

## Performing Difference: Brecht, *Galileo*, and the Regime of Quotations

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[I]n epic theatre (which proceeds by successive tableaux) all the burden of meaning and pleasure bears on each scene, not on the whole. At the level of the play itself, there is no meaning, no maturation: there is an ideal meaning (given straight in every tableau), but there is no final meaning, nothing but a series of segmentations each of which possesses a sufficient demonstrative power.

--Roland Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," *Image/Music/Text* (1977)

The epic writer Döblin provided an excellent criterion when he said that with an epic work, as opposed to a dramatic, one can as it were take a pair of scissors and cut it into individual pieces, which remain fully capable of life.

--Brecht, "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction" (1957)

[Brecht] wanted to set the spectator at a distance from the performance, but in such a situation that he would be incapable of flight or simple enjoyment. In short, he wanted to make the spectator into an actor who would complete the unfinished play, but in real life.

--Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (1965)

Two boys climbed up a ladder,  
The one on top was somewhat smarter,  
The one below somewhat dumber.  
All at once the ladder fell.

(Zwei knaben stiegen auf eine Leiter,  
 der oben war etwas gescheiter,  
 der unten war etwas dumm.  
 Auf einmal fiel die Leiter um.)

--Brecht, quoting Karl Valentin, on the *Fabel of Leben des Galilei*

# I

The following represents an attempt to *perform* a reading of *Galileo* true not so much to the "spirit" as the letter of Brecht's own critical practice as it is displayed in, for instance, *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1949).

To this end (*à la lettre*), I have juxtaposed passages from his theoretical writings with my own (running) commentary on the play in order to dialectically recirculate and thereby problematize those canonical readings of the play (humanist, Marxist, deconstructive) which constitute its critical history. At the same time, by putting into play both the Hegelian Dialectic and the Classic Dilemma as well as what Jacques Derrida calls the "regime" and Barthes--reading Brecht--the "reign of quotations," I have also essayed to articulate a position "beyond" the above critical perspectives; in other words, a position that takes into account not only the autonomy of the work of art, the authority of the author and the textuality of the text, but the heterogeneity of the reader, her differences, his "I-slots."

It is commonly accepted that there are at least three versions of *Galileo*<sup>1</sup>: the first was written from 1938-39 and first performed in Zurich in 1943; the second was written from 1944-46 and first performed in Hollywood in 1947; and the third--a working revision of the second--was put together from 1954-56 and performed in East Berlin in 1957.<sup>2</sup> In the Introduction to the Charles Laughton translation of *Galileo*, though, Eric Bentley conveniently argues that there are only two versions: *Galileo* I, "a 'liberal' defense of freedom against tyranny," and *Galileo* II, "a Marxist defense of a social conception of science against the 'liberal' view that truth is an end in itself."<sup>3</sup>

However many versions of *Galileo* there in fact are (a matter of some dispute, as the above testifies), it is obvious that there is no original or definitive version--as Nietzsche would say, there is no *Galileo* "in itself" (*an sich*). Which is to say that each *Galileo* is a representation: there is no *Galileo*, only "*Galileo*" (in quotations).<sup>4</sup> As Brecht himself has said, "Only performance can decide between possible variations."<sup>5</sup>

If, then, *Galileo* is undecidable, if there is no constative *Galileo*, no text with a capital T, it is impossible to postulate a Truth about the play that would transcend its concrete context.<sup>6</sup> In other words, *Galileo* is a function of "*Galileo*" which is a function, in turn, of both socio-economic and bio-graphic, historical and textual traces (the last in the narrow sense).

## II

Speaking of bio-graphical traces, where is Brecht himself in all of this? Or is he a text too, his "life" a play that must be read *à la lettre*?

An anecdote about the "real" Brecht as related by Ronald Hayman in yet another of the latter's consummately consumable biographies of "great men of German letters": "Brecht had celebrated Galileo as a man whose thinking proceeded out of sensuality, but while he was capable of eating a box of chocolates in one evening, and while the number of cooks among his characters evidences an interest in food, generally, as Joseph Losey put it, 'he ate very little, drank very little, and fornicated a great deal'. . . [However,] he did crave for a bigger appetite."<sup>7</sup>

## III

One of the critical clouds that has gathered over *Galileo* (as well as one of the reasons why it is frequently cited as one of Brecht's best plays) is the provocative question of whether the character of Galileo is a figure for Brecht himself; and, if so, to what degree Brecht's own personality is invested in the fictional Galileo. For example, Brecht in the play plays up Galileo's "culinary" appetite ("No one's virtue is complete:/Great Galileo liked to eat"<sup>8</sup>) even as he suppresses his own and the historical Galileo's sexual one.

