of the false freedom of capitalism, and by the fact that this critical alliance is based on a privileging of the material that was revolutionary for Brecht.

This decoding of the symbolic meaning of the criticisms of the little people, as voiced by Courage (alone and in combination with the cook) allowed us to see how Courage's feminist revolt was also a revolutionary criticism of capitalism, of its asceticism for the oppressed, of its ideology that blinds the oppressed to the real state of affairs, of its instrumentalizaton and quantification, a criticism that supports producers taking control of their own affairs. To reinforce this decoding of Courage's revolt, and to show the specific historical moment that informs it, I adduced Courage's criticism of values that reflected Brecht's own criticism of the "soldierly virtues" of a fascist capitalism: honour, heroism, and nationalism (and racism). Though Courage's rebellions all imply or

display an attack on authority, I then demonstrated that her assault on authority is even more radical, that, through criticisms of "great men" and of the fallacious belief in justice from a "higher instance", she prepares the ground for, or at least raises the possibility of, that assault on authority in the name of a "great anger": revolution.

Furthermore, as one who blasphemes against the ruling order, Courage is once again a witch.[331] For like the witch Courage works "against authority and the laws"; when she exhorts the little people to a "long anger", then she conjures up those spirits of the "underworld" who threaten the rule of the reigning "priests" and "kings" (just as Brecht's Johanna descended into "die Tiefe" to join with those spirits).[332] Courage, then, is another of Brecht's "witches", women who resist patriarchal capitalist authority and offer a glimpse of another world, one of freedom and fulfilment instead of oppression and renunciation. In this she is like those women (if the reminiscence is accurate) recalled by Brecht from the Revolutions of 1918-1919: "Einige Tage lang sprachen Arbeiterfrauen in den schnell improvisierten Räten und wuschen jungen Arbeitern in Soldatenkitteln die Köpfe, und die Fabriken hörten die Befehle der Arbeiter";[333] like those mothers in Brecht's *Wiegenlieder* who instruct their children in the class struggle;[334] like the women of his poems and his *Lukullus* who expose the reality of war;[335] like the young woman who stands before her judge and defiantly sings *The Internationale*;[336] like Shen Te who will teach her child not to trust the representatives of authority (the police) and how to steal cherries from the

---

[331] Brecht referred to Courage's criticisms of authority in scene 2 as "Blasphemien" (*MC* 143).

[332] *GW* 2:671,689,733.

[333] *GW* 20:344.

[334] *GW* 9:430-433.

[335] *GW* 9:750, 799; 4:1449, 1469-1470.

[336] *GW* 9:546.

orchard;[337] like that revolutionary mother, Pelagea Wlassowa.[338] These "witches" show clearly: for Brecht revolution is "female".[339]

The deep and powerful rebellion contained in the figure of Courage reveals how inadequate any interpretation is which can see in Courage only the Hyena or the symbolic translation of capitalism. It reveals too that phrases about Courage as a representation of the "plebian hero of survival,"[340] or the "wisdom of the *Volk*," are too shallow to contain the meaning of Courage's rebellion.[341] It discovers another source of that sympathy for Courage which Brecht and others unsuccessfully tried to block. For the sympathy for Courage comes not merely from an irrational neglect of Courage's "evil" side, not — as Eisler suggested — from Courage having been on stage longer than any other figure.[342] Nor does sympathy come only from admiration for her survival. For the sympathy felt for Courage, as the phrases about her representing the "wisdom of the people" dimly perceive, is also informed by her profoundly rebellious and liberating symbolic content.

In a sense the Mother of Chapter 2 has reappeared in this chapter, but now we see that the life-affirming mother is also a "feminist" and "socialist" rebel. But what of the Hyena? Indeed, it must seem, since the Hyena in Courage cannot

---

[337] *GW* 4:1568.

[338] For an interesting joining of a witch and progress such as Courage represents see *Das Leben des Galilei* (*GW* 4:1342-1345).

[339] Perhaps not quite in the spirit intended by Raddatz in "Ent-weiblichte Eschatologie" 152; see also Martin Esslin, *Brecht, A Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work and His Opinions* 4th revised ed. (1959; London: Methuen, 1984) 231; Oscar Mandel, "Brecht's Unheroes and Heroines," *Medieval Epic to the 'Epic Theater' of Brecht: Essays in Comparative Literature*, Comparative Literature Conference, University of Southern California, 1967, eds. Rosario P. Armato, and John M. Spalek (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1968) 239; Fenn 13, 44, 203-204; Frenken 166; Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 159, n.11.

[340] Milfull, *From Baal to Keuner* 132.

[341] Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 165-166.

[342] Hanns Eisler 23.

be suppressed in favour of the Outlaw, that in this chapter and the last I have only restated the original dichotomy of merchant and mother — albeit on a more developed level. I will anticipate myself to say that the uncovering of Courage's symbolic content, of Courage as the incarnation of capitalism and of the resistance to capitalism, already suggests a solution: she is the incarnation of capitalism in its *totality*; she embodies the *world* as Brecht knew it. But we cannot fully appreciate this until we take account of the last important symbolic element of Courage. Paradoxically, in order to do this, and to understand Courage as the symbolic translation of history, we will have to make a seeming detour through myth.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

CHAPTER 6

THE GREAT MOTHER

THE GREAT MOTHER AND BRECHT

The Great Mother is the *personification* of the elemental forces of the universe, she is the symbolic expression of the most fundamental human experiences: plenitude and want, growth and decay, life and death.

Two seminal works to which all the Great Mother's later admirers are indebted, Robert Briffault's *The Mothers* (1927) and Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother* (1955), paint her classic portrait.[1] In Briffault's work of comparative anthropology and Neumann's Jungian account we meet the Great Mother, that most ancient of deities, in all her omnipotence. She appears as she did before she

---

[1] Robert Briffault, *The Mothers: A Study of the Origins of Sentiments and Institutions*, 3 vols. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1927), especially in volume 3 the chapters "The Great Mothers" (46-184), and "The Magical Origin of Queens" (1-45); and in volume 2 the chapter "The Witch and the Priestess" (502-571); Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*; see also by Neumann *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2 vols. (1954; New York: Harper, 1962). I rely here mainly on Briffault and Neumann, but the reader may wish to consult two interesting authors out of the legion to which this subject has given rise: the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas and *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe*, ed. Joan Marler (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), and *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500 B.C.: Myths and Cult Images* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982); see also Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988).

was dethroned by the male gods of patriarchal societies, before she had been degraded, fragmented, and "departmentalized" into remnants such as Demeter, Isis, Ishtar, Nut, and the Virgin Mary, or as Kali, Hecate, Circe, Medusa, and Eve, to name only a few of her manifold appearances.[2] These figures and the roles they play in their respective mythologies now seem only faint echoes of a goddess who as mother had encompassed all of existence, who was the sole mother and beginning of all things animate and inanimate, the mother of beasts and people, of trees and grain, of the mountains and the rocks, of the rivers and the seas, of the thunder and the rain; who was the origin of agriculture and the temples, of the religions and the laws, of pottery and craft, and of song and dance; who was the mistress of herbs, magic, and the spirits, and of paradise and the nether world; who was the mother of the heavens and the stars, and of time itself and the very gods.[3]

What is the source of this maternal personification of the universe? Though there is good reason to think that on some level each of us knows the answer to this question, Erich Neumann's essay, *The Fear of the Feminine*, gives an explicit account of the psychic activation of the archetype of the Great Mother.[4] I warn here, however, that I read Neumann's essay against the grain (which is not difficult in this case). That is, I bracket his opinion that the world is a product of consciousness, as well as his views of the hypothetical "collective

---

[2] On the confusion which later departmentalization of the Goddess creates for our understanding see Briffault 3:166.

[3] Here I combine descriptions of the Great Mother as she is found in Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, trans. and ed. H. A. J. Munro, 3 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1908-1910) II.589-660; Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. W. Adlington, ed. S. Gaselee (London: Heinemann, 1919) XI.1-2; Ovid V.341-343 (Ceres), XIV.326 (Circe), II.28-9 (Diana); and in the song of the Kagaba Indians of Columbia from Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 85; see also Briffault 3:48-60.

[4] Erich Neumann, "The Fear of the Feminine," trans. Boris Matthews, *The Fear of the Feminine and Other Essays on Feminine Psychology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): 227-281.

unconscious" and the "archetype".[5] Instead of seeing the archetype as a universally already-present psychic "content" awaiting experience only to give it form (as, say, the Great Mother) I see the archetype as a symbolic understanding of the world that is both formed and informed by experience. In the case of the archetype of the Great Mother, it is an experience — at least for Brecht's society and those that made up its tradition — that is universal: the primal relationship of the infant to its mother.

The primal relationship of the child to its mother in the first year of life (as within the womb) is marked by "wholeness". Utterly dependent upon her for nourishment, warmth, and protection, the infant still lives, so to speak, "within" the mother. For the child there is no separation from the mother, she is its own self and the world in one. It is a relationship secure and without fear.[6] Soon, however, this plenitude is disturbed, the fabric of wholeness is rent, by some failure to maintain this state, a failure which may be as seemingly innocuous as the hunger that arises in the course of the feeding cycle. Now the child in its want senses a world, a mother "outside" itself, a world which, even if it attends to the child's needs, by its very independence threatens or at least raises the spectre of abandonment (as the perpetuation of want).[7] The child comes to sense the world as a Great Mother who can be Good or Terrible, it apprehends the two fundamental aspects of the unity of its cosmos.

---

[5] "The relating of all ideologies to their foundations in human nature is one of the decisive intellectual gains of our time, but any true reduction must culminate in the unconscious psychic reality of mankind, and not merely in an outward reality that is largely an expression of the human psyche" (Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 269-269). On the archetype and the collective unconscious see Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 3-17; see also Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, vol. 9, part 1 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, eds. Herbert Read et al., 2nd. ed., 20 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953-1979), especially pages 3-53 for the above concepts, and 73-110 on the mother archetype.

[6] Erich Neumann, "Fear" 229-231.

[7] Erich Neumann, "Fear" 233-234.

As the child develops, new and ambivalent relations refine this image. For now, though the child still desires the protection and care of the Good Mother, when this protection threatens its necessary development as an individual the Good Mother is transformed into the suffocating and ensnaring Terrible Mother. Conversely, though the child has no desire to be abandoned, in the interests of its growth it needs a certain freedom, which transforms the Terrible Mother's "abandonment" into the Good Mother's encouragement to growth.[8] These basic experiences are the stuff from which are formed the images of the Good and the Terrible Mothers, and their unity in the Great Mother.

As the mother is the child's world, so by analogy the world may be seen as mother. For the universe, like the mother, creates the human being and is the source of possibility; it is the source of nourishment and plenty, but also of scarcity and want. Like the mother the world may encourage the development of the individual, but it may also abandon its creature to suffering, or resist its development through the sheer refractoriness of the material world. As the mother generates the child and so only then makes it available to death, so the world is both womb and tomb for its children.[9]

If this account of the formation of the symbol of the Great Mother is correct, then it would be reasonable to expect that Brecht's experience of a mother would have made this symbol available to him.[10] The proof of this is found in the young poet's *Choral vom grossen Baal*, the poem which "begins" his collected works and which, in that respect at least, may be said to install the Great Mother at the "origin" of his own productivity:[11]

---

[8] Erich Neumann, "Fear" 236-239; also Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 147-149.

[9] Neumann's *The Great Mother* is in effect an extended account of this symbolic equation.

[10] For interesting views on Brecht's relations to his mother see Carl Pietzcker, *'Ich kommandiere mein Herz': Brechts Herzneurose — ein Schlüssel zu seinem Leben und Schreiben*, 2nd ed. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1988).

[11] *GW* 1:3-4.

Als im weißen Mutterschoße aufwuchs Baal
War der Himmel schon so groß und still und fahl
Jung und nackt und ungeheuer wundersam
Wie ihn Baal dann liebte, als Baal kam.

. . . . . .

Und das große Weib Welt, das sich lachend gibt
Dem, der sich zermalmen läßt von ihren Knien
Gab ihm einige Ekstase, die er liebt
Aber Baal starb nicht: er sah nur hin.

Und wenn Baal nur Leichen um sich sah
War die Wollust immer doppelt groß.
Man hat Platz, sagt Baal, es sind nicht viele da.
Man hat Platz, sagt Baal, in dieses Weibes Schoß.

. . . . . .

Unter düstern Sternen in dem Jammertal
Grast Baal weite Felder schmatzend ab.
Sind sie leer, dann trottet singend Baal
In den ewigen Wald zum Schlaf hinab.

Und wenn Baal der dunkle Schoß hinunter zieht:
Was ist Welt für Baal noch? Baal ist satt.
Soviel Himmel hat Baal unterm Lid.
Daß er tot noch grad gnug Himmel hat.

Als im dunkeln Erdenschoße faulte Baal
War der Himmel noch so groß und still und fahl
Jung und nackt und ungeheuer wunderbar
Wie ihn Baal einst liebte, als Baal war.

Here is the mother as world and the world as mother, a Great Mother who describes the limits of her creature's existence, who first creates, contains, and nourishes Baal "im weißen Mutterschoße," who fills his experience of life as he, "der sich zermalmen läßt von ihren Knien," abandons himself to her thrilling — and destroying — embrace, who ultimately draws Baal back "in den ewigen Wald," into her protective and confining final embrace "im dunkeln Erdenschoße."

The Great Mother, then, was a symbol that Brecht both knew and deliberately used.[12] When we turn to *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* we once again glimpse her shadow. I do not, however, suggest that Brecht deliberately invokes the Great Mother in *Mutter Courage*. In my opinion there is no evidence to support such a position. Rather, I am saying that the symbol of the Great Mother is part of what one may call the "unconscious" of the drama. Why she appears will be discovered in the next chapter, though I will say here that she is a symbolic expression of Brecht's position at a particular historical moment. In this chapter I intend only to demonstrate the essential similarities between the figure of Courage and the Great Mother, as evidence of the existence of this symbol in the text.

COURAGE AS THE GREAT MOTHER

The content of the symbol of the Great Mother is generated from the basic qualities of engendering and nurturing (together with their opposites) so that, as we have already seen, the Great Mother encompasses, as both Good and Terrible Mother, all of existence. Thus the Great Mother is a source of food and comfort, but also of want, suffering, and abandonment; she encourages the growth and development of her wards, but she also diminishes them and keeps them "small"; she protects but she also ensnares and smothers; as the principle of the world she is the source of wisdom about that world, and may inspire or instruct her children with that wisdom, or she may instead stupefy and poison the spirit with a

---

[12] See also *Vom Schwimmen in Seen und Flüssen* (*GW* 8:210), in which a youth gives himself over to the waters, "als ob einen ein Weib trägt," waters that signal the Great Mother's original power (despite the possessive pronoun), since even "der liebe Gott" is contained "in seinen Flüssen." There may also be signs of the Great Mother in the poems, *O Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* (*GW* 9:487), and *Die Niederkunft der großen Babel* (*GW* 9:730).

destructive madness; finally, as she is the source of life, so she is also a dealer in sure death.[13] Courage contains all of these contradictory qualities.

NURTURER AND FORSAKER

In a sense, this is already apparent as far as Courage's nurturing, protecting, and abandoning of her wards is concerned. For we have already seen in Chapters 1 and 2 (in a description detailed enough to forgo repeating here) how Courage feeds and protects not only her own children, but others as well, so that the Great Mother can be said to be integral to Courage's role as provisioner. Indeed, that every aspect of the Great Mother manifested by Courage is realized in regard to others already indicates a representation of something greater than a mother who dotes only on her own children. We saw too how Courage abandons to war not only her children, but also the soldiers (when she feeds them and then sends them off to the *Höllenschlund*); we saw how she abandons people in other ways, for which her refusal of bandages to the wounded of Magdeburg may stand as an example.[14] Now, however, we see these characteristics not as absolute contradictions which are used to support the blame or exoneration of Courage, but as contradictory moments of a whole which is Courage as the Great Mother.

---

[13] For a very brief summary of these qualities see Jung, *The Archetypes* 82. See also Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, facing page 82, for a summarizing diagram. On nurturing and protecting: Briffault 3:54; Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 29, 32, 42, 44-47, 120, 131, 261, 282; Gimbutas, *The Civilization* 223-237. On suffering and abandonment: Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 66-67. On fostering growth: Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 33, 282. On diminishing, ensnaring, smothering: Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 24-5, 43. On inspiration: Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 70, 72, 76, 250-1, and poisoning the spirit: Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 33, 69, 73, 76. On both engendering and destroying: Briffault 3:48-51; Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 30, 48-49, 67, 69, 106, 120, 138, 149, 232; Gimbutas, *The Civilization* 223-237, 238-248.

[14] *GW* 4:1351, 1398.

(Some may object that Courage's role as sutler does not truly approximate the giving mother, since it involves an exchange of money. I need only note that this rather sanitized view of an altruistic mother — an image to which even the mature Brecht seems to have fallen prey, as in the case of Grusche from *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* — forgets that there is no maternal gift of life without an exchange, whether it involve love, obedience, or some other token. That is, there is no Good Mother without the Terrible Mother waiting in the wings to exact her due, however benign it may seem. This is true for Courage as well, who for instance expects that her children obey her. But these exchanges, whether of love, duty, or money, are only moments of a greater "exchange" conducted by the Great Mother, a point to which I will return.)

THE ENCOURAGER AND DIMINISHER OF LIFE

As a representation of the generative forces of the universe, the Great Mother, in analogy to the human mother who prepares her children for adulthood, fosters the development of her creatures. Yet she simultaneously restrains that same development, not unlike the human mother whose child in some sense always remains her "infant". The Great Mother, after all, is the ground of her creatures' existence; however much they may grow, they nevertheless remain dependent on her as their ground, and in this sense she is the domineering Terrible Mother.

Courage, of course, fosters the development of her children with her advice and with her material nurturing, but perhaps her strongest exhortation to development lies in her example. Her vitality, her ceaseless industry, her ability to survive and care for her family in war (at least until the obvious loss of Schweizerkas, though this is not quite what it seems, as we will see on page 313) all this is the Good Mother providing inspiration to others. She inspires her sons to succeed in war like their mother;[15] she inspires her daughter's desire for her

---

[15] *GW* 4:1357, where Eilif expresses his and Schweizerkas's desire to be

own family (implied by Kattrin's wish for marriage and by her care for children and other defenceless creatures).[16] Indeed, Courage could be said to inspire all others to make their fortune in war, as she does in her song:[17]

> Der Krieg wird seinen Mann ernähren
> Er braucht nur Pulver zu und Blei.
> Von Blei allein kann er nicht leben
> Von Pulver nicht, er braucht auch Leut!
> Müßts euch zum Regiment begeben
> Sonst steht er um! So kommt noch heut!

But Courage is simultaneously the domineering Terrible Mother who continually orders her children about and keeps them small, who insists (and not only in jest) on calling her marriageable daughter and the well-built young men who are her sons her "halbwüchsige Kinder."[18] Courage may swell with maternal pride when she sees how Eilif is esteemed by his commander, but still she treats this warrior steeped in the blood of slaughtered peasants like a child, and boxes his ears for his "carelessness", as though he were guilty of a schoolboy's prank: "Hab ich dir nicht gelernt, daß du auf dich achtgeben sollst?"[19] She does not hesitate to order him about: she tells him (against his inclination) that he will not fight, will not join the army, will not leave her,[20] indeed, will laugh when she so orders, even if it cost him his self-respect: "Klug ist, wenn du bei deiner Mutter bleibst, und wenn sie dich verhöhnen und ein Hühnchen schimpfen, lachst du nur."[21]

---

soldiers.

[16] Kattrin's interests in men can be seen from her wearing of Yvette's hat and shoes (*GW* 4:1374), in marriage is revealed in her anger at discovering there will be no peace and so no marriage for her (*GW* 4:1403), in children and animals (*GW* 4:1408, 1425).

[17] *GW* 4:1421.

[18] *GW* 4:1352; see Nussbaum, *The Image of Woman* 388; and Smith 496.

[19] *GW* 4:1363, 1367-8.

[20] *GW* 4:1353.

[21] *GW* 4:1357.

Like his brother, Schweizerkas wants to be a soldier.[22] This is itself evidence of Courage's effect as a model of success in war. His dream of distinguishing himself before his commander through the rescue of the regimental cashbox shows that his mother's ambitions have left a further trace in him.[23] But Courage diminishes Schweizerkas as well. She tries to keep him from the army, when she cannot, she dictates to him too, and directs him according to the situation to protect or throw away or keep the cashbox, or later, to surrender it to his captors.[24] She infantilizes her allegedly "half-grown" and "thick" son by presuming even to tell him what he should do with his underwear: "Da has du deine Unterhos zurück, heb sie gut auf...";[25] her exhortation to uprightness reduces him to an infant by activating a childhood memory: "Oh, Schweizerkas, du sinkst auch dahin, wenn du nicht ganz und gar redlich bist allezeit, wie ichs dir gelehrt hab von Kindesbein an, und mir das Wechselgeld zurückbringst vom Brotkaufen."[26]

Good Mother Courage promotes Kattrin's development through the examples of her own family and sexual escapades, and she even seems actively to sanction this growth since she promises her daughter a marriage — if only at war's end.[27] Yet Courage is also the Terrible Mother who keeps her daughter small. She would prefer — under the pretext of keeping her daughter from assault — that Kattrin (whom she finds too "hoffärtig") be without distinction: "Wenn sie ist wie ein Stein in Dalarne, wos nix andres gibt, so daß die Leut sagen: den Krüppel sieht man gar nicht, ist sie mir am liebsten."[28] She laughs at Kattrin's

---

[22] "EILIF Der Schweizerkas will jetzt auch Soldat werden" (*GW* 4:1357).

[23] "Der Herr Feldwebel wird Augen machen," Schweizerkas muses (*GW* 4:1381).

[24] *GW* 4:1377, 1380.

[25] *GW* 4:1369.

[26] *GW* 4:1358.

[27] *GW* 4:1380, 1403.

[28] *GW* 4:1380.

disappointed hopes as though they were of no moment.[29] She refuses to take seriously her daughter's threat with a plank: "Leg das Brett weg, sonst schmier ich dir eine, Krampen!";[30] and thus she orders Kattrin about like a child, as she does when her daughter tries to leave Courage free to go with the cook: "Kattrin! Bleibst stehen!"[31] It may seem that it is the Good Mother who warns Kattrin from the prostitute's example and from the slavery of the chaplain,[32] who protects Kattrin from assault by smearing her face with ashes and confiscating from her Yvette's "promiscuous" hat and shoes,[33] but it is also the Terrible Mother who thus keeps her daughter from becoming fully a woman, who keeps her daughter chained to her by promising marriage in a peacetime which she does her best to postpone.[34] Similarly Courage may seem the Good Mother when she refuses to desert her daughter for the cook, but she is also in this instance the Terrible Mother who keeps her daughter bound to her.[35] The dramatic realization of this scene under Brecht reproduced this contradiction. When both Helene Weigel and Therese Giehse as Mutter Courage spoon-feed Kattrin, they display maternal solicitude, of course, but they also show the Terrible Mother's infantile diminishment of a nubile young woman.[36] Finally, Courage may be comforting Kattrin when she takes her daughter's hand as Schweizerkas's body is brought before them, but the gesture is also a controlling one, one that could be telling Kattrin (by squeezing her hand) that on no account must a show of emotion reveal a recognition of her brother.[37]

---

[29] *GW* 4:1403.
[30] *GW* 4:1398.
[31] *GW* 4:1428.
[32] *GW* 4:1370, 1372-1373.
[33] *GW* 4:1376-7.
[34] *GW* 4:1380, 1403; Hein 68-69.
[35] *GW* 4:1427-8.
[36] *MC* 176-177.
[37] *GW* 4:1391; Mennemeier sees in Kattrin's muteness a sign of repression (399).

This overbearing aspect is strikingly represented when Courage's children draw life's lots.[38] Courage never waits for her children to reveal the results, but instead snatches this role from them. Eilif selects his lot and begins to unfold it but "sie entreißt es ihm" and announces: "Da hast dus, ein Kreuz!" Schweizerkas draws and looks upon his fate, but his mother takes over, "*Sie nimmt den Zettel,*" and declares: "Ein Kreuz." In Kattrin's case Courage cannot even wait for her daughter to draw but does this as well and, as she did for the others, proclaims the result: "ein Kreuz steht auch über deinem Weg."

Finally, Courage's domination of her children is expressed in a pair of arresting images. The first is an image of Courage's children "shackled" to her business as each one in turn must draw her wagon.[39] The second appears when, exasperated with Schweizerkas's desire to keep the regimental cashbox and with Kattrin's dangerous theft of Yvette's "promiscuous" shoes, Courage exclaims: "Lieber einen Sack Flöh hüten."[40] Not only does Courage reduce her children to the subhuman status of vermin, she also transforms the Great Mother's protective womb into a sack, into a trap and a prison. (Even if this image means to convey the difficulty of containment, since fleas cannot be kept in a sack, still it betrays the desire to confine her children.)

If Good Mother Courage through her example encourages others to accomplishment in war, her relations with others also reveal the domineering Terrible Mother. This may be seen, for instance, in her interference in the affairs of others, as when she tells one soldier to leave the cannon, and another to capitulate to prevailing conditions.[41] But it is most evident in her relations with the chaplain and the cook. Courage dictates to the chaplain — who like her children is dependent on her for food and protection; she tells him what he will

---

[38] *GW* 4:1357-1358.
[39] *GW* 4:1351, 1360.
[40] *GW* 4:1380.
[41] *GW* 4:1376, 1394.

do, whether he will keep his robes of office, or wash dishes, or chop wood.[42] And if the cook, as we have seen, is an ally of Courage, still she harnesses him to her wagon as she does her children (an image of containment that is repeated when she keeps the cook's pipe in her pocket — as she would keep her flea-children in a sack).[43]

WISDOM AND MADNESS

The Great Mother is a symbol that arises both psychologically and historically before a demarcation is established between the physical and the spiritual, the sacred and the secular.[44] So it is no wonder that the Great Mother is also a nurturer and destroyer on the spiritual level. As the principle of the universe she is the wisdom of that world, and she may use that wisdom to aid her children, or she may use her powers to poison their spirits: Courage does both.

In Chapter 2 we encountered Courage as the wise and benevolent advisor. She advises her children against participation in war;[45] she tells Eilif to avoid heroism;[46] she counsels Schweizerkas on his business affairs, on wariness,[47] and on keeping or jettisoning the cashbox;[48] she warns Kattrin to avoid "love" as the prelude to slavery.[49] Similarly she counsels the sergeant on the danger of

---

[42] *GW* 4:1377, 1388, 1404; Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology" 50.

[43] *GW* 4:1421, 1404.

[44] Psychologically, because there are no such distinctions made by the infant when the mother symbol is first formed, historically because the Goddess seems to have her origins in a time before the distinction between the sacred and the secular (a distinction which only became firmly established with the Enlightenment); see for example Briffault 2:555-556. On (for us) a conflation in mythical thought of the real and the ideal, the natural and the supernatural, see Cassirer 76-77.

[45] *GW* 4:1355.

[46] *GW* 4:1366, 1368.

[47] *GW* 4:1369.

[48] *GW* 4:1377, 1380, 1383.

[49] *GW* 4:1372.

his participation in war;[50] she advises soldiers against the dangerous task of saving the regimental cannon; she recommends that a young soldier capitulate if he is not prepared to have a "long anger".[51]

Yet even in this apparently beneficial advice one may catch sight of the Terrible Mother. Courage's advice to Kattrin that she keep away from love may save her daughter from patriarchal slavery, but in the end it has an effect more deadly than just maintaining her daughter in "maternal" servitude. For this "wisdom" is bound to the "madness" of waiting for peace and marriage in war at her mother's side, which — as Courage in a sense foresees — will kill her daughter. And Courage's recommendation to the young soldier that he capitulate unless he have a long anger certainly saves him from the stocks, but this capitulation only perpetuates a situation (provisioned by Courage) which will swallow him up just as surely as the icy waters of war consume the bold soldier in the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten*.[52]

At this point it may be useful to correct a misunderstanding about Courage's advice. Some believe that her advice is deadly for Schweizerkas, since the honesty which she recommends to him, as protection against his dull wit, leads to his death when he uprightly guards the regimental treasure against the enemy.[53] But this is to blame Courage for Schweizerkas's stubborn and inflexible interpretation of her advice, even when she counsels otherwise. After all, when the Imperial troops attack she tells Schweizerkas, who wants to keep the cashbox, to throw it away; when her son has kept the box against her advice, but decides too late to dispose of it, she wisely directs him to leave it hidden to avoid calling attention to it; later, when her son is arrested, Courage counsels him to give up the money to his captors.[54] In each case she gives her son timely and

---

[50] *GW* 4:1355.
[51] *GW* 4:1376. 1393-1396.
[52] *GW* 4:1396, 1367.
[53] *GW* 4:1358, 1369.
[54] *GW* 4:1377, 1380, 1383; thus her advice is not "contradictory" as Bergstedt

appropriate counsel. Her advice to remain upright (in scenes 1 and 3) is not the cause of his demise.[55] In reality Schweizerkas is destroyed when he does not follow her counsel, just as Kattrin and Eilif perish exercising qualities against which their mother has warned.[56]

The real madness with which Courage inspires Schweizerkas and others, the true opposite to her good advice, is the desire to participate in war. (This is true even for Kattrin, who is persuaded to stay with her mother in war with the promise that she will find a husband in peacetime.) Courage's call to war: "So kommt noch heut!" as we saw above, is general; her example is not limited to her children. Courage wants to inspire everyone with the madness of participation in war, a war which she hopes will spread to all lands and never end.[57]

This mad inspiration to self-destructively participate in war is tied several times to something that long represented the Great Mother's access, by nullifying "reason", to the source of existence, something that helped to conflate sleep, ecstasy, madness, inspiration — and death: intoxicants. Alcohol, as the transformation of vegetation and the mystery of drunkenness (as the loss of consciousness), points both to the Great Mother's power over plants and to the Terrible Mother's dark world.[58] In ancient Mexico, to name an example especially relevant here, intoxicating pulque was poured out both to warriors about to enter battle — and

---

thinks ("Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 148).

[55] See Hein 75.

[56] She warns Eilif against boldness (*GW* 4:1357) and Kattrin against compassion (*GW* 4:1358).

[57] "Aber der Krieg läßt sich nicht schlecht an. Bis alle Länder drin sind, kann er vier, fünf Jahre dauern wie nix. Ein bissel Weitblick und keine Unvorsichtigkeit, und ich mach gute Geschäfte" (*GW* 4:1370). Her fear that war ends can be seen in scenes 6 and 8 (*GW* 4:1401, 1410, 1412); her joy that the chaplain's prediction of eternal war seems to be fulfilled is found in scene 8 (*GW* 4:1420-1421).

[58] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 59-61, 73-74, 286-287, 300-302.

to prisoners about to be sacrificed.[59] It is no accident that one of the most important wares of this Great Mother in sutler's guise is also intoxicating liquor.

Thus it is not only the Good Mother, but also the Terrible Mother who offers the soldiers Courage's wine.[60] For her wine not only nourishes and comforts the anxious men, it also inspires them to march madly to their slaughter. Similarly Courage restores the sergeant's resolve to continue in war after he has heard of his imminent demise — by giving him schnapps;[61] and she tries to move Schweizerkas's captors to act against their interests with an offer of drink.[62] (When Courage offers the cook and chaplain brandy, then, it may not be too much to ask whether this is an ecstasy offered by the Good Mother, or the more dangerous ecstasy of the Terrible Mother, for we remember that her previous men seem not to have survived her destroying embrace.)[63] And when in scene 8 a peasant woman faints at the announcement of peace, a peace that she never believed possible, Courage may seem to offer her restoration with the *aqua vitae*, but her offer of schnapps may equally be understood as an attempt to "poison" her, to make her believe the impossible. For (as Courage knows) the woman is correct to believe that peace is impossible. Courage's brandy, then, would paradoxically have restored her to a "waking dream" or illusion that peace truly had arrived (had the woman remained to accept the gift).[64]

Drink not only stupefies, it is also the Terrible Mother's libation of sacrifice. This is obvious in the case of those soldiers who receive Courage's wine before she sends them off to the *Höllenschlund* (just as the ancient Mexicans gave pulque to their sacrificial victims). It is a "ritual" that is reenacted throughout the drama. In scene 6, for example, a soldier drinks before he dies for

---

[59] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 300-301.
[60] *GW* 4:1351.
[61] *GW* 4:1359.
[62] *GW* 4:1383.
[63] *GW* 4:1372; on her men see *GW* 4:1352-1353.
[64] *GW* 4:1411.

his Emperor; in scene 3 the cook asks for brandy as he prepares to leave for war.[65] Intoxicating liquors again appear with the sacrifice of Courage's sons. When Schweizerkas resolves to hide the cashbox, the deed that costs him his life, he prepares for his act — and for his sacrifice — with a cup of his mother's brandy.[66] When Eilif is about to be executed and hopes to see his mother one last time, but finds her absent, he asks instead for the drink that will help him face death, for the "milk" of his Great and Terrible Mother: "Gib mir lieber einen Schluck Schnaps."[67]

We see Courage, then, as benevolent nurturer and malevolent depriver, as encouraging example and domineering matriarch, as the source both of saving wisdom or of deadly madness, as the caring protector and the abandoning (or ensnaring) monster. To these correspondences between Courage and the Great Mother three further ones ought to be added, correspondences that significantly enlarge the symbolic scope of Courage and make her, as omniscient and eternal ruler over life and death, a true representative of the Great Mother.

