

BRECHT AND SHAKESPEARE:

THE CORIOLAN ADAPTATION

BRECHT AND SHAKESPEARE:
THE CORIOLAN ADAPTATION

By

Diana M. LaPietra, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts

McMaster University

April, 1979

MASTER OF ARTS (1979)
(German)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Brecht and Shakespeare: The Coriolan Adaptation

AUTHOR: Diana Marie LaPietra

SUPERVISOR: Prof. Hans H. Schulte

NUMBER OF PAGES: x, 111

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to present a thorough comparative analysis and evaluation of Brecht's Coriolan adaptation and his Shakespearean model. Brecht's actual achievement is measured by the standards of his critical theory of literary adaptation of classical drama, and especially of Shakespeare, on the modern, 'epic' stage. It is shown why Brecht's insistence on shifting our central interest and sympathy from the hero, on whom Shakespeare had focussed the entire action, to the people's collective, had to result in an admirable failure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend by thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Hans Schulte, for his helpful and substantial advice and support, and to Profs. Chapple and Lawson for their time and suggestions as readers of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
INTRODUCTION	iv
CHAPTER I <u>Critical Conventions</u>	1
CHAPTER II <u>The First Scene</u>	18
CHAPTER III <u>Psychology vs. Social History</u>	38
CHAPTER IV <u>The Problem of Language</u>	69
CHAPTER V <u>Conclusions</u>	87
FOOTNOTES	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	109

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to understand and question Brecht, the dramaturge and theoretician of the theatre, whose enormous, self-proclaimed task it was to salvage the traditional repertoire for his new dialectic theatre. To this enterprise, he devoted a very considerable portion of his creative life.

Brecht could never do more than to set a pattern for others to follow. If we consider this pattern, the implication becomes immediately clear: the traditional theatre should and could never be 'saved' en bloc, but only insofar as it proved 'useful'. Brecht would have preferred all else to be eliminated from the programme of serious theatre.

What kind of traditional drama did he then consider useful? "Erst der neue Zweck macht die neue Kunst." "...der neue Zweck heisst: Pädagogik".¹ Any theatrical subject matter, according to Brecht, is pedagogic and reflects the real, historical conditions of man and society and, at the same time, motivates the audience to react productively. It is Brecht's conviction, based on Marxist theory, that such 'useful' subject matter is evident only at the onset of great cultural movements in feudal and bourgeois history. In the course of the so-called development of these movements, such realistic matter is progressively estranged, to the point of irremediability, by absolutist forms

and norms. The socio-historical tendency of an inflating super-structure increasingly denying its basis also applies to any major culture movement. Accordingly, Brecht refers to the spring of such a movement, its original inspiration, as having been a popular event. For these reasons, the early period of the 'Goethezeit', known as 'Storm and Stress', characterized by the awareness of and struggle for a natural right of man and the feeling of an infinite richness of life, offers more useful material for adoption and adaptation than the later 'classical' phase. An adaptation of Der Hofmeister by Lenz is therefore a more sensible undertaking than that of Maria Stuart:²

Noch hat die Idee nicht das Stoffliche vergewaltigt; es entfaltet sich üppig nach allen Seiten, in natürlicher Unordnung. Das Publikum befindet sich noch in der grossen Diskussion; der Stückschreiber gibt und provoziert Ideen, gibt uns nicht das Ganze als Verkörperung von Ideen. So werden wir gezwungen (oder in-stand gesetzt), die Vorgänge zwischen seinen Personen zu spielen und die Ausserungen davon abzusetzen--wir brauchen sie nicht zu unseren eigenen zu machen.

Brecht offers yet another reason for his choice of Lenz' play: "um den Weg zum Shakespeare zu bahnen". For Brecht is convinced that without Shakespeare a modern German "nationales Theater kaum zustande kommen kann".⁴

We may, at first, be puzzled by the logic of this statement; but it must be remembered that, to Brecht, Shakespeare represents the happiest moment in the history of European theatre, which had first been received

by the German tradition in Lenz' Der Hofmeister. The young 'Storm and Stress' movement thus echoes the vital youthfulness of modern European drama as a whole.

To Brecht, this young Elizabethan drama reflects a chaotic freedom of production. Marlowe had prepared the abundant resources of popular plays and pageants for presentation to a sophisticated audience by the introduction of blank verse. The questions of property were quite unsettled. Dramatic themes and subject matter were used and reused as they were found in life, in chronicles or in other plays, and adaptations of existing dramas by writer collectives were the norm, not the exception.⁵ Writers like Shakespeare himself were realistic business people with a very material interest in the theatre. Moreover, the judgment and imagination of the audience were not yet predetermined by any rigid conceptual structure and detailed illusion. The sparse stage props, the use of boys instead of women, the presentation of plays like A Midsummer Night's Dream in broad daylight, etc. resulted in a "Theater voll von V-Effekten".⁶ Elizabethan and especially Shakespearean drama is, to Brecht, the origin and--prior to his own Versuche--the high point of European epic theatre. In Brecht's view, Shakespeare's plays are already 'Versuche' in his own sense, i.e., experiments with the true historical matter of life, which they offer in rich abundance. And Brecht concludes: "Darum tut man auch gut, die Stücke experimentierend aufzuführen."⁷ He understands his own experimental staging of

Shakespearean plays, his adaptations, as a continuation of the productive tradition of the Renaissance playwright. Shakespeare's plays are provisional reports on social life in his time; thus Brecht tells modern producers, "ihr braucht nur den Bericht zu vervollständigen".⁸ This completion of the report is done with the knowledge of our time and--as shown in Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit--the precise methods of understanding: "Kenntnis der materialistischen Dialektik, der Ökonomie und der Geschichte."⁹ We shall have to examine if, and to what extent, Shakespeare's text lends itself to such unrestrained theatrical reorganisation.

There seem to have been three main reasons which led Brecht to the choice of Coriolanus as the text of his only complete exemplary adaptation from Shakespeare. The first is the fact that it is the last and probably most powerful of the historical plays; and this genre with its loosely knit structure was, to him, the prototype of Elizabethan 'epic' theatre. He reverts to the kind of play that had fascinated him since the Twenties when he had collaborated with Lion Feuchtwanger to adapt Marlowe's Edward II. Secondly, in this particular 'History', we have an individual of towering proportions challenged by the people's collective. The great historical individual put to the test of social usefulness is a very basic theme and motive for Brecht's work--he had previously explored it in another Renaissance figure, Galileo Galilei.

Das elisabethanische Drama hat eine mächtige Freiheit des Individuums etabliert und es grosszügig seinen Leidenschaften überlassen...Diese Freiheiten mögen unsere Schauspieler ihr Publikum weiterhin auskosten lassen. Aber zugleich, in ein und derselben Gestaltung, werden sie nunmehr auch die Freiheit des Individuums etablieren, das Individuum zu ändern und produktiv zu machen. Denn was nützt es, wenn die Ketten weg sind, aber der Entfesselte nicht weiss,¹⁰ wie zu produzieren, in welchem alles Glück liegt.

Interestingly enough, it is not the gospel of the freedom of the individual as such that Brecht's alienating demonstration wishes to challenge, and indeed sees challenged in Shakespeare's Coriolanus. On the contrary, Galileo is a potential social powerhouse, as is Coriolanus, although much more inaccessibly. The Renaissance message of the unfettered individual remains valid, along with the new Renaissance awareness of the populace and its needs. Consequently, Brecht strongly emphasizes this awareness and challenge in his adaptation. We shall have to determine the validity of the results.

The third reason for Brecht's choice is undoubtedly attributable to the fact that here we find Shakespeare's closest approximation to a political play. Coriolanus presents a crucial episode of early Roman class struggle, the first constitutional appointment of people's tribunes, and the first banishment of a leading patrician by decree of the people. We shall have reason to question, in the following chapters, such essentially political understanding of Shakespeare's text. The first chapter, however, shall be devoted to a brief survey and evaluation of the role this adaptation has played in literary criticism to date.

CHAPTER I

Critical Conventions

Brecht's adaptation of Coriolanus has attracted a considerable number of studies during the past fifteen years. This attention reflects an increased interest in his reception of the 'bourgeois' cultural tradition. The pendulum has swung from an understanding of Brecht as the "Bürgerschreck", the radical reevaluator of all traditional values, to that of modern author firmly embedded in the classical tradition. Surely the discovery of Brecht's fascination with the European classical theatre was an important step towards a deeper understanding of his concerns. His purpose, as a dramatic writer, to parody and alienate traditional attitudes and concepts, is quite obvious. There is also the equally significant responsibility of the theatre reformist to 'clean up' the repertoire not necessarily by clearing it out, but by reinterpretation. For Brecht, classical theatre from Sophocles to the Age of Goethe is very much alive beneath dense layers of theatrical misuse, and offers the most fascinating material as a basis for a better understanding of our time.

Critics now generally realize this. They also perceive and reiterate Brecht's particular interest in a supposedly young and unspoiled Elizabethan stage, especially in the loose genre of the 'History', mentioned above. They state and explain how it was here that Brecht found the origin of the 'epic' theatre within the European tradition.

On the other hand, the critics largely agree that Brecht, with his own plays as well as with his adaptations, attempts to correct the Elizabethan historical play by restoring its actual basis--the common man who makes history, not the great and fateful individuals. Critics further realize that with Brecht the theatre is an active forum of collective self-criticism and self-discovery. It is no longer an institution which simply accomodates works of art: it is rather in itself a politically productive process. Brecht's theatre never preserves the stories or 'Histories' it presents, but constantly serves to question and up-date them. Thus Brecht is convinced that no 'injustice' is done by the reworking of these texts. He further proceeds to radicalize this principle by pointing out that every director feels free to make even the most drastic of changes if necessary for his conception of the production. Hence Shakespearean drama is subject matter for Brecht, as were Plutarch's Lives for Shakespeare. Among the critics there is also widespread recognition of Brecht's sole dedication to the socio-historical 'truth' of the original story, to "durchleuchtete Geschichte" ¹ and its enjoyable communication. The question of the presentation of the personal merit of a 'great' individual, along with its social basis is at the focus of critical interest. And they all realize that Brecht leads a general attack against the bourgeois theatre and the sanctification of its classics.

Still, many questions remain. How, for example, in order to keep

or even enhance the 'tragic' impact of the play, does Brecht fill the gap left by the great individual whom he has dethroned? And how successful is he? Does Brecht, who wants to retrieve a natural and stimulating epic drama from the constraints of bourgeois ideology, not then merely confine it once again within a Marxist ideology? Exactly how stimulating and superior to Shakespeare's version is this new antithesis of the positive, historically wise and productive people with their tribunes and the negatively portrayed braggard hero and 'war specialist'? How convincing is Brecht's attempt to make the people's collective the real 'hero' of the play?

Apart from a few minor interpretations and comparisons, the beginning of an active research interest in Brecht's Shakespearean adaptations is marked by the four hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth in 1964. In this year an article appeared on the 'Vor- und Nachgeschichte der Tragödie des Coriolanus von Livius und Plutarch über Shakespeare bis zu Brecht und mir'. The author was Günter Grass.² He was soon to complete a play about Brecht producing a play, Coriolan. In this work, Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand, Grass continued to hold Brecht at as much of a critical distance as he did in his article. He wanted to make it very clear that he did not count Brecht among his teachers. This he strongly implied later when his article reappeared under the title Über meinen Lehrer Döblin und andere Vorträge. Still, Grass can not conceal his sympathy with Brecht's predilection for the 'plebeian'

toughness, richness and vitality of the Elizabethan stage. Accordingly, his article shows more understanding for Brecht's fascination for Coriolanus than any of the later critics. Grass makes Shakespeare's play believable as a realistic mirror of the vast social struggles during the early years of the seventeenth century: the peasant uprisings; the London plague and its destructive consequences for Shakespeare's theatre, along with the strengthening of the Puritan movement; and behind it all, a Renaissance world of grand and monumental individuals who would become, as did Sir Walter Raleigh, unpopular by virtue of their larger-than-life statures. Grass is also pro-Brecht in his implicit criticism of Shakespeare's judgmental perspective which warned his contemporaries of the rise of the 'little people' and of a people's parliament. He shares in Brecht's acknowledgement of that central historical event presented in Shakespeare's play: the installation of the people's tribunate. He is not party to Shakespeare's sadness at the consequent fall of Corioalnus, but does share Brecht's knowledge of the rise of Oliver Cromwell.

Unfortunately, Grass is less successful in his specific criticism of Brecht's adaptation. He views Shakespeare's hero as essentially "geheimnislos" and "ohne Dämonie",³ a lonely, simple character lacking free will whom Brecht intellectualizes and ideologizes.⁴ There can be no doubt, however, that it is precisely Coriolanus' demonic nature which leaves him with no choice of action, and around which the entire tragedy

revolves. Brecht indeed intellectualizes, but not by transforming Shakespeare's hero into an intellectual. He simply supplies a rational motive for his inflexibility: his radical, false and (self-)destructive class virtue. Grass does not see that it is in this very way that Brecht, in fact, removes the tragic hub from the play. And we would like to agree when he pronounces the judgment that Brecht has

der Tragödie das naive Gefälle genommen und an dessen Stelle einen fleissigen Mechanismus gesetzt.⁵

and decides that

Bei so schmaler Beute der Griff nach dem fremden Stoff nicht lohne. (ibid.).

But we are at a loss for good reasons, if we do not supply them ourselves. Nevertheless, none of the later critics sees the logic of Brecht's productive interest and of the failure of the actual product as clearly as Grass.

The more professional critics of Brecht's adaptation lack Grass' freedom of judgment. No one seems to have dared challenge the master so bluntly again. I. Fradkin, in a somewhat synthetic and general essay,⁶ follows Grass' exploration of Brecht's preoccupation with the 'plebeian' theatre of the Elizabethans. In Shakespeare's plays she finds a tough, earthy humour, 'epic' diversity of life, an anti-illusionist dramaturgy and stage setting, the stimulating disturbance of linear dramatic or tragic consequence, the quality of the chronicle,

and even the montage technique and conscious use of the alienation effect. Fradkin's thesis is most interesting. She maintains that this popular Shakespearean tradition has been superseded by an intellectual enlightenment tradition which was not, as Grass implies, discarded en bloc as being purely ideal-ideological, but productively absorbed to form the new unity of intellectual and plebeian theatre which is typically Brecht's. It is precisely here, in fact, that we find a most convincing historical explanation of the two roots of Brecht's art which Grass could not or did not wish to link together. We further find a provocative comment on the philosophical tendentiousness imposed by the adaptor on his model which, after all, had attracted him by virtue of its non-rational and impartial concreteness. In following Fradkin's findings, we might agree that the early 'plebeian' Brecht was suppressed by the intellectual 'Aufklärer' Brecht during the phase of his didactic plays and that, in his classical plays, he found his happy medium. And accordingly, the pre-didactic adaptation of Marlowe's Edward II showed an as yet unbroken receptiveness toward an Elizabethan chronicle which was lost in the explicitly didactic adaptation of Coriolanus.

Fradkin, however, does not pass any judgments. She has the potential capacity of literary critics which, at least in the case of Brecht, tends to do more harm than good: to explain every facet of a literary work as the necessary outcome of historical conventions. Shakespeare plus Enlightenment equals Brecht--that critical tool can

all too easily become a torture instrument. Fradkin, it must be said, does not abuse it.