Hayman's facile Freudianism aside ("[Brecht] was jealous of Laughton for scoring so often at the dinner table" [B 289]), why this displacement?

My recourse to the word *culinary* is not, needless to say, unintentional.<sup>9</sup> It is well known that, true to the classic Marxist narrative of the modes of production, Brecht later disparaged *Galileo* in particular (as well as other of the so-called "exile plays" and the "epic theatre" in general) as "bourgeois." As early as 1939, Brecht wrote in his Arbeits-journal that, compared to such "learning plays" (*Lehrstücke*) as *Fatzer* and *Bakery*, *Galileo* was a "technical regression" or, more colloquially, a "step backwards."<sup>10</sup>

Is it any surprise, then, that six years later, in 1945, Brecht tried--with the dubious help of the gourmand Laughton<sup>11</sup>--to downplay the "culinary" impact of the 1938 *Galileo* in order to alienate Galileo's character even more than in the first version (Galileo-as-"intellectual prostitute"<sup>12</sup>) and to account for a very unappetizing event; an event that no doubt recollected Brecht's own seminal, if not traumatic experience as a medical orderly in the first World War (memorialized in *The Legend of the Dead Soldier* and later, explicitly thematized in the man-as-meat metaphors of *Mother Courage*): the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

## IV

Two autobiographical citations. The first, from *A Short Organum for the Theatre*:

I . . . am writing this . . . on a machine which at the time of my birth was unknown. I travel in the new vehicles with a rapidity that my grandfather could not imagine; in those days, nothing moved so fast. And I rise in the air: a thing my father was unable to do. With my father I already spoke across the width of a continent, but it was together with my son that I saw the moving pictures of the explosion at Hiroshima. (BT 184)

The second, from an *Unvarnished Picture of a New Age*:

When, during my first years in exile in Denmark, I wrote *The Life of Galileo*, I was helped in the reconstruction of the Ptolemaic cosmology by assistants of Niels Bohr who were working on the problem of 'splitting' the atom. . . . [Y]ears later, I began, together with Charles Laughton, to prepare an American version of the play. The 'atomic' age made its debut at Hiroshima in the middle of our work. Overnight the biography of the founder of the new system of physics read differently.<sup>13</sup>

## V

Which brings me to the heart, or guts, of this (performance) piece: How are we to read Brecht's revision of the 1938 *Galileo*?

There are, it seems to me, three typical approaches. The first school, best represented by Eric Bentley, argues for what I would call the aesthetic scenario. Its *thesis* is that *Galileo I*--the pristine 1938 version of the play--is better because more "consistent," aesthetically speaking, than *Galileo II*. So, of the controversial conclusion to *Galileo II*, Bentley writes: "Personally I find the ambiguity of the earlier ending more human and more richly dramatic, as well as more Brechtian and more consistent with the rest of the play" (G 21). Despite, then, the "many small improvements" of the later version, Bentley "personally" prefers the earlier version of *Galileo* which for him--which is to say, in the final, New-Critical analysis--has more to offer: "more human," "more dramatic," "more consistent."

In a word, more ambiguous.

Personally, I think Bentley's "moreness" (*Mehrdeutigkeit*), his cornucopian aesthetics of richness and ambiguity, dramaturgy and consistency, say more about his own liberal humanism than about Brecht's *Galileo*."

Is *Galileo I* really--as Bentley contends--"more Brechtian" than *Galileo II*?

## VI

Brecht on the "spiritual dope traffic" that passes as *thaëter* in the "dramatic" playhouses: "The one important point for the spectators in these houses is that they should be able to swap a contradictory world for a consistent one" (*Kleines Organon für das Theater* [BT 188]).

## VII

As should become evident, my allusion to the Hegelian Dialectic above is more parodic than strict.