THE OMNISCIENT ONE

We have seen that Courage as the Great Mother incarnates the wisdom of the world that she simultaneously is. This not only puts her in a position to advise others, it also logically means that she, as no other, has access to the secrets of her world. We discover that Courage does indeed have a knowledge whose breadth and depth transcends that of the other figures. In contrast to them, for example, Courage knows the real conditions of her world. She dispels the cook's illusion that his party has the advantage as aggressors and informs him that there is in war no advantage for the little people (who are the real subject of her

---

[65] *GW* 4:1402, 1372-1373.
[66] *GW* 4:1381.
[67] *GW* 4:1419.

speech), that they, both as besieged and besieger, suffer in the war.[68] She corrects the cook's view that the peasants are hoarding goods, and tells him that they have nothing.[69] Courage knows that behind the chaplain's "closer relationship" and his phrases about "the heart speaking for itself" there lurks slavery (which she also knows is common to the relationship between male and female).[70] She sees through the unemployed cook's empty words about visiting old friends, and knows that he has come because he is hungry and penniless.[71] It is she who knows the truth about the celebrated Tilly's unheroic death.[72] She knows, despite the propaganda, that the peace of the Swedish King is war.[73] She knows that virtue is not a good sign but a sign of evil lands and evil leaders.[74] She knows that the suffering of the little people is caused by bad leadership.[75] She knows that the young soldier's hope for justice from a superior is in vain. She knows that the only answer for the little people lies in an armed "long anger" (even as she knows the young soldier has no long anger).[76] She knows that the brutality of the little people is not innate but instead the effect of want.[77] So close is she to the secrets of her world that she knows even the seasons need not come as they ought.[78] Courage knows the truth as well about the very foundations of her world. She knows that war and business are one, that there is no escape from war, that war is not fought for high ideals but for profit, and that the little people do not gain in war but pay for both defeat and victory.[79] Not

---

[68] *GW* 4:1361.
[69] *GW* 4:1361.
[70] *GW* 4:1405, 1372.
[71] *GW* 4:1413.
[72] *GW* 4:1399-1400.
[73] *GW* 4:1374.
[74] *GW* 4:1365.
[75] *GW* 4:1393.
[76] *GW* 4:1393-1396.
[77] *GW* 4:1377.
[78] *GW* 4:1369.
[79] *GW* 4:1409, 1397, 1374, 1379, 1404.

even the future is hidden from Courage — and this is perhaps the strongest indicator of her omniscience: for she knows and prophesies truly that those who come to war will perish.[80]

THE ETERNAL ONE

To Courage's omniscience comes her indestructibility, her centrality and permanence. As the ground of existence the Great Mother is central to the world, she is the sun round which all other existents orbit as her satellites. She is also, in contrast to her creations, permanent; she is the eternal presence while all her "children" are mere passing shadows. Courage has these qualities as well.

Courage, for instance, suggests the centrality of the Great Mother through her formal domination of the drama. Absent from a single scene (scene 11, when Kattrin rises against war and against her mother), Courage is otherwise off-stage for only a few brief moments.[81] Only Kattrin comes close to occupying the stage as long as Courage, but even she is absent for two complete scenes (2 and 4). Kattrin, however, is mute, and this leads us to Courage's second form of dominance, for she is hardly ever silent during the drama, and a rough estimate

---

[80] *GW* 4:1356-1358, 1367 (*Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten*); that Courage does not know Kattrin's dreams (*GW* 4:1408) could imply that Courage is not all-knowing; see Erich Speidel, "The Mute Person's Voice: Mutter Courage and Her Daughter," *German Life & Letters* 23 (1970): 336-337. We will see that this is no true contradiction to the above portrayal of omniscience. Courage, after all, knows all when it comes to her own world, but Kattrin's dream, whose deep "utopian" content is only made available to us with her rebellion, stands outside Courage's world, and so outside her mother's knowledge. This, however, can only be understood with the conclusion of the next chapter.

[81] In scene 1, during the introductory dialogue; in scene 3, during the Imperial attack, then while Schweizerkas makes the disastrous decision to hide the cashbox, and again during the chaplain's *Horenlied*; in scene 8 (though still in her wagon, which is onstage), while preparing to go to market, and while she is in town when Eilif is brought to his execution; and lastly in scene 9, while she is in the parson's house.

suggests that she speaks more than twice as many lines as her nearest rival, the chaplain.[82]

Courage also dominates the narrative. That is, the drama is about *her* and *her* dependents; all other stories are subordinated to her story. This is obvious for most figures, which only make brief appearances to contribute to or shed light on some aspect of Courage's story (such as the peasants at the drama's end or the *Obrist* of scene 3, to name only two of eighteen minor figures). It is no less true for more developed figures such as Yvette, the chaplain, and the cook. They are attached to her camp, not she to them; their active roles are realized in proximation to Courage or her camp; obviously the story is not about them but about Courage. It is true also for Courage's children, even if they share the title with her. Their subordinate role is emphasized by the fact that their paths scarcely stray from Courage and that their ends converge on her. This is clear for Kattrin who but once escapes her mother's "gravity", and purchases her one heroic excursion, her attempt to rebel against the ground of her existence, with extinction. It is true as well for Schweizerkas who hardly moves beyond his mother's immediate influence before he is executed and returned to her. And it is true for Eilif, for, if his escape from his mother seems more successful, still it does not establish his own story (which is always told only as part of Courage's), and in the end his tale ends in Courage's camp, the last place of appearance before his death.

Like the Great Mother, who represents the unending universe, Courage is "permanent" and "eternal". Courage is with us almost from the beginning of the drama (and if, as the representative of capitalism, she is the analogue of war, then she is always present); and she is there yet at the end, when her equivalence with endless war is portrayed by her final union with war (a union that recalls her

---

[82] I conducted only a rough survey of the number of lines for Courage and the chaplain, but am confident that a more accurate count will show that I have greatly underestimated Courage's dominance.

meeting of war at the start of the drama, and so suggests a natural cycle, and once again, therefore, the Great Mother; for even if the particular children are gone, still the war is ready to recommence with new victims). Except for Courage all other figures have passed from the stage or have become shades themselves. Courage is eternal as well in her character. From beginning to end she has not changed, her beliefs and her attitudes have remained constant.[83] (There is no textual support for the erroneous assertion that Courage becomes more hardened or profit-hungry after Schweizerkas's death.[84] This pious wish ignores that, as we have seen in Chapter 4 — in her *Geschäftslied* for example — Courage's brutality and hunger for profit are from the beginning at high pitch.) Courage is also eternal in her undiminished industry, signalled especially by her continuance in war at the end of the drama despite her apparent setbacks. Marie Luise Kaschnitz is quite right to see in her continuing productivity (against physiological probability) the promise of new life (and so, one might add, of new cannon-fodder).[85] That Kaschnitz's intuition is accurate in this regard may be seen from the rather desperate attempts of Brecht and Weigel to counter it, as when Weigel at the end of the drama removed her dentures to suggest that Courage, as a shrivelled old woman, has reached the end of her productivity.[86]

---

[83] Hiller notes, for instance, her superhuman resilience (191).

[84] See for example Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology," where the author tells us that Courage becomes "more and more intent on profit" (46). In the *Couragemodell* Brecht says something similar when he says of Courage after she sacrifices Schweizerkas: "Durch hartes Handeln hat sie sich verhärtet" (*MC* 162), which demonstrates that even this canonical work cannot be taken for an authoritative voice on the actual content of the drama.

[85] Kaschnitz 200.

[86] Matthias Braun, "Notierungen zu den Mutterrollen der Schauspielerin Helene Weigel," *Maske und Kothern* 35.1 (1989): 42. Brecht himself is ambiguous on this point. In the *Couragemodell* he suggests that Courage is as one destroyed (*MC* 121), yet in another note he seems to think that the text allows her to be portrayed (however much he was against it) as an indestructibly vital person (*GW* 16:895).

This attempt to chastise Courage fails against the greater evidence of her survival and permanent industry.[87]

THE PRIESTESS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Courage is associated, in a way most unlike the majority of mortal mothers, but quite in keeping with the Great Mother, with both the beginning and, more especially, with the *end* of life. Since it is evident that Courage as a mother, as an "eternally" vital and productive entity, is a source and symbol of life, an aspect already sufficiently elaborated in Chapter 2, I will concentrate here on the specific ways in which Courage is also the priestess of death.

Perhaps, though, it would be best to begin with an arresting scene of simultaneous birth and death, all linked to war, the foundation of this world, a scene in which Courage clearly stands like the Great Mother at both the "East Gate" of Life and the "West Gate" of Death.[88] This important moment, like so many others, is found in the first scene of the drama. Here Courage "gives birth" not only to her immediate children, but to a sergeant as well. She does this by having all of them, sergeant and children, draw life's lots from a helmet turned thereby into a "womb", in which, as Courage says (so that the figure herself seems to allude to her role as Great Mother): "wir alle gemischt sind, von Mutterleib an...."[89] Not only does Courage, who holds the helmet, "give birth" here, she also assumes the Great Mother's role as Fate since she determines the

---

[87] The undiminished productivity of this provisioner of war caused a Soviet producer to take drastic measures in order to counter that portrayal and punish the Hyena: at the end, as Courage is about to rejoin the war, she collapses and dies, a solution that would have blocked the interpretation that I propose; see Henry Glade, "The Death of Mother Courage," *Tulane Drama Review* 12.6 (1967): 137.

[88] On the West and East Gates see Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 170.

[89] *GW* 4:1356.

outcome.[90] And she becomes the Terrible Mother as well, for the fate she determines for her "children" — not surprisingly for lives born out of a warrior's helmet, that is, out of a war that Courage hopes will become universal — is death.[91]

This ritual of fate illuminates other occasions where Courage as the Terrible Mother prepares her sacrificial victims. We recall, for example, how in her *Geschäftslied* she offers the soldiers food and wine, how she fattens and intoxicates them before sending them to slaughter: "wie die Kälber zum Salz,"[92] before she instructs the soldiers' leaders, the "priests" of this Goddess of war: "führt sie in den Höllenschlund."[93] (As in the case of the helmet, Courage brings together here both the organ of birth and the belly-vessel of death, the *Schlund*.)[94] The curious demise of Courage's earlier men is cast in a new light; Courage seems to sacrifice them in her service like the black widow, to become as Goddess the "avid womb which attracts the male and kills the phallus within itself in order to achieve satisfaction and fecundation."[95]

We see now that the deaths of Courage's children are not only the necessary result of their mother bringing them to war. This presentation to war becomes also the first act of Courage's sacrifice of her children to war, that is, to herself as the Terrible Mother who consumes life in order to bring it forth again. And Courage's absence on the business that perpetuates the conditions which kill them, is now seen as part of the ritual of their sacrifice. All three are offerings to the world that Courage incarnates, to Courage as the Terrible Mother, so that they form part of a cycle of life and death in war. And since these are sacrifices to Courage as the Terrible Mother, we have another

---

[90] See Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 226-234.
[91] On Courage's hope that war become universal see this chapter, footnote 57.
[92] *GW* 4:1357.
[93] *GW* 4:1351.
[94] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 170-171.
[95] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 171-172; Fenn 164.

explanation for Courage's silence at the death of each of her children. In Chapter 2 it was suggested that profound emotion in a surrounding barbarism caused her stillness. Now we see instead that her silence marks the Terrible Mother's simple acceptance of her child's sacrifice, since for her it is not truly gone, but only absorbed back into her as material from which to furnish new sacrifices.

The Great Mother also makes her appearance in conjunction with Courage in the *Lied vom Weib und dem Soldaten.*[96] I said earlier that this song, since it rehearses Courage's warnings, represents her as advisor, which representation is reinforced when she sings the admonishing conclusion to the song. She is, therefore, the *Weib* of this song. The soldier ignores the old woman's warning, and presumes to predict that he will return, "wenn weiß der Mond überm Schindeldach steht." Instead he is swallowed up by the icy waters which represent war. But these waters are also a standard symbol for the Great Mother, so that we are presented with a complex constellation of meaning: both Courage and the *Weib* are together the wise Good Mother who advises her bold child about the nature of the world (war, icy waters), a world she knows well since she is that world, and in the end the truth she represents is made manifest when the child is consumed by the dangerous waters of the Terrible Mother. And there is another symbol of the Great Mother here, for whom does the soldier impudently conjure up as a witness to his predicted successful return, but that being who "cooly" watches her waters swallow up her proud creature, as she foresaw in her manifestation as *Weib*: the moon ("Kühl stand der Mond überm Schindeldach weiß / Doch der Soldat trieb hinab mit dem Eis.")[97]

---

[96] *GW* 4:1366-1367.

[97] On water and moon symbolism and the Great Mother see Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 47-48, 286 (water), 55-56 (moon); on the moon see also Briffault 2:572-640 (note that both are connected in that the moon controls moisture, Briffault 632-638). The deeper meaning of this song is lost in John Willett's translation; see *Mother Courage and her Children*, trans. John Willett, eds. John Willett, and Ralph Manheim (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980) 19; unhappily Willett, believing he found a model for this song in an obscure story

That Courage is the Great and Terrible Mother to whom her children are sacrificed is reinforced by their presentation as offering either to the Goddess herself or to her effigy. Before his execution Eilif is brought, if not before his mother, then before her symbol, the wagon. Kattrin too is laid as the sacrificed victim at her mother's feet. But the most important example is when Schweizerkas's corpse is brought to his mother. Then it is as though those who bear her son's body are the attendants of the Goddess's temple of war, as though the volley that felled her son were the blow struck by the priests of the Goddess. Indeed, seated with Kattrin, her Persephone, at her side, Courage seems the Terrible Mother enthroned who receives her blood offering.[98] No other image conveys so clearly this sutler as the Great and Terrible Mother, or tells us so forcefully (to use Neumann's words) that Courage:[99]

> who generates life and all living things on earth is the same who takes them back into herself, who pursues her victims and captures them with snare and net. Disease, hunger, hardship, war above all, are her helpers .... This Terrible Mother is the hungry earth, which devours its own children and fattens on their corpses; it is the tiger and the vulture, the vulture and the coffin, the flesh-eating sarcophagus voraciously licking up the blood seed of men and beasts and, once fecundated and sated, casting it out again in new birth, hurling it to death, and over and over again to death.

*** *** ***

---

by Rudyard Kipling, chose to make of the *Weib* not an old woman but a young girl (as in the Kipling work); see his *Brecht in Context: Comparative Approaches* (London: Methuen, 1983) 49.

[98] On the throne and the Great Mother see Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 98-100, and blood offering 149-152.

[99] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* 149-150; Thiele comes very close to putting his finger on Courage's content when he calls the war the "Ernährer" of the children, who are its "Ausgeburten", but who are in turn swallowed up by it in the end (45). Unfortunately he does not make the connection between "Ernährer" and *Mutter* Courage.

When we recognize how the symbol of the Great Mother inhabits every moment of the drama, then we see that those who interpret Courage as a mythological figure or as a sort of *Urmutter* do not invent the association out of nothing, but are responding to something truly part of *Mutter Courage* (even if Brecht would deny it). However, the complexity of both Courage and the Great Mother at the same time shows such interpretations to be hopelessly one-dimensional, to be in the thrall of a (patriarchally) wishful, and even sentimental, view of an altruistic and benign mother figure.[100] We have seen that Courage and the Great Mother are in fact a union of the life-affirming Good Mother *and* the devouring and destroying Terrible Mother (a union that has implications for even the petty bourgeois motherhood that Courage superficially represents, but more on this in the Conclusion). To put it another way, the symbol of the Great Mother reveals Courage to be a representation of the unity of a fundamentally contradictory *world*.

The recognition of Courage's great symbolic scope, of her representation of a world just as the Great Mother represents the world, solves some of the riddles of this drama. Courage, for example, correctly warns that getting too close to war means destruction. Her children are proof of the truth of that statement. Yet Courage is not destroyed by her participation in war; she is, as we saw above, "eternal". Yet this is no contradiction, for now we see that Courage is that world to which her lesser creatures are sacrificed, and so she cannot become her own sacrifice. Similarly, she warns Kattrin against love with soldiers as the prelude to slavery; yet Courage, despite her frequent favouring of soldiers has become no slave (the slavery of which she seemed a victim in *Lied von der großen Kapitulation*, given the rest of Courage's life, seems only a momentary indulgence of the Great Mother). She has become no slave because she, as the

---

[100] As is the case with Bernard Fenn, as the reader will remember from our discussion of his vitalist defense in Chapter 3; see also Esslin, *Brecht, A Choice of Evils* 217; Jacques Desuché, *Bertolt Brecht* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963) 36.

Great Mother, is the ground of which the men are mere "effects"; as her creatures, these men cannot master her. By the same token the capitulations of Courage and the soldier of scene 4, though they seem similar, are not. The soldier capitulates to that which must destroy him; Courage only capitulates to herself as the Terrible Mother of war — which is no capitulation. (Incidentally, Courage as the Great Mother also reinforces the idea that Courage cannot escape war, for she is the world which is war; and this also blocks any legal assignment of blame for the deaths of Courage's children and leads us again to the symbolic blame discussed in the conclusion of Chapter 4 and in "Brecht on Courage" in Chapter 3.)

The image of the Great Mother also suggests a solution to the apparently irreconcilable contradictions of Courage as revealed in Chapters 4 and 5, where Courage seems against sense to be both a representative of capitalism and of its refutation. For just as the Great Mother represents, as a world, the unity of contradictions, so it may be that the contradictions of Chapters 4 and 5 are contained within Courage, as the representation of a contradictory world. Yet, if the Great Mother and the representation of capitalism and its refutation come together in Courage, they also begin at that very moment to come apart again. But to understand this we must leave the realm of "myth" and return to that of history.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

CHAPTER 7

RETURN TO HISTORY

The Great Mother, as we saw in the last chapter, represents powerful Nature, a world in which human beings are as helpless infants at the mercy of the cycles and accidents of a mysteriously benign or deadly Mother Earth. Since the Great Mother is clearly part of her symbolic complex, it follows that Courage, too, represents Nature. Yet this flies in the face of what was learned in Chapter 4, where Courage was seen to represent, not Nature, but History, specifically History as Capitalism. Does this mean, then, that Brecht's text says that capitalism is nature, a proposition which goes against one of his most constant premises, namely that capitalism, contrary to bourgeois belief and ideology, is no immutable natural fact but a historically transient human product that can, must, and will, be succeeded by a better social organization? Yes, in a certain sense, the figure of Courage as the conjunction of capitalism and the Great Mother means just this: Capitalism is Nature. First let us see what makes possible this coexistence of Nature and History.[1]

---

[1] For an interesting discussion of Brecht and nature see Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 15-32.

CAPITALISM AS THE GREAT MOTHER

It takes no great imaginative effort to see how capitalism as Brecht and Marx understood it could be adapted to the symbol of the Great Mother, since both are a unity revolving round an essential contradiction between production and destruction.

For example, we see the development-fostering Good Mother in a capitalism that promotes progress (according to the historical narrative told by Marx and embraced by Brecht), one that plays "eine höchst revolutionäre Rolle," as Marx says, by ending "alle feudalen, patriarchalischen, idyllischen Verhältnisse...."[2] This is the "Hohelied auf die revolutionären Verdienste der Bourgeoisie"[3] that Brecht sees in the *Communist Manifesto*, a "Hohelied" which Brecht continues when he notes approvingly that capitalism had created "die moderne Produktion" and "die großen industriellen Werke."[4]

This "Hohelied" sung by Marx and Brecht to capitalism also refers to its enormous productivity, an attribute that makes capitalism look like the bountiful and nurturing Good Mother. As Marx said, capitalism had unleashed "massenhaftere und kolossalere Produktionskräfte ... als alle vergangenen Generationen zusammen,"[5] a productivity that is the necessary precondition for that "higher" form of society which would end want and exploitation and permit the free development of all.[6] "Der Fortschritt aller," as Brecht said, is contained in this "Steigerung der Produktion."[7]

And yet this bountiful and development-fostering Good Mother is also a Terrible Mother who forsakes her children and tries to keep them from growth. Thus capitalism as the Terrible Mother exploits the majority who do not benefit

---

[2] *MEW* 4:464.
[3] *GW* 20:334; see also *GW* 20:58-59.
[4] *GW* 20:109, 155.
[5] *MEW* 4:467.
[6] *MEW* 25:827-828; see also *MEW* 42:512, 601, 607.
[7] *GW* 16:669-670.

from its productivity, while only a few favourites, the capitalists, reap the profits.[8] The restraining and ensnaring Terrible Mother is seen in the irrational response of capitalism to its own creativity, which it periodically conceives as crises of "overproduction", epidemics which it no less irrationally "cures" by creating a famine in plenty, by destroying part of its previously created products and productive forces.[9] Unable to manage its creativity, destructive capitalism becomes a shackle on its own production, "eine Schranke für [die] Entwicklung der Produktivkräfte" and a "Fessel der Produktionsweise."[10] It is this to which Brecht refers when he speaks of the "fesselung der produktivkräfte" of capitalism and sees "das Bürgerliche als Schranke, Fessel und Bedrohung."[11]

In the Reason of capitalism one can see the benign Wisdom of the Good Mother, for it not only made possible the technological developments that resulted in the productivity of capitalism, and which promised a release from the drudgery of alienated labour and raised the hope of the free development of the individual;[12] Reason also underlay the theoretical self-understanding of the bourgeoisie and its notions of freedom and equality, of a world based on science rather than belief, of a hierarchy based on talent not birth, all of which undermined the traditionalist feudal society.[13]

---

[8] See Chapter 4, "Brecht on Capitalism."

[9] *MEW* 4:467-468.

[10] *MEW* 4:467-468 (unable to manage productivity); *MEW* 42:641-642 (*Schranke*); *MEW* 23:791 (*Fessel*).

[11] *AJ* 10.9.38; *GW* 19:467; see also *GW* 15:244, a translation of the same idea into the realm of theatre, when Brecht associates the bourgeoisie with dramatic "Einfühlung", which has become in his eyes a "Hindernis einer weiteren Entfaltung der Produktivkräfte." On the destruction of productive forces by capitalism see *GW* 18:244, 19:468-479.

[12] On revolution of production (technology) see *MEW* 4: 465-466; on the use of Reason or Science in the process of rationalization see *MEW* 42: 599-602; see also *MEW* 23:674 where this Reason is mentioned in the same breath as the dehumanization of the worker; on the promise of such devlopment see again footnote 6. We remember that this is the content of Ziffel's hopeful reference to technological developments in the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* (*GW* 14:1496-1497).

[13] See for example Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848*

Yet capitalism also contains the Madness of the Terrible Mother. For its Reason also appears as the Instrumental Reason that breaks the promise of capitalism. For example, instead of improving people's lives, Instrumental Reason impoverishes the lives of the majority, either by throwing them out on the street when technology makes them "superfluous", or by chaining them to a labour process that becomes more exploitative and more alienating, one that transforms them into mere appendages to the machine of production.[14]

The Madness of the Terrible Mother is also manifested in the ideology of capitalism, an ideology which we saw in Chapters 4 and 5 marshall in its service, as aids to exploitation, many forms of the irrational, such as nationalism, racism, and sexism,[15] an ideology that would have us believe capitalism to be the end

---

(London: Eidenfeld and Nicolas, 1962) 20-22. This threat to feudalism by Reason is found in Brecht's *Leben des Galilei*, for example, when science threatens the established hierarchy (*GW* 3:1232-1233) or would make the "beastly" peasants more difficult to control (*GW* 3:1309); on this see also Werner Mittenzwei, *Bertolt Brecht: Von der 'Maßnahme' zu 'Leben des Galilei'* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1962) 309.

[14] *MEW* 23:674 (appendage and dehumanization), 454 and 464 (technology unemploys); 425-440 (technology lengthens workday). For Brecht see Chapter 4 ("Brecht on Capitalism," "Quantification").

[15] The reader is referred to Chapter 5 ("Exploited and Doubly Exploited," "The Virtues of War"). The radical egalitarianism of Marx and Engels logically precludes nationalism, racism, and sexism, as most theorists will agree, but neither fully developed their theory in this regard. Some move toward a notion of women's labour as unpaid labour, and so implicitly akin to the unpaid labour that makes up surplus value, can be seen in Engels' "Urprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats" (*MEW* 21:75, 158). In Marx's criticism of Bakunin he attacks in Panslavism simultaneously racism and nationalism which support the Russian rulers (*MEW* 18:446); while in a letter to Engels he seems to link as one colonialism (that is, an exploitative policy integral to capitalism) and racism (*MEW* 35:54). The implicit content of Marxist theory on these questions has been recently developed. On racism and sexism as integral to capitalism see Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983) 24, 78-79, 103; see also Wallerstein in Balibar and Wallerstein 29-36; on racism and nationalism see Balibar in Balibar and Wallerstein 37-67; on sexism see *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, ed. Zillah R. Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review, 1979): 15-17, 28-29; see also Cynthia

of history,[16] an ideology which blinds the wise, scientific eye of the Good Mother to the Terrible Mother's unreasonable claims to permanence and rightness (in support of which the Terrible Mother enlists her one-time foe, the Church).[17] And, if we may see the Good Mother in the rationality that guides the improved production of the individual enterprise, it is the Terrible Mother who oversees the chaos of the market that destroys her enterprising children.

These basic correspondences could be greatly expanded and elaborated, but they suffice to show how the joining of capitalism and the symbol of the Great Mother could be motivated. They remind us, too, that neither Brecht nor Marx saw in capitalism only the villain of the piece (though they concentrated on that aspect since their main concern was the next step of transcending capitalism); rather, they saw capitalism as a unity of contradictions, just as we have seen the Great Mother is a unity of the productive and the destructive.

Yet these correspondences do not in themselves suffice to invoke the Great Mother. Indeed, since any social organization may be seen as both productive and destructive to some degree, these resemblances could seem trivial. In fact they serve mainly to reinforce a joining of capitalism and the Great Mother that is most strongly suggested by that same correspondence which cemented the union of Courage and the Great Mother in Chapter 6: like the Great Mother, her

---

Cockburn, "What Implications for Theories of Sex and Class?" *Gender and Stratification*, eds. Rosemary Crompton and Michael Mann (London: Polity Press, 1986): 79-80.

[16] As when the bourgeoisie proclaims itself a natural order, see Marx's "Das Elend der Philosophie" (*MEW* 4:139), a passage probably known to Brecht since he repeats Marx's thought: "Somit hat es eine Geschichte gegeben, aber es gibt keine mehr" in his own criticism of bourgeois claims to permanence; see *GW* 20:151.

[17] "Die sozialen Prinzipien des Christentums haben die antike Sklaverei gerechtfertigt, die mittelalterliche Leibeigenschaft verherrlicht und verstehen sich ebenfalls im Notfall dazu, die Unterdrückung des Proletariats, wenn auch mit etwas jämmerlicher Miene, zu verteidigen" (*MEW* 4:200). For Brecht on capitalism refusing to critically or scientifically view itself, see *GW* 16:669-670.

analogue (whether Courage or capitalism) assumes the extension and permanence of the natural world.

Of course, it is easy to find similarities between Capitalism and Nature. The chaotic and fierce competitive struggle of the market, for instance, looks like Nature's "law of the jungle"; and the convulsions of the market look like Nature's earthquakes and droughts.[18] Moreover, capitalism with its technological advances (especially in Brecht's time, before the ominous revelations which 30 years of ecological studies have given us), had made of Nature purely a "Gegenstand für den Menschen," and, by causing Nature to cease being recognized as a "Macht für sich,"[19] had usurped its power and itself come to resemble the Great Mother as the mistress of Nature. These correspondences help to suggest capitalism as nature and to motivate the identity of capitalism and the Great Mother, but in this regard there is another correspondence more important for Brecht's drama.

In the *Grundrisse* Marx observes that human products such as art and religion are not timeless, but are bound up with certain forms of development. He points out that Hellenic mythology could never have survived the industrial and technological advances of nineteenth-century Europe: "ist Achilles möglich mit Pulver und Blei?"[20] As he explains: "Alle Mythologie überwindet und beherrscht und gestaltet die Naturkräfte in der Einbildung und durch die Einbildung; verschwindet also mit der wirklichen Herrschaft über dieselben."[21]

---

[18] An interesting statement of capitalism as nature is found in "Learning the Tools of Investing" by liberal economist and Nobel Prize winner Paul A. Samuelson, which forms the introduction to Jeffrey B. Little's *Reading the Financial Pages* (New York: Chelsea House, 1988) 6-7. Samuelson writes: "We begin life dependent on someone else's income and capital. But after we become independent, it is a remorseless fact of nature that we must not only support ourselves for the present but must also start saving money for retirement" (6).

[19] *MEW* 42:323.

[20] *MEW* 42:45.

[21] *MEW* 42:44.

But what if this mastery over nature no longer seems to give human beings the freedom to control their own fate? What if the apparatus that once promised the control over nature is turned back on people and instead becomes a new unfreedom, a new necessity, a second "Nature"? (Here is the dark side of Brecht's statement that we live in a time, "wo des Menschen Schicksal der Mensch ist.")[22] One might predict that such conditions would give rise to a new mythology, and the Marxist might say this did indeed happen, in the form of bourgeois ideology, which claims for capitalism the permanence and status of a natural world, a "mythology" against which Brecht tirelessly fought.[23] But myth also reappears in Brecht's drama via Courage as the Great Mother, and it appears in this form because capitalism, despite Brecht's constant battle against its pretense to a natural order, had come to look even to him like a second Nature.[24]

DARK TIMES AND PREHISTORY

"Wirklich, ich lebe in finsteren Zeiten!"[25] It is not difficult to see how this would have seemed so to Brecht as he wrote *Mutter Courage* in the autumn of 1939. We need only consider the personal suffering he endured as a poet of the German language and no other, exiled nearly 7 years from his real audience and the apparatus needed to make his voice heard, a voice with a pressing social message not content to whisper in the desk drawer. No doubt he felt much as he did 18 months later when he laments that he had long sent his scattered friends

---

[22] *GW* 18:228.

[23] In fact, Brecht's attack on naturalistic theatre in favour of his realistic epic theatre is a translation into dramatic theory of this struggle against the illusion of bourgeois ideology. See Marx's attacks on bourgeois ideology which posits bourgeois relations as natural; in the "Deutsche Ideologie" (*MEW* 3:70), for example, and the "Grundrisse" (*MEW* 42:22).

[24] For some of Brecht's comments on capitalism seeming wrongly like nature, see *GW* 10:863-864; 15:297; 16:575, 669-670.

[25] *GW* 9:722.

a new drama (*Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*), "und noch nicht ein einziger brief darüber ist eingelaufen." He is without the critical response and stimulation his art needs: "selbst der buchhändler und kritiker olsoni in helsinki findet nicht die zeit, mein stück zu lesen. und es gibt immer weniger besucher." Among other things we hear anguish at the effect of his exile when he says: "mit jedem siegesrapport hitlers verliere ich an bedeutung als schriftsteller."[26]

It was a time, as Brecht wrote in a poem addressing his friend and suicide, Walter Benjamin, when conditions might lead one to think: "So liegt die Zukunft in Finsternis, und die guten Kräfte / Sind schwach."[27] It was a time of growing dread, when Brecht describes himself fleeing Europe for America as: "Flüchtend vom sinkenden Schiff, besteigend ein sinkendes...."[28] It was a time in which Brecht felt compelled to record those lost to him in a "Verlustliste", and to write poems such as *In finsteren Zeiten*, *Schlechte Zeit für Lyrik*, *Schlechte Zeit für die Jugend*, poems in which he exhorts, as he did his companion and collaborator Margarete Steffin: "Bedenk das Dunkel, in dem wir noch stehen!"[29]

Dark, Evil: These words describe a time when war loomed or was under way, a war that threatened enormous destruction and which in 1939 had no foreseeable end. But "dark times" for Brecht meant also the continuing and unrelenting rule of his chief antagonist, capitalism, in both "normal" and fascist form. Beginning with the Nazis' *Machtergreifung*, which led to Brecht's emigration, he had seen the uglier twin of capitalism stride with impunity from victory to victory. He had seen it install a dictatorship that crushed the German working-class movement (for Brecht at once his audience and the agent of a better future), he had seen it intensify its brutality, rearm, annex Austria, reduce Czechoslovakia, and then defeat Poland in a dizzyingly swift war, a war that threatened the Soviet Union (for Brecht the only place to question the hegemony

---

[26] *AJ* 20.4.41.
[27] *GW* 10:829.
[28] *GW* 10:829.
[29] *GW* 10:829 (*Verlustliste*); *GW* 9:587, 743, 745, 758.

of capitalism). Nor did "normal" capitalism in the rest of the world seem about to perish, despite predictions of world revolution by its opponents. Indeed, tremors notwithstanding, even the Great Depression had not unseated capitalism; nor was there any promising anticapitalistic revolutionary movement to be seen in Europe as Brecht wrote *Mutter Courage*. Brecht, then, seems to comment on his own situation when he reflects on his *Galilei* and the world of 1938-1939:[30]

> Furchtbar die Enttäuschung, wenn die Menschen erkennen oder zu erkennen glauben, daß sie einer Illusion zum Opfer gefallen sind, daß das Alte stärker ist als das Neue, daß die "Tatsachen" gegen sie und nicht für sie sind, daß ihre Zeit, die neue, noch nicht gekommen ist. Es ist dann nicht nur so schlecht wie vorher, sondern viel schlechter; denn sie haben allerhand geopfert für ihre Pläne, was ihnen jetzt fehlt, sie haben sich vorgewagt und werden jetzt überfallen, das Alte rächt sich an ihnen.

In fascism, the "große Zeiten" of capitalism, as Brecht called it,[31] he would have seen the "revenge of the Old", of capitalism, for the daring of the New in October 1917 and November 1918, a revenge that meant a continuing and growing exploitation and inhumanity.