Three years later, she renders a more specific account of Brecht's adaptations. ⁷ Here we find a closer analysis of the idea of his adaptations, especially of classical works. Fradkin strongly emphasizes Brecht's very positive reception of the classics. Her analysis is primarily based on Brecht's remark that "die grossen, alten Bilder" should no longer be neglected. The greatness of these images lies, as Fradkin implies, in their ability to cater to the contemporary poetic and social consciousness and to that of all ages to come. For Brecht, according to Fradkin, it is the modern producer's and playwright's job to restore the "grossen, alten Bilder" to their present relevance and applicability. And Fradkin gives still another motive for Brecht's choice of existing dramatic works as subject matter: an adaptation automatically provides the text with epic character, it diverts the interest of the spectator from the solution to the action. For us, however, this article is of limited importance since it concentrates on the analysis of the purpose of Brecht's adaptations without questioning the merits of the completed works, and also because Fradkin for no apparent reason, neglects to discuss Coriolan as such.

In 1967 a short article on the adaptation was published by Lawrence Lerner. ⁸ It should first be mentioned that this article is a lone statement on the question of 'Shakespeare and Brecht' by an

English scholar in an English periodical. The lack of interest in, and knowledge of, Shakespearean drama is one of the most obvious drawbacks in the otherwise lively discussion of Brecht's adaptations. Brecht himself challenges his fellow playwrights to 'improve' Shakespeare, i.e., he consciously invites comparison with his model. Brecht critics, however, are usually preoccupied with Brecht's theatrical programme and consider Shakespeare as little more than subject matter. Lerner challenges Brecht's critics with some pertinent antitheses. The most general of these is Shakespeare's pessimism in his presentation of a state unable to control its own disruptive forces and Brecht's optimism which does not feel obliged to adhere to existing social orders. Accordingly, Lerner sees Shakespeare's hero as an embodiment of the general political instability, whereas Brecht is concerned rather in developing the contradiction between the individual and his social basis. Here Lerner seems to force his issue. Shakespeare's hero is quite obviously not intended to be a social symptom, but, like Lear, an "unaccommodated man". What Brecht does, therefore, is to cast new light on the 'tragic' relationship of state and individual: it is the state that suffers, not the individual. However, Lerner perceives Brecht's aim and problem in his presentation of the individual most clearly. It was his task to "diminish his importance in the state without diminishing his importance in the play".⁹ This observation contains an excellent measure by which to judge the success of Brecht's adaptation. Lerner does not judge.

Paolo Chiarini's essay¹⁰ does not lead us much further. Chiarini defines Brecht's art as an ongoing process of explaining and producing reality, and he convincingly anchors the principle of aesthetic pleasure in the double role of intellectuality and productivity. This holds true for the traditional texts as well. According to Chiarini, to understand and produce Shakespeare within a present-day context is to return to the Elizabethan dramatist his authentic historical meaning. It is not clear, however, how Chiarini can prove this point with his comparison of the two endings. Is Brecht's ending "ein Darüberhinausgehen, das die Bindung an die Tradition nicht zurückweist"?¹¹ The tradition here is the fall of the heroic individual, and Brecht's ending very consciously severs all ties with this tradition or, more correctly, he reveals this tradition as a false consciousness. Chiarini's article remains inconclusive.

In the same year, Johannes Kleinstück published an article on Brecht's adaptation.¹² Kleinstück is one of the few critics who venture to question the adaptation, but he does so for the wrong reasons. He sarcastically remarks:

Der Marxist darf tun, was dem Bourgeois verboten ist. Wenn der Bourgeois ändert, dann verfälscht er, ändert der Marxist, dann dringt er zum ursprünglichen Ideengehalt des klassischen Werks vor.¹³

Interestingly enough, Kleinstück had just stated two pages earlier that Brecht's adaptation is not concerned with the "ursprünglichen Ideengehalt des Werks".¹⁴

Kleinstück basically talks about progressivist and conservative attitudes, and if Brecht wants to discover Shakespeare's "Ideengehalt", this term must be understood in the sense of an historical (not author-and-work) intentionality. For the most part, Kleinstück obviously argues from the position of an offended and irritated believer in bourgeois cultural ideology. He even rejects Brecht's version because it wants to teach--to him a sign of dramatic narrow-mindedness.

An East German study on Coriolanus in history and literature by J. Kuczynski appeared in 1969.¹⁵ Kuczynski, moving from Plutarch's narrative to the dramas of Shakespeare and Brecht, presents a simple thesis. In Plutarch he finds a moral fable of an important, yet totally asocial and irrational man who having set himself against everyone including his fatherland, had to fall--social reality demanded it. Shakespeare, however, as Kuczynski sees him, has no understanding for the role of the people in history, and thus makes Coriolanus, contrary to social reality, into a tragic hero. Brecht then, in a third historical step, not only returns to Plutarch's rejection of the asocial hero, but also gives us its sociological basis. In his version, the masses gradually come to understand their own strength and unity through need and experience. And accordingly, they come to understand the true enemy in their midst. In time they also learn of the imminent danger they face under the rule of a recklessly self-assertive individual, and they succeed in averting tragedy.

This clear-cut analysis should not simply be dismissed. The draw-

backs of such Marxist criticism are quite apparent. Brecht, it is claimed, ideologically corrects and improves Shakespeare who, in turn, had not understood Plutarch. Brecht's play, therefore, represents the ultimate achievement in the history of the 'Stoff'. Undoubtedly, such a 'critical' neglect of the totality of form and structure would have embarrassed Brecht himself.

In 1970 Rodney Symington published a lengthy dissertation on Brecht und Shakespeare.¹⁶ The essential merit of this book, it would seem, is the very detailed account of Brecht's involvement with Shakespeare throughout his literary development. It is basically a report, not a critical analysis. In his relatively short chapter on Coriolanus, Symington renders a very close, scene by scene, and sometimes line by line description of the changes instituted by Brecht. With such a critically solid method, we would have expected more interesting results. The reasons for this lack of new insights, however, are readily apparent. Symington approaches, as do so many of Brecht's critics, these adaptations with Brecht's theory and political philosophy in mind. He discusses what Brecht intends to do and not what he actually achieves. Symington only explains why Brecht makes these changes. He does not expound on their impact on the whole organism of the play. To give just one example: Symington tries his best to give textual proof whenever possible for Brecht's intention of making Coriolanus a symbol for the behavior of the wealthy, the nobility, the exploiters. Thus he cannot explain why Coriolanus's own class, which he symbolizes, rejects him in the

end. Brecht accents this rejection even more strongly than does Shakespeare. Volumnia, Coriolan's own mother, is, for Brecht, the real incarnation of Rome's aristocracy, and she rigorously cuts her ties with the enemy of the state.

The most important and comprehensive study on Brecht's Coriolanus adaptation is David McCann's dissertation.¹⁷ McCann's treatment of his subject is in many ways superior to that of Symington. Above all, he makes extensive use of the Brecht archives in East Berlin. The information derived from the discussion of Brecht's workbooks, sketches, production notes and, in particular, his markings in his copy of the Shakespearean play is highly interesting and revealing. For any critic of the genesis of Brecht's adaptation, McCann's report is the most substantial material source in existence outside the archive itself. Moreover, McCann is well aware of the common pervasive fallacy among the critics of Coriolan looking exclusively for symptoms and expressions of Brecht's political theory. It is, therefore, understandable that McCann carries his argument too far in the opposite direction and overemphasizes the underlying psychological complex, especially the Oedipal relationship between mother and son. McCann has much difficulty, however, in unifying the political and psychological perspectives of the adaptation. He follows a general pattern of using the term 'dialectical' to explain contradictions:

Brecht takes over Shakespeare's dialectical vision that compasses the deep-seated psychologically

regressive tendencies in the individual as they condition and inform conservative or reactionary socio-political tendencies.¹⁸

If that is so, the ruling and exploiting aristocracy would become a psycho-pathological problem, and Brecht would hardly agree to that. McCann generally presents the 'dialectical' principles as central to the understanding of Brecht's adaptation (see his title). But there is nowhere a clear definition of this term, one of the most abused of our time. In explaining Brecht, we should use the term strictly in its Marxist context and, more specifically, in the sense Brecht himself understands it. The concept of dialectics should be confined to a method of presenting a text within a context, and to a critical translation of fixed given conditions into processes. It is the method of "eingreifenden Denkens" that reveals the growing contradiction in apparently unified formations. Dialectical presentation teaches to question and leads to action.

There is yet another typical contradiction which pervades McCann's study. The author stresses, more than anyone else, the strength of Brecht's allegiance to Shakespeare's text and spirit. He insists that "Brecht simply writes a nonconventional interpretation",¹⁹ that "Brecht remains faithful to Shakespeare's design",²⁰ that, according to Brecht "to historicize Shakespeare was to complete his reporting".²¹ This leads him to the untenable assertion that Brecht's view of Coriolanus was compatible with Shakespeare's²² and to the uniformly untenable equation between Shakespeare's adaptation of Plutarch and Brecht's adaptation of

Shakespeare.²³ To McCann, Coriolan represents a cumulative effort of both Shakespeare and Brecht. On the other hand, McCann is an observant critic and realizes the poetic inferiority of Brecht's work. And he presents us with the intriguing explanation that Brecht felt obliged in post-war Germany to reduce the complex tragedy to the level of Lehrstück to make it acceptable and productive for the confused German minds. Coriolan--a "noble cultural venture":²⁴ this is McCann's final word on the adaptation. With all its contradictions, this study is a very useful interpretation of this play and its productive conditions.

In 1974 and 1975 two books on Brecht's adaptations appeared; one by Paul Kussmaul²⁵ and the other by Martin Brunkhorst.²⁶ Both are primarily interested in the method of Brecht's adaptations of Shakespearean works. The conclusion of Kussmaul's analysis is simple and obvious: Brecht reverses the Shakespearean 'Fabel' and puts the weight of the hero on the plebeians. This indicates that Coriolan, in Kussmaul's understanding, is never the source of the action, but a mere tool, part of the war machinery. He is, in fact, a specialist in war, a learned, not innate skill which implies that, contrary to his own thinking, he can be replaced. This interpretation is consistent but narrow. It sacrifices, for instance, the entire psychological motivating complex which McCann tried to integrate, if unsuccessfully. Kussmaul concludes that the fall of the hero is the direct consequence of his obsession with war. It is a rigorous interpretation which cannot explain the Volumnia scene in the last act which, in Brecht's version, becomes even more important than is Shakespeare's.

Volumnia's influence proves far superior to that of the war machine which, had it prevailed, would have lifted the hero to victorious heights.

Kussmaul's most important contribution to the understanding of Brecht's play is probably his discussion of language. Rhetoric plays a prominent role in Shakespeare's tragedy. Brecht adopts this principle of rhetoric as well as the massive invectives and crudities of Shakespeare's language to make them 'gestisch'. Kussmaul shows, for example, how the tribunes adopt the ceremonial speech of the aristocracy to realize their revolutionary spirit: one who speaks as the nobility also has the rights of the nobility. Kussmaul fails, however, to convince us of Coriolan's rhetorical resourcefulness and flexibility. His own study implies, as mentioned, that this hero is a rigid and totally undiplomatic functionary of war. Quite obviously we cannot equate Coriolan's language with that of the eloquent and highly educated Menenius. Menenius has the rhetorical capacity to extricate himself from the critical situation. Coriolan does not.

Brunkhorst's study is the last to be mentioned here. He strives to explain the failure of several other Shakespeare adaptations, especially the Julius Caesar project. These are highly relevant observations and will help to clarify why the Coriolan project, too, could not succeed. Brunkhorst shows, with the help of Wekwerth's notes, how firmly convinced Brecht was that he was, in fact, strengthening and consolidating the Shakespearean text. This seems, at first, a curious delusion and should

be more fully explained. Brunkhorst largely analyses Brecht's technique of interpolations and strategic cuts. He is especially convincing, however, in that he shows us how Brecht's re-evaluation of the central figure leads him, by necessity, to a restructuring of the entire pattern of dramatic characters. At the same time he shows how Brecht tends to retain the speeches of these characters. The resulting contradiction then becomes the perfect tool for Brecht to expose or alienate Shakespeare's dramatis personae. It is one of Brecht's most cunning methods of adaptation, and we shall have to try to get a better and more detailed understanding of it.

Brunkhorst's study is one of the more useful in a short history of Coriolan criticism which is lacking in results, not in quantity. Obviously, a new study becomes necessary not only when a literary subject is underresearched, but also when there exists a considerable number of studies which seem to set a trend of evading rather than solving the problem. It shall be the purpose of this thesis, therefore,

- 1) to base this evaluation of Brecht's adaptation as solidly as possible on the interpretation of, and comparison with, Shakespeare's original. Brecht, after all, wished to free Shakespeare's play from the constraints of traditional misrepresentation, and from the limited perspective of Shakespeare's own time. He had no ambition to write a new play,
- 2) to compare and explain the interrelation between

individual psychology and political motivation in both Shakespeare and Brecht. Brecht's most dramatic alteration, the dethroning of the great individual on which the Shakespearean text is solely focussed, and the institution of the people's collective in his place, has never received full consideration.

- 3) to evaluate the new solutions which Brecht offers to the problems Shakespeare poses. How 'free' does Shakespeare's material actually become? Or does it appear confined and reduced by Brecht's didactic purposes? What is the effect of Brecht's most radically re-worked ending?

CHAPTER II

The First Scene

There is no more effective method to examine exactly what, how and why Brecht has "herausgelesen und hineingelesen"¹ in Shakespeare's text than a close comparative interpretation of the first scene.² This scene not only bears significance as a full exposition of the entire play, but also as an almost breathless launching of all of its dramatic forces. In this discussion of the scene's five clearly divisible parts, we shall ask what questions Brecht put to Shakespeare, and how Brecht--in agreement with, or opposition to Shakespeare--answered them. The five parts are:

- 1) the citizens' uprising and assessment of Coriolanus, their "chief enemy",
- 2) Menenius and his fable,
- 3) Coriolanus' entrance and expository tirade,
- 4) the news of the Volscians' approach,
- 5) the role of the tribunes: their election and isolation.

1) Beginning with the very first line, Brecht moves the rebellious plebeians to the centre of the action and interest of the play. Can the scene of the insurrection be some "street"? It should be a forum, "ein offentlicher Platz". Shall there be some random gathering of dissolute mutineers with "staves" and "clubs", as in Shakespeare? There must be a definite plan, an organized situation where "Waffen verteilt

werden". Moreover, Brecht adds profile to the insurgent group by giving it significant structure. In Shakespeare, we find "first citizen", "second citizen", and "all", the latter being a mechanical echo of the "first citizen", the agitator, and the "second citizen", a benevolent individual lacking insight and judgment. The "first citizen", on the other hand, does have sharp, aggressive judgment but is completely without moral stature which, in Brecht's understanding, is essential to this agitator of a people's uprising. Brecht, therefore, rearranges the roles of the plebeians in this scene. We now find the "erster Bürger" to be a truly enlightened and enlightening protagonist; the 'Bürger' collective displays determination, judgment and solidarity, yet not without reckless emotional undertones; and thirdly, the creation of the "Mann mit dem Kind", the resigned emigrant-escapist. Accordingly, Brecht relieves his "erster Bürger" of mobster-like lines such as,

Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price.
Is't a verdict? (804)

His narrow-minded method of attaining the people's goal becomes, with Brecht, a socially constructive, constitutional method:

...nicht eher umzukehren bis der Senat zuge-
standen hat, dass den Brotpreis wir Bürger bestimmen. (2397)

He now sounds rather like an adept of Marxist economics. With his very first words, he speaks of the necessary progress of "die Sache" (ibid.),

and later asserts that

ich nicht mitmache, wenn in der Sache nicht zu
Ende gegangen wird. (ibid.)