And yet, according to a certain sublative logic, the first thetic position (the 1938 version of *Galileo*) also already represents a thematic synthesis. As Julian H. Wulbern observes: "In the original [1938] version, with its form of *Happy-End*, the thesis, scientific truth, is opposed by its antithesis, reactionary suppression, which is in turn surmounted by the synthesizing force of individual cunning so that the truth wins out in the end."<sup>14</sup>

The problem with this synthesis, as Brecht himself realized, is that from another, Marxist perspective (say Gramsci's reinscription of German Idealist philosophy as a "philosophy of praxis"), it is a "bad" synthesis. So, of the 1938 *Galileo*, Wulbern concludes: "Philosophically, the case is closed, the lesson learned."<sup>15</sup> That is, unlike *Galileo* II which "leaves the synthesis to the spectator," *Galileo* I and its "closed," dialectical valorization of "cunning" (*List*) is profoundly idealist. *Contra* Benjamin, the hero of the play is not "the people," a militant socius or collectivity, but consciousness, Schweikian consciousness, "the cunning of reason" (*die List der Vernunft*).

Therefore, if Bentley's critico-descriptive categories (*Galileo* I/II) are not without force, his reading of the former, 1938 version of the play as "a 'liberal' defense of freedom against tyranny" is moot, to say the least. The theme of "cunning" privileged in *Galileo* I in fact problematizes just such a unilateral reading not simply because it puts liberalism as such into quotations--as even Bentley, admittedly, does--but because Brecht posits it as a thesis that must in turn be superseded. To wit: in *Galileo* I, liberalism is simultaneously preserved (Bentley's position) and destroyed.

## VIII

"The epic drama, with its materialistic standpoint and its lack of interest in any investment of its spectators' emotions, knows no objective but only a finishing point, and is familiar with a different kind of chain, whose course need not be a straight one but may quite well be in curves or even in leaps" (Berlin 1931 [BT 45]).

## IX

If the first school of readers argues that *Galileo* I is better, because an aesthetically more "integrated work of art" (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) than *Galileo* II, the second school--best represented by Brecht himself--argues for what I would call the authorial, or developmental, scenario: *Galileo* II succeeds *Galileo* I and thus "reflects" the author's maturation as a Marxist (artist).<sup>16</sup>

In other words, if *Galileo* I is ultimately Hegelian, *Galileo* II (the 1947 version of the play) can be said to be antithetical in that it turns *Galileo* I on its head: materialist, it negates the thesis--or "negative," thematic synthesis--of its idealist predecessor. "The 'foundation of the thaëter,'" John Willet writes in his editorial notes to "*Der Messingkauf*," involves "the standing on its head of the traditional notion of the theatre in order to meet the Philosopher's demands, the Philosopher being quite plainly a Marxist" (BT 171). Or, as Brecht himself wrote, recollecting not so much the Marx of *The German Ideology* as of the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: "The theatre became an affair for philosophers, but only for such philosophers as wished not just to explain the world but to change it" (BT 72).

From *this* antithetical perspective (which is not distinguishable from a certain classical Marxism), *Galileo* II is less bourgeois than *Galileo* I--in Brecht's own terms, less empathetic, less mimetic, less static.

In a word: less Aristotelian.

## X

The post-Galilean, not to say non-Aristotelian Brecht, the Brecht who, post *Galileo*, wanted to write a play called the *Life of Einstein*:

Even when a character behaves by contradictions that's only because nobody can be identically the same at two unidentical moments. Changes in his exterior continually lead to an inner reshuffling. The continuity of the ego is a myth. A man is an atom that perpetually breaks up and forms anew." (*Die Literarische Welt*, Berlin 1926 [BT 15])

## XI

Is less more or more--well--more, better, "more Brechtian"?

More specifically: Which is "more Brechtian," *Galileo* I, Bentley's privileged version and its aesthetics of plenty, of ambiguity and consistency, or *Galileo* II, Brecht's, that is to say the "authorized" version and its "epic" economy, a dialectic of gestures and negations, "leaps" and V-effects (*Verfremdungseffekte*)?

However, this question posed, another question--*pace* both Bentley and Brecht himself--remains: How useful is it to read "*Galileo*" from such an intentional perspective, as if "Brecht" unequivocally possessed himself as a subject; as if "Brecht" himself were not a construction, what Foucault calls an "author function"; as if, in other words, "Brecht" himself were not a *contradiction*, like "*Galileo*" himself?<sup>17</sup>

From this improper perspective, Brecht's "own" theory must be submitted to a certain grammatological practice, what Derrida calls "the regime of quotations."<sup>18</sup> Put another way, Brecht's apparently authoritative writings on the theatre--in particular his "own" author-invested readings of *Galileo* I and II--are neither *more* nor *less* simple than the plays, even a supposedly backward, "bourgeois" play such as "*Galileo*."