Capitalism, abhorrent to Brecht, firmly entrenched and thriving in its irrational and warring way, threatening unheard-of destruction and apparently beyond human intervention, contributed in 1939 to the "darkness" of war that permeates *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*. No wonder Brecht portrayed the war of *Mutter Courage* as the Thirty Years War.[32] For the latter remained in the German imagination *the* great disaster to have struck German soil (matched only by the defeat of 1918), a war which according to legend slaughtered two-thirds of Germany's population, which ruined its thriving towns and destroyed its economy, which condemned Germany by the Peace of Westphalia to a political "dark age" of feudal particularism (retarding both Germany's development as a

---

[30] *GW* 17:1104.

[31] *GW* 20:183.

[32] Hiller notes that German authors were fascinated by the Thirty Years War between 1937-1941, and counts 22 works with that war as a basis (137).

nation-state and the rise of her bourgeoisie, so that she fell behind her rivals, England and France).[33] Through the Thirty Years War Brecht gives expression to the disaster wrought by capitalism in 1939.

This view of capitalism headed for the *Höllenschlund* of war, a system approaching the extension and permanence of a terribly erupting nature, underpins the appearance in this drama of capitalism as the Great Mother. If Brecht, following Marx, saw capitalism as a step upward on the historical ladder toward socialism, from Necessity to Freedom, from the bonds of Nature to a freely and humanly made History, then in September 1939 an "omnipotent" capitalism must have seemed to Brecht the stagnation of history, indeed, it must have seemed a perverse historical reversal, a return to prehistory (a notion never far from his mind when he viewed capitalism),[34] for now History had become Nature, Capitalism the Great and Terrible Mother.

But what of the Soviet Union? Did it not represent to some degree the realization of Brecht's hopes and so the refutation of the image of a hegemonous and permanent capitalism? Would not the existence of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party have blocked the symbolic expression of capitalism as a "universal" power, as the omnipotent Great Mother? On the contrary, the Soviet Union reinforced the impression of capitalism unchallenged.

THE DARK AGES AND THE SOVIET UNION

It is difficult to summarize accurately Brecht's attitude toward Stalinism (a notion that describes here the Communist Party and the Soviet Union under Stalin).[35] Certainly he never publicly criticized Stalinist Russia, an omission that

---

[33] See Geoffrey Parker et al., *The Thirty Years' War* (1984; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987) 215; compare, for example, Becher 15:589; see Thiele 49.

[34] In the *Dreigroschenroman* Peachum reflects how his time is not so different from that of the Neanderthal who forthrightly murders his rivals (*GW* 13:1083).

[35] For an excellent discussion, see Michael Rohrwasser, "'Ist also Schweigen das beste?': Brechts Schreibtischschublade und das Messer des Chirurgen," *Text*

even at the time drew fire from his critics.[36] Yet privately Brecht expressed reservations and criticisms that reveal he was no mere creature of Stalinism. In the end, perhaps the best characterization of Brecht in this regard is the "loyal critic".[37]

Loyalty is found, for example, in Brecht's insistence that Stalin was not only a hindrance to building socialism, but also its motor;[38] or in his characterization of Stalin in 1953 as the incarnation of the hopes of the oppressed of the world.[39] In Brecht's last year he admits the barbarism of the Soviet Union (by which he means the Great Terror), but even here he excuses it as a necessary aftereffect of the barbarism of capitalism.[40]

Loyalty also appears in Brecht's reply in 1937 to André Gide's criticism of a lack of freedom in the Soviet Union.[41] Brecht says that Gide's notions of freedom are too strongly based on bourgeois prejudices to serve as criteria for judging an emerging socialism.[42] He may have a point, but he even defends the

---

+ *Kritik* 108 (1990): 38-47; see also Peter Bormans, "Brecht und der Stalinismus," *Brecht-Jahrbuch* 4 (1974): 53-76; compare with Heinz Abosch, "Der Dichter und der Marxismus," *Neue Rundschau* 91.2/3 (1980): 96-120.

[36] Rohrwasser mentions the Trotskyist Walter Held, who censured Brecht's silence on his friends who had fallen victim to the Terror (43); see also David Pike, "Brecht and Stalin's Russia: The Victim as Apologist 1931-1945," *The Brecht Yearbook* 11 (1983): 177-181.

[37] Rohrwasser 45; see on this Pike, "Brecht and Stalin's Russia"; Willett, *Brecht in Context* 190-193, 214-215; Peter Brooker, *Bertolt Brecht: Dialectics, Poetry, Politics* (London: Croon Helm, 1988) 221.

[38] *GW* 20:326; on Stalin's "usefulness" see also *GW* 12:467, 491, 503, 538-539; see also: Iring Fetscher, "Es gibt keine Götter - auch Stalin: ein Ochs. Postscriptum zu Hannah Arendts *Quod licet Jovi...*(*Merkur*, Juni/Juli 1969)," *Merkur* 23 (1969): 888; Klaus-Bernd Vollmar, *Ästhetische Strukturen und politische Aufklärung: Ein Versuch, die materialistische Literaturtheorie auf den Boden des Textes zu stellen* (Bern: Lang, 1976) 111-130; James K. Lyon, "Brecht und Stalin - des Dichters *letztes Wort*," *Exilforschung* 1 (1983): 120-121.

[39] *GW* 20:325.

[40] *GW* 20:325.

[41] *GW* 19:434-8.

[42] *GW* 19:437.

dictatorship against something normally important to him, namely critical thought, when he asserts: "die Generallinie der Partei steht jenseits der Kritik."[43] Nor does he shrink from a rhetorical trick when he downplays the question of criticism of the Party: "Tatsächlich wird die Generallinie der Partei nicht in Zeitungsartikeln kritisiert und nicht von plaudernden Gruppen an Kaminen festgelegt oder umgeworfen,"[44] a statement in which he diminishes the important issue of public criticism (*Zeitungsartikeln*) by linking it with mere chatter (*Plaudern an Kaminen*).[45] Similarly, in a fragment written in the 1930s, Brecht avoids the question of freedom in the Soviet Union and instead points out that the freedom which people allegedly enjoy in capitalism is an illusion, since workers, for example, have no real access to the capitalist-controlled press. He suggests that the supply of printing materials to the proletariat of the Soviet Union, guaranteed as a constitutional right, means a greater freedom there (though he does not say how this freedom might be realized if the Party is "beyond criticism").[46]

Brecht also loyally defends the Soviet Union in one of its darkest moments: the Moscow Trials.[47] In a text from 1938 we see him repeat the line of the prosecution about "Verschwörungen gegen das Regime" (though it should be said that such credulity was not uniquely his, nor was it even confined to those sympathizing with socialism;[48] indeed, Brecht's sobriety in this regard can be

---

[43] *GW* 19:438; on the importance of critical thought for Brecht, see *GW* 16:567 and 19:393; see also *GW* 9:626; 18:235, 237; see also Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik* 132-134.

[44] *GW* 19:438.

[45] See also Brecht's defense of wage discrepancies in the Soviet Union; *GW* 20:105-111.

[46] *GW* 19:435,440-1; *BF* dates this 1934, *GW* dates it 1939; for other defenses of the lack of freedom in the Soviet Union see *GW* 12:438, 535, 536, 540-541, 543.

[47] See *GW* 20:111-115; see also *GW* 12:432, 530-540; see Mittenzwei, *Das Leben* 1:612-623, 629, 652.

[48] See Jürgen Schebera, "Feuchtwangers *Moskau 1937*: ein 'kleiner taciteischer Bericht'?" *Nach Brecht: Ein Almanach 1992*, ed. Inge Gellert (Berlin:

gauged by comparison with others such as Johannes R. Becher, who enthusiastically defended the trials).[49] Brecht adds that the trials could only be considered suspicious if one were to admit the impossible assumption that an unbridgeable gulf lies between the regime and the masses.[50] (Since he remarks in the same year to Walter Benjamin that there is in Russia a dictatorship *over* and not *by* the proletariat, which implies the existence of such a gulf, one wonders how impossible the assumption may have been for Brecht.)[51]

Thus Brecht is loyal, if not specifically to Stalin or his regime, then (as Michael Rohrwasser has said) as one who submits to "Party discipline," according to which criticism "am falschen Platz," even if justified, is seen as comfort to the enemy (which meant in this case both fascist Germany and the capitalist West).[52] Indeed, Brecht's defense of Stalinist Russia, even when crude or outrageous, should probably be seen less as a defense of Stalinism than of a nascent and threatened socialism, which is made plain in Brecht's remarks on the Moscow Trials:[53]

> Was die Prozesse betrifft, so wäre es ganz und gar unrichtig, bei ihrer Besprechung eine Haltung gegen die sie veranstaltende Regierung der Union einzunehmen, schon da diese ganz automatisch in kürzester Zeit sich in eine Haltung gegen das heute vom Weltfaschismus mit Krieg bedrohte russische Proletariat und seinen im Aufbau begriffenen Sozialismus verwandeln müßte.

Brecht Zentrum Berlin, 1992) 101-111.

[49] Becher 15:493.

[50] *GW* 20:112.

[51] Benjamin *Versuche* 171.

[52] Rohrwasser 44; see also John Fuegi, "The Soviet Union and Brecht: The Exile's Choice," *Brecht Heute* 2 (1972): 219.

[53] *GW* 20:111; Rohrwasser 44; also consider that Brecht may have seen no alternative available, and so maintained a tactical silence for that reason as well (Sternberg 24); and that, as Bluhm has noted, Stalin's rule may have been considered by Brecht a transient phenomenon caused in part by Russia's primitive stage of development and by the hostility of her enemies, a phenomenon possibly unavoidable for a revolution (687).

"Loyal critic", however, also means he was a critic. And he was critical, it must be said, even before Khrushchev's famous revelations at the 20th Party Congress of 1956.[54] We should not, for example, underestimate the criticism implied by the fact that Brecht, unlike many of those close to him (such as Weigel, Berlau, Steffin, Hauptmann, and Eisler), never joined the Communist Party. A criticism can also be seen when Brecht avoided the Soviet Union as his place of exile after fleeing Germany in 1933, and again when he quickly passed through Russia for an American exile in 1941. Reasons for these implied criticisms may be inferred from the "skeptische Antworten" he gave Walter Benjamin in 1938, answers that reveal his awareness of the real situation that would await him in the Soviet Union. For example, when Benjamin wondered whether Ernst Ottwalt, who worked with Brecht on the film *Kuhle Wampe* and was in prison in Russia, "noch sitzt", Brecht answered: "wenn er noch sitzen kann, sitzt er."[55] Clearly Brecht did not think, as Becher did, that he would find himself in the Soviet Union "in einer ungewöhnlich günstigen Lage."[56]

Some of Brecht's strongest criticisms compare Soviet to fascist conditions. Of the Soviet secret police Brecht said to Benjamin: "Was aus der Tscheka werden kann, sieht man an der Gestapo."[57] In his journal Brecht wrote what must among other things be taken as a sharp criticism of the Soviet government: "im faschismus erblickt der sozialismus sein verzerrtes spiegelbild. mit keiner seiner tugenden, *aber allen seinen lastern*" (my emphasis).[58] In 1937 he admires the progress made by the Soviet Union — with reservations: "Aber es gibt dort

---

[54] So he cannot be described as unconditionally committed to the policies of Stalin (Lyon, "Brecht und Stalin" 122); compare Lyon's earlier work, *Bertolt Brecht in America* 295-296; on Brecht's scepticism in regard to Stalinism, see Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik* 104-108.

[55] Benjamin *Versuche* 166; Ottwalt died in one of Stalin's camps, see Völker, *Bertolt Brecht* 225.

[56] Becher 15:539; see Esslin, *Brecht, A Choice of Evils* 155-156; Fuegi, "The Soviet Union and Brecht" 220-221; Lyon, *Bertolt Brecht in America* 21.

[57] Benjamin *Versuche* 159.

[58] *AJ* 19.7.43.

einen Staat, Vorschriften und Rangstufen, Folge und Ursache von Unordnung, selber Unordnung."[59] Later, of course, he criticizes Stalin's cult of personality as "eine Ursache der Distanzierung und Lahmlegung [der großen rückständigen Massen]," as he censures the bureaucratic "Negierung der Partei durch den Apparat."[60] Nor should we overlook that Brecht, even if he did suggest that fascist elements tried to use the circumstances of 17 June 1953 to initiate "einen neuen Weltbrand," even if he did announce his solidarity with the regime and its repressive measures against the "unrest", still he insisted — in unpublished remarks — that the workers' dissatisfaction had a real basis, and he named as examples their lack of control over their own affairs and the discrepancies between the living standards of workers and the privileged — such as artists.[61]

It is this critical attitude toward the Soviet Union that I would like to emphasize when we consider how the period in which Brecht wrote *Mutter Courage* was for him a new Dark Ages. For at that time his criticisms are particularly sharp.

Some of Brecht's strongest and bitterest comments on Soviet policy are recorded in his *Arbeitsjournal* in the first months of the war, in that period which saw the composition of *Mutter Courage*. On 9 September 1939, with Warsaw (as he believed) in the hands of Hitler's forces, Brecht writes: "große verwirrung richtete natürlich der deutsch russische pakt an bei allen proletariern."[62] By referring to the Communists in the third person, he distances himself from the justification for the pact: "die kommunisten behaupteten sofort, es sei ein respekt verlangender beitrag der union zum frieden." Immediately afterward he adds the comment that reveals his critical attitude and that the "bewilderment" (*Verwirrung*) is not only found in the "proletariat": "allerdings brach kurz darauf

---

[59] *GW* 20:67.

[60] *GW* 20:326; see also *GW* 12:467, 536, 538-539; Esslin, *Brecht, A Choice of Evils* 168-169.

[61] *GW* 20:326-327.

[62] *AJ* 9.9.39.

— einige stunden darauf — der krieg aus." In favour of the Soviet decision he considers the correctness of their assumption, not yet disproved in the eighth day of war, that the West would never enter a war on Poland's behalf.[63] He considers, too, that the Soviet Union, given the reluctance of the West to fight Hitler, entered the agreement so that it would not find itself alone in a defense of Poland against Germany (or even in its own defense, since Poland may not have resisted), a situation that would have meant, as Brecht called it, a triumph for the "chamberlain-konzeption" ("hitler soll gegen die union geleitet werden").[64] But, if Brecht would later say that he believed at the time that the pact was "gute Politik,"[65] on 9 September 1939 his journal makes his reservations plain: "die union trägt vor dem weltproletariat das fürchterliche stigma einer hilfeleistung an den faschismus, den wildesten und arbeiterfeindlichsten teil des kapitalismus"; and his criticism is searing: "ich glaube nicht, daß mehr gesagt werden kann, als daß die union sich eben rettete, um den preis, das weltproletariat ohne losungen, hoffnungen und beistand zu lassen."[66]

Nine days later Brecht's "bewilderment" extends to the Soviet march into Poland.[67] "Es [ist] sehr schwer," he says, "sich an die nackte realität zu gewöhnen,"[68] especially, one would think, since earlier he had denounced German claims of military agreements with the Soviets as "Unsinn".[69] In the Soviet Union's complicity in the division of Poland he sees "die aufgabe der parole ›die ussr braucht keinen fußbreit fremden bodens.‹" In the Soviet

---

[63] Despite formal declarations of war by France and Britain on 3 September 1939, this was the time of the "phony war" or *Sitzkrieg* (the first British divisions were deployed in October); see *AJ* 4.9.39 and 5.9.39.

[64] See also *AJ* 1.9.39, and 7.9.39.

[65] Brecht, *Briefe* no.785.

[66] See also *AJ* 24.12.39; see Willett, *Brecht in Context* 193; Brecht was not as accepting of the pact as some think; see Bormans 65-66; Mittenzwei, *Das Leben* 1:670-671.

[67] Willett, *Brecht in Context* 193.

[68] *AJ* 18.9.39.

[69] *AJ* 7.9.39.

appropriation "der ganzen nationalistischen terminologie" he sees "die aneignung der faschistischen heuchlereien von ›blutsverwandschaft.‹" We know already how Brecht hated "stinking" nationalism, so we hear the unease in his voice when he says of the nationalistic phrases used by the Soviet Union: "das wird zu den deutschen faschisten hingesprochen, aber zugleich zu den sowjettruppen." Next day, 19 September 1939, Brecht is disconcerted because he has discovered there was no consultation or preparation of the Polish public for the Soviet march, "in einer eigentümlich napoleonischen form," into Poland; the case, he says, was simply one of a Soviet government decree ("die regierung verfügte"). He understands the tactic, "und doch wird [Hitler] sein kriegsziel entrissen," but still he is dismayed since he hears communiqués "auf nationale töne abgestimmt" and occupied territories described as lands, "die zum russischen reich gehörten." He wonders, are these "diplomatische rücksichten"? But his criticism of Soviet nationalistic justifications is evident: "ein riesenreich hört, bevor sich eine riesenarmee in bewegung setzt, *nur, was europa, das kapitalistische, hören soll*" (my emphasis). Or, even more damning: "der text ist wie von hitler revidiert."

Nor do Brecht's criticisms disappear three months later (that is, after *Mutter Courage* is written) when Stalin, anxious for security against a German ally he knew he could not trust, invaded Finland (30 November 1939), which had refused him strategic bases to protect the Leningrad approach to the Soviet Union. One excuse for the invasion, "die finnen haben russisches grenzgebiet betreten, also angegriffen," Brecht says, "beweist, wie weit entfernt die russen von der möglichkeit sind, dialektische parolen zu geben."[70] He also criticizes the appearance of what might be characterized as imperialistic tendencies on the part of the Soviet Union:

> der vertrag mit der von der sowjetregierung ernannten finnischen volksregierung tritt der auffassung entgegen, daß die finnischen arbeiter und bauern ihre nationale freiheit gegen ihre soziale

---

[70] *AJ* 10.12.39.

> freiheit eintauschen müssen, er dient als argument und ist als solches schwach.

"Det finska undret" or "Der finnische Wunder," a satire written by Brecht after the above journal entry, appears to contradict his own criticisms.[71] Michael Rohrwasser seems to think it an indirect legitimation of Soviet expansionism.[72] Indirectly perhaps, but at the same time we should note that Brecht neither cites the official justifications for the invasion (which he criticized in his journal), nor does he offer new justifications or revise opinions uttered in his journal. Instead Brecht's article, which does not shrink from a distasteful mockery of the Finnish troops who are struggling after their initial successes, seems motivated first by irritation at Western newspaper reports celebrating Finnish wins over the Soviets; and second, his more fundamental criticism is that the "civilization" that Finland defends with the help of France and England is really a defense of capitalism — and so for Brecht of unfreedom, since he names as the other allies of this "civilization" the Pope, Mussolini, and Franco.[73] Though it could be argued, then, that Brecht's text defends the Soviet invasion through omission of censure, it may be motivated more by anger at Finland supporting the enemies of the Soviet Union than by agreement with the Soviet invasion. Rohrwasser himself has noted that Brecht may be distancing himself from the text since it is (1) a satire which (2) appeared under a pseudonym and (3) only in Finnish — no German version exists.[74]

The Soviet Union, then, with its pact with Germany, its invasions of Poland and Finland, and with its turn to a nationalistic phraseology abhorrent to Brecht, substantially contributed to the Dark Ages he saw yawning before him. But the Soviet Union had already contributed to Brecht's dark times with the terror of the 1930s. In a journal entry from January 1939, in which Brecht

---

[71] *GW* 20:278-281, 12*-15*.
[72] Rohrwasser 41.
[73] *GW* 20:13*.
[74] Rohrwasser 41; see also *AJ* 9.12.39.

criticizes the Soviet state for its self-perpetuation, for its restriction of the movement of labour, for a political "democracy" that consisted only in phrases, and for the lack of information on the social relations of production there, he composes a list of personal loss that becomes a condemnation of Soviet aesthetic and political policy:[75]

> auch kolzow verhaftet in moskau. meine letzte russische verbindung mit drüben. niemand weiß etwas von tretjakow, der 'japanische spion' sein soll. niemand etwas von der neher, die in prag im auftrag ihres mannes trotzkistische geschäfte abgewickelt haben soll. reich und assja lacis schreiben mir nie mehr, grete bekommt keine antwort mehr von ihren bekannten im kaukasus und in leningrad. auch béla kun ist verhaftet, der einzige, den ich von den politikern gesehen habe. meyerhold hat sein theater verloren, soll aber opernregie machen dürfen. literatur und kunst scheinen beschissen, die politische theorie auf dem hund....

Faced with the bitterness contained in this journal entry and in those we considered from September and December 1939, one wonders whether Brecht's comments were not influenced by other events, events which saw the Communist Party deliberately or unwittingly aid capitalism and fascism. There was, for example, the Comintern's "class against class" strategy, a policy cut to suit Soviet domestic needs — that is, Stalin's struggle for total power.[76] In Germany this strategy meant that, at a crucial moment, the Communists effectively ignored the threat represented by the fascists and instead directed their efforts against the Social Democrats (dubbed "social fascists"). This divided the Left and contributed to the Nazi rise to power. Some censure of the Party in this regard may be inferred from Brecht's comments in February 1933, when the Party itself still refused to recognize what Brecht called outright a "Niederlage".[77] Among the

---

[75] *AJ* januar 1939.

[76] Julius Braunthal, *History of the International 1914-1943*, trans. John Clark (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967) 366-368, 375-379. See also Wolfgang Abendroth, *A Short History of the European Working Class*, trans. Nicholas Jacobs and Brian Trench (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972) 91-93.

[77] *GW* 20:97-98; see also Joost 47.

many questions which this defeat raises for Brecht are also some that contain implicit criticism: "Ist die Niedergeschlagenheit zu groß? Bestehen diesbezüglich Unterschiede zwischen Partei und Proletariat? Innerhalb der Partei? Sind Irrtümer zutage getreten?"[78]

Consider also the peculiar sight, during the Spanish Civil War, of Communists not only liquidating left-wing opposition, but also holding back revolutionary impulses.[79] Then in France, when the electoral victory of a Popular Front government in 1936 gave rise to enthusiastic workers' uprisings that seemed unstoppable, it was the Communist Party that ended the unrest and became the "saviour" of the bourgeoisie.[80] In both the Spanish and French examples potential threats to capitalism (and so to fascism, to follow the line of the Comintern and of Brecht) were undermined by the Comintern itself in the interests of a Soviet foreign policy that hoped to win over France and England as allies against Germany, not frighten them into Hitler's arms by appearing to support European revolution.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to know with certainty whether, and if so how, these conditions may have contributed to Brecht's critical view of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. His *Rede auf dem I. Internationalen Schriftstellerkongreß zur Verteidigung der Kultur* (given in Paris in June 1935), in which he insists that the root and cause of fascism are the "bestehende Eigentumsverhältnisse" (i.e. capitalism), could be seen as a refusal to join in the policy of reassuring potential bourgeois allies.[81] That is, he appears to go against

---

[78] *GW* 20:97.

[79] Braunthal 440, 454-457, 463-467. See also Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970) 232, 268; and Abendroth 111-112.

[80] Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 10 (where she describes Thorez as the "bourgeoisie's real saviour"); see also 88, 94-95, 108-109; Abendroth 105-106.

[81] *GW* 18:241-246, 245; see Hans Mayer, *Brecht in der Geschichte: 3 Versuche* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971) 97; Mayer tells us in this work that the Party leaders did not care for this speech (95).

the more conciliatory strategy begun by the Soviet Union, as demonstrated by the Pact of French Communists and Socialists of 27 July 1934, the Soviet Union's admission to the League of Nations on 18 September 1934, the French-Soviet pact of 2 May 1935, and the cooperation of the French Communist and Social Democratic parties in the elections of May and June 1935.[82] (On the other hand, the Comintern was not certain of its conciliatory Popular Front strategy until its Seventh Congress which opened July 25, 1935, that is, after Brecht's speech.)[83] Again, Brecht might appear to accommodate himself to the Soviet policy in 1937 in a second speech for the same body, since he now drops his insistence on the "Eigentumsverhältnisse" and instead concentrates his attack on fascism.[84] Yet even here there may be a criticism of conciliation when he writes: "Der Gewalt der einzelnen, wie der privilegierten Klasse, muß die Gewalt, die volle zerschmetternde Gewalt des Volkes entgegengesetzt werden."[85] In addition, Brecht criticized the Popular Front pursued by the Soviet Union until 1939 when, in a journal entry from 29 January 1940, he points out that the strategy, "[die USSR] forciert volksfronten und gefährdet dadurch die kriegsführung," had led in his opinion "zum scheitern der allianz" (with England and France), so that the Soviets might now be put in the embarrassing position of maintaining the Nazi regime, "und wie das machen mit der ofenzange?"[86]

In conclusion we see that Brecht harboured strong criticisms of Stalinist policy in the period leading up to and beginning the Second World War.[87] At

---

[82] Abendroth 105.

[83] Jackson 41; see also *The Communist International* 3:356.

[84] *GW* 18:247-250.

[85] *GW* 18:249.

[86] *AJ* 29.1.40; compare Frank Dietrich Wagner, who says that Brecht never used the term "Volksfront" and was reserved on the topic (40); and Mittenzwei, who said Brecht was a consistent "Verfechter des Volksfrontgedankens" (*Das Leben* 1:530); see also Herbert Claas, in *Die politische Ästhetik Bertolt Brechts vom Baal zum Caesar* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977) 108-111.

[87] This ought to correct the old "Cold War" harmonies that have surfaced since the final defeat of Communism. For an example of the familiar tune see

that time Brecht was not only faced with the ascendancy of the dark binary star of capitalism and fascism, he was also confronted with the unwelcome sight of a Soviet Union and Communist Party that had contributed to the surrounding darkness by courting France and England, by adopting expansionist policies in Poland and Finland, by stifling incipient workers' uprisings in Spain and France, and by concluding a pact with the "most barbaric form" of capitalism.

I emphasize the contribution made by Stalinism to the "darkening" of Brecht's world, and to his awareness of that role on some level, for two reasons. The first is to show that even the Communist Party helped to create the conditions that are translated in *Mutter Courage* into an apparently endless and permanent war, which is to say, an endless and permanent capitalism.

The second reason for my emphasis is more speculative: I believe that Brecht's bitterness toward the Stalinist Party and its policies, especially in the Fall of 1939, finds its (deliberate or unconscious) expression in *Mutter Courage* — though it is an expression through omission.[88] The "revenge" of Brecht's text consists in the fact that, unlike pre-exile dramas such as *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, *Die Maßnahme*, and *Die Mutter*, unlike even dramas written in exile such as *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköfe*, *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar*, and *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reichs*, in *Mutter Courage* there is no representation of the "Vortrupp der Massen,"[89] no sign, not even in symbolic form, of that alleged organizer and voice of the oppressed: the Communist Party.

That others sensed some sort of criticism from this absence may be seen from the official reaction to *Mutter Courage* in the Soviet Zone after its German premiere in January 1949, which pointed regretfully to the lack of an opponent

---

Udo Tietz, "Kurze Nachschrift zur 'Großen Ordnung' oder: Der hilflose Antistalinismus des Bert Brecht," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 40.1/2 (1992): 145-162.

[88] Willett believes that "dark times" in Brecht's poems of 1937 referred to the Soviet Union as well as Germany (*Brecht in Context* 190).

[89] *GW* 2:657.

to the war, to the lack of a representation, that is, of the Party (for which Kattrin's lone act could not stand).[90] This lack may have contributed to the stigmatization of the drama as "pacifist" in the GDR.[91] (It is worth noting that Brecht, if he tried to accommodate such criticisms for the planned, but never executed, film of *Mutter Courage*, never changed the text of his drama.)[92]

Some might suggest that Brecht's omission of the Party follows from a sort of conciliatory strategy of his own, that in exile he wrote works to appeal not to the workers but to the middle class as a potential ally against fascism.[93] That this is unlikely is shown by the above speeches for the Congress for the Defense of Culture (see page 338), where he is less than conciliatory; furthermore, the deeper content of *Mutter Courage* as revealed in Chapters 4 and 5: the identity of business and war, and of capitalism and fascism, together with the support of a rebellion against them — and against the still thriving patriarchy as well — would hardly have been attractive to the middle classes.

Others might object that the historical model offers no figure which could represent a revolutionary vanguard. That Brecht should choose a model that would preclude such a representation would be significant in itself, were it true. But it is incorrect, as we saw in Chapter 3. In fact, during the Thirty Years War

---

[90] See for example S. Altermann's article (*MC* 86-87); on the reception in the GDR see Manfred Jäger, "Zur Rezeption des Stückeschreibers Brecht in der DDR," *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht I* (1971): 109-111; Ludwig, Karl-Heinz, *Bertolt Brecht: Tätigkeit und Rezeption von der Rückkehr aus dem Exil bis zur Gründung der DDR* (Kronberg: Scriptor, 1976) 47-55; Thiele 55; Rohrwasser notes how the drama could not be instrumentalized by the Stalinist state (45).

[91] See Walter Janka, *Schwierigkeiten mit der Wahrheit* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1990) 23-24.

[92] On the film see Wolfgang Gersch, *Film bei Brecht: Bertolt Brechts praktische und theoretische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Film* (Munich: Hanser, 1976) 271-293; see Hein 101-103.

[93] For a sample argument, see Iring Fetscher's "Bertolt Brecht and Politics," trans. Betty Nance Weber, *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice*, eds. Betty Nance Weber, and Hubert Heinen (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980) 12-13.

there were many collective revolts of peasants because of the suffering forced on them by their lords' war. On occasion these revolts had a leader who articulated their grievances and organized and directed large groups against the rulers — as in the case of the peasant uprising in Upper Austria under the farmer Stephan Fadinger, which began in May 1626, swelled to 70,000 strong, and even experienced military success before it was finally crushed by Count Pappenheim in November of that year.[94] That a historical precedent and candidate for the symbolic representation of the "vanguard of the working class" existed, and yet was not used, only supports my hypothesis and sharpens Brecht's implied criticism.

*** *** ***

History informs myth; a particular historical moment as perceived by Brecht is symbolically transformed into nature personified. To be more specific, capitalism as it presented itself to Brecht in 1939, enormously productive and destructive, progressive and regressive, an apparently unchallenged irrational and warring system beyond human control, a systematic disorder that had begun to look permanent (an impression to which the Stalinist Communist Party contributed); this capitalism signalled the end of progress and a fall back into the thralldom to nature. It was a historical reversal that could not be content with its portrayal as the Thirty Years War, which only reproduced the immensity of the disaster, but, as a "natural force" out of control, sought its representation in a

---

[94] Wedgwood 214-16; for other revolts see Wedgwood 413, 352, 322, 118. There is an interesting parallel between Wedgwood's fascinating narrative of the Thirty Years War and Brecht's drama, so that I cannot help wondering whether Brecht knew of the historian's book, which appeared in 1938. Of course, the same idea could easily come to many others who reflect on the war, yet when Courage says: "Im allgemeinen kann man sagen, daß uns gemeinen Leuten Sieg und Niederlag teuer zu stehn kommen," it is as though we hear an echo of Wedgwood, who said of the peasants after the defeat of their uprising under Fadinger: "whoever lost or gained by the war, whatever religion throve or prince grew rich, they [i.e. the peasants] paid and suffered for all" (216).

figure that could adequately convey its contradictions and its extension: The Great Mother, as part of the symbolic content of Courage.

This convergence of a historical moment (capitalism in 1939) and myth (the Great Mother) allows us to understand the persistence of interpretions that consider the war inescapable. For the joining of the Thirty Years War (as an enormous disaster), Capitalism (as a permanent war), and The Great Mother (as Nature) adds support to those interpretations. Not only is the war inescapable, as we saw in Chapter 4, because Courage *is* the war; it is inescapable because the war of capitalism, as The Great Mother, is nature itself. However, as we have also seen, the cause of the emergence of the figure of the Great Mother is a particular moment in history, and not Brecht's alleged pessimism or "biblical sorrow".[95]

However, as strong as this *impression* may be of natural permanence and extension, as real as is the contribution of the drama to that effect on both the literal and symbolic levels, nevertheless the text does not halt finally at this "pessimistic" view. There are in fact several key moments that break with this impression, that contradict the world that Courage incarnates. Before taking up this "completion" of Courage, we will first consider something that may be wrongly construed as her implied contradiction, namely her children as the representatives of virtue.

A TALE OF VIRTUE

VIRTUE ITSELF

The question of virtue is important for an understanding of *Mutter Courage* for two basic reasons. First, it contributes to the picture developed in Chapter 5 of Courage as a critic of ideology. Second, it clarifies something of

---

[95] Mennemeier 394.

cardinal importance to any interpretation of the drama: the relationship between Courage and her children.

A natural misunderstanding arises concerning this relationship. The children are plainly marked as the bearers of virtue. In scene 1 Courage labels Eilif, Schweizerkas, and Kattrin, respectively, *Kühnheit*, *Redlichkeit* (paired with *Einfalt*), and *Mitleid* (which becomes associated with *Selbstlosigkeit*). This labelling is reinforced in scene 9 when the *Salomon-Song* introduces historical figures who echo the children's virtues. In both the song and the drama the bearers of virtue meet a sad end. This contrasts with Courage, for the unscrupulous profiteer seems no model of virtue; and, unlike her children, she survives the war.[96] In this sense Courage's children seem her opposite: they represent virtue, she does not (the effect may be more pronounced for those who hold Courage responsible for her children's deaths, for then she seems to help war murder virtue). Virtue and war appear mutually exclusive; Courage's children, the bearers of virtue, are destroyed by war, they are "excluded" by their mother who incarnates war. The moral seems to be: virtue is destroyed in an evil world. Some infer from this that the message of the text is that a good world would permit virtue to thrive. This view is mistaken.

Virtue, we will see, is not precluded by, but is the necessary partner of evil, of war; virtue is the "effect" of evil.[97] In particular, the virtues of Courage's children (including Kattrin) are no real contradiction of their world, but are functions of that world. Similarly Courage's children are, as the bearers of virtue, no contradiction, but the contributing and dependent effects, of their mother, that is, of the world she represents.