We find no trace of this in Shakespeare.

A systematic, rational approach of a clearly envisioned common good contrasts with biased, vengeful anger ("Let us revenge this...", 804) in Shakespeare where the common good of the body politic in Menenius' fable is shown to be violated. Brecht has no use for the word "revenge". "Let us kill him", however, he retains, but puts it in the mouths of the "Haufe" of citizens who seem prone to rash and less than purposeful action. At the bottom of this hierarchy of socially enlightened engagement we find the "Mann mit dem Kind" who, in despicable passivity, turns his back on "die Sache":

Wenn ihr nichts erreicht, werde ich...auswandern. (2397)

He is the "feige Hund" (2398) who abandons Rome with his child, the city's future. "Feige" also because he fears Coriolan more than an uncertain future on foreign, barren ground. With Brecht, a phalanx of the people's movement is organized and indoctrinated. The class confrontation is clearly established, and thus he certainly is not interested in a "second citizen" siding with the patricians. The "second citizen's" expository perspectives of Coriolanus--his good service to the state, his love for his mother, and the right to his own "nature"--are eliminated.

With these, Brecht deals later in his own way.

2) When Brecht's Menenius Agrippa enters, the people already have a vivid knowledge of his social position and function, i.e., of the whole Menenius, since he is defined in such terms by the enlightened agitator:

Das ist Menenius Agrippa, Senator und Schönredner.(ibid.)

Thus Brecht establishes at once that his 'schöne Rede', which includes the famous fable, will have no effect on these critics of the ruling class ideology and propaganda. Even the humorous response of the "Bürger":

Er hat eine Schwäche für das Volk. (2398)

is not conciliatory but derisive, and points out a comical weakness for the people and their problems of which he is not remotely aware. Here, Brecht 'translates' the affirmation of Menenius, by Shakespeare's citizens, as

...one that hath always loved the people. (ibid.)

--even Shakespeare's aggressive "first citizen" must concede that he is "honest enough" (ibid.) Shakespeare's Menenius is, in fact, a man of great political insight and wit, and potentially an ideal mediator. Thus the ensuing 'schöne' fable, ineffectual as it is, has an enormously important function: to serve as an ever-present point of reference for

Coriolanus' tragedy. It is, moreover, symptomatic for the tragedy that it is so ineffectual. The fable stands between the plebeian tumult and Coriolanus' tempestuous arrival almost as an image of another world, although Menenius stands accused of using it primarily in the interest of the patricians. Brecht had obvious difficulties in retaining the strength of this lengthy dialogue, in spite of a number of deletions and interpolations. For him, of course, Menenius is no longer the conciliatory orator who wishes to convince of a truth, but instead a hostile orator who wishes to convince of a fabricated falsehood. This would then imply that while Shakespeare demonstrated the tragic ineffectiveness of a truthful fable, Brecht was left the less than rewarding task of proving the ineffectiveness of a fabulous untruth. Such would indeed have been quite an anticlimax following the emphatic urgency of the beginning, and Brecht's first citizen expresses this feeling and provides some motivation:

Das ist kaum eine Zeit für Märlein. Aber ich
für mein Teil möchte schon lang gern schön reden
lernen, und das kann man von dir, Agrippa.
Schiess los! (2400)

When Menenius then 'shoots' and misses (the pun certainly intended), we are not surprised. We are, however, moved by the subsequent impact of the hero and the news of impending war: the citizens, almost totally muted, disband. Thus we learn that the people, in the course of their social evolution, are now beyond the stage of ideological maneuverability

and that they see through the selling practices of the ruling class. And yet they fall victim to their military strategem. Such is the import of Brecht's Menenius scene. He adds further poignancy by the introduction of an ingenious device. Shakespeare has Menenius curse the agitator of the plebeians in a kind of half-humorous rage at the end of his scene, then has Coriolanus enter and carry on in the same vein. Brecht, however, has him enter earlier, "mit Bewaffneten", to motivate Menenius' outbreak. The vicious onslaught now represents a shocking or 'alienating' relapse into the true language of the class enemy at the point when military reinforcements relieve him of his odious 'Schönrednerei'.³

This carefully designed new structure of the rebellious group functions to serve a dual purpose: a) to demonstrate the enlightening and unifying force of the people's misery--Brecht's articulate "erster Bürger" achieves this goal;⁴ b) to demonstrate, simultaneously, the fragility of this union forged by the distress of hunger. Brecht takes great pains with very few, but extremely careful deletions and changes, to establish--in his understanding--a real basis of dramatic interest in his plebeians.

We must now focus our concern on the central question of how this new socially productive phalanx will be able to stand up to the powers of war and the mighty war hero. Brecht instills his audience with the confidence that these citizens, once positively aroused and on the march, will ultimately succeed.⁵ Bearing the entire play in mind, one realizes that Brecht wants to make the reader acutely aware that, for the people

to succeed, they are in need of exceptional historical good fortune and colossal blunders on the part of their enemies. Shakespeare, on the other hand, deprives the people of what Brecht invests them with: knowledge. The focus of his tragedy is and remains on Coriolanus, the people remain external, unable to apprehend his heights and depths. Shakespeare's plebeians do show understanding, but it is one-sided, embracing only their own material concerns. While his plebeians are instrumental in contributing to Coriolanus' tragedy, Brecht's interpretation finds the war hero, Coriolanus, instrumental in bringing the people's movement close to tragedy.⁶

Brecht, therefore, completely re-evaluates the function of poetic rhetoric, along with its content. Poetry, fable and myth become implements of power, capable of concealing, not revealing truth, and thus making it palatable, as in Shakespeare. Poetry evokes a 'cosmic' unity and harmony which, for Shakespeare, is the principle of undisturbed nature, in this instance of the body physic, as well as of the body politic. Form and content in Shakespeare's rendering of the fable become one. The near deadly disjunction of this harmony by the patri- cians and plebeians alike lies at the core of Shakespeare's drama.⁷ Its imagery virtually reeks with disease, decay and mutilation.⁸ For Brecht, this Platonic myth of a natural harmonious hierarchy is nothing but a conscious lie, and the image-making of poetry its vehicle. Thus, when Menenius commences speaking in the 'high style' rhythm of blank verse the drama is not, as in Shakespeare, lifted to the realm of

higher poetic vision, but turns to parody. This parody accentuates the essential disunity of form and content of speech, or of seeming culture and real exploitation. Thus, Menenius is put in the same league with Brecht's earlier 'hero' Pierpont Mauler, who also turned to blank verse or rhythms from Faust to explain his slaughterhouse enterprises. Accordingly, one of the few, but incisive, interpolations in Brecht's text makes the plebeians and the audience aware that Menenius does not wish to communicate real facts, but a make-believe form of understanding: when the "erste Bürger" wants to know what the "faule Bauch" had to say, he replies, half angrily:

Was, was! Wie, wie!
Darauf kommt's an. (2400)

Brecht's version is fundamentally concerned with the clash between an unified but unfounded form of consciousness and the forces of material social facticity. The other conspicuous interpolation in this section reveals quite clearly how Menenius wants to 'creat' in the plebeians' minds the form of consciousness that serves his purpose:

Ihr seid die aufsässigen Glieder. Denkt!
Aufs Denken kommt es an. Denkt, denkt, denkt, denkt!
Und euch wird aufgehen... (2402)⁹

A unified system of ideology is to be superimposed on a world whose future is produced through dialectics, and which lives and thrives on disunity ('Widersprüche'). The purpose is to darken the historically

creative vision which always endangers the established class. The greedy belly is to be reinstated and freed from all responsibility: the gods, not the patricians are the agents of the present misery.¹⁰

3) Coriolan enters and instantly attacks the plebeians with inordinately harsh and acrimonious invectives. Brecht's understanding of the hero's brutality is immediately clear: he carries out what Menenius had planned to achieve, without the conciliatory imagery. Coriolan arrives as the incarnation of the patricians' war against the people; fully armed and accompanied by soldiers, his words like most effective extensions of his weapons, enabling Menenius to say of the plebeians' defeat:

Ich hielt sie auf mit einem M rlein. Freilich
es war nicht meiner Stimme Erz, es war
Die Stimme deinen Erzes, die sie umwarf. (2403)

Brecht's hero derives his identity from his class consciousness.¹¹ It seems, however, that he fails to answer certain important questions posed by Shakespeare's text. How can his typical complete lack of diplomacy be explained in terms of his class consciousness? The tribunes later forge their weapons out of this 'deficiency' and gain a major victory. And how can the very enormity, the towering extremity of Coriolanus' hatred and contempt be explained?

Indeed, Brecht found in Shakespeare's hero all the class consciousness he needed:

You cry against the noble senate, who
 Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
 Would feed on one another? (806)

But if he translates--

Das spuckt auf den Senat, der mit dem Göttern
 Zusammen etwas Ordnung hält, da sonst
 Der eine noch den andern fressen würde! (2402)

--he makes a very decisive change. Brecht's ideological analysis of Coriolan's claim leads him to a parodistic alienation effect ("mit den Göttern zusammen etwas Ordnung"). This he cannot do, however, without radically changing his character. Such deification of the senate in this situation can only serve to reveal his propaganda practices, or to expose his arrogance to ridicule. Both deprive him of his dramatic stature. Certainly Shakespeare's Coriolanus is no schemer or dissembler but radically honest and outspoken, and an outspoken member of the ruling class is, in Marxist theory, a contradiction in terms. Shakespeare derives a special dramatic interest from the sequence of Menenius' diplomatic rhetoric and Coriolanus' thundering address; here we have an aristocrat who does not cajole the people into believing and accepting, but one who confronts them openly as a man. Coriolanus is a "lonely wolf" from the start and, as it happens, is as embarrassing to the nobility as he is disagreeable to the plebeians. His 'consciousness' of the Roman senate is that of an ideal, not of a political reality.¹² And for him, moreover, it is never an operative, but a lived ideal. The

attribute 'noble', which he attaches to the senate, is not merely a password of class membership, in his estimation, but rather a matter of personal identity, of virtue, valour and integrity which he projects into the senate assembly. For Shakespeare's Coriolanus, the senate becomes a kind of 'Urversammlung' which never was and never would be. And from these ideal heights the people, of course, present a 'natural' antithesis. He is the striving, aspiring, warring hero who seeks and cultivates the radical confrontation. To earn the crown of honour and valour, he seeks to earn their hatred:

Who deserves greatness
Deserves your hate... (806)

Brecht quite obviously cannot retain the boundless anger of this Shakespearean hero, with the grandiose metaphysical quality. Ancient Roman idealism is no longer believable in Brecht's context, and he has much difficulty in steering him clear of the image of an isolated Don Quixote (who would soon become ridiculous and irrelevant) and of an aristocratic operator (who would be quite inconsistent with the play's basic plot). Shakespeare, of course, does not acquit his hero of guilt--the people, after all, deserve a helpful father as their leader, not their enemy. But it is clearly a tragic guilt which Shakespeare unfolds, the guilt of a great individual who chooses to live a myth and fails to see the impossibility and destructiveness of such an endeavour. Brecht's hero, by contrast, tends to represent a public menace which de-

serves to be removed, not shown sympathy. His new ending allows the tribunes to effectively veto a proposed mourning period.

4) If Brecht is so eager to bridge the gap between the soft-spoken Menenius and the furor of Coriolan, having made the two of the same ilk and purpose, why then does he make no attempt whatever to reduce the contrast and to modify the hero's thundering pride? Clearly, Brecht found himself caught in the throes of a typical conflict of interests: his interest in and respect for Shakespeare's genius, and his interest in his own 'Lehrtheater'. And he openly admits at one point:

Es ist bei dem Genie des Shakespeare nicht möglich, die 'Tragödie des Stolzes' ausser acht zu lassen oder auch nur abzustumpfen. Es mag dabei bleiben, dass es sich für den Coriolan lohnt, seinen Stolz so auszuleben, dass Tod und Untergang da nicht 'in Gewicht fallen'.¹⁾

At a later time, we shall have to discuss this individual, almost pathological 'tragic flaw' in Brecht's context. He may have left us, in fact, with a blind motive. What concerns us here is his special device to bridge the conflict. In Shakespeare, Coriolanus enters the stage alone. His action, in view of the rebellion, is hazardous and as negligent of his own "Tod und Untergang" as his lone entry into Corioli and his final, fatal, triumph:

alone I did it...! (844)

Brecht, however, deprives him of his fearless, reckless quality by simply supplying him with an army on stage. The intention is evident: both Menenius and Coriolan have come to subvert ("umwerfen", 2403) the citizens who dared stand up to them. What the voice of political oration could not effect, the voice of weapons ("Stimme deines Erzes", *ibid.*) brings about easily. Brecht thus establishes the unity of contradiction, the demonstration of which is the goal of his dialectic theatre:

Nur das Studium der Einheit der Widersprüche gestattet es..., die erste Szene des 'Coriolan' richtig zu arrangieren!, und sie ist die Grundlage des ganzen Stücks! Wie anders soll der Spielleiter darauf kommen, den Unterschied zwischen den falschen ideologischen Versuch des Menenius Agrippa, eine Einheit aus Patriziern und Plebejern herauszustellen und der wirklichen Herstellung dieser Einheit durch den Krieg deutlich zu machen?¹⁴

Coriolan becomes the agent of this "Herstellung dieser Einheit durch den Krieg" long before the news of the Volscian march on Rome arrives. Ruling class measures, the hero Coriolan, and the impending war are becoming synonymous. If Brecht translates Coriolanus' frequent "Hang 'em" into "Nur Hängen hilft da", he translates an emotional expression of proud disgust into a well considered threat. Accordingly, Brecht has a senator announce the war which both Cominius and Coriolan hail--it is their business. Shakespeare's messenger is retained, but as the bearer of 'strange' news liable to change the course of action. His more appropriate task is that of bringing the news of the people's victory, the election of the tribunes.

In this short section dealing with the threat of war, Coriolanus' relationships with Cominius, the senior general, and with Aufidius, leader of the Volscians, are of particular interest. Why does Shakespeare subordinate the leading Roman war hero to a superior? Cominius is one of "our best elders" (806) and Coriolanus is a young man armed with the essence of Roman virtue: service to the state. Shakespeare wishes to eliminate any idea of arrogance contained in the 'pride' of his hero, who later (in act II) will display nothing but contempt and disgust for the traditional hero-cult of the citizens. For Coriolanus, Cominius is symbolic of the voice of Rome, it follows then that subordination is quite natural for him in this instance. Brecht doubts this. He believes Coriolanus has no more urgent desire than to command in war. Unfortunately though, he is under the command of Cominius, and this he "schient...nicht gut aufzunehmen".¹⁵ Brecht has no use for a positive ideal of service in Coriolanus, nor for the tragic unity of the ideology of service and the reality of disservice to Rome which is so essential for Shakespeare's dramatic purpose, Brecht's 'dialectic' analysis cannot afford a tragic split in this "enemy of the people" which is a sign of greatness and calls on our sympathy.¹⁶ It would be in Brecht's purpose to show how and why this greatest enemy of the people becomes their greatest hope and ally, and how, in a sudden turnabout, the military conflict supersedes the class conflict. The 'hero' whose duty it is to vanquish and triumph is to be shown unrivalled and untouchable in his own true element.