Thus a certain critical question--Which is better, the drama-rich 1938 *Galileo* or the ambiguity-poor 1947 version?--is a red herring, bad bait for cunning humanists and correct Marxists, subaltern students and dogmatic schoolmasters.

## XII

Brecht, in 1926, on Shaw's heroes: "heroism consists of an impenetrable but exceedingly lively hotchpotch of the most contradictory qualities" ("Ovation für Shaw," *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 1926 [BT 11-12]).

## XIII

If the "author" should be understood, according to Foucault, as a site traversed by "a series of specific and complex operations . . . [that] can give rise simultaneously to several . . . subjects--positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals,"<sup>19</sup> then even "Brecht" himself does not have the last word on "*Galileo*" and its meaning. Though his intention is not irrelevant (in fact, it is an inescapable element of the play's irreducibility), "the authority of the author must be content," as Gayatri Spivak has said, "to stand in the wings."<sup>20</sup>

This said, how can one reconcile Brecht's polemical understanding of *Galileo* II (e.g., "*Galileo's* crime can be regarded as the 'original sin' of modern natural sciences" [P 340]) with the audience's "own" very different, sympathetic reception of it?<sup>21</sup> More to the point, if--from a strict "epic" standpoint--the audience over-identifies with the figure of *Galileo* (as it frequently does with *Mother Courage*), what exactly is the economy of "*Galileo*"?

Is it possible that the play of representation between *Galileo* I and *Galileo* II is an instance of a more general difference, a *différance* that exceeds the authority of the author as well as the not necessarily untutored response of the reader/audience; a *différance* that neither position can claim to

comprehend or only at the expense of "*Galileo*" and its rewriting of Galileo's "life" as history (where history is not simply opposed to story, the Imaginary to the Real, etc.)?<sup>22</sup>

#### XIV

Of his experience of rewriting *Galileo* with Laughton, Brecht referred to it once in conversation as "a piece of fun that lasted two years" (*ein zweijähriger Spass* [BT 168]). *Macht es Spass?*

#### XV

Let me put this in "paedagogical" terms.<sup>23</sup> Anyone who has taught *Galileo* and who has broached the subject of Brecht's seemingly endless revision of it knows that, in the classroom, the play frequently takes on the characteristics of the Classic Dilemma.

Thus, even if students recognize that the figure of Galileo is neither wholly virtuous nor wholly meretricious, they are usually not very comfortable with the play's unusually prickly horns ("One can scarcely wish only to praise or only to condemn Galileo" [B 340]). Invariably, they plump down on one side of the fence or the other. According to a binary moral logic that binds and blinds student readers despite Brecht's "epic-dialectical" devices, they tend to feel/think that Galileo is either a hero or a coward, a contributor or collaborator; a determination that would seem to conform to the "natural," diametrical opposition between "emotion" (*Einfühlung*) and "reason" (*Verstand*).

In the parlance of the Hollywood western, Galileo wears either a white or black hat.

#### XVI

A painter or a poet, a poet--as Frisch said--more like a scientist than a poet, "without incense": "In spite of the fact that he was anything but a colorless person, [Brecht] loved the color gray, not the opaque gray of obscurity, but the sober gray of the theoretician, commentator, and schoolmaster."<sup>24</sup>

#### XVII

If *Galileo I* is a thesis of sorts and *Galileo II* its antithesis (the aesthetic and authorial schools respectively), the third school argues for what might be called the synthetic scenario, a post-Hegelian, albeit non-Marxist posture that allows one to read "*Galileo*" as both a "liberal" defense of freedom against tyranny and "a Marxist defense of a social conception of science." According



to this school (which is indistinguishable from a certain instance of American deconstruction), it is impossible to privilege any particular version or performance of "*Galileo*" since the play deconstructs itself (where, for example, the grammar of Marxism puts into abyss the rhetoric of Aesthetics, and vice versa).

Yet if this is in fact true, if "*Galileo*" institutes a textual semiosis that cannot be "spiritualized" (*aufgehoben*), whose abyssal logic by-steps the omnivorous jaws of the Hegelian Dialectic as well as the Scylla and Charybdis of the Classic Dilemma, how does this position account for contradiction, for the asymmetrically loaded social and historical context in which the play is both inscribed and produced, reproduced and re-inscribed?