I have already mentioned the *Salomon-Song*. It is the second of two texts that highlight the question of virtue. The first, which begins our discussion since

---

[96] Völker, *Brecht: Kommentar* 202.

[97] For other views on Brecht and virtue, see Jendreiek 184, 204; Frank Dietrich Wagner 347-355; Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 56-63.

it effectively "sets the stage" for the song, is found in scene 2 in that speech by Courage which we considered in Chapter 5.[98]

(The reader will note that the following treatment of virtue remains quite general, with little account taken of the individual virtues mentioned by Brecht. This is because the crucial part of Brecht's discussion of virtue also remains quite general, and his particular examples of virtue — around 30 are named — while they possess a certain logic of their own, have in regard to the main discussion a character more accidental than systematic. For our purpose at any rate, there is little to gain from more closely examining Brecht's collection of virtues.)

To continue: In scene 2 Courage angers at the risk Eilif has run in order to feed the troops. The cook thinks Eilif's boldness or bravery, his virtue, "beweist, daß etwas gut ist." Courage doesn't think so: "wenn es wo so große Tugenden gibt, das beweist, daß da etwas faul ist."[99]

> Warum, Wenn ein Feldhauptmann oder König recht dumm ist und er führt seine Leut in die Scheißgaß, dann brauchts Todesmut bei den Leuten, auch eine Tugend. Wenn er zu geizig ist und zuwenig Soldaten anwirbt, dann müssen sie lauter Herkulesse sein. Und wenn er ein Schlamper ist und kümmert sich um nix, dann müssen sie klug wie die Schlangen sein, sonst sind sie hin. So brauchts auch die ganz besondere Treue, wenn er ihnen immer zuviel zumutet. Lauter Tugenden, die ein ordentliches Land und ein guter König und Feldhauptmann nicht brauchen. In einem guten Land brauchts keine Tugenden, alle können ganz gewöhnlich sein, mittelgescheit und meinetwegen Feiglinge.

We note here that virtue is the concomitant of evil, of the *Scheißgaß*. Only evil lands give rise to virtue; a good land needs no virtue. What is meant by the "evil" on which virtue attends? This we learned in Chapter 5 ("Evil Times, Evil Lands, Evil Rulers"), where we saw that the situation described by Courage (in which the little people who work — as soldiers — for their rulers are forced to exercise virtue because of the danger and deprivation they endure in such

---

[98] See White 98.
[99] 4:1365.

disordered and badly ruled lands) has a particular referent; that is, the *Scheißgaß* is capitalism.

We also saw in Chapter 5 that Brecht's *Flüchtlingsgespräche* provided a parallel passage for Courage's speech, one that supported the association of capitalism with "evil times" requiring virtue. In the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* the "große Zeit" of fascism (a phase of capitalism), like the *Scheißgaß* of *Mutter Courage*, calls for "anstrengende" or superhuman virtues, such as "eine homerische Tapferkeit."[100] This is a common association with Brecht; we often find, in the *Flüchtlingsgespräche*, *Me-ti*, and *Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit*, capitalism associated with "Schlechte Zeiten" and "schlecht verwaltete Länder" that require virtue.[101] These all refer to capitalism by way of fascism, but elsewhere Brecht also directly targets capitalism with such criticism, and we hear Courage's echo when Brecht calls capitalism an "Existenzform, die zuviel Denken und zu viele Tugenden nötig macht."[102]

It is clear, then, that Courage's criticism of "evil leaders" and "evil lands", "wo etwas faul ist", refers to capitalism. What is perhaps less clear is that this criticism rebounds onto virtue itself as the attendant of evil. This is implied, for example, in Courage's assertion that a good land needs no virtues. Indeed, Courage indicates elsewhere that virtues are a source of harm. She fears for her children, as she tells the sergeant, because of their virtues, their "schreckliche Eigenschaften."[103] In scene 6, when Kattrin is assaulted, Courage blames the attack on her daughter's virtue: "Das kommt davon, daß du eine anständige Person bist...."[104] Similarly she implies that virtue is harmful — and so "moral laxness" humane — when she says of Schweizerkas's captors: "Gott sei Dank sind

---

[100] *GW* 14:1498,1496.
[101] *GW* 12:433, 455-6, 518, 520; *GW* 14:1433; *GW* 18:223-224.
[102] *GW* 20:133, see also 135.
[103] *GW* 4:1357; see Thiele 50.
[104] *GW* 4:1407.

sie bestechlich.... Die Bestechlichkeit ist bei die Menschen dasselbe wie beim lieben Gott die Barmherzigkeit."[105]

That this criticism does not represent the hatred of virtue by the wicked, that is, by Courage the unscrupulous profiteer, but instead is part of Brecht's criticism of virtue "itself", can be seen from his use of similar ideas when criticizing capitalism. Again the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* provide a parallel, one that sounds strikingly like Courage's praise of *Bestechlichkeit*. In this case the virtue *Ordnungsliebe* is discussed in a text that mocks the fascists' fetish of repressive order (*Ordnung*). *Ordnungsliebe*, like *Unbestechlichkeit*, is also deadly. If a pilot is "virtuous" in this sense, then his bombs unerringly find their victims; if, however, the pilot should sin against virtue: "Ein halbes Hundert Menschen sind gerettet."[106]

Other comments suggest that Brecht, like Courage, finds virtues "schreckliche Eigenschaften" (though it must be remembered that this criticism of virtue is always tied to his criticism of capitalism). Thus he says that capitalism creates conditions, "in denen... die Tugenden viel kosten"; and, in a comment on justice which, as the last reference shows, could also apply to virtue in general, he says a just act "kostet den Täter viel, oder seine Sippe."[107] Such criticisms of virtue may be implied in other comments, as when Brecht says that war makes virtue deadly both for its bearer and for others,[108] or when he says that the need for overly great virtue makes the world unlivable,[109] or finally, when qualities elsewhere called virtues (including those associated with Courage's children) are said to be, if not positively destructive, then at least no aid to survival:[110]

---

[105] *GW* 4:1388.

[106] *GW* 14:1389.

[107] *GW* 18:244, *GW* 12:457.

[108] Brecht tells us *Mutter Courage* shows, "daß der Krieg ... die menschlichen Tugenden tödlich macht, auch für ihre Besitzer" (*MC* 130; also in *GW* 17:1138).

[109] *GW* 12:457.

[110] *AJ* 5.1.41.

> alle berechnungsarten des individuums, gezogen aus erfahrungen des friedens, versagen; es geht nicht mit kühnheit, es geht nicht mit vorsicht, nicht mit ehrlichkeit, nicht mit betrug, nicht mit brutalität noch mit mitleid, alles bringt untergang.

Why Brecht is critical of virtue is not hard to guess. That, as we have seen, his sworn foe, capitalism, should require it would make virtue suspect. And it is rightly suspect in his view, for capitalism uses virtue to perpetuate itself by encouraging among the exploited a "virtuous" endurance of their exploitation, of the evil of capitalism, just as the morality or virtue recommended by the sergeant entails that the peasants endure exploitation.[111] Virtue, then, supports capitalism, and so is anathema to Brecht. In a speech against fascism, whose barbarism (considered by Brecht an effect of capitalism) was not to be vanquished with calls to morality, he warns:[112]

> Hüten wir uns, [die Tugenden] von den Menschen einfach zu verlangen! Möchten doch auch wir nichts Unmögliches verlangen! Setzen wir uns nicht dem Vorwurf aus, wir kämen, auch wir, mit Appellen an die Menschen, Übermenschliches zu leisten, nämlich durch hohe Tugenden furchtbare Zustände zu ertragen, welche zwar geändert werden können, aber nicht geändert werden sollen!

Brecht criticizes virtue because its harm (toward the oppressed) lies in its very harmlessness (toward the oppressor), and, as Brecht said: "Harmlosigkeit ist nicht Güte."[113] Similarly he dismisses, in the person of Me-ti, the call for good will (*Nächstenliebe*), since the exercise of that virtue (presumably toward the exploiters) will prevent workers from dismantling capitalism, "in dem man seinen Nächsten nur lieben kann, wenn man sich selbst nicht liebt."[114]

This same harmful harmlessness is suggested in that parallel passage to Courage's speech, namely Ziffel's monologue on virtue in the

---

[111] See Pascal 2; as recognized in Shen Te's case by S. C. Sood, "The Development of Brecht's Concept of the Hero," *Creative Forum* 1.3 (1988): 25.

[112] *GW* 18:244-245.

[113] *GW* 12:478.

[114] *GW* 12:476.

Flüchtlingsgespräche. There too virtues appear only as strategies that allow mere survival in evil times. For example, when Ziffel describes "eine Energie, mit der man früher den Boden einer ganzen Provinz hätt urbar machen können," that virtue serves only, "damit man zu einem Sack Mehl kommt"; that is, it only helps to endure, and so that virtue could be said to perpetuate evil conditions.[115] Courage's speech also associates virtue with enduring or surviving evil conditions, not changing them. The same is true of the virtue that Courage associates with the little people and whose name she bears (a virtue she likewise exercises to sell bread and so maintain war): "Daß sie einen Kaiser und einen Papst *dulden*, das beweist eine unheimliche Courage, denn die kosten ihnen das Leben" (my emphasis).[116]

Critical as Brecht is of a harmless virtue that perpetuates evil, still, he appears not to share Courage's radical condemnation of virtue, for he approves virtues that effectively resist evil. These are the virtues that Brecht (as Me-ti) says the people will have to exercise, "um die Machthaber zu stürzen,"[117] the "useful" virtues that Brecht (through Marx) advises the workers to choose (instead of the virtues practised for their own sake which "die alten Sittenlehrer" preach).[118] These are also the virtues of which the worker Kalle of the *Flüchtlingsgespräche* approves when he lists among the things needed to introduce socialism: "die äußerste Tapferkeit, der tiefste Freiheitsdurst, die größte Selbstlosigkeit und der größte Egoismus."[119] (That Brecht includes egoism among his virtues is in keeping with his privileging of the material, just as it marks his departure from systems of virtue that promote selflessness.)[120]

---

[115] *GW* 14:1496.
[116] *GW* 4:1404.
[117] *GW* 12:519.
[118] *GW* 12:477.
[119] *GW* 14:1499; compare Frank Dietrich Wagner (354), who finds this need for virtues to realize socialism surprising, even though he has told us that Brecht does not argue against virtue as such (353).
[120] See "Über den Egoismus" (*GW* 12:469-470).

It seems, then, that Brecht has no quarrel with virtue itself; rather, he judges virtue according to its function.[121] He judges those virtues excellent that undermine capitalism; those that support capitalism he rejects (without, however, denying they are virtues; rather they are, as Brecht's advice by way of Marx implies, simply "useless" virtues).[122] But this does not necessarily mean that Brecht adopts a position of radical ethical relativism. For example, unlike Becher, Brecht never approves of "Vaterlandsliebe", which he associates with nationalism and the wars of competing capitalist nation-states.[123] "Tapferkeit", though, as a "neutral" virtue, is praised when manifested in the struggle against capitalism, but criticized when it supports capitalism, as when the oppressed (like the soldiers in Courage's speech) bravely fight the wars of their exploiters.[124]

However, this emphasis on the different functions of virtue forgets what both types of virtue, useful and useless, have in common: both are extraordinary (*besondere*) efforts brought about by the same evil; their goals are different, one perpetuates and the other overthrows capitalism, but both are "effects" of the same *Scheißgaß*. Is it not likely, then, that both would carry the stigma of that association? Could it be that Brecht on some level agrees with Courage's condemnation of virtue "itself"?

Just such a criticism informs Brecht's writings on virtue. It could be objected, of course, that Brecht nowhere attacks either virtue "itself" or "ordinary" virtue, but only the need for taxing (*anstrengend*), "high" or "noble"

---

[121] See Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 57-59; see als Müller's "Brechts *Meti* und die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Lehrer Karl Korsch," *Brecht Jahrbuch* 7 (1977): 15-16; Bluhm 683-684.

[122] As Brecht said: "Unsere Sittlichkeit leiten wir von den Interessen unseres Kampfes gegen die Unterdrücker und Ausbeuter ab" (*GW* 12:477), alluding to Lenin's statement on 2 October 1920 from the speech, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," in *Collected Works* 31:291 (which Brecht cites in notes for *Die Maßnahme*, *GW* 17:1033; see also *GW* 2:638; 12:462-463); see Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 59.

[123] Contrary to the view of Frank Dietrich Wagner (353).

[124] Praised in *GW* 12:433, it is criticized in *GW* 12:455, 530.

(*hohe*), or exceptional (*besondere*) virtue, or simply the need for too many virtues (*zu viele*).[125] This is absolutely correct as far as the letter is concerned. But in this case I think we must also be sensitive to the spirit of Brecht's criticism. For one thing, I have found nowhere in writings from the same period any suggestion that the goal is a state in which "ordinary" virtue might survive. For another, virtue seems only to appear in Brecht's works as virtue qualified, that is, as taxing or exceptional virtue. This suggests to me that virtue is for Brecht defined by its exceptional status, and this is borne out by the fact that virtue only appears as an extraordinary effort made either to endure or destroy evil. Why is Brecht so unclear? It is, I think, because he has fallen into the very trap he himself once identified, namely that the opponents of capitalism are at a disadvantage because they derive their vocabulary from the very ideology they oppose.[126] In this case Brecht's persistent qualification of the virtue he criticizes does not mean he is interested in preserving "virtue", but only some "part" of it. A key to this dilemma is furnished by a remarkable text which we have already encountered in Chapter 5, one from *Me-ti* bearing the title, "Das Land, das keine besonderen Tugenden nötig hat":[127]

> Ein Land, in dem das Volk sich selbst verwalten kann, hat keine besonders glänzende Führung nötig. Ein Land, wo nicht unterdrückt werden kann, braucht keine besondere Freiheitsliebe. Ohne Ungerechtigkeit zu spüren wird man auch keinen besonderen Gerechtigkeitssinn entwickeln. Ist der Krieg unnötig, ist auch die Tapferkeit unnötig. Sind die Institutionen gut, muß der Mensch nicht besonders gut sein. Freilich ist ihm dann die Möglichkeit gegeben, es sein zu können. Er kann frei, gerecht und tapfer sein, ohne daß er oder andere zu leiden haben.

---

[125] *GW* 14:1498; 20:135 (anstrengend); *GW* 14:1433; 18:245 (hohe); *GW* 12:455-456, 518, 519, 520 (besondere); *GW* 14:1398, 1496-1497; 20:133, 135 (zu viele).

[126] *GW* 20:82.

[127] *GW* 12:520; Klaus-Detlef Müller warns us that *Me-ti* is not a theoretical work identical with Brecht's opinions ("Brechts *Meti*" 23). This, however, can only be established with each text. And in the present case I think the text captures the direction of Brecht's thinking on virtue.

Socialism, where the people rule themselves, needs "keine besonderen Tugenden." Capitalism, on the other hand, the seat of oppression, injustice, and war, needs virtues such as *Freiheitsliebe*, *Gerechtigkeitssinn*, and *Tapferkeit*. Once again virtue attends on vice; only unfreedom, for example, calls forth *Freiheitsliebe*. Yet we are told that socialism, if it needs no extraordinary virtues, if in it a person need not be "besonders gut," nevertheless provides the possibility "es sein zu können." Does Brecht mean the possibility to be virtuous? That is, especially good? Or simply good? The answer lies in the transformation of the virtues in the "socialism" of the text.

One change, effected in two instances, is the loss of the qualifier "besondere". This would seem to say that only an "exceptional" virtue is no longer needed, that, for example, in socialism a quite "ordinary" love of freedom would suffice. In other words, it suggests that Brecht does not place "virtue" in question, but only "besondere Tugenden." But something more happens here.

Three of the four virtues mentioned appear, as they normally do, as abstract nouns: *Freiheitsliebe*, *Gerechtigkeitssinn*, *Tapferkeit*. That is, the simple qualities distance themselves from the "mundane" by appearing in "dress clothes". As the amateur astronomer Cardinal Barberini, from whom Galileo expected support, dons papal robes and instead becomes, as Pope Urban VIII, the representative of an oppressive office, so these qualities, by donning the signifiers of abstraction ("keit", "heit"), and other signs that make them "bigger" than they once were ("Sinn", "Liebe"), show us that they are august "personages" who inhabit the superhuman world of extraordinary effort, the world of Virtue.[128] At the same time, as Brecht has suggested, their very existence signals a lack, as "Freiheitsliebe" signals the absence of freedom. How different in socialism! Now these abstract nouns, these virtues, are stripped of their abstraction; transformed into predicate adjectives they have left the superhuman world of virtue and their

---

[128] See the transformation from Cardinal Barberini to Pope Urban VIII in *GW* 3:1321-1325.

lack has become instead the immediacy of fulfilment. We no longer have the virtues: *Freiheitsliebe*, *Gerechtigkeitssinn*, and *Tapferkeit*, but instead the qualities *frei*, *gerecht*, and *tapfer*. It is as though these qualities, become fully possible in socialism, no longer need to parade as virtues. In a creative linguistic act Brecht realizes what he only dimly apprehended in his criticism of virtue. While on the discursive level he was loath utterly to abandon the notion of "virtue", since he was still attracted to it as a concept that marked a quality of excellence, here his intuitive grasp of language effects the separation he elsewhere only implied, the separation of an excellent quality from its superhuman function as virtue, content from form, *tapfer* from *Tapferkeit*. In socialism, Brecht seems to say, virtue is cancelled out even as its "content" is preserved and raised to a new level. In other words, we witness in this passage the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of virtue.

In this sense Brecht subjects virtue, very much as Marxism does capitalism or the state (in socialism), to a fundamental criticism. For if its negative aspect is plain (as the perpetuation of oppression), even its positive side (as the opponent of oppression) is only provisionally approved — as a contribution to its own "withering away". As Brecht said in the poem, *Was nützt die Güte*, we must make *Güte* and *Freiheitsliebe* "überflüssig".[129] Thus Brecht's view of virtue converges on Courage's; they share — as they did in Chapter 5 — yet another criticism of ideology (here the "ideology" of virtue), so that creator and creation with one voice say: "In einem guten Land brauchts *keine Tugenden.*"

We see, then, that Brecht criticizes virtue in two ways. On the one hand there is a criticism of virtue according to its function, according to whether the virtue supports or undermines an evil condition (i.e. capitalism). On the other hand there is a deeper criticism of virtue as an extraordinary effort required either to endure or overthrow evil, a criticism that seeks the end of evil — and so the end of virtue as the concomitant of evil.[130]

---

[129] *GW* 9:553.

[130] Though Klaus-Detlef Müller has a sense of this (*Die Funktion* 60-61), his

The first criticism would be enough to seriously tarnish the virtues of Courage's children, and we will see that their particular virtues do indeed perpetuate evil. However, the second criticism also contributes to our understanding of Courage's children. For if as bearers of virtue they are the "effects" of the evil world incarnated by their mother, then there can be no question of a portrayal here of a "verkehrte Welt" in which virtue cannot survive, as if a "righted" world would be a true home for virtue (this interpretation would be more appropriate for an author like Grimmelshausen than for Brecht).[131] For it is only a "verkehrte Welt", so to speak, that creates virtue. In that case a good world logically would have no more use for the virtues of Courage's children (even if they were — as they are not — virtues that undermine evil). Such considerations should at the outset make the virtues of Courage's children, and so those of the *Salomon-Song*, suspect. With this in mind, we turn to the second great treatment of virtue in *Mutter Courage*.

THE *SALOMON-SONG*

The *Salomon-Song* has several functions in the drama.[132] With it

---

interpretation of *Mutter Courage* and the *Salomon-Song* does not sufficiently reflect it; see also Müller's contribution in Joost (283); Dickson also has some idea of Brecht's deeper criticism of virtue (*Towards Utopia* 142), but does not develop it; Ekmann's view that Brecht attacks "morality" is not the same thing (239), but he is on the right track when he says that virtue prepares the ground for war and evil (237). All this contrasts to the view that Brecht does not attack virtue "itself": see Frank Dietrich Wagner 353, and footnote 131.

[131] This view is not limited to any particular interpretive tendency: see Mayer, *Anmerkungen* 54; Schöne 273; Brinkmann 54; Jendreiek 184, 205; Thomas Luthardt, "Der Song als Schlüssel zur dramatischen Grundkonzeption in Bertolt Brechts *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena* 7.1 (1957/1958): 120; Thiele 38.

[132] On functions of the song, see Thiele 38; for interpretations see Mayer, *Anmerkungen zu Brecht* 49-55; Jendreiek 185, 204-205; Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 170-171. John Fuegi is mistaken when he says that Brecht's *Salomon-Song* (whether that from the *Dreigroschenoper* or from *Mutter Courage*) had been "taken virtually verbatim" from K. L. Ammer's translation of François Villon;

Courage and the cook beg for food. By demonstrating that virtue does not pay, it excuses the cook's inhuman demand that Courage desert Kattrin.[133] More important for the present discussion, the song is a continuation of Courage's criticism of both virtue and great men.

Ihr saht den weisen Salomon
Ihr wißt, was aus ihm wurd.
Dem Mann war alles sonnenklar
Er verfluchte die Stunde seiner Geburt
Und sah, daß alles eitel war.
Wie groß und weis war Salomon!
Und seht, da war es noch nicht Nacht
Da sah die Welt die Folgen schon:
Die Weisheit hatte ihn so weit gebracht!
Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!

Motivated by obvious parallels between the three middle stanzas of the song and Courage's children, scholars have tried to find a dramatic figure who corresponds to Solomon's wisdom. His virtue has been assigned to Courage, even though her *Weltklugheit* ill fits Solomon's wisdom.[134] It has also been given to the cook since "his" song (in some versions he sings without Courage's accompaniment) allegedly demonstrates wisdom by its recognition that virtue does not pay (and it is tempting to see a parallel between Solomon's turning away from the world and the cook's apparent exit from war — were it not that the latter does so in order to become an innkeeper).[135]

This is wasted effort; the neat (but superficial) assignment of all the models of virtue in the song to dramatic figures is misguided.[136] In fact this

---

see his *Brecht and Company: Sex, Politics, and the Making of the Modern Drama* (New York: Grove Press, 1994) 199. Neither in content nor in form is Brecht's song, as Fuegi says, the "work of Villon" (203); "Brecht's theft" (226) consists of the use of the name "Salomon" and the line "beneidenswert, wer frei davon." The Ammer translation I consulted is: François Villon, *Balladen*, Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1930; see there "Ballade von den Torheiten der Liebe" (61-2).

[133] Jendreiek 204.

[134] Müller, *Die Funktion* 56; Luthardt 121.

[135] Bentley, "The Songs in *Mother Courage*" 47; Jendreiek 184-185.

[136] Jendreiek 204-205; Luthardt 121.

song is a demonstration that revolves, with respect to both form and content, round Courage's children and the nature of their virtues. The purpose of the first stanza, which together with the last frames those representing Courage's children, is to establish the thesis of the song and to pose its main questions.

Franz Norbert Mennemeier has said that the "great men" of this song are merely mechanical associations with virtues that are formulas emptied of meaning (*sinnentleert*).[137] This is certainly erroneous so far as the song goes, but Mennemeier unwittingly describes the critical response to the song, for it does seem that these too familiar historical figures and virtues, these "mechanical associations", have emptied some learned heads of sense. Thus Solomon, once he has been noted as a representative of Wisdom, is dropped into the box labelled "Wisdom of Solomon", and the scholar goes on to more pressing matters. This is especially surprising for students of an author who exhorted always to question the self-evident. Far from being devoid of substance, it is precisely the content of these allegedly "sinnentleerte Formeln" that allows us to uncover the meaning of the song.

For example, when we look at the Solomon of this stanza, we discover no abstraction but a very specific Solomon. This is not the Solomon of the story of the two "harlots" and the child (1 Kings 3.16-28), nor is it the Solomon of Proverbs; rather, this is the Solomon of Ecclesiastes, whose wisdom is summed up in the assertion that temporal things are all vanity (1.2), who tells us that the world cannot be understood or explained (1.8), and that there is nothing new under the sun (1.10).

Such wisdom is incompatible with the views of Brecht and Courage, who, as we saw in Chapter 5, instead privilege the material world, the very thing dismissed by Solomon.[138] Courage never gives up her faith in the world; even

---

[137] Mennemeier 395.

[138] As far as I know, Peter Horst Neumann is the only scholar to have recognized that this song criticizes Solomon's wisdom (and Socrates' *Redlichkeit*), though he does not use this insight to develop an interpretation of the *Salomon-*

at the end she goes off with war, her belief in her chance of profit intact. Nor is Brecht a vessel for such "idealism", he who saw salvation in an earthly reordering of things (and so something "new under the sun"), a rational reordering based on the principle of universal material well-being (a view undiminished in this drama, as Courage the Outlaw has shown, so that there can be no serious talk here of Brecht's "biblical sorrow").[139] Brecht's view of Solomon's wisdom can be seen from the poem, *An die Nachgeborenen* (1934-1938).[140] He says: "Ich wäre gerne auch weise," that is, "sich aus dem Streit der Welt halten," "die kurze Zeit / Ohne Furcht verbringen," "ohne Gewalt auskommen," and "Wünsche nicht erfüllen, sondern vergessen" — but: "Alles das kann ich nicht: Wirklich ich lebe in finsteren Zeiten!"[141] In other words, he observes the world like Solomon, but from the evil he sees he draws the opposite conclusion: he must change the world, not turn away from it. In their different ways Brecht and Courage reject Solomon, they stand for action in the world, not withdrawal from it.[142] Solomon's virtue, then, is one of those "useless" virtues criticized by both Brecht and Courage, virtues that perpetuate evil, in this case by rejecting the world. Now we see: it is Solomon's conclusion ("daß alles eitel war") that is the sorry pass to which his virtue has brought him ("Die Weisheit hatte ihn so weit gebracht!"). The message of the stanza is plain in the last line; it is no lament at virtue ill-repaid, no cynical reflection that in such a world it is better to be without virtue, rather it is a denunciation of this particular otherworldly virtue: "Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!"

Hans Mayer thought it remarkable that Brecht should sing the virtues of the great when the drama shows that real virtue, exemplified for him by Kattrin,

---

Song (or of Brecht's view of virtue), since his essay had a different purpose; see his *Der Weise und der Elefant: Zwei Brecht-Studien* (Munich: Fink, 1970) 9-11.

[139] Mennemeier 394.

[140] Thomson 113.

[141] *GW* 9:723.

[142] Peter Horst Neumann 14.

resides in the actions of the little people.[143] More remarkable, I think, is that Mayer, for one, blinded perhaps by the self-evident "greatness" of these historical figures, has lost sight of the author he discusses. Even before his turn to Marxism, did not Brecht continually attack oppressive religious and secular authority, exposing the "great" to criticism and so undermining both their authority and the actions that supposedly made them great? We need only think of the *Legende vom toten Soldaten* and the *Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters*, representative works that span the period from Brecht's youth to his exile, to know that this is so.[144] And we saw in Chapter 5 how Brecht and Courage question the greatness of historical figures. Thus Brecht tries Lucullus in the afterworld and Courage undermines the heroic Tilly. And yet it seems that scholars (since they have not questioned it) are willing to take at face value the authority of Solomon, a king — and so an oppressor — whose great works were carried out on the backs of slaves,[145] an exploiter who (like others, such as Puntila) preaches a conveniently ascetic ethic that would keep the exploited in their place.[146] On the contrary, that this particular figure is singled out as a paragon of virtue should make us question his virtue, just as that virtue, criticized by the song, ought to make us reflect critically on its bearer. The first stanza, then, puts into question both (a particular) virtue and the great man who represents it.

> Ihr saht den kühnen Cäsar dann
> Ihr wißt, was aus ihm wurd.
> Der saß wien Gott auf dem Altar
> Und wurde ermordet, wie ihr erfuhrt
> Und zwar, als er am größten war.
> Wie schrie der laut: Auch du, mein Sohn!
> Denn seht, da war es noch nicht Nacht

---

[143] Mayer, *Anmerkungen* 54-5.

[144] *GW* 8:256, *GW* 9:656.

[145] "King Solomon raised a levy of forced labour out of all Israel..." (1 Kings 5.13).

[146] I discussed Puntila's example in Chapter 4; see *GW* 4:1634.

Da sah die Welt die Folgen schon:
Die Kühnheit hatte ihn so weit gebracht!
Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!

Alerted by the first stanza to the continuing criticism of virtue and of great men, we are prepared to be more sceptical of bold Caesar — and so of bold Eilif. Even so, a jolt lies in the coupling of the "world historical" leader with the lowly mercenary. This, however, is not only a satiric thrust that makes Eilif look ridiculously overblown; it is also (and perhaps primarily) a satirical jab at the great Caesar, who was once considered (hence the shock of his association with Eilif) "the greatest man of action who ever lived," and the "entire and perfect man."[147]

This comparison to Eilif so unfavourable to Caesar is first enacted in scene 2 when Eilif's commander hails the youthful murderer of peasants: "in dir steckt ein junger Cäsar" (an association strengthened when the commander celebrates Eilif with Falernian, the very wine with which Caesar celebrated his triumph).[148] If we do not feel the blow struck at Caesar here, then perhaps we are still too enamoured of powerful men to see that there is a strong resemblance between the Roman general and the sutler's son, not least in the parallel between

---

[147] See Michael Grant, *Julius Caesar* (1969; New York: M. Evans, 1992) xi; see Luthardt, who thinks the comparison is at Eilif's expense (120); compare, in another context, Klaus-Detlef Müller, *Die Funktion* 109-111.

[148] Though the combination of Caesar and Falernian is hardly accidental, just how Brecht acquired this knowledge is unclear. Claas discusses Brecht's sources for his novel on Caesar (151-157, 267-268). So far as I can tell, the only book that Brecht owned that contained a statement combining Caesar's triumph with Falernian was Jérome Carcopino's *Jules César*, but Claas tells us that this book shows no signs of use (268, n.455). Carcopino has the information from Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historiae* (14.97), a work apparently not used by Brecht. Brecht could have learned of the Falernian during his gymnasium days, or from his friends, or from notes that may have accompanied his Reclam edition of Plutarch's biography of Caesar (which I have not seen). On Brecht's sources see also Wolfgang Jeske, *Bertolt Brechts Poetik des Romans* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984) 242-276 (who tells us that Brecht had the 1920 edition of Plutarch's *Caesar*).

Eilif's clever massacre of peasants and, say, Caesar's calculated terroristic slaughter of migrating Celts in 58 BCE.[149]

But the association of Caesar with Eilif is by no means the only one effected here. There is a third star in this constellation, one that emerges through the particular context of Caesar's death — which in turn reveals the sort of virtue he embodies. We are reminded, that is, that the glorious Caesar was assassinated after he had made himself dictator for life ("als er am größten war"), and after he connived to have himself — unheard of arrogance — deified even as he lived ("wie'n Gott auf dem Altar").[150] This portrait immediately suggests an association with another friend of war and dictator: Adolf Hitler.

That Brecht found this association particularly appropriate can be seen from his longest work dedicated to the Roman, the unfinished *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar*. The parallels between Caesar and Hitler in this novel are many; here I will only mention that between Brecht's view that Hitler (despite his revolutionary phraseology) had been installed by large business and finance capital, and the (historically accurate) portrayal of Caesar as a demagogue who appealed to the people even as he curried favour with the financiers.[151] Indeed, anyone who glances at the biography of Caesar will find many such parallels: like Hitler, Caesar compelled the senators and the army to swear a personal oath of loyalty to him; Caesar, too, cared little for representative bodies and rode roughshod over the Roman assembly (which is not to suggest Rome was a democratic republic); Caesar, too, tried to make the civil war he conducted (49 BCE) seem an attempt to free the Roman people from the oppression of a small clique; Caesar, too, used terror and force to effect his will, as when he ensured

---

[149] The Helvetii, who were migrating westward through Gaul (Grant 51-52); see a similar action taken by Caesar against a Germanic tribe in the same year (Grant 53-54); on the criticism of Eilif's virtue in regard to the murder of the peasants, see Jendreiek 164.

[150] Grant 146-147, 150-151.

[151] Grant 111; for Brecht's portrayal of Caesar's apparent democratic stance and his relations with financiers see *GW* 14:1231, 1372.

the passage of his agrarian reforms (which tied the army to him) by intimidating the assembly with soldiers, and by having the consul who opposed him in this fouled with excrement and his emblems of office smashed.[152] Certainly, Brecht elsewhere joins Caesar with Hitler, as he does in *Arturo Ui* when Ui, who represents Hitler, practices his rhetorical skills by delivering Antony's speech praising Caesar, which in effect shows us Hitler praising himself as Caesar.[153] Again, in the poem, *Wann lebe ich?*, Brecht asks, with clear reference to Hitler's Thousand Year Reich: "Lebe ich etwa am Abend vor dem caesarischen Jahrtausend?"[154]

Still recovering, perhaps, from a historical tradition that idolized Caesar, even scholars who doubt the "virtue" of Eilif's boldness have overlooked Brecht's allusion, here and elsewhere, to Hitler through the Roman, which must in turn tarnish Eilif the "young Caesar".[155] Similarly they have overlooked the fact that Caesar as a brutal (if civilized) dictator and man of war (and imperialist) would hardly have been for Brecht a model of virtue or excellence. Thus the stigma attached to Eilif's supposed virtue through its association with the two dictators has also been overlooked.