It is necessary to modify this statement to a degree. There is, in fact, a rival in pride and honours in the person of Aufidius, the enemy. What is the hidden motive for Coriolanus' pronounced interest in Aufidius?, Brecht asks. We find the answer in a passage in 'Studium':

Interessant ist bei seiner Verachtung der Plebejer,
die Achtung vor dem nationalen Feind, dem Patrizier
Aufidius. Er ist sehr klassenbewusst.¹⁷

Aufidius is infinitely closer to him than are his own people, he is "mir bekannt" (2405) while, as Brecht implies, Coriolan has no hint of the conditions and desires of the Roman citizens, and wants none. Brecht reduces nine of Shakespeare's lines in praise of Aufidius to two of his own invention:

Und ein Feind
Wie der, und schon lohnt sich ein ganzer Krieg! (2405)

Brecht employs a blunt and effective parody of the dealings of a war-monger who believes that business with a so-called enemy of his own class is well worth the sacrifice of thousands of Roman soldiers of an inferior class. Here the contrast with the emotional strength and intimacy in the eulogy of Shakespeare's hero, which borders on a declaration of love, is especially striking. Shakespeare certainly wishes to prepare and motivate Coriolanus' 'treason' in act IV, his banishment of the "common cry of curs" (830), the Roman citizens who banish him, in favour of the "lion", Aufidius, whose "nobility" he envies (806f.). Brecht sacrifices the entire complex of 'noble heart in search of noble

heart', and of a quixotic quest for a lost paradise of honour and valour. The harsh light cast on the common 'interests' of the war leaders which is opposed to the interest of the people must not be dif-fused. Brecht aligns this interpretation with Aufidius' motivation for starting the war, to which Shakespeare alludes in the next scene ("the dearth is great, / The people mutinous.", 807). The Volscians are marching--

Auf die Nachricht grosser
Teurung und Rebellion hier (2405)

--and Brecht associates this march with Coriolan's own march on the people in the company of his squadron of "Bewaffneten" (2401). Aufidius supports Coriolan as Coriolan later supports Aufidius in the intention to crush and punish the rebellious people. The entire war machinery is thus revealed as the most efficient strategy of the ruling class.¹⁸ With Brecht, the anxious sympathy must lie exclusively with the deadly threat to the people's movement which has been so suddenly halted.

5) The news of the impending war is preceded by the news of the election of the tribunes, the first decisive triumph of the people over the senate ("Der Senat hat ihre Fordrung zugestanden", 2404). This sequence had special significance for Brecht. The most active "Haufe" of desperate, hungry citizens has been dispelled by Coriolan ("Ich trieb ihn auseinander", 2403) when the messenger provides the complete turnabout.¹⁹ Menenius is stunned ("Das ist seltsam", 2404) and Coriolan thrown into a new rage. This section which, in Shakespeare, is hardly

more than the announcement followed by Coriolanus' angry commentary is strongly emphasized by Brecht, and nearly doubled in size. The citizens come running together, celebrating their new leaders and their new right

in den Sitzungen zu sitzen und Beschlüsse abzuschlagen!
(2404)

Brecht's actual drama begins at this point; it ends, significantly, with the tribunes' decree "Abgeschlagen!" (2497) in response to the senators' proposal to grant the women a ten month mourning period for the dead hero. In the meantime, however, the victory appears brittle and there is a long way to go from that hope to this final decree. The ruling powers employ their most incisive weapon, the war machine, and it seems for a moment that the people's movement is effectively aborted. In the original text which centres on Coriolanus, however, the tribunes' success plays a quite different role. For Shakespeare, it is not the people's victory, but rather the impending war which provides dramatic relief, and the short announcement of the tribune's installation signifies no more than a foreboding of what Coriolanus will face on his return.

In Brecht, the pseudo-unity of the war effort projects no relief at all, but a shocking deprivation and frustration. The people and the tribunes remain alone on stage. The tribunes in particular, having been the centre of universal attention and political triumph, are suddenly left behind quite useless, "unerledigt herausstehend wie verletzte Daumen".²⁰ Shakespeare, however, whose "Citizens steal away" in the

face of Coriolanus' sarcastic challenge--taunting them to let their mutinous "valour" shine in the battlefield--leaves no vacuum, and no stunned silence. His tribunes are also of the sort who "steal" politically and, hard-core operators that they are, cannot but presuppose that their political opponents do likewise. They psychologize about Coriolanus' behavior sneeringly. They clearly realize that his willingness to submit to Cominius' command is a cunning device to steal fame and glory, for

Brutus Half of Cominius' honours are to Martius,
 Though Martius earned them not; and all his
 faults
 To Martius shall be honours, though indeed
 In aught he merit not. (807)

It is most evident, in light of events to follow, that the judgment of these fellows is false and slanderous, and that they have no tools by which to measure greatness.

Shakespeare's tribunes are strangely ambivalent. They know nothing and they know all. In their commentary, we find the eerie detachment of two vultures circling their prey:

Brutus Being mov'd, he will not spare to gird the
 gods. ...

Sicinius Such a nature,
 Tickled with good success, disdains the
 shadow
 Which he treads on at noon, ... (807)

Despite their ignorance of Coriolanus' magnitude, they speak as agents

of his fate, and their words are highly ominous. They know the weak point of his greatness--his furious recklessness in speaking his mind--and they will use it against him as a deadly weapon when the time is right. The most powerful image of dramatic anticipation is that of the hero standing in his own shadow when the sun is high. This single-minded man knows only of the high sun and of no shadow: such is both his greatness and his guilt. These men, on the other hand, know only of the shadow: such is their baseness as well as their superior realism. The very fact that they speak in this manner, in lurid quiet under the sun's eclipse, reduced to total insignificance waiting for the shadow to return, makes this an extremely effective dramatic closing of the scene.

Brecht's 'translation' completely eliminates this vulture mentality. Unlike Shakespeare's tribunes, his do not focus upon the hero's individual vulnerability, but on Rome's future, and upon the material value as well as the threat which Coriolan represents in this respect. Any personal or narrow political interest is excluded. Their critical overview approaches the wisdom of the gods, the gods of material dialectics:

Sicinius Ich hörte, was er sagte. Solch ein Mann ist
Gefährlicher für Rom als für die Volsker.

Brutus Das glaub ich nicht. Solch eines Mannes
Schwert
Ist mehr, als seine Laster schaden, wert. (2407)

Both are correct. Together they display a truly 'political' knowledge of historical dialectics. In this respect, their concluding statements --reminiscent of a Greek chorus--also foreshadow the coming events.

Coriolan must be dealt with according to his usefulness to the people of Rome. The present 'Widerspruch', the armed conflict, has the historical priority, as does the material value of the war specialist, Coriolan. In this knowledge there is hope; in Shakespeare's evocation of the shadowless noon there was apprehension. Shakespeare raised fear for his hero where Brecht raises hope for the Romans.

CHAPTER III

Psychology vs. Social History

The radical degree to which Shakespeare concentrated his dramatic efforts on his hero is indeed striking. Every scene, every person continually draws attention to him, never away from him. The dramatis personae are exclusively his friends or enemies, commenting on the fascinating or threatening mystery of his existence. And the action unfolds this mystery to the point of its deadly 'solution'. It is then understandable that, among Shakespeare's works, Coriolanus came to be regarded as a gold mine for literary psychoanalysts.

This character monodrama proved to be Brecht's greatest problem; for he had to steer the attention of the audience in the opposite direction, away from the hero and his heroic pretense. His intention was to turn the tragedy of the hero into the "Tragödie des Volks..., das einen Held gegen sich hat".¹ In Brecht's estimation, concentration on the hero was permissible only as 'Ideologiekritik', aimed at a socio-historical analysis of his behavior.

Brecht found psychological motivation and interest in a dramatic hero and his actions to be symptomatic of individualist bourgeois tradition.

Jene Leidenschaft der Figuren, welche im bürgerlichen Drama dem Zuschauer Leidenschaft (in Form vom Mitgefühl) erregte, ist überflüssig geworden, wo das Interesse an den Vorgängen nicht mehr von Interessen an einem besonderen (das heisst in irgendeiner besonderen Eigenschaft stark ausgebauten)

Individuum abhängt, sondern der Situation und ihren Funktionen zugewandt ist.²

The "grosse leidenschaftliche Individuum" itself became superfluous where the function of the individual was reduced to answering (with his necessary "typisches Verhalten", *ibid.*) the questions posed by the complete situational pattern of the play. Shakespeare's play, which rests on this "grosse leidenschaftliche" and in "einer besonderen Eigenschaft [i.e., 'pride'] stark ausgebauten" individual, had to be completely re-interpreted. In his theory concerning 'Theater und Wissenschaft', Brecht gives us the example of the passionate 'Machttrieb'. Its dramatic representation as a fundamental, unquestioned human passion accessible only through 'Einfühlung' is, in Brecht's view, simply substandard in modern theatre productions. He assumes, therefore, that a writer wishes to present the hidden motives of man rising to great influence and power:

...wie soll er nun den äusserst komplizierten Mechanismus in Erfahrung₃ bringen, mit dem heute die Macht erkämpft wird?

The answer, of course, is through scientific knowledge, primarily of the laws and facts of economics and sociology. However, to our initial surprise, he states that "ein wichtiges Gebiet für die Dramatiker ist die Psychologie."⁴ Brecht argues that the writer, in presenting the case of a murderer, faces the same problem as a judge.

Die moderne Psychologie von der Psychoanalyse bis

zum Behaviorismus verschafft mir Kenntnisse, die mir zu einer ganz anderen Beurteilung des Falles verhelfen, besonders wenn ich die Ergebnisse der Soziologie berücksichtige und die Ökonomie der Geschichte nicht ausser acht lasse.

The mention of the movement "von der Psychoanalyse bis zum Behaviorismus" is interesting inasmuch as it reflects Brecht's own new orientation. There is little to be found in Brecht's work relevant to individual depth psychology, whereas his 'epic' demonstrations can well be read as historical studies in behaviorism. The schizoid characters of Shen Te/Shui Ta and Mother Coruage are cases of socio-historical, not individual pathology. In Brecht's theatre, the psychological make-up of a character reflects the contradictions of its and our time: it presents the lesson learned in social history, a lesson which (in tune with behaviorist optimism) the spectator is to unlearn. Bourgeois 'character plays' based on individual psychology would, according to Brecht, hide the historical--and therefore changeable--motivation, and have a socially paralysing effect on the audience.

Brecht states in Der Messingkauf, "Der Mensch ist das Ensemble aller gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse aller Zeiten."⁶ This expresses his principle law of psychology as well as of the structure of his theatrical character. It does not denote a dissolution of the 'person' in the theatre in favour of allegorical types (Shen Te is 'goodness' confronted with 'capitalist evil', etc.) Man's 'sickness', his frustration and alienation, remains Brecht's paramount interest. In his philo-

sophical studies he writes:

In den wachsenden Kollektiven erfolgt die Zertrümmerung der Person. Die Mutmassungen der alten Philosophen von der Gespaltenheit des Menschen realisieren sich: in Form einer ungeheuren Krankheit spiegelt sich Denken und Sein in der Person.⁷

In order to cure this disease, therefore, a responsible writer must create its historical consciousness. He must 'historicize' the person and his disease on stage, which would imply the explanation of its genesis and its eradication from our present state of mind (the so-called 'Verfremdungseffekt'). Thus, the person, like Shen Te or Courage, simultaneously evokes sympathy as well as a productive distance: the person is the victim of historical struggles and yet--in direct opposition to bourgeois tragedy and Hegelian dialectics--a provocatively unnecessary victim.

Brecht credits Shakespeare with omitting in his plays the kind of psychological motivation which endows the action with unity and 'necessity'. Thus the focus of the action--the character--remains unreconciled nature, a battlefield of historical raw material. Shakespeare's theatre, Brecht declares, "ist absoluter Stoff."⁸ The "wertvollen Bruchstellen, wo das Neue seiner Zeit auf das Alte stiess"⁹ are quite obviously open, to the annoyance of formalists and aestheticians of all times. This, according to Brecht, renders the "Untergang der Feudalen", his main 'tragic' theme, so constructively enjoyable. Of Shakespeare's heroes--Lear, Richard III, Macbeth, Antony, Othello--we

read in Der Messingkauf: "...sie alle existieren in einer neuen Welt, an der sie zerschellen".¹⁰ This holds true for Coriolanus as well, at the end of his play, Brecht's tribunes veto the suggested mourning period. The struggle is over, the way is clear to look to the future.

It is the purpose of this chapter to determine the compatibility of Brecht's central character, historicized and de-psychologized, with Shakespeare's dramatic intentions, as well as Brecht's 'ability', in this respect, to change Shakespeare ("Wir können den Shakespeare ändern, wenn wir ihn ändern können.").¹¹

Employing W. Reich's analysis and terminology,¹² the psychiatrist, Charles K. Hofling, describes Coriolanus as a "phallic-narcissistic character". Hofling's reading should not be dismissed, it reveals much of the play's hidden symbolism. Yet, quite apart from the question whether Shakespeare would have considered it worthwhile to dramatize a childhood fixation, the symptoms--"exaggerated display of self-confidence, dignity and superiority", "narcissistic preoccupation with their selves"¹³--simply do not fit his hero. Hofling is guilty of the same mistake made by countless critics both before and after him, i.e., of allowing the comments of nearly all the secondary characters (including Volumnia) concerning Coriolanus' 'pride' to go unquestioned. His 'pride' and the manner in which it is understood by those around him present a dramatically essential semantic antithesis. What the plebeians, tribunes and Hofling refer to is colloquially termed an 'inflated ego'. However, as

was hinted above, there is no 'preoccupation with the self' in any sense. In this respect, Coriolanus is sharply contrasted to the tribunes. When returning triumphant, with honours heaped upon him, he simply states:

I have done
As you have done, that's what I can: induc'd
As you have been, that's for my country. (812)

He later displays anguished disgust in having to 'show off' his wounds and scars. His "superiority" is not with reference to his own person, but with what Freud would call his 'superego'. i.e., his conscience or ideals, and here, we shall see, Rome and Volumnia play important roles. His sense of identity is so thoroughly absorbed by his burning moral desire, and springs so spontaneously from his primal unconscious passion,¹⁴ that there is no allowance for the establishment of an ego, i.e., the process of socializing the individual between the opposing formative forces of the primordial ('id') and the moral ('superego').¹⁵

Such analysis, aided by Freudian concepts, which in this case prove very useful as interpretive tools, leads us to a complete reversal of traditional understanding: Coriolanus' ego is not inflated, it is seriously deficient. Shakespeare's 'pride' is indeed intended as a tragic paradox, and this paradox is reflected in many ways throughout the play.