More importantly, if a certain deconstructive reading of the opposition *Galileo* I/II replays rather than transforms the terms of the former "moments" (Hegelian/Marxist), is it possible to "portray" (*abbilden*) another position--a position "beyond," that is, a certain humanism (the speculative-derived theme of "individual cunning"), a certain Marxism (a politicization of literature that is a mirror antithesis of the former's aestheticization of politics), and a certain deconstructionism (a general theory of reading that, endlessly rewriting the political and the aesthetic as signifiers, effectively neutralizes whatever significance "*Galileo*" might--as a text--possess)?

## XVIII

Marx, the early Marx, as Copernicus (or, according to Andrea, *Kippemikus*<sup>25</sup>): "The criticism of religion disillusions man so that he may think, act and fashion his own reality as a disillusioned man come to his senses; so that he may revolve around himself as his real sun."<sup>26</sup>

## XIX

Precisely at this point I would submit that it is necessary to read "*Galileo*" differently not simply because there are different versions (a tempo-empirical as opposed to textual effect typical of plays) but because its performativity--the differential play between *Galileo* I and II--encourages the reader or, more generally, the audience to reconsider its particular subject-position.

And this subject-position, as we know from Brecht, is neither a uniform nor universal one: the reader is no ideal, imperial subject but the product of a heterogeneous social text, what Brecht calls the "joke of contradiction." Put another way: the authority of the author--the autonomy of Brecht's "epic theatre" and its "alienation effects"--is not absolute but relative. One must therefore put into play both Brecht's and one's "own" subject-position in order to attend to the letter of the text, a historio-graphic materialism that may or may not "reflect" the spirit of the author and/or reader.

All of which is to say that the *political* interest of "*Galileo*" can only be articulated on the local level, at that point where--face to face with the text and its differential play--the reader positions himself as a subject. Thus, because it challenges the reader to question the author's considerable authority as well as answer for his/her "own" subject position--a political effect that is an indispensable part of Brecht's genuinely radical project--"*Galileo*" points up the undecidable ethical context in which the reader must, ultimately, stake out a position, materialize, decide.

In a word, act.

## XX

A "painterly" passage from Hegel, who--according to Brecht--"had the greatest comic talent among all philosophers": "When philosophy paints its gray on gray it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of dusk."<sup>27</sup>

## XXI

Pedagogically speaking, in Brecht's sense of pedagogy, "*Galileo*" is not, then, a "step backwards"; "Brecht" himself aside, it has a general political force equal to the more properly "didactic" plays (*Lehrstücke*) of the 20s.<sup>28</sup> Though it may be "conservative" in that it does not put into play the "grand pedagogy" (*grosse Pädagogik*) that Brecht dreamed of,<sup>29</sup> the built-in give-and-take of the "lesser pedagogy" (*kleine Pädagogik*) is not necessarily a bad thing.

In "Conversations with Brecht," Walter Benjamin records Brecht as saying: "It is a good thing to be overtaken in an extreme position [read "grand pedagogy"] by a reactionary epoch. That way you reach a middle position."<sup>30</sup> The strategic, situational necessity of this middle position--which is also the reader's position--is neither a logical conclusion nor golden mean: not a position "in the center," "equally distant from either end."

Rather, this middle position signifies the in-between, a site that displays the semiosis of signification even as it permits the reader to re-mark his "I-slot" or subject-position, her status as both a citational subject and ethico-political agent, what Julia Kristeva calls the *subject en procès* ("subject in process/on trial").<sup>31</sup>

## XXII

In a late, posthumously published appendix to *A Short Organum for the Theatre*, Brecht wrote, dramatically re-writing Hegel's Prussianized, or "righted" philosophy: "In times of upheaval, fearful and fruitful, the evenings of the doomed classes coincide with the dawns of those that are rising. It is in these twilight periods that Miverva's owl sets out on her flights" (BT 227).

## XXIII

To re-mark Brecht's "own" subject-position, one might say that "*Galileo*"--*Galileo* in quotations--dramatizes the dictatorial imagination at work behind or, in this case, *between* the scenes. In other words, the human, not to say human all-too-human hand of Brecht is clearly, even obtrusively, visible in "*Galileo*," a hand that continually disturbs the still glassine water of theatrical illusion even as it disrupts the specular autonomy of the New Criticism, the spectral party-correct "materialism" of classical Marxism, and the spectacular neo-formalism of the New New Criticism.<sup>32</sup>

The spectacle--in the fazed, broken world of Brecht's *thaëter*--will not stand still for the spectator.

