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Bertolt Brecht's Use of the Bible and Christianity in Representative Dramatic Works.

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BERTOLT BRECHT'S USE OF THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY IN REPRESENTATIVE DRAMATIC WORKS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of Foreign Languages

by

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M. A., University of Mississippi, 1959
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study has been to make a careful analysis of Bertolt Brecht's use of the Bible and Christianity in representative dramatic works. The eight major dramas treated reveal that Brecht inherited the philosophical approach to Christianity of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as well as the atheistic doctrine of Marxist humanism. The nihilism of the former is seen in his early period, which contains the dramas *Die Bibel* and *Baal*. The denigration of the Bible and Christianity by the naturalist writers prior to Brecht's generation reflect the breakdown of social and moral conditions which prevailed in his early years. Combined with the dichotomous nature of the author, these influences caused him to seek refuge in humanism as a source for the regeneration of mankind.

In *Baal* Brecht accentuates the impotence of organized religion, as represented in the Bible and Christianity, without offering any substitute or remedy. In his metaphysical search for a solution to the ambiguities of human existence, he finds the humanist ideals of Marxism most complementary to his *Weltanschauung*. He denigrates liturgical imagery as a means of building up his own secular credo of life through dialectic-epic theater, which originated primarily from his conversion to Marxism. Biblical and Christian parody, the major vehicle for his didacticism and propaganda, is shown to be most apparent in the representative Marxist dramas *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*. They evidence his loss of faith in Christianity with its deceptive and hypocritical alliance with capitalism. The anti-religiosity developed
in his dramas is motivated by the close affiliation of the religious institutions with the ruling social and political systems which exploit the masses.

While preoccupied with anti-Fascist writings during the thirties, Brecht continues to use the Bible and Christianity as a basis for his attack. He condemns the sense of resignation found in Christianity. Accusation is made in 'Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches' and 'Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar' that the church capitulated to Hitler. Both Nazism and Christianity are accused of exploiting the lower classes in their respective practices. In 'Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui' Hitler is paralleled with God in his role before the people.

Following the nihilistic period of the early twenties and the subsequent saturation with Marxism, Brecht enters his most productive period toward the end of the thirties. His Marxist overtures are less doctrinaire. His biblical and Christian imagery is elevated in style in 'Leben des Galilei', which deals with a protagonist and a period in history which involves both theological and secular conflicts. Attention is given in this drama to biblical and Christian motifs as they relate to the history of truth and mankind in the scientific age.

In 'Der gute Mensch von Sezuan' Brecht reflects cognizance of the ambivalent role of the Bible and Christianity in the dilemma of man's existence in a world beset with the undeniable conflict of good and evil. Evidence confirms that Brecht considered goodness worth cherishing, but that it was a quality which succumbed to the inequities of the practical world.
The evidence of this study confirms that Brecht uses the Bible and Christianity as antithetical source material for his materialistic philosophy of life. Indeed, his treatment of the Bible and Christianity is for the most part that of an adversary, whose nature he seeks to master in order to combat it. Thus, this study confirms most emphatically Brecht's confession that the Bible had exerted the greatest influence on his life and work.
INTRODUCTION

Although there have appeared several relatively short articles within this decade on the significant influence of the Bible and Christianity on the works of Bertolt Brecht, none has attempted to make an exhaustive analysis of the degree of actual use of this theme in the author's dramatic works. From an examination of representative dramas, covering the whole range of his creative period, one observes that Brecht's preoccupation with the hypocrisy of Christianity, as it is practiced, supercedes most other literary motifs in his works. There is virtually no play which does not in some way reveal the author's predilection for biblical style or contain overt reference to Christian doctrine. This fact is confirmed by Ilja Fradkin, one of Brecht's most favorable Marxist apologists, who says:

Fast jedes Stück von Brecht enthält zahlreiche Reminiszenzen, Zitate, direkte und versteckte Anspielungen, parodistische und polemische Entlehnungen aus der Bibel. Ihre Funktionen sind unterschiedlich. Brecht bedient sich seiner Bibelkenntnis, in der er es mit jedem Theologen hätte aufnehmen können, jeweils in unterschiedlicher Weise, mit unterschiedlichem Ziel, nicht selten gegen die Bibel selbst gerichtet,

d. h. im antireligiösen Sinne. Und trotz alledem, dieser konsequent antireligiöse Standpunkt schloss nicht aus, dass die poetische Kraft der Bibel Brecht ergriff, ja, auf ihn den 'stärksten Eindruck' machte.\textsuperscript{2}

Important in an analysis of Brecht's use of biblical motifs is the origin of his motivation toward overt manipulation of such source material. An attempt is made in the first chapter to offer evidence that Brecht inherits the seminal features of his anti-Christian posture through German philosophical and cultural history as well as through his immediate Catholic-Lutheran family background. The former influence is a powerful force with which most German intellectuals of the late nineteenth and twentieth century in and out of Germany had to reckon. No great writers have escaped the Bible as a source of literary inspiration. Some have displayed greater use of it, both negatively and positively, than others. There are several recent studies which have been devoted to the use of the Bible by noted individual authors, such as Swift,\textsuperscript{3} Galdós,\textsuperscript{4} Thoreau,\textsuperscript{5} and Shaw,\textsuperscript{6} as well as studies of its influence on groups of authors in literary periods, such as The Bible in


\textsuperscript{4} Alfred R. Saéz, "La Influencia de la Biblia en las Novelas de Galdós" (diss., Northwestern University, 1966).

\textsuperscript{5} John Robert Burns, "Thoreau's Use of the Bible" (diss., University of Notre Dame, 1966).

\textsuperscript{6} Anthony S. Abbott, Shaw and Christianity (New York: Seabury, 1965).
German and French Romantic Poetry.  

Of the authors mentioned above, Brecht has the closest affinity with George Bernard Shaw. In fact, many of the invectives which Brecht uses to denounce Christian hypocrisy, he learns from Shaw. He evidences his kinship and appreciation of Shaw in an "Ovation for Shaw," published originally in Berliner Börsen-Courier, July 25, 1926. In the introduction to a collection of critical essays on George Bernard Shaw, R. J. Kaufmann confirms the positive tone with which Brecht's essay treats his English mentor: "Brecht's ovation is a form of testimony to his affinity to Shaw, the social-artist, and his sensitivity to Shaw's originality." Brecht pays homage in the ovation to Shaw's dramatic technique by saying "that Shaw's own dramatic works were able to overshadow those of his contemporaries exactly because they unflinchingly appealed to the intellect. His world is composed of opinions. The fate of his characters is identical with their opinions. Shaw, in order to have a play, invents some complications which provide his characters with opportunities to vent their opinions extensively and to have them clash with ours." Brecht's analysis here of Shaw applies emphatically to his own method of writing. There are relatively few situations in a Brecht play where antithetical remarks about the Bible

9 Ibid., p. 16.
and foibles of Christianity do not "provide his characters with opportunities to vent their opinions extensively and to have them clash with ours."\(^{10}\) That is Brecht's method.

Much of the anti-religious sentiment of Brecht originates in the hypocritical and false middle-class morality of the nineteenth century which his generation inherited. The failure of Christianity to play an impressive role in society and world affairs at the turn of the century led intellectuals to turn to a humanist doctrine which seemed to fill temporarily the vacuum. Kurt Pinthus' anthology of expressionistic poetry, *Menschheitsdämmerung*,\(^{11}\) suggests that man must rely on man and not on supernatural guidance as set down in the Bible and Christianity.

The final factors considered as a motivating influence on Brecht's juxtaposition to religion and Christianity concern the religious make-up of the family and the dichotomous nature of the author in his youth. In conclusion, a parallel is observed with young Rimbaud, which is followed up in detail in the second chapter in connection with the sources of Brecht's first major play, *Baal*, as they relate to biblical and Christian imagery of the French poète-maudit.

Attention is also given to the embryonic dramatic work, *Die Bibel*, written at the age of fifteen, which appears for the first time in the latest edition of Brecht's complete works.\(^{12}\) This short one-act play

\(^{10}\) Ibid.


confirms basically the author's later reply to the question posed him by a reporter inquiring about the most important influence on his work. The answer he unequivocally gives is "the Bible."\footnote{Brandt, \textit{PMLA}, p. 171.}

Following the treatment of Brecht's literary beginnings in poetry and drama, as they relate to biblical and Christian parody and imagery, attention is turned to his first full length play, \textit{Baal}, whose origin is indirectly associated with much of the legend built up around the Song of Solomon in the Old Testament. \textit{Baal} also reflects influence from Christian Grabbe and Georg Büchner, French \textit{poètes-maudits} Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud, and Brecht's mentor and senior contemporary rebel playwright, Frank Wedekind. Brecht's predilection for biblical and moral denigration is at no later time sharper and more fanatical than in the anarchic, vitalistic character of Baal. Baal's ennui reflects the "mal du siècle" of the expressionistic period, which calls for the development of a "new man." The idea of a "new man" takes several forms, but all reflect a trend toward disbelief in the supernatural guidance of man and affirm faith in a "new humanism."

The third chapter deals initially with Brecht's metaphysical search for a change in the make-up of the social and political forces confronting man. His search appears to end with his conversion to Marxism-Leninism in 1927, which supposedly provides him a \textit{Weltanschauung} without need for belief in eschatological matters. The here and now concerns him completely. He attacks the religious idealism of the middle-class society, particularly in its hypocritical representation. Brecht's idealis-
tic view of Marxism embodies two major criticisms of capitalistic, so-called, Christian, middle-class society—exploitation and ignorance of the masses.

The first major Marxist play, in which Brecht continues to use biblical and Christian imagery and parody in his didactical-dialectical method, is *Die Dreigroschenoper*. In this drama the author denigrates liturgical imagery, much as he does in his first collection of poems, *Hauspostille*, published in 1927, one year before *Die Dreigroschenoper*, in an attempt to portray the distorted ideals of a society more bestial than Christian in its practical ethics.

The last play treated in chapter three is *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, possibly Brecht's most accomplished effort. It shows the transition of a devout Salvation Army girl to a Communist martyr, dying for the cause of the oppressed workers. Brecht becomes a little more sophisticated in his use of the Bible and derogatory language against its precepts. However, the quantity of denigration exceeds that in any other play of the author. Brecht points out in his remarks on *Die Heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* in his "Schriften zum Theater" that his aim is to attack the superficiality and hypocrisy of an individual's "living" the religion he professes. His purpose is not to mock the Bible for its truths and humanistic precepts, but to unveil and challenge the hypocrisy blatantly accepted by society in general.

As a transition to chapter four which deals with Brecht's extreme

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Brecht, Werkausgabe, XVII, 1019-1020.
anti-Fascist penchant during the thirties while Hitler was coming to the fore, the powerful poem; 'Die drei Soldaten' (1932), is treated. Its major emphasis is Brechtian as ever, namely, the impotence of God in the face of the exploitation and ignorance rampaging the earth during and after war. At this same time Brecht produces in the satirical and ironic parable play, 'Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe,' his first anti-Fascist play. Simultaneously with it, Brecht writes the famous "Hitler-Choräle," which are parodies of songs of Luther and Baroque song writers like Paul Gerhardt. They act as a prelude to the analysis of the Fascist play; 'Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches.' Both Nazism and Christianity are accused by Brecht of exploiting the lower classes. For this exploitation Brecht condemns Christ for his parable of the pounds in the dream trial of the soldier Fewkoomby in the epilogue of the 'Drei Groschen Roman,' which appeared in 1934, shortly after his attacks on Nazism began. Brecht's campaign against Nazism is effectively waged through the application of the tenets of a very important piece of prose entitled "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit."

The mixture of fear and misery is seen from the first to the last of the montage-like scenes of 'Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches.' The author couches his attack against Nazism in biblical and Christian imagery in several of the episodes. The most meaningful allusions to biblical and Christian imagery occur toward the end in the scene, Bergpredigt. Of the two remaining major anti-Fascist plays; 'Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar' and 'Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui,' the latter is treated in detail. It reveals the author's continued preoccupation
with the exalted position of Hitler and the analogy of his role with that of God. In the prologue the announcer refers in this manner to Arturo Ui (Hitler), whose identity Brecht does not hide: "Der Gangster aller Gangster! Der berüchtigte / Arturo Ui! Mit dem uns der Himmel züchtige / Für alle unsere Sünden und Verbrechen / Gewalttaten, Dummheiten und Schwächen!" The epilogue of the play, obviously not written until after the defeat of Hitler, is most powerful in its warning of future Hitlers.

The final chapter considers two of Brecht's major plays written between 1938-1940: Leben des Galilei and Der gute Mensch von Sezuan. Both plays reveal the author's continued obsession with biblical and Christian imagery, which implies that organized religion, secularized by philosophy and void of practical effectiveness, produces no tangible answer to the tragedy of the human condition. Brecht chooses in Galileo a protagonist and a period in history, which involve both theological as well as secular conflicts and implications.

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15 Ibid., IV, 1722.

While *Leben des Galilei* shows Brecht's development of the age-old conflict of science and religion and "den Verrat der Wissenschaft an die Macht," *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* brings the reader face to face with the ambiguities and conflicts of being good in a world, which would appear to be ruled by evil in all its forms. Three gods seek to find one "good" person and consider themselves fortunate to find one in the person of a prostitute, Shen Te. Her desire for doing good is offset in a cruel world by the necessity to make a living. She survives only by resorting to disguise of a mythical cousin who becomes her alter ego and defends her "goodness" before those who would exploit her. Brecht raises the question of why wickedness is rewarded and goodness punished in this drama, but leaves the answer to the reader in the epilogue.

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CHAPTER I

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Christianity and German Philosophy from Kant to Nietzsche

Die Philosophie hat in Deutschland gegen das Christentum denselben Krieg geführt, den sie einst in der griechischen Welt gegen die ältere Mythologie geführt hat, und sie erfocht hier wieder den Sieg.¹

To determine from the dramatic works of Bertolt Brecht the purpose and implications of the intricate and deliberate use of the Bible and Christianity, one needs to call attention, if but superficially, to the heritage of the philosophical approach to Christianity, which is basically two-fold. The first pertains to the philosophical validation of Christianity and is based on the premises of idealism and realism, as it is found in Kant. The second pertains to the rejection of Christianity and rests on the premise of materialism, like that advocated by Marx and Lenin: "Der Marxismus-Leninismus nimmt die Welt so, wie sie ist, und erfindet keine Hölle und kein Paradies. Er geht davon aus, dass die gesamte Natur einschliesslich des Menschen aus Materie besteht, die verschiedene Eigenschaften besitzt."² There are others who take a

¹ Heinrich Heine, Sämtliche Werke (Leipzig: Insel, 1910), IX, 482.
philosophical approach to Christianity somewhat between these two extremes.

Brecht, at first, prior to his conversion to Marxism, seems to fluctuate between these two positions, as reflected in his rejection of the "mythological essence" of Christianity. Afterwards, he moves entirely over into the materialist camp. The following brief development of the philosophical approach to Christianity from the Enlightenment to the twentieth century attempts to clarify Brecht's own intellectual and spiritual heritage, as it relates to his efforts to express his ideas and philosophy through drama.³

³ H. F. Garten expresses the valid role of German drama as a vehicle of social and religious thoughts for the past two centuries: "Any account of German drama will inevitably present a more comprehensive picture of the social and historical background than it would in other countries. While it is quite possible to give an outline of the more recent English theatre without touching on the wider issues of contemporary life, such a procedure would be impossible in the case of Germany. German drama, for the last two centuries, has been a faithful—perhaps the most faithful—mirror of the vital issues and currents in the nation's history. Any attempt to give a coherent account of modern German drama will therefore necessarily touch upon the main trends, spiritual, social, and political, of the period." Modern German Drama (Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Essential Books, 1959), p. 12. More recently Frederic Ewen has expressed the point as follows: "It is within the theatre, and in drama, that Germans found that outlet for their agitations, discontents, and hopes that seemed denied them in real life. The theatre, not the ballot-box or even political parties, represented the true arena of social activity for them. So it had been since the eighteenth century when Lessing sounded the call to battle of the Enlightenment in Emilia Galotti and Nathan the Wise, and brought modern middle-class drama into being. So it was when on the eve of the French Revolution Schiller wrote The Robbers and Goethe Goetz von Berlichingen, in the war on medieval feudalism. The tensions and agitations of... the German 'War of Liberation' and its aftermath, found voices in... Christian Grabbe and Georg Bichner. Even the Blight that followed the collapse of the Revolution of 1848 could not completely undo the theatre, and the drama spoke out through Friedrich Hebbel and the Austrian Franz Grillparzer." Bertolt Brecht: His Life, His Art and His Times (New York: Citadel, 1967), p. 43.
The eighteenth century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, is the foremost philosopher of the Enlightenment and, consequently, the best representative of the philosophical posture of Christianity in the age of rationalism, which pleaded for tolerance in religion. His major emphasis in regards to the Christian religion is on Christian ethics or, more specifically, on Christian morality. In his first important critical work, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), he posits the concept that the idea of God is produced by pure reason alone and not by intuition. Through this process Kant supposedly synthesizes dogmatic rationalism and skeptical empiricism, the two major ingredients of enlightened philosophic thought. Thus, Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* limits man's knowledge to phenomena, or the world as we experience it. Man cannot know rationally the world of the noumena, which lies beyond human experience (i.e. the *Ding an sich*). It is in this unknown category of the noumena that God exists. This concept of reason obviously does not suffice in demonstrating the existence of God, nor the non-existence of God. Leaving this external, theoretical concept at this point, Kant turns inwardly to man's practical, rational behavior and knowledge in his second critique, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788). This work deals with man's moral actions initiated out of a sense of duty for practical laws. Kant discusses his moral argument for the existence of God by connecting man's sense of moral obligation with the law giver, i.e. God. It

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is then man's duty to obey these moral laws, which will lead him through an understanding of the sumnum bonum to religion, which is the object and final end of pure practical reason,

d. i. zur Erkenntniss aller Pflichten als göttlicher Gebote, nicht als Sanctionen, d. i. willkürlicher, für sich selbst zufälliger Verordnungen eines fremden Willens, sondern als wesentlicher Gesetze eines jeden freien Willens für sich selbst, die aber dennoch als Gebote des höchsten Wesens angesehen werden müssen, weil wir nur von einem moralisch-vollkommenen (heiligen und gültigen), zugleich auch allgewaltigen Willen das höchste Gut, welches zum Gegenstande unserer Bestrebung zu setzen uns das moralische Gesetz zur Pflicht macht, und also durch Uebereinstimmung mit diesem Willen dazu zu gelangen hoffen können.⁵

Kant's work as a whole confirms that Christian morality is inconceivable without the existence of God, immortality, and, above all, the freedom of the will.⁶

Among the three great philosophers, who are direct spiritual heirs of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, it is Hegel, Bertolt Brecht's favorite philosopher,⁷ who best represents the lineage by way of Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, and Marx to Friedrich Nietzsche. With the possible exception of Marx, each of these philosophers is steeped in Greek culture and religion and, thus, finds it convenient to compare it with


⁷ Ewen, p. 23.
Christianity. As a young man Hegel sees the Greek religion as "the religion of imagination and enthusiasm—the values exalted by Storm and Stress. Christianity appeared as the religion of Enlightenment dominated by reason." Kroner further states that the young Hegel, at the approximate age of twenty five, begins to exert his Independence in his ideas on religion:

Religion, he then held, should not be learned from books or confined to dogma, memory, and moral rules; it should not be a theological religion. Rather it should be a living power, flourishing in the real life of a nation, in their habits, ideals, customs, actions, and festivals, in their hearts and will, in their deeds as well as in their imagination. It should be popular, not clerical. It should be the concern not of a special church but of the nation as a whole. Its sphere should not be restricted to private persons but should be one with the political organization of the republic. Religion should be not otherworldly but humane. Unlike the gloomy religion of the cross, it should glorify not suffering and martyrdom but joy and earthly life. It should appeal to the senses and natural emotions rather than to the intellect. It should not be scholastic but should captivate the sense of beauty as Greek religion did.

Such an appraisal of Hegel's early thinking regarding Christianity evidences on Hegel's part a "hostility to Christian teaching, or at least to Christian institutions, which stems from two sources: Hegel's love for Greek 'folk religion' and his devotion to Kant's ethical doctrine." This anti-Christian or anti-ecclesiastical tone is found in his first work on Christianity, The Positivity of the Christian Religion. At the beginning of this work, however, Hegel sets forth human

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9 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
10 Ibid., p. 9.
morality as the essence of the Christian religion or all true religion:

Wholly and entirely in reference to the topic itself, I remark here that the general principle to be laid down as a foundation for all judgments on the varying modifications, forms, and spirit of the Christian religion is this—that the aim and essence of all true religion, our religion included, is human morality, and that all the more detailed doctrines of Christianity, all means of propagating them, and all its obligations (whether obligations to believe or obligations to perform actions in themselves otherwise arbitrary) have their worth and their sanctity appraised according to their close or distant connection with that aim.\(^{11}\)

But in a subsequent work called The Spirit of Christianity, there appears a "deep sympathy for the doctrine of the Gospel, which had come to Hegel as the result of his inner struggle."\(^{12}\) According to Kroner, the synthesis of this latter work is that "the moral principle of the Gospel is charity or love, and love is the beauty of the heart, a spiritual beauty which combines the Greek Soul and Kant's Moral Reason."\(^{13}\)

In his early development Hegel tends to let religion be the vehicle of reconciling the antithetical components within Christianity, but, as one sees toward the end of The Spirit of Christianity, he finally concludes that religion cannot produce the desired synthesis: "And it is its fate [i. e. the Christian religion's] that church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action, can never dissolve into one."\(^{14}\) Hegel now begins to place specu-

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 68.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 9.
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 301.
ative philosophy in the position of religion: "Philosophy is called upon to do what faith alone can never achieve: the absolute reconciliation of absolute opposites."\(^\text{15}\) For Hegel "history is shaped by Providence, and Providence is Reason and can therefore be understood by the speculative dialectic of the philosopher."\(^\text{16}\)

Hegel's philosophy is in theory very invigorating and challenging, but from the practical side, regarding Christianity and ethics, it seems less palatable and applicable. There appear to be two main lineages of Anti-Hegelianism, both of which are consequential in their respective developments. One is represented in Ludwig Feuerbach's materialistic philosophy and the other in Schopenhauer's pessimistic, even nihilistic, philosophy found in Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (1819). Hegel's theories concerning man and God are exploited for their current social and political implications by Feuerbach and his more radical and contemporary harbingers of communistic interpretation of civilization's ills. Feuerbach, "son of Hegel and father to Marx,"\(^\text{17}\) capitalized "upon the general problem of historical materialism and Christianity" and "was not a revolutionary in the sense in which Marx and Engels were revolutionaries."\(^\text{18}\) Briefly stated, "Feuerbach's con-

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 38.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 65.


\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 18. This latter statement is acknowledged no less than by Marx himself in "Theses on Feuerbach" when Marx writes: "Hence,
tribution is in his writings on religion and philosophy, each of them a manifesto to humanity, telling us that the desires of men can be satisfied here below." It is with Feuerbach that atheistic materialism begins to reign over Christian idealism, which Kant and Hegel had proposed in their own respective ways. Feuerbach himself confirms that Hegelian philosophy made the last significant attempt to re-establish through philosophy the lost and decaying Christianity: "Die Hegelsche Philosophie ist der letzte grossartige Versuch, das verlorene, untergegangene Christenthum durch die Philosophie wieder herzustellen." He further claims that the question of whether there is a God or not remains a debate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To him, the nineteenth century view equates the question of the being or non-being of God with the being or non-being of man. However, in comparison to Hegel, Chamberlain states that

from Feuerbach's point of view, religion and philosophy are identical.... Just as Hegel insisted that religion and philosophy were identical in content and differ only in form, so Feuerbach contended that the content of religion and philosophy are the same and that they differ in the Essence of Christianity, he [Feuerbach] regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty-Judaical form of appearance. Hence he does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary', of 'practical-critical', activity." Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, On Religion, intro. Reinhold Niebuhr (New York, 1964), p. 69.

19 Chamberlain, p. 19.
21 Ibid., p. 411.
solely in that the objects of the former are sensuous and imaginative while those of the latter are conceptual and abstract. To Hegel, however, the content is intellectual; to Feuerbach it is essentially emotional.  

Feuerbach criticizes Hegel's critical-speculative philosophy, which in Feuerbach's opinion does not explain the subject matter adequately. Feuerbach says: "my work—is the direct opposite of speculation, nay, puts an end to it by explaining it." The essence of Feuerbach's philosophy, as it reflects his evolution from theological thought can be seen in the following aphorism: "Gott war mein erster Gedanke, die Vernunft mein zweiter, der Mensch mein dritter und letzter Gedanke. Das Subject der Gottheit ist die Vernunft, aber das Subject der Vernunft ist der Mensch." More specifically, this philosophy is amplified best in Feuerbach's most significant work, Das Wesen des Christenthums. Briefly summarized as follows, one sees that Feuerbach's conclusions are, indeed, foreboding the humanistic trend, which has come to fruition in the twentieth century and is reflected in Brecht's anti-Christian dialog:

Taking as point of departure his criticism of Hegel which reverses the relation established by the latter between the idea and reality, Feuerbach investigates the Christian religion. He shows that religion is the product of man, who creates God in his own image, incarnates in Deity his own nature, needs, and hopes. Man assigns as attributes to God the outstanding qualities of the human species. The fault of religion, therefore, has been to despoil man of his own nature in exteriorizing in God what really belongs

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22 Chamberlain, p. 37.
23 Quoted by Chamberlain, p. 33.
24 Feuerbach, p. 388.
to, is the essence of humanity. The existence of God being illusory, man, unaware of what has happened, becomes a thoroughly egoistic being, divorced from the essential in-dwelling communal spirit of his species. In order to give back to man his true collective being, the religious illusion must be dissipated; that which man has unwittingly taken from himself and assigned to God must be reintegrated into present reality. Theology must be reduced to anthropology; love of humanity must be substituted for love of God. 

It is to a great extent through Feuerbach that Marx develops dialectical materialism, in which orthodox religion has no place. Although Marx's endeavors appear primarily to remain in the realm of economics and historical evolution, one can be relatively certain the motivating force behind communism's rise is the recognition that Christianity has failed "to remedy the evils of society, and that the official preservers of the faith protect religion only through self-interest." Similar is the idea which Siegfried Marck implies: "Es ist die Krisis der modernen Zivilisation schlechthin, die Marx unter Ökonomischen Gesichtspunkten und an der modernen Wirtschaft in grandioser Weise zur Darstellung ge-

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26 The influence of Feuerbach on both Marx and Engels is evidenced in an article by Engels on "L. Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy," in which he says: "Then came Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity. With one blow it pulverized the contradiction in that without circumlocutions it places materialism on the throne again. Nature exists independently of all philosophy.... Nothing exists outside nature and man, and the higher beings our religious fantasies have created are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence.... One must oneself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much he was influenced by it, one may read in The Holy Family." Marx and Engels, p. 223.

27 Chamberlain is paraphrasing the poet Herwegh, an ardent disciple of Feuerbach, along with Gottfried Keller and Richard Wagner. p. 123.
bracht hat."

In addition to the above references to Marx's and Engel's ideas on religion, Marx's classical dictum on religion is found at the very beginning of an article called "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in which he says: "For Germany the criticism of religion is in the main complete, and criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism." Marx reflects in more philosophic overtones his concept of the origin of religion and its superficial role in man's life. Much of Bertolt Brecht's attitude toward religion stems from a premise, such as the following reiterates:

Man, who looked for a superman in the fantastic reality of heaven and found nothing but the reflexion of himself, will no longer be disposed to find but the semblance of himself, the non-human (Ummensch) where he seeks and must seek his true reality. The basis of irreligious criticism is: man makes religion, religion does not make man. In other words, religion is the self-consciousness and self-feeling of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again.

The success of Marxism did not come about primarily through its theoretical and philosophical implications, but through the practical analysis of the social and economic situation of the day. Marx characterizes best the mutual injustices of capitalism and religion of his era by pointing out the insincerity and hypocritical approach of religious institutions and the state. Marx, for instance, condemns the

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29 Marx and Engels, p. 41.

30 Ibid.
attempt of the Established Church of England to pass measures of reli-
gious coercion through Parliament, such as the 'Beer Bill' and the 'Sunday
Trading Bill', both of which were

religious penal laws against the lower classes to set
the consciences of the privileged classes at rest....
The workers get their wages late on Saturday; they are
the only ones for whom shops open on Sundays. They are
the only ones compelled to make their purchases, small
as they are, on Sundays. The new bill is therefore di-
rected against them alone. In the eighteenth century the
French aristocracy said: For us, Voltaire; for the people,
the mass and the tithes. In the nineteenth century the
English aristocracy says: For us, pious phrases; for the
people, Christian practice. The classical saint of
Christianity mortified his body for the salvation of the
souls of the masses; the modern, educated saint mortifies
the bodies of the masses for the salvation of his own soul. 31

Brecht makes essentially the same point in the defense of his treatment
of the Bible and Christianity.

Marx's final word pertaining to his anti-religious sentiment is
clearly expressed in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, where it is
stated that "communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all reli-
gion, and all morality;... it therefore acts in contradiction to all
past historical experience.... [which] ... consisted in the development
of class antagonisms, antagonism that assumed different forms at differ-
ent epochs." 32

Contemporary with Feuerbach and Marx is another anti-Hegelian,
Arthur Schopenhauer, whose negative philosophy of life is best revealed
in his work, 'Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Where Feuerbach's and

31 Ibid., pp. 128-129.
32 Ibid., p. 89.
Marx's anti-religious doctrine is directed more for consumption by the masses, Schopenhauer's nihilistic philosophy finds fruition in the intellectual elite, who find no credence in organized religion. Schopenhauer's fundamental principles in his work maintain that the visible world is only Vorstellung, which is a creation of reason. Its only entity, the real world, is man's will. This will becomes active through man's sense of deficiency and by suffering. For Schopenhauer, existence is concerned with the perennial battle against pain. Even after a sense of accomplishment on man's part occurs, the end result is only ennui, which appears as unpleasant as the initial suffering. With such depressing alternatives the solution appears to be the total abandonment of the 'will to live'; thus, the choice man has is either to endure unmitigated suffering or to cease to exist. Schopenhauer emphasizes the nothingness of existence, before which only man's 'will to live' has any effect: "Vor uns bleibt allerdings nur das Nichts. Aber das, was sich gegen dieses Zerfließen ins Nichts straubt, unsere Natur, ist ja eben nur der Wille zum Leben, der wir selbst sind, wie er unsere Welt ist...."33

This 'will to live', he concludes, is "jener Friede, der höher ist als alle Vernunft, jene gänzliche Meeresstille des Gemüths, jene tiefe Ruhe ... ein ganzes und sicheres Evangelium."34

Schopenhauer is the spiritual predecessor of Nietzsche in philosophic thought as it involves man and his religious inclinations. In

34 Ibid., p. 487.
addition to calling Nietzsche "a great critic and philosopher of culture," Thomas Mann affirms that he was also "a disciple of Schopenhauer." Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche comes partially through Richard Wagner, whose protégé Nietzsche was in his early years. It was the poet, Herwegh, an ardent follower of Feuerbach and Marxism, who gave Wagner a copy of Schopenhauer's work in 1854. Nietzsche, however, projects quite a different influence upon posterity in general than does Marx. Both consider the conventional God, religion, and morality to be dead and non-existent, but Nietzsche substitutes no such alternative as Marx does, i.e. a future communist utopia, in which society will one day evolve. One might consider Nietzsche's concept of "the Eternal Recurrence of a senseless world in motion" as an alternative, but basically Nietzsche remains the ardent unbeliever his philosophy reflects without any positive plan for the future. His philosophy is, however, concerned with "the 'predicament' of modern man." Wagner and Schopenhauer influenced Nietzsche in his early development, but they "belonged to the nineteenth century.... Nietzsche is a precursor of the twentieth in the sense that he anticipates what is now part of the conscious-

36 Chamberlain, p. 143.
39 Nietzsche broke away simultaneously around 1876 from Schopenhauer and Wagner. Ibid., p. 78.
ness of every thinking person: Nietzsche's philosophy presupposes a crisis in human affairs of which there is no hint in Wagner or Schopenhauer. H. F. Garten best describes the type of conflict which ensues from Nietzsche's as well as Marx's philosophy:

The challenge to middle-class society and its intrinsic set of values came from two opposite quarters, which can best be indicated by the names of Marx and Nietzsche. The first stood for the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois society, and its replacement by an entirely new social order; the second entailed a 'revaluation of all values', challenging the moral standards on which the middle classes were founded, and setting up the image of the strong and independent individual; the first was collective and materialistic, the second individualistic and spiritual. Both these challenges made themselves increasingly felt towards the end of the century—the second somewhat later than the first—and helped undermine the foundations on which the social structure was built.

Turning to Nietzsche's dislike of the Christian religion, one observes that it centers around the concept of morality, which it taught and which ruled in the Europe of his day: "Among the debilitating moralities was ... the Christian." In Jenseits von Gut und Böse Nietzsche states: "Jede Moral ist ... ein Stück Tyrannie gegen die 'Natur', auch gegen die 'Vernunft'... Das Wesentliche und Unschätzbare an jeder Moral ist, dass sie ein langer Zwang ist."}

\[40\] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

\[41\] Garten, pp. 23-24.

\[42\] Hollingdale, p. 221. Nietzsche's feeling on the matter of separating life from morality was greatly shared by his French contemporaries, the symbolist poets: Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé. However, Thomas Mann, later, objected to "Nietzsche's desire to separate life from morality." Jon Tuska, "Thomas Mann and Nietzsche: A Study in Ideas," Germanic Review, XXXIX (1964), p. 291.

One particular moral precept which Nietzsche belabors is the Christian attitude towards sex, which seems perverse to him as reflected in the following statement from Morgenröte:

So ist es dem Christentum gelungen, aus Eros und Aphrodite—grossen idealfähigen Mächten—hölische Kobolde und Truggeister zu schaffen, durch die Martern, welche es in dem Gewissen der Gläubigen bei allen geschlechtlichen Erregungen entstehen liess.... An sich ist den geschlechtlichen wie den mitleidenden und anbetenden Empfindungen gemeinsam, dass hier der eine Mensch durch sein Vergnügen einem anderen Menschen wohltut,—man trifft derartige wohlwollende Veranstaltungen nicht zu häufig in der Natur!... Die Zeugung des Menschen mit dem bösen Gewissen verschwistern.\(^4\)

Likewise in Ecce Homo Nietzsche asserts regarding the teaching of chastity: "Die Predigt der Keuschheit ist eine öffentliche Aufreizung zur Wider­natur. Jede Verachtung des geschlechtlichen Lebens, jede Verunreinigung desselben durch den Begriff 'unrein' ist das Verbrechen selbst am Leben—is die eigentliche Sünde wider den heiligen Geist des Lebens."\(^5\)

A recent biographer of Nietzsche claims that the problem which Nietzsche has with Christianity exists because "for Nietzsche the key to the character of Jesus is to be found in his doctrine of non-resistance to evil,"\(^6\) as reflected in Der Anti-Christ: "Gerade der Gegen­satz zu allem Ringen, zu allem Sich-in-Dampf-fühlen ist hier Instinkt geworden: die Unfähigkeit zum Widerstand wird hier Moral ('widerstehe nicht dem Bösen'! das tiefste Wort der Evangelien, ihr Schlüssel in gewissem Sinne), die Seligkeit im Frieden, in der Sanftmut, im Nicht-Feind­sein-können."\(^7\) The dichotomy existing between Nietzsche's and Jesus's

\(^{4}\) Ibid., I, 1062.
\(^{5}\) Ibid., II, 1106.
\(^{6}\) Hollingdale, p. 247.
\(^{7}\) Nietzsche, II, 1190-1191.
teaching consists in a type of pacifism on the part of Jesus versus the concept of eternal conflict of Nietzsche's. It is because of this doctrine of total pacifism that Nietzsche is inclined to call Jesus a 'decadent'. What appears to be a contradiction to this negative analysis of Jesus is also observed subsequently in *Der Anti-Christ* where Nietzsche shows considerable respect for Jesus as a man:

> Das Wort schon 'Christentum' ist ein Missverständnis—, im Grunde gab es nur einen Christen, und der starb am Kreuz. Das 'Evangelium' starb am Kreuz.... Es ist falsch bis zum Unsinn, wenn man in einem 'Glauben', etwa im Glauben an die Erlösung durch Christus das Abzeichen des Christen sieht: bloss die christliche Praktik, ein Leben so wie der, der am Kreuze starb, es lebte, ist christlich.... Heute noch ist ein solches Leben möglich, für gewisse Menschen sogar notwendig: das echte, das ursprüngliche Christentum wird zu allen Zeiten möglich sein....