The most obvious of these paradoxes is that of the inviolable superman in war, and the helplessly vulnerable "boy" in the political arena of his beloved Rome. At war, he is at home and always a victor; at home he is at war and always a loser. He takes Corioli single-handedly, in-

flicting countless casualties, indeed, filling an entire army with awe. In Rome, at the 'rhetorical' forum, two viciously placed words, "boy" and "traitor", prove fatal blows to this seemingly invincible warrior. His fighting spirit (in view of his ideal superego) of towering rage is miraculously efficient in enemy action and, on the home front, fruitless and self-defeating. The contrasting images of warring god and political dwarf are so provocative that we realize why some critics interpret it as an intended comical or satirical disparity.¹⁶ It is, however, evident that Shakespeare wished to awaken tragic sympathy, not laughter. Lesser men, the tribunes, Aufidius, all of them villains, slay Coriolanus. And even Volumnia's plea cautioning him not to be "too absolute" is questionable:

If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not - which for your best ends
You adopt your policy - how is it less or worse,
That is shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war; since that to both
It stands like a request? (827)

This piece of sophistry was designed by Shakespeare to persuade his audience to favour Coriolanus' choosing to be a truthful rather than deceptive statesman. We are aware that the temporary suspension of social rules and roles in conditions of war allowed Coriolanus to be a free agent, and that the victor would necessarily become the victim with the re-instatement of the statutes. Without those rules, "his war" (in Volumnia's words) can become the real medium of ideal, archaic-Roman valour; the frequent references to Homeric heroism are more than meta-

phors. The ancient gods are present or, to be more exact: Mars and Coriolanus become one. The taking of Corioli reads like a fairy tale, and during the march on Rome, the former enemy clearly enjoys his god-like status among the Volscians. However, the moment Coriolanus returns and comes under the jurisdiction of laws and habits once again, the gods leave and the hero is left powerless. Shakespeare's portrayal of the rules regulating social interaction is melancholy. They allow such tribunes as these to thrive, and they suppress human greatness. They favour the deceitful spirit, dissembling, strategems, and they destroy the spirit of truth and the language of the heart. Language has a fundamental role in this play which we shall later have to examine more closely. Coriolanus' language is heroic action, the language of the sword, and when, back in Rome, action becomes language--

Volumnia

...for in such is business
Action is eloquence (827)

---it is a convincing, double-dealing language to which Coriolanus is a total stranger and with which he can be manipulated like a child.

But language, of course, is also the medium of the establishment of an operative ego in society, and here, Shakespeare implies, Coriolanus never matures, nor does he wish to mature. This absolutism, this angry insistence on remaining a stranger in the real Rome, in favour of an ideal Rome, is his guilt and inadequacy. He is unwilling to meet the real Roman society on its own ground to then become productive as its leader. At times when the people expect a father to guide them (as was

the Renaissance concept of a good leader) he remains the angry young man. There are, in fact, good psychological and philosophical reasons for this, as we shall further see but, as far as we can determine, no socio-political reasons as such. In Shakespeare, the patricians have a positive insight into the ideal of human society and government--Menenius, with his fable, is their spokesman--despite having become negligent of their duties. Coriolanus, however, absorbed by his ideal of fighting valour, does not recognize this social ideal of productive harmony.

We shall now examine Brecht's reaction to the psychological background of this Shakespearean hero. Brecht consistently seeks to turn any instance of psychological interest in Coriolanus into historical interest. At the end of act IV, stands Aufidius' important reflection,

So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time; (838)

suggesting the opportunist's response to Coriolanus' claim to a timeless heroic ideal. Brecht's subtle change,

Und unser Wert hängt ab von dem Gebrauch
Den unsre Zeit macht von uns. (2480)

is quite significant. Here, the enemy who speaks is vastly superior to Coriolan in historic-materialistic insight and, therefore, gains a deadly leverage against the hero. The knowledge that "Macht verkommt durch Macht"--a very close translation (*ibid.*)--now assumes a hopeful meaning, a promise of change and progress. The melancholic and rather

nihilistic connotations in Shakespeare are eliminated, particularly because Aufidius, in contrast to Coriolan, is elevated in stature. In both versions, Aufidius knows Coriolanus intimately, whereas Coriolanus knows very little about Aufidius or, indeed, himself. In Shakespeare, Aufidius considers three motives for Coriolanus' misfortune which present a climax of deepening perception: 1) pride, 2) defect of judgment, and 3) the deeper disposition of his "nature, / Not to be...one thing"--

...not moving
 From the casque to the cushion, but commanding
 peace
 Even with the same austerity and garb
 As he controlled the war. (838).

Brecht could not be expected to retain the psychoanalytical descent into the secret of his personality. The assessment of his Aufidius hinges on one principle:

Der Mann hing ab vom Glück und konnte Glück
 Nicht nutzen. (2480)

Coriolan is a man of the past, and the past is a time of "Glück" promoting 'selves', self-interest and group interest, of constant struggle for power. This is also the essence of the 'war-and-peace' antithesis in Brecht, although he plays this down as much as possible. The time has come for the forces of peace which rule with the words of reason, not with swords. Anyone armed with the old warring spirit attempting to disrupt peaceful progression will be destroyed by these times. Brecht manages to invert Shakespeare's value relationship of war-time and peace-

time rule--peace, in Shakespeare's context, denotes a continuation of war on a debased and viler level (as was shown) to which Coriolanus is too proud to condescend.

The vehicle of scheming psychological warfare is language, "eloquence". In order to transform it into the required language of reason, it was necessary for Brecht to fundamentally change its agents, the tribunes. His tribunes, therefore, speak the reasonable, unemotional language of constitutional reform and of social law. Brecht's most radical changes and deletions occur in the speeches of the tribunes. In act III, iii of the Shakespeare text which corresponds to Brecht's act III, ii, Sicinius and Brutus are engaged in a lengthy discourse planning strategy to be used against Coriolanus. They instruct and Aedile to organize a crowd for the proposed verbal attack and vote which should

If I say fine, cry fine, if death, cry death. (828)

Their purpose is to

Put him to choler straight...

...Being once again chafed, he cannot
Be reined again to temperance, then he speaks
What's in his heart, and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck. (828)

Where, in Shakespeare, the tribunes speak forty-one lines in preparation for the arrival of Coriolanus, Brecht has only five of strictly legal confirmation,

Brutus Dies sind die Obleute der Wahlbezirke?

Adil Ja

Brutus Hast du die Liste aller Stimmen, die sie vertreten?

Adil Ja, hier ist sie.

Sicinius Und hier kommt er.

(Es treten auf Coriolan, Menenius, Cominius und Senatoren)
(2455)

Brecht thus completely alters the meaning of peace-time confrontation in Rome: a new, responsible leadership is at work, a truly collective, unbiassed, matter-of-fact type of politician who contrasts, to the point of ridicule, with old-time, socially unfounded egomania. The old spirit of "I alone!" or "We alone!" (including the patricians) clashes with the new democratic law which heralds a prosperous future for the city.¹⁷

For Brecht, the 'I alone' pathos is obsolete pseudo-heroism. While this spirit may well find temporary asylum, and even glorification in the ongoing wars, it is fully and most obviously compromised (even to the patricians) where peaceful social leadership is at stake. To further clarify this point, Brecht adds short dialogues such as that in act III, ii, when Coriolan makes his second attempt to win the consulship:

Adil Hört eure Tribunen!

Coriolan Erst mich!

Bürger Erst er! Wie immer doch: erst er!

Sicinius Nun gut, sprecht ihr!

Bürger

Erst ich, dann das Gesetz!-
Beharrt nicht auf der Form! (2456)

In Brecht's reading of Shakespeare, Coriolanus' spiritual absolutism represents a grandiose absurdity and an embarrassment to the patricians themselves who are trying to adapt their policy to the new spirit and time, and who are busy to 'sell' themselves and hide their true passions and motives (Menenius!). Thus, even in the confrontation between Coriolan and the patricians, Brecht reverses Shakespeare's value judgment as he did in the instance of Coriolan and the tribunes. It can at least be said of the patricians that they move with the times and betray a degree of good sense and readiness to compromise. In these forum scenes, Brecht's re-evaluation of Shakespeare's "lonely dragon" is especially striking. Brecht carefully eliminates Shakespeare's paradox of the isolated individual, 'banished' from home and humanity, which carries a superior psychological and philosophical weight and is simply much more interesting. Coriolan's rage is quite unprovoked and thus borders on the absurd:

Der Hölle tiefster Schlund verschling das Volk. (2457)

It stands out as the self-expression of one whose heroic isolation is not, as in Shakespeare, of a fateful or 'tragic' quality, but a matter of free choice in a false and historically out-dated consciousness. What he displays, in Brecht's estimation, is the monstrous gluttony of a monstrous god; and Brecht then strengthens this material basis of his

behavior by several references to his eating habits. When the 'god' threatens to destroy the city, the anxious Menenius, who knows him best, suggests that he should "erst gut frdhstücken" before being confronted with pleas to make peace (2482 and 2484). Accordingly, his first verbal onslaught directed at Sicinius (a fairly close translation):

Du Hund
 Von einem Tribun, und du Tribun von Hunden!
 Du Dreck des Drecks! Lump, dessen Augen hungern
 Nach meinem Tod... (2457)

merely reflects his own aggressive 'hunger', whereas, in Shakespeare, this description fits the tribunes and their actions quite well. In Shakespeare, the tribunes are not only vengeful and bloodthirsty, but also wealthy (and therefore dubious representatives of the poor). And their behavior is, quite uncannily, that of vicious dogs: they hunt down their man, attack where he is most vulnerable, and once he is banished and about to leave the city, they (unnecessarily) send the mob after him, to

...follow him...with all despite.
 Give him deserved vexation... (830)

Brecht, of course, struck this from his version and ends the scene with the joyful exclamation of the people:

Der Feind des Volks ist weg, ist weg!
 (Sie werfen ihre Kopfbedeckungen in die Luft, 2460)

Here, Brecht employs one of his most successful principles of 'dialectic'

adaptation: he deprives the hero's utterances and actions of their objective foundations and thus allows them to boomerang. He truly alienates them from our contextual understanding.

Brecht handles Coriolan's reaction to his imminent exile similarly:

Nay mother,
 Where is your ancient courage? You were used
 to say extremities was the trier of spirits;
 that common chances men could bear...

Nein Mutter
 Wo ist der alte Mumm? Wer lehrte mich, dass
 Gewöhnliches Unglück und gewöhnliches Glück
 Was für gewöhnliche Leute sind?

Your son
 will not or exceed the common, or be caught
 by cautious baits and practice. (830)

...dein Sohn wird
 Entweder ungewöhnlich handeln oder
 Den kleinen Praktiken der gewöhnlichen Art
 Zum Opfer fallen. (2460f)

In Shakespeare, this "ancient courage" pitted against "common men" has full heroic validity. Coriolanus is mindful of his resources to cope with absolute disaster: expulsion from his mother-Rome. His desire to be above the "common" with its "cautious baits and practice", of which he has just had more than a sampling, is quite commendable in this context, while deepening the sense of his misfortune and loneliness.

Brecht's translation, however, effects almost the opposite. The hero's speech has no definite target. There is no objectionable 'Gewöhnlichkeit' nor "kleine Praktiken" to which he might fall victim, as he does in Shakespeare's version. Brecht also strengthens the purely subjective quality of the hero's claim through parody: the obnoxious reiteration of "gewöhnlich" (5 times) rendering it an obsession. Parody is also the

"alte Mumm" as a translation of "ancient courage"; this ideal of his yearning soul is reduced to the jargon of a retiring social caste. It also subtracts any real seriousness from the matter. Most importantly, however, Brecht removes any serious impact of the expulsion itself on the hero as well as on the sympathy of the spectator. Brecht's Coriolanus truly 'prides' himself on the enormity of his fate; he feeds his ego by turning his defeat into an asset. This underscores his typical insensitivity to history, change and any kind of productive antithesis. Such disposition of mind, of course, considerably weakens the motive for his march on Rome. We shall later see how Brecht solved this structural problem

Coriolanus' arch-enemy, the people's collective of Rome, is incessantly under furious verbal and finally military attack. Brecht found this situation to be the perfect grist for his mill, a veritable god-send for the purpose of his adaptation. However, a closer look at Shakespeare's imagery should suffice to convince us that depth psychology can provide better insight into Coriolanus' furor than can sociology.

The recurrent imagery in Coriolanus' vituperative language falls into the three basic categories of disease, physical repulsion (especially bad breath) and of lower, contemptible animals. Maurice Charney claims that all of the disease imagery in the play, e.g.,

you dissentious rogues
That rubbing the poor itch of your opinion
Make yourselves scabs... (806)

is derived from the idea of the healthy body-state of Menenius' fable.¹⁸ However, the greatest portion of these images are Coriolanus' and do not refer back to Menenius' concept of a healthy state, but rather to a homogeneous elite. A Coriolanus ready to "pluck out the multitudinous tongues" (824) i.e., the people and their voices, from the body of the state is hardly concerned about its health in Menenius' terms. Coriolanus' healthy body is that of his own ideal self, and as he rages at the insufficiency of the people and their right to live, he transforms them into symbols of his own insufficient real self. He consequently rages at supposed substandard (animal and weak) tendencies in his own nature, denying them the right to exist.¹⁹

One must remember that Coriolanus is indeed a very young man seeking his identity, with a tempestuous single-mindedness, in the heroic goals set for him by his mother-Rome. The most viciously calculated blow dealt him by his antagonists (causing his death with minutes!) is certainly Aufidius' charge "thou boy of tears" (844). These words play on his self proclaimed superego of manly independence:

I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct; but stand,
As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other kin. (840)

His frustration with himself explodes into fury. For he, Coriolanus, knows all too well that he, in the confrontation with his mother and wife, has just succumbed to the natural instincts of the child and

husband; that he "sat too long", allowing the "woman's tenderness" (841) in him free rein. Aufidius thus devilishly spills forth on the market place what the hero's secretly anguished sense of defeat cannot deny, yet which to us, and perhaps even to Aufidius, is the most human, honourable and truly noble quality in Coriolanus' nature.

It is now quite remarkable to discover how closely his images of the people correspond to this image of himself, especially to his desire to cleanse himself of all instinctual, passive and appetitive tendencies in his nature. This warrior, unafraid of death in battle, is deathly frightened of the infection, decay and death of his spirit symbolized by the people. The recurrent motive of the people's bad breath signifies their contaminating spirit infesting his own. They are a "mutable, rank-scented many" (822), a disease, like "measles" to be eradicated. This Coriolanus vows to do with every word and weapon he can muster: until his own last breath

...shall my lungs
Coin words till their decay against those measles...(823)

And this he does in the following manner:

You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
As reek a'th rotten fens, whose love I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied man,
That do corrupt my air; I banish you...(830)

The psychological symbolism of the corrupting scent of 'cur's' breath and, especially unburied men, of the very idea of 'banishing' the people,

is unmistakable. His preoccupation with cleanliness points to the same phenomenon. As everyone shouts forth emulations of his victory, he can only say

I will go wash.
 And when my face is fair, you shall perceive
 Whether I blush or no. (813)

The people, in turn, are admonished to

wash their faces
 And keep their teeth clean. (819)

This is analogous to the frequent animal images of instinctual and moral baseness²⁰ together with the implied 'noble' opposites (lions, eagles, etc.). Psychologically, the most interesting of these images, however, are those of the hydra for the people, and the butterfly-dragon for himself. The plebeian hydra, "the beast with many heads" (830), is entirely comprised of tongues, mouths and voices which, by implication, multiply even while being cut back. His battle against it, though inward, is nevertheless Herculean. But Coriolanus is no Hercules capable of decisively fending off naturally or evilly rampant powers. He is a highly vulnerable young man, and the central motive of his wounds has, therefore, a double function. They signify the god-like invincibility of a soldier and the child-like vulnerability of a man striving to realize his identity. They can be construed, psychologically, as wounds of honour which he must protect, by any means, from the touch and intrusion of the hydra's "multiplying spawn" (812). He cannot

"stand naked" before it, his wounds were not inflicted "for the hire... of their the plebeians breath" (818). His highly precarious sense of honour, the condition of his 'open wounds', breeds his typical anguished revulsion of the ancient custom implied in the striking explanation of the "third citizen":

...for if he show us his wounds and tell us his
deeds, we are to put our tongues into those
wounds and speak for them; (819)

The most interesting image for Coriolanus' psychological vulnerability is that of the butterfly. Critics repeatedly refer to the scene in which young Martius tears apart a butterfly as an expression of the hero's innate fierceness and aggressiveness. The actual meaning of the butterfly is vividly revealed when Menenius, in act V, iv, speaks of Coriolanus as a butterfly which, exiled, assumed the shape of a dragon. Inwardly, Coriolanus remains a delicate and vulnerable butterfly. His furious aggression is directed towards his inner self: he tears himself apart.