Still, the "epic theatre" never quite materializes. Neither a "grand" nor "lesser pedagogy," neither "dialectical" nor "bourgeois," neither dawn nor dusk, "*Galileo*" is--in the last, interminable instance--a contradiction in terms and defies even Brecht's "own" remarkable signature. Unsigned, alienated from the authority of its non-Aristotelian author (*nichtaristotelische Dramatik*), it represents a "cunning" interval between pleasure and instruction, identification and distance, *between*--in other words--a "culinary" and "smoking theatre" or, from a more general perspective, a certain Marxism and a certain humanism.

Thus in-between, twilit, "*Galileo*" deserves to be read in quotations. At the same time, if one is not to privilege the semiosis of signification at the expense of the text's politico-historical significance, "*Galileo*" demands to be read differently; that is, it demands to be re-written according to the changing, even conflicting lights of the subject and his/her positions, whether "above" or "below," "fearful" or "fruitful," "brighter" (*gescheiter*) or "dimmer" (*dumm*).

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## Notes

1. Bertolt Brecht, *The Life of Galileo*, trans. Desmond Vesvey, *Plays*, Vol. 1 (London: Methuen, 1963 [1960]); hereafter abbreviated as P. For all the references to the play in German, see *Leben des Galilei*, ed. H. F. Brookes and C. E. Fraenkel (London: Heinemann, 1958); LG.

2. This last date (1957) comprises, for me, the 1955 Cologne production.

3. Eric Bentley, "Introduction: The Science Fiction of Bertolt Brecht," *Galileo*, trans. Charles Laughton (New York: Grove Press, 1966) 18-19.

4. I'm thinking here not only of Barthes and Derrida but Brecht in "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" and "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting" respectively: "[The Chinese performer] limits himself from the start to simply quoting the character played" (*Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willet [London: Methuen, 1986] 94); and "Once the idea of total transformation is abandoned the actor speaks his part not as if he were improvising it himself but like a quotation" (BT 138). In addition, one might cite Barthes' commentary on both of these passages in his essay on Bunraku theatre, *Lesson of Writing*: "A total spectacle, but divided, Bunraku evidently excludes improvisation, doubtless aware that the return to

spontaneity is the return to all those stereotypes which go to make up our 'inner depths.' Here we have, as Brecht saw in connection with the oriental actor whose lesson he wishes to receive and propagate on this point too, the reign of quotation" (*Image/Music/Text*, sel. and ed. Stephen Heath [New York: Hill & Wang, 1977] 177).

5. Quoted by Ronald Hayman in *Brecht: A Biography* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983) 237.

6. I would argue that there is a certain autobiographical charge to this particular epithet ("concrete") inasmuch as it invokes one of Brecht's favorite (Marxist) truisms: "The truth is concrete." See, for example, *Brecht: A Biography* 301.

7. See also the ode Brecht composed to Laughton's "Buddha-like" stomach: "All of them, the way they carry their bellies around/You'd think it was swag with someone in pursuit of it/But the great man Laughton performed his like a poem/For his edification and nobody's discomfort." Quoted by Jan Needle and Peter Thomson, "In Search of a Theatre," *Brecht* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) 171. See also *Brecht: A Biography* 289.

8. "Grosser ist nicht alles, was ein grosser Mann tut/Und Galilei ass gern gut" (LG 30).

9. I am distinguishing "culinary" (*kulinarisch*) from, say, "pleasure" (*Vergnügung*) or "fun" (*Spass*), the latter of which can, and should, be dialectically understood in relation to "instruction" or what Brecht calls "the didactic." Of his opera *Mahagonny* (1927), Brecht wrote in 1930: "In subsequent works attempts were made to emphasize the didactic more and more at the expense of the culinary element. And so to develop the means of pleasure into an object of instruction and to convert certain institutions from places of entertainment into organs of mass communication" ("Notes on the Opera" [BT 42]).

10. See Douglas Kellner's "Brecht's Marxist Aesthetic: The Korsch Connection," *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice*, ed. Betty Nance Weber and Hubert Heinen (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1980) 41 n22. For Brecht's understanding of the "learning play" (Brecht's translation of *Lehrstück*), see "The German Drama: Pre-Hitler," which was originally published in *The New York Times* in 1935 (BT 77-81).