Any consideration of Nietzsche must include the acknowledgement

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48 Hollingdale, pp. 248-249.

49 In reality it is not! Thomas Mann writes in *Last Essays* the following assessment of Nietzsche in this regard: "I recall the desperate cruelty with which Nietzsche spoke of all that he himself venerated: of Wagner, music in general, morality; Christianity—I almost said, of Germanism as well. Yet even in the midst of his most ferocious critical assaults upon these values and forces which within himself he always cherished, he obviously never felt that he was harming them. Rather, it would seem, he regarded the most rabid of the insults he hurled at them as a form of homage.... Nietzsche apologized to his friend Peter Gast, the musician, for constantly quarreling with Christianity; after all, he said, it represented the finest ideal he had ever known, and he himself was the descendant of whole generations of Christian clergy-men. He believed, he went on, that he had 'never been, in his heart, insulting to Christianity'.... [Moreover] this 'Antichrist' gave the most Christian of all titles to his autobiography: *Ecce homo*. And last scraps of paper he wrote in his madness were signed: 'The Crucified One'!" pp. 149-150.

50 Nietzsche, II, 1200.
that "Nietzsche himself was a nihilist," and that the rise of nihilism in the twentieth century finds its major source of energy primarily in Nietzsche's vitalistic philosophy:


A brief summary of the consequences of these major thinkers in the latter half of the nineteenth century to the cultural heritage Brecht claims reveals a gradual secularization of civilization, which, Emil Brunner maintains, places man, not God, at the center of everything. In essence, this is an expression of man's view of himself rather than the world about him, "an understanding of himself as the homo faber".

51 Hollingdale, p. 310.
54 Ibid., p. 33. A Roman Proverb says: "Faber est quisque fortunae suae." ("Everyman is the maker of his own fortune."). The Marxist-Leninist-materialist concept of life, which Brecht eventually accepts, has the philosophy of this proverb at its roots, as the following quote from the doctrinaire text book of Marxism-Leninism affirms: "Nicht auf ein Leben nach dem Tode zu hoffen, sondern das irdische Leben zu schätzen und danach zu streben, es zu verbessern, lehrt die materialistische Philosophie die Menschen. Der Materialismus lässt erstmals in der Geschichte die Würde und die Vernunft des Menschen zu Recht und Geltung kommen; er erklärt, dass der Mensch kein Wurm ist, der im Staub kriecht, sondern die höchste Schöpfung der Natur, fähig, den Naturkräften zu gebieten. Der Materialismus ist von festem Vertrauen auf die Kraft des Wissens
alone. Yet, Brunner properly says, "also he is *homo religiosus*. He
is this even when he renounces all mythology, all ideas of a super-
natural being, and becomes an agnostic or an atheist."\(^55\) Brunner labels
this view anthropological:

> The fact that binds together the most influential thinkers
of recent generations, those whose thought was capable of
determining the thought, not only of other thinkers, but
also of the masses, and through them of determining the
whole course of political development—Charles Darwin,
Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Marx—was this: that each of
them gained power, directly or indirectly, over a consider­
able section of mankind by his view of man, by his 'anthro­
pology'. Whether they were aware of it or not, it was not
their scientific systems or their systems of philosophy which
made history, but their view of man.\(^56\)

This analysis is relative to what Max Frisch implies when he says of
Brecht: "Brecht rejects the World of the Hereafter.... Christians be­
lieve in the Hereafter, Brecht in the Present."\(^57\)

**NATURALISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

Brecht's generation is not the first to evidence the results of
the decay of Christianity among the influential philosophers of the
nineteenth century. The one autonomous literary period at the end of
the nineteenth century which reflects best the pessimistic influence
of Feuerbach, Marx, Engels, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche is Naturalism.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 25.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 34.

\(^{57}\) Max Frisch, "Recollections of Brecht," *Tulane Drama Review*,
VI (1961), 34.
One observes that Zola's and Antoine's vitalistic naturalism resounds on the stage in Germany in 1889 with Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Gerhart Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang*. With naturalism comes an anti-metaphysical and anti-religious nature not equalled previously. It reflects an inclination toward a sordid, hideous, brutal, and pathological perversity of life. The individual is represented as the slave of the natural processes about him, which Feuerbach's doctrine of omnipotent materialism advocated. Jethro Bithell points out that a "strongly emphasized feature of the new naturalism is hostility to the doctrines of Christianity," a feature he adds, which existed in part from the middle of the century in Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* (1854), in Spielhagen's *Problematische Naturen* (1861), in Paul Heyse's *Kinder der Welt* (1873), and *Im Paradiese* (1876). There seems to be, however, among the naturalists the strongest swing of the pendulum to this proclivity toward anti-Christianism, which Henri de Lubac considers the direct product of positivist humanism, Marxist humanism, and Nietzschean humanism.

Robison Max Rogers establishes in his study of "The Anti-Christian Elements in the German Naturalistic Novel" that the great majority of the novelists, who express attitudes against religion fall into the following "weltanschauliche" categories: "Science, Marxian socialism, materialism, historical criticism, religious individualism, Nietzschean

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individualism, idealism, rationalism (i.e., rational arguments), moral
anarchy (i.e., general 'immoralism'), and psychology. It is interesting to note that Brecht's use of the Bible and Christianity in his dramatic works reflects the influence of each of these categories—some, however, more than others! Brecht, himself, acknowledges his affinity with Naturalism by saying in a radio news interview: "Die Anfänge des Naturalismus waren die Anfänge des epischen Dramas in Europa.... Das naturalistische Drama entstand aus dem bürgerlichen Roman der Zola und Dostojewski.... Die Naturalisten (Ibsen, Hauptmann) suchten die neuen Stoffe der neuen Romane auf die Bühne zu bringen und fanden keine andere Form dafür als eben die dieser Romane: eine epische."

SOCIAL AND MORAL CONDITIONS

One last aspect of the cultural and historical perspective to be considered prior to an analysis of Brecht's representative works in their use of the Bible and Christianity is the social and moral tenor of the times shortly before his birth and during his early years.

Martin Esslin characterizes Brecht's representation of the times in which he lived: "He is above all an epitome of his times. Most of the crosscurrents and contradictions, moral and political dilemmas, artistic and literary trends of our time are focused and exemplified in Brecht's


What were the moral dilemmas of the times, particularly, of Brecht's first period? The reference to moral conditions here is related to Christianity either directly or indirectly, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, in which the treatment of representative dramas will occur.

There are numerous accounts to be found of the moral condition of European society in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth. For example, Stefan Zweig's autobiography, *The World of Yesterday*, which deals in general with this era, criticizes the hypocritical and false middle-class morality of the nineteenth century, especially that of the last quarter, which he labels "essentially a Victorian morality." By this reference he implies primarily condemnation of the rigid conviction and pseudo-practice of strict sexual views. There was the attempt "to suppress the consciousness of natural desires" and conceal "every form of free and extra-marital love" which "was in opposition to middle-class 'decency'." The negative results of this approach are given in the following maxim:

"But this wise morality completely forgot that if one shuts the front door on the Devil, he usually forces an entrance through the chimney or

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64 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
the back door." Otto Maurice Sorensen introduces his study of "The Political Aspect in the Dramatic Works of Bertolt Brecht" by attributing this breakdown of bourgeois morality first to "the increased pressures arising from an intensified economic activity," and secondly, the philosophies of "Darwin and Marx, [and later] Freud." Brecht reflects these influences more than most writers in his deliberate attack on the sensibilities of the bourgeoisie. Returning to Zweig's analysis we see that the course of events went from bad to worse in his description of what gave impetus to Wedekind's efforts to emancipate the sexual drive in man: "By this unnatural differentiation in external habits the inner tension between the poles, the erotic, was necessarily strengthened, and thus, by its unpsychological method of concealment and reticence, the society of that time achieved the directly opposite effect. While in its incessant fear and prudishness it was constantly tracking down the indecent in all forms of life, literature, art, and dress, in order to avoid every possible incitement, it was actually forced to think constantly of the indecent." Beyond the few rich young men who could afford a mistress in a private apartment and those few who had an affair with a married woman, 

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65 Ibid., p. 73.
67 Zweig, pp. 73-74.
68 In Brecht's first major play Baal, one sees that Baal's first victim is the wife of his publisher. Although the reader is aware of this affair in the beginning of the play, no such narrative account is given at the time to compare with Baal's at the end of scene thirteen, which for some reason is left out of the 1961 Suhrkamp edition. It is included in the second version of 1919, which was published in 1966.
there were basically two types of women on which middle-class men satisfied their sex-drive under such cautious convention. First, there were the girls of the poorest proletarian background who were sufficiently unresisting on the one hand, and had enough freedom on the other, for such passing relationships without serious thoughts of marriage.... There was still the possibility of an affair with one of those amphibious creatures who were half inside, half outside society--actresses, dancers, and artistes, the only 'emancipated' women of the times. But generally speaking, prostitution was still the foundation of the erotic life outside of marriage; in a certain sense it constituted a dark underground vault over which rose the gorgeous structure of middle-class society with its faultless, radiant façade.

Although the sexual element was not the only key to the morality of the times, such description was symptomatic of the moral climate at the turn of the century, after which a decade of encouraging change appeared to be taking place, only to be "the glare of the approaching conflagration," during and after which there was "the reaction of the generation ... to the collapse of their entire civilization." In describing this period


69 Zweig, pp. 82-83.
70 Ibid., p. 192.
71 Esslin, p. 8.
Ewen says in regards to the bourgeois "heroes" of contemporary dramatist Carl Sternheim: "In their smugness, self-assurance, and brutal self-seeking one senses the character of an era on the eve of an explosion." 72

Brecht was among the younger reactionaries of this generation, as Esslin recognizes: "Brecht was more deeply involved in the conflicts of his age than most of his contemporaries. His experiences concentrate and distil its basic issues: [such as] the dilemmas facing a sensitive and passionate personality in an age of declining faith [and] the dangers that beset an artist whose indignation about the social evils of his society drives him into the arms of totalitarian forces." 73

Interesting are the implications of Esslin's last sentence, in which he emphasizes the consequences of the social evils of society. Contemporaries of Brecht, such as Ernst Toller and Georg Kaiser, were driven into sympathy with communism partially by the lack of control over the social and political evils of the immediate post-war era. Again Zweig records a very poignant and descriptive account of the post-war expressionistic milieu, out of which Brecht rises:

The post-war generation emancipated itself with a violent wrench from the established order and revolted against every tradition, determined to mold its own fate, to abandon bygones and to soar into the future.... They [the students] revolted against every legitimate form for the mere pleasure of revolting, even against the order of nature,


73 Esslin, p. 8.
against the eternal polarity of the sexes.... Homosexuality and lesbianism became the fashion, not from an inner instinct but by way of protest against the traditional and normal expressions of love.... Writers who had used plain, direct language for decades obediently hacked their sentences apart and excelled in 'activism'.... It was an epoch of high ecstasy and ugly scheming, a singular mixture of unrest and fanaticism.... Anything that gave hope of newer and greater thrills, anything in the way of narcotics, morphine, cocaine, heroin found a tremendous market; on the stage, incest and parricide, in politics, communism and fascism, constituted the most favored themes; unconditionally proscribed, however, was any representation of normality and moderation.74

Zweig's description suffices to exemplify in part the social and moral aspects of the culture Brecht grew up in.

A more precise literary and philosophical commentary on the major decade (1910-1920) of Brecht's early period exists in Kurt Pinthus' anthology of expressionistic poetry, Menschheitsdämmerung. This work gives evidence of the conclusion of Brecht and his contemporaries that man must rely on man and not on supernatural guidance as set down in the Bible and Christianity. As the title of the work implies, "die Humanitäts-Melodie kann als das messianische Hauptmotiv des Expressionismus bezeichnet werden."75 Pinthus compares the humanism which accompanied the renaissance in Europe to expressionism in the following manner:

Auch der Humanismus der Renaissance war eine Gemeinschafts-Bewegung über ganz Europa; auch der Humanismus hat durch die geistige Zerstörung der vorangehenden Epoche des Mittelalters ein neues Zeitalter schaffen wollen; und es war der Humanismus, der sich unmittelbar mit dem Menschen beschäftigte und an den Menschen wandte--wie der Expressionismus.

74 Zweig, pp. 299-301.
Die Expressionisten waren enttäuschte Humanisten, da die Wirklichkeit, in der sie lebten, nichts gemein hatte mit jener, die der Humanismus der Gymnasien und Universitäten lehrte. Man könnte sagen, dass die sozialistischen oder utopischen Forderungen des Expressionismus nicht von Marx, wie man annimmt, sondern vom Humanismus herstammen (wahrscheinlich kam auch Marx daher). Denn der Humanismus hatte einst das Wort und die Idee der Utopie geschaffen.  

One needs not belabor the implications of this emphasis upon humanism, which was believed (and continues to be believed) to be the answer to man's ills and evils, but it was an understandable rebuttal to the false representation and expression of true Christianity. In any case, it became the conclusion of the major intellectuals, "der Mensch kann nur gerettet werden durch den Menschen, nicht durch die Umwelt."  

76 Ibid., p. 15.  
77 One of the most prominent literary critics who defends Christianity (at a time when it has been considered impotent in aiding modern man) as compatible with great literature and a proper Weltanschauung is Professor Erich Heller, who does "posit religious faith as an essential feature of a great poet." (p. 246) William H. Rey, who takes partial issue with Heller's critical approach, continues to discuss Heller's views further: "The theological dispute between Luther and Zwingli anticipated the radical revolution in man's concept of the world and of himself which ultimately led to Nietzsche's alarming experience that 'God is dead', and to his consequent transvaluation of all values. With the loss of Christian transcendence, humility of the creature before a God of infinite power and infinite love, was also lost the religious polarity of human guilt and divine grace was no longer acceptable. The modern disinherited individual merely had the choice of either accepting his role as an outcast in the empty vastness of the universe or of usurping the divine function of creator and redeemer." (pp. 248-249) To Professor Heller "the eternal truth of biblical tradition clearly towers above all historical rivals." (p. 255) Discussed in: William H. Rey, "Theological Aesthetics?" Germanic Review, XXXV (1960).  
78 Pinthus, p. 27.
BRECHT'S AMBIGUOUS NATURE

Recognizing the philosophical, social, and literary heritage which Brecht claims, one can better analyze Brecht's own character and understand his juxtaposition to religion and Christianity. Brecht comes from a mixed Catholic-Protestant marriage. One cannot definitely say what the influence of this conflict of faiths in the family was on "Brecht's ambivalent and self-contradictory character." It is safe to assume that his being christened "in the protestant faith of his mother . . . accounts for the strong influence the language of Luther's Bible exercised on him." Brecht is described by Esslin as "a sensitive and taciturn child, non conformist and rebellious in a quiet, negative way." The young Brecht possessed the dichotomous nature of being on the one hand a pacifist and on the other a rebel, the latter quality which Brecht praised by maintaining "that he learned more from opposition than emulation in his schooldays." Max Frisch likewise recollects: "Brecht, moreover; . . . expects no agreement whatever; on the contrary, he expects opposition. When the opposition is too moderate, he is ad-

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79 Esslin, p. 16.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 18. Emil Brunner's remarks about Nietzsche in this regard apply strongly to Brecht's anti-religiosity: "The work of Nietzsche shows an increasing preponderance of the naturalistic over the classical-humanistic elements, while certainly the formal element, the prophetic consciousness and the imperative character of the doctrine
verse, and he is bored when it fails to appear at all." James Schevill best summarizes Brecht's art of contradiction, which he attributes partially to his affinity with Hegel:

Brecht was a master of contradictions, of opposites. This is the source and power of his work, as it was of his personality. Humor and tragedy, exile and rootedness, the Bible and Existentialism, material and spiritual power, Communism and Democracy, peace and violence, science and art—he broke through the specialized forces of our time, ignoring the fact that these forces could not often be unified. It was no accident that he chose to be buried in the old Huguenot cemetery in Berlin, near the grave of Hegel, the master philosopher of the dialectical method.  

Berthold Viertel touches upon another salient reason for Brecht's rash, unorthodox manner of writing and expression, including the multiple sarcastic and ironic uses of the Bible and Christianity. Viertel says: "Two things, sensation and scandal, were the means to success [in] the commercial theatre," two concepts he said, which "have proved to be much sounder foundations than pity and fear" of the traditional theater.

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83 Frisch, p. 33.
85 Berthold Viertel, "Bertolt Brecht," Kenyon Review, VII (1945), 471. Also: Dieter Schmidt affirms this fact and attributes this quality partially to Brecht's emulation of Wedekind: "Brecht geniesst . . . das Bürgertum zu schockieren und zu provozieren. Die Waffen dazu hat er bei Wedekind gescharft." Baal und der junge Brecht: Eine textkritische Untersuchung zur Entwicklung des Frühwerks (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1966), pp. 17-18. Also, in regard to Brecht's answer that the Bible was the most influential source material on his life, Ilja Fradkin indicates use of the Bible as a means of shocking his readers into an awareness of the dichotomy of the spirit and the flesh: "In dieser unerwarteten Antwort lag
Esslin asserts, however, that Brecht's ostentatious display of defiant toughness in later life, the disgusted rejection of anything even remotely smack­ing of highminded sentiment, whether religious or patriotic, can be seen as the reaction of a basically tender mind shaken to its core by the sheer horror of existence in a world where such suffering was allowed to happen. Whether he had been religious or not in any conventional sense, the blatant cynicism of his public persona in later life is all too obviously the mask of one whose faith has been shattered and who had decided to meet the world on its own inhuman terms.\(^{86}\)

Esslin further characterizes Brecht as "a person basically tender, driven to suppress his emotion, to appear hard and rational, a human being so deeply hurt that he has become afraid of being involved in the feelings of others, and therefore, appears incapable of sympathy— and empathy."\(^{87}\) Amidst the following contradictions, which Esslin attributes to the young Brecht, is the implication of the Faustian dictum: "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust."\(^{88}\) Brecht was "lonely, almost incapable of communicating his deeper emotions, yet constantly surrounded by a circle of friends, admirers, and collaborators; a sensualist and


\(^{86}\) Esslin, p. 20. (Such was the basis for Nietzsche's extreme visionary moral philosophy.)

\(^{87}\) Ibid., p. 32.

Don Juan, yet a puritan who seemed incapable of real sensual pleasure; an ugly and unkempt figure to some, highly attractive to others, men and women; the soul of courtesy, tact, and friendliness to some, intolerably rude and repulsive to others.  

In conclusion, what one has said about Rimbaud and his "Une Saison en Enfer," can be appropriately stated about Brecht and his works in regard to his treatment of Christianity and morality, as well as other problems of modern life: "Rimbaud must speak of much else that has always been involved in the writing of poetry, but has not always required the direct attention of the author. He must discuss Christianity, the East, Science, France, morality and heredity, everything that has been engaged in his life." The object of this dissertation is to discuss primarily how Christianity, the Bible, and morality are exemplified in Brecht's life and dramatic writings, in the light of the influences analyzed in this first chapter.

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89 Esslin, p. 33.


91 The edition of the Bible used in this study is the following: DIE BIBEL oder die ganze HEILIGE SCHRIFT des Alten und Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Übersetzung D. Martin Luthers (Stuttgart: Privilegier- te Württembergische Bibelanstalt, no date).
CHAPTER II

LITERARY BEGINNINGS: POETRY AND DRAMA

Die Sünder in der Hölle
Habe's heisser, als man glaubt.
Doch fliesst, wenn einer weint um sie
Die Trän mild auf ihr Haupt.

Und dort im Lichte steht Bert Brecht
An einem Hundestein
Der kriegt kein Wasser, weil man glaubt
Der müsst im Himmel sein.

Jetzt brennt er in der Höllen
Oh, weint, ihr Brüder mein!
Sonst steht er am Sonntagnachmittag
Immer wieder dort an seinem Hundestein.

In the first prose/poetry writing of young Bertolt Brecht, contained in a collection called "Notizen über unsere Zeit" (1914), are some conventional overtures to both Kaiser and God in regards to Germany's position in war, none, however, more affirmative than: "Wir alle, alle Deutschen fürchten Gott und sonst nichts auf der Welt." Schmidt's comment on this theme emphasizes Brecht's rather conservative image of God and Fatherland—an image which is destined to change diametrically before the end of the war:

Die beiden Fixpunkte im Wertsystem des sechzehnjährigen Brecht sind somit gekennzeichnet durch den Kaiser als den irdischen Repräsentanten nationaler Würde und Ehre und durch Gott als den jenseitigen Lenker der vaterländischen Geschichte. Dass die konservative Verbindung von Gott und Vaterland von Brecht

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Brecht's earliest creative endeavors lie in the realm of poetry, with fragmentary attempts at drama interspersed. Prior to and shortly after the one-act play, *Die Bibel* (1914), there are many poems which reflect youthful allegiance to God and mother, such as "Moderne Legende" ("Nur die Mütter weinten / Hübien und drüben.") and "Deutsches Frühlingsgebet":

Herr!  
Horch, wie die Mütter schreien im dämmernden Land voll Not:  
Herr, sie schreien immer für ihre hungernenden Kinder um Brot!  
Sieh, Herr, wir bangen nicht in dieser feurigen Nacht  
Wir fürchten nicht Hass, Lüge und Übermacht.  
Kämpfen und Hinterhalt fürchten wir nicht.  
Beben kaum für Hof, Haus, Land:  
Unsre Söhne bluten an fern dunklem Strand.  
Ein Schatten fiel über uns und ein drohend Gesicht  
Riesenhaft, grauenhaft gross.  
Und wir bangten nicht, sorgten nicht  
Als er vorbeischritt, dein düsterer Tod...  
Aber, Herr eins, für eins zittern wir bloss:  
In dieser grünen Äcker Schoss  
Reift unser Schicksal und unser Los...  
Ständig und dunkel dem Tage entgegen  
Dem Fluch oder Segen:  
Reift für unsre Kinder das bisschen Brot.

Similar in theme are the two poems, "Der Fähnrich" ("Mutter ... Mutter, ich halt's nicht mehr länger aus....") and "Mütter Vermisster." Attention is called to Brecht's repetitious references to the mother figure in order to associate the early influence of his own Lutheran mother upon this formative period of his life. In the poem "Deutsches Frühlings-

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3 Ibid.  
4 Gedichte I, pp. 4-16.
gebet" one sees a major theme germinating in the prayer to God to provide Brot for the hungry children, excluding all else if necessary. In the early poem, "Mütter Vermisster," Brecht narrates the loss of the mother's son by mentioning all of the associations with the family and friends which he will never experience. There is reverence in this poem, as well as in most of the other early ones, for God and what He traditionally stands for in the lives of believers. Brecht is destined, however, to desecrate this early reverence during the remainder of his life.

Hans Otto Münsterer, a close classmate and friend of Brecht in Augsburg, confirms Brecht's rather positive attitude toward Christianity in these early years: "Den Kern des Christentums jedenfalls hat Brecht in seiner Jugend kaum abgelehnt." However, even at this time he is not silent about the "Verfälschung," among Christians and considers Saint Paul, the "Lieblingsapostel des Luthertums," to be the greatest "Fälscher." Münsterer feels that Brecht held greater affinity for Catholicism than Lutheranism because of his dislike of Saint Paul. In any case, he concludes about Brecht in this regard: "Dazu kam natürlich, dass ihm Puritanerstolz und Muckertum, die gerade hier oft so üppig ins Kraut schiessen, von Grund auf verhasst waren."

Münsterer also tells of Brecht's plans in 1919 to write a biblical drama which he calls initially David, then, Absalom—oder Der Beauftragte Gottes, and finally, Absalom und Bathseba. The story of David, a man

6 Ibid., p. 134.
who at the same time knew the lust of the flesh and was called the man after God's own heart, provides Brecht with a *Fabel*, in which hate, adultery, and immorality reign. Münsterer remains convinced, had Brecht finished this play, that "gerade dieses Stück nach seiner Vollendung zum Grössten gezählt hätte, was die deutsche Dramenliteratur überhaupt aufzuweisen hat."  

There is confirmation in Münsterer's memoirs, that young Brecht was preoccupied with the conflict of good and evil and was planning a drama dealing with the problem: "es sollte ein Stück werden, in dem lauter Bösewichter und Huren vorkamen und dazwischen ein ganz reiner Jungling." Brecht and Münsterer leave the details unrecorded, but one can imagine the fate of the lad among such persons in the mind of Brecht, who is basically fatalistic regarding man's physical and moral stamina in the face of odds. Münsterer relates an encounter Brecht had once with a beautiful eighteen year old girl, with whom he tried to get acquainted and failed. Münsterer gives the following reason and observation for this rebuff: "er mit seiner weitoffenen, aber ungesicherten Weltschau war ihrer engen, jedoch durch religiöse und familiäre gefestigten Haltung allzu fern."

Münsterer claims Brecht was in this early period more puritanical in his demands and expectations in the theatre. He was not envisioning the politically doctrinaire theatre which in reality he later developed,

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7 Ibid., p. 139.
8 Ibid., pp. 147-148.
9 Ibid., p. 121.
but a kind of moral education institution which Schiller advocated:

"Brecht's Forderungen sind in diesen Tagen puritanisch streng geworden, er sieht im Theater zwar noch keine politische Lehrbühne, aber doch mit Schiller eine Art moralische Erziehungsanstalt."^10

DIE BIBEL

The first significant sign that Brecht's view of the Bible and Christianity begins to crystalize is found in the one-act drama, Die Bibel, which is considered by Elisabeth Hauptmann, editor of the most recent edition of Brecht's works as well as close collaborator of the dramatist for several years, to be "wahrscheinlich das erste abgeschlossene Stück Brechts."^11 This drama, written at the age of fifteen as a student of the Realgymnasium in Augsburg, was published in January, 1914, under the name of Bertold Eugen in the student periodical "Die Ernte," to which he contributed several articles while in school.\(^12\) This work had been viewed previously to its first publication in 1967 and subsequently discussed briefly by researchers like Grimm,^13 Brandt,^14

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 166.

\(^{11}\) Bertolt Brecht; Gesammelte Werke: Stücke VII, Werkausgabe (20 vols.; Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), VII, Anmerkungen, p. 5. Hereafter, the page number is given in parenthesis in the text.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.


\(^{14}\) Thomas O. Brandt; Die Vielseitigkeit Bertolt Brechts (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1968), pp. 81-82.
and Ewen, all of whom have worked in the Brecht archives in East Berlin.

The exposition to the first scene of the play sets it in Holland in a Protestant city which is besieged by the Catholics. The *dramatis personae* consist of the grandfather, the father, who is the mayor of the town, the granddaughter, and the grandson; thus, three generations of the family. The names of the figures possess the characteristic anonymity of the contemporary expressionistic theater. In this regard, Münsterer points out that Brecht's efforts during this time toward a strict expressionistic style are confined to a later oratoria, originating in 1916, "das die Verfemung des dichterischen Genius und seine Vernichtung in Gott schildert." The characters are: "Er, Sein Weib, Der Jüngling, Die Mutter." At the end one hears the voice of God saying: "Der Baum, den mein Sturm fasst, fühlt seine Wurzeln, und wenn er gestorben ist, muss er blühn, es hilft ihm nichts. Freund sind dir alle Dinge, wenn du blind bist und sie sind nicht mehr da für dich! Aber aller Licht gebe ich in dich und du erleuchtest alles! Nun sollst du sterben, denn du hast es verdient: Allzeit hast du mir gedient und selbst deine Niederlage war mein Triumph." Brecht's metaphoric language expresses God's initial expectation of man, his disappointment, judgment, and subsequent victory out of man's defeat (fall). The man (Er) replies: "Herr, ich weiss, wer du bist, denn es ist schon still worden in mir....

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16 Münsterer, pp. 87-88.
17 Ibid., p. 88.
Ich bin voll Unruhe als gebäre ich eine Welt und bin doch nur ein Staubteil, das du getrunken gemacht hast, dass es seine Kleinheit vergisst aus schwachem Hirn und sich vermisst eine Welt zu machen! Aber ich will still sein, denn es hören nicht, die nur reden." Man, thus, expresses his despair amidst the chaos about him and accuses God of having numbed man's mind and made him drunk. Such imagery remains with Brecht throughout his life. Münsterer feels this sketch of a drama indicates Brecht's "endgültige Abkehr vom Expressionismus und die Entscheidung für eine realistische Weltdarstellung...."

In Die Bibel Brecht develops the conflict on two levels—externally and internally. The former level reveals the state of siege and impending doom of the city by the Catholics. Precedent has it that the fate of the city will be complete destruction of person and property. The latter level is thematically woven into the fabric of the external conflict.

The background for the internal conflict begins with the pious grandfather reading pompously from the Bible concerning the events around the last moments of Jesus on the Cross: "Und um die neunte Stunde rief Jesus laut und sprach: 'Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen' [Matt. 27:46], und nach einer Weile spotteten die um ihn standen und sagten: Anderen hat er geholfen, aber sich selbst kann er nicht helfen. Steig herab vom Kreuz und wir wollen Dir glauben

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 89.
[Matt. 27:50]. Da schrie Jesus abermals: 'Es ist vollbracht' und neigte das Haupt und verschied" (3031). [John 19:30] The granddaughter does not find comfort in these verses. She evidences a foreboding fear of what is to come when she recapitulates what her brother said that morning, before he and the father left, about the joy of sacrificing themselves in view of the impending conflagration: "Wir opfern uns gerne. Er betonte das 'Wir'. Diese Rede ist nicht wichtig. Aber sie geht mir immer im Sinn um. Und dann bekomme ich immer plötzlich Angst. Ich weiss nicht warum" (3031). The grandfather continues to pray and read from the Bible: "Wenn aber solche Zeichen geschehen, müsst ihr auf die Berge fliehen! Seid standhaft dann und treu. Denn es hängt davon viel ab!" to which the granddaughter replies: "Erzähle mir anderes Grossvater! Deine Bibel ist kalt. Sie redet von Menschen, die stärker waren als wir.... Erzähle etwas [nicht] von Not und Tod, aber von der Hilfe Gottes. Erzähle etwas von dem guten rettenden Gotte. Deine Bibel kennt nur den Strafenden" (3032). Rather than answer her with a rational response, he continues, as if unconscious of her despair, to read at random from the Bible: "Wer Vater oder Mutter liebet denn mich, der ist meiner nicht wert" (3032). [Matt. 10:37] The grandfather's mechanical repetition of biblical passages reflects in Brecht's mind a hypocritical trait common in Christianity.

The internal conflict rises sharply when the father and son arrive and tell the daughter that destruction will be avoided if the city promises to become Catholic and a maiden sacrifices herself to the enemy commander for one night. The father reluctantly commits his daughter
to this task, at which point all emotional frenzy breaks loose. The grandfather opposes this choice on biblical grounds: "Wer mich verleugnet vor den Menschen, den will ich verleugnen vor dem himmlischen Vater! [Matt. 10:33]... Wahrlich, sagt der Herr, wer Vater oder Mutter mehr liebt als mich, ist meiner nicht wert! [Matt. 10:37] Du musst fest bleiben, denk an deine Seele" (3035). The opposing force to the grandfather's position is the grandson, who is for this choice on social, humanistic grounds. In answer to the grandfather's pleas to fight and die for their belief and confess their sins, the brother, scornfully says: "Bekennet! Haha! Weisst du, Grossvater, ist leicht bekennen, wenn man satt ist. Und in Friedenszeiten, in der guten Stube" (3033-3034). The older Brecht never surpasses this caustic expression which is evident in the role of this brother regarding the pious, and too often, hypcritical call to confession and willingness to die for ambiguous reasons.

The granddaughter, however, inclines at first toward the bidding of the grandfather, but after the fire is seen billowing nearer she walks out past the grandfather in answer to the sacrifice, to which she finds herself destined. Shortly thereafter, the flames and noise die down and the curtain falls after the grandfather cries out loudly: "Herr, bleibe bei uns, denn es will Abend werden und der Tag hat sich geneigt" (3038). Thus, the play begins with the grandfather reading the scripture and ends with him praying.

The basic theme of the play is derived from the Old Testament account of Judith as well as from Hebbel's drama Judith. It is known that Brecht liked Hebbel's work in his early years but gradually turned
Brech's one-act play in a somewhat limited way also reflects Hebbel's dramatic theory, according to which great tragedy arises when there exists a conflict, which concerns a transition from one generation, religion, or class to another. The grandfather is Brecht's Meister Anton of Hebbel's *Maria Magdalene*. Brecht's character dogmatically holds to his view on traditional religious grounds and Hebbel's wants, similarly, no dishonor to come to his family for moral and social reasons. Both are persistent in their execution of their beliefs and consequently share a tragic position in the dramas.

Brecht's main mouthpiece in this short play is the brother, who advocates forcefully the cold utilitarian philosophy of the author. Brecht is more concerned with the "utility value" of religion than its true spiritual value, as one can see in the brother's defense before the grandfather of the choice to sacrifice the sister: "Draussen schreien die Menschen und du hörst sie nicht, draussen lodern die Flammen und du siehst sie nicht, Grossvater, wenn der Tag des Gerichtes kommt, wie wirst du dastehen!" (3035) His concern is salvation from the hostile forces of the here and now, which is parallel to Brecht's major theme of *Brot* found throughout his works. This demand for bread is biblical, as Ilja Fradkin points out, in Jesus' temptation in the Wilderness by the Devil (Matt. 4:3-4): "Und der Versucher trat zu ihm und sprach: Bist du Gottes Sohn, so sprich, dass diese Steine Brot werden. Und er antwortete und sprach: Es steht geschrieben [Deut. 8:3]: Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot

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20 Grimm, "Brecht's Beginning," *TDR*, p. 32.

21 Ibid.
allein, sondern von einem jeglichen Wort, das durch den Mund Gottes geht."  

In other words Brecht is more concerned with the external conditions confronting man than the internal. Grimm expresses this Weltanschauung by saying that it is "not what goes on inside a human being but the processes that go on between human beings" that interest Brecht, i.e., the social. Where the grandfather cries out for the granddaughter to save her soul ("Denk an deine Seele" 3036.), that which is of the future or eternal, the brother is concerned with the salvation of the flesh, that which is of the present: "Schwester! Du rettest ein Volk! Ein Volk! Du rettest deine Verwandten. Deinen Vater! Deinen Grossvater" (3055). Brecht is in the main consistent and, of course, justified in his plea for a humaneness among men. Because Christianity and the Bible claim the supreme concept of humanity as well as eternal immortality, and its believers do not practice it, Brecht uses its hypocrisy as a springboard to an alternate approach to humanism, which is confined solely to this world, namely, Marxist humanism.

Thus, from the above examination of Brecht's literary activity prior to Baal, his first major drama, one sees that his preoccupation with the themes of the Bible, Christianity, and morality is deeply rooted in his earliest poetic and dramatic endeavors. Grimm confirms the significance of the one act drama Die Bibel: "Dass Brecht als Fünfzehnjähriger einen

22 Ilja Fradkin, "Brecht, die Bibel, die Aufklärung und Shakespeare," Kunst und Literatur: Sovjetwissenschaft, XIII (1965), 158.