Brecht does everything to reverse the inward direction of Shakespeare's text. The real (historic material) conflict between the hero and the people is never to be doubted. Coriolanus' aggressive irrational imagery must have posed a considerable problem for Brecht, especially because he could not change it without completely rewriting all of the hero's speeches. It seems that not even Brecht quite understood the inward bent of this imagery. To take, for example, the funda-

mental category of 'cowardly' animals (hares, geese, etc.), Brecht writes that the references to the plebeians' cowardice are "nicht begründet von Shakespeare".²¹ Hence, in his translation, Coriolan's imaginative invectives are anchored neither in the subjective nor in the objective conditions²² of his experience. This does not necessarily mean that Brecht leaves us with 'blind' images. When he translates:

Ihr Kropfzeug! Dessen Atem ich schon hasse
 Wie den Gestank von Sumpf und dessen Liebe
 Ich schätze wie das Aas noch immer nicht
 Begrabner Feinde. Ich verbanne euch!
 Und hier sollt ihr mir bleiben müssen, angst-
 Geschüttelt, euch bekackend, wenn ein Helmbusch
 Von ungewohnter Farb im Tor auftaucht. (2459)

he eliminates images pointing to Coriolan's inner struggle (like the 'corrupting of his air' by the stench of rotting bodies) and strengthens crude aggression ("bekacken"). What remains is historically and realistically unfounded ideology of high and low, pure and impure, strength and weakness. In the mirrors of the images we cannot recognize Brecht's plebeians or Coriolan's own 'heart'. The central phrase, "Ich verbanne euch!", is then exposed to the historical irony, and even ridicule, of a ruler who decides to dismiss his rebellious people.²³

Brecht consequently ends this scene with a preposterous revelation: it is for him the spectacle of a ruling class driven to the extremity of revealing the historical absurdity to which it has come. He could not allow any psychological relativity to intrude into this historic-material event of the highest order. After all, the unprecedented ban-

ishment of a leading patrician by the people of Rome was the point of both Plutarch's and Shakespeare's stories as it had attracted Brecht in the first place. In the vote-begging scene (II, iii) which precedes his banishment, Brecht accordingly strengthens the role and impact of the plebeians considerably. Whereas Shakespeare hardly presents the plebeians as dialectic partners, leaving only Coriolanus' anger and anguish, Brecht fully employs them in open confrontation. He turns Shakespeare's nonplussed "good citizens" into enlightened pedagogues. In the teaching of Marx, enlightenment of and by the masses²⁴ precedes the revolutionary act. This scene most closely resembles his early dialectic plays. Brecht's citizens stand in a socially productive reality--they are "Flickschuster", Gärtner", etc.--Coriolan does not; he simply wants to have their voices and has no interest in their "Gewerbe" as such:

Coriolan Hahaha! Ich studiere die Gewerbe hier,
Herr. Dieser Herr ist ein Flickschuster,
und was seid ihr, Herr?

Fünfter Bürger Ich bin ein Gärtner, Herr.

Coriolan Und was lehrt euch eure Gewerbe, was den
Staat angeht, denn hier sollt ihr etwas
für den Staat entscheiden. (2440)

Coriolan has no insight whatever into that which is clearly communicated to the audience, i.e., that human, social "Gewerbe" is the state. His 'interest' provides him immunity to the teaching of the gardener:

Fünfter Bürger Herr, mein Garten lehrt mich-
Dies kleine Reich der Beeten und Rabatten -
Dass selbst die edle Rose von Milet
Von allzu üppigem Wuchs beschnitten sein muss

Soll sie gedeihn. Auch muss sie sich drein finden
 Dass Kohl und Lauch und allerlei Gemüse
 Von niederer Abstammung, doch ziemlich nützlich
 An ihrer Seit ihr Wasser abbekommen.

Coriolan Was soll das heissen, Stimme?

Fünfter Bürger Der Garten müß verwildern, dächte man
 Der königlichen Rose.

Coriolan Danke für Belehrung. Und nur noch eins:
 Die Stimme, Stimme! (2440f.)

This parable of 'communism' is Brecht's answer to Shakespeare's Menenius fable. Coriolan simply refuses to understand its relevance for the present and, more importantly, for the future of Roman society. To accentuate this dimension, Brecht re-introduces a "Mann mit Kind" (2439). Hence, we understand thereby that society must provide for its children and not prepare the way to their demise by electing a war specialist as leader. Society must also teach its children to judge and test its leaders. Brecht offers an ingenious comment on the traditional vote-seeking ritual. Shakespeare, we remember, used the custom to demonstrate the hero's vulnerable self-consciousness, and his fear of contaminating or alienating the ideal of his heart.

Mann (zeigt dem Kind Coriolans Toga): Das ist die
 schlichte Toga, mit der sie sich auf dem Markt
 bewerben müssen, Terzius. Sie hat keine Taschen,
 damit er keine Stimmen kaufen kann, hahaha.
 Sonst möchte er sie vielleicht kaufen, wie? (2439)

A custom such as this is a constructive innovation of the people. It seeks to insure that the candidate reveal his true merit, and to prevent the cunning purchase of votes. Brecht reverses Shakespeare's im-

plicit criticism: for Shakespeare, the commodities in the market place are the wounds of the heart, for Brecht, the votes of the people. Ingenious as this may appear, it remains a misconstruction. The cunning dealer's spirit may be that of Menenius and the ruling class in principle, but it cannot be that of the hero, not even in Brecht's version. We must remember that Brecht's title figure is, in fact, an embarrassment to his fellow patricians because he lacks political strategy and proves incapable of winning the people's submission through clever rhetoric and play acting.

Brecht has successfully suppressed Shakespeare's hydra imagery with its irrational connotations. It occurs only once, inconspicuously ("Das Tier mit vielen Häuptionern stösst mich weg", 2460). Instead, he stresses and expands the limited animal images which refer to Coriolan encircling and devouring the city. Thus, typically, he concludes the decisive scene leading up to Coriolan's banishment with Brutus' decree

Ergreift die Viper
Die eine Stadt entvölkern will, um alles
In allem drin zu sein! (2449)

The deadly threat of a 'hero' monstrously growing into the totality of Rome (i.e., 'hydra' properties are transferred to Coriolan) while possessing its people, demands the exclusive interest of both Brecht and the audience. Of course Brecht interpreted the scene with young Martius tearing apart the butterfly accordingly: it is to reflect his father's aggression toward other tender life, and his lust in play-

ing the master of life and death. Even Virgilia, the boy's mother, now comments:

Ein kleiner Schläger Madame. (2408)

And when Menenius later describes Coriolan himself as a butterfly assuming the shape of a dragon, Brecht translates:

Dieser Marcius ist aus einem Menschen ein Drache geworden. (2486)

Consequently, we understand that Coriolan had been a "Mensch" in Menenius' eyes as long as he only threatened the people; however, now that he threatens Menenius and his friends, he becomes a "Drache". Brecht turned symbolic psychology into an alienating effect revealing and exposing the subject of the speech, not its object.

Brecht could not allow any tendency towards inwardness, spiritual struggle, or even youth to explain or excuse Coriolan's words and actions. Shakespeare's absolute moralist had to be portrayed as an immoral absolutist negating communal life and history. How then did Brecht handle the irradicably fundamental reference to the hero's youth, the "boy" who must be a man, the filial obedience to his mother? The answer is quite surprising: he permits psychopathology to take care of the entire complex by insisting on an Oedipal relationship between mother and son.

As for Shakespeare's interest in this mother-son relationship, Plutarch supplies the motive: the paradox of the fierce warrior and the

tenderly obedient son. He also explains that this only child had never known his father and that his mother developed and disciplined the martial Roman virtues in him. Shakespeare draws his conclusion from this information that Coriolanus' spirit and valour spring from the sole source of his mother: he identifies Rome and Volumnia in the boy's mind.²⁵ Rome is his mother and his mother is Rome. He gives all his heart and service to his mother Rome. The identity of mother and Rome, the libidinous base and the ideal superstructure, permitted no development of an ego. But it is Coriolanus' tragedy that his mother is not the ideal his heart has made her, and that she, in her double identity, turns against him. Correspondingly, it is Volumnia's tragedy to find that her son, in whom she has implanted her fervent Roman ambition, has taken her too literally (see the following chapter's discussion of his problem with the established language) and destructively turned against her.

Shakespeare's Volumnia is a fiercely domineering woman who, with her erotic cult of battle, wounds and death,

The breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier,
Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood... (808)

has forced the young boy into a mould which is not natural to him; for we must bear in mind that he has chosen Virgilia for his wife whose sympathetic femininity is his mother's exact opposite.²⁶ The praise heaped upon Volumnia by most of the critics is therefore truly amazing.

She is no longer the arch-Roman matron celebrated by Plutarch. When she 'disciplines' her son for the last time, in the great rhetorical feat mentioned above, her methods are more than questionable:

There is no man in the world
More bound to's mother, yet here he lets me prate
Like one i'th' stock. Thou hast never in thy life
Showed thy dear mother any courtesy,
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has clucked thee to the wars, and safely home,
Loaden with honour. (841)

Volumnia takes advantage, as she has always done, of her son's love and gratitude towards her. She has always made him fulfill her desires, bring home to her all the wounds in which she revels ("O he is wounded, I thank the gods for't". 815) and display them in pursuit of political power, which is strictly against his natural inclination. She then demands "courtesy" for such a "dear mother", "poor hen", as she stylizes herself, that has "clucked" him "safely home" from the wars, while, in fact, she did everything in her power to send him to his death. For we have just witnessed her as being outgoing and triumphant when she knew him to be in battle, in the grip of death; and it was Virgilia who stayed at home in silence, praying for his safety. Volumnia demands this ill-founded "courtesy" from him in order to finally achieve her latent goal: his death--for Rome. Hence it is Shakespeare's supreme tragic irony that she thus becomes the actual saviour of Rome, a celebrated heroine who has made the ultimate sacrifice. Coriolanus' simple love cannot understand her; her word is to him the word of Rome. He

does not understand, even in his last moments, how the 'true' mother-Rome which he has come to avenge can speak with two tongues; but only a dim awareness of having played some terrible role weighs upon him, and he senses that his end is near.

Shakespeare's psychological probing leads to questions of moral truth. Brecht's interest in the antithesis of moral appearance and moral reality picked up the 'alienating' devices in Shakespeare's portrait of Volumnia and strengthened them by implications of pathological deviation. But again he shuns individual psychology: all three generations, mother, son, and the child, Martius, are sadists. Where Shakespeare's Volumnia says,

Methinks I...see him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair;
(808)

Brecht 'translates',

Virgilia, ich seh ihn diesen Aufidius einfach schlachten.
(2408)

Father and son are, in the same scene, "Schläger". It is Brecht's conviction that the moral-psychological makeup of the ruling classes is degenerating through static, anti-historic rule, and that 'health' is a property of the class which produces. The urge to suppress and possess others through bondage is a destructively pathological human desire. The class structure of our society invites its free and sometimes epidemic development; Nazism was, for Brecht, the supreme example and proof.

Sexual bondage is one form of pathological possessiveness. Brecht employs this motive, especially in act V, when Volumnia uses the full leverage of Coriolan's dependence on her to have her way:

So wirst du deine Vaterstadt betreten
Indem du erst auf deiner Mutter Schoss trittst
Der dich auf diese Welt warf. (2491)

Shakespeare speaks of his "mother's womb / That brought thee to the world" (841)--the new accent is clearly noticeable. Brecht's correlative is the "Muttersöhnchen" (2495)--Aufidius' accusation that makes the secret public. Brecht, who cut the fifth act so drastically, uses Coriolan's lamentable protestations that he is no "Muttersöhnchen" (repeated three times) as his climax: the definite demythologization of a hero. The ideal superstructure immediately collapses as the material basis is revealed--sexual bondage, and sadism beneath the avenging furor. There is no shred of sympathy left in the spectator for this hero when he meets his death, whereas we do sympathize with the anguish evoked in the Shakespearean hero by the accusation "boy".

Again, however, Brecht faced problems with his new conception of Volumnia which he was unable to solve convincingly. Volumnia is, after all, the chief advocate of the presentation on the market place (viewed positively by Brecht) and she is decisive in averting the threat of death faced by the people of Rome. She is, after Brecht's heart, a realist with shrewd political cunning, though of the wrong party, and he therefore attempts to make her into an effective patriot,²⁷ hoping

to gain another critical contrast to Coriolan in the process. Volumnia's advice in the vote-begging scene,

Sohn

Ich hab ein Herz, so wenig matt wie deins
 Doch sagt mein Hirn mir, wann's die Zeit für Zorn ist
 Und auch, wann's nicht die Zeit ist. Lass dir raten!
 (2451)

is undoubtedly full of political wisdom, whereas in Shakespeare's text, there is only bitter contemplation of 'time' playing with the heart's truth. It is difficult to see the sadism and political wisdom as functionally and psychologically compatible in Volumnia's character. It is even more difficult to believe that Volumnia, confronted in the last act with the fruits of her own work--her son and the deadly threat he poses--can become the real tragic figure:

Ich darf nicht den Himmel bitten
 Dass du siegst, Sohn, was ich doch dürfen müsst
 Und nicht, dass unsre Stadt siegt, was ich
 Auch dürfen müsst... (2491)

--up to the final rejection and 'tragic' breakthrough,

Unersetzlich

Bist du nicht mehr, nur noch die tödliche
 Gefahr für alle. Wart nicht auf den Rauch
 Der Unterwerfung! Wenn du Rauch sehn wirst
 Dann aus den Schmieden steigend, die jetzt Schwerter
 Wider dich schmieden, der dem eignen Volk den
 Fuss auf den Nacken setzen will... (2492)

Here, Brecht lends her his own perspective. Even his "erster Bürger" in act II, iii (2437), had believed in the hero's irreplaceability. Thus,

Brecht, in debasing the hero and exposing him to our contempt, raises his mother--with whom he had too closely associated him previously--to tragic stature. The necessity of these shifts and changes, from Brecht's point of view, becomes clear. Their validity and consistency, within the framework of the entire play, remains uncertain.

CHAPTER IV

The Problem of Language

One of the most important themes in Shakespeare's play is, as previously stated, the problem of 'language'. This problem encompasses the contradiction of a truthful and 'political' language, and the intimate connection between this political language and a functional knowledge of others and of one's own self. To demonstrate the consequence of this circumstance in Shakespeare's text, we shall trace it through the work, and then examine Brecht's response.