This stigma consists not only in the association with dictators and men of war. Eilif's virtue is also tainted because his and Caesar's boldness serve to perpetuate an "evil". Indeed, if their boldness is a "virtue", then one should be

---

[152] Grant 159 (oath), 146-147 (disregard for representative bodies), 101 (civil war made to seem liberation from clique), 35-36 (use of terror); as for Hitler, his favouring of dictatorship over democracy, his use of terror, his unleashing of a "civil war" against Germany's workers and "internal aliens", is a matter of historical record, as can be seen in Bracher's *The German Dictatorship*; in regard to other parallels with Caesar I will only mention specifically the oath sworn 2 August 1934 by the army pledging "unconditional obedience" to the Führer (Bracher 242-243).

[153] *GW* 4:1773.

[154] *GW* 9:751.

[155] See, for example, Ronald Gray, who calls Eilif's virtue "criminal low cunning" in *Brecht the Dramatist* 133.

clear that its actual function and context make it a virtue from an ethical code like that of the Homeric heros, a group of "robbers and pirates" as one historian called them, for whom "goodness" was indistinguishable from sheer success.[156] Eilif and Caesar may be destroyed by their boldness, but this is really war consuming a quality that it needs and continually replenishes, a quality that perpetuates this warring society of "bold men".[157] In other words, Caesar and Eilif demonstrate a virtue that is an "effect" of evil, one of those virtues which Brecht criticized for perpetuating "evil times".[158] (Eilif, of course, is not really executed in peacetime; we have seen there is no peace in this world, the representation of an eternally warring capitalism.)[159] Once again the closing line is not a cynical recognition that virtue does not pay, but a perfectly straightforward criticism of the sort of virtue possessed by these men of war: "Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!"

> Ihr kennt den redlichen Sokrates
> Der stets die Wahrheit sprach:
> Ach nein, sie wußten ihm keinen Dank
> Vielmehr stellten die Oberen böse ihm nach
> Und reichten ihm den Schierlingstrank.
> Wie redlich war des Volkes großer Sohn!
> Und seht, da war es noch nicht Nacht
> Da sah die Welt die Folgen schon:
> Die Redlichkeit hatt' ihn so weit gebracht!
> Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!

---

[156] Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951) 1:72; for a description of Homeric ethics see Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967) 6-8; see Jendreiek 164.

[157] Hein may have a similar view, since he calls Eilif a sacrifice (74).

[158] See White, who distinguishes, between war virtues that defeat (Schweizerkas, Eilif), and humanitarian virtue that helps (Kattrin) (99-100); on Eilif and virtue, see Jendreiek 188.

[159] Contrary to the view of Hein 67; see Thiele 36-37.

Here is a wicked combination, Socrates and Schweizerkas, philosopher and fool. As with the pair of Caesar and Eilif, Courage's son is not ennobled by his companion; rather, each serves to place the other in a bad light.

To understand how a philosopher's "honesty" or "uprightness" (*Redlichkeit*) seems a fool's virtue, we must first know that Brecht did not admire Socrates. This may surprise. After all, did not Brecht and Socrates both seek to speak "die Wahrheit," and for this draw down upon themselves the wrath of "die Obern"? Yet we must also consider their differences. A most important distinction is that Socrates, unlike Brecht, was a patriot and no friend to democracy.[160] Such a fundamental difference may underlie Brecht's attacks on Socrates, which of course is part of his project of debunking "great men". In one of his *Keuner-Geschichten*, for example, Brecht ridicules one of Socrates' most famous claims, namely that his wisdom consists in knowing that he knows nothing. Brecht tells us this is only because Socrates had studied nothing.[161] Furthermore, in the short story, *Der verwunderte Sokrates*, Brecht exposes the reason for the courage in battle to which Socrates himself alluded at his trial: a thorn in the philosopher's foot prevented his earnestly desired flight.[162] (That Brecht seizes on this historically false cause shows that his real purpose is to put the philosopher's reputation in question — and to mock heroic patriotism.)[163]

This reminder of Socrates' "steadfastness" recalls another difference between him and Brecht, one more important to us because it touches on the

---

[160] On Socrates as patriot and anti-democrat see Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 78-80.

[161] *GW* 12:392; see Peter Horst Neumann 13.

[162] In the *Symposium* Plato has Alcibiades tell of Socrates' bravery, and in the *Apology* he has the philosopher allude to it; see Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 2 vols. (1892; New York: Random House, 1937) 1:343-344, 411-412; on Brecht's story of the thorn see *GW* 11:286-303; see also Peter Horst Neumann 16-17.

[163] The motif of the thorn is taken from Georg Kaiser's *Der gerettete Alkibiades* (Peter Horst Neumann 16).

present stanza. After the Reichstag Fire Brecht, who had good reason to fear for his life, fled Germany. He chose flight, not least because he would then still be able to add his voice to the criticism of Hitler's Reich. The Socrates of the song (and of history) is very different: once on trial he positively courts martyrdom.[164] In the song this is conveyed by the phrase: "die Oberen ... reichten ihm den Schierlingstrank." Death was not forced upon Socrates, it was offered him and he accepted. He was not bound and done to death before he could act; rather, in reaching out for the hemlock handed him he collaborates with the State in his judicial murder. Nor was this unavoidable. In Socrates' time there were ways to escape the ultimate penalty with honour intact and live to fight another day. In this case, for example, the convicted could suggest a counterpenalty, preferably one that would satisfy the self-respect of the jurors (and so of Athens, since there were 500 jurors). A usual punishment would be a substantial fine and voluntary exile. Instead Socrates not only proposed a relatively light fine, but also that he be given a seat in the Prytaneum — an honour reserved for public heros. The outraged jurors rewarded his audacity with a confirmation of the death sentence by a number greater than had at first convicted him. Nevertheless, Socrates could have contented himself with this moral and legal success and still survived, if he had taken the usual precaution: escape. Yet when Socrates' friends arranged the escape (as Athenians probably expected), Socrates refused it.[165] No doubt Brecht, who was neither a patriot nor an obedient son of the State, would have found Socrates' reasons for this refusal perverse:[166]

---

[164] On Socrates' trial see A. E. Taylor, *Socrates* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1953; Reprinted by Westport, Connecticut: Hyperion, 1979) 102-129; see also the account of the position I adopt here in the recent work of Brickhouse and Smith (see footnote 160), who also provide an interesting counterargument while also giving full and fair accounts of the positions they criticize.

[165] See A. E. Taylor on the fine (105, 118) and Socrates' refusal to escape (115,123); see Brickhouse and Smith on the penalty (214-234).

[166] Plato 1:435.

> our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far more than mother or father or any ancestor.... and either to be persuaded, or if not persuaded, to be obeyed. And when we are punished by her ... the punishment is to be endured in silence.... he must do what his city and country order him....

Socrates' death, then, seems a wilful self-sacrifice of which Brecht would not have approved, as our examinations in Chapters 4 and 5 of his criticisms of heroism and self-sacrifice tell us.[167] As he said in his "Verurteilung der Ethiken": "ihr müßt vielleicht mitunter euer schlechtes Leben riskieren, um ein besseres zu gewinnen, aber den sicheren Tod sollt ihr niemals aufsuchen."[168]

A sure death, however, is just what Schweizerkas seeks when, out of a "Redlichkeit" like Socrates', he is loyal to his "State", to his regiment (which for Brecht effectively means loyal to his exploiter) when he rescues the cashbox, the property of his exploiter, at the cost of his own life. In another context Brecht says disapprovingly of such loyalty that it only permits the "Konkurrenzkampf" of the rulers (read: of the capitalists) to continue.[169] In Brecht's eyes, then, Schweizerkas's and Socrates' self-sacrifices are foolish submissions to an oppressive State.[170] Further, since neither self-sacrifice changes social conditions, indeed, since each collaborates with the existing evil state of affairs, they too are virtues that preserve evil, and so are "useless" virtues. Of Schweizerkas's and Socrates' virtues as well Brecht says: "Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!"

At this point it might be useful to mention a second criticism of Schweizerkas's submissive virtue, found this time in the chaplain's *Horenlied*. Schweizerkas has just been taken to the torture that will end in his execution. The

---

[167] Peter Horst Neumann 12, 19; Sood 23.
[168] *GW* 12:477.
[169] *GW* 16:677.
[170] Again, see White 99-100.

chaplain tells us: "Solche Fäll, wos einen erwischt, sind in der Religionsgeschicht nicht unbekannt." He sings:[171]

In der ersten Tagesstund
Ward der Herr bescheiden
Als ein Mörder dargestellt
Pilatus dem Heiden.

Der ihn unschüldig fand
Ohn Ursach des Todes
Ihn derhalben von sich sandt
Zum König Herodes.

Umb drei ward der Gottessohn
Mit Geißeln geschmissen
Ihm sein Haupt mit einer Kron
Von Dornen zurrissen!

Gekleidet zu Hohn und Spott
Ward er es geschlagen
Und das Kreuz zu seinem Tod
Mußt er selber tragen.

Umb sechs ward er nackt und bloß
An das Kreuz geschlagen
An dem er sein Blut vergoß
Betet mit Wehklagen.

Die Zuseher spotten sein
Auch die bei ihm hingen
Bis die Sonn auch ihren Schein
Entzog solchen Dingen.

Jesus schrie zur neunden Stund
Klaget sich verlassen
Bald ward Gall in seinen Mund
Mit Essig gelassen.

---

[171] *GW* 4:1384-1385.

Da gab er auf seinen Geist
Und die Erd erbebet
Des Tempels Vorhang zerreißt
Mancher Fels zerklübet.

Da hat man zur Vesperzeit
Der Schechr Bein zerbrochen
Ward Jesus in seine Seit
Mit eim Speer gestochen.

Doraus Blut und Wasser ran
Sie machtens zum Hohne
Solches stellen sie uns an
Mit dem Menschensohne.

This song is a scarcely altered borrowing of 5 of 8 double stanzas from a sixteenth-century religious song by Michael Weiße.[172] Brecht struck it from the German premiere, if not from the text, because he thought neither the theatre nor the audience of the time were ready for it.[173] What exactly he meant by this, what precisely he intended with the song, is not clear. Is it used simply to draw a parallel between the sacrifice of the Lamb of God and the atrocity of another murdered innocent? What we have seen so far in the *Salomon-Song* should make us hesitate before answering in the affirmative, especially since the subject of the chaplain's *Horenlied* is the founder of a religion that Brecht continually censured as a creature of the exploiters. Nor is Christ left untouched in Brecht's oeuvre: we recall that he is tried and sentenced in Fewkoombey's dream trial (*Dreigroschenroman*) because he justified and obscured the truth of exploitative social relations with his parable of the talents.[174] And Christ — or

---

[172] *Patris sapientia*, written ca. 1520, is found in Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zum Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, 5 volumes (Leipzig, 1870; Reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1964) 3:259 (No.289); *BF* 6:405-406 incorrectly cites page 253 (i.e. No.285), a song with the same title.

[173] *AJ* 1.1.49.

[174] According to the novel the parable obscured that profit comes from those whose only "talent" granted by God is their labour power, which is put into the hands of those with capital (*GW* 13:1153-1165); see Joost 197. This attack on the founder of a religion would seem to counter Dickson's suggestion that Brecht

better, his sacrifice — may well be criticized in this song by virtue of what Brecht left out of his adaptation. Christ's sacrifice, we remember, was divinely ordained in order to save mankind and prepare for Christ's reign. These things are present in Weiße's text, but not in Brecht's. For example, in Brecht's text we no longer hear of events occurring as the "schrieft saget" or "wie matheus saget" as they do in Weiße's text; that is, the Gospel does not appear as authority. Nor does the Gospel appear as evidence of God's foresight, for there are no events in Brecht's text that occur "die schrieft zu erfüllen." Nor is Christ conceived as an otherworldly Lord; in Brecht's text he is not one to whom we are "unterthan" or whom we would imitate to avoid "untugent". But more important, there is no longer a sign that Christ's death is our salvation; he is not in Brecht's text the one, "der uns seligmacht"; his sacrifice "nur umb unsretwillen" is no longer something we can "fruchtbarlich bedenckenn," or for which we give "danckopffer".[175] Thus Brecht's text more than Weiße's seems bound to earth; and Christ as a result seems a mortal. Even the term "Gottessohn" seems negated at the end by "Menschensohn" (Brecht's addition);[176] for, even though the epithet was common for Christ (to signal the Incarnation and his humility), since there is no resurrection in Brecht's song, the term suggests that there will be no resurrection, no more than there was on the battlefield when Courage called: "Wach auf, du Christ!" but saw "die Toten ruhn";[177] no more than there will

---

does not attack religion, but only its "misguided apologists" (*Towards Utopia* 135), a peculiar view to have of someone who thought it not unworthy to be remembered, "weil ich die Religionen bekämpfte" (*GW* 9:561).

[175] Hein correctly notes that Schweizerkas's death is not saving here (75-76), but this is not in contrast to the *Horenlied* as Hein thinks; rather, Christ's death also is missing the element of salvation in Brecht's song.

[176] Walter Hinck sees this as a shift from the religious to the worldly; see his "Die 'Grosse Helferin' im Drama Bertolt Brechts," *Études Germaniques* 44.1 (1989): 92.

[177] *GW* 4:1351; which is a jab at the notion of resurrection, contrary to the opinion expressed in Dieter Baacke and Wolfgang Heydrich, "Glück und Geschichte: Anmerkungen zur Lyrik Bertolt Brechts," *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht II* (1973): 11.

be for Schweizerkas. In other words, given the absence of God in Brecht's text (an absence later pointed to by Courage when she says: "Der Mensch denkt: Gott lenkt — / Keine Red davon!"),[178] Christ's sacrifice seems pointless. And this ties in with Schweizerkas, for his sacrifice is also pointless, one he undertook (as did Christ) in obedience to authority, if not to God, then to his regiment and officer.

It is no accident that Christ and Socrates are associated with Schweizerkas (in another three-starred constellation like Eilif's). At least since St. Justin (100-164 CE) Christ and Socrates were named respectfully together as martyrs.[179] But we have learned that it is precisely Socrates' seeking "sure death" and his submission to authority (and so to his "fate") that Brecht criticizes. And so we might expect that Christ also would be no "great man" in Brecht's eyes, since he too pursued martyrdom, by submitting to the fate prepared for him by God, and by loitering about on the Mount of Olives waiting for his captors instead of escaping while he could. This very criticism is sounded moments after the *Horenlied* when Courage, in a flurry of activity intended to save Schweizerkas, admonishes the chaplain: "stehn Sie auch nicht herum wie Jesus am Ölberg...."[180] Christ, then, is a pendant to the Socrates of the *Salomon-Song*; both are bad examples of self-sacrifice, of the exercise of a useless virtue that leaves evil untouched, just as Schweizerkas sacrifices himself out of loyalty to his exploiter, a *Redlichkeit* useful to war (and so to the rulers), but of no use to Courage's son, as one of the little people. Given this context, perhaps even the

---

[178] *GW* 4:1395.

[179] See Justin Martyr's "Second Apology," in *The Anti-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, eds. Rev. Alexander Roberts D.D. and James Donaldson LL.D., Volume 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867) 80. A modern example is found in Pierre Bertaux's *Hölderlin und die Französische Revolution* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974): "Sokrates und Christus ... mußten untergehen, um ihre ganze Wirkung ... zu erreichen" (127); see also A. E. Taylor 11.

[180] *GW* 4:1388.

unaltered words of a sixteenth-century song may change their sense. For when the sun turns away from the evil that sacrifices the Son of Man, perhaps it is the principle of life which averts its gaze from a senseless self-sacrifice.[181]

Der heilige Martin, wie ihr wißt
Ertrug nicht fremde Not.
Er sah im Schnee ein armen Mann
Und er bot seinen halben Mantel ihm an
Da frorn sie alle beid zu Tod.
Der Mann sah nicht auf irdischen Lohn!
Und seht, da war es noch nicht Nacht
Da sah die Welt die Folgen schon:
Selbstlosigkeit hatt' ihn so weit gebracht!
Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!

Brecht uses this stanza as a signpost. If we lost his sense in the first three stanzas, if we did not realize how questionable were the virtues and the reputations of these "great men", then this stanza (significantly associated with Kattrin, an almost universally approved example of virtue) causes us to halt and reconsider the path already travelled. As with his odd characterization of the Thirty Years War as a capitalist venture, so in this stanza Brecht uses a distortion to make us reflect on the seemingly self-evident.[182] In this case the distortion is found in the legend of St. Martin of Tours (ca. 316-397). One winter's day, legend has it, St. Martin, originally an officer of Rome, chanced upon a freezing beggar at the gates of Amiens in Gaul. St. Martin divided his cloak and gave one part to the man. That night he dreamed that Christ was the beggar, and was moved by this vision to convert to Christianity. He rose steadily in the hierarchy of the Church until he became a bishop and — somewhat later — a saint.[183]

How different Brecht's version! Now the saint's promising career stops short, for neither man can face the cold with only half a cloak: "Da frorn sie alle beid zu Tod." This revision is clearly meant to draw critical attention to the dire

---

[181] For another interpretation, see Jendreiek 201.

[182] *GW* 17:1149.

[183] "Martin of Tours," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1913 ed.; see also John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980) 388-389.

effect of the saint's compassion and selflessness. Here are more "useless" virtues harmful both to bearer and "beneficiary", virtues that leave untouched the evil that called forth such virtue in the first place, namely the cause of the beggar's poverty. (We may discount any suggestion on Brecht's part here of a heavenly reward for the "tragically" compassionate, since he elsewhere tells us: "es kommt nichts nachher";[184] thus the exclamation: "Der Mann sah nicht auf irdischen Lohn!" is less admiring than exasperated.) The criticism of St. Martin carries over to the figure of which he is the pendant: Kattrin.

How can this be? Even Brecht encourages the view that Kattrin is Courage's opposite.[185] Yet, without denying the truth of this characterization (to which I will return), we must recognize that the text also criticizes Kattrin. Most important here is the resemblance between St. Martin's *Mitleid* and that of Kattrin. The "uselessness" of this *Mitleid* for both its bearers is plain in their deaths; the harm done the beneficiaries of Kattrin's virtue is not so clear, since, in contrast to St. Martin, she does save the object of her virtue. Kattrin, then, practices a *Mitleid* considerably more effective than that of St. Martin (or of Brecht's Johanna, to name another example of useless compassion in Brecht's work).[186] But Kattrin's *Mitleid* also resembles that of the young comrade from *Die Maßnahme*, whose compassionate assistence of those hauling a barge is both short-lived and, more significantly, not directed toward the larger problem of class relations (by conducting propaganda that focuses the discontent of the workers rather than attempting with too few means to ease their present suffering).[187] Kattrin's muteness contributes to this resemblance, for if she is

---

[184] *GW* 8:260; Joost 76-77.

[185] "Der Aufstand ihrer Tochter gegen [Courage] (bei der Rettung der Stadt Halle) betäubte sie völlig und belehrte sie keineswegs" (*GW* 16:896); "die aktion gegen den krieg dieser art ist nicht vernachlässigt. (die stumme kattrin)" (*AJ* 12.1.53); see Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Bd.1* 187; Hinck, "*Mutter Courage*" 171; Thiele 56.

[186] *GW* 2:689.

[187] *GW* 2:640.

able to rise up against her situation in a single helpful act, still she cannot articulate the criticism latent in that act. Furthermore, even if she saves the people in Halle, it is a short-lived mercy; the war continues after Kattrin's death, and Halle may once again become its victim, only now there is no Kattrin to warn the victims. The criticism of the young comrade's actions could apply equally to Kattrin (not as an assignment of personal blame, of course, but as a criticism of her as a "solution"): "Er hatte ein kleines Unrecht verhindert, aber das große Unrecht ... ging weiter."[188]

Nor should we overlook the similarity between Kattrin's act and those self-sacrifices of Schweizerkas and Socrates which the song earlier criticized. Against Brecht's admonition never to seek sure death, Kattrin deliberately places herself in an exposed position on a roof and, with no hope of escape, stubbornly drums until she is shot.

The song, then, makes it clear that Kattrin's virtue is also insufficient. Her self-sacrifice does not touch the greater evil, war, and if it suggests the social and hints at revolt more than do the virtues of her brothers, still it is the limited, desperate act of an individual. To that extent her virtue is harmless, and, as Brecht said elsewhere: "Harmlosigkeit ist nicht Güte," for it perpetuates evil.[189] Even in Kattrin's case, then, the text forces us to conclude of her limited forms of compassion and selflessness: "Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!"[190]

> Hier seht ihr ordentliche Leut
> Haltend die zehn Gebot
> Es hat uns bisher nichts genützt:
> Ihr, die am warmen Ofen sitzt

---

[188] *GW* 2:648; see Lyons, *Bertolt Brecht* 106; in contrast to Schöne's view (290-291).

[189] This criticism of virtue may also point to a corrective criticism of Shen Te's "useless goodness" in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*. Indeed, she is so often called good that one must wonder whether this quality is what it seems; as Jendreiek does not 222-237; nor Esslin, *Brecht, A Choice of Evils* 203.

[190] See also Bryant-Bertail, "Women, Space, Ideology" (58), who seems to see in Kattrin a sacrifice that redeems society.

Helft lindern unsre große Not!
Wie kreuzbrav waren wir doch schon!
Und seht, da war es noch nicht Nacht
Da sah die Welt die Folgen schon:
Die Gottesfurcht hat uns so weit gebracht!
Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!

This last stanza does two things. First it brings us back from the deeper content of the song to its dramatic role as a beggar's device, by referring to those "die am warmen Ofen sitzt," from whom Courage and the cook ask food (though in 1939 it was also a call for help from those not yet touched by Hitler's war). Second it draws the moral: "see how far such virtue has brought the little people!" Boldness like Eilif's which fuels war, Honesty like Schweizerkas's which loyally supports the interests of the rulers, Compassion and Selflessness like Kattrin's which provide a temporary respite but do not touch the source of evil; virtues such as these are of no use to the little people, no more than is Solomon's world-denying wisdom, no more than has been the virtue of obedience (to God in *Gottesfurcht*, and to civil authority by remaining "ordentliche Leut"). All these virtues have only perpetuated the evil that brings them into being in the first place, all are functions and effects of that evil. Truly, if these are virtues: "Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!"

To conclude: Courage's children and the historical models that represent them are neither praised as virtue nor lamented as virtue unjustly destroyed; rather models and virtues are equally condemned. These are for Brecht's text not qualities of (moral) excellence, but useless virtues that perpetuate a world which ought to be changed.[191] When the cook introduces the concluding stanza with the assertion: "die Tugenden zahln sich nicht aus, nur die Schlechtigkeiten, so ist die Welt und müßt nicht so sein!"[192] this is no call for a world in which virtue might prosper. Rather, the song is part of Brecht's larger argument that virtue is concomitant to evil, that virtue is integral to the "verkehrte Welt", and that a

---

[191] Sood 23.
[192] *GW* 4:1427; Jendreiek 184.

world should be made which needs no virtue. In so far as Courage is the symbolic representative of that "verkehrte Welt", her children are, as virtue and as child to mother, her "effects"; their virtues are at once the products and the fuel of war.

*** *** ***

Courage's centrality is once again apparent. As she is the dramatic star round which events and figures orbit, so she is, as the representation of the system that informs and defines her world, the symbolic focus, a "black hole" whose gravitational field pulls everything back into herself; Courage is the central "event" of which the other figures, even the virtuous ones, are "effects". Yet, if Courage seems once again to represent a mythic and omnipotent dark empire, still the drama is not completely given over to the image of a warring system become a natural world beyond human intervention. The text may represent the war as the ultimate horizon of the drama (a not unrealistic view of the unpromising historical moment that caused Brecht to write it), but within that horizon this impression is also contradicted — though not with a rosy hymn to an inevitable dawn of peace, freedom, and justice.

THE HOPE OF HISTORY

It is clear, then, that Brecht's hopes in this drama marked by the dark age of capitalism unchallenged and become second nature are not invested in the symbolic representation of the Communist Party, nor in Courage's virtuous children, in so far as their virtues perpetuate evil (though I will soon have to qualify the criticism of Kattrin). Where are they found? In brief, Brecht's hope in this drama is found where he would have expected the material conditions to give rise to it, even without the guidance of the Party, it is found in those who have the most to gain from resisting the rulers' war. That is, Brecht places his

hope in the revolt of the little people.[193] Furthermore, his hope is placed in the source of that revolt, namely in the historical process that causes the already existing to create its own negation.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

A journal entry from 20 August 1943 shows us how to see the revolts of the little people in *Mutter Courage*:[194]

> man hört von streiks, nicht nur in milano, auch in berlin. mitunter, für einen augenblick, scheinen sich die schlachtfelder, kriegsschauplätze, geographischen reliefs europas zu bevölkern. es sind menschen in milano und in hamburg.

Here, too, we see Brecht hoping. Suddenly, in the "schlachtfelder" where he had seen no "menschen", no trace of humanity, he momentarily glimpses the mark of the truly human: the resistance of the little people. That humanity should manifest itself, both in Berlin and in Milan after Mussolini's fall, as strikes, that classic form of workers' resistance, suggests that humanity for Brecht consists in the resistance to capitalism as well as to fascism. A similar humanity is found in *Mutter Courage* in the spontaneous rejection of the war by the little people.[195]

Such a trace of humanity, for example, is found in scene 3 when the cook strikes his alliance with Courage the Outlaw in order to criticize war; or in scene 6 when the chaplain briefly forgets himself and blames the brutality of the little people on those "wo Krieg anstiften" (the rulers), and when he says heros are a dime-a-dozen phenomenon that allow war to go on forever;[196] or in scene 11 when a young peasant encourages Kattrin's warning of Halle (though his earlier refusal to help the Catholics may mean he is only interested in thwarting that party);[197] or in scene 12 in the anger displayed by the peasants toward those

---

[193] Thiele 57.
[194] *AJ* 20.8.43.
[195] Jendreiek 196-197.
[196] *GW* 4:1407, 1401.
[197] *GW* 4:1431.

involved in war, such as Courage. But the most striking of these spontaneous revolts by the little people are found at the beginning of the drama. Already there is hope, for the peasants "strike" just like those workers in Berlin and Milan, they refuse to enlist and so refuse to be their rulers' tools, they show that the interests of ruler and ruled differ.[198] A second revolt is found in the same scene: the peasants "immorally" neglect their ruler's war in favour of the good life: "Käs aufs Weißbrot und dann noch eine Scheibe Speck auf den Käs."[199] Here is another "strike", since the producers withold the material for their overlord's "Konkurrenzkampf". But this image also anticipates the more fundamental final revolt that Brecht hoped for from the little people, by anticipating the goal of that revolt: producers who produce for themselves and not for an exploiter, producers who enjoy material well-being and have forgotten the forms of instrumental reason (names, numbers). In other words, these peasants foreshadow the socialism of which Brecht dreamt, in which those who build the "house" (which also means the state) also live in it, where those who prepare the "food" are their own guests.[200] These various revolts by the little people would have been good omens for Brecht, signs that could have led him to say: "Es sind Menschen in diesem Stück."

KATTRIN

Kattrin's warning of Halle is a special case of the revolt of the little people.[201] It is special because she represents in concentrated form the oppressed.[202] Unlike her mother, for example, she has no truck with war, she

---

[198] This revolt has its pendant in the implied indifference of the little people to their rulers' plans (*GW* 4: 1404); see Jendreiek 160.

[199] *GW* 4:1349.

[200] See *Nimm Platz am Tisch* (*GW* 10:961) and *Das Lied von der Suppe* (*GW* 9:461).

[201] On Kattrin see Thiele 55-57.

[202] See Mandel 241.

is only its victim;[203] as woman she is more fully than her mother one of the "doubly exploited", because half of Courage's being is the war-mongering merchant; and with the double wound received from war — one to her forehead, one to her tongue — Kattrin is clearly one of the helpless to whom Brecht's call to revolt is addressed: "An wen wenden wir uns? An die Ohnmächtigen. Wen rufen wir um Hilfe an? Die Hilflosen."[204]

Now, it cannot be denied that Kattrin's virtue, her *Mitleid*, is criticized in *Mutter Courage*. The *Salomon-Song* shows the limitations of her rescue of Halle, a rescue that is only temporary since the greater evil of war continues.[205] And her heroism and self-sacrifice, again since they do not harm the greater evil, and since they go against Brecht's admonition never to seek sure death,[206] could be listed among those virtues criticized as useless by Brecht (as we saw in this chapter and through the figure of Courage in Chapter 5).

However, and this contradiction cannot be wished away, Kattrin's revolt is, in its social "activism", unlike any other revolt in the drama, and her virtue is not simply a support of the status quo as are those of her brothers.[207] More than any other figure, Kattrin, by frustrating the war in its intended destruction of Halle, directly intervenes in war and breaks with it, as she breaks with her brothers who fuel that patriarchal warrior society, as she breaks with her world and so with her mother who incarnates that world[208] (a rejection of that world which is emphasized when Kattrin in the same scene treats the word of honour

---

[203] Hein thinks Kattrin the only mother figure unsullied by business (68).

[204] *GW* 20:81; see *GW* 17:1142; Thiele 57.

[205] Her death makes her alleged triumph over violence (Ekmann 242) questionable.

[206] *GW* 12:477.

[207] On Kattrin see Jendreiek 192-198; Gray sees the contradictions in Kattrin's role, but is unable to give an account of them (*Brecht the Dramatist* 134-135).

[208] *GW* 16:896; see Thiele 56-57; this break with her world is correctly seen by Lyons as the result of the "langer Zorn" (*Bertolt Brecht* 98).

of an agent of war — who promises to spare her mother if she ceases drumming — as mere noise: "Sie hält nichts von den Ehrenwörtern der Schlächter").[209]

Through her concern for others Kattrin also breaks with the vicious logic of the war, based on the notion that one's well-being relies solely on one's *own* well-being, a logic that drives the war of all against all. She shows up, therefore, the limitations of the revolts of the little people considered above, and reveals them to be merely a *weak* foreshadowing of the future, for now the resistance of the peasants who merely avoid war and want only to enjoy their own products seems an asocial concern for their own necks (just as Courage's quest for freedom in this light seems a tainted freedom, one purchased with the misery of others, which is, as Brecht said, no freedom at all).[210]

However, Kattrin's break with the calculating and self-serving logic of the system around her does not — as Jendreiek seemed to think — promote an "erasure of self" in favour of a higher principle.[211] Rather, Kattrin's act demonstrates an *enlargement* of her self. Like Pelegea Wlassowa of *Die Mutter*, Kattrin recognizes, "daß ... dem einzelnen, nur geholfen werden kann, indem allen seinesgleichen geholfen wird, indem alle seinesgleichen sich selber

---

[209] *MC* 118; see *GW* 4:1434; see also *GW* 17:1140. We note again, as in Chapter 5, a criticism of "Ehre".

[210] "Es gibt keine Freiheit irgendwelcher Schichten auf dem Rücken anderer Schichten" (*GW* 19:473); Compare this with discussions of Marx's view of bourgeois freedom in James J. O'Rourke, *The Problem of Freedom in Marxist Thought: An Analysis of the Treatment of Human Freedom by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Contemporary Soviet Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974) 41; and George G. Brenkert, *Marx's Ethic of Freedom* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983) 85-90.

[211] Jendreiek 194; White 100; nor is it a sign that she loves the children *more* than herself, as a sort of "Nachfolge Christi", as suggested in Hans Egon Holthusen, "Versuch über Brecht" 100; see also Lyons, *Bertolt Brecht* 103; on the idea of the sublation, and not the loss, of the individual, as Brecht developed it, see Joost 147.

helfen."[212] Kattrin sees that her own well-being cannot rest upon the suffering of others, that the well-being of all is inseparably linked.[213]

The knowledge that she cannot remain whole while the children (and citizens) of Halle are torn to pieces shows Kattrin's act to be, not greater than maternal, but maternal in a greater sense, greater than that of Courage, greater even than that of the Great Mother.[214] For Kattrin's motherhood, her care of life (already evidenced, in contrast to her mother, in her greater awareness of her brothers' danger,[215] in her rescue of an infant from the flames, in her concern for the wounded of Magdeburg, in her care for hurt creatures such as the hedgehog run over by that engine of war, her mother's wagon): this motherhood aims only at life.[216] Kattrin does not use her maternal counsel to maintain a warring system as Courage does when she advises capitulation in scene 4; Kattrin does not help others so that she may profit in imitation of her rulers, as Courage does when she saves the soldiers from a dangerous task and gains a cannon in scene 3; Kattrin does not ask whether there is a profit to be had from her maternal behaviour, as Courage does when she weighs the worth of Schweizerkas against that of her wagon in scene 3; unlike the Great Mother, Kattrin does not nurture life in order to take it away, she is not like those mothers — examples of the self-colonization of the oppressed — who raise their children for a world that oppresses and destroys them.[217] Rather, when Kattrin saves Halle, and so the

---

[212] *GW* 17:1073.

[213] See Thiele (39); but does not show that one who has compassion for the many can have none for the few (Jendreiek 195).

[214] Thiele says Kattrin is more than a mother (56); on Kattrin as greater mother than Courage see: Joost 283; Hein 64.

[215] Nussbaum, "The Evolution" 233.

[216] On the brothers see scenes 1 and 3; on the infant and the wounded scene 5; on the hedgehog scene 6; see Hinck, "'Die Grosse Helferin'" 89-90.