11. On the relation between Laughton and the figure of Galileo, see also "Building Up a Part: Laughton's Galileo" (BT 163-68); *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (BT 192, 198-200, 202-03); and Bruce Cook's "Galileo in Hollywood," *Brecht in Exile* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962) 165-81.

12. This is one of Brecht's less ambiguous, not to say less dialectical descriptions of Galileo. Against the apologist reading of *Galileo* ("Galileo's recantation of his teachings . . . enables him to carry on with his scientific work and to hand it down to posterity" [P 339]), Brecht asserts, seemingly despite himself, despite—that is—the interrogative ambivalence of the subtitle (*Preis oder Verdammung des Galilei?*): "The fact is that Galileo enriched astronomy and physics by simultaneously robbing these sciences of a greater part of their social importance" (P 339-40).

For a reading truer to the dialectical potential of the above, ambivalent subtitle ("Praise or Condemnation of Galileo?"), see *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (BT 199-200). Even this reading, however, is tilted towards a negative appraisal of Galileo. After glossing, gest-by-gest, Scene 2 where Galileo "complacently accepts the undeserved honors paid him," Brecht concludes with a loaded rhetorical question: "A more significant test awaits him, and does not every capitulation bring the next one nearer" (BT 200).

13. For another, less narrow reaction to "the day the bomb dropped," see also Brecht's "Postscript to an American Production" (P 339).

14. Julian H. Wulbern, *Brecht and Ionesco: Commitment in Context* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1971) 182.

15. 182. In fact, Brecht originally thought of calling his life of Galileo "The Cunning of Survival" (*Die Schlaueheit des Überlebens*); see *Brecht: A Biography* 213.

On the question of "cunning," see also Brecht's "The Cunning to Spread the Truth Among the Many" in "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties" (G 141-49).

16. I should also note that if it is true that *Galileo I* reflects, on Brecht's part, a rather thinly veiled justification of his escape in 1933 from Nazi Germany, *Galileo II* reflects in turn a considerably more "negative" response to this "cunning" strategy. With the latter especially

in mind, it follows that the manifest Marxism of *Galileo II* is intimately tied to an autobiographical subtext.

17. In "Bertolt Brecht and Politics," Irving Fetscher succinctly spells out the "paradoxes" or contradictions that animated Brecht, contradictions that one resolves only—as I have suggested—at the expense of both "*Galileo*" and "Brecht" himself: "his readiness to learn from all collaborators and to form a productive theatre collective versus his dictatorial style of leadership; his assumption in principle (which he never articulated) of the equality of the sexes versus his cliché-ridden images of women in most of his pieces; his allegiance to Rosa Luxemburg's concept of self-learning and self-activity as the basis for revolution among the masses as they become emancipated versus his willingness, in spite of all criticism, to accept Lenin's elite concept of the Party hierarchy and to justify Stalin's deformed dictatorship of the Party; his silence about the Moscow trials versus his skepticism concerning the justification of many of the sentences; his courage versus his ability to conform more than was necessary for survival; his honesty versus his sly cunning" (trans. Betty Nance Weber, *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice* 16-17). With this in mind, one must rigorously distinguish between "author" and "author function"—as Foucault does—insofar as the former concept "serves to neutralize the contradictions that may emerge in a series of texts" ("What Is an Author?," *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josué V. Harari [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979] 151).

18. See "The Gaze of Oedipus": "The epochal regime of quotation marks [*le régime époual des guillemets*] . . . is to be enforced for every concept belonging to the system of philosophical decidability. The hermeneutic project which postulates a true sense of the text is disqualified under this regime" (*Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1979] 107).

19. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?," *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* 153.

20. Gayatri Spivak, "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: A Woman's Text from the Third World," *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987) 268.

21. This point is, I think, obvious to anyone who has seen the play performed. As one Berlin critic, Fritz Erpenbeck, put it: "But besides all this [theory], what do I actually see on stage during this intellectual battle? I see a man who has weakened his eyes at the telescope and who is now almost blind as a result of working, illegally, by moonlight, in order to make a copy of a work extremely useful to mankind. This is not merely spoken; this is demonstrated. I see further a man ruined by the burden of thought and work that has driven him like an uncontrollable itch into ever more dangerous situations. . . . And am I supposed to hate this man? I don't care how many directives are issued demanding that I do so, I simply cannot!" (quoted by John Fuegi in *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos According to Plan* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987] 183).

For a more complex, theoretical analysis of the play of "identification" in Brecht's "great plays" (i. e., *Mother Courage and Galileo*), see Althusser's "Piccolo Teatro: Bertolazzi and Brecht," *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1977 [1969]) 130-51.