23 Grimm, p. 32.
solchen Stoff aufgegriffen und auf unbeholfen tastende Weise auch ge-
staltet hat, zeugt nicht allein von der Genialität des Dichters, son-
dern vor allem von der Gewalt, mit der ihn die christliche Botschaft
in ihren Bann schlug.24

BAAL

The question of how Brecht goes about his deliberate desecration
of the Bible and Christian morality is nowhere as boldly portrayed as
in his first full length play, Baal, which was inspired partially by
Hans Johst's play, Der Einsame, which deals with the poète-maudit,
Christian Grabbe, and was first performed on the stage of the Munich
Kammerspiele in March, 1918.25 More basic to the origin of the charac-
ter Baal and the very naturalistic description of sexual exercise and
imagery is the Song of Solomon (Das Hohelied Salomos) of the Old Testa-
ment. Confirmation of this heretofore unmentioned source is attempted
by textural comparison below.

Brecht's play treats the Baudelairian ennui of a martyred poet,
who has revolted from the mold of contemporary morality. Brecht stands
as the intermediary representative of the modern revolt against an impo-
tent morality between Frank Wedekind and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, all of
whom can claim Grabbe and Georg Büchner as predecessors in German lite-
rature or Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud in French literature. Volks-
er Klotz places strong emphasis on Wedekind's influence upon young Brecht:

24 Grimm, Deutsche Dichter der Moderne, p. 509.
25 Münsterer, pp. 24-25.
"Der junge Brecht steht in Opposition zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft
doch als Einzelgänger, noch ohne ein bestimmtes Programm wie der moralisch-
sche Erotiker Wedekind, dessen dramatisches Werk auf Brechts frühe
Stücke wirkte, ... besonders in Baal.... Schliesslich verbindet den
jungen Brecht mit Wedekind ein Bilderfundus aus der Raubtierwelt, dessen
Genealogie bis auf Grabbe und Büchner sich zurückverfolgen lässt." 26

Brecht not only borrowed Wedekind's penchant for filling his plays
and poems "with social buccanneers, swindlers, amoral castigators of
polite society," 27 but also his predilection for biblical denigration.
Brecht's own acknowledgement of his appreciation of Wedekind reflects
the affinity of the two: "Nie hat mich ein Sänger so begeistert und erschüttert. Es war die enorme Lebendigkeit dieses Menschen, die Energie,
die ihn befähigte, von Gelächter und Hohn überschüttet sein ehernes
Hoheslied auf die Menschlichkeit zu schaffen, die ihm auch diesen per-
sönlichen Zauber verlieh. Er schien nicht sterblich." 28

Brecht's use of Baal, which is a Hebrew word meaning master or possessor, the Phoenecian God of sensualism, abhored by the Israelites of
the Old Testament, finds its parallel in Wedekind's plays, Der Erdgeist
and Die Büchse der Pandorrah in the figure of Lulu, whose origin stems
from the biblical character Lilith. Further, Brecht reflects Wedekind's

27 Ewen, p. 67.
28 Brecht, Schriften zum Theater I, Werkausgabe, XV, 3-4.
definition of sin as expressed in the latter's play, *Der Marquis von Keith*: "Sünde ist eine mythologische Bezeichnung für schlechte Geschäfte." To Brecht "there is only one guilt, the guilt of living in this world, and 'sin' is the sin against the Holy Ghost of Life itself, that is, the Flesh."  

Brecht's Baal expresses his ennui through abnormal actions in a manner commensurate with the above account of the times by Stefan Zweig. Brecht, himself, asserts in this regard: "Sie sehen die Abnormität Baal, wie sie sich zurechtfindet in der Welt des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts." Baal satiates his boredom through masochistic sexual experience, all of which reflects Brecht's dissipated view at this time "that life lives by feeding on life, and God forgets his rolling creation. Sex is the means by which Baal expresses his revolt against and his enactment of the purposelessness of a universe in which nothing lasts." The translators, Bentley and Esslin, inscribe beneath the list of characters in *Baal* the following account which Max Högel relates in his work, *Bertolt Brecht: ein Portrait*: "Over the bed stood a life-size picture of his [Brecht's] idol Baal, the semitic-Phoenician deity of insatiability which Christianity had declared the principle of evil."  

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30 Ewen, p. 68.  
31 Brecht, *Schriften zum Theater* III, Werkausgabe, XVII, 954-955. See Rom. 1:20-32 for the descriptive biblical counterpart to Brecht's view of the twentieth century. His description epitomizes the biblical rendition!  
33 Ibid., p. 305. However, this conventional interpretation of the
Brecht has incarnated the spirit of Faust and Mephistopheles in Baal, when Faust says: "Der Gott, der mir im Busen wohnt, / Kann tief mein Innerstes erregen; / Der über allen meinen Kräften thront, / Er kann nach aussen nichts bewegen; / Und so ist mir das Dasein eine Last, / Der Tod erwünscht, das Leben mir verhasst," Mephistopheles replies: "Und doch ist nie der Tod ein ganz willkommner Gast." Baal is more "der Geist, der stets verneint!" than the contrary. In the 1967 Suhrkamp Werkausgabe, as well as Bentley's and Esslin's translation of Baal, there are five and four respectively of eighteen quatrains of the prologue "Der Choral vom grossen Baal" missing. Their absence does not shatter the continuity greatly, but their content does demonstrate Brecht's overt attempt to juxtapose God and Baal in a manner parallel to his efforts to capitalize upon the impotence of God, as the following picture über Brecht's bed is counteracted first by a close friend of Brecht's, Hans Otto Münsterer, who remembers it to be "die zum Teil fast lebensgrossen Kartons Caspar Nehers, die den breitstirnigen, mongoliden Verlainetyp des Brechtschen Helden wiedergaben," p. 2. Dieter Schmidt writes more convincingly and emphatically: "Es ist jedoch weder das Gemälde eines syrischen Erdgotts oder einer semitisch-phönizischen Gottheit, wie in der Literatur oft behauptet wird, noch gar das Portrait eines 'männlichen Vamps namens K. aus Pfersee bei Augsburg' [Max Högel, Bertolt Brecht: Ein Portrait (Augsburg: Verlag der schwäbischen Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1962), p. 19.], das manngross über Brechts Bett hängt. Das 'Urbild' dieser Gestaltung Baals ist Paul Verlaine." p. 12. In the 1918 version of Baal in the beginning scene, "Soirée," one of the audience remarks about Baal's "unsterbliche Verse": "Einiges könnte geradezu von Verlaine oder Wedekind sein. Ich meine das Diabolische." Bertolt Brecht, Baal: Drei Fassungen, ed. Dieter Schmidt (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), p. 13. Thus, there is overt indication, on Brecht's part, that these two figures (Verlaine and Wedekind) contribute to Brecht's affinity with evil and anti-God.


stanza exemplifies: "Ob es Gott gibt oder keinen Gott / Kann, so lang
es Baal gibt, Baal gleich sein. / Aber das ist Baal zu ernst zum
Spott: / Ob es Wein gibt oder keinen Wein." 36 Baal's Lebensauffassung
is expressed in this "Choral," about which Münsterer says: "Er enthält
tatsächlich die Quintessenz von Brechts Philosophie." 37

The play is not divided into conventional acts and scenes, but is
simply a series of individual, almost autonomous episodes or scenes,
in which Baal is unquestionably the center of action. Dieter Schmidt's
study of the early versions of Baal shows that a variety of sequences
of scenes exists. 38 The first episode of the final version of the col-
lected published works takes place in a Speisezimmer in which Baal, the
poet, is being honored at a dinner party by a potential editor and a
few aspiring associates. While Baal eats and drinks, animal-like, 39
several of the characters begin to compare the poet with Homer, Whitman,
Verhaeren, and Verlaine. On the surface the comparison can be taken in
a literary sense, but more important for Brecht is the subtle implication

36 Bertolt Brecht, Baal, in Erste Stücke (12 vols.; Berlin and
Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1961), I, 20. The stanza quoted above is left out
of the 1967 Werkausgabe. This "Choral" is found in the middle of the
first version: Baal: Drei Fassungen, pp. 48-60.

37 Münsterer, p. 84.

38 In addition to the references to the twelve volume edition of
the Stücke (1961-1964) and the 1967 Werkausgabe, mention and reference
will be made of the first version of 1918, second version of 1919, and
1926 stage version, all as published in: Baal: Drei Fassungen.

39 Baal's third victim describes him likewise: "Sie haben mich auf
offener Strasse überfallen. Ich dachte, es sei ein Orang-Utan." Stücke
I, Werkausgabe, p. 25. Hereafter, the page number is given in parenthe-
ses in the text.
of the theme of homosexuality, which unites the four poets with Baal. Brecht depicts in Baal the animalistic link between man and nature, as does the contemporary French writer, Sidonie-Gabrielle Collette. Willy Haas comments: "Solche animistisch-animalischen Töne waren in der deutschen Literatur, in der Weltliteratur noch nie gehört worden." Baal asserts his independence from any moral hampering or ethical consideration. Connected to this motif is Brecht's recognition of the decadence which a pseudo-moralistic society imposes upon its artists. Symbolically evidencing Brecht's own hopes, one of the guests reflects in his comparison of the poet the expressionistic motif of a new day on the literary horizon, for which Baal is the forerunner: "Ich halte Sie für den Vorläufer des grossen Messias der europäischen Dichtung, den wir auf das Bestimmteste für die unmittelbar allernächste Zeit erwarten" (6). In Brecht's obituary writings on Wedekind March 12, 1918, he associates the latter with Tolstoy and Strindberg, influential forerunners of the expressionistic generation, and alludes to the same concept of a "new day" that he permits Baal to represent at the beginning: "Er gehörte mit Tolstoi und Strindberg zu den grossen Erziehern des neuen Europas."

\footnote{40} Willy Haas confirms the Verlaine-Rimbaud relationship to Baal-Ekart: "Er [Brecht] muss schon damals Rimbaud und Verlaine genau gekannt haben--manches, gegen das Ende des Dramas hin, weist auf die Katastrophe dieser homosexuellen Freundschaft hin." 
\footnote{41} Bert Brecht (Berlin: Colloquium, 1958), p. 20.


\footnote{43} Haas, p. 21.

\footnote{43} Brecht, Schriften zum Theater I, Werkausgabe, XV, 4.
Brecht parodies here also the Old and New Testament's account of John the Baptist being the forerunner of Christ, the prophesied Messiah (Matt. 3:3). The analogy, however, is to a poet, who will create a new European poetry in his coming.

Brecht, who is well known for his tendencies to adapt other works of literature, evidences a rather mature stylistic move, when he has a young lady step forward and read a couple of poems from the periodical *Revolution* without mention of the authors, after which she comments: "Meiner Meinung nach kommt das dem baalischen Weltgefühl am nächsten" (8). It is not a case of plagiarism, since about half of one and all of the other poem is read and they are from two representative expressionistic poets included in Pinthus' collection, *Menschheitsdämmerung.* The first one is Johannes Becher's "Vorbereitung," which depicts the Marxist "socio-political outlook" and the second one is Georg Heym's "Der Wald," which deals "with the theme of suicide," two themes of expressionism which are "thematically characterized by opposition to the status quo and the evocation of a new, better world." What connection do these poems have to Baal, or more cogently, what implications exist regarding Brecht's unique attention to religiosity? Becher's poem is less applicable to the question, since its theme of a better world through a new political order in the Marxist sense was only in the embryonic stages in this period of Brecht's development. It does have significance in Brecht's sub-


45 Egbert Krispyn, "Brecht and Expressionism: Notes on a Scene from *Baal,*" *Revue des Langues Vivantes,* XXXI (1965), 212 ff..
Sequent transition to Marxism after the mid-twenties. Heym's "Der Wald" is the salient poem which is connected to the thematic structure of the play as well as evokes an indirect jab at "the established world view by implication, when he [Heym-Brecht] negates man's supreme position in creation [as confirmed in Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:5-7] and shatters the concept of God as an awe-inspiring ruler of the universe."46

Applicable also are Krispyn's comments on the analogous implications of this poem and Brecht's ideas in Baal: "Suicide amounts, moreover, to a renunciation of eternal salvation. This theological aspect of the motif is emphasized in the last stanzas of the poem, in which God's sphere of authority is limited to the 'Schlangengezücht'. The devaluation of the Deity is also obvious in the quasi-primitive, heavily ironical lines: 'Gott in dem weissen Kleide / Tat in den Wolken sich auf'."47

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46 Ibid., p. 214.
47 Ibid.
This first scene depicts Baal in his most passive state. Baal, the poet, is the subject of this first episode, after which little is said or implied regarding this poetic quality of Baal. The 1926 state version of the first scene, which Suhrkamp has recently published, reveals Brecht's overt sympathy for the rebel, when he concludes the scene with Baal narrating an episode concerning Noah and the Ark:


Briefly, the remainder of the play relates how Baal, the amoral poet, causes the destruction of three women who could not resist his physical enticement 49—his publisher's wife, his protegée's fiancée,

48 Baal: Drei Fassungen, p. 156.

49 It is interesting to note what an acquaintance and observer of Brecht had to say partially in this regard about Brecht's own relationship to women: "All of Brecht's women were loyal to him—and he had a vast consumption. He was a singularly ugly man, and he certainly was anything but a charmer, but his very contempt for all the traditional rules of conduct between sexes made him peculiarly attractive to women. [Brecht was] one who positively prided himself on his ugliness and ill manners," Ernest Borneman. "Credo Quia Absurdum: An Epitaph for Bertolt Brecht," The Kenyon Review, XXI (1959), p. 188.
and another young girl—and concludes by entering a homosexual relation-
ship with another admirer, which leads to the jealous murder of his
friend and subsequently his own death. Baal sees each of his victims
destroyed without displaying any pity, as evidenced in the following
remark: "Ich kümmere mich nie um Leichname" (28). With each sexual
rendezvous Baal is only momentarily satisfied and finds only contempt
for anything spiritual or moral: "Die Enttäuschung führt nun zu jener
gewaltsamen Reaktion, zur Verachtung des Menschen und der Welt, zur
Verachtung für alles, was mit Geist, Gefühl und Sittlichkeit zu tun
hat." In the course of the ensuing action of the play Brecht dis-
plays in his baroque and bombastic language derogatory metaphors and
images of God and Christianity which echo strongly in the reader's mind
afterwards. Brecht leads his hero at times to desire to usurp the role
of God, as did Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:5,22), the people at the tower of
Babel (Gen. 11:4), and Verlaine's demonic angel in the poem "Crimen
Amoris": "Oh! je serai celui-là qui sera Dieu!"

In the second scene, "Baals Dachkammer," Baal and his na"ıve proté-
gé, Johannes, are in Baal's attic apartment and Johannes is relating
prudishly his sensuous thoughts regarding his innocent fiancée. He,
thinking possibly that Baal feels he is showing too little propriety,
says: "Ich sehe: Sie halten die Vereinigung auch für schmutzig." Baal


51 It is generally held that this angel represents Verlaine's con-
densed vision of Rimbaud as he knew him in the summer of 1872. See:
Edgell Rickword, Rimbaud: The Boy and the Poet, revised ed. (London,
1963), p. 45.

replies metaphorically: "Das ist das Geschrei der Schweine, denen es
nicht gelingt. Wenn du die jungfräulichen Hüften umschlingst, wirst du
in der Angst und Seligkeit der Kreatur zum Gott" (11). The 1926 stage
version of this scene, which uses some decorum in its title, "Baal beim
unbedenklichen Missbrauch göttlicher Gaben," and the two latest editions
leave out part of Baal's reply which exists in the two earliest versions.
As one sees in the following excerpt, that which is left out is a rather
obscene description of the sexual act, expressed in symbolical and meta-
phorical language: "Es gibt keinen schöneren Genuss als den Körper eines
jungen Weibes. Er darf nicht besudelt werden. Er ist wild und geschmei-
dig wie der Leib eines Tigers und doch sanft und schmeichelnd, voller
Wonne und ganz herrlich. Wenn du die jungfräulichen Hüften umspannst,
zuckt warmes Leben in deinen Händen, und in der Angst und Seligkeit der
Kreatur wirst du zum Gott. Im Tanz durch Höllen, hopp! und gepeitscht
durch Paradiese, hopp! hopp!"53

Brecht's metaphorical and symbolical description of woman is hard-
ly less provocative than the lines from the Song of Solomon 7:1-6:

Wie schön ist dein Gang in
den Schuhen, du Fürsten-
tochter!
Deine Lenden stehen gleich an-
einander, wie zwei Spanen,
die des Meisters Hand gemacht
hät.
Dein Schoss ist wie ein runder
Becher,
dem nimmer Getränk mangelt.
Dein Leib ist wie ein Weizen-
haufen,
umsteckt mit Rosen.

53 Baal: Drei Fassungen, p. 18.
Deine zwei Brüste sind
wie zwei junge Rehzwillinge.

Wie schön und wie lieblich
bist du,
du Liebe voller Wonne!

There is, however, in Brecht's account the normal touch of the profane when one looks at the play as a whole. In the latter portion of Brecht's description there is reference to man becoming God in the act of copulation, thus reflecting the previously mentioned inclination of the hero to become God or like God in his role as progenitor or creator of life. There is, however, no such parallel of imagery in the Song of Solomon. This brutal description of the sexual act is the way Brecht parodies Nietzsche's concept of the Übermensch, although in a more negative sense than Nietzsche.

For further confirmation that the Song of Solomon was influential on Brecht's Baal, one notes in The Interpreter's Bible that the features of the Book suggest similarity in style of language and imagery to that of Brecht, who alludes more often to this Book in the Bible than to any other:

It is lyric poetry of exquisite beauty, full of sensuous symbols. It is manifestly folk poetry, not belles-lettres. It is simple and naïve, not the studies work of a littérature. The many repetitions in the poem and its lack of structure preclude that. It is full of elaborate imagery, with extravagant, sometimes overbold metaphors. There is a remarkable appreciation of the beauty of nature in the poem and nature is prominent throughout. In its present form it is purely secular in character, with no apparent theological, religious, or moral attributes. God never once appears in it. 54

54 George Arthur Buttrick, ed.; The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville, 1956), V, 92.
The two most common interpretations of the Song are the allegorical and liturgical interpretation. The former is the earliest and is interpreted differently by the Jews and Christians. According to Jewish interpretation the bridegroom is Yahweh and the bride the Jewish nation. According to Christian interpretation the bridegroom is Christ and the bride is the Church in general, but also the individual believer. More widely accepted today is the liturgical interpretation, which says that the Song represents "the survival in conventionalized form of ancient Hebrew New Year liturgies that celebrated the reunion and marriage of the sun god with the mother goddess, which in the ancient world typified the revival of life in nature that came with the return of the growing season." The Hebrew New Year celebration came in the spring and fall, with the one in the spring paralleling the traditional worship of the fertility god of pagan origin but still practiced partially in the Christian Easter Celebration.

Baal's origin is, thus, indirectly associated with much of the legend built up around the Song of Solomon. In summarizing the likely influence of the Song of Solomon on Brecht's Baal, we can assume it is highly possible that Brecht studied this short book in the Old Testament, which has so great a similarity of imagery to that in Baal. Also, this particular book has been treated by other authors, such as Herder, who in 1778 published a collection of love songs, Lieder der Liebe, die ältesten und schönsten aus dem Morgenlande, among which was the Song of

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., p. 94.
Solomon, which he interpreted to be a collection of independent erotic songs arranged by a collector to signify "the gradual growth of true love in its various nuances and stages, till it finds its consummation in wedlock."^  

The third scene is in a Brämtweinschenke, where Brecht again juxtaposes the licentious, bestial existence of man opposite the accusation that God has forgotten modern man: "Baal!... Geh mit mir, Bruder!... Zu den Schnapsschenken voll von Besoffenen: in die schwarzen Flüsse fallen Weiber, die du gefüllt hast. Zu den Kathedralen mit kleinen weissen Frauen.... Zu den Kuhställen, wo man zwischen Tieren schläft.... Und zu den Wäldern, wo das erzene Schallen oben ist und man das Licht des Himmels vergisst: Gott hat einen vergessen" (16). These words are reminiscent of the context of the tenth Psalm, especially fourth and eleventh verses, which say: "Der Gottlose meint in seinem / Stolz, er frage nicht danach; / in allen seinen Tücken hält er / Gott für nichts. / Er spricht in seinem Herzen: / Gott hat's vergessen; / er hat sein Antlitz verborgen, er / wird's nimmermehr sehen."

Brecht's use of biblical references in Baal begins to fall into a consistent pattern of always connoting the inability of the old myth to cope with the current existence of man and to solve his multiple problems. In the second part of the fourth scene Baal is visited by two sisters who cannot resist his sexual power over them. The landlady enters and warns Baal of his shameful and obsessive practice in her

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apartment and then makes the two sisters leave and chides them not to be caught again. Baal sits down at his desk with paper and pencil and says: "Ich mache einen neuen Adam [See Rom. 5:12-18; I Cor. 15:21-22]. Ich versuche es mit dem inneren Menschen" (23-24). Again he is harping at the need for a new man, not like the Adam, whose descendants breed war, corruption, and death. His new man will have different inner qualities, which will reflect unanimity, not chaos. This image is repeated toward the end of the play by a patron in a bar: "aber ich habe Ahnungen von einer höheren Welt. Beugt euch, seid de-demütig! Legt den alten Adam ab" (60). Thus, the images compliment one another in revealing the author's twisted implication of the scriptures.\(^{58}\) In the 1918 version the scene entitled "Baals Dachkammer" combines with the subsequent sixth one entitled "Mainacht unter Bäumen" of the later editions. One sees again Baal's insatiable thirst for sexual pleasure draped in metaphoric and symbolic reference to heaven and God, as he pours out his lament to his intimate companion, Lethe, of the mythological realm, whose potion he refuses, since he finds oblivion best in the act of procreation. Baal's primary lament pertains to his inability for two days to finish a work of poetry. Since he cannot create a poem, his mind turns to the sexual concept of creation:


\(^{58}\) This concept of "a new man" is reminiscent of Georg Kaiser's "Erneuerung des Menschen."
zur Qual geboren, und ich habe keine Ruhe. Blut füllt
mir die Augen, und meine Hände zittern wie Laub. Ich
will etwas gebären! Ich will etwas gebären! Mein Herz
schlägt ganz schnell und matt. Aber mitunter dumpf wie
ein Pferdefuß, du weißt! Der Geruch der wilden Mai-
nächte ist in mir. Die Liebe ist wie ein Strudel, der
einem die Kleider vom Leibe reisst und einen nackt be-
gräbt, nachdem man Himmel gesehen hat, blau, unermess-
liche, nichts als Himmel, blauen, unersättlichen, offenen.
Der Sommer singt aus mir mit einer sanften und lauthallen-
den Stimme, wie die von Frauen beim Pflügen, und mein
eigener Leib ist voll fremder Unruhe, ich liebe keine
Lethe, aber ich bin ein großer Liebender, Gott weiß,
dass ich es ernst nehme, ich gehe immer aufs Ganze. Ich
verschämhe die romantische Schwärmerei, warum wird dieses
Werk nicht fertig, dieses gottgewollte, verfluchte, selige,
gefressige! Musik quillt aus mir, ich kann sie nicht
halten, sie verzittert im Sand wie ein fruchtbarer Quell,
und ich dorre darüber aus.59

In the above monolog Baal essentially tells Lethe, who in general
symbolizes the source of oblivion from the despair of this world through
liquor or wine, that he prefers "Liebe" to "Lethe." In the Song of
Solomon such imagery is often repeated: "Wir gedenken an deine Liebe /
mehr denn an den Wein" (1:4). Also: "Deine Liebe ist lieblicher denn
Wein" (4:10); just as Brecht utilizes the various senses in his des-
criptive language, so does the writer in the Song of Solomon, as with
taste and smell: "und der Geruch deiner Salben übertrifft alle Würze. /
Deine Lippen, meine Braut, sind / wie triefender Honigseim; / Honig und
Milch ist unter deiner / Zunge, / und deiner Kleider Geruch ist / wie
der Geruch des Libanaon" (4:10-11). Again, the difference between the
two sources lies in the fact that Brecht tends, as is the case with the
majority of his references to the Bible, to evoke an antithetical, nega-
tive implication. In the original version Brecht introduces Baal's mother

in this scene. She plays the role of the despairing mother lamenting over her wayward son: "O du Gotteslästerer." 60

The scene following the conversation of Baal and his mother is also to be found only in this earliest version. Baal finds himself among a group in a Wirtsstube where he is coaxed into reading the ballad legend of the prostitute, Evlyn Roe. She climbs aboard a ship and tells the captain: "Herr Kapitän, lass mich dir ins heilge Land fahrm. / Ich muss zu Jeses Christ." The captain replies: "Du sollst mitfahrn, Weib, weil wir Narrn / und du so herrlich bist." She naively says: "Er lohns Euch. Ich bin nur ein arm Weib. / Mein Seel gehört dem Herrn Jesu Christ." The captain is not interested in her soul, but her body: "So gib uns deinen süssen Leib!" He also tells her the Lord is dead: "Denn der Herr, den du liebst, kann das nimmermehr zahln: / weil er gestorben ist." 61 After several descriptive stanzas of the orgy she endures with the captain and the crew, she acknowledges to the Lord: "Nie seh' ich dich Herr Jesus Christ / mit meinem sündigen Leib. / Du darfst nicht gehn zu einer Hur / und bin ein so arm Weib." She subsequently throws herself into the waters, where she supposedly is washed clean and pure in the symbolic language of the Bible: "Sie liess sich den dunklen Wellen und die / wuschen sie weiss und rein / Nun wird sie wohl vor dem Kapitän / im heiligen Lande sein." Yet, when she arrives at the gates of Heaven, Saint Peter slams them in her face saying: "Gott hat mir gesagt: Ich will nit han / Die Dirne Evlyn Roe." Like-

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60 Ibid., p. 22.
wise were the doors of Hell closed before her, as Satan shouts: "Ich
will nit han / Die fromme Evlyn Roe."62 Evlyn Roe is relegated to a
limbo that only a nihilistically inclined mind could conjure up: "Da
ging sie durch Wind und Sternenraum / und wanderte immer zu / Spätt
abends durchs Feld sah ich sie schon gehn: / Sie wankte oft. Nie blieb
sie stehen. / Die arme Evlyn Roe."63

Thus, Brecht draws here a picture of the "sinner" continuing to
"sin" while asking simultaneously for forgiveness and salvation. In­
stead of receiving either one, as the scripture implies the sinner can,
she is condemned. Her condemnation, however, is also not conventional,
for she is turned away by Satan, allegedly for being too pious. Brecht's
pessimism and deprecation of a biblical theme is hardly matched else­
where in his works. Münsterer asserts: "Die Evlyn Roe, deren philoso-
phische Aussage in der trostlosen Einsicht besteht, dass die Seligkeit
nur um einen Preis erkauft werden kann, der die Seligkeit unmöglich
macht, und deren logische Konsequenz zum Ausgeschlossensein von Himmel
und Hölle führt, sind natürlich zu tiefst pessimistisch."64

The fifth scene records a classic example of what Brecht might con­
sider to be a representative Christian image. The example is one in
which the Christian spews out pious words while his actions reflect the
contrary. Baal meets a pale, inebriated man, whom he asks who has nail­
ed the corpses to the trees on the wall. The bum answers "Corpus
Christi" (Fronleichnam). The fellow hears the church bells ringing and

62 Ibid., p. 27.
63 Ibid., p. 28.
64 Münsterer, p. 82.
feels edified. Baal wonders if the dead bodies of the trees bother him. The image of the dead trees represents the decaying society, just as do the bodies of the women. Lyons says of this image: "Baal uses this image to contrast his own exploitation of the trees with their use in Christian ritual. Baal sees the boughs nailed to the wall for the Corpus Christi procession as the bodies of women; and he holds Jesus, whose own union with the trees was accomplished on the cross, responsible for their murder." The drunk man begins to praise "den weissen Leib Jesu," whom he loves, in the following manner: "Dienen!! Meinem Herrn Jesus: Ich sehe den weissen Leib Jesu. Ich sehe den weissen Leib Jesu. Jesus liebte das Böse." And Baal replies sarcastically: "Wie ich." Then says: "Vielleicht werde ich katholisch," but the stranger asserts: "Er [Jesus] wurde es nicht," while taking another swig of liquor. Baal retorts the conventional implication of the vain babbling of this poor creature: "Sie haben zuviel Religion oder zuviel Schnaps im Leib" (28). Brecht has drawn for us, whether consciously or unconsciously, I believe consciously, the primary cause of the sterility of the Christian religion—the hypocrisy of the professing Christian.

Although there is no encounter with the drunk man, this scene is developed in the first version with more overt attention expended toward a denigration of the biblical implication of the "Corpus Christi" pro-

65 Charles R. Lyons, "Bertolt Brecht's BAAL: The Structure of Images," Modern Drama, VIII (1965), 320. Walter Sokel speaks apropos of this subject of the crucified Christ and why it was widely adapted by the expressionists: "Disaffection with the bourgeois environment, accompanied by the wish to attract attention to provoke the enemy, and to be crucified by him, fits in well with the analogies in Expressionist literature between misunderstood artists and Christ." Walter H. Sokel, The Writer in Extremis: Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Literature (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 63.

Baal comes out of a low-class café thinking of his delightful affair with Marie on the one hand and of "repentance" on the other. His "neues Leben" comes not from the scriptural source (i.e., Christ), but from having spent the night with Marie. He affirms his amorality by claiming to be at the same time "ein guter Christ" and "der Niederste der Sünder," while protesting the vain babbling of the participants in procession, who cling to the tenets and ritual of their religion. Schmidt correctly alludes to the source of influence on Brecht's imagery here, when he writes: "Milieu und Art der Frömmigkeit, die Brecht hier angreift, haben sich ihm in Augsburg dargeboten.... Baal mit seiner leidenschaftlichen Stellungnahme für die 'Birkenbäumchen', die geschändete Natur, ohne Rücksicht auf die 'Heiligkeit' der Prozession, trägt Züge des Naturgottes 'Baal' im Alten Testament."67

The third part of scene four of the latest version has its parallel in the first version with the scene in "Baals Kammer." Baal has forced a girl named Sophie Barger in the latest version, Sophie Dechant in the first, to accompany him up to his room. In the latest version she is an actress on her way to the theater to play the role of Judith, presumably in Hebbel's play by that name. 68 She is dressed in white, a symbol for Christian purity, which Baal deliberately desecrates on this and other occasions. At the conclusion of this scene in the early version Baal's mother comes by and scolds him again for living "das wüste Leben," but to no avail. However, in the next scene of the first version we see Baal hypocritically defending himself in her name before his editor who has just fired him: "Meine Herrn, hören Sie mich an: Ich habe gefehlt und den Boden verloren. Ich war dann im Gefängnis und habe gearbeitet wie nie. Ich bin hochgekommen, und jetzt wollen Sie mich wieder hinunterstossen. Ich werde mich nicht mehr hinausdrängen lassen. Hier bleibe ich.... Ich habe eine alte Mutter! Herr!" His editor replies: "Versuchen Sie nicht, sentimentale Stimmung zu machen. Sie sind ein notorischer Betrüger. Sie waren nicht nur im Gefängnis, sondern auch im Varieté. Machen Sie sich dünn. Verschwinden Sie, solange ich mich noch beherrschen kann." 69

Following this scene Baal is found stirring up friction in a night club, whose owner calls the police. This scene in the latest version

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68 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
69 Baal: Drei Fassungen, p. 47.
concludes with no confirmation that Baal was imprisoned, as happens in
the first version, which follows up with a conversation in prison be­
tween Baal and a clergyman, in which Baal announces his "Anschauung vom
Leben."

**DER GEISTLICHE:** Sie lüsten Gott. Sie sind ein Tier. Sie
sind das Tier. Das Urtier! Ein schmutziges, hungriges
Tier, das schön ist und gemein. Eine Plage des Himmels.
Aber Sie werden sterben.

**BAAL:** Sterben? Ich lasse mich nicht überreden. Ich wehre
mich bis aufs Messer. Ich will noch ohne Haut leben. Ich
ziehe mich in die Zehen zurück. Ich falle wie ein Stier.
Es muss noch Genuss sein im Sichkrümmen. Ich glaube an
kein Fortleben und bin aufs Hiesige angewiesen.\(^{70}\)

We see in this conversation Baal's ridicule of the clergyman's witness­
ing to him about God. Peace of soul comes for Baal not from God but
from the freedom to go where he wants to and from the companionship of
woman. Baal, whose biblical origin is associated also with the idea
of the sun and fertility god, waxes ecstatic as he enumerates the quali­
ties of his soul—the sunlight of an unearthed diamond and the urge to
bud of the trees and the groaning of the corn fields in spring! The
pastor's assertion that he will die brings Baal to affirm disbelief in
the Hereafter. After the minister leaves Baal utters in complete in­
difference to the clergyman's concern: "Ich habe die Zeit versäumt, wo
der Baumgipfel das einzige Mal am Tag voll Sonne ist! Hol den Pfaffen
der liebe Gott!"\(^{71}\)

In a subsequent short scene of the first version, which is also
not included in the latest version, Baal promises his mother as they
leave the prison that he will begin "ein neues Leben." Interesting is
the frequent association of Baal with his mother in this early version.

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\(^{70}\) Ibid., p. 55.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 56.
This affection to the mother reflects an autobiographical trait not found in the later versions. Münsterer, Brecht's close childhood friend, writes that the mother favored her son's choice to become a poet, whereas, the father remained skeptical and bound to the ideas of the 'Kleinbürgertum.' The early version of Baal includes a scene "Die Kammer von Baals Mutter," in which the mother dies in Baal's arms. As Brecht distances himself from Augsburg and the mother, who dies in 1919, he extends no attention to her as a figure in the final version of the play. His relationship to the mother is indirectly dramatized in the later plays, Die Mutter, adapted from Gorky's novel by the same name, Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar, and Mutter Courage.

It is also this affinity to the mother versus the father that Brecht and Rimbaud have in common. Brecht's relationship to the mother is not as antagonistic as that of Rimbaud and his mother, but it is obvious that Brecht comes to disavow the orthodox Lutheran faith of his mother just as did Rimbaud. Rimbaud's influence upon young Brecht is reflected in the autobiographical poem "Les poètes de sept ans." Written in September or October, 1870, when Rimbaud was just becoming sixteen, the first part of the poem deals mainly with descriptions of provincial life in and around his native town of Charleville and belabors the conflict of a puritanical mother and a young son, who comes to hate her and the symbols of authority, which she represents. She makes him read

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72 Münsterer, p. 37.
73 Baal: Drei Fassungen, p. 56.
the Bible, which only causes him to assert more his dislike of God: 
"Il n'aimait pas Dieu." Fowlie writes that the large church stood 
"in the center of Charleville as a symbol of authority for Rimbaud....
On the wall of the church, the boy Arthur wrote his supreme blasphemy, 
MORT à DIEU, to mark his disapproval of bigotry and narrow dogma."

Rimbaud seizes upon the spiritual vacuity of nineteenth century 
Europe with its false Christianity and exploits it for his own purposes, 
and Brecht follows in his path. Brecht's attention to the debilitating 
aspect of Christianity as represented in its priests and clergy finds 
its parallel in two poems of Rimbaud, "Les pauvres à l'église" and "Les 
premières communions." In the former poem there are brief overtures, 
amidst the descriptions of the lower classes with their physical deform-
ities, to the faith of poor people in a God who "les fait souffrir:" "Et tous, bavant la foi mendicante et stupide, / Récitent la complainte 
infinie à Jésus / Qui rêve en haut, jauni par le vitrail livide, / Loin 
des maigres mauvais et des méchants pansus." "Les premières communions," 
a poem written on the occasion of his sister Isabell's first communion 
and one of the longest poems which Rimbaud wrote, "deals with religious 
fervor as a kind of physical defilement." It ranks as one of his most

76 Fowlie, p. 226.
77 Rimbaud, p. 78.
78 Ibid., p. 80.
eloquent efforts in attacking Christianity prior to his "Une Saison en Enfer" and contains descriptions of provincial life and local color similar to the above mentioned poems, "Les poètes de sept ans" and "Les pauvres à l'église." The poet begins by degrading the role of the priest, as does Brecht in the ninth scene of Baal. In concluding the poem the poet's bitterness towards Christ is compounded when he calls him the eternal thief of energy: "Christ! ô Christ, éternal voleur des énergies / Dieu qui pour deux mille ans vous a ta pâleur." Thus, among influences from Rimbaud, Brecht particularly found affinity with his denigration of Christianity and morality.