[217] I take my cue for "self-colonization" from Kate Millett, who called the domination of women an "interior colonization" (25). What she later calls the "interiorization of patriarchal ideology" by women (54), so that they collaborate in the reproduction of their own oppression and of the patriarchy, I call "self-colonization".

future embodied in its children, she activates that social content which one might argue is inherent in a truly life-affirming motherhood. That is, Kattrin's motherhood transcends biology and the nuclear family, it approaches that larger motherhood which Brecht portrays in *Die Mutter*; Kattrin, too, is "mehr noch Mutter jetzt, vieler Gefallenen Mutter / Kämpfender Mutter, Ungeborener Mutter";[218] Kattrin is like those mothers mentioned in Chapter 5 in connection with Courage the Outlaw, such as Grusche, Shen Te, and the mothers of the *Wiegenlieder*;[219] Kattrin is, as Brecht said of Wlassowa, "ein Beispiel ganz neuartiger, eingreifender Mutterliebe"[220] (and she is even a "witch" when she counters the impotent prayers of the pious peasants with effective action).[221]

It should be stressed, too, that Kattrin's act, though also emotionally fuelled, as her groan at the mention of the children about to be murdered shows,[222] is no purely emotional, instinctive reflex.[223] Her reasoned behaviour: her stealthy appropriation of the drum and attaining of the roof, her calculated removal of all approaches to her, her laughter at the soldiers whose predicament she understands, her continued drumming even when she must choose between it (and so the people of Halle) and the destruction of her mother's wagon, or the beating of the peasant lad, or even the possible death of her mother — all this undermines any attempt to understand Kattrin either as an instinctively maternal creature or as infantile (something which even the *Courage modell* occasionally does, if inconsistently).[224] In this decided emphasis on the

---

[218] *GW* 17:1054; Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Bd.1* 188; Joost 159; Pascal 3; but she is not a representative of "inscrutable mother love" (Fenn 168).

[219] For *Wiegenlieder* see *GW* 9:430-433; see also *GW* 9:750, 799; see also Hein for the association with Grusche (68).

[220] Frenken sees motherliness being fulfilled for Brecht in the social struggle and not at home (169).

[221] *GW* 17:1040; Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Bd.1* 188; which includes a criticism of the "Gottesfurcht" of the *Salomon-Song* (Thiele 39); Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 135.

[222] *GW* 4:1432.

[223] Hein 71; Jendreiek 193-194.

[224] *MC* 117, 120; see also *GW* 17:1141; see also for similar views: Esslin,

rationality of Kattrin's act we see a translation of the rationality that Brecht expected would inform the revolt of the oppressed, a revolt that realized the Reason of History, that was informed by the rational and critical theory of "scientific socialism", and that would be in the name of a truly rational social order.

The content of Kattrin's act, her critical, rational, and social motherhood, forces a revision of the criticism of her *Mitleid* as found in the *Salomon-Song*. If the criticism of the limitations of Kattrin's *Mitleid* is inescapable, by virtue of the continuing danger to which Halle is exposed, and of the muteness that prevents an adequately articulate criticism of her conditions; still, her act is also a revolt of the little people, a hopeful anticipation, despite its insufficiency, of that *Wunder*, or revolution, to which the last stanza of the drama refers,[225] a "miraculous" moment when Kattrin chooses, in a historically unpromising situation, as do Brecht's Communards, to fear an evil life worse than death.[226] Walter Benjamin once called fascism and war (and with them capitalism) the "Ausnahmezustand" which is in fact "die Regel".[227] The task, he said, in the struggle against these conditions, is the "Herbeiführung des wirklichen Ausnahmezustands." Kattrin's desperate act, an exemplary moment of the transcendence of an asocial world, is a brief appearance "des wirklichen Ausnahmezustands."

Finally, let us remember that Kattrin's act, if it does not end war any more than St. Martin's ends poverty, at the same time is more effective than the

---

Brecht, A Choice of Evils 201; Wiese 269; Mennemeier 399; Boeddinghaus 87; Lyons, *Bertolt Brecht* 109; Lennox 87; (but see *MC* 163 for a different view).

[225] Compare Jendreiek 196; Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Bd.1* 188; Thiele 57; Hein calls it a revolutionary deed (41-42); compare Ekmann 242.

[226] The Communards of *Resolution der Kommunarden* have "beschlossen, nunmehr schlechtes Leben / Mehr zu fürchten als den Tod" (*GW* 9:654).

[227] Walter Benjamin, "Über den Begriff der Geschichte," *Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann, and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972-1989) 1.2: 697.

saint's.[228] And by saving Halle she shows up the limitations of the "long anger" that Courage discovers to the soldier, for Kattrin's *Mitleid* saves a city; Courage's "long anger" — despite its revolutionary potential — remains latent (and is not transmitted even to the soldier). Nor is Kattrin's effect limited to her rescue of Halle. In her example of a single small revolt saving a city, we are shown that Kattrin's cloak is greater than St. Martin's, for more than half a man it covers a whole city (so that Kattrin in turn criticizes the criticism of her in the *Salomon-Song*); and her example implies the question: if more were to act like Kattrin, could a cloak be fashioned to protect a whole world?[229]

And when Kattrin expropriates the drum from war[230] (a symbol for Brecht of militaristic nationalism and Hitler, "Der Trommler"),[231] when she turns it into her voice against war (another *Wunder*, the mute, the "stone" "speaks", and one that reminds us of a similar "expropriation" in the poem, *Lied gegen den Krieg*, where soldiers turn the rifles given them — to use against their own — against their class enemies instead),[232] then she sends a message that is heard not only by Halle, but also by the peasant lad who encourages her at his peril; like Wlassowa she teaches "die Sprache des Kampfes / Gegen den Krieg."[233] And this example of communication raises another question: what if more were to send this message, what if more little people, indeed the little people of the whole world, were to hear it and together answer war with: Enough!

---

[228] Kaufmann says that part of the liberating effect of Kattrin's scene comes from the fact that finally something is decided in the drama (*Bertolt Brecht* 141).

[229] Thus her deed contrasts with those of the soldier in *Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten*, for hers "warms" others, which the song tells us is a ground for approval of a deed; see Schäfer 411. On another cloak, one to cover the poor of a city, see *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (*GW* 4:1512).

[230] As Simone does when she drums a call for help for embattled France (*GW* 5:1888).

[231] *GW* 9:604, 439, 448.

[232] *GW* 9:651; see "Der Stein beginnt zu reden" (*GW* 17:1139-1142).

[233] *GW* 17:1054; Jendreiek 196-197; Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Bd.1* 188.

COURAGE

Kattrin's revolt is certainly the most effective and the most moving in *Mutter Courage*. But its very dramatic effectiveness can cause us to overlook other important revolts. I, too, despite my main concern, was seduced in earlier drafts to end this chapter with a discussion of Kattrin. Yet reality does not always coincide with appearance, and that is no less true here. For if Kattrin's revolt has (limited) results, if it captures our hearts and minds, still there is a revolt which, if latent, points to a rebellion that would far exceed the scope of Kattrin's. That revolt is Courage's "long anger".

Of course, it is also true that Courage's revolts as they were developed in Chapter 5 could be added as reinforcements to the hopes that are the content of the above revolts of the little people. Yet even in Chapter 5 it is plain that Courage's revolts, if not so spectacular as Kattrin's, outnumber by far those of other representatives of the little people. Furthermore, Courage's revolts, when considered against her many mercantile inhumanities, show her to represent a greater and more intensely contradictory reality than any other figure — an impression that is reinforced by her domination of the drama as it was elaborated under the rubric of the Great Mother. Certainly no other figure contains both Courage's maternal, nurturing creativity and her war-mongering, inhuman mercantilism. And when the cook as an innkeeper is about to take on the aspect of a male Courage, and so seem a Terrible Father, as it were, the cunning text (and Courage) prevents this muddying of its symbolism by removing him from the drama. Lastly, no other figure, whatever revolt it may undertake, can match Courage's knowledge of the "long anger", which I said in Chapter 5 was the metaphor for the revolution desired by Brecht.

Now, Courage's "long anger" is latent, Kattrin's revolt is actual. But it is this very latency that makes it such a repository of hope for Brecht in these dark times — otherwise he might be forced to rely on the premature and doomed revolt of Kattrin. In brief, this "long anger" is the final contradiction at the heart of Courage as the representation of a contradictory capitalism. It is the "final"

contradiction, one different from the contradiction between productivity and destruction discussed earlier, because it is the contradiction that points to the end of the system that Courage represents — and so to the end of the contradictory but essentially static unity of nature represented by the Great Mother. In other words, the "long anger" stands for the effect created by the historical process of capitalism as it was understood by Marx and Brecht.

I am referring to Marx's view of capitalism as a historical moment that produces its own negation, as a process that generates contradictions that point to its own end.[234] One such contradiction involves the productive forces which capitalism unleashes, but which are restrained by the social relations of capitalism and can only be fully developed when they transcend that system, when they "burst its bonds" in a revolution that those same productive forces help to create.[235] It is to this that Brecht refers when he says: "Unter den antagonistischen Faktoren, die im Schoße einer bestimmten Gesellschaft entstehen

---

[234] *MEW* 23:791.

[235] "Hand in Hand mit dieser Zentralisation oder der Expropriation vieler Kapitalisten durch wenige entwickelt sich die kooperative Form des Arbeitsprozesses auf stets wachsender Stufenleiter, die bewußte technische Anwendung der Wissenschaft, die planmäßige Ausbeutung der Erde, die Verwandlung der Arbeitsmittel in nur gemeinsam verwendbare Arbeitsmittel, die Ökonomisierung aller Produktionsmittel durch ihren Gebrauch als Produktionsmittel kombinierter, gesellschaftlicher Arbeit, die Verschlingung aller Völker in das Netz des Weltmarkts und damit der internationale Charakter des kapitalistischen Regimes. Mit der beständig abnehmenden Zahl der Kapitalmagnaten, welche alle Vorteile dieses Umwandlungsprozesses usurpieren und monopolisieren, wächst die Masse des Elends, des Drucks, der Knechtschaft, der Entartung, der Ausbeutung, aber auch die Empörung der stets anschwellenden und durch den Mechanismus des kapitalistischen Produktionsprozesses selbst geschulten, vereinten und organisierten Arbeiterklasse. Das Kapital wird zur Fessel der Produktionsweise, die mit und unter ihm aufgeblüht ist. Die Zentralisation der Produktionsmittel und die Vergesellschaftlichung der Arbeit erreichen den Punkt, wo sie unverträglich werden mit ihrer kapitalistischen Hülle. Sie wird gesprengt. Die Stunde des kapitalistischen Privateigentums schlägt. Die Expropriateurs werden expropriiert" (*MEW* 23:790).

und zu ihrer Revolutionierung führen, spielt als eine der Produktivkräfte die Technik eine entscheidende Rolle."[236]

However, the contradiction to which I want to draw attention, as one more important for our understanding of Courage, is that which causes capitalism to create, in the proletariat, the very group that it both needs and which is to overthrow it. As Marx wrote in *Kapital*:[237]

> Der Fortschritt der Industrie, dessen willenloser und widerstandsloser Träger die Bourgeoisie ist, setzt an die Stelle der Isolierung der Arbeiter durch die Konkurrenz ihre revolutionäre Vereinigung durch die Assoziation. Mit der Entwicklung der großen Industrie wird also unter den Füßen der Bourgeoisie die Grundlage selbst hinweggezogen, worauf sie produziert und die Produkte sich aneignet. Sie produziert vor allem ihren eigenen Totengräber. Ihr Untergang und der Sieg des Proletariats sind gleich unvermeidlich.

It is more than probable that Brecht agreed with this view of Marx, since he often enough appealed from a Marxist perspective to the dialectical process of history, and saw the proletariat as the last class to be liberated in the name of universal freedom (which is what he meant when he calls the proletariat the group whose interests are those of humanity itself).[238] It is this content which informs, for example, the following statement from Brecht:[239]

> Diese Dialektik, diese Revolutionsphilosophie [der Bourgeoisie] erfährt ihren großartigsten Ausbau (durch Hegel) in einer Zeit, wo die Bourgeoisie eine Revolution *mehr oder weniger* hinter sich hat und bereits mit der Schlichtung der Interessengegensätze beschäftigt ist, dem Abstoppen der Entwicklung, während sie noch immer gezwungen ist, ihre Revolution zu vervollständigen. Der Ausbau der Dialektik durch Hegel erfolgt im Hinblick auf das anwachsende Proletariat, unter dem Zwang für die Bourgeoisie, mehr und mehr Proletariat zu produzieren und mehr und mehr seine drohende Emanzipation zu verhindern.

---

[236] *GW* 20:76.
[237] *MEW* 4:473-474.
[238] *GW* 20:236.
[239] *GW* 20:150-151.

This finally is the meaning of the contradiction of Courage the Hyena by Courage the Outlaw. In her revolts against the system she herself represents, Courage represents also her own "gravedigger". Her knowledge of the "long anger", which is not yet realized in the little people, is, so to speak, the system's knowledge of its own future end.[240] Thus, in so far as Courage represents the system that creates its own gravediggers, so the various revolts of the little people could be viewed as her "effects". But this is given its clearest expression in Kattrin. Premature and undeveloped as it is, Kattrin's revolt represents a premonition of the final rebellion that the system itself creates, as the mother gives birth to her rebellious daughter. And this reminds us that, just as Brecht saw capitalism create not only virtues that support it, but also those that would destroy it,[241] so Kattrin too shows us that not all effects of that system, her mother, are purely reproductive.

It may be well here to forestall a possible misunderstanding that could arise about the particular symbolic form given capitalism in *Mutter Courage*. Capitalism, with its instrumental reason, violence, culture of war, and domination, would — if we were to momentarily accept patriarchal definitions of gender — seem to be a manifestation of the masculine principle. And Brecht often portrayed capitalism as a "Terrible Father" — an image that is particularly striking when we consider how often its opposite was given female form — one thinks of Johanna Dark and Pierpont Mauler, of Shen Te and Shui Ta, of Pelegea Wlassowa and the male agents of the capitalist State.

Yet in Courage capitalism is given female form. Indeed, when Courage as capitalism begins to look like the Great Mother, then some may be tempted to

---

[240] Thus Courage could be called, as Darko Suvin did, but without quite the same meaning, the protagonist who is her own antagonist; see his *To Brecht and Beyond* 65; also, while Dickson is right to point to Courage as the paradoxically productive and destructive "life-asserting force" of the drama, we see now that it is precisely because, in a deeper sense, she is not merely "reactionary" ("History, Drama" 271), but contains also the possibility of change.

[241] *GW* 14:1499.

think that Brecht is stigmatizing capitalism with the patriarchal hatred of *Frau Welt*. Nor is this the only time that such an image is hinted at: in the poem, *Die Niederkunft der Großen Babel*, the Whore of Babylon gives birth (as does capitalism) to war,[242] and in the poem, *Deutschland*, a national form of the Great Mother, Germania, has given birth to what Brecht called the most brutal form of capitalism.[243] Moreover, given Brecht's own patriarchal tendencies, such as his occupation of the realm of the "spirit", or art, while leaving the realm of the "material", such as typescripts, children, household management, and so on, to women,[244] such as his jealousy in regard to his women friends,[245] it would not be utterly strange to think that capitalism as *Frau Welt* would represent a patriarchal regression. Except that there is a second "reversal" here that subverts the first (a reversal that shows, as I suggested in Chapter 5, that Brecht was aware of the situation of women).

---

[242] *GW* 9:730.

[243] *GW* 9:487.

[244] At least to be delegated by them, since Helene Weigel, to that extent a good German bourgeois, often had a hired woman to carry out menial tasks; see Hartmut Reiber, "Das eigene Leben des Anderen: Gespräch mit Käthe Rülicke-Weiler," *The Brecht Yearbook* 19 (1994): 184. See also how the household difficulties Weigel has in Finland concern Brecht, but not enough, apparently, to think of helping her (*AJ* 5.7.40). Brecht's reliance on women for the regulation of his material comforts is a constant (if quiet) theme in Mittenzwei's *Das Leben*. As Pietzcker says of Brecht: "als Muttersohn blieb er blind für patriarchalische Momente bürgerlicher Herrschaft" (*'Ich kommandiere mein Herz'* 243). A good presentation of the standard argument for Brecht's patriarchal attitudes toward women can be found in Wedel 46-110. Kebir's *Ein akzeptabler Mann?* is an important corrective to the fashionable criticism of Brecht's patriarchal attitudes. There she reminds us, for example, "daß die in der Männerwelt heutzutage ausgebrochene Kochmode nicht unbedingt schon ein Zeichen für männliche Emanzipation ist..." (12); see also Frenken 177-178.

[245] Signs of Brecht's exclusivity toward women can be seen in poems such as *GW* 9:537; 10:938; and late in life in the *Tagebücher* 237. Again, see Wedel 46-110; Pietzcker, *'Ich kommandiere mein Herz'* 74-75; and for a corrective, Kebir's *Ein akzeptabler Mann?*.

Socialism, we remember, represents for Brecht the supreme rational good. Reason informed the "scientific socialism" he embraced, socialism represented a truly rational social order, the creation of socialism represented the realization of the Reason of History. If we were to keep to our patriarchal gender definitions invoked above, then socialism would logically seem a benevolent expression of the masculine principle. Yet in this drama it is precisely women, Courage and Kattrin, who represent this most powerful expression of Reason. Thus Brecht subverts the patriarchal aspect of the image of capitalism as the Great Mother. While in patriarchal thought reason, the defining attribute of the human, was masculine, so that to be fully human was to be male, now the essence of humanity is given a new home in woman as the "doubly exploited" and prime representative of the oppressed. Again, as Fritz Raddatz rightly remarked, revolution for Brecht is female. But revolution is not, as Raddatz anxiously portrayed it with patriarchal overtones, an explosion of irrational, elemental (and so "feminine") forces; rather, it is the supremely rational that is expressed in the revolt of the oppressed and in the changes wrought by the dialectic of history.[246]

Here, then, is Brecht's hope in the dark times captured by *Mutter Courage*.[247] Hope is found in the revolts of the little people, including those of Kattrin and Courage (as the Outlaw). Hope is found in the historical process that engenders such revolts, in the very development of a system that creates its own

---

[246] "Bert Brechts Revolution ist weiblich; genauer mütterlich. Lyrische Metapherwahl und Begriffsraster wie modellfähige Figuren seiner Stücke scheinen zu zeigen, daß die Neue Ordnung eine Form des Retour zu altem Naturrecht ist, daß Leben —ja, Geburt— heißt, *aus der Ordnung gefallen* zu sein" (Raddatz, "Ent-weiblichte Eschatologie" 152); Klaus-Detlef Müller was the first to say that the mother was for Brecht the "Prototyp der Revolutionärin", without, however, seeing how this is true for Courage as well (*Die Funktion* 159-161, n.11).

[247] Thus it is not a deeply pessimistic work (Mennemeier 400); but one that points to the possibility of change (Jendreiek 197-198), one that, like Brecht's poem on Laotse (*GW* 9:660-663), calls to mind in a time of defeat that, as Antonio Gramsci said, right and history stand on one's side (Brooker 128).

gravediggers — as symbolized by the contradictory unity of the affirmative Courage as Hyena and the critical Courage as Outlaw (who has the knowledge of the "long anger"). These hopes, however, are not unblemished; each of the rebellions is limited. The revolts of Courage and the peasants against ascetic and submissive self-sacrifice to exploitative authority approach the asocial search for one's own advantage at the cost of others; Kattrin's revolt, if it is effective in a limited sense, is without the articulation needed to make it into a collective "long anger"; and Courage's criticisms of ideology and her "long anger" contain great promise, but their energy remains merely latent. Yet each of these limited revolts has what the others lack and so raise the possibility of the combination of their strengths (we need not consider the combination of their weaknesses, for an asocial submissiveness already exists in that world). That is, they are stars awaiting that conjunction — effected by those revolts coming together, perhaps by being joined by an agent that Brecht could not imagine here — which will form a constellation, a this-worldly and social "long anger", that will once and for all burn away the bloody night of war and finally make the earth livable. For Brecht these revolts remained promises — to be redeemed.

This page intentionally left blank
for the purpose of double-sided photocopying.

CONCLUSION

History unlocks the meaning of *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*; history allows us finally to get beyond the interpretive see-saw fuelled by Courage's contradictions. Of course, it is history refracted through Brecht's psyche, history received and worked on by his symbolic world in an effort to grasp that same historical moment — and to communicate that understanding to others. Yet the drama that results from Brecht's labour escapes the limited meaning its author had intended for it (as well as those so far suggested by other interpreters), but with this qualification: it escapes its author's intentions only to give an even fuller account of his view of the threatening and contradictory world that confronted him in the Fall of 1939.

We saw that Courage's world, the war of the drama, represents both the war which capitalism inherently was for Brecht, as well as the specific war unleashed by the "most brutal" form of capitalism on 1 September 1939. But if the war of *Mutter Courage* is an extended metaphor for warring capitalism, Courage herself is that metaphor in more concentrated form; thus her story becomes the story of the drama, and her meaning becomes its meaning.[1] Of course, as a merchant Courage could be seen as a synecdoche of business or

---

[1] So it is too great a reduction to say that the drama has the theme of pacifism "pure and simple" (Esslin *Brecht, A Choice of Evils* 203).

capitalism, but she is more than that. She is, in fact, the personification of capitalism. If the difficulty of representing a "mode of production" lies in vividly illustrating something everywhere present and felt, but nowhere to be grasped entire, Courage is the solution to that problem. Courage is capitalism, she is the "absent cause" given tangible form, the "mode of production" made flesh. But she is this representation of a "world", the world of capitalism, not because she contains all its manifold appearances (though she does contain the basic elements of the other figures),[2] but because she, as no other figure in the drama, represents the essential contradictions of that system.[3]

Integral to the impression of a "world" represented by Courage is her being as mother. As mother she invokes the entity who once was for all of us the "world", and this is reinforced in her case since she is the centre round which the other figures revolve, as the mode of production is the centre of all lives. As mother, Courage reinforces her representation of the world of capitalism by engendering both her affirmation (her sons)[4] and her negation (partly in her daughter). As the world that is both Great Mother and capitalism, Courage also points to the historical moment of her realization, to that time when capitalism had begun to look to Brecht invincible and permanent, to look like Nature itself. All this, together with her embodiment of the contradictions of capitalism, causes the image of concentration, which is suggested by the representation of a world within a single figure, to be complemented by Courage's simultaneous expansion to represent the spirit of her world, to become the Great Mother of Capitalism,

---

[2] As Dort saw (137).

[3] Gabrielle Bersier, who reviewed Heinz-Uwe Haus's production of 1977 (Weimar) said Courage "erwies sich als die körperliche und moralische Gesamtsumme des Stücks," but nevertheless limited this characterization to Courage conceived as an allegorical portrayal of only the petty bourgeois (Thiele 86).

[4] Gabrielle Bersier correctly sees Courage's sons as her "Ergänzungen" (Thiele 86).

to become — as Brecht's view of capitalism might suggest — the Mother of all Wars.

As I said, Courage represents the world of capitalism because she contains its essential contradictions. First, she represents the contradiction between productivity and destructiveness (which again reinforces her portrayal of the Great Mother). She is, for example, the capitalist hyena so familiar to us from Brecht's works, one who seeks her personal profit in the destruction, misery, and exploitation of the rest, one who perpetuates that world — and so herself — not only through her business, but also by reproducing the ideology of her world: the false hope of the little people that they can profit like their rulers from a system of war; the resigned capitulation to the system which implies that the latter cannot be changed; the enthusiastic consent of the little people (achieved through her alcohol) to their own destruction for the profit of their lords. But Courage is also the mother in capitalism, whose industry, nurturing, and protecting represent the promise latent in the system (though that promise can only be realized, according to Brecht, in the "completion" of capitalism, that is, in socialism).

The above contradiction tells us that it is impossible to separate Courage's moments, to criticize the merchant, as Brecht suggested, and yet admire the mother.[5] For Courage's sutlerdom, we have seen, her representation of the instrumental and exploitative aspect of capitalism, is inseparable from the maternal qualities in her which point to the actual productivity and promise of capitalism.[6] As the representation of the exploiter, then, Courage reminds us of the barbarism underlying bourgeois motherhood, which purchases its children's lives with those of the exploited. As a representation of the exploited, she

---

[5] Hein correctly notes that there is no "break" between these aspects (64); see also Thiele (44).

[6] Käthe Rülicke-Weiler is mistaken, then, to describe Courage as a conflict between the individual (the mother) and society (the merchant); see her *Die Dramaturgie Brechts: Theater als Mittel der Veränderung* (Berlin: Henschel, 1966) 92.

reminds us how their motherhood is no less barbaric when they internalize their oppression and reproduce both it and the system that exploits them by raising their children to be its sacrifices (in contrast to those mothers of the *Wiegenlieder* who raise their children to fight capitalism).[7]

Second, if Courage as a petty bourgeois represents a sociological limbo between capitalist and worker, on the symbolic level her class allows Brecht's text to suggest with great economy the contradictory whole by making her a "montage" of the elements of both the main actors of capitalism: exploiter and exploited.[8] We have seen above how she represents the capitalists (so that she is the tangible form of yet another "absent cause" in this drama, namely the rulers who make the war).[9] But, as a victim of war, that is, as one who feeds war to her own loss, as someone always on the verge of pauperization, as a woman pressed hard by the surrounding patriarchal warrior society, Courage also represents the oppressed. This is especially clear in her rebellion as one of the little people in the name of material freedom and pleasure, a rebellion against the ascetic self-sacrifice her world demands for the sake of the rulers. She also represents the oppressed through her alliance with the cook, another labourer of war, in order to criticize war and expose its true nature (so that she also represents the intellectual who sides with the oppressed). (Incidentally, this

---

[7] Examples of mothers as collaborators with the system can be seen in the women of *Von der Willfährigkeit der Natur* (*GW* 8:195), or the mothers of *Gedicht vom unbekannten Soldaten unter dem Triumphbogen* (*GW* 9:425-426), the well-known *Deutschland* (*GW* 9:487-488), and the *Lied einer deutschen Mutter* (*GW* 10:854); see also the *Fischweib* in *Das Verhör des Lukullus* (*GW* 4:1471). See also Frenken 166-167.

[8] So that it is not a matter of Courage "objectively" sharing the ideology of the ruling class while "subjectively" sharing the fate of the little people, as White says (97).

[9] This is why she "sympathizes" with the powerful, and not, as Mennemeier suggests, because great and small have the same interest in war, namely business (396).

critical element, which is present throughout the drama, shows that it does not depend for its existence on additions from the actor.)[10]

Third, Courage contains the contradiction that introduces historical movement and possibility into her world, for she not only positively reproduces her world, she also produces her own negation. This is suggested, of course, by her critical rebellion, but it is also represented by her invocation of the "long anger", the possibility of revolution as the appropriate response to oppression (which represents the system's self-knowledge of its own end), a possibility which is given concrete expression in the image of Courage as the system that produces a daughter whose virtue (in greater quantity) would negate her. (Again, here is a historical reference, for the placing of possibility in the little people and the dialectical historical process, but not in the Party, despite the existence of historical models that could have been used for that purpose, is a sign of Brecht's criticism of a Party that in effect had assisted capitalism.)

Brecht's drama, then, is nothing less than an extended metaphor on the historical dialectic of capitalism as Brecht saw it in the years leading up to World War II. It is clear, then, that Courage's contradictions do not preclude a judgment of her.[11] Rather, these contradictions, since they describe capitalism, tell us that Courage cannot be evaluated except by evaluating capitalism (which one could argue is the real object of the scholars' "paper war"). That is, the symbolic content of *Mutter Courage* points outside the drama and joins its world with ours (and so in this sense is "open"),[12] just as Courage, when she pulls her wagon back into the continuing war, joins her world with what Brecht would have considered our own continuing war.

---

[10] On the purely textual level, Hecht tells us, and without the instructions to the actors from the *Couragemodell*, Courage would seem heroic; see Werner Hecht, *Brecht: Vielseitige Betrachtungen* (Berlin: Henschel, 1978) 54.

[11] As Thiele thought (46).

[12] Early noted as characteristic of Brecht's dramas by Hinck, *Die Dramaturgie* 22-3, and disdainfully by Schöne 286; see also Bergstedt, "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip" 286-288.

This reminds us that we cannot truly think Brecht's text without thinking his audience; it reveals as well the truth of that much quoted statement by Brecht which says that, if Courage cannot learn from her experience, at least the audience can.[13] Indeed, it is only when Courage rejoins the war and, like some Great Mother of Business, threatens to start the cycle all over again, that the questions asked by Kattrin are heard most clearly by an audience that finds such a repetition too monstrous.[14] For Kattrin's implicit invitation to fashion a motherly blanket to cover the world, her denial of the universe represented by her mother as a challenge to recognize the possibility of change,[15] these pose Brecht's question to us:[16] are we going to follow Courage back into the belly of war, that "exceptional state" that is actually the rule; or are we going to heed that call: "Erfreut euch des Neuen, schämt euch des Alten!" (in which the New is represented by Courage's daughter);[17] that is, will we instead "leave the womb" and make a life that is not based on the destruction of others, a life in which children are not raised as sacrifices, and by so doing finally bring about a truly "exceptional condition"?[18]

---

[13] *GW* 17:1147; see also Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 248.

[14] Jendreiek 155, 186.

[15] Jendreiek 196; see also the same, page 32.

[16] And so reveals that he is not bound to the notion of automatic change, but, like one of his mentors in Marxist theory, Karl Korsch, gives importance to the individual (even as he does with Kattrin); see Joost 206; and Dickson, *Towards Utopia* 63.

[17] *GW* 9:793-794.

[18] I allude, of course, to Benjamin's *Ausnahmezustand* in "Über den Begriff" 697, which we first encountered in Chapter 7, in "The Hope of History" while discussing Kattrin.

WORKS CONSULTED

1. Works by Bertolt Brecht (including collections and *Materialienbücher*)

Arbeitsjournal. Ed. Werner Hecht. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974.

Brecht im Gespräch: Diskussionen, Dialoge, Interviews. Ed. Werner Hecht. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975.

Brechts 'Aufhaltsamer Aufstieg des Arturo Ui'. Ed. Raimund Gerz. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983.

Brechts 'Kaukasischer Kreidekreis'. Ed. Werner Hecht. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985.

Brechts 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'. Ed. Klaus-Detlef Müller. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982.

Brechts 'Tage der Commune'. Ed. Wolf Siegert. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983.

Briefe. Ed. Günter Glaeser. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981.

Briefe an Marianne Zoff und Hanne Hiob. Ed. Hanne Hiob. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990.

Courage-Modell 1949: Text, Anmerkungen, Aufführung. Berlin: Henschel, 1958.

Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß. 2 vols. Ed. Herta Ramthun. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982.

Gesammelte Werke. 20 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967.

Liebste Bi: Briefe an Paula Banholzer. Eds. Helmut Gier, and Jürgen Hillesheim. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992.

Materialien zu Bertolt Brechts 'Schweyk im zweiten Weltkrieg'. Ed. Herbert Knust. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974.

Materialien zu Brechts 'Der gute Mensch von Sezuan'. Ed. Werner Hecht. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969.

Materialien zu Brechts 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'. Ed. Werner Hecht. 1964. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979.

Mother Courage and Her Children. Trans. John Willett. Eds. John Willett, and Ralph Manheim. London: Eyre Methuen, 1980.

Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Bühnenfassung des Berliner Ensembles. Berlin: Henschel, 1968.

Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Ed. Jan Esper Olsson. Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1981.

Schriften zum Theater. Ed. Werner Hecht. 7 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963-1964.

Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst. Ed. Werner Hecht. 3 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967.

Stücke. 12 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1957-1959.

Tagebücher 1920-1922 — Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1920-1954. Ed. Herta Ramthun. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975.

Texte für Filme. Eds. Wolfgang Gersch, and Werner Hecht. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969.

Theaterarbeit: Sechs Aufführungen des Berliner Ensembles. Eds. Ruth Berlau, Bertolt Brecht, Claus Hubalek, Peter Palitzsch, Käthe Rülicke. 2nd ed. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1961.

Werke: Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe. Eds. Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, and Klaus-Detlef Müller. 30 vols. (projected) Berlin and Frankfurt: Aufbau and Suhrkamp, 1988-.

2. Literature on Brecht (Including Reminiscences)

Abosch, Heinz. "Der Dichter und der Marxismus." *Neue Rundschau*. 91.2/3 (1980): 96-120.

Abusch, Alexander. *Literatur im Zeitalter des Sozialismus: Beiträge zur Literaturgeschichte 1921 bis 1966*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1967.

Adorno, Theodor W. *Noten zur Literatur III*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1965.

Albrecht, Richard, and Matthias Mitzschke. "*Bolschewik ohne Parteibuch* oder kleinbürgerlicher Antileninist?" *Weimarer Beiträge*. 24.2 (1978): 172-179.

Anders, Günther. *Bertolt Brecht: Gespräche und Erinnerungen*. Zurich: Arche, 1962.

Anders, Helena, and Nikolaus Rehling. "Zum Beispiel *Mutter Courage*." *alternative*. 19 (1976): 10-21, 57.

Angermeyer, Hans Christoph. *Zuschauer im Drama: Brecht-Dürrenmatt-Handke*. Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1971.

Arendt, Hannah. *Walter Benjamin - Bertolt Brecht: 2 Essays*. Munich: Piper, 1971.

Baacke, Dieter, and Wolfgang Heydrich. "Glück und Geschichte: Anmerkungen zur Lyrik Bertolt Brechts." *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht II*. (1973): 5-19.

Bab, Julius. *Über den Tag hinaus: Kritische Betrachtungen*. Ed. Harry Bergholz. Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1960.

Backes, Dirk. *Die erste Kunst ist die Beobachtungskunst: Bertolt Brecht und der Sozialistische Realismus*. Berlin: Kramer, 1981.

Bahnholzer, Paula. *So viel wie eine Liebe: Der unbekannte Brecht. Erinnerungen und Gespräche*. Eds. Axel Poldner, and Willibald Eser. Munich: Universitas, 1981.

Bahr, Ehrhard. "Brechts episches Theater als Exiltheater." *Schreiben im Exil*. 109-122.

Baier, Lothar. "Vom Erhabenen der proletarischen Revolution: Ein Nachtrag zur 'Brecht-Lukács-Debatte'." *Der Streit mit Georg Lukács*. Ed. Hans-Jürgen Schmitt. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981. 55-76.