Coriolanus' loneliness is closely associated with the problem of a shared language. A common language, among other things, accommodates man, provides him with an ego conditioned among egos, and establishes social identities with roles of interaction. Coriolanus has no such language and, because of its characteristic untruthfulness, never desires it. This explains the disastrous lack of understanding between himself and all others. It is one of Shakespeare's most fascinating paradoxes inasmuch as friend and enemy alike speak of nothing but Coriolanus, and he of nothing but his friends and enemies in relation to himself. It is evident that Coriolanus has no real knowledge of the people, nor even of the two individuals whom he embraces with all his heart, Aufidius and Volumnia. Aufidius is the villain who slays him in the end, and Volumnia's specific 'Romanness' remains unknown to him. When he defies the citizens and meets with her criticism, he is stunned:

Sicinius		'Twere well
	We let the people kno'w.	
Menenius		What, what? His choler?
Coriolanus	Choler?	
	Were I as patient as...etc.	
Sicinius		It is a mind
	That shall remain a poison where it is, Not poison any further.	
Coriolanus		Shall remain?
	Hear you this triton of the minnows? Mark you	
	His absolute shall?	
Cominius		'Twas from the canon.
Coriolanus		Shall?
	O good...patricians... (823)	

and he launches a lengthy (23 lines) furious tirade about "his shall", "his peremptory shall", "his popular shall", etc. The senator, Menenius and Sicinius speak full sentences attempting to get the situation in hand. But Coriolanus only picks up certain words, quite harmless in their context, against which to hurl his quixotic attacks. Thus, isolated and repetitive (Shakespeare isolates and exposes his words also by breaking his lines), their significance is entirely different and stems from quite another system of meaning. Herein lies the deepest source of Coriolanus' loneliness. He pours forth boundless cascades of words like blood from his heart (his own analogy!) to rid his country of their inner enemy, common "infirmity" and corruption. Yet he moves nothing and no one, and since no one understands him, only 'unwise' or

'hostile' is registered on the social scale of values. At the same time he becomes hopelessly entangled in a few strategically placed words. His speeches do not succeed in rendering him the healer of a diseased society, as was intended, but rather its victim. The problematic analogy of word with sword occurs for the first time, foreboding the coming events, near the beginning in the following exchange:

Brutus	Sir, I hope My words disbenched you not?
Coriolanus	No sir. Yet oft, When blows have made me stay, I fled from words. (817)

We know he will find no escape from words in Rome. Language becomes the element of action, the decision "to be or not to be" depends on the verdict for or against it. Coriolanus does not recognize this; he has no knowledge of himself, since he avoids, with certain disgust (as we have seen), establishing a socializing ego. He has neither the intention nor capacity to soliloquize, as does Hamlet, i.e., to contemplate and come to terms with his existential dilemma. He speaks only one short soliloquy as compared with Hamlet's seven lengthy ones.¹ He instinctively shrinks from exposing his war deeds to contaminating words--praise and eulogy--as he shrinks from exposing his wounds to the public, as required. He feels, with immense passion and even anguish, that his blood, as it flowed from his wounds, had nothing whatever in common with these strange words he hears; his scars become "nothings monstered" with words

expressed in the most powerful, precise and rhythmically splendid speeches of the play. And to demand, as does Volumnia, that this man's "tongue" produce "bastards", is to expect that he betrays

Some harlot's spirit. My throat of war be turned
...into a pipe
 Small as an eunuch...A beggar's tongue
 Make motion through my lips... (828)

Volumnia should know how helpless this man, her son, must be on the political market place where wounds of war and heart are bought and sold. The dealer's or "beggar's tongue", however, is understood by its advocates as the "good tongue"--Sicinius pleads with Menenius in act V, i, to use it in imploring Coriolanus for mercy (838).

What can now be said of Shakespeare's implicit judgment of Coriolanus' mind and action? He presents a great asocial hero and 'small' social people. Their 'socializing' language is compromising, inconsistent and lends itself to dishonesty. But theirs is a language of life, and Coriolanus' is the language of death: he is unable to lay down his sword. Ideally, it is he who is right:³ the truth of his heart seems to have little chance with his fellow man. The people vote for him one minute and against him the next. The patricians first eulogize and then withdraw from him. The Volscians make him their god, then slay him as their bitterest enemy. And Coriolanus changes 'costumes' rapidly: from armour to robe to beggar's garb. We then understand the exclamation

O world, thy slippery turns! (832)

which begins his short soliloquy, only too well. We also apprehend, to a degree, his anti-democratic furor in act III, i:

Must these have voices that...
...straight disdain their tongues?
(822)

Practically and politically, however, Coriolanus is, of course, wrong. He does not understand that by refusing to "act" the parts assigned to him (he remains exactly the same in all his costumes) and by not allowing others to act theirs he becomes (like Lear) the "unaccommodated man" who can only banish or be banished. From the distance of his own ideal super-ego, he sees only despicable language roles, not the people who use them to 'accommodate' themselves and each other. And accordingly, he cannot perceive himself as a functioning person, but only as a will. The people, therefore, do not become visible to him from behind their "voices". Throughout his 'campaign' in act II, iii, he addresses them with cruelly unjust sarcasms as "voices" ("here come moe voices", "worthy voices", etc.) Such scornful remarks sharply contrast with their friendly, harmless behavior ("We hope to find you our friend", "The gods give you joy sir heartily", 820). With him, the world is dehumanized and becomes a battlefield of beasts; the people as "the beast with many heads" is opposed by a "lonely dragon" (830) whose isolation is much more pronounced than in Plutarch.⁴ This rigidity of absolute will, along with his absence of self (-knowledge) does not allow him to learn.⁵ John Dover Wilson, in his introduction,⁶ insists that Coriolanus matures before meeting his

death, and that he realizes, for the first time, his responsibility to "the very life of family and country".⁷ And when--following Volumnia's appeal--he

[holds her by the hand, silent] (835)

he "comes to know himself", in Wilson's view, "and to understand the meaning of life".⁸ But such a man would not again react in precisely the same way to the word "traitor" as in his first crisis in act III. He would not seek to prove he is not a "boy", as charged, by reminding the Volscian soldier how he took 'the very lives of his family and country'.

Coriolanus' silence, however, is an even more interesting and complex matter. It is more than likely that he shares the inmost secrets of his heart not with his mother, Volumnia, but with his gentle wife, Virgilia, who speaks so little in the play, and whom he addresses on his return from Corioli as

my gracious silence (815)

Silence reigns where all social and heroic language and warfare ceases, and all his torrential outbursts are directed against those who disturb his dream of a higher poetry of life, and of a silent community of noble hearts. He could not "act" a part of "eloquence" at the market place, as we have seen. But, in the end, he comes to see--yet not to understand!--that by such single-minded and supremely 'rhetorical' enforcement of

his dream, he has indeed played a role, a role which led him nowhere except to "disgrace":

Like a dull actor now
I have forgot my part... (840)

It is the actor who forgot his lines who holds Volumnia's hand in silence. Coriolanus' mystery is Coriolanus' silence. Neither he nor anyone else, with the possible exception of Virgilia, understands or refers to it. It is continually buried under the mountain of words designed to grasp it. Coriolanus, it seems, is Shakespeare's most radical attempt to exclude any knowledge and self-knowledge of a great protagonist from a play's action and reflection, thereby leaving the 'mystery' open to our creative imaginations.⁹

If we compare this complex picture of language in Shakespeare's play with that in Brecht's version, we find it reduced, sometimes with bold, determined strokes, to quite a simple, basic pattern. In examining the language of Brecht's citizens and tribunes, we find a clear correspondence throughout between words and historical reason, and between words and the material content of the political situation; whereas the words of the nobility, with the exception of Coriolan, are wielded as strategic instruments of power. Their 'rhetorical' function serves to camouflage their political function. Coriolan alone shuns the disguise: "[Er] hält...zu keiner Regel keines Spiels." (2430). The language of militant aggression and suppression. of self-love and possess-

iveness no longer conceals its true purpose. The effect of this truthful language is one of mortification for the nobility, and optimism, in view of such self-condemnation, for the people. Shakespeare's tragic antithesis of the lonely, destructive, heartfelt language, and the 'social' scheming language of self-interest is completely revoked.

In both versions, the quality and ethics of public speech, the "action" on the market place of Rome, is of the essence. The rhetorical language of self-interest, however, becomes with Brecht (as shown above), the sole property of the ruling class, with their principle spokesman the "Schönredner", Menenius. His concern is with the "Wie" and not the "Was" of words (act I, i, 2400). Volumnia puts it more bluntly in explaining to her son that it is

dir jetzt auferlegt...,
 Zum Volk zu sprechen und dies mit Worten
 Die weiter nicht als von der Zunge kommen
 Bastardgeburten, Lauten nur und Silben
 Ganz unverbindlich...
 Verleugne deine Natur, denn diene Freunde
 Sind in Gefahr - und sieh Ehre darin. (2452)

The language that rules is purely manipulative, even the class oriented concept of "Ehre" is nothing more. Such language seeks to rule the market place by ruling out its true material concerns:

Sicinius Nun, wir sind hier
 Auf freundliches Vernehmen, und wir sind
 Nicht abgeneigt, den Gegenstand der Sitzung
 Zu ehren und zu fördern.

Brutus Um so lieber

Wenn er fortan dem Volk mehr Achtung zeigt
Als er's bisher tat.

Menenius

Das gehört nicht her.
Ihr hättet besser nicht gesprochen. Wollt ihr
Cominius hören? (2433)

This is one of Brecht's typical insertions. The nobility determines the form of public speech, and the function of this form is to avoid true public interest. Truthful language is 'non-language' and "gehört nicht her"--a rather provocative alienation device.

However, Brecht's historic-dialectic understanding of the text renders the antithesis of linguistic truth and untruth, i.e., of need and manipulation, obsolete in view of the new clashing antithesis of outspoken truths. The rulers' true sentiments are aroused by the new spokesmen of the ruled. We then witness the crucial revolutionary process whereby basic truths of society are forced into the open. Hence, Menenius is so comically ineffectual; he is outdated; everyone sees through him and his antics. By comparison, we must remember Shakespeare's sad implication that social wisdom, of which Menenius is the sole embodiment, has become comical, and assumed the shape of an old drinker and joker who is completely disregarded by all. In Brecht, Menenius speaks the language of the old antagonist which arouses glee; the new antagonist is Coriolan, and he speaks the language of the battlesword.

The last quotation above also shows how Brecht took careful pains to eliminate any manipulative quality from the language of the people and their spokesmen. Their's is a truly social, co-operative means of

communication; and they listen as well ("freundliches Vernehmen") as they speak. Brecht's version contains no fundamental language problem as does Shakespeare's. On the contrary, language enunciates factual truth even where it tries to hide it. Accordingly, the metaphysical fear of words in Shakespeare's hero becomes a morbid fear of words in Brecht's:

Oft
 Wenn Schläge mich verweilen machten, floh ich
 Vor Worten. (ibid.)

Fact and reason in words now confront and challenge much more effectively, and no force can annihilate them. Words like "Verräter", "Muttersöhnchen" and even "Korn" (among Brecht's additions) drive the hero to a powerless fury. In challenging Coriolan, Brecht's tribunes do not manipulate him, yet he feels himself subversively manipulated and attacked. In spite of their attitude, he refuses to listen to their words, but automatically, and defensively, suspects "ein Komplott" (2443 et passim). An interesting example of Brecht's re-working of the Shakespearean text, in this respect, is Brutus' use of

The noble house o' th' Martians; from whence came
 That Ancus Martius, Numa's daughter's son,
 Who after great Hostilius here was king...etc. (821)

Shakespeare's tribunes flagrantly misuse the 'noble name'. They instruct the people in psychological warfare during the short pause between the two phases of the battle on the market place; the citizens are

to pretend that, in voting for Coriolanus, they had been misguided by their deep respect for his noble ancestry, but that they must now retract their votes since they realize that he did not live up to his great name. It is a clever plan to divide the enemy, i.e., the patricians, as well as Coriolanus' own conscience. In Brecht's version, the name of Martian is not used in a secret, strategic planning session, but in open confrontation. And this confrontation, again, is not that of warfare, but of appeal:

Sicinius	Coriolanus
	Ihr stammt vom noblen Haus der Marcier...
	...Und aus demselben Haus
	Kam Publius und Quintus, gute Männer,
	Die uns durch Röhren gutes Wasser schafften.
	Ich bitt euch nun, eh ich in Volkes Namen
	Hier meine Fragen stelle, der beliebten Ahnen
	Euch innigst zu erinnern. Coriolanus
	Soeben liefen in den Hafen unsre
	Kornschniffe ein aus dem besiegten Antium.
	Die Fracht ist Korn. Tribut und Beute aus
	Dem blutigen Volskerkrieg. Was, edler Marcier
	Würdest du als Konsul tun mit diesem Korn?
Menenius	Gemach nun, Marcius!
Coriolanus	Das ist ein Komplott! (2443)

The contrast could not be more radical, Shakespeare's tribunes use the name of Martian to destroy Coriolanus, Brecht's use it to invite the productive potential of the candidate. Shakespeare's tribunes associate the name hypocritically with abstract nobility, thus using it for their own egoistic purposes; Brecht's tribunes associate it with concrete material achievement and usefulness. The name meant 'suppliers of

water' in the past, therefore, should it not mean suppliers of corn in the future? A child could not be guided with more pedagogic understanding: "Was, edler Marcier / Würd'st du...tun..?". Menenius and Coriolan, however, cannot afford even such gentle questioning, the latter only understands insult and attack:

Mir hier von Korn zu sprechen! (2444)

and

Ein Komplott, ich wusst es
Die Macht des Adels zu beseitigen! (2447)

Thus it becomes clear that Brecht makes Coriolan fully responsible for his inability to cope with public language; he eradicates the implicit criticism of this language in Shakespeare's text, and therewith one of its central themes. Accordingly, the market place, the forum of public speech and decision, takes on a new function in Brecht's adaptation. We no longer watch the great war leader exposed and helpless, like a fish out of water, in the strange political element of words, but find a stubborn power-monger who defensively stonewalls and hurls counter-claims when faced with the just claims of the people. In Shakespeare, the market place is a battlefield where the war hero has no chance; in Brecht, only the war hero himself behaves as if it were such. He is the only person who does not see and cannot understand that the market place is the people's place, and that it is his very function here to answer to the people, and give them a convincing account of his

leadership goals. He does not see--as the audience sees--that the purpose of the market place is to assemble the people for political decisions. In this case, with Brecht, the place of questioning the candidate becomes a tribunal. He took pains to have the tribunes proceed with complete constitutional logic, by posing sensible, clearly worded questions and passing judgment without a trace of malice or any other subverting emotion. Coriolan's response to this exemplary sober examination:

Ihr Hunde! Ihr verkrüppelten Söhne
Des Aufruhrs!... (2446)

All the dangerous emotionality and irrationality which made the language of Shakespeare's people and tribunes so base is now in Coriolan's language only.