Brecht makes an assault on the naiveness of the peasants and their parson in the ninth scene. Baal and his newly acquired male companion set out for open country, where there is again sense imagery such as "der Geruch der Felder.... Die weissen Landstrassen ziehen uns sonst wie Seile von Engeln in den Himmel" (33). Such imagery of walking in the country side is typical of Brecht's life in Augsburg with his friends, such as Hans Otto Münsterer, who writes: "Damals durchstreiften wir mit offenen Augen Wald und Feld; man erkennt es aus den frühen Dichtungen, in denen Baum, Fluss und Sternennacht in fast romantischem Glanz aufleuchten." Except that it is a woman talking, a scene in the Song of Solomon parallels Brecht's imagery here:

Mein Freund ist mein, und nach mir steht sein Verlangen.
Komm, mein Freund, lass uns aufs Feld hinausgehen
und auf den Dörfern bleiben,
dass wir früh aufstehen zu den Weinbergen,
und dass wir sehen, ob der Wein-

80 Rimbaud, p. 100.
81 Münsterer, p. 135.
stock sprosse
und seine Blüten aufgehen,
ob die Grannatbäume blühen;
da will ich dir meine Liebe geben.
Die Lilien geben den Geruch,
und über unserer Tür sind allerlei
edle Früchte.
Mein Freund, ich habe dir beide,
heurige und vorjährige, behalten.(7:10-13)

Baal and his companion arrive at a village tavern in the evening
and Baal proceeds to make a proposition to a group of peasants concerning
their best bulls, which his brother, allegedly, will come look at
the next day, after they have all been collected in the town from
several villages. The bull with the strongest loins will be bought
at a good price. Baal makes reference here to the sexual element,
one of the major themes of the play. Each of the peasants claims his
bull is the best and great enthusiasm ensues as they leave. The friend
is appalled at this swindle, but Baal wishes to show him "ein göttliches
Schauspiel," which will reveal the peasants' traits: "Sie [the peasants]
tun es zu ihrer Belehrung. Ich denke an sie jetzt im warmen Abend mit
einer gewissen Zärtlichkeit. Sie kommen, um zu betrügen, in ihrer ein-
fachen Art, und das gefällt mir" (35). Then there comes the village
parson, who has seen through the deception. Baal is as coarse with him
as with the peasants, as he explains that his aim was the spectacle of
seeing the bulls all coming in from all directions. Brecht seems to
overdo the naïve depiction of the parson as he says: "Ich begreife jetzt.
Sie [Baal] sind ein armer Mensch. Und Sie lieben wohl Stiere besonders?"
Baal replies in derision: "Komm Ekart! Er hat die Geschichte verdorben.
Der Christ liebt die Tiere nicht mehr" (36). In one sense Baal is depicted
as consistent in his role as a depraved type of animal; in another he
implies the naïveness of the Christian person, who has not been able to appreciate his method of entertainment.

In the subsequent scene Baal is among some woodcutters, who have lost to death a companion whom they describe in a biblical dialog as "dick wie ein Pfaffe" (37). Speaking about the dead one before them, Baal echos Brecht's nihilism, when he says: "Der hat seine Ruhe, und wir haben unsere Unruhe. Das ist beides gut. Der Himmel ist schwarz. Die Bäume zittern. Irgendwo blähen sich Wolken. Das ist die Szenerie. Man kann essen. Nach dem Schlaf wacht man auf. Er nicht. Wir. Es ist doppelt gut" (37-38). Later in the discussion about taking some of the deceased's belongings from his children, Baal hypocritically defends him in the name of religic.: "Wollt ihr Teddy's fünf armen Waisen den Schnaps ihres armen Vaters wegsaufen? Ist das Religion?" (39) In reality Baal himself has already drunk the brandy. Upon learning this fact, the woodcutters are about to pounce on Baal, who defends himself this time in the name of 'poor Teddy', whose limp arm he picks up, and piety: "Schweinebande! Tretet mir wenigstens den armen Teddy nicht! Wenn ihr mich misshandelt, fällt Teddy aufs Gesicht. Ist das Pietät?" (41) Some of the men express their amazement at such merciless action: "Dem

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Burschen ist nichts heilig.—Gott sei seiner besoffenen Seele gnädig!—
Er ist der hartgesottenste Sündер, der zwischen Gottes Händen herum-
läuft" (41). In concluding the scene Baal says their complaints are
simply "Pfafferei" and he wants to hear no more. Trying to change the
mood he points out: "Seht euch den Himmel an zwischen den Bäumen der
Jetzt dunkel wird. Ist das nichts? Dann habt ihr keine Religion im
Leibe" (41).

The eleventh scene finds Baal and his friend, Eckart, in a hut
talking. Baal characterizes his friend as well as himself as he says:
"Du bist ein böser Mensch, gerade wie ich, ein Teufel" (43). This
scene is particularly reminiscent of the relationship between the
French poets, Verlaine and Rimbaud.

In the twelfth scene, which is appropriately titled in the 1926
stage edition "Baal verlässt die Mutter seines ungeborenen Sohnes,"
Baal's last female victim has come into the hut and pleads that Baal
not make her return home to her mother since she is pregnant. Baal is
cold and tells her in essence to go away and leave him alone. The
girl, Sophie, says: "Wo soll ich denn hin?" Baal: "In den Himmel,
Geliebte!" Sophie: "Mit meinem Kind?" Baal: "Vergrab es!" (45) This
is simply another affront of Brecht's against the so-called perverted
sense of morality existing under Christianity. Brecht's transitory ap­
proach to love affairs at this time is seen in the closing lines of the
poem, "Die Liebenden:" "Ihr fragt, wie lange sind sie schon beisammen? /Seit kurzem.—Und wann werden sie sich / trennen?—Bald. / So scheint
die Liebe Liebenden ein Halt."83

From this point on in the drama, Baal and Eckart are in flight. The 1926 edition identifies this period as follows: "In den Jahren 1907-1910 finden wir Baal und Eckart auf Streifzügen in Süddeutschland." It is here that a close parallel of Verlaine's and Rimbaud's travels together to Belgium and England exists, with the homosexual theme taking precedence in both instances.

In the thirteenth scene Baal and Eckart arrive on a windy night at an inn, where in conversation with a beggar Baal's own death is intimated in a story the beggar relates about a man; he "stammte aus einem Wald und kam einmal wieder dort hin, denn er musste sich etwas überlegen" (47). Baal is nervous and, looking for an excuse to leave, says to Eckart: "So ein Wind! Und wir müssen heut nacht noch fort" (48). The mention of 'Wind' only brings the beggar to the denouement of his story, namely, that one day the man threw himself down beneath a big tree, against which the wind was blowing strong, "umschlang die wilden und harten Wurzeln und weinte bitterlich. Aber er tat es mit vielen Bäumen." This orgiastic ritual did not save the man, so the beggar says, but he conceded he had an easier death. One of the patrons of the inn chirps in: "Das versteh ich nicht" and the beggar replies in nihilistic

84 Baal: Drei Fassungen, p. 171.


86 This line has definite similarity and implications to that of the first lines of the famous ballade by Brecht: "Vom Armen B. B.," although the latter was not written or published until 1921: "Ich, Bertolt Brecht, bin aus den schwarzen Wäldern. / Meine Mutter trug mich in die Städte hinein / Als ich in ihrem Leibe lag. Und die Kälte der Wälder / Wird in mir bis zu meinem Absterben sein." Hundert Gedichte, p. 57.
language: "Nichts versteht man." Another member of the company asks Baal: "Glaubt ihr an Gott?" and he replies wearily: "Ich glaubte immer an mich. Aber man kann Atheist werden" (48). Brecht carries his nihilistic implications possibly to the highest degree in this scene, as one of the crowd says to Ekart: "Das Schönste ist das Nichts." In this state of nothingness the beggar says: "Das ist das Paradies der Hölle." Gougou complements the remark by saying: "Ja, das ist das Paradies. Es bleibt kein Wunsch unerfüllt. Man hat keinen mehr. Es wird einem alles abgewöhnt. Auch die Wünsche. So wird man frei." Maja asks: "Und was kommt am Schluss?" Gougou's answer is: "Nichts. Gar nichts. Es kommt am Schluss. Nichts dauert ewig." Brecht evidences one of his most famous qualities in Baal's reply to this discussion, namely, that of ambiguousness: "Ekart, Steh auf! Wir sind unter Mörder gefallen" (50). In reality, how different is Baal himself from this crowd? In a drunken stupor Baal addresses a corpse and God: "Tanz mit dem Wind, armer Leichnam, schlaf mit der Wolke, verkommener Gott!" This reference to God as decadent is reminiscent of Nietzsche's dictum mentioned above (See page 26). Ekart, drunk also, asserts that he cannot endure further association with Baal, recognizing the corruptive force of him:

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87 Münsterer confirms this nihilistic attitude of Brecht during this period: "Wenn man sich auf die von Brecht selbst damals als wesentlich empfundenen Arbeiten beschränkt, bleibt jedoch ein Grundton unüberhörbar, der in die nächste Nähe des Nihilismus oder Existentialismus führt." p. 82.

88 Ernest Borneman confirms this point: "Ambiguity is the formal principle of his [Brecht] work, the key to its charm, the secret of its success." p. 176.

*Two characters standing by.*
"Du hast meine Seele verdorben. Du verdirbst alles." In the end, however, he does follow Baal, as Baal commands: "Komm, Ekart, wir wollen uns im Fluss waschen" (51). In this thirteenth scene Brecht parrots Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's philosophy of the "Nichtigkeit des Daseins," which Marxism basically adopted in its denial of organized religion.

The fifteenth scene shows Ekart asleep in the grass and Baal ambling up to him as if he were a sleep-walker. Baal recites a song which refers back to the innocent young fiancée of Johannes, whom Baal seduced and subsequently rejected. She had flung herself into the nearby river and throughout the play there is an interplay of images dealing with her decaying body floating on the river. In this song which Baal is singing about her, he says that even God had forgotten her:

"Als ihr bleicher Leib im Wasser verfaulet war/ Geschah-es (sehr langsam), dass Gott sie allmäHlich vergass." In viewing the world and its decadence, Baal further states: "Ich sehe die Welt in mildem Licht: Sie ist das Exkrement des lieben Gottes." Ekart considers God's crowning glory in combining the sexual organ with the urinary tract!: "Des lieben Gottes, der sich durch die Verbindung von Harnrohr und Geschlechtsglied hinlänglich ein für allemal gekennzeichnet hat." To that response, Baal utters the Faustian attitude of satisfaction: "Das alles ist so schön" (53)

Baal, however, is thinking of the extasy of the sexual act, after which there is nothing but death waiting.

89 Compare with Faust's famous proposition to Mephistopheles:

In the eighteenth scene Baal sings a song to a group in a bar, in which Ekart is present. In the song he laments that man should have been born, as King Solomon once uttered in a despairing moment (Eccl. 2: 17); it would have been better to have remained in the unborn ethereal state of existence than to have the miseries of this life perpetrated upon him: "O ihr, die ihr aus Himmel und Hölle vertrieben! / Ihr Mörder, denen viel Leides geschah! / Warum seid ihr nicht im Schoss eurer Mütter geblieben, / Wo es stille war und man schlief und war da" (60). Eric Bentley has analysed the idea Brecht implies in these lines in the following words: "Brecht's 'heaven' is momentary, and does not redeem: the guilt remains, and the guilt is all the greater for not being only a guilt for specific offenses. When the individual disappears, what is left is the race. And the race is seen by Brecht as burdened with a primal curse—that which caused the Greeks to repeat that 'not to be born is the best for man', and the Christians to formulate a doctrine of 'original sin'."90

It is shortly after the above song that Baal goes into a state of frenzy and kills his friend Ekart over a prostitute and flees into a forest, where we are told in the last scene that he was found dead by some woodcutters. This last scene, which narrates the finding of Baal's body in the forest, does not exist in the previous three versions discussed in this chapter. The early versions conclude with part of the final remarks Baal makes in the twenty-first or next to the last scene, which leaves his fate open. It is filled with despairing pleas to God:

Oh, Marie! Der Himmel ist so verflucht nah da. Zum
Wimmert, plötzlich laut. Ich kann nicht. Ich will nicht.
Man erstickt hier. Ganz klar. Es muss draussen hell sein.
Scharf. Ich bin keine Ratte. Er taumelt vom Bett und
fällt. Teufel! Lieber Gott, bis zur Tür! Er kriecht auf

Just as the subtitle of Johst's play, Der Einsame, speaks of "Menschen-
untergang," so does Brecht in writing Baal's epitaph, especially in the
final version.

Indeed, Baal "is the rebellious son of God crucified by the powers
of earth, heaven, and hell," to whom the world is the 'excrement' of
God. To Brecht the world was facing the downfall of man and God appeared
to him not to be doing anything about it. His intention in Baal has
best been summarized in the following statement, which reflects the va-
lidity of the theme of this study: "Es ist augenscheinlich Brechts Ab-
sicht, dass kein Glaube, keine Idee, keine Lebenshaltung sollte unausge-
sprochen bleiben; am treuesten und am häufigsten trägt er depravierte
und schockierende Ideen vor—idealistische, religiöse und humanistische
nur in verzerrter Gestalt." The play as a whole can be considered
young Brecht's apotheosis of nihilism. It is Brecht, the realist, who
veils these depraved and shocking ideas in biblical language, in order
to accentuate the impotence of organized religion.

91 Baal: Drei Fassungen, p. 75.
92 Peter Heller, "Nihilist into activist: Two Phases in the Develop-
CHAPTER III

MARXIST PLAYS


The transition of Brecht from the strictly nihilistic, sensuous, and anarchic period, which Baal initiates, to his conversion to Marxism, comes shortly past the mid twenties. Although his second play, Trommeln in der Nacht (1919) alludes to attempts to perpetrate revolution, he obviously has no serious inclination to commit himself, if we judge by the Heimkehrer Kragler's indifferent response to the Spartakus uprising.

Brecht has not yet formulated any social or political panacea at this time. This comes after he is indoctrinated and converted to Marxism-Leninism in 1927. Of the other major works prior to this time, Im Dikicht der Städte (1924), Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England (1924), and Mann ist Mann (1926), the first two belabor the homosexual theme of Baal, which Brecht uses primarily as a symbol of "expression of isolated man's attempt to establish contact in the purely physical world." 

2 Claude Hill, "Bertolt Brecht," Universitas, V (1962/63), 387
Mann reflects Brecht's gradual concern for the plight of the proletariat, but obviously does not evidence the author's motivation acquired after his conversion to Marxism.

In the above works following Baal Brecht does not cease using biblical language and implication. In Trommeln in der Nacht the parents of Anna Balicke, who are waiting for her fiancé, Andreas Kragler, to return from the war, question whether he will return and exemplify Brecht's favorite technique of the "double entendre" by saying "aus dem Himmel kommt keiner wieder." Paraphrasing Luke 16:26 Herr Balicke implies simply that Kragler is dead and consequently will not return to Anna from the war. Similar to the babblings of the drunk man in Baal, the one in Trommeln in der Nacht sings in a blasphemous tone: "Wasche mich, Herr, dass ich weiss werde! Wasche mich, dass ich schneeweiß werde."

In Im Dickicht der Städte there is again a scene similar to the one in Baal where a Salvation Army preacher is humiliated and spit upon by Shlink. Allusion to Lot's wife is made in both Trommeln in der Nacht and Im Dickicht der Städte: "Was stehst du da wie Lots Weib?" thus showing Brecht's constant preoccupation with biblical images, which he feels best expresses the ideas desired, whether affirmative or negative.

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5 Ibid., p. 114, Act IV.
6 Ibid., p. 143, Scene 2.
7 Ibid., p. 104, Act IV.
8 Ibid., p. 146, Scene 4.
In Leben Eduards des Zweiten short lines of biblical parody are frequent, such as when the Archbishop says: "Mylady, der Gaveston ist uns / ein Dorn im Aug. Wir wollen ihn ausziehn."

Or, when Gaveston writes his will: "Denn ich bin sehr betrübt, dass ich nicht einfach / zu Staub ward." In the former Brecht is drawing upon two sources in the Bible, one in Matt. 7:3-4, which speaks of a mote in another person's eye, while he himself has a beam in his own; another in II Cor. 12:7, which refers to Saint Paul's "Pfahl ins Fleisch," which was "des Satans Engel." In the latter quote concerning dust the author is alluding to Gen. 3:19: "Denn du bist Erde und sollst zu Erde werden." There is one other significant reference to biblical sources in Leben Eduards des Zweiten, which deals with the betrayal plan of Baldock against Eduard II, Baldock, Eduard's confident, tells Mortimer, who wishes to apprehend Eduard: "Die Bibel lehrt uns, wie's zu halten ist, / wenn Eure Leute kommen mit Handfesseln und / Mit Riemen, will ich zu ihm [Eduard] sagen: Lieber Herr / Beruhigt Euch, da habt Ihr ein Handtuch. Und dem / Ich dann das Handtuch reiche, der ist es." This image is obviously that of Judas' betrayal of Jesus by a kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the subsequent scene Eduard continues the same biblical imagery by asking Baldock to break bread with him, as did Christ with the disciples at the Last Supper. Eduard then asks Baldock and his friend,

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10 Ibid., p. 211.
11 Ibid., p. 249.
Spencer, to come and sit with him during what appears to be his last hours before death—reminiscent of Jesus' despairing moments in the Garden of Gethsemane previous to his betrayal:

Komm, Spencer! Baldock, komm! Setz dich zu mir!
Mach die Probe jetzt auf deine Philosophie
Die du aus Plato sogst und Aristoteles
An den Ammenbrüsten hochberühmter Weisheit.
Ach, Spencer
Da Worte roh sind, nur trennen Herz von Herz
Und Verständigung uns nicht geschenkt ist
In solcher Taubheit bleibt nur körperlich Berühren
Zwischen den Männern. Doch auch dieses ist
Sehr wenig und alles ist eitel.12

Eduard's concluding line is taken directly out of Eccl. 1:2, where King Solomon says: "Es ist alles ganz eitel"—medieval and Baroque man's lament of man's plight in this world. Brecht is reiterating the implication of the vanity of man's helpless existence in this world wrought by a multiplicity of conflicts seemingly out of control. However, his object is not to turn the individual towards divine restitution or eschatological thoughts, but to improve man's humanity to man here and now.

At this point in his metaphysical search for a change in the make-up of the social and political forces confronting man, Brecht turns to Marxism as early as October 26, 1926, at which time he writes to his close collaborator, Elisabeth Hauptmann: "Ich stecke acht Schuh tief im Kapital. Ich muss das jetzt genau wissen...."13 As for his initial

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12 Ibid., p. 252.
motivation toward Communism, Fritz Sternberg, a close friend of Brecht's from his early Berlin days, concludes simply, "dass er sich—gerade nach seiner etwas anarchistischen Vergangenheit—mit irgend etwas identifizieren wollte und musste."\(^{14}\) Volker Klotz speaks more explicitly about his conversion: "Zur Zeit von Brechts Konversion zum Marxismus ist die Natur blosser Gegenstand der Ausbeutung, der Kampf mit ihr ist rein auf Zweck gerichtet, sie ist Rohstoffquelle und Speisekammer der Menschen."\(^{15}\) Brecht attacks the religious idealism of the middle-class society. It appears, "die Religion, nach Marx ein Ausdruck der bedrängten Kreatur in der Not wirtschaftlicher Unordnung, ist . . . Hauptziel der Angriffe."\(^{16}\) To the technique of satire and criticism seen in Baal, Brecht adds the technique of propaganda in his communist oriented plays. In regard to the difference in language, Brandt says: "Die Sprache ist nicht mehr so schmissig, sie ist theoretischer und hat Distanz gewonnen."\(^{17}\) "Like most propagandists, he wishes to disturb his listeners, to throw them off balance," says Peter Heller.\(^{18}\)

The most thorough study of Brecht's association with Communism is Ralph Ley's dissertation, *The Marxist Ethos of Bertolt Brecht,*... which


\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 43.


contends "that Brecht's view of reality was an extremely realistic and humanistic one, and that at the same time its roots are in complete conformity with and thoroughly inspired by the concept of historical development and social progress propounded by Marx and his most consistent followers, in short that Brecht championed a type of humanism that is grounded in western tradition and yet inseparable from the humanism of Karl Marx."19

Brecht's transition to Marxism was accelerated by his observing the police's extreme treatment of some demonstrators on May 1, 1929 from the third floor apartment of his friend, Fritz Sternberg, who writes:

Was er sah, war, wie die Demonstranten von der Polizei auseinandergetrieben und verfolgt wurden. Soweit wir feststellen konnten, waren diese Menschen nicht bewaffnet. Mehrfach schoss die Polizei. Wir glaubten zunächst, es handele sich um Schreckgeschüsse. Dann sahen wir, dass mehrere der Demonstranten niederstürzten und später auf Bahren weggetragen wurden. Es hat damals, soweit ich mich erinnere, über zwanzig Tote unter den Demonstranten in Berlin gegeben. Als Brecht die Schüsse hörte und sah, dass Menschen getroffen wurden, wurde er so weiss im Gesicht, wie ich ihn nie zuvor in meinem Leben gesehen hatte. Ich glaube, es war nicht zuletzt dieses Erlebnis, was ihn dann immer stärker zu den Kommunisten trieb.20

19 Ralph J. Ley, The Marxist Ethos of Bertolt Brecht and its Relation to Existentialism: A Study of the Writer in the Scientific Age (diss.; Rutgers University, 1964), p. 9. More recently a Communist apologist confirmed the humanistic element firmly rooted in Marxist-Leninist ideology: "All for Man, for the benefit of Man. It was this real, rather than abstract humanism that Marx, Engels and Lenin asserted and championed in all their theoretical and practical work as scientists and revolutionaries. But they were not revolutionaries and theorists who created and developed dialectical materialism and formulated the fundamental thesis that it is not enough to explain the world--the job is to change it, remould it, in other words, to humanize it." Todor Pavlov, "Leninism in the Battle for Man," World Marxist Review, XI (Oct.-Nov., 1968), 6.

20 Sternberg, p. 25.
Although one finds Marxist elements in plays subsequent to Mann, beginning primarily with the Dreigroschenoper, followed by Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Der Ozeanflug, Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis, Der Jasager und der Neinsager, Die Massnahme, Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe, and die Ausnahme und die Regel, Brecht expresses best his "Lob des Kommunismus" in the 1931 play, Die Mutter, which is based on Gorky's doctrinaire novel by that name:

**FRAU:** Wir haben gehört, der Kommunismus ist ein Verbrechen.
**PELAGEA WLASSOWA:** Das ist nicht wahr, der Kommunismus ist gut für uns. Was spricht gegen den Kommunismus? Sie singt:

**LOB DES KOMMUNISMUS**

Er ist vernünftig, jeder versteht ihn. Er ist leicht.
Du bist doch dein Ausbeuter, du kannst ihn begreifen.
Er ist gut für dich, erkundige dich nach ihm.
Die Dummköpfe nennen ihn dumm, und die Schmutzigen nennen ihn schmutzig.
Er ist gegen den Schmutz und gegen die Dummheit.
Die Ausbeuter nennen ihn ein Verbrechen
Wir aber wissen:
Er ist das Ende der Verbrechen.
Er ist keine Tollheit, sondern
Das Ende der Tollheit.
Er ist nicht das Chaos
Sondern die Ordnung.
Er ist das Einfache
Das schwer zu machen ist.

**FRAU:** Warum aber sehen das nicht alle Arbeiter ein?
**DER ARBEITSLOSE SIGORSKI:** zitiert: 'Weil sie in Unwissenheit gehalten werden darüber, dass sie ausgebeutet werden und dass dies ein Verbrechen ist und dass es möglich ist, diesem Verbrechen ein Ende zu bereiten'.

The two major themes in Brecht's idealistic view of Marxism are embodied in synonyms found in this dialog—"Ausbeutung" and "Unwissenheit" or "Unkenntniss." Ralph Ley asserts: "Together they sum up the theory and

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practice of Marxism (as well as the theory and practice of Brecht's own Epic Theater and of his writings as a whole)."\(^{22}\) There is doubt whether Marxism or Brecht's practice of it ever reached the practical stage envisioned by Marx or Brecht. In any case, Brecht casts his lot with Marxist idealism and humanism rather than Christian idealism and humanism. In doing so, however, he ironically never is able to remove himself from biblical and Christian imagery and parody in his dialectical method. In fact, it becomes one of his best alienation techniques in his epic theater.

Of these Marxist plays prior to the anti-Nazi plays, *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* best represent Brecht's use of biblical and Christian elements.

**DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER**

The first utterances of the first act, in the form of "Der Morgenchoral des Peachum," set the tone that is to be maintained throughout the drama, as well as Brecht's works:

- Wach auf, du verrotteter Christ!
- Mach dich an dein sündiges Leben!
- Zeig, was für ein Schurke du bist
- Der Herr wird es dir dann schon geben.

- Verkauf deinen Bruder, du Schuft!
- Verschacher dein Ehweib, du Wicht!
- Der Herrgott, für dich ist er Luft?
- Er zeigt dir's beim Jüngsten Gericht!\(^{23}\)

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\(^{22}\) Ley, p. 27.

\(^{23}\) Brecht, *Stücke II*, Werkausgabe, p. 397. Hereafter, act and page are given in parentheses. This Chorale contains the essence of Brecht's denigration of Christ and Christians, which the author develops in detail
Brecht continues to lampoon Christian hypocrisy in this morning chorale, which is a sequel to the author's first collection of poems, *Hauspostille*, published in 1927, one year before *Die Dreigroschenoper*. In this collection of early poetry, which is a parody of a prayer book, Brecht denigrates liturgical imagery in an attempt to portray the distorted ideals of a society more bestial than Christian in its ethics. Sidney Bremer says: "Men do not 'turn the other cheek'; rather, they act like beasts, instinctively protecting their own self-interests." In the "Morning Chorale" there is the indictment of the Christian world, which appears so barren of practical solutions for mankind's dilemma. Brecht concludes each stanza with the reminder that the Lord will repay man for his hypocrisy on Judgment Day, thus giving rise to the implication that Brecht might place some credence in the biblical message. In this regard Kurt-Lothar Tank considers Brecht's moral and political stance to have originated in *Urchristentum*, which demanded a social life of the believers that was meaningful and sincere. Brecht's loss of faith in Christianity comes when deception and hypocrisy are more prevalent than Christian virtues, particularly among the bourgeoisie: "Er hat wahrscheinlich schon in früher Kindheit entdeckt, dass zwischen der Verlogenheit der bürgerlichen Menschen, der Kapitalisten, und der Heuchelei derer, die sich Christen nennen, eine sehr tiefe, innere Verbindung besteht. Brecht wird nicht müde, diese Verlogenheit als den Krebsschaden der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft aufzudecken. Mit einem Menschen, der sich

in the last chapter of the *Drei Groschen Roman*, in which Jesus becomes the accused. There Brecht spares no words in his harsh denunciation of Christ and the consequences to the poor masses of His Parable of the Pounds.

als Heuchler erweist, wird für Brecht die ganze christliche Lehre entwertet und unwahr, die Kirche zu einer Institution, die die Heuchelei und Ungerechtigkeit sanktioniert.\textsuperscript{25} Consequently, Brecht’s affinity to the scripture continues basically to rest upon its utilitarian value in the development of his secular credo of life through dialectic-epic theater. Volker Klotz points this out in the following manner: "Die Bibel wird zum literarischen Reservoir, das zahllose menschliche Grundsituationen enthält, wohlerwurzelt in der Vorstellung des Publikums."\textsuperscript{26}

Brecht’s parody in \textit{Die Dreigroschenoper} spoofs the themes of human pity\textsuperscript{27} and human misery by utilizing biblical and Christian adages such as "Geben ist seliger als Nehmen," which Peachum discusses in the opening monolog. His job is to awaken human pity among people in order that after two or three times—receiving less each time—a giver of alms is likely to turn the beggar into the police. That is the way it is "mit den geistigen Hilfsmitteln" (l.390). Peachum reflects Brecht’s attitude of the Bible when he says: "In der Bibel gibt es etwa vier, fünf Sprüche, die das Herz rühren. Wenn man sie verbraucht hat, ist man.


\textsuperscript{26} Klotz, p. 46. Brandt writes in this regard: "Die Bibelcollage in dieser gesellschaftskritischen, antikulinarischen und doch so kulinarischen Oper verwendete kühn verschobene Sprüche und Verse, die durch Tafeln, Szenenanweisungen und Sentenzen an den unerwartetsten Stellen auftauchten und dadurch eine neue, bitter-ironische Bezogenheit vermittelten." p. 172.

\textsuperscript{27} Peter Michelsen emphasizes this theme by saying: "Ohne Zweifel ist das Leid nicht nur der Hauptgegenstand, sondern auch die Haupttriebkraft für Brechts gesamtes Schaffen." "Bertolt Brechts Atheismus," \textit{Eckart}, XXVI (1957), 55.
glatt brotlos" (I.398). For Brecht, to be without bread is the epitome of human neglect. Thus, to run out of biblical sayings is a great impoverishment for Peachum and Brecht!

Peachum is visited by one named Filch who has committed the cardinal crime of setting himself up autonomously as a beggar in a district, which is franchised by Peachum and Company. He was beaten up by Peachum's henchmen and told to see Peachum for his "union card"—thus, leading to his appearance before Peachum. Peachum shows him such signs as: "Verschliesst euer Ohr nicht dem Elend" or "Gib, so wird dir gegeben," which become watchwords of the professional beggars on the streets.

Peachum and his wife are moaning the forthcoming marriage of their daughter, Polly, who Peachum says is "nichts als ein Haufen Sinnlichkeit" (I.402). He is against her marriage primarily for selfish financial reasons, but tries to use the Bible in his argument against this event: "Heiraten! Meine Tochter soll für mich das sein, was das Brot für den Hungrigen—er blättert nach--; das steht sogar irgendwo in der Bibel" (I.403). In the meantime, preparation is being made by friends of Polly's fiancé, Macheath, to clean up an old empty horse stable for the expected wedding. As Macheath (Mackie Messer) and Polly share their personal feelings for one another, Polly utters the vow Ruth (1:16) made in the Old Testament to Naomi: "Wo du hingehst, da will auch ich hingehen." Mackie Messer replies: "Und wo du bleibst da will auch ich sein" (I.422). Polly, who considers love "das Höchste auf der Welt" (I.428), is serious while Mackie Messer is incapable of resisting his physical urges and returns regularly to the brothel.
Peachum makes plans to have the notorious Mackie Messer captured by Mackie's close friend, Police Chief Tiger Brown, after which Polly would be free and well-off. In the "Three Penny-Finale" Peachum, "mit der Bibel in den Händen," proclaims the right of man to happiness on earth and bread, not a stone ("Zum Essen Brot zu kriegen und nicht einen Stein."). This latter reference is taken from Matt. 4:3, where Jesus is tempted by the Devil during His forty days in the Wildernis and is admonished to turn the stones to bread. There is the desire for "goodness, peace, and harmony" implied in this finale and at the same time the implausibility of them: "Ein guter Mensch sein? Ja, wer wär's nicht gern? / ... Wer möchte nicht in Fried und Eintracht leben? / Doch die Verhältnisse, sie sind nicht so" (I.430-431. Polly sums up Brecht's philosophy best when she says: "Die Welt ist arm, der Mensch ist schlecht" (I.431).

Polly returns to Mackie Messer and warns him of her parents' plot against him. Polly seeks assurance from him that he will be faithful to her before he leaves. After his departure the ballad of sexual slavery appears as a sort of prolog to his visit to the brothel of "Turnbridge." In this ballad Satan is the progenitor of sexual slavery and does not heed the Bible: "Er hält sich nicht an die Bibel" (II.439). Subsequently, Mackie is betrayed to the policeman Brown by one of the whores named Jenny. Mackie Messer, who like Christ was seized on a Thursday, tells of looking pitifully and weeping bitterly at Brown and says: "Den Trick habe ich aus der Bibel" (II.446).

Through the jailor's daughter, Lucy, Mackie Messer escapes for a
short while, leaving Lucy and Polly arguing over him. In the "Second
Three Penny - Finale" the rhetorical question, "Denn wovon lebt der
Mensch?" is not answered biblically, "not by bread alone," but "nur von
Missetat allein" (II.458). However, a major theme of the drama places
top priority on bread and then morality: "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann
kommt die Moral" (II.457). This is Brecht's favorite theme.

In the third act Jenny comes to collect from Peachum for having
assisted in the capture of Mackie Messer, but is turned away since he
has escaped again. Jenny confesses that he has recently spent some
time with her, but had gone over to another girlfriend's place. With
this news Peachum has Brown go there and apprehend him once again. At
this point the famous "Salomon-Song" is sung by Jenny:

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! (III.467-468)

Here is Brecht's didacticism at its best! The motif of Solomon cursing
the hour of his birth is reminiscent of Baal's despair on one occasion.
With all his wisdom Solomon is brought to the conclusion at one time
"dass alles eitel war." Brecht belittles the virtues and qualities
portrayed in this song, all of which are positive, except the last one:
wisdom of Solomon, beauty of Cleopatra, bravery of Caesar, thirst for
knowledge of Brecht, and sensuousness of Mackie Messer. This song has
its sequel toward the end of Mutter Courage, in which the honesty of
Socrates, the unselfishness of Saint Martin, and the obedience of simple folks to God replace respectively the beauty of Cleopatra, the thirst of knowledge of Brecht, and the sensuousness of Mackie Messer. These two songs are models for Brecht's later Die sieben Todsünden der Kleinbürger, which reflect how far Brecht will go in denouncing traditional values and virtues which tend to suppress the common people. Dukore summarizes Brecht's "seven deadly sins" as follows: "Sloth: relaxing, and not hustling for a buck. Pride: the notion that dancing is an art rather than an excuse to display a bosom and shapely legs. Wrath: voicing one's anger at injustice instead of subduing it in order to keep one's job. Gluttony: eating without worrying about gaining half an ounce. Lust: cohabiting for love rather than for profit, and being true to the loved one. Avarice: taking what one needs without shame. Envy: being envious of those who give in to their impulses to obey the other six." Brecht's point in each of these is that virtues are not rewarding, only vices, as the cook expresses in between stanzas in Mutter Courage: "die Tugenden zahlen sich nicht aus, nur die Schlechtigkeiten, so ist die Welt und müsst nicht so sein."


29 Brecht, Stücke IV, Werkausgabe, IV, 1427, Scene ix. Speaking about the difference in the mood of John Gay's Beggar's Opera of the eighteenth century and Brecht's modern version, Judith J. Sherwin says: "Gay exposes social evils; he does not inquire into their causes and effects, nor does he bitterly denounce them. Brecht, on the other hand, tries to answer the questions: 'What causes evil?' 'Can it be conquered?' And his answer is that it cannot, because it is inherent in the nature of life itself: 'the world is mean and man uncouth.' "The World is Mean and Man Uncouth," Virginia Quarterly Review, XXXV (1959), 270.
In the final part of *Die Dreigroschenoper* Mackie Messer is in jail waiting to be hanged and is visited by Polly, Lucy, and Jenny respectively. In his last words before leaving the jail Mackie Messer focuses attention on the fact that his downfall is representative of the decay of the low-middle-class professional thieves, who are devoured by big capital, backed by the banks. Brecht throws the accusation out that banks steal more from the people than common thieves. In fact, the actual founding of a bank initiates in Brecht's eyes and that of the Marxist a more destructive action than robbing a bank. Even the employment of a man, who supposedly will be exploited by the employer, is worse than murdering him. Brecht is never more forceful in his attack on capitalism and indirectly Christianity than in this last address of Mackie Messer: "Sie sehen den untergehenden Vertreter eines untergehenden Standes, wir kleinen bürgerlichen Handwerker, die wir mit dem biederem Brecheisen an den Nickelkassen der kleinen Ladenbesitzer arbeiten, werden von den Grossunternehmern verschlungen, hinter denen die Banken stehen.... Was ist ein Einbruch in eine Bank gegen die Gründung einer Bank? Was ist die Ermordung eines Mannes gegen die Anstellung eines Mannes?" (III.482)

Mackie Messer concludes his plea in the form of a ballad in the style of François Villon, in which he asks all, beginning with God, to forgive him in a manner reminiscent of the repentance scene of a Christian. This repentance scene of Mackie Messer causes the reader to reflect on the equally guilty tactics of Peachum, who has made use of piety and human pity in his business. Consequently, there is an indictment of the
hypocritical bourgeois morality in this play, against which Brecht's treatment of the Bible and Christianity rest.