Barck, Simone. "Soldat der Revolution - Margarete Steffin." *Neue Deutsche Literatur*. 27.5 (1979): 165-169.

Barthes, Roland. *Essais critiques*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964.

Bauer, Gerhard. "Lehren ohne Schüler: Brechts Schwierigkeiten beim Dichten gegen die Nationalsozialisten." *Europäische Lehrdichtung: Festschrift für Walter Naumann zum 70. Geburtstag*. Eds. Hans Gerd Rötzer, and Herbert Walz. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981. 262-279.

Bauland, Peter. *The Hooded Eagle: Modern German Drama on the New York Stage*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968.

Baumgart, Reinhard. *Selbstvergessenheit: Drei Wege zum Werk — Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht*. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1989.

Beiträge zur Poetik des Dramas. Ed. Werner Keller. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976.

Benjamin, Walter. *Versuche über Brecht*. Ed. Rolf Tiedemann. 2nd ed. 1966. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978.

Bentley, Eric, ed. *Bertolt Brecht: Seven Plays*. New York: Grove, 1961.

_____. *The Brecht Commentaries 1943-1980*. New York: Grove, 1981.

_____. *The Life of the Drama*. New York: Atheneum, 1964.

_____. "The Songs in *Mother Courage*." *Varieties of Literary Experience: Eighteen Essays in World Literature*. Ed. Stanley Burnshaw. New York: New York University, 1962. 45-74

Bergstedt, Alfred. "Das dialektische Darstellungsprinzip des 'Nicht-Sondern' in neueren Stücken Bertolt Brechts: Literarästhetische Untersuchungen zur 'Politischen Theorie des Verfremdungseffekts." Diss. Pädagogische Hochschule Potsdam, 1962.

Berlau, Ruth. *Brechts Lai-Tu: Erinnerungen und Notate von Ruth Berlau*. Ed. Hans Bunge. Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1985.

Bertolt Brecht: Aspekte seines Werkes, Spuren seiner Wirkung. Eds. Helmut Koopmann, and Theo Stammen. Munich: Vögel, 1983.

Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv. *Bestandsverzeichnis des literarischen Nachlasses*. 4 vols. Berlin: Aufbau, 1969-1973.

Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice. Eds. Betty Nance Weber, and Hubert Heinen. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980.

Bishop, Philip E. "Brecht, Hegel, Lacan: Brecht's Theory of Gest and the Problem of the Subject." *Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature* 10.2 (1986): 267-288.

Blau, Herbert. "Brecht's *Mother Courage*: The Rite of War and the Rhythm of Epic." *Educational Theatre Journal*. 9 (1957): 1-10

Bluhm, Katharina. "Von den Schwierigkeiten der Zuspitzung: Replik auf Udo Tietz' 'hilflosen Antistalinismus des Bert Brecht.'" *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*. 40.6 (1992): 679-688.

Böckmann, Paul. *Provokation und Dialektik in der Dramatik Bertolt Brechts*. Krefeld: Scherpe, 1961.

Boeddinghaus, Walter. "Bestie Mensch in Brechts *Mutter Courage*." *Acta Germanica* 2 (1967): 81-88.

Bohnen, Klaus. "*...schrieb ich mein Stück für Skandinavien*: Eine historisch-kritische Ausgabe von *Mutter Courage* und ein auf deutsch unveröffentlichter Kommentar Brechts zu seinem Stück." *Text & Kontext*. 9.1 (1981): 145-156.

Bormans, Peter. "Brecht und der Stalinismus." *Brecht-Jahrbuch*. 4 (1974): 53-76.

Brandt, Helmut. "Funktionswandel und ästhetische Gestalt in der Exillyrik Bertolt Brechts." *Schreiben im Exil*. 123-144.

Brandt, Thomas Otto. *Die Vieldeutigkeit Bertolt Brechts*. Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1968.

Braun, Matthias. "Aus dem Helene-Weigel-Archiv: Gespräch mit Rudolf Engel." *Sinn und Form*. 34 (1982): 1308-1316.

_____. "Notierungen zu den Mutterrollen der Schauspielerin Helene Weigel." *Maske und Kothurn*. 35.1 (1989): 37-44.

Brecht 83: Brecht und der Marxismus. Berlin: Brecht-Zentrum DDR, 1983.

Brecht-Dialog 1968: Politik auf dem Theater. Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1969.

Brecht, Walter. *Unser Leben in Augsburg, Damals: Erinnerungen*. 2nd ed. 1984. Frankfurt: Insel, 1985.

Brechts Dramen: Neue Interpretationen. Ed. Walter Hinderer. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984.

Brenner, Hildegard, and Hermann Haarmann. "Brecht/Korsch Diskussion: Positionen der Literaturwissenschaft." *alternative*. 18 (1975): 260-279.

Brinkmann, Karl. *Erläuterungen zu Bertolt Brechts 'Mutter Courage' und 'Der kaukasische Kreidekreis'*. Hollfeld: Bange, 1961.

Brooker, Peter. *Bertolt Brecht: Dialectics, Poetry, Politics*. London: Croon Helm, 1988.

Bronnen, Arnolt. *Tage mit Bertolt Brecht: Geschichte einer unvollendeten Freundschaft*. Vienna: Desch, 1960.

Brown, Russell E. *Intimacy and Intimidation: Three Essays on Bertolt Brecht*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990.

Brüggemann, Heinz. "Aspekte einer marxistischen Produktionsästhetik: Versuch über theoretische Beiträge des LEF, Benjamins und Brechts." *Literaturwissenschaft und Sozialwissenschaften 4: Erweiterung der materialistischen Literaturtheorie durch Bestimmung ihrer Grenzen*. Ed. Heinz Schlaffer. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974. 109-143.

_____. *Literarische Technik und soziale Revolution: Versuche über das Verhältnis von Kunstproduktion, Marxismus und literarischer Tradition in den theoretischen Schriften Bertolt Brechts*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1973.

Brustein, Robert. *Seasons of Discontent: Dramatic Opinions 1959-1965*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965.

____. *The Theatre of Revolt: An Approach to the Modern Drama*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962.

Bryant-Bertail, Sarah. "Spatio-Temporality as Theater Performance." *Text and Presentation: The University of Florida Department of Classics Comparative Drama Conference Papers*. Vol.10. Ed. Karelisa Hartigan. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990. 1-9.

____. "Women, Space, Ideology: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*." *The Brecht Yearbook*. 12 (1985): 40-61.

Buck, Theo. "Dialektisches Drama, dialektisches Theater: Anmerkungen zu Brechts *Leben des Galilei*." *Études germaniques*. 33 (1978): 414-427.

Buhl, Barbara. *Bilder der Zukunft, Traum und Plan: Utopie im Werk Bertolt Brechts*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1988.

Bunge, Hans. *Die Debatte um Hanns Eislers "Johann Faustus": Eine Dokumentation*. Berlin: Basisdruck, 1991.

Bürger, Peter. "Kunstsoziologische Aspekte der Brecht-Benjamin-Adorno-Debatte der 30er Jahre." *Seminar: Literatur und Kunstsoziologie*. Ed. Peter Bürger. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978. 11-20.

Busacca, Basil. "Brecht and the Destruction of Theatre." *Medieval Epic*. 185-201.

Calabro, Tony. *Bertolt Brecht's Art of Dissemblance*. New Hampshire: Longwood Academic, 1990.

Case, Sue-Ellen. "Brecht and Women: Homosexuality and the Mother." *The Brecht Yearbook*. 12 (1985): 65-74.

Chiarini, Paolo. "Dialektik, Realismus und Wandlungen des Tragischen bei Brecht." *Brecht 83*. 139-147, 376-377.

____. "Dichtung und Ideologie." *Weimarer Beiträge. Sonderheft*. (1968): 195-222.

Claas, Herbert. *Die politische Ästhetik Bertolt Brechts vom 'Baal' zum 'Caesar'*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977.

Cleary, Donald L., Jr. *Effects of Dialectic Materialism on Selected Works by Bertolt Brecht and Theodor W. Adorno*. Diss. Ohio University, 1991. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991. AAD91-04393.

Clurman, Harold. *The Naked Image: Observations on the Modern Theatre*. New York: Collier-MacMillan, 1966.

Crumbach, Franz Hubert. *Die Struktur des epischen Theaters: Dramaturgie der Kontraste*. 2nd ed. Braunschweig: Waisenhaus, 1970.

Das Ärgernis Brecht. Stuttgart: Basilius, 1961.

Debiel, Gisela. "Das Prinzip der Verfremdung in der Sprachgestaltung Bertolt Brechts: Untersuchungen zum Sprachstil seiner epischen Dramen." Diss. Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität. Bonn. 1960.

Demange, Camille. *Bertolt Brecht: Textes de Brecht*. Paris: Seghers, 1967.

Demetz, Peter. *Brecht: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962.

Der Streit mit Lukács. Ed. Hans-Jürgen Schmitt. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978.

Desuché, Jacques. *Bertolt Brecht*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963.

Deutsches Exildrama und Exiltheater: Akten des Exilliteratur-Symposiums der University of Southern California 1976. Ed. Wolfgang Elfe. Bern: Lang, 1977.

Dickson, Keith A. "History, Drama and Brecht's Chronicle of the Thirty Years War." *Forum for Modern Language Studies*. 6 (1970): 255-272.

____. *Towards Utopia: A Study of Brecht*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

Didyk, Michaela. "Schwierigkeiten einer Brecht-Edition: Jasper [sic] Olssons historisch-kritische Ausgabe von *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*. Sonderheft 105 (1986): 181-193.

Dieckmann, Friedrich. *Karl von Appens Bühnenbilder am Berliner Ensemble: Szenenbilder, Figurinen, Entwürfe und Szenenphotos zu 18 Aufführungen*. Berlin: Henschel, 1971.

'Die Mühen der Ebenen': Kontinuität und Wandel in der deutschen Literatur und Gesellschaft 1945-1949. Ed. Bernd Hüppauf. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1981.

Dort, Bernard. *Lecture de Brecht.* 1960. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972.

Dumazeau, Henri. *Mère Courage — Brecht: Analyse critique.* Paris: Hatier, 1972.

Dümling, Albrecht. *'Laßt euch nicht verführen': Brecht und die Musik.* Munich: Kindler, 1985.

Duwe, Wilhelm. *Deutsche Dichtung des 20. Jahrhunderts vom Naturalismus bis zum Surrealismus.* 2 vols. Zurich: Orell-Füssli, 1962.

Dymschiz, Alexander. *Ein unvergeßlicher Frühling: Literarische Porträts und Erinnerungen.* Trans. Klaus Ziermann. Berlin: Dietz, 1970.

Eagleton, Terry. "Brecht and Rhetoric." *New Literary History.* 16 (1984/85): 633-638.

Eckhardt, Juliane. *Das epische Theater.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983.

Eddershaw, Margaret. "Echt Brecht? *Mother Courage* at the Citizens, 1990." *New Theatre Quarterly.* 7.28 (1991): 303-14.

Eisler, Hanns. *Fragen Sie mehr nach Brecht: Gespräche mit Hans Bunge.* 1975. Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1986.

Ekmann, Bjφrn. *Gesellschaft und Gewissen: Die sozialen und moralischen Anschauungen Bertolt Brechts und ihre Bedeutung für seine Dichtung.* Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1969.

Emmerich, Wolfgang. "*Massenfaschismus* und die Rolle des Ästhetischen: Faschismustheorie bei Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht." *Antifaschistische Literatur: Programme, Autoren, Werke.* Ed. Lutz Winkler. 3 vols. Kronberg: Scriptor, 1977. 1:223-290.

Engberg, Harald. *Brecht auf Fünen: Exil in Dänemark 1933-1939.* Trans. Heinz Kulas. Wuppertal: Hammer, 1974.

Engel, Erich. *Schriften: Über Theater und Film*. Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1971.

Episches Theater. Ed. Reinhold Grimm. Cologne: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1966.

Epp, Peter. *Die Darstellung des Nationalsozialismus in der Literatur: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung am Beispiel von Texten Brechts, Thomas Manns, Seghers' und Hochhuths*. Frankfurt: Lang, 1985.

Erworbene Tradition: Studien zu Werken der sozialistischen deutschen Literatur. Ed. Günter Hartung. Berlin: Aufbau, 1977.

Essays on Brecht: Theater and Politics. Eds. Siegfried Mews, and Herbert Knust. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974.

Esslin, Martin. *Bertolt Brecht*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

_____. *Brecht, A Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work and His Opinions*. 4th revised ed. 1959. London: Methuen, 1984.

Europäische Lehrdichtung: Festschrift für Walter Naumann zum 70. Geburtstag. Eds. Hans Gerd Rötzer, and Herbert Walz. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981.

Eversberg, Gerd. *Bertolt Brecht — Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Beispiel für Theorie and Praxis des epischen Theaters*. Hollfeld: Beyer, 1976.

Ewen, Frederic. *Bertolt Brecht. His Life, His Art, and His Times*. 1967. New York: Citadel, 1985.

Fankhauser, Gertrud. *Verfremdung als Stilmittel vor und bei Brecht*. Tübingen: Huth, 1971.

Fenn, Bernard. *Characterisation of Women in the Plays of Bertolt Brecht*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982.

Fergusson, Francis. "Three Allegorists: Brecht, Wilder, and Eliot." *The Human Image in Dramatic Literature*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1969. 41-71.

Fetscher, Iring. "Bertolt Brecht and Politics." Trans. Betty Nance Weber. *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory*. 11-17.

_____. "Brecht und der Kommunismus." *Merkur*. 27 (1973): 872-886.

____. "Es gibt keine Götter - auch Stalin: ein Ochs. Postscriptum zu Hannah Arendts *Quod licet Jovi...*(*Merkur*, Juni/Juli 1969)." *Merkur*. 23 (1969): 888-889.

Fiebach, Joachim. *Von Craig bis Brecht: Studien zu Künstlertheorien in der 1. Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Henschel, 1975.

Fischbach, Fred. "L'evolution politique de Bertolt Brecht: Les années du grand *retournement* (1926-1929)." *Brecht Heute*. 3 (1973): 122-155.

Fischer, Gerhard. "Brechts Dramen 1948-1950." *'Die Mühen der Ebenen'*. 271-306.

Fischer, Matthias-Johannes. *Brechts Theatertheorie: Forschungsgeschichte-Forschungsstand-Perspektiven*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989.

Fradkin, Ilja. *Bertolt Brecht: Weg und Methode*. Trans. Oskar Törne. Leipzig: Reclam, 1977.

____. "On the Artistic Originality of Bertolt Brecht's Drama." Trans. Ruth Crego. Demetz, *Brecht*. 97-105.

Frenken, Herbert. *Das Frauenbild in Brechts Lyrik*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993.

Frisch, Max. *Erinnerungen an Brecht*. Berlin: Friedenauer, 1968.

Frisch, Werner, and K.W. Obermeier. *Brecht in Augsburg — Erinnerungen, Texte, Fotos: Eine Dokumentation*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976.

Fuegi, John. *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

____. *Brecht and Company: Sex, Politics, and the Making of the Modern Drama*. New York: Grove, 1994.

____. "Gespräch mit Richard Schechner über seine New Yorker Aufführung der *Mutter Courage*." Trans. Jost Hermand. *Brecht-Jahrbuch*. 6 (1976): 166-176.

____. "The Alogical in the Plays of Brecht." *Alogical Modern Drama*. Ed. Kenneth S. White. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982. 13-24.

____. *The Essential Brecht*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1972.

____. "The Soviet Union and Brecht: The Exile's Choice." *Brecht Heute*. 2 (1972): 209-221.

Führich, Angelika E. *Aufbruch der geopferten Heldinnen zum Frauenbild im Drama der Weimarer Republik*. Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1989. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989. AAD89-22501.

Geiger, Heinz. *Widerstand und Mitschuld: Zum deutschen Drama von Brecht bis Weiss*. Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1973.

Geißler, Rolf, ed. *Zur Interpretation des modernen Dramas: Brecht-Dürrenmatt-Frisch*. Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1961.

Gersch, Wolfgang. *Film bei Brecht: Bertolt Brechts praktische und theoretische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Film*. Munich: Hanser, 1976.

Giehse, Therese. *Ich habe nichts zum Sagen: Gespräche mit Monika Sperr*. Munich: Bertelsmann, 1974.

Giese, Peter Christian. *Das 'Gesellschaftlich-Komische': Zu Komik und Komödie am Beispiel der Stücke und Bearbeitungen Brechts*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974.

Glade, Henry. "The Death of Mother Courage." *Tulane Drama Review*. 12.6 (1967): 137-142.

Gleitman, Claire. "All in the Family: Mother Courage and the Ideology in the Gestus." *Comparative Drama*. 25.2 (1991): 147-67.

Gonçalves de Silva, M. Helena. *Character, Ideology and Symbolism in the Plays of Wedekind, Sternheim, Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht*. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1985.

Gong Boan. "First Performance of Brecht's Dramatic Work in China: The Production of *Mother Courage* and its Stage Design." Trans. Ping-leung Chan. *Brecht and East Asian Theatre: The Proceedings of a Conference on Brecht in East Asian Theatre*. Eds. Anthony Tatlow, and Tak-wai Wong. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1982. 65-71.

Goodman, Henry. "Bertolt Brecht: Dualism and Tradition." *Medieval Epic*. 219-232.

Gray, Ronald. *Brecht*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961.

_____. *Brecht the Dramatist*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Greid, Hermann. *Der Mensch Brecht wie ich ihn erlebt habe*. Stockholm: Deutsches Institut, Stolkholm University, 1974.

Grimm, Reinhold. *Bertolt Brecht*. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971.

_____. *Bertolt Brecht: Die Struktur seines Werkes*. 4th ed. 1959. Nuremberg: Carl, 1968.

_____. "Bertolt Brechts dramatische Kunst." *Universitas*. 18 (1963): 1077-1086.

_____. "Betrachtungen eines Unbeteiligten: ein paar ausgewählte Kommentare zur neuen 'kommentierten' Brecht-Ausgabe." *Annali: Sezione Germanica, Filologia Germanica 1991*. 1.1/2 (1992): 269-288.

_____. "Confessions of a Poet: Poetry and Politics in Brecht's Lyric." *From Kafka and Dada to Brecht and Beyond*. Eds. Reinhold Grimm, Peter Spycher, and Richard A. Zipser. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1982. 35-48.

_____. "Der katholische Einstein: Brechts Dramen- und Theatertheorie." *Brechts Dramen*. 11-32.

_____. "Die ästhetischen Anschauungen Bertolt Brechts: Notizen zu dem Buch von Helge Hultberg." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*. 84. Sonderheft. (1965): 90-111.

_____. "Notizen zu Brechts Liebesleben." *German Life and Letters*. 42.4 (1989): 411-419.

_____. "Verfremdung: Beiträge zu Wesen und Ursprung eines Begriffes." *Revue de la littérature comparée*. 35.2 (1961): 207-236.

_____. "Vom Novum Organum zum Kleinen Organon: Gedanken über Verfremdung." *Das Ärgernis Brecht*. 45-70.

_____. "Zwischen Tragik und Ideologie." *Das Ärgernis Brecht*. 103-125.

Guggenheimer, Walter Maria. *Alles Theater: Ausgewählte Kritiken 1947-1965*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966.

Haas, Willy. *Bert Brecht*. Berlin: Colloquium, 1958.

Hartinger, Christel. *Bertolt Brecht - das Gedicht nach Krieg und Wiederkehr: Studien zum lyrischen Werk 1945-1956*. Berlin: Brecht-Zentrum der DDR, 1982.

Hartung, Günter. "Bertolt Brecht und Thomas Mann: Über Alternativen in Kunst und Politik." *Weimarer Beiträge*. 12.3 (1967): 407-435.

_____. "Diskussion über die 'Autonomie der Kunst'." *Weimarer Beiträge*. 28.6 (1982): 147-151.

_____. "Ein Meinungsstreit um Brecht, kritisch betrachtet." *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*. 28 (1979): 5-19.

_____. "Zum Publikumsverhältnis des epischen Theaters." *Probleme der Kunstwirkung*. Ed. Dietrich Sommer. Halle: Marthin-Luther-Universität, 1979. 97-101.

Haug, Wolfgang Fritz, ed. *Aktualisierung Brechts*. Berlin: Argument, 1980.

Hauptmann, Elisabeth. *Julia ohne Romeo: Geschichten, Stücke, Aufsätze, Erinnerungen*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1977.

Haus, Heinz-Uwe. "A Comparison of Two Versions of *Mother Courage*: Weimar/GDR and Nicosia, Cyprus." *Gestus*. 3 (1987): 25-32.

_____. "*Mutter Courage* in Weimar: Konzeption, Diskussion, Rezeption." *Brecht-Jahrbuch*. 8 (1978): 109-119.

Hecht, Werner. *Aufsätze über Brecht*. Berlin: Henschel, 1970.

_____. *Brecht: Vielseitige Betrachtungen*. Berlin: Henschel, 1978.

_____. *Brechts Weg zum epischen Theater: Beitrag zur Entwicklung des epischen Theaters 1918 bis 1933*. Berlin: Henschel, 1962.

_____. *Helene Weigel zu Ehren*. Frankfurt: Surhkamp, 1970.

_____. *Sieben Studien über Brecht*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972.

____. "Zur großen kommentierten Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe der Werke Bertolt Brechts." *Zeitschrift für Germanistik.* 7 (1986): 313-317.

Hecht, Werner, and Karl-Heinz Drescher. *Bertolt Brecht 1898-1956: Zeit, Leben, Werk.* Berlin: Henschel, 1978.

Hein, Edgar. *Bertolt Brecht — "Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder": Interpretation.* Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994.

Heinitz, Werner. "Das Epische in der Sprache Bertolt Brechts." *Neue Deutsche Literatur.* 5.4 (1957): 49-59.

Heinze, Helmut. *Brechts Ästhetik des Gestischen: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1992.

Heiseler, Berndt von. "Bert Brecht. Mutter Courage." *Gesammelte Essays zur alten und neuen Literatur.* 2 vols. Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf, 1967. Volume 2. 141-144.

Hennenberg, Fritz. *Das Große Brecht-Liederbuch.* 3 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984.

____. *Dessau-Brecht: Musikalische Arbeiten.* Berlin: Henschel, 1963.

Hermand, Jost. "Utopisches bei Brecht." *Brecht-Jahrbuch.* 4 (1974): 9-33.

Hiller, Robert L. "The Sutler's Cart and the Lump of Gold." *The Germanic Review.* 39.2 (1964): 137-144.

Hinck, Walter. *Die Dramaturgie des späten Brecht.* 2nd ed. 1959. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960.

____. "Die 'Grosse Helferin' im Drama Bertolt Brechts." *Études Germaniques.* 44.1 (1989): 79-93.

____. "Metamorphosen eines Wiegenlieds: H. L. Wagner, Heine, G. Hauptmann, Toller, Brecht." *Zeiten und Formen in Sprache und Dichtung: Festschrift für Fritz Tschich zum 70. Geburtstag.* Eds. Karl Heinz Schirmer, and Bernhard Savinski. Cologne: Böhlau, 1972.

____. "*Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*: Ein kritisches Volksstück." *Brechts Dramen.* 162-177.

Hinderer, Walter. "Inferno am Pazifik oder die heimliche Flucht in den ästhetischen Mehrwert: Bertolt Brechts kalifornische Alpträume." *Weimar am Pazifik — Literarische Wege zwischen den Kontinenten: Festschrift für Werner Vordtriede zum 70. Geburtstag*. Eds. Dieter Borchmeyer, and Till Heimeran. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985 137-145.

Hohnhäuser, Josef. "Brecht und der kalte Krieg: Materialien zur Brecht-Rezeption in der BRD." *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht II.* (1973): 192-203.

Holt, Robin J. "Solomon, Brecht, and the Conception of Motherhood." *Gestus*. 2 (1986): 293-298.

Holthusen, Hans Egon. "Bertolt Brecht: Mutter Courage — Oder das Prinzip der nächsten Dinge." *Das deutsche Drama vom Expressionismus bis zur Gegenwart: Interpretationen*. Ed. Manfred Brauneck. Bamberg: Buchner, 1970. 141-149.

____. "Dramaturgie der Verfremdung: Eine Studie zur Dramentechnik Bertolt Brechts." *Merkur*. 15.6 (1961): 520-542.

____. "Versuch über Brecht." Holthusen. *Kritisches Verstehen: Neue Aufsätze zur Literatur*. Munich: Piper, 1961. 7-137.

Hook, Sidney. "Was dachte Brecht von Stalin? Nochmals zu Hannah Arendts Brecht-Aufsatz." *Merkur*. 23 (1969): 1082-1083.

Horst, Astrid. *Prima inter pares: Elisabeth Hauptmann, die Mitarbeiterin Bertolt Brechts*. Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1992.

Horwich, Cara Mary. *The Theme of Survival in Grimmelshausen's 'Der abentheuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch' and Brecht's 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'*. Diss. Georgetown University, 1994. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1994.

Hultberg, Helge. *Die ästhetischen Anschauungen Bertolt Brechts*. Trans. Hans Martin Junghans. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962.

Ihering, Herbert. *Bertolt Brecht und das Theater*. Berlin: Rembrandt, 1959.

Jacobi, Walter. "Die Beeinflussung des modernen deutschen Dramas durch den Film." *Der Deutschunterricht*. 10.3 (1958): 46-56.

Jäger, Manfred. "Zur Rezeption des Stückeschreibers Brecht in der DDR." *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht I.* (1971): 107-118.

Janka, Walter. *Schwierigkeiten mit der Wahrheit*. Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1990.

Jarvis, Ursula Liebrecht. "Theories of Illusion and Distance in the Drama from Lessing to Brecht." Diss. Columbia University, 1961.

Jendreiek, Helmut. *Bertolt Brecht: Drama der Veränderung*. Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1969.

Jeske, Wolfgang. *Bertolt Brechts Poetik des Romans*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984.

Jesse, Horst. *Die Lyrik Bertolt Brechts von 1914-1956 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der "ars vivendi" angesichts der Todesbedrohungen*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994.

John, Helmut. "Helmut Baierls *Frau Flinz* als 'Gegenentwurf' zu Bertolt Brechts *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*." *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Pädagogischen Hochschule Potsdam. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe.* 12.4 (1968): 655-671.

Joost, Jörg-Wilhelm, Klaus-Detlef Müller, and Michael Voges. *Bertolt Brecht: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung*. Ed. Klaus-Detlef Müller. Munich: Beck, 1985.

Kächele, Heinz. *Bertolt Brecht*. Leipzig: VEB, 1984.

_____. *Bertolt Brecht: Sein Leben in Bildern*. Leipzig: Enzyklopädie, 1963.

Kaemmerling, Ekkehard. "Theaterbezogene Lektüre und pragma-semantische Dramenanalyse." *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*. 70 (1979): 171-187.

Karasek, Hellmuth. *Bertolt Brecht: Der jüngste Fall eines Theaterklassikers*. Munich: Kindler, 1978.

Kaschnitz, Marie Luise. "Mutter Courage." By Kaschnitz. *Zwischen immer und nie: Gestalten und Themen der Dichtung*. Frankfurt: Insel, 1971. 191-201.

Kaufmann, Hans. *Bertolt Brecht: Geschichtsdrama und Parabelstück.* Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1962.

____. "Brecht, die Entfremdung und die Liebe: Zur Gestaltung der Geschlechterbeziehungen im Werk Brechts." *Weimarer Beiträge.* 11.1 (1965): 84-101.

Kebir, Sabine. "Die feministische Brechtkritik." *Weimarer Beiträge.* 34.2 (1988): 297-302.

____. *Ein akzeptabler Mann? Brecht und die Frauen.* Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1989.

Kellner, Douglas. "Brecht's Marxist Aesthetic: The Korsch Connection." *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory.* 29-42.

Kesting, Marianne. *Bertolt Brecht in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten.* 1959. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982.

____. *Das epische Theater: Zur Struktur des modernen Dramas.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967.

____. "Wagner/Meyerhold/Brecht oder Die Erfindung des *epischen* Theaters." *Brecht-Jahrbuch.* 7 (1977): 111-130.

Kettle, Arnold. *Shaw and Brecht: 'Major Barbara', 'Saint Joan', 'The Life of Galileo' and 'Mother Courage and her Children'.* Walton Hall, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1977.

Kienzler, Klaus. "Bertolt Brecht — ein Gegenstand der Theologie?" *Bertolt Brecht: Aspekte.* 85-110.

Klapdor-Kops, Heike. *Heldinnen: Die Gestaltung der Frauen im Drama deutscher Exilautoren (1933-1945).* Wenheim and Basel: Beltz, 1985.

Kleber, Pia, and Colin Visser, eds. *Re-interpreting Brecht: His Influence on Contemporary Drama and Film.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Klotz, Volker. *Bertolt Brecht: Versuch über das Werk.* Darmstadt: Hermann Gentner, 1957.

Knight, Kenneth. "*Simplicissimus* und *Mutter Courage*." *Daphnis*. 5 (1976): 699-705.

Knopf, Jan. *Bertolt Brecht, Ein kritischer Forschungsbericht: Fragwürdiges in der Brecht-Forschung*. Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1974.

_____. *Brecht-Handbuch: Eine Ästhetik der Widersprüche. Bd.1. Theater*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980.

_____. *Brecht-Handbuch: Eine Ästhetik der Widersprüche. Bd.2. Lyrik, Prosa, Schriften*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984.

_____. "Lyrik der Politik: Brechts *Buckower Elegien* und der 17. Juni." *Bertolt Brecht: Actes du Colloque franco-allemand tenu en Sorbonne (15-19 novembre 1988)*. Eds. Jean-Marie Valentin, and Theo Buck. Bern: Lang, 1990. 53-66.

Knust, Herbert. "Grosz, Piscator und Brecht: Notizen zum Theater im Exil." *Deutsches Exildrama und Exiltheater*. 56-66.

_____. "Piscator and Brecht: Affinity and Alienation." *Essays on Brecht*. 44-68.

Koller, Gerold. *Der mitspielende Zuschauer: Theorie und Praxis im Schaffen Brechts*. Zurich: Artemis, 1979.

Komar, Kathleen L. "Paradigm change: the Female Paradigm in Brecht's *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* and Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*." *Euphorion*. 82 (1988): 116-126.

Kortner, Fritz. *Aller Tage Abend*. Munich: Kindler, 1959.

Kuczynski, Jürgen. *Gestalten und Werke: Soziologische Studien zur deutschen Literatur*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1969.

Lacis, Asja. *Revolutionär im Beruf: Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator*. Ed. Hildegard Brenner. Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1971.

Leach, Robert. "*Mother Courage and her Children*." *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. Eds. Peter Thomson, and Glendye Sacks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 128-138.

Leiser, Peter. *Bertolt Brecht: 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder' - 'Der kaukasische Kreidekreis'*. Hollfeld: Beyer, 1973.

Lennox, Sara. "Women in Brecht's Work." *New German Critique*. 5.2 (1978): 83-97.

Ley, Ralph. *Brecht as Thinker: Studies in Literary Marxism and Existentialism*. Ann Arbor: Applied Literature Press, 1979.

Lindenberger, Herbert. *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Lindner, Burkhardt. "Brecht/Benjamin/Adorno: Über Veränderungen der Kunstproduktion im wissenschaftlich-technischen Zeitalter." *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht I.* (1971): 14-36.

Lindtberg, Leopold. "Persönliche Erinnerungen an Bertolt Brecht." By Lindtberg. *Reden und Aufsätze*. Zurich: Atlantis, 1972. 120-124.

Literarische Profile: Deutsche Dichter von Grimmelshausen bis Brecht. Ed. Walter Hinderer. Königstein: Athenäum, 1982.

Lothar, Ernst. "Die Durchbrechung der Wiener Brecht-Blokade: Tragikomödien." *Macht und Ohnmacht des Theaters: Reden, Regeln, Rechenschaft*. Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 1968. 185-189.

Lucchesi, Joachim, and Ronald K. Shull. *Musik bei Brecht*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988.

Ludwig, Karl-Heinz. *Bertolt Brecht: Philosophische Grundlagen und Implikationen seiner Dramaturgie*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1975.

_____. *Bertolt Brecht: Tätigkeit und Rezeption von der Rückkehr aus dem Exil bis zur Gründung der DDR*. Kronberg: Scriptor, 1976.

Luft, Friedrich. *Berliner Theater 1945-1961: Sechzehn kritische Jahre*. Velber: Friedrich, 1961.

Lukes, Milan. "Dialektischer Widerspruch in Brechts Theorie des Theaters." *Brecht 83*. 174-179.

Luthardt, Theodor. "Der Song als Schlüssel zur dramatischen Grundkonzeption in Bertolt Brechts *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder.*" *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena: Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe.* 7.1 (1957/1958): 119-122.

Lyon, James K. *Bertolt Brecht in America.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

____. "Bertolt Brecht's Love Poetry for Margarete Steffin." *Perspectives and Personalities: Studies in Modern German Literature Honoring Claude Hill.* Eds. Ralph Ley et al. Heidelberg: Winter, 1978. 261-273.

____. "Brecht und Stalin - des Dichters *letztes Wort.*" *Exilforschung.* 1 (1983): 120-129.

____. "The FBI as Literary Historian: The File of Bertolt Brecht." *The Brecht Yearbook.* 11 (1983): 213-231.

____. "Zur New Yorker Aufführung von Brechts *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches.*" *Deutsches Exildrama und Exiltheater.* 67-76.

Lyon, James K., and John B. Fuegi. "Bertolt Brecht." *Deutsche Exilliteratur seit 1933: Bd.1 Kalifornien.* Eds. John M. Spalek, and Joseph Strelka. Bern: Francke, 1976. 268-298.