22. For a penetrating analysis of this (historiographical) problematic, see the essay by Spivak cited above (n20), especially "The Historian and the Teacher of Literature," *In Other Worlds* 241-244.

23. For Brecht's understanding of art (or theatre)-as-pedagogy, "turning the audience not only into pupils but teachers," see "On Form and Subject Matter" (*Berliner Börsen-Courier* 1929 [BT 29-31]) and "An Example of Paedagogics (Notes to *Der Flug der Lindbergs*)" (1930 [BT 31-32]). For a similar understanding of pedagogy, see Antonio Gramsci's "The Study of Philosophy" in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International, 1987 [1971]) 349-51. I cite Gramsci here because unlike Brecht's Galileo, Gramsci—whose work, like Galileo's, was smuggled out of "prison"—never recanted his beliefs and therefore provides an excellent historical foil to the fictional Galileo. Thus one alternative, interventionist reading of *Galileo* might be posed; for another, different, "historical" intervention, see Betty Nance Weber's reading of Brecht's Galileo-as-Trotsky (and Stalin-as-"red pope") in "*The Life of Galileo and the Theory of Revolution in Permanence*," *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice* 60-78.

24. George Grosz, quoted by Martin Esslin in *Brecht: The Man and His Work* (New York: Norton, 1974) 57.

25. In the 1955 Suhrkamp-Verlag edition, Andrea answers Galileo's question ("Hast du, was ich dir gestern sagte, inzwischen begriffen? ["Do you understand what I told you yesterday?]) with another, childlike question: "Was? Das mit dem Kippernikus seinem Drehen? (LG 18) ("What? All that [stuff] about Kippernikus and his rotation" [P 234]).

26. Karl Marx, *The Early Texts*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971) 116.

27. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1942) 13.

28. Against the reading of a turn (*Kehre*) or "decisive shift" à la Heidegger from the "precise, argumentative, dialectical style" of the "learning plays" of the twenties (*Flight Over the Ocean*, *The Baden Learning Play of Consent*, *The Yes-Sayer and the No-Sayer*, and *The Exception and the Rule*) to the "nontendentious, mature dramas" or "epic 'masterworks'" of the major exile plays (*Galileo*, *Mother Courage*, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*), see Betty Nance Weber's "The Life of Galileo and the Theory of Revolution in Permanence," 60-78, esp. 60-62. It's worth noting, I think, that Brecht considered re-writing *Galileo* as a *Lehrstück*; see, for example, "Caesar and Galileo: Businessman and Rebel," *Brecht: A Biography* 213.

29. On the difference between the "grand" and "lesser pedagogy," Douglas Kellner, quoting Brecht, has written: "The 'grand pedagogy' . . . would turn actors/audience into statesmen and philosophers. Whereas the 'lesser pedagogy' of the epic theatre merely 'democratized the theatre in the post-revolutionary period,' the 'grand pedagogy' completely transforms the roles of the producer and 'abolishes the system of performer and spectator'" ("Brecht's Marxist Aesthetic" 35).

30. Walter Benjamin, "Conversations with Brecht," *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz and trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1986) 214.

31. See, for example, "From One Identity to Another," *Desire in Language*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez and trans. Thomas Gora et al. (New York: Columbia UP, 1980) 135.

32. This is the historiographical sense that I introduced earlier in the piece. That is, the material traces of Brecht's *labor* as a writer are inscribed in the body of the text. Which is precisely how "Brecht" himself understood the "look" of the "epic theatre": "The image that gives historical definition will retain something of the rough sketching which indicates traces of outer movements and features all around the fully-worked out figure" (BT 181). Thus, in addition to "textual" and social-historical traces such as Schiller's *Don Carlos* and the bombing of Hiroshima/Nagasaki respectively, there are auto-historical ones (e. g. Brecht's ambivalence about his *émigré* status). All of these traces interrupt the dream of the spectator and thereby combat the transformation of the text into a commodity-as-fetish. As Adorno essayed in "Art Object": "Perfection,' as Nietzsche put it, 'must not have become,' that is, it should not appear made. Yet the more consequentially [the work of art] distances itself, through perfection, from making, the more fragile its own made existence becomes: the endless pains to eradicate the traces of making injure works of art and condemn them to be fragmentary" (*Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott [London: Verso, 1987 (1974)] 226).