At the last moment Peachum steps forward and stays the execution, in view of the approaching messenger of the King. Significant is his statement that in all Christianity there is nothing given freely to man ("Denn in der ganzen Christenheit / Da wird dem Menschen nichts geschenkt" III.464.), whereas from the state, i.e., the King, mercy is forthcoming. This conclusion confirms Brecht's conversion to Marxist dialectics as much as any previous lines in his works. Thus, he uses in this first major drama written after his conversion to Marxism-Leninism his knowledge and disbelief of the Bible and Christianity to thrust forth his new-found ideology.

30 Georg Salomon summarizes best the implication of major themes of this drama: "The Threepenny songs . . . fling the unwashed truth about the condition of man into the face of complacency and hypocrisy. What anyone but a fool comes to suspect sooner or later, they say out loud: that this brutal world is governed not by morality or justice but by animal necessity and naked power." "Happy Ending, Nice and Tidy," The Kenyon Review, XXIV (1962), 544. Marx's influence on Brecht is most evident in this theme of power of the "haves" versus the "have nots." For Marx and Brecht, Jochen Klicker says, truth is "nichts anderes als die Einheit von Wirklichkeit und Macht. Über die Wahrheit entscheiden die Mächtigen, die die Wirklichkeit bestimmen." "Bert Brecht—Frage an die Christen. Verfremdung als Problem christlicher Existenz," Kommunität, V (1961), 60.
In a three year period after Brecht's great success with Die Dreigroschenoper, there appear several heavily Marxist oriented plays, all of which have an abundance of biblical and Christian imagery exemplified: Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (1928/29), Der Ozeanflug (1928/29), Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis (1929), Der Jasager und der Neinsager (1929/30), Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe (1929/31), Die Ausnahme und die Regel (1929/30), and Die Mutter (1931).

Mahagonny, like Die Dreigroschenoper, indirectly reflects Marxist tendencies by its overt satire on the American/German capitalist way of life. Its major theme, which is a take-off on a biblical precept, asserts that the lack of money is the only crime in a bourgeois society and it is demonstrated dramatically in the nineteenth scene by the following inscription flashed onto a screen: HINRICHTUNG UND TOD DES PAUL ACKERMANN. VIELE MÖGEN DIE NUN FOLGENDE HINRICHTUNG DES PAUL ACKERMANN UNGERN SEHEN; ABER AUCH SIE WÜRDEN UNSERER ANSICHT NACH NICHT FÜR IHN ZAHLEN. SO GROSS IST DIE ACHTUNG VOR DEM GELD IN UNSERER ZEIT. In this penultimate scene of the drama there is a brief skit dealing with a visit of God to Mahagonny, which has a repetitious refrain sung by a male quartet: "An einem grauen Vormittag / Mitten im Whisky / Kam Gott nach Mahagonny / Mitten im Whisky / Bemerkten wir Gott in Mahagonny" (XIX.558). Dreieinigkeitsmoses, who plays the role of God, says: "Kennt ihr diese Patronen? / Schiesst ihr meinen guten Missionar? / Soll ich wohl mit euch im Himmel wohnen /

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31 Brecht, Stücke II, Werkausgabe, II, 555, Scene xix. Hereafter, scene and page are given in parentheses.
Steckt jetzt die Virginien in den Sack! / Marsch mit euch in meine Hölle, Burschen! / In die schwarze Hölle mit euch Pack" (XIX.560).

Brecht then has the quartet remark: "An den Haaren / Kannst du uns nicht in die Hölle ziehen / Weil wir immer in der Hölle waren" (XIX. 560). Thus, we see Brecht's theme that Hell is here on earth and man has always inhabited it! The condemned one, Paul Ackermann, makes a final statement, which ironically has the tone of a confession that the love of money is the root of all evil (I Tim. 6:10). Also, there is the analogy in the last line to the biblical account of the rich man in Hell asking that Lazarus, the beggar now in Heaven, might give him water to quench his awful thirst (Luke 16:24):


In Der Ozeanflug, which parodies the flight of Lindberg across the Atlantic, Brecht begins to connect his Marxist dialectics with the scientific age ("es ist eine neue Zeit" VIII.575), which supposedly does away with God. The pilot says in the scene entitled "Ideologie": "Wenn ich fliege, bin ich / Ein wirklicher Atheist" (VIII.576). Amidst the disorder of the classed society, where exploitation and ignorance allegedly reign, the revolution for a classless society has liquidated God: "In den Wüsten kam er im Sandsturm, und / In den Städten wurde er erzeugt von der Unordnung / Der Menschenklasse, weil es zweierlei
Menschen gibt / Ausbeutung und Unkenntnis, aber / Die Revolution liqui-
diert ihn" (VIII.576). Brecht associates the exploitation and ignorance of man with his dependence upon God. In reality, Brecht implies that God is a creation of man to help him accept the irrationality of the world, which is reflected in the disorder of the social classes. Brecht concludes the play with a dedication of it to that glorious utopian day of the future: "das noch nicht Erreichte" (XVII.585). Rather than Heaven, which the Christian looks for in the future, it is the Communist Utopia of a rational classless society here on earth, which one's decendants will enjoy, that Brecht sees.

In Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis there is an investigation "ob es üblich ist, dass der Mensch dem Menschen hilft" (III.592) and the conclusion for the time being is "nein." Emphasis is placed on "das Erreichte" (IX.607) rather than on the exercise of faith for the future; in essence it is the traditional emphasis on the "diesseits" rather than on the "jenseits." As in Der Ozeanflug the accusation is made that exploitation and ignorance are the basis of disorder among human classes (XI.611). Brecht reiterates this theme throughout the Lehrstücke, particularly in Die Massnahme, where there is also affirma-
tion of the question whether man helps his fellow man: "Der Anblick des Unrechts trieb mich in die Reihen der Kämpfer. Der Mensch muss dem Menschen helfen. Ich bin für die Freiheit. Ich glaube an die Menschheit. Und ich bin für die Massnahmen der Kommunistischen Partei, welche gegen Ausbeutung und Unkenntnis für die klassenlose Gesellschaft kämpft" (I.634).

\[^{32}\text{Sorensen, p. 85.}\]
Overt reference is made to Communism and its virtues: "Wer für den Kommunismus kämpft, hat von allen Tugenden nur eine: dass er für den Kommunismus kämpft" (II.638).

Subsequent to Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe there are two major plays, in which Brecht reaches the apex of his Marxist oriented period. Although as Marxist as Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe, they possess less biblical imagery and parody. Consequently, attention is given primarily to Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe in the remainder of this chapter. However, a few references to biblical style and imagery of the other two are in order. In 'Die Ausnahme und die Regel', after traveling together all day a Kuli and a merchant make camp for the night and the merchant sings a song in the style of Genesis 1:

Der kranke Mann stirbt und der starke Mann ficht  
Und das ist gut so.  
Dem Starken wird geholfen, dem Schwachen hilft man nicht 
Und das ist gut so.  
Lass fallen, was fällt, gib ihm noch einen Tritt  
Denn das ist gut so.  
Es setzt sich zum Essen, wer den Sieg sich erstritt 
Das ist gut so.  
Und der Koch nach der Schlacht zählt die Toten nicht mit 
Und er tut gut so.  
Und der Gott der Dinge, wie sie sind, schuf Herr und Knecht!  
Und das war gut so.  
Und wem's gut geht, der ist gut; und wem's schlecht geht, 
der ist schlecht 
Und das ist gut so. (VI.807-08)

The merchant is suspicious of the Kuli: "Vertrauen ist Dummheit" (VI.808). Although there is no substantiating follow-up statement, the implications

are two-fold; pragmatically speaking, he does not trust the Kuli while sleeping; spiritually the author is saying that the required faith of the Christian is stupid. Finally, the merchant kills the Kuli, inadvertently thinking that the water canteen, which he is reaching toward his tent is a stone, with which he intends to kill the merchant. Herein lies the essence of the play, namely, that the exception symbolizes humanity and friendship, whereas, the rule is: "Auge um Auge" (IX.820). Consequently the merchant is acquitted.

In *Die Mutter* there exists a long discussion about the Bible between a poor woman and Pelagia Wlassowa, the mother. Wlassowa narrates with assurance her disbelief in the Bible and the existence of God: "Die Versicherung hilft, wenn das Beten nichts geholfen hat. Sie brauchen also nicht mehr zu Gott zu beten, wenn die Gewitter am Himmel stehen, aber Sie müssen versichert sein. Denn das hilft Ihnen. Wenn er so unwichtig ist, das ist ungünstig für Gott. So besteht doch Hoffnung, dass dieser Gott, wenn er erst über euern Feldern verschwunden sein wird, auch in euern Köpfen verschwindet" (X.882). Brecht waxes autobiographic when he permits her to remember that in her youth all the people believed "Dass er [Gott] irgendwo im Himmel sässe und aussähe wie ein alter Mann" (X.882). Imagery, similar to that discussed in *Der Ozeanflug*, is made to the new scientific age, where airplanes come and go, and "niemand redete mehr von einem Gott, der im Himmel sitzt" (X.882-83).

Turning to Brecht's *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, which Karl Thieme considers "neben dem als 'Kinderbuch' bezeichneten Sowjet-propaganda—Machwerk 'Die drei Soldaten' wohl das antichristlichste Pro-
dukt dieses Autors,"^34 we have one of the author's best dramatic efforts.^35

Significant to the theme under consideration in this study is Brecht's "Erklärung des Sinns der Heiligen Johanna der Schlachthöfe." The entire explanation is an attempt to show how integrated the religious institutions of our society are with the ruling social and political systems:

In Zeiten, wo für sehr grosse Massen des Volkes das herrschende gesellschaftliche System, das Arbeit und Broterwerb regelt, unerträgliche Härten verursacht, kann es nicht wundernehmen, wenn diese Massen (selber oder durch den Mund derer, die für sie sprechen) die grossen geistigen Systeme überprüfen, welche die Lebenshaltung in moralischer und religiöser Hinsicht zu gestalten suchen. Für die Institutionen, die diese Systeme vertreten, wie die Kirchen, Schulen usw., stellt sich das so dar: Riesige Teile der Arbeiterschaft, unzufrieden mit dem herrschenden gesellschaftlichen System, erklären diese Institutionen für organisatorisch und geistig verknuft und verbundet mit der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung, die für sie keine Lebensmöglichkeit mehr schafft, und wenden sich von bestimmten religiösen und moralischen Gedankengängen ab.^36

In Die 'heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe, "dem programmatischen Stück der mittleren Periode,"^37 Brecht has incorporated a tangible re-

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^35 Ernest Borneman, among others, considers this play "the noblest and most beautifully poised play Brecht ever wrote. There are pages of it that read like a parody of Schiller: yet the impact is dead serious and the stamp of Brecht's hand is so powerful that you cannot pick out a line which could have been written by anyone else." "Credo Quia Absurdum: An Epitaph for Bertolt Brecht," The Kenyon Review, XXI (1959), 185.

^36 Brecht, Schriften zum Theater III, Werkausgabe, XVII, 1017.

^37 Peter Michelsen, "Bertolt Brechts Atheismus," Eckart, XXVI (1959), 53.
representative of Christianity, namely the Salvation Army. The undenominational character of this organization lends its use to those who wish to criticize Christianity in general and at the same time use some propriety in their approach. Brecht becomes a little more sophisticated in his use of the Bible and derogatory language against its precepts.

Brecht's first significant reference to our theme is found in the initial monolog of Johanna "Vor dem Haus der Schwarzen Strohhüte":

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In finsterer Zeit blutiger Verwirrung} \\
\text{Verordneter Unordnung} \\
\text{Planmäßiger Willkür} \\
\text{Entmenschchter Menschheit} \\
\text{Wo nicht mehr aufhören wollen in unseren Städten die Unruhen:} \\
\text{In solche Welt, gleichend einem Schlachthaus} \\
\text{Herbeigerufen durch das Gerücht drohender Gewalttat} \\
\text{Damit nicht rohe Gewalt des kurzsichtigen Volkes} \\
\text{Zerschlag das eigene Handwerkszeug und} \\
\text{Zertrample den eigenen Brotkorb} \\
\text{Wollen wir wieder einführen} \\
\text{Gott.}
\end{align*}
\]

In these lines there is a similar identification of the decadent and impotent situation in which the once hallowed middle-class found itself. Raymond Williams best captures this middle-class dilemma, which partially included Brecht, in the following words: "At its most mature [state], naturalism effectively embodied all that was best in the general middle-class view of life: respect for individuals and family relationships, a humanitarianism, a preoccupation with individual conscience. This view was taken to breaking-point in Ibsen, at that historical period when the best men trained to this view of life were beginning radically to

\[38\] Brecht had made reference to the Salvation Army in his first play, \textit{Baal}, in \textit{Stücke I}, Werkausgabe, I, 32, scene VII.

\[39\] Ibid., II, 671-72. Hereafter, scene and page are given in parentheses in the text.
question its adequacy. One main line of this reaction was to break the domestic frame, to confront man again with God and with certain absolute human demands. However, the main difference in William's reference to a return to God and that of Brecht's, is that Brecht does not seriously mean his statement. That his aim is one which might be labeled as a part of his "alienation effect" in his epic theater, is seen in the development of Johanna's own philosophy up to the end of the play, when she becomes a convert to communism (in a not too convincing a manner, one might add!) before dying.

Singing to the workers, the Salvation Army "Schwarzen Strohhüte" deliver a positive message to those sinking under the laborious conditions of this earthly life: "Du, der du untergehst / Sieh uns, oh, sieh uns, Bruder, bevor du untergehst.... Das Unrecht dieser Welt kann nicht bestehn / Wenn alle mit uns kommen und marschieren" (II.673). Indeed, this is in Brechtian dialectics not to be believed, but taken in the deepest manner of irony and satire. The allusion to the biblical account of "marching to Zion" is but wasted words, especially on the workers, who do not want God, but bread! Johanna places the workers and the business men in similar position regarding their need for her message (II.674). Brecht uses the conventional slogans and phrases of the

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Salvation Army witness, as Johanna speaks: "Diese niederen Genüsse, nach denen ihr strebt, nämlich dieses bisschen Essen und hübsche Wohnung und Kino, das sind ja nur ganz grobe sinnliche Genüsse, Gottes Wort aber ist ein viel feinerer und innerlicherer und raffinierterer Genuss, ihr könnt euch vielleicht nichts Süßeres denken als Schlagsahne, aber Gottes Wort ist eben doch noch süßer, ei, wie süß ist Gottes Wort! Das ist wie Milch und Honigseim" (II.675). In such dialog there is direct paraphrasing from the Bible, such as the last line indicates (Exod. 3:8,17). Johanna differentiates between the improvement of one's lot from one class to the other in the secular sense and the spiritual: "Wie aber wollt ihr hinaufkommen, oder was ihr in eurem Unverstand so 'hinauf' nennt? Durch die rohe Gewalt! Als ob Gewalt jemals etwas anderes ausgerichtet hätte als Zerstörung. Ihr glaubt, wenn ihr euch auf die Hinterbeine stellt, dann gibt es das Paradies auf Erden. Aber ich sage euch: so macht man kein Paradies, so macht man das Chaos" (II.675). The ineffectiveness of Johanna's message is portrayed in the following dialog, initiated when three workers leave their soup and walk away: "Johanna: Hallo, ihr, wo lauft ihr denn hin? Wenn man euch von Gott erzählt! Das wollt ihr nicht hören! Was?!" One of the girls among the "Schwarzen Strohhüte" answers: "Die Suppe ist aus" (II.676). The mood of the workers regarding their message is one of crass indifference: "Sie berührt kein Lied mehr, zu ihnen dringt in solche Tiefe kein Wort" (II. 677).

From the poverty-stricken workers Johanna goes to the bureaucratic leader of the big business, Pierpont Mauler, to whom she attributes.
part of the cause of the ugly plight of the workers. When she meets Mauler for the first time, he teases her by confusing his identity with his broker, Slift, who possesses his own Mephistophelian traits (III. 688). Mauler is moved by Johanna's innocence, as the title of this scene indicates: "Pierpont Mauler verspürt den Hauch einer anderen Welt" (III, 680). Again Brecht's dialectical technique of verbal alienation takes place. The reader's first inference is the Christian concept of another world, which the Salvation Army symbolizes. Brecht already has the reader in his grasp. However, Brecht's real implication of another world comes to light later, as he causes Mauler, the capitalist, to "feel the breath of the proletarian world," as it is being led in a strike by the communists. Mauler attempts to satisfy Johanna and possibly his own conscience by giving her some money for the workers, but proceeds to give her some facts about the hopelessness of her task: "Die Menschen sind für deinen Plan nicht reif. / Erst muss, bevor die Welt sich ändern kann / Der Mensch sich ändern" (III.688). Thus, we see again Brecht's brand of humanism displayed. Clurman says also in this regard that what attracted Brecht above all in Marxism was "the humanism of Marxist theories," along with their activism. \(^{42}\) Raymond Williams says, "Brecht looked in a different direction" than conventional humanism and the new psychology of guilt and hate (of his early period)\(^{43}\) for a method of improving the lot of man. Williams continues to say: "We must be shocked into seeing


\(^{43}\) Ralph Ley implies in his paper on Brecht, that his conversion to Marxism was the thing which kept Brecht from suicide, after going through the early phase of the recognition of the absurdity of life. "Brecht: Science and Cosmic Futility," *Germanic Review*, XL (1965), 205-224.
the real situation,... only the shock would do."

Mauler makes plans for Slift to take Johanna into the slaughter pens to view the "Abschaum der Welt" (III.689). On the tour of the plant not only the slaughtering of animals is observed, but an account of a worker being mutilated by the machine as well—(IV.689) with no apparent concern by anyone, even by his wife, after she has been guaranteed food for three weeks! (IV.695) After the tour Slift asks Johanna: "Hast du gesehen, Johanna, dass ihre Schlechtigkeit ohne Mass ist?" (IV.695) She replies: "Ist ihre Schlechtigkeit ohne Mass, so ist's / Ihre Armut auch. Nicht der Armen Schlechtigkeit / Hast du mir gezeigt, sondern / DER ARMEN ARMUT" (IV.696). The implication here is similar to Mackie Messer's dictum in the Dreigroschenoper: "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann die Moral."  

On Johanna's next visit to Mauler's surroundings, she parodies the biblical moral sayings in abundance in one particular speech:

Denn warum ist diese Schlechtigkeit in der Welt? Ja wie soll's denn anders sein! Natürlich, wenn jeder seinem Nächsten wegen einem Stückchen Schinken aufs Brot mit einer Axt über den Kopf hauen muss, damit er es ihm vielleicht abtritt, was er doch braucht zu seiner Lebens Notdürft, und der Bruder ringend mit dem Bruder um das Nötigste, wie soll da der Sinn für das Höhere nicht ersticken in des Menschen Brust? Betrachten Sie doch einmal den Dienst am Nächsten einfach als Dienst am Kunden! Dann

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44 Williams, p. 154.


It is at this time that Mauler has frozen the meat market and caused a shutdown of plants, due to his decision to buy no more cattle from the breeders. However, Johanna's message appears to have touched the tenderer side of him, as revealed in a secret visit of Mauler to the home of his broker, Slift. Slift can hardly believe Mauler's attitude (VI.710-11). But, what Mauler fears "ist anderes als Gott / . . . nicht das, was über, das / Was unter mir! Was auf dem Schlachthof steht" (VI.712). Johanna's message about the conditions in the stockyards, not the need for turning to God, has begun to work on his mind—thus, the alienation effect of the title caption of scene three. Mauler also has financial pressures from business associates in New York (VI.713), who have urged him not to buy more cattle at this time. Only the demands of the breeders, led by Johanna, convince him to do the expedient—and buy again! (VI.716)

46 Volker Klotz points out the similar implications of this act to baroque poetry's reference to Greek mythology reintroduced during the renaissance: "Die Muster haben eine ähnliche Aufgabe wie die mythologischen Anspielungen in der Dichtung des Barock." p. 46.

The title of scene seven, "Austreibung der Händler aus dem Tempel," makes references to Jesus' driving the money-changers from the outer court of the temple (Matt. 21:12), with the implication that they were desecrating the Lord's House. Brecht creates an interesting setting in the meeting place of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte" to ply his unique didactical^48^ dialectical method. The leader of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte," Paulus Snyder, evidences his concern for the finances of the organization, acknowledging appreciation for the mite of the widows and orphans, but desiring to entice some of the well-to-do Chicago business men into giving support. At the arrival of some of the meat packers, Snyder is portrayed as an avaricious person in his "bargaining" with the money-men for support. They see and laugh at his superficiality. Then Johanna arrives and learns the stockyards are closed, and the workers are out of work. She turns on the meat-packers and castigates them for their audacity in being found there, after having turned their backs on the workers: "Und ihr träut euch noch in Gottes Haus zu kommen, nur weil ihr diesen schmutzigen Mammon habt, man weiß schon woher und wodurch, der ist ja nicht ehrlich erworben. Aber da seid ihr bei Gott an den Falschen gekommen, euch muss man einfach hinausjagen, mit einem Stecken muss man euch hinausjagen ... hinaus mit euch und schnell" (VII.723). Brecht makes rather detailed use of the biblical counterpart when he has Johanna say: "Hinaus! Ihr habt hier nichts zu suchen. Solche Gesichter wollen

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^48^ Harold Clurman notes: "The aim is frankly didactic. One play tells us that war debases everything and everyone, even those who seem to be outside its antagonisms. Another play tells us that it is virtually impossible to 'do good' in a corrupt society. These are morality plays as certainly as anything ever written in the Middle Ages in behalf of the Church." p. 625.
Not only were there money-changers whom he drove from the temple, but also men who had sacrificial animals for sale in stalls of the outer court. This association of animal exchange in the temple and the stockyards of Chicago go hand-in-hand in Brecht's analogy. Because Johanna has driven the money-men away, thus losing forty months of rent, which Snyder had talked them into paying, Johanna is, herself, "driven" from the midst of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte" (VII.725). She does not resist this punishment for two possible reasons. First, she has intentions of going to Mauler, himself, for assistance for the "Schwarzen Strohhüte." Secondly, this is a turning point in Johanna's philosophy, if but only a small sign!

The caption for the eighth scene is: "Pierpont Maulers Rede über die Unentbehrlichkeit des Kapitalismus und der Religion" (VIII.726). Johanna comes to visit Mauler after having spent the last eight days alone in the city. Her gradual transition in outlook on the social conditions prevailing is evidenced in the following statement: "Jetzt, wo ich die aufreibende Missionsarbeit nicht habe, kann ich mehr auf den einzelnen Menschen eingehen" (VIII.727). Her departure from the mission

Brecht clarifies in his "Schriften zum Theater" that the reader should not judge the organization by the action or attitude of either Johanna or Snyder alone: "Das Stück bezeichnet als notwendig für die Beurteilung des Verhaltens religiöser Institutionen (wie der Sekte der Schwarzen Strohhüte) das Erfassen der Gänge einer solchen Bewegung. Diese Bewegung wird gezeigt als eine in sich widersprüchsvolle: Zu ihr gehören untrennbar das religiöse Ingenium (die Johanna Dark) und der Apparat (Paulus Snyder und die übrige Station). In den Streit dieser Gegensätze darf sich aber der Zuschauer nicht zu sehr einmischen. Er soll nicht etwa die Johanna anerkennen und den Apparat verwerfen oder umgekehrt. Seine Kritik soll erfolgen an dem Ganzen der betreffenden Institution, denn im gesellschaftlichen Prozess tritt die in sich wider-
is symbolic of her giving less attention to God as the source of help for the oppressed workers and joining the worker on his level. Her approach to Mauler has a different twist, which Mauler does not comprehend until later in the conversation. The following parody of Adam in the Garden of Eden reflects Johanna's attempt to show Mauler's guilt regarding the poverty of the worker. Mauler plays the role of Adam:


Mauler changes the subject abruptly and pursues the idea of giving money to the Mission. Johanna's reply is one which acknowledges still more her allegiance to the worker's cause directly, not through the mission: "Ich weiss, ich sollt mich freuen, jetzt zu hören / Dass Gott geholfen werden soll, nur: ich / Gehör zu denen, welchen damit / Noch nicht geholfen ist. Und denen nichts / Geboten wird" (VIII.732). She casts her lot totally with the factory workers as she asserts: "Wenn Sie mich künftig sehen wollen, dann / Auf den Schlachthöfen" (VIII.733). It is only a short time later that she says more convincingly in a dis-

spruchsvolle Institution als ein Ganzes auf." Schriften zum Theater III, Werkausgabe, XVII, 1020. Gerald Weales points out that this scene was influenced by Shaw: "The scene is a twisted reworking of the end of Act II of Major Barbara where Barbara removes her insignia, just as an earlier identity scene (Joan's recognition of Mauler) is a parody of Joan's meeting with the Dauphin in Shaw's Saint Joan." "Brecht and the Drama of Ideas," in Ideas in the Drama, ed. John Gassner (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), p. 150.
cussion with a group of workers that the only successful means of improving the worker's condition is power—power in numbers. She begins to align her ideas with that of communism, and practically all she says subsequently is communist oriented (IX.741). Johanna becomes involved as messenger, who carries an important letter from the revolutionary leader to an unknown contact (or contacts), whom she fails to locate because of a snow storm.

Meanwhile, in the tenth scene the setting is again at the mission of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte," whose leader, Snyder, anticipates help from Mauler in support of the mission. Among three poor souls who come in, is Pierpont Mauler, disguised. According to the heading of the tenth scene, "Pierpont Mauler erniedrigt sich und wird erhöht" (X.760), again echoing scriptural text (Luke 14:11). In his disguise, Mauler gets up and says he once knew a man like Mauler: "Ich kannte einen, den bat man / Um hundert Dollar. Und er hatte an zehn Millionen. / Und kam und gab nicht hundert Dollar, sondern warf / Die zehn Millionen Weg / Und gab sich selbst" (X.762). Brecht parodies ironically here the Christian demand of giving oneself to God, rather than material things alone. Upon learning, however, that it is Mauler himself standing "Ohne Habe" before them, the chorus of "Schwarzen Strohhüte" sing: "Wir haben erwartet mit Gebeten / Den reichen Mauler, aber herein / Trat der Bekehrte. / Sein Herz / Trug er uns entgegen, aber sein Geld nicht. / Darum ist unser Herz gerührt, aber / Unsre Gesichter sind lang" (X.763-64).

There are implications in this expression which reflect Marxism's partial adapting of Hegel's and Nietzsche's concept of 'Will to Power'.

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Snyder sees again his source of revenue thwarted and runs everyone out of the mission, saying to Mauler: "und vor allem Sie!" (X.764) With irony Mauler says: "Ich aber seh, dass ich, so wie ich bin / Für euch der Falsche bin" (X.764). Brecht reveals the hypocritical side of practicing Christianity in effective language, although, as Barbara Woods notes, "much of Brecht's criticism of Christian ethics consists not in attacking the principles, but in pointing out the failure to apply them."51

In essence Brecht says that his aim in der Heiligen Johanna der Schlachthöfe is to attack the superficiality of an individual's "living" the religion he professes: "So steht in der Heiligen Johanna der Schlachthöfe, einem Stück dieser Dramatik, nicht das 'innere Wesen der Religion', die Existenz Gottes, der Glaube zur Diskussion. Was zur Diskussion steht, ist das Verhalten des religiösen Menschen (soweit es von aussen wahrnehmbar ist), das Reden von Gott, die Bemühungen von Menschen, Glauben zu erzeugen."52

The second aspect of the heading of scene ten is developed by Mauler receiving news from New York that he should begin buying beef again. Simultaneously the breeders and packers plead for him to take on again "das Joch der Verantwortung" (X.769). Mauler does accept this responsibility, but warns that the number of workers in the factory will have to be limited and the strike threats, initiated by the communists, must be suppressed. Since the consumers are the ones suffering from the situation, they agree to these terms. News arrives that the general strike has been fought off.


52 Brecht, *Schriften zum Theater III*, Werkausgabe, XVII, 1019-1020.
The eleventh scene finds Johanna in the stockyards, which are empty except for a few groups of workers passing. She is still looking for the people to whom she was to deliver the letter (XI.775). She is told by some journalists, who recognize her, that the general strike has been averted and the workers have agreed. After learning that the police had taken into custody the few dissident leaders, Johanna collapses unconscious.

In the twelfth and last scene Johanna is brought to the mission of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte" still somewhat in a daze. Brecht's "double entendre" is depicted, at no time, better than when Johanna, who has been dressed by one of the girls in the uniform of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte," dies in the eyes of the public as a martyr to the cause of God, but in her own sight (and the reader's!) to the cause of the worker in the name of Communism. Before dying of pneumonia, which she caught in the stockyards, Johanna clarifies her new philosophy. In metaphoric language she compares the suppressed workers to the bureaucratic money-men in the following way: "Denn es ist eine Kluft zwischen oben und unten, grösser als / Zwischen dem Berg Himalaja und dem Meer" (XII.780). She further amplifies the polarity of the stratas of society: "Die aber unten sind, werden unten gehalten / Damit die oben sind, oben bleiben. / Und der Oberen Niedrigkeit ist ohne Mass / Und auch wenn sie besser werden, so hüle es / Doch nichts, denn ohnegleichen ist / Das System, das sie gemacht haben: / Ausbeutung und Unordnung, tierisch und also / Unverständlich" (XII.781).

Johanna becomes adamant in her assertion not to speak about the existence of a God, who will help the poor, in the following lines:
"Darum, wer unten sagt, dass es einen Gott gibt / Und kann sein unsichtbar und hilfe ihnen doch / Den soll man mit dem Kopf auf das Pflaster schlagen / Bis er verreckt ist" (XII.782). Brecht's clarification of these harsh lines is significant to the importance of our theme. He says: "Man muss sie genau nehmen und wird dann sehen, dass sie keineswegs über Gott spricht, sondern über das Reden von Gott, und zwar über ein bestimmtes Reden in einer bestimmten Situation und von bestimmten Aussagen über Gott." Johanna does not use any more the glib language of the "Schwarzen Strohhüte" in parroting the message of God. On the contrary she announces a message of power among the proletariat: "Und auch die, welche ihnen sagen, sie konnten / sich erheben im Geiste / Und stecken bleiben im Schlamm, die soll man / auch mit den Köpfen auf das / Pflaster schlagen. Sondern / Es hilft nur Gewalt, wo Gewalt herrscht, und / Es helfen nur Menschen, wo Menschen sind" (XII.782-83).

Johanna's message is heretical to the listeners; therefore, the chorus begins to drown her voice where she cannot be heard. Shortly thereafter, seeing that she has died, Snyder pronounces the following epitaph: "Johanna Dark, fünfundzwanzig Jahre alt, gestorben an Lungenentzündung auf den Schlachthöfen, im Dienste Gottes, Streiterin und Opfer" (XII.785).

Mauler comments with Faustian overtones that Johanna "weckt in unserer Brust die zweit / Bessere Seele!" (XII.785) He reiterates the same idea in the following words: "Ach, in meine arme Brust / Ist ein Zwiefaches gestossen / Wie ein Messer bis zum Heft" (XII.785). The last chorus of all those present in the mission compounds this parodying of Goethe's own treatment of the theme of God, Satan, and Man in Faust:

53 Ibid., p. 1021.
Mensch, es wohnen dir zwei Seelen
In der Brust!
Such nicht eine auszuwählen
Da du beide haben musst.
Bleibe stets mit dir im Streite!
Bleib der Eine, stets Entzweite!
Halte die hohe, halte die niedere
Halte die rohe, halte die biedere
Halte sie beide. (XII.786)

Speaking about Brecht's parodies of Goethe and Schiller in Die Heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe, Hoffmann points to the reason for Brecht's ridicule of the Bible: "It is important to recognize that Brecht's purpose is not to mock the classical authors—any more than ridicule of the Bible is his goal in the Biblical parodies of the Dreigroschenoper and Mahagonny.... It was, by the way, partly as an antidote against the public's unquestioning reverence for refined traditional forms that Brecht also introduced into his dramas the 'Moritat' and the 'Bänkelsang' with their gory subject matter, their simple, earthly diction, and their images."\(^{54}\)

Thus, one can see that Brecht's parody is a vehicle for his type of didacticism—one might also say his propaganda. Parody is only one form of Brecht's use of the Bible. He reverses the conventional implications of Biblical or Christian terminology to accomplish his "tour de force." Brecht's use of the Bible and Christianity fits well into his social didacticism, which manipulates similar problems of Christianity. In fact, Chiari says with Rousseauistic overtones: "It is not man alone (an unthinkable notion) but social man which is sinful, and in this respect Marxist and Brechtian views coincide with Christianity."\(^{55}\)

\(^{54}\) Charles W. Hoffmann, "Brecht's Humor: Laughter While the Shark Bites," Germanic Review, XXXVIII (1963), 159.

CHAPTER IV

ANTI-FASCIST PLAYS

As a transition work from the Marxist plays to the Anti-Fascist plays, the powerful and meaningful poem, 'Die drei Soldaten' (1932), emphasizes among other themes the impotence of God in face of the odds of the war, misery, corruption, exploitation, and ignorance which rampage the earth. Brief attention, therefore, is given to the biblical and Christian imagery in it as a prelude to the study of the theme within the Anti-Fascist plays.

Made up of fourteen scenes of rhymed couplets, Brecht describes how the three soldiers—Hunger, Mishap, and Consumption (Hunger, Unfall und Husten)—desert near the close of the war and wander through town and country, encountering the inequities of society in the persons of the rich, the poor, children, and the clergy.

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In the second scene a commission of the poor visits God, who, as usual, is dining with the rich, and requests that he put an end to the misery in the world, of which they share the biggest lot. God passes the question on to the rich, who reply negatively with hypocritical passion:

Soll man das Elend entfernen? Man soll!
Nur, denken sie weiter (die denken scharf)
Dass es natürlich nichts kosten darf.
Und bei den Kosten angekommen
Haben sie sich gleich zusammengenommen
Und sie schauen einander an und sagen:
Man muss das Elend leider ertragen.
Leider (man muss da wieder scharf denken)
Braucht man das Elend, um die Löhne zu senken.
Da beschlossen die Reichen messerscharf
Dass das Elend nicht entfernt werden darf. 3

They pursue the matter further with God as to what might be done to help the poor endure their misery and conclude that He might make it invisible. This he does and says: "Ich kann es nicht ausrotten ganz und gar / Gut, da mach ich es unsichtbar" (343). The scene concludes with a summarizing refrain of its theme, using a format repeated at the end of each of the subsequent scenes: "Dass die Reichen und ihr Gott das so machen / Das beweisen die Tatsachen: / In unseren Städten trotz ihres elektrischen Lichts / Sieht man von ihrem Elend fast nichts" (343).