Lyons, Charles R. *Bertolt Brecht: The Despair and the Polemic.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1968.

____. "Some Variations of *Kindermord* as Dramatic Archetype." *Comparative Drama.* 1 (1967): 56-71.

Mandel, Oscar. "Brecht's Unheroes and Heroines." *Medieval Epic.* 233-242.

Mayer, Hans. *Anmerkungen zu Brecht.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1965.

____. *Brecht in der Geschichte: 3 Versuche.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971.

Mclean, Sammy K. *The 'Bänkelsang' and the Work of Bertolt Brecht.* The Hague: Mouton, 1972.

Medieval Epic to the 'Epic Theater' of Brecht: Essays in Comparative Literature. Comparative Literature Conference, University of Southern California,

1967. Eds. Rosario P. Armato, and John M. Spalek. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1968.

Melchinger, Siegfried. *Geschichte des politischen Theaters*. Velber: Friedrich, 1971.

Mennemeier, Franz Norbert. "Brecht: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*." *Das deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*. 2 vols. Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1962. Volume 2. 386-404.

Milfull, John. *From Baal to Keuner: The 'Second Optimism' of Bertolt Brecht*. Bern: Lang, 1974.

_____. "*Mühen der Gebirge, Mühen der Ebenen*: Probleme des Heimkehrers Brecht." *'Die Mühen der Ebenen'* 233-247.

Mittenzwei, Werner. *Bertolt Brecht: Von der 'Maßnahme' zu 'Leben des Galilei'*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1962.

_____. "Brecht - Die ästhetischen Folgen des Funktionswechsels." *Funktion der Literatur: Aspekte-Probleme-Aufgaben*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975. 348-355.

_____. *Brechts Verhältnis zur Tradition*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972.

_____. "Das Brechtverständnis in beiden deutschen Staaten." *Sinn und Form*. 39 (1987): 1265-1303.

_____. *Das Leben des Bertolt Brecht, oder Der Umgang mit den Welträtseln*. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987.

_____. "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung: Die Brecht-Lukács-Debatte." *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács: Der Methodenstreit deutscher sozialistischer Schriftsteller*. Ed. Werner Mittenzwei. Leipzig: Reclam, 1975. 153-203.

_____. "Erprobung einer neuen Methode: Zur ästhetischen Position Bertolt Brechts." *Positionen: Beiträge zur marxistischen Literaturtheorie in der DDR*. Ed. Werner Mittenzwei. Leipzig: Reclam, 1969. 59-100.

_____. *Gestaltung und Gestalten im modernen Drama: Zur Technik des Figurenaufbaus in der sozialistischen und spätbürgerlichen Dramatik.* Berlin: Aufbau, 1965.

Morley, Michael. "Kontinuität und Wandel in Brechts Gedichten nach 1945." *'Die Mühen der Ebenen'*. 249-269.

Mueller, Carl R. "Brecht and the Marxist Concept of Man." *Medieval Epic*. 203-217.

Mueller, Roswitha. "The Language of Utopia in *The Good Person of Setzuan*." *Gestus*. 3 (1987): 16-18.

Mühleisen, Hans-Otto. "Bertolt Brecht und die Frankfurter Schule." *Bertolt Brecht: Aspekte*. 125-145.

Müller, Joachim. "Dramatisches, episches und dialektisches Theater." *Episches Theater*. 154-196.

Müller, Klaus-Detlef. "Bertolt Brechts *Leben des Galilei*." *Geschichte als Schauspiel: Deutsche Geschichtsdramen, Interpretationen*. Ed. Walter Hinck. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981. 240-253.

_____. "Brechts *Meti* und die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Lehrer Karl Korsch." *Brecht Jahrbuch*. 7 (1977): 9-29.

_____. "Der Philosoph auf dem Theater: Ideologiekritik und 'Linksabweichung' in Bertolt Brechts *Messingkauf*." *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht I*. (1971): 45-71.

_____. *Die Funktion der Geschichte im Werk Bertolt Brechts: Studien zum Verhältnis von Marxismus und Ästhetik*. 2nd ed. 1967. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972.

_____. "Utopische Intention und Kritik der Utopien bei Brecht." *Literatur ist Utopie*. Ed. Gert Ueding. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978. 335-366.

Müller-Michaels, Harro. "Bertolt Brecht: *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*." *Deutsche Dramen: Interpretationen zu Werken von der Aufklärung bis zur*

Gegenwart. Ed. Harro Müller-Michaels. Vol.1. Königstein: Athenäum, 1981. 1: 68-84.

Müller-Seidel, Walter. Nachwort. *Bürgerliches Trauerspiel und soziales Drama*. Vol.15 of *Klassische deutsche Dichtung in 22 Bänden*. 22 vols. Eds. Fritz Martini, and Walter Müller-Seidel. Freiburg: Herder, 1964. 490-537.

Münch, Alois. *Bertolt Brechts Faschismustheorie und ihre theatralische Konkretisierung in den 'Rundköpfen und Spitzköpfen'*. Frankfurt: Lang, 1982.

Münsterer, Hanns Otto, Tom Kuhn, Karen J. Leeder, and Michael Morley. *The Young Brecht*. London: Libris, 1992.

Müssener, Helmut. *Deutschsprachiges Exil-Theater in Skandinavien*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm, Tgsla Institute, 1977.

Needle, Jan, and Peter Thomson. *Brecht*. Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1981.

Neumann, Peter Horst. *Der Weise und der Elefant: Zwei Brecht-Studien*. Munich: Fink, 1970.

Nørregaard, Hans Christian. "Bertolt Brecht und Dänemark." *Exil in Dänemark: Deutschsprachige Wissenschaftler, Künstler und Schriftsteller in dänischem Exil nach 1933*. Eds. Willy Dähnhardt, and Birgit S. Nielsen. Heide: Bogens, 1993. 405-461.

Nussbaum, Laureen. "The Evolution of the Feminine Principle in Brecht's Work: Beyond the Feminist Critique." *German Studies Review*. 8 (1985): 217-244.

_____. *The Image of Woman in the Work of Bertolt Brecht*. Diss. University of Washington, 1977. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1977. DDJ77-18400.

Obermayer, August. "Die dramaturgische Funktion der Lieder in Brechts *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*." *Festschrift für E.W. Herd*. Ed. August Obermeyer. Dunedin: University of Otago, 1980. 200-213.

Olsson, Jan Esper. "The Starting Point and Turning Points in *Mother Courage's* Stage History." *Communications from the International Brecht Society*. 21.2 (1992): 71-74.

Otto, Theo. "Bühnenbilder für Brecht." *Brecht auf deutschen Bühnen: Bertolt Brechts dramatisches Werk auf dem Theater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Trans. John Willet. Eds. Hermann Beil et al. Bad Godesberg: InterNationes, 1968.

Padture, Rajendra. "Die Problematik in Bertolt Brechts *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*." *German Studies in India*. 13.3 (1989): 35-40.

Pascal, Roy. *Brecht's Misgivings*. The 1977 Bithell Memorial Lecture. London: The Institute of Germanic Studies, 1977.

Petersen, Klaus-Dietrich. *Bertolt-Brecht-Bibliographie*. Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1968.

Pfotenhauer, Helmut. *Ästhetische Erfahrung und gesellschaftliches System: Untersuchungen zu Methodenproblemen einer materialistischen Literaturanalyse im Spätwerk Benjamins*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975.

Pietzcker, Carl. "Bertolt Brecht: *Die Ballade vom Wasserrad*." *Geschichte im Gedicht: Texte und Interpretationen — Protestlied, Bänkelsang, Ballade, Chronik*. Ed. Walter Hinck. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979. 206-213.

_____. *'Ich kommandiere mein Herz': Brechts Herzneurose — ein Schlüssel zu seinem Leben und Schreiben*. 2nd ed. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1988.

Pike, David. "Brecht and Stalin's Russia: The Victim as Apologist 1931-1945." *The Brecht Yearbook*. 11 (1983): 143-193.

_____. *Lukács and Brecht*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Plachta, Bodo. "Der 'Stückeschreiber' als Regisseur: Editorische Konsequenzen aus Brechts Regiearbeit am *Galilei*." *Textkonstitution bei mündlicher und*

bei schriftlicher Überlieferung. Ed. Martin Stern. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991. 197-208.

Pohl, Rainer. *Strukturelemente und Entwicklung von Pathosformen in der Dramensprache Bertold Brechts*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1969.

Pracht, Erwin. "Bertolt Brecht über die soziale Funktion der Kunst." *Weimarer Beiträge*. 15 (1969): 46-73.

Raddatz, Fritz J. "Ent-weiblichte Eschatologie: Bertolt Brechts revolutionärer Gegenmythos." *Text + Kritik. Sonderband Bertolt Brecht II*. (1973): 152-159.

_____. "Exil contra Emigration." *Merkur*. 32 (1978): 148-152.

Reiber, Hartmut. "Das eigene Leben des Anderen: Gespräch mit Käthe Rülicke-Weiler." *The Brecht Yearbook*. 19 (1994): 163-185.

Reich, Bernard. *Im Wettlauf mit der Zeit*. Berlin: Henschel, 1970.

Reichert, Herbert W. "Hauptmann's Frau Wolf and Brecht's Mutter Courage." *The German Quarterly*. 34.4 (1961): 439-448.

Riess, Curt. *Sein oder Nichtsein: Der Roman eines Theaters*. Zurich: Arche, 1963.

Rilla, Paul. *Vom bürgerlichen und sozialistischen Realismus*. Leipzig: Reclam, 1967.

Rischbieter, Henning. *Bertolt Brecht*. Velber: Friedrich, 1966.

Ritchie, Gisela Fuhrmann. *Der Dichter und die Frau: Literarische Frauengestalten durch drei Jahrhunderte*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1989.

Ritter, Hans Martin. *Das gestische Prinzip bei Bertolt Brecht*. Cologne: Prometh, 1986.

Rohrwasser, Michael. "*Ist also Schweigen das beste?*: Brechts Schreibtischschublade und das Messer des Chirurgen." *Text + Kritik*. 108 (1990): 38-47.

Rorrison, Hugh. "Brecht and Piscator." *Brecht in Perspective*. Eds. Graham Bartram, and Anthony Waine. New York: Longman, 1982. 145-159.

Rühle, Jürgen. *Literature and Revolution: A Critical Study of the Writer and Communism in the Twentieth Century*. Trans. Jean Steinberg. Revised ed. 1960. New York: Praeger, 1969.

Rülicke-Weiler, Käthe. *Die Dramaturgie Brechts: Theater als Mittel der Veränderung*. Berlin: Henschel, 1966.

Ryan, Laurence. "Bertolt Brecht: A Marxist Dramatist?" *Aspects of the Drama and the Theatre: Five Kathleen Robinson Lectures delivered in the University of Sydney 1961-1963*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1965. 71-111.

Saillet, Maurice. "Mère Courage à la Porte de Montreuil." *Mercure de France*. 1071 (1952): 496-506.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Un théâtre de situations*. Eds. Michel Contal, and Michel Rybalka. Paris: Gallimard, 1973.

Schäfer, Walter E. "War der Weg über die Lieder ein Umweg? Bertolt Brecht — *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*." *Wirkendes Wort*. 14 (1964): 407-413.

Schalk, Axel. "*O, Deutschland, bleiche Mutter!*: Heines Enkel und Brechts Söhne und ein deutscher Mythos." *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*. 28 (1990): 145-172.

Schärer, Bruno. *Bertolt Brechts Theater: Sprache und Bühne*. Zurich: Juris, 1964.

Schebera, Jürgen. "Feuchtwangers *Moskau 1937*: ein 'kleiner taciteischer Bericht'?" *Nach Brecht: Ein Almanach 1992*. Ed. Inge Gellert. Berlin: Brecht Zentrum Berlin, 1992. 101-111.

Schings, Dietmar. *Über die Bedeutung der Rolle als Medium der Entpersonalisierung im Theater des XX. Jahrhunderts: Strindberg-Pirandello-Brecht-Ionesco*. Munich: Schön, 1969.

Schlenstedt, Silvia. "Ermutigungen auf vielerlei Art: Wirkungsstrategien im Aufbau von Gedichtbüchern 1933-1945." *Wer schreibt, handelt: Strategien*

und Verfahren literarischer Arbeit vor und nach 1933. Ed. Silvia Schlenstedt. Berlin: Aufbau, 1983. 310-368.

Schmidt, Günter. "Nachtrag zu Brechts schwedischem Exil." *Moderna Sprak*. 72 (1978): 33-35.

Schmiester, Burkhard. *Revolutionär im Theater: Weimar 1928-1933*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1982.

Schoeps, Karl-Heinz. *Bertolt Brecht*. New York: Ungar, 1977.

_____. "*Und als der Krieg im vierten Lenz...* : Brecht and the Two World Wars." *1914/1939: German Reflections of the Two World Wars*. Eds. Reinhold Grimm, and Jost Hermand. *Monatshefte*. Occasional Volume 12. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. 37-69.

Schöne, Albrecht. "Bertolt Brecht: Theatertheorie und dramatische Dichtung." *Euphorion*. 52 (1958): 272-296.

Schöttker, Detlev. "Das Nationale als theoretisches Defizit: Bertolt Brecht und die deutsche Geschichte." *Dichter und ihre Nation*. Ed. Helmut Scheuer. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993. 428-458.

Schreiben im Exil: Zur Ästhetik der deutschen Exilliteratur 1933-1945. Eds. Alexander Stephan, and Hans Wagener. Bonn: Bouvier, 1985.

Schumacher, Ernst. *Brecht-Kritiken*. Ed. Christa Neubert-Herwig. Berlin: Henschel, 1977.

_____. *Brecht-Theater und Gesellschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Henschel, 1973.

_____. *Die dramatischen Versuche Bertolt Brechts 1918-1933*. Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1955.

_____. *Drama und Geschichte: Bertolt Brechts 'Leben des Galilei' und andere Stücke*. Berlin: Henschel, 1965.

Schumacher Ernst, and Renate Schumacher. *Leben Brechts in Wort und Bild*. Berlin: Henschel, 1978.

Schutte, Jürgen. "*Die Wiederherstellung der Wahrheit*: Vorüberlegungen zu Brechts *Aufsätzen über den Faschismus*." *Text & Kontext*. 26. Supplement (1988): 130-160.

Schwarz, Hans-Günther. *Das stumme Zeichen: Der symbolische Gebrauch von Requisiten*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1974.

Schwarz, Peter Paul. *Brechts frühe Lyrik 1914-1922: Nihilismus als Werkzusammenhang der frühen Lyrik Brechts*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1971.

Seidel, Gerhard. *Bertolt Brecht - Arbeitsweise und Edition: Das literarische Werk als Prozeß*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977.

_____. "Der 'edierte Text' als Repräsentation und Reduktion des Werkes: Zur Wahl der Textgrundlage bei Brecht." *Textkonstitution bei mundlicher und bei schriftlicher Überlieferung*. Ed. Martin Stern. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991. 209-213.

Słupiński, Zbigniew. *Die Funktion des 'Songs' in den Stücken Bertolt Brechts*. Posnan: Adam Mickiewicz University of Posnan, 1972.

Smith, Iris. "Brecht and the Mothers of Epic Theater." *Theatre Journal*. 43.4 (1991): 491-505.

Sood, S. C. "The Development of Brecht's Concept of the Hero." *Creative Forum*. 1.3 (1988): 19-29.

Spalter, Max. *Brecht's Tradition*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967.

Speidel, Erich. "The Mute Person's Voice: Mutter Courage and Her Daughter." *German Life & Letters*. 23 (1970): 332-339.

Stammen, Theo. "*Me-ti* - Große Methode - Große Ordnung. (Brecht und der Marxismus)." *Bertolt Brecht: Aspekte*. 147-166.

Stark, James. "Symbolic Gender Transformation: A Comparison of Brecht and Grimmelshausen." *Gestus*. 3 (1987): 56-66.

Steer, W. A. J. "Brecht's Epic Theatre: Theory and Practice." *Modern Language Review*. 63 (1968): 636-649.

Steiner, George. *Death of Tragedy*. 1961. New York: Knopf, 1968.

Steinweg, Reiner. *Das Lehrstück: Brechts Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1972.

Stephan, Erika. "Interview mit dem Regisseur Heinz-Uwe Haus: Zu seiner Inszenierung von Brechts *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* am Nationaltheater Weimar." *Weimarer Beiträge*. 24.2 (1978): 101-122.

Sternberg, Fritz. *Der Dichter und die Ratio: Erinnerungen an Bertolt Brecht*. Göttingen: Sachsen & Pohle, 1963.

Strelka, Joseph. *Brecht, Horváth, Dürrenmatt: Wege und Abwege des modernen Dramas*. Vienna: Forum, 1962.

Subik, Christof. *Einverständnis, Verfremdung und Produktivität: Versuche über die Philosophie Bertolt Brechts*. Vienna: Verlag des Verbandes der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1982.

Suvin, Darko. *To Brecht and Beyond: Soundings in Modern Dramaturgy*. Sussex: Harvester, 1984.

Symington, Rodney. "*Gestic Metaphor* in Brecht's Epic Theatre." *Momentum dramaticum: Festschrift for Eckehard Catholy*. Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1990. 469-483.

Tauscher, Rolf. *Brechts Faschismuskritik in Prosaarbeiten und Gedichten der ersten Exiljahre*. Berlin: Brecht Zentrum der DDR, 1981.

The Cambridge Companion to Brecht. Eds. Peter Thomson, and Glendye Sacks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Theweleit, Klaus. *Buch der Könige: Orpheus und Eurydike*. Stroemfeld: Roter Stern, 1989.

Thiele, Dieter. *Bertolt Brecht: Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*. Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1985.

Thole, Bernward. *Die 'Gesänge' in den Stücken Brechts: Zur Geschichte und Ästhetik des Liedes im Drama*. Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1973.

Thomas, Linda L. *Ordnung und Wert der Unordnung bei Bertolt Brecht*. Bern: Lang, 1979.

Thomson, Philip. *The Poetry of Brecht: Seven Studies*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Tietz, Udo. "Nachschrift zur 'Großen Ordnung' oder: Der hilflose Antistalinismus des Bert Brecht." *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*. 40.1/2 (1992): 145-162.

Tracy, Gordon L. "*Das Gestische* and the Poetry of Brecht." *Essays on German Literature in Honor of G. Joyce Hallamore*. Eds. Michael S. Batts, and Marketa Goetz Stankiewicz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968. 218-235.

Tynan, Kenneth. *Curtains*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1961.

Ungvári, Tamás. "The Origins of the Theory of *Verfremdung*." *Neohelicon*. 7.1 (1979/81): 171-232.

Unseld, Siegfried. *The Author and His Publisher*. Trans. Hunter Hannum, and Hildegarde Hannum. 1978. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980.

Vellusig, Robert Heinz. *Dramatik im Zeitalter der Wissenschaft: Die Fiktionen des Bertolt Brecht*. Erlangen: Palm & Enke, 1989.

Voigts, Manfred, ed. *100 Texte zu Brecht: Materialien aus der Weimarer Republik*. Munich: Fink, 1980.

_____. *Brechts Theaterkonzeptionen: Entstehung und Entfaltung bis 1931*. Munich: Fink, 1977.

Völker, Klaus. *Bertolt Brecht: Eine Biographie*. Munich: Hanser, 1976.

_____. *Brecht-Chronik: Daten zu Leben und Werk*. 2nd ed. Munich: Hanser, 1973.

_____. *Brecht: Kommentar zum dramatischen Werk*. Munich: Winkler, 1983.

Vollmar, Klaus-Bernd. *Ästhetische Strukturen und politische Aufklärung: Ein Versuch, die materialistische Literaturtheorie auf den Boden des Textes zu stellen*. Bern: Lang, 1976.

Wagner, Frank Dietrich. *Bertolt Brecht: Kritik des Faschismus*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989.

Wagner, Peter. "Das Verhältnis von 'Fabel' und 'Grundgestus' in Bertolt Brechts Theorie des epischen Theaters." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*. 89 (1970): 601-615.

Weber, Betty Nance. "Marxismus, Brecht, Gesamtkunstwerk." Trans. Jost Hermand. *Brecht-Jahrbuch*. 6 (1976): 120-127.

Wedel, Ute. *Die Rolle der Frau bei Bertolt Brecht*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1983.

Weideli, Walter. *Bertolt Brecht*. Paris: Editions universitaires, 1961.

Wekwerth, Manfred. *Brecht? Berichte, Erfahrungen, Polemik*. Munich: Hanser, 1976.

_____. *Notate: Über die Arbeit des Berliner Ensembles 1956 bis 1966*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967.

_____. *Schriften: Arbeit mit Brecht*. Berlin: Henschel, 1973.

Wer war Brecht: Wandlung und Entwicklung der Ansichten über Brecht (im Spiegel von) 'Sinn und Form'. Ed. Werner Mittenzwei. Berlin: Verlag das europäische buch, 1977.

Whitaker, Peter. *Brecht's Poetry: A Critical Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

White, Alfred D. *Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays*. London: MacMillan, 1978.

Wiese, Benno von. *Zwischen Utopie und Wirklichkeit: Studien zur deutschen Literatur*. Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1963.

Willett, John. *Brecht in Context: Comparative Approaches*. London: Methuen, 1983.

_____. *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht: A Study from Eight Aspects*. 3rd ed. 1959. London: Methuen, 1967.

Williams, Raymond. *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*. Harmondsworth: Penquin, 1976.

Willits, Ross D. "The Through-Line of Meaning: The A-Effect in *Mother Courage* and Brecht." *Text and Presentation: The University of Florida Department of Classics Comparative Drama Conference Papers*. Vol.9.

Ed. Karelisa Hartigan. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989. 161-168.

Wintzen, René. *Bertolt Brecht: Une étude*. Paris: Seghers, 1964.

Wirth, Andrzey. "Brecht: Writer between Ideology and Politics." *Essays on Brecht*. 199-208.

_____. "Über die stereometrische Struktur der Brechtschen Stücke." *Episches Theater*. 197-230.

Witt, Hubert. ed. *Erinnerungen an Brecht*. Leipzig: Reclam, 1966.

Wolf, Friedrich. *Aufsätze über Theater*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1957.

Wölfel, Friedrich. "Das Lied der Mutter Courage." *Wege zum Gedicht*. Eds. Rupert Hirschenauer, and Albrecht Weber. Munich: Schnell und Steiner, 1963. 537-549.

Woods, Barbara Allen. "A Man of Two Minds." *The German Quarterly*. 42 (1969): 44-51.

_____. "Perverted Proverbs in Brecht and 'Verfremdungssprache'." *The Germanic Review*. 43 (1968): 100-108.

Wright, Elizabeth. *Postmodern Brecht: A Re-Presentation*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Wyss, Monika. ed. *Brecht in der Kritik: Rezensionen aller Brecht-Uraufführungen sowie ausgewählter deutsch- und fremdsprachiger Premieren*. Munich: Kindler, 1977.

Ziprian, Marika-A. "Puzzle: Werkstattbericht über den Briefwechsel Bertolt Brecht/ Margarete Steffin. Aus dem Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv." *Mitteilungen: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin*. 28.5 (1990): 20-23.

3. Miscellaneous Works Cited

A Dictionary of Marxist Thought. Ed. Tom Bottomore. 2nd. ed. London: Blackwell, 1991.

Abendroth, Wolfgang. *A Short History of the European Working Class*. Trans. Nicholas Jacobs, and Brian Trench. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

Anderson, Perry. *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Apuleius. *The Golden Ass*. Trans. W. Adlington. Ed. S. Gaselee. London: Heinemann, 1919.

Aristotle. *Historia Animalium*. Vol. 4 of *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*. Eds. J. A. Smith, and W. E. Ross. 11 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.

Balibar, Etienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, 1991.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. H. M. Parshley. 1949. New York: Knopf, 1971.

Bebel, August. *Women under Socialism*. Trans. Daniel de Leon. New York: New York Labor News Press, 1904.

Becher, Johannes R. *Gesammelte Werke*. 18 vols. Berlin: Aufbau, 1977.

Benedict, Ruth. *Race and Racism*. London: Routledge, 1943.

Benjamin, Walter. "Über den Begriff der Geschichte." *Gesammelte Schriften*. Eds. Rolf Tiedemann, and Hermann Schweppenhäuser. 7 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972-1989. Volume 1, Part 2. 691-704.

Berghahn, V. R. *Modern Germany: Society, Economy and Politics in the Twentieth Century*. 2nd. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Bertaux, Pierre. *Hölderlin und die Französische Revolution*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974.

Bloch, Ernst. *Politische Messungen, Pestzeit, Vormärz*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.

Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society*. Trans. L. A. Manyon. 1940. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961.

Bracher, Karl Dietrich. *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*. Trans. Jean Steinberg. 1969. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

Braunthal, Julius. *History of the International 1914-1943*. Trans. John Clark. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967.

Brenkert, George G. *Marx's Ethic of Freedom*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

Brickhouse, Thomas C., and Nicholas D. Smith. *Socrates on Trial*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Briffault, Robert. *The Mothers: A Study of the Origins of Sentiments and Institutions*. 3 vols. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1927.

Brundage James A. *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Burke, Peter. "Overture: The New History, its Past and its Future." *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. Ed. Peter Burke. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992. 1-23.

Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism. Ed. Zillah R. Eisenstein. New York: Monthly Review, 1979.

Cassirer, Ernst. *Mythical Thought*. Vol.2 of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955.

Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1978.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Trans. and Eds. Michael Howard, and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Cockburn, Cynthia. "What Implications for Theories of Sex and Class?" *Gender and Stratification*. Eds. Rosemary Crompton, and Michael Mann. London: Polity Press, 1986. 74-85.

Dallin, Alexander. *German Rule in Russia 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Politics*. London: MacMillan, 1957.

Das Kabinett von Papen 1. Juni bis 3. Dezember 1932: Akten der Reichskanzlei Weimarer Republik. Ed. Karl-Heinz Erdmann. 2 vols. Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1989.

Delaney, John J. *Dictionary of Saints*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980.

Deutscher, Isaac. *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky 1929-1940*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Eisler, Riane. *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988.

Evans, E. P. *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture*. London: W. Heinemann, 1896.

Evans, Richard. *In Hitler's Shadow: Germany and the West*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1989.

Feldges, Mathias. *Grimmelshausens "Landstörtzerin Courasche": Eine Interpretation nach der Methode des vierfachen Schriftsinnes*. Bern: Francke, 1969.

Feldman, Linda Ellen. "The Good *Hausvater*: Patriarchal Elements and the Depiction of Women in Three Works by Grimmelshausen." Diss. McGill University, Montreal. 1986.

French, Marilyn. *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*. New York: Summit, 1981.

Friedenthal, Richard. *Goethe: Sein Leben und seine Zeit*. Munich: Piper, 1963.

Fromm, Erich. *Marx's Concept of Man*. New York: Ungar, 1965.

Gimbutas, Marija. *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe*. Ed. Joan Marler. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

_____. *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500 B.C.: Myths and Cult Images*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Penguin, 1988.

Goebbels, Joseph. *Goebbels-Reden*. Ed. Helmut Heiber. Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust*. Vol. 3 of *Goethes Werke*. Ed. Erich Trunze. 4th ed. 14 vols. Hamburg: Christian Wegner, 1959.

Grant, Michael. *Julius Caesar*. 1969. New York: M. Evans, 1992.

Grimmelshausen, Hans Jakob Christoffel von. *Lebensbeschreibung der Ertzbetrügerin und Landstörzerin Courasche*. Ed. Wolfgang Bender. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967.

Hamilton, Roberta. *The Liberation of Women: A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism*. London: George Allan & Unwin, 1978.

Hauser, Arnold. *The Social History of Art*. 2 vols. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Philosophy of Right*. Trans. and Ed. T. M. Knox. 1952. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Henkel, Arthur, and Albrecht Schöne, eds. *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967.

Hiller, Robert L., and John C. Osborne. eds. and trans. *The Runagate Courage*. By Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965.

Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. 1943. Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1971.

Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944. Trans. Norman Cameron, and R. H. Stevens. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Capital 1848-1875*. New York: Scribner, 1975.

_____. *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848*. London: Eidenfeld and Nicolas, 1962.

Holyoak, Keith J., and Paul Thagard. *Mental Leaps: Analogy in Creative Thought*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. 1944. New York: Continuum, 1972.

Hsia, Adrian. "Chinesien: Zur Typologie des anderen China in der deutschen Literatur mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des 20. Jahrhunderts." *Arcadia*. 25 (1990): 44-65.

Jackson, Julian. *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-1938*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Jameson, Fredric. *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*. London: Verso, 1990.

Jay, Martin. *Adorno*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Jung, Carl Gustav. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Vol. 9, Part 1 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Eds. Herbert Read et al.. 2nd. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Jünger, Ernst. "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis." *Werke*. 10 vols. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1960. Volume 5. 11-108.

Justin Martyr. "Second Apology." *The Anti-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. Eds. Rev. Alexander Roberts D.D., and James Donaldson LL.D.. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867. Volume 2. 71-84.

Kolb, Eberhard. *The Weimar Republic*. Trans. P. S. Falla. 1984. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988.

Kraft, Helga. "Töchter, die keine Mütter werden: Nonnen, Amazonen, Mätressen: Hildegaard von Bingen, Mechthild von Magdeburg, Grimmelshausens *Courasche*, Gotthold E. Lessings Marwood in *Miss Sara Sampson*." *Mütter-Töchter-Frauen: Weiblichkeitsbilder in der Literatur*. Eds. Helga Kraft, and Elke Liebs. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993. 35-52.

Kruuk, Hans. *The Spotted Hyena: A Study of Predation and Social Behaviour*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Küpper, Heinz. *Wörterbuch der deutschen Umgangssprache*. Hamburg: Claassen, 1955.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. *Collected Works*. 45 vols. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960-1970.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Werke*. Ed. Herbert G. Göpfert. 8 vols. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1970-1979.

Lucretius. *De rerum natura*. Trans. and Ed. H. A. J. Munro. 3 vols. London: George Bell and Sons, 1908-1910.

Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *A Short History of Ethics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

Marcuse, Herbert. *Negations*. Trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.

_____. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon, 1964.

_____. *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*. 1941. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.

"Martin of Tours." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. 1913 ed.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Werke*. 42 vols. Berlin: Dietz, 1960-1983.

Mauerer, Friedrich. *Der altdeutsche Physiologus: Die Millstätter Reinfassung und die Wiener Prosa (neben dem lateinischen Text und dem althochdeutschen Physiologus)*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967.

McCullough, Florence. *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*. Chapel Hill: University of Northern Carolina Press, 1962.

McLellan, David. *Ideology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Meid, Volker. *Grimmelshausen: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung*. Munich: Beck, 1984.

Miles, Robert. *Racism after 'Race Relations'*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 1970.

Mitchell, Juliet. *Woman's Estate*. 1971. New York: Vintage, 1973.

Mommsen, Hans. *Arbeiterbewegung und Nationale Frage: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979.

Neumann, Erich. "The Fear of the Feminine." Trans. Boris Matthews. By Neumann. *The Fear of the Feminine and Other Essays on Feminine Psychology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. 227-281.

_____. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. 1955. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.

_____. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. 2 vols. 1954. New York: Harper, 1962.

O'Rourke, James J. *The Problem of Freedom in Marxist Thought: An Analysis of the Treatment of Human Freedom by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Contemporary Soviet Philosophy*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Parker Geoffrey, et al. *The Thirty Years' War*. 1984. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.

Parker, Geoffrey, and Lesley M. Smith. Introduction. *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*. Eds. Geoffrey Parker, and Lesley M. Smith. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. 1-25.

Paul, Hermann. *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992.

Payne, Stanley G. *The Spanish Revolution*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1970.

Peukert, Detlev. *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everydaylife*. Trans. Richard Deveson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

_____. *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*. Trans. Richard Deveson. 1987. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.

Plato. *The Dialogues of Plato*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. 2 vols. 1892. New York: Random House, 1937.

Pliny. *Natural History*. Ed. H. Rackham. 10 vols. The Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann, 1947.

Powis, Jonathan. *Aristocracy*. London: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

Quaife, G. R. *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. 1976. New York: W.W. Norton, 1986.

Richards, I. A. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

Rowland, Beryl. *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973.

Samuelson, Paul A. "Learning the Tools of Investing," *Reading the Financial Pages*. By Jeffrey B. Little. New York: Chelsea House, 1988. 6-7.

Schoenbaum, David. *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933-1939*. 1966. New York: W.W.Norton, 1980.

Shirer, William L. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960.

Sophocles. "Antigone." *The Complete Greek Drama*. Trans. R. C. Jebb. Eds. Whitney J. Oates, and Eugene O'Neill Jr. 2 vols. New York: Random House, 1938.

Speier, Hans, ed. and trans. *Courage, The Adventuress and The False Messiah*. By Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Szondi, Peter. *Versuch über das Tragische*. Frankfurt: Insel, 1961.

Taylor, A. E. *Socrates*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1953; Westport, Connecticut: Hyperion, 1979.

Tertullian. "De cultu feminarum." *Tertulliani Opera*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1954.

The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922-August 1939. Ed. Norman H. Baynes. 2 vols. 1942. New York: Fertig, 1969.

The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents. Ed. Jane Degras. 3 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Toller, Ernst. *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1933.

Tuttle, Lisa. *Encyclopedia of Feminism*. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986.

Villon, François. *Balladen*. Trans. K. L. Ammer. Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1930.

Vogel, Lise. *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

Wackernagel, Philipp. *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zum Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*. 5 vols. Leipzig, 1870. Reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1964. Volume 3.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner, 1958.

Wedgwood, Cicely Veronica. *The Thirty Years War*. 1938. London: Jonathan Cape, 1968.

Weydt, Günther. *Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen*. 2nd. ed. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana, 1984.

_____. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.