The seventh scene, "Die drei Soldaten und die Kirche," reveals the continued sharp criticism of the author against organized religion:

"Mehr als dasGiftgas und die Kanonen / Vertilgen auf Erden die Religio-
donen. / Wer diese Welt für sich behält / Verweist seinen Bruder auf eine

3 Brecht, Gedichte I, Werkausgabe, VIII, 342-343. Hereafter, the page number is given in parenthesis in the text.
andere Welt" (349). The Fabel of this scene deals primarily with the desperate hunger of a small boy who delivers bread at the door of customers for a bakery. One of the soldiers observes him and asks if he is hungry and he replies immediately "Gewiss doch." However, as a Christian, he refuses to eat of the bread which is not his, although the soldier insists. The boy says he has bread at communion in his Church. Later, while he is receiving communion, the soldier, joined now by his two companions, observes the small size of the bread and the "Amen" of the minister. This angers them so that they lead the boy out abruptly. Finally, the congregation calmed down—"und hörten weiter auf Gottes Wort" (351). The three soldiers in their allegorical attire serve Brecht's Marxist materialism well as the refrain concludes: "Dass die drei Soldaten das wirklich so machen / Das beweisen die Tatsachen: / Wer seine Sach auf Gott gestellt / Den jagen sie aus dieser Welt" (351).

The twelfth scene offers the most striking attack upon the impotence of God: "Die drei Soldaten und der liebe Gott." The first part recapitulates God's tangible role in the world through His church and servants, both of which have been perpetually maintained by the sweat and toil of the poor people. God is then pictured in a perplexed and tortured state after he recognizes this fact, and sets out in flight from the reality of the situation. Stopping under a bridge, he meets the invisible soldiers (a reversal of Wang and the three gods of Der gute Mensch von Sezuan), who point fingers of accusation at him. He replies by giving the following excuses: "Da sagte der liebe Gott bekloemen / Er wisse gar nicht, wie es gekommen / Dass man den Ärmsten
ihre Geld genommen. / Er selber sei niemals dafür gewesen. / Nur die Repräsentationskosten! und die Spesen! / Und die teure Kirche mit ihrem Prassen! / Er selber habe es sich eigentlich nur gefallen lassen" (359).

Without any hesitation or reply the three soldiers place God before a wall and shoot him unmercifully, "so dass Gott aus der Welt verschwand" (360). The refrain asserts the absence of "den lieben Gott . . . bei dem Grossen Arbeiterheer" (360). With God not around any more "[wurde] der Frieden sichtbar als ein Krieg" (360). In fact, the revolution is avoided: "So wird die Revolution vermieden" (362). The conclusion one can draw is that if organized religion could be eliminated, the Marxist utopia would appear sooner. Pesch confirms the opinion; Brecht's "Sozialismus wurzelt in dieser bewussten Konzentration auf das Diesseits in der Religion eines neuromantischen Positivismus, im Gott, . . . Dionysos, dem er den Namen Baal in Gedichten gibt."4

Remaining Marxist oriented, Brecht turns his dramatic attention following the doctrinaire communist play, Die Mutter, to a prophetic analysis of Fascism, first in the satirical and ironic parable play, Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe, then in Fürcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches. Having begun the former before Hitler's takeover, as an adaptation of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, which dealt with "the problem of mercy and human frailty," Brecht "was primarily concerned with exposing the class character of justice."5 While in his Danish exile he be-


gins to revise it into a sharp attack upon Hitler's demagogy and its relation to capitalism, which still symbolizes for Brecht the inequities of society: "Deshalb war der Ausgangspunkt ihrer literarischen Gestaltung die Darstellung des Faschismus als einer Herrschaftsform des Monopolkapitalismus." Initially, as the seventeenth Versuch, the play carried a double title, Die Spitzköpfe und die Rundköpfe oder Reich gesellt sich gern. The revision displayed the Heine-esque subtitle "Ein Greuelmärchen" in the London Malik-Verlag edition in 1938. Unfortunately, Brecht's deep commitment to the defense of the worker, which is usually expressed in terms of the class struggle, leads him to conclude that Nazism's main interest is not so much racial and anti-semitic, but more a new approach of capitalism to subdue the proletariat. Willy Haas quotes Brecht as saying in 1934-35: "Auch die Rassentheorie ist nur eine Waffe im Klassenkampf der Bourgeoisie gegen das werktätige Volk." Of these two anti-Fascist plays, Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches provides the most abundant display of anti-Christian and biblical imagery. The main object of these two plays, as well as Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar and Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui, was to deprecate Hitler and the reign of terror which he inflicted on Germany from 1933.

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8 Willy Haas, Bert Brecht (Berlin: Colloquium, 1958), p. 79.
Brecht's campaign against Hitler included his established practice of poetic-political satire within biblical or Christian reference. Most indicative and representative are the six "Hitler-Choräle," which are parodies in melody and rhyme of church hymns from Luther to such Baroque poets as Martin Rinckart, Joachim Neander, and Paul Gerhardt. In these "Hitler-Choräle," which were written during the time of the revision of Die Spitzköpfe und die Rundköpfe (ca. 1933), Brecht seems to imply condemnation of God's type of justice along with that of Hitler's. It will be noted later that the motif of Hitler being referred to as God in these "Choräle" is carried over into the two anti-Nazi plays, Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches and Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui.

Rinckart's "Nun danket alle Gott," which continues, "Mit Herzen, Mund und Händen, / Der grosse Dinge tut / An uns und allen Enden," reads as follows in Brecht's version: "Der uns den Hitler sandte / Der aufraumt mit dem Schutt / Im ganzen deutschen Lande." Although the primary message of these satirical parodies intends the deprecation of Hitler, Brecht still finds that Christian imagery provides the most powerful vehicle to transfer his Marxist ideas. In the second Choral Brecht parodies Joachim Neander's "Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren, / Meine geliebte Seele, das ist mein Begehren, / Kommet zu Hauf," by writing in the concluding verse: "Lobet den Führer, den jeder durch Mark und durch Bein

10 Brecht, Gedichte II, Werkausgabe, IX, 442.
spürt! / Dort ist ein Sumpf / Und hier erwarten wir dumpf / Dass uns
der Führer hineinführt!"¹² One sees a confirmation here in such paro-
dies of biblical language and style that Brecht's use of biblical and
Christian imagery represents his anti-Christian bias as well as his
anti-Hitler feelings. Just as he used the Bible and Christian doctrine
to vilify hypocritical Christian practice, so he uses them effectively
in fighting the more tangible, objective foe, German Nazism. In Luther's
famous hymn Brecht reflects that Hitler's enemy is communism: "Ein'
grosse Hilf war uns sein Maul / Ein' gute Wehr und Waffen / Er nannt
den Feind und war nicht faul / Ihn uns vom Hals zu schaffen. / Der Feind
stand im Land / Kommune war genannt! / Vernunft und viel List/ Sein
grausam Rüstzeug ist / Dagegen ist kein leicht Reden."¹³ He spells the
Feind out in the third stanza: "Der Feind allbekannt / Marxismus genannt /
Ohn Maulaufgereiss / Mit Gründen schwarz auf weiss / Hat er uns fast ver-
führet."¹⁴ In Brecht's version of Paul Gerhardt's famous song, we see
Gerhardt's imagery of God's direction of man transformed into Brecht's
imagery of the butcher before the helpless calf:

Befiehl du deine Wege
O Kalb, so oft verletzt
Der allertreusten Pflege
Des, der das Messer wetzt!
Der denen, die sich schinden
Ein neues Kreuz ersann
Der wird auch Wege finden
Wie er dich schlachten kann.

¹² Brecht, Gedichte II, 445.
¹³ Ibid., p. 449.
¹⁴ Ibid., p. 450.
Both Nazism and Christianity are accused by Brecht of the exploitation of the lower classes in their respective practices. Brecht shows evidence of his Marxist position against the "abstract moralism of religion and capitalism" in the *Drei Groschen Roman*, which appeared in 1934, shortly after his attacks on Nazism began. His major philosophical criticism of Christianity is seen in the dream of the soldier-beggar Fewkoombey in the last chapter of the *Drei Groschen Roman*, which amounts to a trial of Christ for his parable of the pounds (Matt. 25: 14-30; Luke 19:11-27). The dream starts with the day of triumph "nach Jahren des Elends." The time is the era when Marxist Socialism reigns.

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over the world, due to the revolt of the masses over their tormentors:

"Die Massen erhoben sich, schüttelten endlich ihre Feiniger ab, ent-
ledigten sich in einem einzigen Aufwaschen ihrer Verträger, vielleicht
der furchtbarsten Feinde, die sie hatten, gaben alle Hoffnung endgültig
auf und erkämpften den Sieg.... Nicht das Erste oder Zweite, aber das
Dritte oder Vierte war die Abhaltung eines grossen Gerichts.... Bevor
dieses Gericht stattgefunden hat, kann von wirklichem Leben natürlich
nicht gesprochen werden."¹⁸

A counterpart to this dream of the soldier Fewkoombey is seen to­
toward the end of the immediately preceding third book, which carries the
caption, "Nur wer im Wohlstand lebt, lebt angenehm." Macheath, the pet-
ty business man of the Dreigroschenoper, has been transformed into a big
capitalist without principle. In a conversation with Brown, the chief
inspector, he projects what would be a utopia in the opinion "eines ernst-
haft arbeitenden Geschäftsmannes" like himself. Speaking first about the
right men at the head of the country, he says:

Sie gehören alle irgendwelchen Parteien an, und Parteien
sind selbstsüchtig. Ihr Standpunkt ist einseitig. Wir
Erauchen Männer, die über den Parteien stehen, so wie
wir Geschäftsleute. Wir verkaufen unsere Ware an arm
und reich. Wir verkaufen jedem ohne Ansehen der Person
 einen Zentner Kartoffeln, installieren ihm eine Lichtlei-
tung, streichen ihm sein Haus an. Die Leitung des Staats
 ist eine moralische Aufgabe. Es muss erreicht werden,
dass die Unternehmer gute Unternehmer, die Angestellten
gute Angestellte, kurz: die Reichen gute Reiche und die
Armen gute Arme sind. Ich bin überzeugt, dass die Zeit
einer solchen Staatsführung kommen wird. Sie wird mich
zu ihren Anhängern zählen. (1108-1109)

¹⁸ Brecht, Prosa III, Werkausgabe, XIII, 1152. Hereafter, the
page number will be given in parenthesis in the text.
Brecht's use of *gute* in this passage parallels his use of it in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, which will be discussed later. There is also a parody on the traditional Christian semantics found in the Bible concerning those who will inherit the kingdom of God. Brecht implies a degree of complicity of Nazism and Christianity in their relationship to capitalism.

In the *Drei Groschen Roman* Brecht juxtaposes the Christian and Marxist conceptions of utopia. In fact, in the dream of the soldier Fewkoombey, Fewkoombey becomes the judge of not only the "Lebenden" but also the "Toten" and begins "nach langem Nachdenken, das allein schon Monate dauerte, ... mit einem Mann ... der, nach Aussage eines Bischofs in einer Trauerfeier für untergegange Soldaten, ein Gleichnis erfunden hatte, das zweitausend Jahre lang von allerlei Kanzeln herab angewendet worden war und nach Ansicht des obersten Richters ein besonderes Verbrechen darstellte" (1153). It becomes obvious that this person is Jesus Christ. Primary attention is given to the accusation that he misrepresented facts in his parable of the pounds, namely, that not just some people but everybody receives his or her pound: "Sie sollen gesagt haben, dass nicht nur einige Leute, sondern alle Leute, also alle Menschen, die es gibt, ein Pfund mitbekommen? Ich mache Sie darauf aufmerksam, dass dies der Hauptpunkt ist" (1154). The accused is reported to have made three statements about the parable of the pounds, two of which are proven true; "erstens, dass mit Pfunden gewuchert, das heisst Gewinne erzeugt werden können, und zweitens, dass diejenigen, die keine erzeugen, in eine Finsternis geworfen werden, wo da Heulen und Zahnklappern ist" (1158). [Matt. 25:30]
One of the witnesses who represents the poor and oppressed answers the question of the judge, concerning their being cast out into the place of outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, emphatically in the negative, saying: "Wir sind nie hereingelassen worden" (1157), meaning they were in worse condition than that afforded. The third statement that all men received at least one pound is not accepted by the court and becomes the key point of concern of the judge. He tries to find out the reason "warum einige von uns, der kleinste Teil, ihr Gut mehren, aus einem Pfund, wie es in der Bibel heißt und verlangt wird, zwei oder fünf oder gar zehn machen, aber andere, viele, die meistens vermehren in einem langen, arbeitsreichen Leben höchstens ihr Elend. Was, meine Freunde, ist das Pfund der Glücklichen, das so gewaltige Gewinne abwirft und um das unter ihnen, wie ich gehört habe, solch ein gewaltiger Kampf tobt? Woraus besteht es?" (1161) Searching the volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica does not help explain satisfactorily "woraus das Pfund der Erfolgreichen bestand" (1162). The judge, Fewkoombey, finally arrives at the answer through the witness of Beery, the harsh manager of Peachum's garment factory. The accused's defense lawyer, Peachum, explains that Beery's bank account originated from the fact, "er versteht es eben, aus den Leuten etwas herauszuholen, das ist es" (1163). His success was in proportion to the number of ways he could exploit the workers beneath him. At this moment the judge acknowledges his conclusion to the question by turning to the minority relatives of the accused and saying: "Das ist euer Pfund! Wer keinen hat, ihn auszubeuten, beutet sich selbst aus!" (1165) Thus, he concludes that the pound of the successful is the human being, the object of mass exploi-
Christ, the accused, stands convicted as the arch conspirator of
the capitalist oppressors: "Du bist überführt! ... Zum Tode!" (1161)
To be sure, Brecht, whose mouthpiece is the judge, is at liberty as a
writer to permit the accused to be represented by such an ignorant and
inept defense, but he consequently is guilty himself of committing the
"Marxist" sin of ignorance (Unkenntniss).

In reality, Brecht's knowledge of the spirit of the Bible is very
weak. The Bible offers primarily the confirmation of a "Jenseits,"
which man has to accept by faith. Brecht's use of biblical and Christ­
ian imagery is confirmed more and more as a utilitarian approach to de­
velop his Marxist humanism of a "Diesseits." Pesch speaks of the absur­
dity of some of Brecht's semantic manipulations of parables in the Bible
as well as his lack of knowledge about heaven and a life after death:

Was Brecht sagt, ist so 'absurd' wie das Gleichnis
vom reichen Jüngling in der Bibel, nur dass Brecht
das Gleichnis umkehrt: Weil du arm bist, hast du kein
Recht zu leben, musst du sterben. Das ist Umkehrung,
nicht Widerspruch zur Bibel. Jesus kann dem Armen nur
den Himmel verheissen. Brecht weiss nichts vom Himmel,
sein Blick dringt Über den Tod nicht hinaus, seine An­
klage bleibt im Bannkreis des Dionysos, sein Trost ist
das Überleben der Kreatur durch alle Tode hindurch,
sein Sozialismus gemischt mit neuromantischem Pessimismus.

None of the positive convictions of his contemporary countryman, Jürgen
Moltmann, are to be found in Brecht's writings:

Christian hope is resurrection hope, and it proves
its truth in the contradiction of the future pros­
pects thereby offered and guaranteed for righteous­
ness as opposed to sin, life as opposed to death, glory
as opposed to suffering, peace as opposed to dissension....
It is only in following the Christ who was raised from
suffering, from a god-forsaken death and from the grave
that it gains an open prospect in which there is nothing

19 Pesch, p. 146.
more to oppress us, a view of the realm of freedom and joy. Where the bounds that mark the end of all human hopes are broken through in the raising of the crucified one, there faith can and must expand into hope.... Faith binds man to Christ. Hope sets this faith open to the comprehensive future of Christ. Hope is therefore the 'inseparable companion' of faith. 20

Consequently, that which Brecht leaves unsaid or uninterpreted about those who do not increase their pound or pounds can be a sounder defense than Brecht chose to present. However, one easily comprehends the one-sided approach in view of the author's vehement dislike of the inequalities produced by the class system, which in turn is propagated by the vested interest of the capitalist. Thus, this approach to the parable of the pounds makes it clear why Brecht associates capitalism with Christianity. He continues this associations as he sharpens his attack on capitalist Hitler in the play, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*.

**FURCHT UND ELEND DES DRITTEN REICHES**

Before an analysis of the play *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* is given, a very important piece of prose entitled "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit" should be mentioned because of its importance to Brecht's subsequent writing relevant to the theme under study. It appeared in 1935 and represents Brecht's efforts to lead a campaign against Fascism, which had engulfed his native country and sent him into exile the next day after the epoch-making Reichstag fire on February 27, 1933. For two years Brecht struggled with the

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problem of keeping hope against great odds. For that brave soul in the underground movement within and without Fascist Germany, the writer in exile, or any writer in a free country [i.e., USA], who "heute die Lüge und Unwissenheit bekämpfen und die Wahrheit schreiben will..."

Brecht writes: "Er muss den Mut haben, die Wahrheit zu schreiben, obwohl sie allenthalben unterdrückt wird; die Klugheit, sie zu erkennen, obwohl sie allenthalben verhüllt wird; die Kunst, sie handhabbar zu machen als eine Waffe; das Urteil, jene auszuwählen, in deren Händen sie wirksam wird; die List, sie unter diesen zu verbreiten."21 The last characteristic, which provides clever ways of disseminating the truth under the nose of an oppressor, is the most apropos. As an example, he tells of how Voltaire couched his attack against the powerful First Estate in France of the eighteenth century:

Voltaire bekämpfte den Wunderglauben der Kirche, indem er ein galantes Gedicht über die Jungfrau von Orlean. Er beschrieb die Wunder, die zweifellos geschehen sein mussten, damit Johanna in einer Armee und an einem Hof und unter Mönchen eine Jungfrau blieb. Durch die Eleganz seines Stils, und indem er erotische Abenteuer schilderte, die aus dem üppigen Leben der Herrschenden stammten, verlockte er diese, eine Religion preiszugeben, die ihnen die Mittel für dieses lockere Leben verschaffte. Ja, er schuf so die Möglichkeit, dass seine Arbeiten auf ungesetzlichen Wegen an die gelangten, für die sie bestimmt waren. Die Mächtigen seiner Leser förderten oder duldeten die Verbreitung. Sie gaben so die Polizei preis, die ihnen ihre Vergnügungen verteidigte. Und der grosse Lukrez des epikureischen Atheismus viel von der Schönheit seiner Verse verspreche.

Brecht's attack on Fascism as well as Christianity is modeled to

21 Brecht, Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst I, Werkausgabe, XVIII, 222.
22 Ibid., pp. 232-233.
a great degree on Voltaire's approach. His efforts to get a message across to his fellow countrymen inside Nazi Germany were to a degree successful because of the epigrammatic, gestic, unrhymed style of language used. Brecht explains in an essay in March, 1939, "Über reimlose Lyrik mit unregelmäßigen Rhythmen," that his technique was influenced greatly by Luther's language and expression in the Bible:

Ich nannte sie gestisch.
Das bedeutete: Die Sprache sollte ganz dem Gestus der sprechenden Person folgen. Ich will ein Beispiel geben.

The "Deutsche Satiren," which he broadcast over the German Freedom Radio,24 consisted of both poetry and prose. In the play, Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches, one finds examples of the prose.

The mixture of fear and misery is seen from the first to the last in the montage-like scenes of Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches. Max Frisch's observation recognizes an integration of form and content: "Furcht und Elend, das ist das einzige Verbindende in diesen Szenen."25

Brecht depicts how Nazism affected all areas and persons of society: the intelligentsia, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. Walter Weideli

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23 Ibid., XVIX, 398.
24 Ibid., p. 403.
summarizes the dilemma as follows: "Incapable of grasping the real causes of their misery, the Brechtian lower middle classes accuse the rain, politics, the Jews, and the people who are poorer than they. But the higher one climbs in the social hierarchy, the more complicated and refined the hypocrisy becomes. Alibis multiply; the lie grows in proportion to the culture." Brecht couches his attack against the Nazi tactics in biblical and Christian imagery in several of the episodes.

The first one shows two SS-Officers, whose language obviously betrays them as the simplest of petty proletariat, walking on patrol through the streets. One points to a corner where some Marxists, who claimed to be Catholic initiates, were apprehended, since not one was wearing a collar: "Da ham wir an de Ecke so 'n Marxistennest ausjehoben. Hinterher ham se jesagt, et war 'n katholscher Lehrlingsverein. Allet Lüje! Keen einzijer hatte 'n Kragen um." The subtle implication here is that it did not matter to the Nazis if their impulsive action was in error. They were soon to find the Catholics as well as Communists conspiring against their tactics.

The primary hostile, political entity, which the Nazis aimed their terror toward, was the Communists, who were all suspect: "Alle Marxisten werden noch ausfindig gemacht werden, weil man nicht dulden kann, dass sie alles zersetzen" (1085). In the third episode a Storm Trooper compares Hitler with Jesus Christ and Napoleon: "unser Führer ist der


27 Brecht, Stücke III, Werkausgabe, III, 1077. Hereafter, the page number is given in parenthesis in the text.
grösste Mensch, der je über den Erdboden gewandelt ist, größer als Jesus Christus und Napoleon zusammengenommen" (1086). Brecht's irony of the "Hitler-Choräle" reverberates here.

In the sixth scene an inspector and a judge are discussing a person who appears innocent, paralleling Pontius Pilate in his condemnation of Christ, even though he believed in his innocence: "Wahrscheinlich ist der Mann ganz unschuldig und hineingekommen wie der Pontius ins Credo" (1113).

In the tenth scene, a man and woman fear that their anti-Nazi remarks before their son, who is a member of Hitler's youth corps, will cause them to become suspect. The woman rationalizes as follows: "Jedenfalls geht es uns nichts an, schliesslich sind wir evangelisch" (1137). The man retorts later to the wife: "Einen Judas hast du mir geboren" (1143). The motif of Judas' betrayal of Jesus is frequently used by Brecht. The basic element of the staging of this play in New York and San Francisco under the title of The Private Life of the Master Race was the Nazi armoured vehicle appearing at the beginning and between the three divisions of the twenty-four scenes and at the end. Even between the scenes one could hear the movement of the vehicles and a voice admitting betrayal of the people: "Aus den Fabriken und aus den Küchen und von den Stempelstellen / Holten wir die Besatzung für unsern Karren. / Mit dem Judaskuss brachten wir ihn auf unsern Karren / Mit dem Freundesschlag auf die Schulter / Brachten wir sie auf unsern Kriegskarren" (1190).

The eighteenth scene contains a biblical proverb which Brecht liked to use, since practical application could be made of it to the proletariat,
whom Brecht sought always to defend. In fact, the whole of the Bible
tends to provide a defense of the poor and destitute. The proverb comes
originally out of Old Testament Mosaic law: "Du sollst dem Ochsen, der da
drischt, nicht das Maul verbinden" (Deut. 25:4). It is repeated in
the Pauline Epistles in I Cor. 9:9 and I Tim. 5:18. There is the general
principle behind the verse that love and kindness should be extended to
all God's creatures. More specifically, it means that "the laborer is
worthy of his hire." Such is not always the case and Brecht recog­
nizes it, especially in Nazi Germany.

Brecht seems to have saved his main attention toward biblical and
Christian reference in this play to one scene entitled "Die Bergpredigt."
The setting is in Lübeck in 1937 at the death bed of an old fisherman.
His wife, Storm Trooper son, and the pastor are beside him. The caption
underneath the title of the scene acknowledges the plight of the Christ­
ian under Nazism, attempting to hide behind the Ten Commandments. In
reality, other gods are alienating him from Jehovah, a Jew and God of
Peace: "Es müssen die Christen mit Schrecken / Ihre zehn Gebote versteck­
en : Sonst hagelt es Prügel und Spott. Sie können nicht Christen blei­
ben. / Neue Götter vertreiben / Ihren jüdischen Friedensgott" (1170).
The voice heard off stage at the beginning of the play echos: "Und es
ist kein Gott / Ausser Adolf Hitler" (1193).

The dying fisherman asks the pastor the eschatological question of
whether there is really life after death. Brecht's probing analysis of

28 Barbara Allen Woods traces Brecht's use of this proverb in
29 The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, et. al.
the question and the answer is most interestingly pursued in a manner which touches upon the so-called ambiguities of the Bible in light of the Nazi takeover of the people and the country. The fisherman comes to doubt that there is eternal life after death. If so, he wonders if he will be able to open his mouth and talk freely without fear of repression. The pastor, somewhat at a loss for a satisfactory answer to these simple but penetrating questions, says: "Es steht geschrieben: Der Glaube versetzt Berge. Sie müssen glauben. Es wird Ihnen leichter dann" (1170). Obviously, Brecht is mocking this central tenet of Christianity, namely, that with blind faith and belief in God through Christ one will obtain eternal life. The Marxist contention, according to Brecht, is that Christianity has been conveniently made the religion of the poor and working class. The pastor implies such in connection with the fisherman's questioning whether the turmoil and strife of this life is transferred to the other: "Ich verstehe Sie vielleicht nicht ganz. Sie meinen doch nicht, dass Sie nur glauben, weil Ihr Leben Mühsal und Arbeit gewesen ist?" (1171) One other important question is raised by the dying fisherman—whether war is immanent—, to which the pastor quotes Matt. 5:9: "Es heisst, selig sind die Friedfertigen" (1171). The pastor quotes the scripture as a handy tool, leaving the common implication of such action as meaningless to those enduring hardships and trials of life. Indeed, to parrot the verse "blessed are the peacemakers," during the days of the rise of Hitler is meaningless to the non-Christian believer, whose sole interest is "Diesseits." The fisherman wants the pastor to explain the meaning of the above beatitude to his son, who is
very Nazi-oriented. The pastor replies: "Er kann es selber lesen. Es steht in der Bergpredigt" (1172). The father reveals how Nazified his son has become by saying: "Er sagt, das ist alles von einem Juden und gilt nicht" (1172). He wants the pastor to say it is not true before he takes his last breath, but the tortured pastor, after a long pause, answers only: "In der Schrift steht auch: Gebt Gott, was Gottes ist und dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist" (1173). [Matt. 22:21] Thus, we see Brecht taking the Sermon on the Mount and revealing its impracticality to the humanist, in Brecht's case the Marxist humanist, whose concern is an earthly utopia. Ewen calls it Marxist humanism and says further: "In the plays of these years, and in the poems too, the human and humane element becomes dominant." Rarely have the nuances of the scripture faced such a challenging assault as is found in this twentieth scene of Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches.

There is a similar episode to the "Bergpredigt" scene in Brecht's next anti-Fascist play, Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar, which serves well as an interlude before Brecht's later anti-Fascist play, Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui. It deals also with the visit of a local "padre" to the home of Frau Carrar during the Civil War in Spain when Hitler helped Franco take over. Frau Carrar, a very devout woman wants her sons to remain out of the conflict, a view shared by the "padre." However, convenient to Brecht's didactic-propaganda purposes a worker,

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Ewen, p. 325. Bernard Dort, referring to Brecht's work as a whole, says: "Elle est un appel à une communauté humaine idéale." Lecture de Brecht, p. 110.
brother of Frau Carrar, has arrived with the most terrifying accounts about the brutality of Franco's generals. The worker challenges the Vatican's passive role concerning the resistance to the Nazi interference in Spain, to which the "padre" replies: "Das weiss ich nicht. Unglücklich: Meiner Meinung nach ist es nicht Sache der Kirche, aus Schwarz Weiss und aus Weiss Schwarz zu machen." This remark approaches the accusation of Hochhuth's play, Der Stellvertreter, which claims the Pope capitulated to a degree in failing to oppose the Nazi atrocities within Germany's borders as well as assist more the Jews escaping the terror.

The "padre" continues to defend his passive philosophy through the application of scripture: "Aber ich selber bin in keiner Weise ein Kämpfer. Gott hat mir nicht die Gabe verliehen, meine Pfarrkinder laut und vernehmlich zum Kampf für—er sucht ein Wort—irgend etwas aufzurufen. Für mich gilt das Wort unseres Herrn: Du sollst nicht töten! Ich bin kein reicher Mann. Ich besitze kein Kloster und teile mit meiner Gemeinde das wenige. Das ist vielleicht das einzige, was meinen Worten in einer solchen Zeit einen Nachdruck verleihen kann" (1212). The worker chides him for taking such a categorical position regarding killing by saying: "Wenn Sie zum Beispiel einem Mann, der gerade getötet werden soll und sich verteidigen will, mit dem Wort in den Arm fallen: Du sollst nicht töten!, so dass er wie ein Huhn abgeschlachtet werden kann, dann nehmen Sie vielleicht an diesem Kampf doch teil, ich meine, in Ihrer Weise. Ich denke, Sie entschuldigen es, wenn ich das sage" (1212). The "padre" attempts to salve his conscience under such meaningful accusation

31 Brecht, Stücke III, Werkausgabe, III, 1211. Hereafter, the page number is given in parenthesis in the text.
by remarking: "Vorläufig nehme ich am Hungern teil," to which the worker retorts: "Und wie meinen Sie, dass wir wieder zu unserem täglichen Brot kommen, um das Sie im Vaterunser bitten?" (1212) Attacking such ambiguities in the Bible is Brecht's consistent method of capitalizing on its impotence and meaninglessness.

Brecht's position on political neutrality is revealed in the conversation between the worker and the "padre" when the former reports, "dass Gott die Lebensmittelschiffe gestern nacht wieder umkehren liess" (1213). It reversed its course because of its neutrality in the war. In explaining to the "padre" what he means by neutrality, the worker says: "Nun, für Nichteinmischung! Und indem Sie für Nichteinmischung sind, billigen Sie im Grund jedes Blutbad, das diese Herren Generäle unter dem spanischen Volk anrichten" (1213). Therefore, Brecht is critical in this play, as in Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches, of those who capitulate in any way to the Nazi terror. Reminding the "padre" of the price of capitulation, the worker tells of the flagrant slaughter of men, women, and children fleeing the holocaust: "Sie wissen, dass fünfzigtausend fluchtende Männer, Frauen und Kinder auf der zweihundertzwanzig Kilometer langen Landstrasse nach Almeria von den Geschützen der Schiffe und von den Bomben und Maschinengewehren der Fluggeschwader Francesos niedergemäch't wurden" (1216). The "padre" becomes silent after this news, indicating defeat or perplexity in his position. Walter Weideli assesses the implications of this drama, when he says: "In it Christian nonviolence is sternly taken to task." 32

32 Weideli, p. 66.
No one can quarrel with Brecht's basic humanitarian bent, except that he appears to remain noticeably silent on such subjects as Stalin's annihilation of millions of Russians in the thirties or more recently on the postwar communist supression of individual freedom, either out of ignorance or political expediency, neither course of which Brecht evidenced much sympathy for in his realistic approach to the facts of life. There are, however, fragmented accounts of his being disillusioned with the East German Regime toward the end of his life.\(^\text{33}\)

**DER AUFHALTSAME AUFSTIEG DES ARTURO UI**

Chronologically, some of Brecht's best plays were written between *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* (1935-38) and his last strictly anti-Fascist play, *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* (1941). Thematically, however, the latter belongs in a discussion of the anti-Fascist works and reveals the author's continued preoccupation with the exalted position of Hitler and the analogy of his role with that of God. In the prolog the announcer refers in this manner to Arturo Ui, whose identity Brecht does not hide: "Der Gangster aller Gangster! Der be-rüchtigte / Arturo Ui! Mit dem uns der Himmel züchtige / Für alle unsre Sünden und Verbrechen / Gewalttaten, Dummheiten und Schwächen!"\(^\text{34}\)

Although the play's gangster parody of Hitler's rise to power does not approach the degree of barbarism which was perpetrated on Germany and the world, it does effectively reflect Brecht's attempt to show the


\(^{34}\) Brecht, *Stücke IV*, Werkausgabe, IV, 1722. Hereafter, the page number is given in parenthesis in the text.
world, especially America, the menace Nazism projected in 1941. Brecht concludes the prolog amidst rattle of machine gun fire by saying: "Es ist das Gangsterstück, das jeder kennt!" (1723) In the play there is parody, elevated verse "im grossen Stile," references to Goethe and Shakespeare, as seen earlier in Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe, all of which are used now in epic proportions.

In the first of fifteen scenes there are five businessmen discussing the plight of their business in the light of the threats surrounding them. One tells of another's bankrupt concern, which had existed "seit Noahs Zeiten" (1724). The alternatives they face are to accept Arturo Ui's protection service or close their business and depend on the Salvation Army. Unfortunately, their current political leader, Dogsborough (Hindenburg) is considered corrupt by many. Under these bewildering circumstances one asks: "Moral, wo bist du in der Zeit der Krise?" (1727) Another, however, defends Dogsborough: "Der Mann ist ehrlich. / Und was mehr ist: bekannt als ehrlich" (1728). This one continues to praise Dogsborough and feels he is their only hope: "Der alte Dogsborough ist unsre Anleih. / Warum? Sie glauben an ihn. Wer an Gott / Längst nicht mehr glaubt, glaubt noch an Dogsborough" (1729). Brecht alludes to the loss of belief in God which prevailed in general and he, himself, acknowledged. Another merchant admits his distrust in Dogsborough by saying: 

"'ne Ansicht wechselt / Er wohl noch seltner als ein Hemd. Die Stadt / Ist für ihn nichts aus Holz und Stein, wo Menschen / Mit Menschen hausen und sich raufen um / Hauszins und Beefsteaks, sondern was Papiernes / Und Biblisches" (1729). Brecht's reference in this context to "Biblisches" implies the traditional hypocritical stance of one who hides behind the
pages of the scripture. The analysis of Dogsborough concludes with a favorite theme of Brecht's, namely, that of the ignorance of those in power of the feelings of the subordinates. One merchant says of Dogsborough, "der alte Sonntagsschüler" (1741), as Ui's cohort, Roma (Roehm), calls him later: "Der Mann weiss nicht, wo Gott wohnt! Was fehlt ihm? Wissen fehlt ihm. Dogsborough / Weiss nicht, wie einer sich in unserer Haut fühlt" (1730). Not knowing where God lives is analogous to Dogsborough's never having faced the trials and tribulations of the average man. The crux of the crisis these men face is expressed in biblical imagery by one, who finds everyone tense and reserved: "Ich lief vom Pontius zum Pilatus. Pontius / War weggereist, Pilatus war im Bad" (1731). Here Brecht uses the analogy of Christ's being sent from Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest, to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor (Matt. 26-27), although the aphorism makes a play only upon the first and last name of the Governor.

The fourth scene finds old Dogsborough and his son on Sunday at his country house alone. He is reminded of the day by the ringing of the bells, which penetrate his worried mind: "Heut / Ist Sonntag. Hm. Die Glocken klingen friedlich / Wär in der Welt nicht so viel Menschenbosheit" (1749). Ui and his henchman, Roma, pay him a sudden visit and he tries to make them leave, but Roma says sarcastically: "Nun, nun! Gemütlich! Nichts Übereiltes! Heut ist Sonntag, was?" (1750) Ui seeks to convince Dogsborough to capitulate willingly the leadership of the cauliflower trust of Chicago to him and reminds him of his corruptness and eventual deposition by his enemies. Claiming symbolically his honesty as well as his age, he says: "Mein Haar ist weiss...," to which Ui re-
plies: "Doch ausser Ihrem Haar / Ist nichts an Ihnen weiss" (1754). Receiving a persistent denial of assistance from Dogsborough, Ui euphemistically asserts his position: "Nun, Herr Dogsborough / Ich bin erst vierzig. Sie sind achtzig, also / Werd ich mit Gottes Hilf Sie überleben! / Ich weiss, ich komme in den Grünzeughandel!" (1755) Ui leaves, but is not out of sight when two officials of the city administration arrive to bring Dogsborough the bad news of an investigation of him and his interest. At the investigation, the one who could acquit Dogsborough is reported slain in his hotel. Ui and his henchmen arrive conveniently and compliment Dogsborough's downfall before the eyes of the reporters.

In the sixth scene, while taking elocution lessons from an old hackneyed actor, Ui and one of his henchmen, Givola (Goebbels), discuss old Dogsborough's usefulness to them. Givola compares Dogsborough with the traditional family Bible which is never opened except occasionally to impress friends: "So geht's mit der Familienbibel, die / Man nicht mehr aufschlägt, seit man, im Freundeskreis / Gerührt drin blätternd, zwischen den ehrwürdigen / Vergilbten Seiten die vertrocknete / Wanze entdeckte" (1771). In the interval between the posture and oratory instruction Givola tells Ui of Giri's (Goering) habit of collecting hats from the victims he murders and asks Ui to make him stop such practice. In response, Ui quotes from Deut. 25:4 and compliments Giri for this 'weakness': "Dem Ochsen, der da drischt / Verbind ich nicht das Maul. Ich überseh / Die kleinen Schwächen meiner Mitarbeiter" (1772).

The model speech, which the old actor uses to teach Ui proper ora-

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35 See Barbara Allen Woods, pp. 46-47.
tory, is Shakespeare's Mark Anthony speech after Caesar's death. Brecht has Ui reciting the speech in his own translation rather than that of August Wilhelm Schlegel. Anthony's reference to Brutus being an honorable man offers Brecht the opportunity to satirize the concept of honorable men: "Denn Brutus ist ein ehrenwerter Mann / Das sind sie alle, ehrenwerte Männer" (1773). Brecht aptly wields his often repeated theme of corruption among those in power.

The ninth scene records Dogsborough writing his will and confession of all the atrocities committed by Ui and his crowd. At the same time, however, Givola is composing a will for Dogsborough, which will place Ui and his men in prominent political positions at his death. Upon hearing that Roma has unilaterally had a transport truck and its driver shot up, Ui considers it an affront to his leadership. However, seeing himself at odds with Ui, Givola, and Giri, Roma disarms them and holds them at gun point. Ui proceeds to talk mildly to Roma, warning him that he does not permit threats of this nature against his person. He demands blind faith in himself and parodies the biblical and Christian account of blind faith and trust in God through Jesus Christ:

Ich bin ein milder Mann.
Doch Drohungen vertrag ich nicht. Wer nicht
Mir blind vertraut, kann seines Wegs ghn. Und
Hier wird nicht abgerechnet. Bei mir heisst es:
Die Pflicht getan, und bis zum Æussersten!
Und ich sag, was verdient wird; denn Verdienen
Kommt nach dem Dienen! Was ich von euch fordre
Das ist Vertraum und noch einmal Vertraum!
Euch fehlt der Glaube! Und wenn dieser fehlt
Ist alles aus. Warum konnt ich das alles
Schaffen, was meint ihr? Weil ich den Glauben hatte!
Weil ich fanatisch glaubte an die Sache.
Und mit dem Glauben, nichts sonst als dem Glauben
Ging ich heran an diese Stadt und hab
Sie auf die Knie gezwungen. Mit dem Glauben kam ich
Zum Dogsborough, und mit dem Glauben trat ich
Ins Stadthaus ein. In nackten Händen nichts
Als meinen unerschütterlichen Glauben! (1796-1797)

Here, again, Brecht capitalizes upon a Christian principle which he considers negative. As the "Hitler-Choräle" implied, he parallels Hitler God as to their omnipotent roles before men. Brecht's attack on the faith and trust demanded by Hitler and that required by God leads one to examine again his relationship to Marxism, which speaks in theoretical, abstract terms about a future which is ethereal and obviously not current reality any more than there is a Christian Heaven on earth in the literal sense.

Ui convinces Roma he is in the wrong and the latter leaves, only to be betrayed by Ui shortly thereafter and shot. With this second obstacle out of the way, Ui turns to the leader of the vegetable trust, Ignatius Dullfeet, of the neighboring area of Cicero, whose paper has been against him. A meeting is arranged through Dullfeet's wife, Betty, to meet with Ui in Givola's florist shop. Ui demands of Dullfeet the same faith and trust he had claimed in his conversation with Roma, admitting simultaneously that the moral climate had been subnormal in recent days:

Es mag in der Vergangenheit da manches Passiert sein, was nicht grad dem allerstrengsten Moralischen Massstab standhielt. So was kommt Im Kampf mitunter vor. Doch unter Freunden Kommt so was eben nicht vor. Dullfeet, was ich Von Ihnen will, ist nur, dass Sie in Zukunft Zu mir Vertrauen haben, mich als Freund sehn Der seinen Freund nirgends und nie im Stich lässt. Und dass Sie, um Genaueres zu erwähnen In Ihrer Zeitung diese Greuelmärchen Die nur böś Blut machen, hinfurt nicht mehr drucken. (1814)
While walking through the florist shop, the wife, Betty, asks Ui in much the same abrupt manner Gretchen asked Faust: "Herr Ui, wie halten Sie's mit der Religion?" He replies much more succinctly than Faust: "Ich bin ein Christ. Das muss genügen." Betty questions further about the Ten Commandments, to which Ui retorts: "Solln sich nicht in den rauhen Alltag mengen" (1817). In other words, the Ten Commandments are not to be considered in the machinations of the everyday world activity. Dullfeet and Givola are conversing and the former comments: "Auch Blumen haben ja Erlebnisse." Givola: "Und ob! Begräbnisse! Begräbnisse!" Dullfeet: "Oh, ich vergess, die Blumen sind Ihr Brot." Givola: "Ganz recht. Mein bester Kunde ist der Tod." Dullfeet: "Ich hoff, Sie sind auf ihn nicht angewiesen." Givola: "Nicht bei den Leuten, die sich warnen liessen" (1817). The "double entendre" effect of Givola's statements leaves no room for false inference on Dullfeet's part, who becomes suddenly very pale.

The antepenultimate scene of the drama is set outside the mausoleum, in which Ignatius Dullfeet's body has been placed to rest. A pastor can be heard inside paying laudable homage to a man, "der den graden Weg / Blind gehen konnte, das Recht auswendig wusst" (1819). Outside are Ui and his cohorts, who greet Betty Dullfeet as she leaves the mausoleum, pale and leaning onto a friend. Ui's words of condolence only excite her to righteous indignation, as she accuses him of Judas-like tactics: "So ist's. Die Hand, die ihn gefällt, war / Die gleiche Hand, die nach der seinen griff. / Die Ihre!" (1822) Betrayal is as common to Ui as faith is to decent people: "Ihr Morden kommt von Herzen! Ihr Verbrechen /
Ist tiefgefühlt wie anderer Menschen Wohltat! / Sie glauben an Verrat
wie wir an Treue!" (1823) In such a cold, cruel world, where the weak
are victims of the power structure, protection remains only with Ui:
"Schutzlos stehen Sie / In einer kalten Welt, wo leider Gottes / Der
Schwache stets geliefert ist! Der einzige / Und letzte Schutz, der
Ihnen bleibt, bin ich" (1825). The nihilism of Baal and Brecht's early
days is called to the reader's attention in these lines. Betty Dull-
feet's last plea is: "Gott schütz uns vor dem Schützer!" (1826)

The play concludes with the vegetable dealers in Chicago and those
from Cicero gathering for a meeting, at which they capitulate to Arturo
Ui. However, in order to free themselves of any guilt, they express in
Pontius Pilate-like manner: "Wir waschen unsre Hände / In Unschuld" (1830).
Brecht, therefore, concludes the play in 1941 with the analogy of Hitler's
impending subjection of Europe. The epilog of the play, obviously not
written until after the defeat of Hitler, is most powerful in its warn-
ing of future Hitlers:

Ihr aber lernet, wie man sieht statt stiert
Und handelt, statt zu reden noch und noch.
So was hätt einmal fast die Welt regiert!
Die Völker wurden seiner Herr, jedoch
Dass keiner uns zu früh da triumphiert--
Der Schoss ist fruchtbar noch, aus dem das kroch! (1835)
CHAPTER V

LATER PLAYS

Ich wäre gerne auch weise.
In den alten Büchern steht, was weise ist:
Sich aus dem Streit der Welt halten und
die kurze Zeit
Ohne Furcht verbringen
Auch ohne Gewalt auskommen
Böses mit Gutem vergelten
Seine Wünsche nicht erfüllen, sondern
vergessen
Gilt für weise.
Alles das kann ich nicht:
Wirklich, ich lebe in finsteren Zeiten.  

Brecht's most fruitful, creative period comes between 1938 and 1940, in which three of his major dramas are written: Leben des Galilei (1938/1939), Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder (1939), and Der gute Mensch von Sezuan (1940). The author's use of biblical and Christian themes, motifs, and imagery is more significant than ever in developing the major ideas of these plays. Eric Bentley comments in an introduction to Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder that Brecht was "obsessed with religion—a subject he could not keep away from for more than a few pages at a time." However, one example of this obsession may suffice from Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder, for it captures the essence of Brecht's contemplation of the historical Jesus in epic-like form. As in most of Brecht's plays there is a member of the clergy depicted in one way or another. In the third scene of Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder a chaplain (Feldprediger)

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sings a song, parodying the passion and crucifixion of Christ:

In der ersten Tagesstund
Ward der Herr bescheiden
Als ein Mörder dargestellt
Pilatus dem Heiden.

Der ihn unschuldig 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.

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 ein Speer gestochen.

Doraus Blut und Wasser ran
Sie machtens zum Hohne
Solches stellen sie uns an
Mit dem Menschensohne.3

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3 Brecht, Stücker IV, Werkausgabe, IV, 1384-1385.
This poem has many of the images of Christ which Brecht makes use of throughout his entire work. Hans Mayer points out: "Das Passionsgedicht des Augsburger im Augsburger Tonfall bleibt nichtchristliche Dichtung; aber von Blasphemie oder Provokation ist es weit entfernt."\(^4\)

**LEBEN DES GALILEI**

From the wealth of literary, historical, and religious allusion encountered in the literary world of Bertolt Brecht, one sees he was a voracious reader.\(^5\) His reading and knowledge of history and literature was something more than superficial, and his acquaintance with philosophy and religion was penetrating. As pointed out earlier in the study, Brecht, as an intellectual, absorbed the philosophic heritage of nineteenth century German culture, which, in its main stream tended to secularize religion. George Santayana recapitulates this process by starting with Kant and concluding with Nietzsche:

> Kant was a puritan; he revered the rule of right as something immutable and holy, perhaps never obeyed in the world. Fichte was somewhat freer in his Gal-

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\(^5\) Max Frisch describes Brecht's room during his interim stay in the Swiss town of Herrliberg overlooking Lake Zürich in 1948: "The room has about it something suggestive of the workshop: typewriter, sheets of paper, shears, boxes with books; on an easychair there are piles of newspapers, local ones, English, German, American ones; time and again something will be cut from them and placed in a small file; on the large table I see paste and brushes, photographs, set designs of a New York production; Brecht tells about Laughton as Galileo; then there are more books which are being used for a present project, letters between Goethe and Schiller; Brecht reads something from them, something concerning the dramatic and the epic." in "Recollections of Bertolt Brecht," *Tulane Drama Review*, VI (1961), 36.
vinism; the rule of right was the moving power in all life and nature, though it might have been betrayed by a doomed and self-seeking generation. Hegel was a very free and superior Lutheran; he saw that the divine will was necessarily and continuously realised in this world, though we might not recognise the fact in our petty moral judgments. Schopenhauer, speaking again for this human judgment, revolted against that cruel optimism, and was an indignant atheist; and finally, in Nietzsche, this atheism became exultant.°

Santayana emphasizes the close proximity of modern German philosophy to Protestantism [Lutheranism] in the following discussion:

It [German philosophy] is Protestant theology rationalised. The element of religious faith, in the Protestant sense of the word faith, is essential to it.... From the same tenet of Fichte and Hegel we may also learn that in the plan of the world, as this revealed philosophy conceives it, the principal figures are not individuals, like the Creator, the Redeemer, and one's own soul, but nations and institutions. It is of the essence of Protestantism and of German philosophy that religion should gradually drop its supernatural personages and comforting private hopes and be absorbed in the duty of living manfully and conscientiously the conventional life of this world.7

Brecht's Lutheran orientation, as evidenced in his overt references to the language, thought, and general content of the Lutheran Bible, places him among those who wrangled with the increasing tendency to view the problem of good and evil intrinsically as a social and intellectual phenomenon. Approaching the matter more specifically, it is the rise of a new humanism, more secular than that of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, which Pinthus speaks of in his introduction to the Expressionist


7 Ibid., pp. 155-56.
This "secularization of thought," as Santayana labels the process of modern man's search for truth, is the object of Brecht's drama, Leben des Galilei. Brecht reaches the apex of his creative endeavor toward the end of the thirties, after having experienced the nihilistic, vitalistic period of the early twenties and the subsequent saturation with Marxism, which offered a framework for his metaphysical search for an answer to the ambiguities, contradictions, inequities, and hypocrisy rampant within human society. The premise upon which he continues to operate, is that organized religion (Christianity), secularized by philosophy and void of practical effectiveness, fails to produce tangible results. It is interesting, however, to observe that those plays appearing between 1936 and 1940 are considered his best plays, "weil sie seine undogmatischsten Produktionen waren . . . [und] die marxistische Lehre keine nennenswerte Rolle spielte." Directly, this is true, but indi-


10 Thomas O. Brandt captures the tone of this drama as follows: "Wie fein seine Klinge gegen die religio geworden ist, schärfer, tödlicher, höflicher, zeigt sich besonders in seinem . . . Leben des Galilei (1938-39), wo Denken und Glauben ihren abgemessenen Kampf austragen nach Regeln des mehr oder weniger nachdrücklichen Anstands." "Brecht und die Bibel," PMLA, LXXIX (1964), 175.


12 Ibid., p. 54.
rectly, the careful reader will see the Marxist implications without question. There is no doubt that he has become less doctrinaire.

There are three versions of Brecht's *Leben des Galilei*; the first one, entitled *Die Erde bewegt sich*, was written in 1938-39 while in Danish exile, the second in 1945-46 in collaboration with Charles Laughton in Hollywood, and the third between 1953-55 in Berlin. Günter Rohrmoser differentiates and summarizes the three versions as follows, with a rather harsh interpretation of Galileo in the last two versions:

The essential difference between the individual versions is the ending, which is concerned with judging the figure of Galileo, his submission to the Inquisition, and answer to the question about the beginning of modern times and a new age. The 1938 version shows Galileo as an old man who outsmarts the Inquisition and, simulating blindness, completes his work and has the results smuggled out of the country by one of his pupils.... In the version of 1947 the last sentence, among others, has been deleted, just as in general the judgment upon Galileo has become harsher. Now he practices science like a vice, secretly and without any obligation to humanity. Galileo retracts his doctrines out of cowardice, and his contributions to the progress of science do not outweigh his failure to human society.  

This study deals primarily with the third version, which borrows from both previous attempts; it has become the standard edition of the Stücke. However, it is the Danish version which comes closest to the historic account.  

Brecht treats the biblical and Christian imagery in a rather unique

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14 Brecht, Stücke III, Werkausgabe, III. Hereafter, the page number is given in parentheses in the text.

15 Szczesny, p. 60.
manner in this historical play. Ernst Schumacher points out: "The dialogue is marked by vivid imagery: the 'prosaic', the penetration of new ideology and new 'objective' relations on the basis of new conditions of production, is transposed into metaphor. The parabolic diction of the Bible is used verbatim in many ways, because of the very nature of the subject matter." Brecht chooses a protagonist and a period in history, which involve both theological as well as secular conflicts and implications. Schuhmacher points out this fact when he says that Brecht "den Antagonismus zwischen Bibelglauben und wissenschaftlichen Wahrheit säkulargisierte." Each of these two poles of interest and interpretation vies for supremacy throughout the drama. So enigmatic is its development that one can hardly say which one wins out.

Realizing this ambiguity of implication in the circumstances surrounding the life of Galileo, Brecht writes in his notes on the play:


One must remember that in 1938-1939 Brecht is laboring not under the threat of religious persecution but of Fascist domination. Writing in 1939, he defends his treatment of the Catholic Church's role in the play:

Es ist für die Theater wichtig, zu wissen, dass dieses Stück einen grossen Teil seiner Wirkung verlieren muss, wenn seine Aufführung hauptsächlich gegen die katholische Kirche gerichtet ist.... In dem vorliegenden Stück fungiert die Kirche, auch wo sie der freien Forschung entgegentritt, einfach als Obrigkeit. Da die Wissenschaft ein Zweig der Theologie war, ist sie geistliche Obrigkeit, letzte wissenschaftliche Instanz. Aber sie ist auch weltliche Obrigkeit, letzte politische Instanz. Das Stück zeigt den vorlaufigen Sieg der Obrigkeit, nicht den der Geistlichkeit. Es entspricht der historischen Wahrheit, wenn der Galilei des Stückes sich niemals direkt gegen die Kirche wendet. Es gibt keinen Satz Galileis in dieser Richtung.19

However, Brecht does not want to leave the impression that this clarification of the play means a change in his view of the Church: "Wer den Standpunkt des Verfassers versteht, wird begreifen, dass diese Haltung keine Verbeugung vor der Kirche des 17. oder gar des 20. Jahrhunderts bedeutet."20 The author adheres basically to the above position in the play in regards to the Catholic Church's role, which at the time in history was a religious and secular power. However, in the beginning scene of the drama Galileo is speaking to young Andrea about "eine neue Zeit," which was initiated by Copernicus' assertion that the earth and man were not the center of the universe but one of several bodies circling the sun.

20 Ibid., p. 15.
Brecht evidences restraint in his development of Galileo's criticism of the Church's propagation of an idea which ultimately proves to be highly erroneous, as recorded by science and history. Nevertheless, he has not lost his technique of the "double entendre," such as when he refers to the invalid content of old books and the supremacy of doubt over long standing belief: "Bald wird die Menschheit Bescheid wissen über ihre Wohnstätte, den Himmelskörper, auf dem sie haust. Was in den alten Büchern steht, das genügt ihr nicht mehr. Denn wo der Glaube tausend Jahre gesessen hat, eben da sitzt jetzt der Zweifel. Alle Welt sagt: ja, das steht in den Büchern, aber lasst uns jetzt selbst sehn. Den gefeiertsten Wahrheiten wird auf die Schulter geklopft; was nie bezweifelt wurde, das wird jetzt bezweifelt" (1233). Günter Rohrmoser considers these lines as indicative of Brecht's own Weltanschauung: "Brecht's extraordinary closeness to the position which he expresses in these sentences is immediately clear. To this extent the life of Galileo is a key to the interpretation of the total phenomenon Bertolt Brecht."21

There is also in this statement of Brecht's the implication that the emphasis on faith and belief of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament, could well be founded on error, as was the Church's defense of the Ptolemaic versus the Copernican system. When Galileo tells Andrea's mother and his own common law wife, "eine neue Zeit ist angebrochen, ein grosses Zeitalter, in dem zu leben eine Lust ist" (1236), Brecht is alluding to the utopian era promised in a classless society under communism. He does not belabor the issue of Marxism in this play, but the reader has

21 Rohrmoser, p. 121.
no problem recognizing that the stern Marxist of the late twenties and early thirties has not lost his course, but is attacking his subject matter on a higher level.

In *Leben des Galilei* Brecht concerns himself basically with the age-old conflict of science and religion, which is commonly referred to as the conflict between reason and faith. Until the renaissance there was a disproportionate emphasis upon faith, as represented in the authority of the Church; however, with humanism, the reformation, and the scientific advances of the Renaissance, the scales begin to tip in the direction of a balance and eventually a disproportionate emphasis upon reason, as represented in the eighteenth century triumph of the Enlightenment. As mentioned earlier in the second chapter, concerning Brecht's first dramatic work, *Die Bibel*, Brecht reflects a kinship to Hebbel, whose dramatic theory suggests a conflict arising during the transition from one generation, religion, or class to another. Brecht's claim that his drama is not a tragedy is valid, when applying the strict rules of high tragedy to it. However, as Charles R. Lyons indicates, there arises a tragic paradox in "Galileo's hunger for life and his hunger for truth," which amounts to a tragic "conception of the recantation."

Having made commercial use of the telescope which a rich young stu-

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dent brought Galileo from Holland where it had recently been invented, the scientist turns attention in the third scene to its application in confirming the Copernican system of the heavenly bodies. A short maxim underneath the introductory title of the scene reads: "Sechzehnhundertzehn, Zehnter Januar: / Galileo Galilei sah, dass kein Himmel war" (1249). Both the theological and the physical implications of this statement are immediately obvious to one oriented to Brecht's world of dialectical ambiguities and antitheses. Within the scene a similar ambiguous conclusion is drawn, as Galileo tries to convince his friend Sagredo of the truth of his discovery with the telescope. Sagredo says: "So wäre kein Unterschied zwischen Mond und Erde?" Galileo replies: "Offenbar nein.... Und wir sehen es. Lass dein Auge am Rohr, Sagredo. Was du siehst, ist, dass es keinen Unterschied zwischen Himmel und Erde gibt" (1250). Later, as the two seek to locate the four stars near the planet, Jupiter, which Galileo had observed two days earlier, only three could be seen, indicating to Galileo that one was behind Jupiter and confirming that it revolved around the sun and that no tangible support of the individual heavenly bodies existed. What had been the privileged opinion of Copernicus and his martyred follower, Giordano Bruno, is now his Wahrheit to behold. With the possibility of the earth and man not being the center of the universe, Sagredo asks the question, which brings forth the theological undertones of the play:

25 Ernst Schumacher confirms the antithetical and dialectical nature of the play: "Galileo is antithetical in its parts and its entirety, and these antitheses are in turn transcended through the dialectical nature of its relationships, characters, and language."

SAGREDO Und wo ist dann Gott?
GALILEI Was meinst du damit?
SAGREDO Gott! Wo ist Gott?
GALILEI Zornig: Dort nicht! So wenig wie er hier auf der Erde zu finden ist, wenn dort Wesen sind und ihn hier suchen sollten!
SAGREDO Und wo ist also Gott?
SAGREDO Vor allem bist du ein Mensch. Und ich frage dich, wo ist Gott in deinem Weltsystem?
GALILEI In uns oder nirgends! (1255)

From the above assertion of Galileo, Brecht leads his protagonist to affirm his belief in "den Menschen [humanism], und das heisst, ... seine Vernunft [rationalism]!" (1256) From his eulogistic discussion of reason, Galileo turns his attention to the allied act of thinking, which he says "gehört zu den grössten Vergnügungen der menschlichen Rasse" (1256). Here, Brecht is reiterating the idea that, through thinking and learning, ignorance (Unkenntnis), one of the two arch enemies of mankind (exploitation is the other), can be abolished. Naturally, Brecht implies that along with the abolishment of ignorance, such as that perpetrated by the Catholic Church in the drama, many of the tenets of organized religion would wither.

What, unfortunately, Brecht appears never to realize completely in his diatribes against the Bible and Christianity, is that it is not the only source or segment of human society which is subject to committing

26 Otto Maurice Sorensen, who considers this play "perhaps the most unsatisfactory of Brecht's 'maturer' works," is unsparingly critical of Brecht's religious implications of the drama and particularly this passage: "It is true that the religious motive in man, by being reduced to that of superstition, is treated in an incredibly shallow fashion, but little else could be expected from our author. The possibility of a new and different religiosity in man, hinted at in Galileo's belief that God 'is in us or nowhere', is but a bon mot, and the idea that acceptance of the Copernican system necessarily entails the submission to such a belief or--and this is what Brecht is really aiming at--the assumption of the atheistic posture, is whimsical." in "The Political Aspect in the Dramatic Works of Bertolt Brecht" (diss.; University of Washington, 1966), p. 220.
or condoning the injustices which mankind perennially must endure. As has been implied before, Brecht could probably wage an equally condemning attack on the practical implementation of Marxism, which he witnessed before his death. Were he to apply the zeal for truth towards communism, which he embodies in his protagonist, Galileo, a greater recantation than Galileo records would be seen. For, indeed, what Sagredo says about Galileo's future in the hands of truth before the authority of the Church, can easily be equated to Brecht's condition before the monolithic structure of Communism: "Galilei, ich sehe dich auf einer furchtbaren Strasse. Das ist eine Nacht des Unglucks, wo der Mensch die Wahrheit sieht.... Wie konnten die Mächtigen einen frei herumlaufen lassen, der die Wahrheit weiss, und sei es eine Über die entferntesten Gestirne! Meinst du, der Papst hört deine Wahrheit, wenn du sagst, er irrt, und hört nicht, dass er irrt?" (1260)

Subsequently, in the fourth scene, Galileo leaves the Republic of Venice for the Florentine court, where his observations with the telescope and conclusions are met with disbelief by the ecclesiatical and intellectual representatives. After an invitation to observe with their own eyes through the telescope is refused, Galileo is perplexed: "Aber die Herren brauchten wirklich nur durch das Instrument zu schauen!" (1271)

In the fifth scene, Galileo waits out alone the siege of the plague in his neighborhood. Areas are quarantined and burned, a procedure which Galileo parallels to the cutting down the fig tree in Luke 13:7, which bears no more fruit: "Wie ihnen das gleich sieht! Das ist ihr ganzes Regierungssystem. Sie hauen uns ab wie den kranken Ast eines Feigenbaumes, der keine Frucht mehr bringen kann" (1275). Also, in this
scene Brecht displays symbolically the conflict and choice Galileo faces at the end of the drama, regarding the best course to take in the verdict rendered by the Papal trial of his heresy. Here, he tells Andrea, who has returned to see about him, somewhat analogous to his return in the concluding scene, that while he was alone with his telescope, he learned that Venus also does not have its own light and revolves around the sun. He thus concludes: "Aber natürlich, wenn ich nicht geblieben wäre, wäre das nicht geschehen" (1277). Likewise, the recantation in the final scene can be rationalized the same way. Had he not recanted, he would not have lived to secretly write his Discorsi in prison and, thus, let the world know the truth of his discovery.

Galileo's contentions have been brought to the attention of the intellectual body of the Papacy, the Collegium Romanum, in the sixth scene. Brecht uses discretion in his treatment of the narrow views of some of the members of that body, but does not pass the opportunity completely by to reflect on their naïveté. One case in point concerns the fanaticism of "ein sehr dünner Mönch," who strikes open the Bible to Joshua 10:12 and asks: "Was steht hier in der Schrift? 'Sonne, steh still zu Gibeon und Mond im Tale Ajalon'! Wie dann die Sonne still-stehen, wenn sie sich überhaupt nicht dreht, wie diese Ketzer behaupten? Lügt die Schrift?" (1280) This emaciated Monk continues his diatribe in a manner, which is very reminiscent of the language of Baal, as he recapitulates the fate of man under the Copernican system:


This reaction is, however, deliberate on the part of the author, who follows this coarse and bombastic approach with a more formal, nevertheless, powerful condemnation of Galileo by an old Cardinal:

Ich höre, dieser Herr Galilei versetzt den Menschen aus dem Mittelpunkt des Weltalls irgendwohin an den Rand. Er ist folglich deutlich ein Feind des Menschengeschlechts! Als solcher muss er behandelt werden. Der Mensch ist die Krone der Schöpfung, das weiss jedes Kind, Gottes höchstes und geliebtestes Geschöpf.... Ich gehe auf einer festen Erde, in sicherem Schritt, sie ruht, sie ist der Mittelpunkt des Alls, ich bin im Mittelpunkt, und das Auge des Schöpfers ruht auf mir und auf mir allein. Um mich kreisen, fixiert an acht kristallene Schalen, die Fixsterne und die gewaltige Sonne, die geschaffen ist, meine Umgebung zu beleuchten. Und auch mich, damit Gott mich sieht. So kommt sichtbar und widerleglich alles an auf mich, den Menschen, die Anstrengung Gottes, das Geschöpf in der Mitte, das Ebenbild Gottes [Gen. 1:26], unvergänglich und.... Er sinkt zusammen. (1281-1282)

Galileo's only reply in this scene hails the victory of reason over the obviously emotional and irrational conclusions uttered by the two representatives of the Church: "Sie hat gesiegt! Nicht ich, die Vernunft hat gesiegt!" (1283) This affirmation is made in connection with the confirmation of the chief astronomer of the Collegium Romanum, Clavius, that Galileo's findings are valid.

The seventh scene is set at the house of the Cardinal Bellarmin in Rome, where a ball is being held. Galileo has accompanied his daughter, Virginia, and her fiancé, who dance while he is introduced to the Cardi-
nals, Bellarmin and Barberini, who symbolically hold carnival masks of a lamb and a dove respectively before their faces. These two symbols of peace indicate, however, the opposite, for Galileo is only a short time away from being condemned by the inquisition. A most unique manner of introductory gestures is observed between Barberini and Galileo in the form of biblical or proverbial quips, which have the effect of "double entendres." Barberini points to Galileo first and quotes Eccl. 1:5: "Die Sonne geht auf und unter und kehret an ihren Ort zurück" (1285). Galileo acknowledges by saying: "Als ich so klein war--er deutet es mit der Hand an--, stand ich auf einem Schiff, und ich rief: Das Ufer bewegt sich fort.--Heute weiss ich, das Ufer stand fest und das Schiff bewegte sich fort" (1285). Bellarmin is concerned about the consequences of the "neue Hypothese" on the Bible, to which Galileo replies by reciting Prov. 11:26: "Wer aber das Korn zurückhält, dem wird das Volk fluchen." Barberini then admonishes Galileo, "Der Weise verbirget sein Wissen," which is a paraphrase of Prov. 12:23: "Ein verständiger Mann trägt / nicht Klugheit zur Schau." Galileo retorts: "Wo da Ochsen sind, da ist der Stall unrein. Aber viel Gewinn ist durch die Stärke des Ochsen," which is a paraphrase of Prov. 14:4: "Wo nicht Ochse geschäftig ist, / da ist viel Einkommen." Barberini adds again: "Der seine Vernunft im Zaum hält, ist besser als der eine Stadt nimmt," which is also paraphrased in Prov. 16:32: "Und der seines Mutes Herr ist, denn der Städte gewinnt." Galileo

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replies with a paraphrase of Prov. 17:22: "Des Geist aber gebrochen ist, dem verdorren die Gebeine." [Luther's version: "Ein betrübter Mut vertrocknet das Gebein."] Barberini concludes this contest of wits by reciting from Prov. 6:28 an ominous warning to Galileo in the form of a question: "Kann man den Fuss setzen auf glühende Kohle, und der Fuss verbrennt nicht?" (1286)

The conversation of the two cardinals and Galileo develops into a debate over the validity of the Bible and Galileo's theories. Galileo confirms that he believes both in reason and the Holy Church, to which Barberini sarcastically replies: "Er will in aller Unschuld Gott die dicksten Schnitzer in der Astronomie nachweisen! Wie, Gott hat nicht sorgfältig genug Astronomie studiert, bevor er die Heilige Schrift verfasste? Liebe Freund!" (1288) Galileo answers logically that if man can conceive falsely the movement of the stars, he also can misunderstand the Bible. The theologian's reply is to be expected: "Aber wie die Bibel aufzufassen ist, darüber haben schliesslich die Theologen der Heiligen Kirche zu befinden, nicht?" (1288) Bellarmin warns Galileo to cease spreading his heretical ideas and preserve the Church's position in regards to science. He uses the common proverb, "Schütten Sie nicht das Kind mit dem Bade aus" (1289), to indicate that a mutual concession on both's part would be the best thing: "Wir tun es auch nicht. Wir brauchen Sie, mehr als Sie uns" (1289).

Brecht, in his continued effort to play with contradictions, oppo-

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28 Szczesny says: "Galilei hielt die Bibel durchaus für die Quelle des wahren Glaubens." p. 68.
sites, ambiguities, etc., makes the mood of the eighth scene, where the Little Monk visits Galileo while he is still in Rome, a scene which describes and defends the poor, as opposed to the preceding scene, which was set in the sumptuous palace of a Cardinal. The Little Monk, an astronomer, who finds Galileo's research valid, admits he must renounce astronomy on account of the repercussions which the new system would cause amidst his parents and peasants in the country. In his monologue, Brecht recapitulates the strong passion he has exemplified throughout his work for the proletariat, ironically, paralleling at times Christ's zeal for the poor and downtrodden:

Ich sehe die Balken über ihnen [meinen Eltern], die der Rauch von Jahrhunderten geschwärzt hat, und ich sehe genau ihre alten abgearbeiteten Hände und den kleinen Löffel darin. Es geht ihnen nicht gut, aber selbst in ihrem Unglück liegt eine gewisse Ordnung verborgen.... Sie schöpfen die Kraft, ihre Körbe schweißtriefend den steinigen Pfad hinaufzuschleppen, Kinder zu gebären, ja zu essen, aus dem Gefühl der Stetigkeit und Notwendigkeit, das der Anblick des Bodens, der jedes Jahr von neuem grünen Bäume, der kleinen Kirche und das Anhören der sonntäglichen Bibeltexte ihnen verleihen können. Es ist ihnen versichert worden, dass das Auge der Götterheit auf ihnen liegt, forschend, ja beinahe angstvoll; dass das ganze Welttheater um sie aufgebaut ist, damit sie, die Agierenden, in ihren grossen oder kleinen Rollen sich bewähren können.... Wozu ist die Heilige Schrift noch gut, die alles erklärt und als notwendig begründet hat, den Schweiss, die Geduld, den Hunger, die Unterwerfung, und die jetzt voll von Irrtümern befinder wird?" (1294-95)

Galileo's answer to this passionate plea reveals the author's indignation at the ignorance of the helpless peasants, who fight the senseless wars in Spain and Germany at the behest of Rome. Brecht sees in the determination of the Church to defend blindly the Ptolemaic system the injustice that it perpetrates upon the masses, in order to maintain its role of authority and surround itself with wealth, pomp, and prosperity: "Ihre
Campagnabauern bezahlen die Kriege, die der Stellvertreter des milden Jesus in Spanien und Deutschland führt. Warum stellt er die Erde in den Mittelpunkt des Universums? Damit der Stuhl Petri im Mittelpunkt der Erde stehen kann! Um das letztere handelt es sich. Sie haben recht, es handelt sich nicht um die Planeten, sondern um die Compagnabauern" (1295). It must be remembered that this accusation is not directed just at the Catholic Church, but is inclusive of all religious faiths, which condone hypocritically the inequalities and injustices among mankind. Galileo reminds the Monk that virtues are not confined to misery and that his parents might develop the virtues of happiness and prosperity if they were prosperous and happy. Such will come sooner through his practical water pump than through any ridiculous superhuman efforts of the scripture. He quotes Gen. 1:22, where man is admonished to be fruitful and multiply, "denn die Äcker sind unfruchtbar, und die Kriege dezimieren euch" (1296). Galileo concludes his argument in Brechtian aphoristic language: "Zum Teufel, ich sehe die göttliche Geduld ihrer Leute, aber wo ist ihr göttlicher Zorn?" (1297) Before the Monk starts to leave, Galileo throws his manuscript dealing with the reasons why the sea moves in ebbs and flows in front of him. The Little Monk picks it up and becomes engrossed with the content, all of which leads Galileo to give an analogy of Gen. 2:9: "Ein Apfel vom Baum der Erkenntnis! Er stopft ihn schon hinein. Er ist ewig verdammt" (1297). This imagery strikes at the heart of Brecht's attack upon the Bible and Christianity. He concludes the scene with the analogous reference to light and the imagery it invokes in connection with acquiring knowledge—imagery which is of the same mould as Victor Hugo rendered in his cosmic work, La fin
de Satan: "Ich denke manchmal: ich liesse mich zehn Klafter unter der 
Erde in einen Kerker einsperren, zu dem kein Licht mehr dringt, wenn 
ich dafür erfähne, was das ist: Licht. Und das Schlimmste: was ich 
weiss, muss ich weiersagen. Wie ein Liebender, wie ein Betrunkener 
wie ein Verräter. Es ist ganz und gar ein Laster und führt ins Unglück. 
Wie lang werde ich es in den Ofen hineinschreien können—das ist die 
Frage" (1298).

The verse which heads the ninth scene reveals Galileo's eight years 
of silence in Florence and implies his reactivation in pursuit of truth: 
"Die Wahrheit im Sacke / Die Zung in der Backe / Schwieg er acht Jahre, 
dann war's / ihm zu lang. / Wahrheit, geh deinen Gang" (1298). Galileo 
is visited by a former student whose questions about his Copernican 
theories incite him to confess in rage that his silence has been a crime: 
"Ich sage Ihnen: Wer die Wahrheit nicht weiss, der ist bloss ein Dumm- 
kopf. Aber wer sie weiss und sie eine Lüge nennt, der ist ein Verbrecher!" 
(1300) This assertion is quite analogous to James 4:17: "Wer nun weiss, 
Gutes zu tun, und tut's nicht, dem ist es Sünde." Galileo's rejuvena-
tion is accelerated by the news that the Pope is near death and his 
"friend" Barberini is in line to succeed him. His daughter's fiancé, 
Ludovico, comes by and denounces him for planning to assert his position 
again openly. Galileo plans to use the technique of Luther in the dis-
semination of his ideas: "Ich könnte in der Sprache des Volkes schreiben, 
für die vielen, anstatt in Latein für die wenigen. Für die neuen Gedanken 
brauchen wir Leute, die mit den Händen arbeiten. Wer sonst wünscht zu 
erfahren, was die Ursachen der Dinge sind? Die das Brot nur auf dem 
Tische sehen, wollen nicht wissen, wie es gebacken wurde; das Pack dankt
lieber Gott als dem Bäcker. Aber die das Brot machen, werden verstehen, 
dass nichts sich bewegt, was nicht bewegt wird" (1310). Herein lies 
also Brecht's major theme of Brot couched in anecdotal and aphoristic 
language.

Galileo's theories are spread far and wide among the populace over 
the next ten years, but become the subject of ridicule by every carnival 
comedian. The tenth scene is filled with sarcastic and satirical remarks 
about Galileo's denigration of God and the Bible. Brecht, who is a mas-
ter at sarcasm and satire on the foibles of mankind, includes a parody 
of a popular spiritual, "Dry Bones," based on Ezekiel 37, as the subject 
of a ballad singer's entertainment:

Und es begannen sich zu kehren
Um die Gewichtigen die Minderen
Um die Vorderen die Hinteren
Wie im Himmel, so auch auf Erden.
Und um den Papst zirkulieren die Kardinäle.
Und um die Kardinäle zirkulieren die Bischöfe.
Und um die Bischöfe zirkulieren die Sekretäre.
Und um die Sekretäre zirkulieren die Stadtschöffen.
Und um die Stadtschöffen zirkulieren die Handwerker
Und um die Handwerker zirkulieren die Dienstleute.
Und um die Dienstleute zirkulieren die Hunde, die Hühner
und die Bettler. (1313)

The irony of the scene has two levels of implication. The surface level 
is obviously centered against Galileo's presumptious challenge of the 
Bible and the Church: "Auf stund der Doktor Galilei / (Schmiss die Bibel 
weg, zückte sein Fernrohr, warf / einen Blick auf das Universum)" und
sprach zur Sonn: Bleib stehn!" (1313) The second level, which for Brecht

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29 Jürgen Rühle says of Brecht: "Mit todernster Miene sagte er sar-kastische Dinge." in Literatur und Revolution: Die Schriftsteller und der 
is the most important, deals with consequences of Galileo's teachings as they affect the social structure in society: "Der Knecht würd faul, die Magd würd kess / Der Schlachterhund würd fett / Der Messbub käm nicht zur Mess / Der Lehrling blieb im Bett" (1314). Charles Laughton's English version paraphrases this verse and several others with Brecht's Marxist overtones:

Good people, what will come to pass
If Galileo's teachings spread?
No altar boy will serve the Mass
No servant girl will make the bed.

The carpenters take wood and build
Their houses—not the church's pews.
And members of the cobbler's guild
Now boldly walk the streets—in shoes.
The tenant kicks the noble lord
Quite off the land he owned—like that!
The milk his wife once gave the priest
Now makes (at last!) her children fat.

Ts, ts, ts, ts, my friends, this is no matter small
For independent spirit spreads like foul diseases
People must keep their place, some down and some on top!
(Though it is nice, for a little change, to do just as one pleases!)30

The ballad singer concludes his performance and the scene with the epitaph: "Galileo Galilei, der Bibelzerträumer!" (1316) It reminds one of the Jewish crowd calling Christ a blasphemer before the crucifixion.

Galileo is challenged by the inquisition in Rome for his heresy. The eleventh scene is set before the Medici Palace in Florence where Galileo and his daughter are awaiting their admittance to the Prince. The scientist is confident, that no harm will come to him, since the Grand Duke is his pupil and the Pope, his friend and a mathematician.

30 Bertolt Brecht, Seven Plays, ed. and intro. Eric Bentley (New York: Grove, 1961), pp. 380-81.)
An official, however, appears soon on the steps and reads the following citation: "Herr Galilei, ich habe den Auftrag, Ihnen mitzuteilen, dass der Florentinische Hof nicht länger imstande ist, dem Wunsch der Heiligen Inquisition, Sie in Rom zu verhören, Widerstand entgegenzusetzen. Der Wagen der Heiligen Inquisition erwartet Sie, Herr Galilei" (1321).

Scene twelve finds the Pope defending Galileo's position before the Inquisitor, whose strong language contains Brecht's repeated implications against the Bible and its credulity: "So wollen Eure Heiligkeit Ihren sich nun versammelnden Doktoren aller Fakultäten, Vertretern aller heiligen Orden und der gesamten Geistlichkeit, welche alle in kindlichem Glauben an das Wort Gottes, niedergelegt in der Schrift, gekommen sind, Eurer Heiligkeit Bestätigung ihres Glaubens zu vernehmen, mitteilen, dass die Schrift nicht länger für wahr gelten könne?" (1321-22) The Inquisitor continues an enumeration of problems facing the Church, such as the Thirty Years' War, which has been going on for nearly fifteen years: "Seit eineinhalb Jahrzehnten ist Deutschland eine Fleischbank, und man zerfleischt sich mit Bibelzitaten auf den Lippen. Und jetzt, wo unter der Pest, dem Krieg und der Reformation die Christenheit zu einigen Häuflein zusammenschmilzt, geht das Gerücht über Europa, dass Sie mit dem lutherischen Schweden in geheimem Bündnis stehen, um den katholischen Kaiser zu schwächen" (1322). He concludes his case against Galileo by admitting the cleverness of Galileo in putting his message in the idiom of the people as had Luther: "Dieser schlechte Mensch weiss, was er tut, wenn er seine astronomischen Arbeiten statt in Latein im Idiom der Fischweiber und Wollhändler verfasst" (1323). Barberini be-
gins to dress himself in the garb of the Pope, after which he capitulates to the position of the Inquisitor, symbolically separating the individual man from that of the office of Pope.

The moment of recantation comes at the end of the thirteenth scene. Of those friends who were hoping Galileo would refuse to recant (The Little Monk, Federzoni, and Andrea), young Andrea is the most disillusioned in his hero: "Unglücklich das Land, das keine Helden hat!" (1329) Galileo's only words are in response to Andrea's statement: "Nein, Unglücklich das Land, das Helden nötig hat" (1329). After this disappointment Andrea leaves. Years later he comes back by the country house where Galileo has been kept prisoner to tell of his move to Holland.

Shortly before his arrival, Galileo's daughter, Virginia, exemplifies how she serves the Church by requesting and receiving reassurances from her father that his repentance is real. He coddles her with applicable verses and moral sayings, such as the references to the Christian teaching of "love thy neighbor" (Matt. 19:19): "Ja . . . stimme ich über-ein . . . dass es besser ist, an sie Suppen zu verteilen im Namen der christlichen Nächstenliebe" (1332). He paraphrases I Cor. 13:8 when he quotes the Apostle Paul: "Wohltätigkeit versaget niemals" (1332). It is interesting to note here that Brecht uses the word charitableness rather than the word "love" of Luther's version, which correctly translates the Greek: "Die Liebe höret nimmer auf." Virginia would have her father come to understand "dass Christum liebhaben viel besser ist denn alles Wissen" (1333), which is a paraphrase of Eph. 3:19: "auch erkennen die Liebe Christi, die doch alle Erkenntnis übertrifft." Brecht brings out
again the analogy of Galileo's role in history with that of Luther when Galileo emphasizes that he once had written "über die Himmelskörper . . . in der Sprache des Marktes" (1333).

Andrea Sarti enters reluctantly to visit his old mentor and learns, when left alone with Galileo, that he has made an extra copy of his Discorsi for him to take secretly to Holland. When Andrea asks where it is, Galileo answers first with the scripture verse from Matt. 18:9 of the offending eye "in reference to a vital drive" within man: "Wenn dich dein Auge ärger, reiss es aus" (1337). The implication is that, although imprisonment causes him physical discomfort, the inner drive for research and knowledge of a new age causes him to continue: "Etwas musste ich anfangen mit meiner Zeit" (1337). Andrea parodies in part the account in Matt. 26 of Peter's denial of Christ, when he confesses: "Und wir dachten, Sie wären übergelaufen! Meine Stimme war die lauteste gegen Sie!" (1337) We see, as Lyons points out, that "Brecht's attempt to define Galileo's sin explicitly is seen in the obvious structural relationship of Scenes I and XIII [Scene XIV in third version], in regards to the association of Andrea to Galileo. As mentioned earlier, there is a similar parallel to the fifth scene when Andrea returns to Galileo after the plague has subsided. One of the many ironies of the complex personality of Galileo is that he betrays the idea of truth on the one hand and serves it in the long run on the other. The question

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32 Lyons, p. 65. Lyons uses the Laughton English edition (second version of play) in his critical study.
arises, whether Galileo's scientific writings in his last days are done altruistically for the sake of science and discovery or out of a sense of personal joy in reasoning and thinking. The general consensus appears to favor the latter interpretation. However, there exist implications in both directions. The former interpretation is aided by Andrea's proverb: "Angesichts von Hindernissen mag die kürzeste Linie zwischen zwei Pünktken die krumme sein" (1338). The implication is that one's goal or ideal can be obtained indirectly. If one were to take Galileo's retrospective appraisal of his own action to Andrea as Brecht's major intention, "ich lehrte dich Wissenschaft, und ich verneinte die Wahrheit" (1337) or "ich verkaufe aus, du bist ein Käufer" (1339), then the latter interpretation would prevail. Dialectically speaking, the latter approach fits Brecht's philosophy, which would place the individual above an altruistic cause. In this regard Andrea's discussion of the implications of the recantation projects both views: "Mit dem Mann auf der Strasse sagten wir: Er wird sterben, aber er wird nie widerrufen. --Sie kamen zurück: Ich habe widerrufen, aber ich werde leben. --Ihre Hände sind befleckt, sagten wir. --Sie sagen: Besser befleckt als leer" (1337). Galileo replies with Marxist overtures: "Besser befleckt als leer. Klingt realistisch. Klingt nach mir. Neue Wissenschaft, neue Ethik" (1338). The idea of dying for a cause is traditionally looked upon as being virtuous; yet, it is the very idea that Brecht's realistic Weltanschauung reacts against. Brecht's Marxism does bring forth a new ethic, which accepts Galileo's rationale. Galileo admits that his recantation occurred, "weil ich den körperlichen Schmerz fürchtete" (1338),

33 Ibid., p. 68.
to which Andrea adds: "Todesfurcht ist menschlich! Menschliche Schwächen gehen die Wissenschaft nichts an" (1339).

Before Andrea goes, Galileo wishes to offer him a few last words about science, to which he has dedicated himself, as it relates to mankind:


In this finale Brecht has scattered the various themes, often by means of one word, which have affinity to his view and use of the Bible and Christianity. Words, such as "Zweifel," "Fürsten, Grundbesitzern, und Geistlichen," "Aberglauben," "das Elend der Vielen," "Gläubigkeit," "Hausfrau um Milch," and "erleichtern" reflect the major themes of Brecht's works and at the same time each one connotes an image associated with his anti-religiosity penchant. Practically speaking, the last sentence reveals the major pathos of Brecht, namely, the alleviation of
the wretchedness of human existence.

Thus, we see that among other themes in *Leben des Galilei*, Brecht has given more attention to biblical and Christian motifs as they relate to the history of truth and mankind in the scientific age. No other drama of his captures the conflict of rational and irrational forces within mankind and history as does this powerful work, which Claude Hill considers "one of the truly great dramas of the Twentieth Century."34 Indeed, "it is a study of the dire consequences of a man's actions on the better part of humanity."35

**DER GUTE MENSCH VON SEZUAN**

It remains no enigma at this point in the study of Bertolt Brecht's view and use of the Bible and Christianity in his dramatic works, that he is deeply cognizant of their ambivalent role in the dilemma of man's existence in a world beset with the undeniable conflict of good and evil. Brecht seems to say in the following short poem that it is paradoxical that man endures such great pain in being evil versus being good: "An meiner Wand hängt ein japanisches Holzwerk / Maske eines bösen Dämons, bemalt mit Goldlack. / Mitfühlend sehe ich / Die geschwollenen Stirnadern, andeutend / Wie anstrengend es ist, böse zu sein."36 Few writers have ever attempted so persistently as Brecht to grapple with this conflict of "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust" outside of Christian doc-

35 Ewen, p. 346.
trine. Few Christians have evidenced greater concern for humanity than this "Kirchenvater des Atheismus," as Kurt-Lothar Tank calls him. It is Tank, however, who best explains Brecht's ambiguity: "Wer Bert Brecht versteht, wer seine Provokationen recht begreifen will, muss mitgehen mit ihm bis zu den äußersten Positionen und Konsequenzen. Brecht war oft ungerecht um der Gerechtigkeit willen, die er erkämpfen wollte; er war unmenschlich, um einer Menschlichkeit willen, die ihm als ethische Erfüllung des Marxismus vorschwebte." Brecht places no noticeable personal credence in Christianity, but his poetic ethic is still very much alive and lucid with its imagery. He would find the content of Christian assertions like the following a mockery in his Weltanschauung:

Statements of hope in Christian eschatology must also assert themselves against the rigidified utopia of realism, if they would keep faith alive and would guide obedience in love on to the path towards earthly, corporeal, social reality. In its eyes the world is full of all kinds of possibilities, namely all the possibilities of the God of hope. It sees reality and mankind in the hand of him whose voice calls into history from its end, saying, 'Behold, I make all things new!', and from hearing this word of promise it acquires the freedom to renew life here and to change the face of the world.

In Der gute Mensch von Sezuan the author attempts to bring the read-


39 Ibid., p. 1.

er face to face with the problem of being good in a world seemingly ruled by all aspects of the ancient and modern deadly sins. Bernard F. Dukore calls it "the temptation of goodness," a theme, he points out, which finds its "most extended treatment . . . in The Good Woman of Setzuan."\(^{41}\)

Brecht begins the play with a prologue, in which three gods seek, as God did through Abraham in Sodom and Gomorrah of the Old Testament (Gen. 18), to find one good (righteous) person. As Volker Klotz points out, "diese Götter haben nichts mit dem christlichen Gott zu tun.... Sie sind viel eher eine Personifikation des bürgerlichen Gewissens."\(^{42}\) A Sezuan water seller, Wang, greets the gods at the gates of the city and tries to find them a night's lodging, but with no success. This image parallels Lot's greeting the two angels of God and inviting them to spend the night with him rather than on the street in Gen. 19:1-2:

"Die zwei Engel kamen gen Sodom des Abends; Lot aber sass zu Sodom unter dem Tor. Und da er sie sah, stand er auf, ihnen entgegen, bückte sich mit seinem Angesicht auf die Erde und sprach: Siehe, liebe Herren, kehret doch ein zum Hause eures Knechtes, und bleibt über Nacht." There is, however, no threat of fire and destruction in Brecht's account because of sin, as one finds in Genesis. Brecht accepts no part of the biblical explanation of sin, as recorded in Genesis concerning the fall of Adam into original sin (i. e., the Adamic nature of man). Because of this fact, he cannot resolve the ambiguities of mankind being evil.


while wanting to be good.

While Wang seeks lodging at another house, the third god parodies God's promise to Abraham: "Die Welt kann bleiben, wie sie ist, wenn genügend gute Menschen gefunden werden, die ein menschenwürdiges Dasein leben können." Reinhold Grimm observes that this play is one of Brecht’s most shaking accusations against Christianity and in spite of the source of the basic Fabel being China, the greater influence is the Bible. Grimm goes on to draw the conclusion that God no longer directs the world, which is, itself, a hell [Cf. Baudelaire's Fleurs du Mal and Rimbaud's Une Saison en Enfer], but the world directs God, condemning him, as at the end of the play in the person of the gods, into a state of nothingness:


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43 Brecht, Stücke IV, Werkausgabe, IV, 1492. Hereafter, the page number is given in parentheses in the text.

44 Brecht, Schriften zum Theater III, Werkausgabe, XVII, 1157-1161.

Seeing that their host has two bottoms in his water cup, they grow despondent; then, one of them harps back almost ritualistically that it does not matter, surely, "wir müssen einen finden" (1492). This god then alludes to Christ's dialogue with the rich, young ruler in Mark 10:17-18: "Seit zweitausend Jahren geht dieses Geschrei, es gehe nicht weiter mit der Welt, so wie sie ist. Niemand auf ihr könne gut bleiben" (1492). The rich, young ruler had addressed Jesus as follows: "Guter Meister, was soll ich tun, dass ich das ewige Leben ererbe?" and Jesus replied: "Was heisst du mich gut? Niemand ist gut als allein Gott." Jesus is speaking from his human side, not the divine, when he excludes even himself from being "good." Thus, this god is referring to Jesus' assertion that none are good except God, an assertion that Paul repeats in Rom. 3:10: "wie denn geschrieben steht! 'Da ist keiner der gerecht sei, auch nicht einer'." However, what Brecht, in the person of this first god's contention believes must be done, is to make people who can follow the commandments without falling: "Wir müssen jetzt endlich Leute namhaft machen, die in der Lage sind, unsere Gebote zu halten" (1492).

This interpretation differs considerably from Eric Bentley's implication in his English translation, which reads: "These atheists are saying, 'the world must be changed because no one can be good and stay good'. No one, eh? I say: let us find one--just one--and we have those fellows where we want them."46 The ambiguity which exists is partly the style of the author.

After finding no one who would "involve" himself by showing hospitality to the gods, Wang is sure Shen Te, the prostitute, will receive

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46 Brecht, Seven Plays, p. 409.
them. She tells Wang she will accept them and Wang tells the gods, "sie ist der beste Mensch von Sezuan" (1495). When Shen Te does not appear after a time, Wang thinks he has failed again and runs away. However, Shen Te does appear soon and welcomes the gods to her house. She says the next morning as the gods prepare to leave: "Ich bin nicht gut.... Ich möchte es wohl sein, nur, wie soll ich meine Miete bezahlen?" (1497)

Herein lies the immoveable conflict, which Brecht tries to resolve in the play, but does not, leaving the solution to the reader. Being good in a world, where everything is so expensive and economically inequitable is impossible: "Wie soll ich gut sein, wo alles so teuer ist?" (1498)

The gods pay Shen Te secretly more than a thousand silver dollars for their night's lodging, allegedly, although their aim is to see if Shen Te cannot remain good with more capital.

In the first scene Shen Te contemplates how she can do good as she opens up the small tobacco shop she purchased with the money from the gods. She is deluged by all sorts of persons wanting her assistance and support under her roof. Some friends see how she is being exploited under the guise of goodness and suggest she tell everyone the shop belongs to a relative who seeks regular payment on the income. At first, Shen Te cannot bring herself to commit such deception, but the ransacking of her shop forces her to relent. Somewhat in the spirit of Paul's lament in Rom. 7:19, Shen Te capitulates to harsh reality by the end of scene one. Paul's account reads: "Denn das Gute, das ich will, das tue nicht; sondern das Böse, das ich nicht will, das tue ich."

We see in the "Zwischenspiel" Wang, the water seller, who has hidden himself under a bridge because he was ashamed that he was mistaken about
Shen Te. In a dream, however, the gods appear to him and support Shen Te's efforts to do good, "denn keiner kann lang gut sein, wenn nicht Güte verlangt wird" (1510). This idea of needing help is paralleled to the second scene, where we see Shen Te providing her own support for goodness through the invention of her cousin Shui Ta, a hard-hearted, firm businessman, whose guise she assumes to ward off exploitation. The success of this approach is proven in the encounter with a cabinet maker, whose fee for repairing the shelves and counters, torn up by the merciless moochers of scene one, is exorbitant. Shui Ta is aware that he will be unable to take up for Shen Te all the time and suggests her marrying.

In the third scene Shen Te meets a flyer, who is obviously a "Lump" (1579) in everyone's eyes but Shen Te's. Later, his mother even tells him in biblical language and spirit: "Du bist vom rechten Wege abgewichen" (1579). The flyer, Sun, literally sweeps Shen Te off her feet with his tales of adventure and "lockt die lange verschüttete weibliche Eitelkeit, im Keim schon die neue Lust am Körper, aus ihr hervor.... Liebe und Regen verbinden sich ... in einer Welt, in der sonst Not und nackte Notwendigkeit regieren." Shen Te tells Sun, who is a skeptical soul: "Ohne Hoffnung sprechen heisst ohne Güte sprechen " (1525). Hope is a virtue for Brecht at this time, for he is writing this work while waiting for twelve years for Nazism to fall. While Shen Te und Sun are sitting under a tree until it stops raining, Wang comes by in the downpour advertising his water. It occurs to one that Brecht might well be throwing a stone at

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capitalism's economic practice of supply and demand. Brecht would say that when the demand is low, someone is without Brot.

The gods appear again in a dream to Wang and request a report on their "good" Shen Te. Wang says she is called "der Engel der Vorstädte" and then tells them of her new love. The first god remarks with Faustian overtones: "Hoffentlich bestärkt sie das in ihrem Streben nach Gutem" (1528). As mentioned before, Brecht's parody of Goethe is to be considered in a similar manner to that of the Bible, for he, likewise, found no satisfactory answer to his conflicting problem in the Humanitätsideal of German classicism. They both are utilitarian symbols within Brecht's ambiguous Weltanschauung.

Wang is struck on the hand with a barber's curling iron at the beginning of the fourth scene. Several individuals witness this ordeal, but when Shen Te arrives later and asks that they testify, all refuse for one reason or another to become involved. Shen Te's rebuttal contains overtones of contempt for fellow Germans, especially intellectuals, who turned their heads to Hitler's tyranny:

So will keines von euch sagen, was ist? Am hellen Tage wurde ihm die Hand zerbrochen, ihr habt alle Zugenschaut, und keines will reden? Zornig:
Oh, ihr Unglücklichen!
Euerm Bruder wird Gewalt angetan, und ihr kneift die Augen zu!
Der Getroffene schreit laut auf, und ihr schweigt?
Der Gewalttätige geht herum und wählt sein Opfer
Und ihr sagt: uns verschont er, denn wir zeigen Kein Missfallen,
Was ist das für eine Stadt, was seid ihr für Menschen!
Wenn in einer Stadt ein Unrecht geschieht, muss ein Aufruhr sein
Und wo kein Aufruhr ist, da ist es besser, dass die Stadt untergeht
Durch ein Feuer, bevor es Nacht wird! (1536)
The sister-in-law utters the proverbial dictum, which Brecht fought his whole life: "Wir können die Welt nicht ändern" (1537). Shen Te laments the impotence of the gods and the way of the world at the hand of the evil ones: "Die Guten / Können sich nicht helfen, und die Götter sind machtlos. / Warum haben die Götter nicht Tanks und Kanonen / Schlachtschiffe und Bombenflugzeuge und Minen / Die Bösen zu fällen, die Guten zu schonen? / Es stünde wohl besser mit uns und mit ihnen" (1539).

Shen Te, herself, becomes the victim of love, but through her alter ego, Shui Ta, she survives the intrigue of her villainous fiancé, Sun. In Wang's third dream, he tells the gods: "Sie ist in ihrer Liebe gescheitert, weil sie die Gebote der Nächstenliebe befolgte. Vielleicht ist sie wirklich zu gut für diese Welt, Erleuchtete!" (1564) The god retorts with Brechtian sarcasm: "Je schlimmer seine Lage ist, als desto besser zeigt sich der gute Mensch" (1565). Wang hints to the gods to try and do something to help Shen Te survive, but they reply in unison: "Nichts.—Wir sind nur Betrachtende. Wir glauben fest, dass unser guter Mensch sich zurechtfinden wird auf der dunklen Erde.—Seine Kraft wird wachsen mit der Bürde.—Warte nur ab, Wasserverkäufer, und du wirst erleben, alles nimmt ein gutes..." (1565). Brecht is without doubt parodying the account in Job 1, as does Goethe in the "Prolog im Himmel" of Faust when the Lord says to Mephistopheles: "Ein guter Mensch, in seinem dunklen Drange, / Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst."

In the seventh scene Shen Te realizes she is with child: "O Freude! Ein kleiner Mensch entsteht in meinem Leibe. Man sieht noch nichts.

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Er ist aber schon da. Die Welt erwartet ihn im geheimen. In den Städten heisst es schon: Jetzt kommt einer, mit dem man rechnen muss" (1568). There is parody here of the announcement to Mary of Jesus's birth and the prophesy and significance of his coming. However, Brecht does not pursue the analogy further. Shen Te pictures her son growing up in a world without the knowledge of the Shui Ta side of her. As Walter Sokel says, "he is condemned to grow up ignorant of the means that are to secure his own life, ignorant of the reality itself.... When she contemplates resorting to the idealizing fraud against her own child, Shen Te joins the ideology of the gods in the play. In these gods Brecht satirizes the fraudulence and self-deception of idealism [such as Christianity affords] divorced from action."

In Wang's last dream, the gods are informed that Shen Te has been missing for several months and people wonder what Shui Ta has done with her. The third god is pessimistic about the implementation of their commandments and reflect Brecht's rationalization of man's lot: "Unsere Gebote scheinen tödlich zu sein! Ich fürchte, es muss alles gestrichen werden, was wir an sittlichen Vorschriften aufgestellt haben. Die Leute haben genug zu tun, nur das nackte Leben zu retten. Gute Vorsätze bringen sie an den Rand des Abgrunds, gute Taten stürzen sie hinab" (1596). The latter statement is comparable to the English saying, that the road to hell is paved with good intentions!

Having been arrested as Shui Ta for the supposed murder of Shen Te,

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the good woman confesses her deceit to the gods who are the judges in her trial. She also confesses her inability to be good or live in the world without dividing herself into two parts, one which would permit her the joy and pleasure of being good to others, the other which would save her from being consumed by those to whom she would do good. Nathan A. Scott calls the irony involved here "the disparity between the impulses of the heart and the demands of a rational practical life." Shen Te concludes with the accusation to the gods that something is inherently wrong with their creation. Hildegard Emmel, who sees the drama "als parodistisches Gegenstück zum Jedermann," correctly points out that Brecht directs his whole accusation in the play against God, who supposedly created man and placed moral demands upon him which cannot be met in the environment of an evil world: "Nicht der Mensch steht hier unter Anklage, sondern der Himmel, der dem Menschen zumutet, in einer Welt zu leben, in der er, selbst bei allerbestem Willen, die göttlichen Gebote nicht halten kann, in der er böse sein muss, um zu existieren." Shen Te wonders why wickedness is rewarded and goodness punished:

Ja, ich bin es. Shui Ta und Shen Te, ich bin beides.
Euer einstiger Befehl
Gut zu sein und doch zu leben
Zerriss mich wie ein Blitz in zwei Hälften. Ich
Weiss nicht, wie es kam: gut sein zu andern
Und zu mir konnte ich nicht zugleich
Andern und mir zu helfen, war mir zu schwer.
Ach, eure Welt ist schwierig! Zu viel Not, zu viel
Verzweiflung!
Die Hand, die dem Elenden gereicht wird
Reiszst er einem gleich aus! Wer den Verlorenen hilft
Ist selbst verloren! Denn wer könnte
Lang sich weigern, böse zu sein, wenn da stirbt, wer kein
Fleisch isst?


Aus was sollte ich nehmen, was alles gebraucht wurde? Nur Aus mir! Aber dann kam ich um! Die Last der guten Vorsätze Drückte mich in die Erde. Doch wenn ich Unrecht tat Ging ich mächtig herum und ass vom guten Fleisch! Etwas muss falsch sein an eurer Welt. Warum Ist auf die Bosheit ein Preis gesezt und warum erwarten den Guten So harte Strafen? (1603-1604)

The gods, themselves, appear perplexed at these valid laments; however, they, too, must in the end confirm that the world should not be changed, that everything is in order (1605). Brecht does not let himself speak clearly on either view. He conveniently states in the epilogue that the gods' answer is inadequate, but leaves the solution to the audience. He probably comes closest to revealing his answer in the words of the water seller, Wang, in next to his last dream (1577-78), when he proposes that the moral demands set before man not be love but good-will, not justice but fairness, not honor but decency, in short, as Ronald Gray summarizes, "that almost unattainable absolutes should be replaced by more human qualities."52

There seems to be ample evidence that Brecht considers goodness worth cherishing; yet, it is a quality which succumbs to the inequities of the practical world. He has no answer to the dilemma; he is a victim of it. Heinz Beckmann speaks of this dilemma: "Aber den Dichter Bert Brecht haben sie [die Christen] dabei fast durchweg übersehen, den Dichter, der weit mehr und anders war als der Marxist. Vor allem aber haben sie den Menschen Bert Brecht übersehen, den Menschen in der schrecklichen Verführung zur Güte."53

Brecht's irony in this play can be appreciated by Marxist and Christian apologists alike. Each, however, will have his own set of standards which support his interpretation and appreciation. The Marxist will rely on the Marxist doctrine of Das Kapital, while the Christian will be supported by the Bible. Each person will be satisfied according to his Weltanschauung. The Christian will conclude:

"Christus hängt für uns, Bürger wie Kommunisten, am Kreuz, er ist allein der wahrhaft gute Mensch, dessen Existenz Bert Brecht für so unerlässlich hielt."\(^{54}\)

\(^{54}\) Johann Christoph Hampe, "Vermisstanzeige: Der gute Mensch. Ein Gespräch über Bert Brecht und mit ihm," Bücherei und Bildung, XI (1959), Heft 12, p. 246.
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to make a careful analysis of Bertolt Brecht's use of the Bible and Christianity in representative dramatic works. The eight major dramas treated reveal that Brecht inherited the philosophical approach to Christianity of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as well as the atheistic doctrine of Marxist humanism. The nihilism of the former is seen in his early period, which contains the dramas *Die Bibel* and *Baal*. The denigration of the Bible and Christianity by the naturalist writers prior to Brecht's generation reflect the breakdown of social and moral conditions which prevailed in his early years. Combined with the dichotomous nature of the author, these influences caused him to seek refuge in humanism as a source for the regeneration of mankind.

In *Baal* Brecht accentuates the impotence of organized religion, as represented in the Bible and Christianity, without offering any substitute or remedy. In his metaphysical search for a solution to the ambiguities of human existence, he finds the humanist ideals of Marxism most complementary to his Weltanschauung. He denigrates liturgical imagery as a means of building up his own secular credo of life through dialectic-epic theater, which originated primarily from his conversion to Marxism. Biblical and Christian parody is shown to be most apparent in the representative Marxist dramas *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*. They evidence his loss of faith in Christianity with its deceptive and hypocritical alliance with capitalism. The anti-religiosity developed in his dramas is motivated by the close
affiliation of the religious institutions with the ruling social and political systems which exploit the masses. Therefore, in the study of the Marxist dramas it is established that biblical and Christian parody becomes the major vehicle for his didacticism and propaganda.

Although Brecht's attention following the Marxist period is pre-occupied with anti-Fascist writings, he continues to use the Bible and Christianity as a basis for his attack. It is shown that Brecht condemns the sense of resignation found in Christianity. Accusation is made in Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches and Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar that the church capitulated to Hitler. Both Nazism and Christianity are accused of exploiting the lower classes in their respective practices. In Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui Hitler is paralleled with God in his role before the people.

Toward the end of the thirties comes Brecht's most productive period. It was preceded by the nihilistic, vitalistic period of the early twenties and the subsequent saturation with Marxism, which offered a framework for his metaphysical search for an answer to the ambiguities, contradictions, inequities, and hypocrisy rampant within human society. The premise upon which he continues to work is that organized religion, secularized by philosophy and void of practical effectiveness, fails to show tangible results. His Marxist overtures are less doctrinaire. His biblical and Christian imagery is elevated in style in Leben des Galilei, which deals with a protagonist and a period in history which involves both theological and secular conflicts. Attention is given in this drama to biblical and Christian motifs as they relate to the history of truth and mankind in the scientific age. No other
drama of Brecht's captures the conflict of rational and irrational forces within mankind and history as does Leben des Galilei.

In Der gute Mensch von Sezuan, the last drama treated, Brecht reflects his view and use of the Bible and Christianity in a unique manner. It shows the author's cognizance of their ambivalent role in the dilemma of man's existence in a world beset with the undeniable conflict of good and evil. Evidence confirms that Brecht considered goodness worth cherishing, but that it was a quality which succumbed to the inequities of the practical world.

In a study of Brecht's major works it becomes obvious that he makes use of the themes and motifs of the Bible and Christianity with the zeal of a crusader, confirming most emphatically his confession that the Bible had exerted the greatest influence on his life and work. This confession was reconfirmed in Switzerland when the author was on his way to East Berlin after the Second World War. A friend quotes Brecht's own words about his familiarity with the Bible and Christianity: "Geben Sie acht, wenn Sie mit mir über Glaubensfragen diskutieren, mein Lieber. Ich bin der letzte römisch-katholische Kopf!" The friend asserts also, that "seine Sprache und vieles in der Art seiner Dialektik ohne die Bibel kaum denkbar wäre."\(^1\) Indeed, his treatment of the Bible and Christianity is for the most part that of an adversary, whose nature he seeks to master in order to combat it. Unfortunately, he prefers to capitalize exclusively upon the negative aspects, blinding himself, as

\(^1\) Ernst Ginsberg, Abschied, Erinnerungen, Theaternässer, Gedichte (Zürich: Arche, 1965), p. 144.
the naturalists did, to the fact that reality consists of more than one side. Brecht chooses to dwell on the tragedy of the human condition, which no doubt adds to the viability of his plays in our time. He blames this tragedy on God, whose existence he consciously or unconsciously believed in.

Brecht's merciless satire of the Bible and Christianity strikes out invariably at the practical or practicing side of the matter. One can detect that he has sympathy for the moral ideas and teachings of Jesus, but not as his followers all too often represent them. Brecht would be comfortable among the marchers whose banners read "Jesus Christ, yes; Christianity, no," which is expressed in the vernacular idiom: "He accepts the product, but he does not like the wrappings." His negative treatment of the Bible and Christianity is directed at the hypocritical practice of Christians, whom he expects to reflect a closer image of their master's teaching than they do reflect. Brecht implies by his radical condemnation of man's hypocrisy that he is a believer in at least one scripture: "An ihren Früchten sollt ihr sie erkennen. Kann man auch Trauben lesen von den Dornen oder Feigen von den Disteln!" (Matt. 7:16) Rather than attempt to show men that one can follow closely the teachings of Christ with minimum hypocrisy, he chooses to condemn man's relationship to God, as set forth in the Bible, and replaces it with the even more precarious, unproven alternative of Marxist humanism. In fact, in this writer's opinion, there is no question that Brecht's advocacy of and devotion to Marxist humanism lies more in the theoretical than the practical realm. Ideologies and creeds, Christianity not excluded, are most impressive on their ideal-
istic and theoretical level. Unfortunately, the breakdown comes in the practical, effective application. Execution of the idealistic and theoretical tenets leaves a lot wanting, both in humanistic Marxism and humanistic Christianity. It is obvious to one who studies Brecht's works carefully in this regard that he directs with great success primary attention to the hypocrisy of Christians, but acknowledges relatively little the inconsistency and hypocrisy of the practical Marxist.

It is not the purpose of this study to judge Brecht's personal concept of God, but invariably conclusions are drawn when identifying the author's consistent use of biblical and Christian imagery in his works. Brecht epitomizes the religious vacuum of the modern intellectual who experienced life and its inequities the way he and his generation did. In order to cope with these inequities of existence he devoted himself to the humanistic principles of Marxism as a means of improving the lot of man here on earth. In the battle of reason and faith Brecht chose reason. In essence, he placed his faith in Marxist humanism, which renounces any credence in eschatological matters.
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