This would explain Brecht's re-evaluation of the 'language of the heart' which is such a positive quality with Shakespeare's hero. To begin with, Brecht eliminates Shakespeare's direct references to this language, including the most important one by Menenius:

His heart's his mouth... (825)

Brecht wished to prevent the traditionally ideal connotations of the image. Moreover, Coriolan was to speak his mind, which was that of the class enemy. The emotional irrationality of his language, Brecht implied, revealed the absolute individualist. Brecht, therefore, knows no irreconcilable difference between the language of the heart, and the

market place. If there is a difference, it is the latter that truly counts, and which can expect that the heart be put into it. The custom which demands the wounds received in battle be translated into the language of the market place is a custom which makes sense. Brecht's Coriolan defies such logic of productive communication, and he defies the people's custom. The context, as well as a few well considered cuts and alterations in the modern version, turn Coriolan's behavior into that of a primadonna, and of a tyrant. Where Shakespeare's Sicinius betrays an aggressive insistence on "ceremony" (the people will not "bate / One jot of ceremony", 818), Brecht's simply says,

Das ist Sitte. (2435)

Brecht allows even Menenius more reason than could be expected of him:

Ich wollt, Ihr fügtet Euch der Sitte. Tut
Was alle Konsuln vor Euch taten. Tut
Nicht mehr noch weniger. (2436)

He employs this striking antithesis, Sicinius/Menenius versus Coriolan, as an alienating device, to expose the egomania of a leader who chooses not to speak to his people, and who treats their institutions with contempt:

's ist eine Rolle
Die ich nur mit Erröten spielen kann.
Solche Spektakel sollte man ihnen nehmen. (ibid.)

Shakespeare's hero, too, refers to a part "that I shall blush in acting";

but whereas this blushing--a very common metaphor in Shakespeare--speaks for his nobility of heart and becomes him well, the less frequent, effeminate "Erröten" exposes the fundamentally private interest in his actions to something close to ridicule. Public speech is the means of public progress; its denial, in Brecht's view, is treason. Brutus sums it up:

Du siehst, wie er das Volk behandeln will. (ibid.)

Brecht found this remark among the scheming whisperings of the tribunes. By isolating it at the end of the scene, he makes it truly public, and a disclosure of the purpose of this entire important scene.

Such rehabilitation of public speech, such condemnation of one who "fled from words" (817), renders Shakespeare's two most intimately connected motives, role-acting and silence, useless. In Shakespeare's text, Volumnia and Cominius seek to help the young idealist in his new role of eloquent action:

Come, come, we'll prompt you. (827)

Brecht cuts this. He also eliminates the tragic consequence of the hero's inability to speak his social role: the discovery that his own language, which no one understood, was that of a strange and destructive role, and the ensuing loss of even this language ("Like a dull actor now, / I have forgot my part", 840). Accordingly, knowledge, self-knowledge and the problem of understanding and communicating the truth (of minds and of hearts) are no longer themes in Brecht's adaptation. Silence, at last,

the inner core of Shakespeare's verbal battles, bears no message in Brecht. The climactic moment when Coriolanus' revenging furor is broken by his mother, and he [holds her by the hand, silent] (842), does not occur in Brecht's version. Virgilia, Coriolanus' "gracious silence", is reduced to a somewhat unnecessary good wife; Brecht translates this address, for no apparent reason, without its context. To him, a human truth outside social interaction and, accordingly, language, is unacceptable.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

One of the most efficient of the word-baits that Coriolanus, as the linguistic absolutist, readily takes, is certainly the charge "traitor". It is closely dependent on the concept of "Rome". In Shakespeare's text, both terms are used with a perfect ambivalence. Brecht offers an equally perfect, yet definite understanding. His answer to the question of treason, and of what Rome is, is as conclusive as his new ending.

In Shakespeare's play, all parties--especially the tribunes, the patricians, and Coriolanus--claim to speak and act in the name and service of Rome. But there is a Babel-like confusion as to its real meaning. For the citizens and the tribunes, Rome is the common people. For the patricians, Rome is another word for their nobility. For Coriolanus, Rome is an ideal. Shakespeare seems to imply that the idea of service has been contaminated by private or group interest. The (wealthy!) tribunes speak of service, but what they seek is to gain is power, at the expense of the patricians. The patricians, too, in speaking of Rome, serve nothing and no one but themselves. Unselfish service to Rome is found in Shakespeare's hero only, but he has lost--or rather failed to establish--contact with social realities. The strong and harmonious unity of head and members, and of the real and the ideal, in the political body has become a fairy-tale which is no longer believed by anyone. The social body is sick and in danger of collapse.

Den grossen Mann. Sie hören ungern unsre
 Seilmacher, Bäcker und Sandalenschneider
 In ihren Läden singen bei der Arbeit. (2472)

This, of course, is wholly Brecht's addition. He also eliminates Menenius' warning to Sicinius who claims that the hero is "a disease that must be cut away":

O, he's a limb that has but a disease:
 Mortal, to cut it off: to cure it, easy. (826)

Thus, in Shakespeare, the notion of 'treason' (although only applied to Coriolanus) is highly debatable: are these tribunes, with all their hatred of this vital "limb" ("Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence...", *ibid.*), not really the more dangerous traitors to the body of the state? Shakespeare seems to respond to this in the affirmative: the drastic expulsion will almost prove "mortal" to Rome. And is not their termite-like undermining of Coriolanus' strength a case of treason --against 'Roman' nobleness, honesty and valour?

Shakespeare, therefore, makes the citizens and tribunes much more responsible than Coriolanus himself for his march on Rome. He approaches the city like the god of revenge. Menenius and Cominius, Shakespeare's good and perceptive patricians, immediately offer this interpretation. Brecht, however, does not hesitate to offer quite a different answer to the question: 'how can this formerly powerful, now banished patrician be motivated to turn against his own beloved city?'. He concludes that the hero pretends to serve the city and state of Rome while actually serving the ruling classes of all nations. Through the extreme provo-

cation of banishment that deprives him of his basis of power, this contradiction is forced into the open. The superficial alliance to Rome is discarded in favour of the fundamental alliance to the nobility: he teams up with his fellow class member, the 'noble' Aufidius, against his own people. The initial judgment of the people (act I, 1) is proven correct: Coriolan is the "Feind des Volkes", by any definition.

Höchst glaublich, so was! (2475),

says Sicinius upon learning of Coriolan's approach, while Menenius still feigns to be utterly amazed:

Er und Aufidius, das ist Öl und Wasser. (ibid.).

Brecht cleverly capitalizes on the patricians' fearful, yet seeming 'heroically' affirmative reaction to Coriolan's threat of death and destruction to the city; his Sicinius informs the people of the truth:

Seid nicht entmutigt. 's gibt
Ein Pack in Rom, das gern bestätigt sähe
Was es zu fürchten vorgibt. (2478)

There is even more "Stoff" in Shakespeare that he could form in this mould, i.e., Coriolanus' life-long fierce love of his enemy, Aufidius:

I sin in envying his nobility:
And were I anything but what I am,
I would wish me only he. (806)

And later:

At Antium lives he?
 I wish I had a cause to seek him there... (822)

--a typical Shakespearean anticipation foreshadowing the events to come. Brecht, of course, makes concrete: these are expressions of latent treason which is to become manifest. Shakespeare had pitted the constructive ideal of a universal Rome against the realities of a Rome in time and place; hence, his tragic paradox of the patriot, Coriolanus, seeking his Rome in Antium, the enemy's capitol. Brecht typically translates the Shakespearean tragic paradox into the provoking contradiction of historical dialectics. He could only achieve this through a drastic reduction of the complex associative structure of the text, and at the expense of the hero. For this hero had to be set up as a 'thesis' to be refuted and discarded by historical progress.

This becomes most vivid when Brecht, after such conclusions of the first part of the play (Coriolan's banishment), finds himself compelled to restructure and rewrite the final act completely in order to present his final conclusions of the entire play. Rome must confront its enemy decisively; it must be rid of him once and for all to begin its own future. As the agent of such a confrontation, however Shakespeare's text offered only Volumnia, who had educated her son in the hatred of the people. Brecht, as already shown, stressed her furious party spirit, her sadistic delight in blood, death and destruction. Now he is forced to make her the victorious representative of Rome and the principle of life, and to raise her to the imposing stature of the

arch-mother Rome, i.e., something close to the ideal image which Shakespeare's hero made of her. This is a serious flaw in the adaptation, although it is difficult to determine if it could have been avoided.

How does the hero finally fall? In Shakespeare's text, it is at the hands of "conspirators" hired by the villain Aufidius. Brecht's Aufidius is, however, a shrewd politician: he brings the crimes of the hero into focus rhetorically, with incisive help from the culprit himself, and the officers of his army then kill him spontaneously. It is important to Brecht that Coriolan be made fully worthy of his death, without a shred of sympathy left behind to salvage him. The new consciousness of the new time must necessarily be absolutely free of the ideology, hero-worship, etc., which he had symbolised. Whereas Shakespeare's last scene marks the end--indeed an end without hope--Brecht's had to mark the beginning. It is the only scene which is exclusively Brecht's own, and its character is clearly Utopian. The will of the people becomes law, the "Anträge" of the tribunes are passed in the senate, whereas those of the patricians are denied. The people's representatives look after the daily business of government with quiet assurance, and when the news arrives that Coriolan has been slain in Antium, Brutus unemotionally--and successfully--moves

Dass der Senat fortfahre mit der Sichtung
Der täglichen Geschäfte. (2497)

In Shakespeare's version, even the enemy's lords cry out to the slayer,

Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep. (845)

Aufidius himself is stricken with deep sorrow; it is decided that the slain warrior shall be given all the honours and memory of

...the most noble corpse that ever herald
Did follow to his urn. (ibid.)

For Brecht, such a memory would contaminate the newly won freedom. The Consul who pleads in favour of a mourning period is censured as one who tries to stop progress. The tribune responds with the one word which ends the play: "Abgeschlagen". The curtness and seeming cruelty of this denial projects the harsh, yet invigorating, freshness of the new time that will give no chance to compromising reaction.

Brecht's didactic purpose is fully evident in his treatment of act V. He uses the 'Fabel' from the early beginnings of Rome and its constitutional struggles, as presented by Shakespeare, as a model of understanding the social predicaments of our own present-day, and of achieving a free and productive future. We should not forget that this adaptation was intended for a Germany during the years after the war. The radicalism and single-mindedness of its purpose, the relentless pursuit of mythical preoccupations, and its likeness to a guide-book for political novices, certainly has much to do with its time and place of origin, and not, as McCann suggests, with the limited ability of the German public to grasp the complexity of Shakespeare's thought.

From this point, therefore, we can draw our own conclusions as to

Brecht's achievement. It was not the purpose of this study to minimize Brecht's adaptation in the comparison with the Shakespearean work. But such a comparison proved necessary to question the critics--and indeed Brecht himself--who claim that the adaptor and his work are closely attuned to the Renaissance model, and that the modern author completed, rather than fundamentally changed, the original.

Brecht reduced the long and complex Shakespearean text by one third. He simplified and clarified its structure ingeniously. He turned a tragedy of social disease (quite possibly the darkest of Shakespeare's works--his tragic hero is not even allowed to understand his own demise) into a drama of social hope and liberation, in which the accents of political and moral guidance are very poignantly set. Shakespeare's material is brilliantly alienated or historicized, especially by the method of contrasting the old text (speeches) with a changed context, or the old context with a changed text. Herein, however, we also find the beginning of Brecht's problems. For this adaptation can obviously provide its full fascination and intellectual stimulus only if we read--or see on stage--both versions together. To some extent, it remains dependent on the model to which it provides a response. In reading it without this frame of reference, we are left with an antithesis to which the thesis is missing, and which therefore lacks interest. Any of Brecht's plays, of course, is dialectically structured or conditioned by such a 'thesis' of traditional consciousness. But of course it is much more difficult to incorporate and demonstrate a thesis

set up by another play than that which is present in the concepts of the audience. In his 'classical' plays, for example, he was much more successful, having had the freedom to confront this consciousness squarely, without the interference of some pre-established (and complex) text. To exemplify the difficulty of integrating Shakespeare's thesis, we must consider the following circumstance: Brecht had to refute Coriolan's claim to represent Rome, and in order to make this believable as a claim of dangerous and seductive power, he had to retain his imposing stature. Brecht could not make this paradox work, for all he retained was the hero's supposed pride--now amounting to little more than arrogance.

More importantly, the character of Coriolanus posed insuperable difficulties to Brecht. He understood the play, as is common among critics of Shakespeare, as the Elizabethan playwright's closest approximation to a political drama, and Coriolanus literally as the class "enemy of the people". But, as this study has shown, Shakespeare wrote a tragedy of an apolitical man, and not a political drama with interest in the people's cause and class struggle. The role of the people is much too small, in spite of Brecht's additions, and the hero's individuality and stage presence is too powerful to justify such a reversal. With every action and character focussed on the hero (and that Brecht could not change) the 'critical' reduction of this hero to a mere obstacle of historical progress would result in a structural misconception. Brecht's Coriolan, after all, is no longer a commanding, but a disquali-

fied hero; the adaptor has taken all objective supports and correlatives away from him so that his hollow pride stands exposed. Such reduction of a central character cannot hold our interest for two hours of exclusive confrontation. Shakespeare's dramatic interest in the hero lies in the tension between 'right' and 'wrong', whereas with Brecht, the hero is all wrong and the people are all right. Again, this led Brecht to structural inconsistencies. The most obvious one is the banishment of Coriolan immediately after he had saved Rome, winning a decisive victory single-handedly. In Shakespeare's text, this is compatible with the vicious ingratitude of both 'rabble' and the tribunes. In Brecht's version, it is quite improbable that such good, unbiassed citizens would act in such an erratic manner. Coriolan's only crime, after all, was to use furious invectives during the election campaign. 'Good', reasonable voters would simply have withheld their votes. Just how unreasonable those drastic measures were, is again born out by the basic plot structure: Coriolan is thus driven to return with an army and threaten Rome with destruction.

The theme of pride itself adds to the problem. Brecht was led to believe the commentators (both within and outside the play) who insist that the mainspring of Coriolanus' words and actions is pride. And Brecht concluded that "bei dem Genie Shakespeares", he could not afford to reduce this "Tragödie des Stolzes"²--which he would have liked to do, since such individualist passions and preoccupations detract from the vision of collective progress. In order to avoid the paradox

of a blind motive as the central theme, he therefore presented this pride as egomania, and egomania as the anarchic will to suppress and possess. Simultaneously, however, he had to prevent any association of greatness, or even demonism, from entering the picture, since his 'epic' purpose was to demythologize a hero. Brecht had to show that his self-inflating pride was really quite unfounded, and since the other 'productive' party, the people and the tribunes, is shown to be completely unimpressed by his pretences, there is really no problem any more. The irony of it all is, of course, the fact that Shakespeare had not written a 'tragedy of pride' in the first place. This study has shown that Shakespeare's interest lies in his hero's heroic isolation, his 'loneliness' and 'silence'. His fellow nobles, the citizens, tribunes, and even his mother, cannot accommodate him, although everyone's mind and fascination is focussed upon him. Stunned, they call his fervent inwardness 'pride'. Shakespeare clearly presents the opposite: Coriolanus' actions reveal uncommon modesty, humility, eager service to his country and its ideals, and a contempt, bordering on disgust, of glory and praise.

The objection that Brecht was completely free to change Shakespeare's characters and motives wherever he wished is, at this point, no longer to be expected. For it is clearly established that Brecht was quite wrong in assuming that Shakespeare is "von Natur unklar. Er ist absoluter Stoff".³ Shakespeare's work is, on the contrary, an amazingly intricate organism that cannot readily (and without

upsetting its delicate balance) be 'changed' by operations, implants, amputations, etc. To give one important example: the work's organism is enveloped, like a skin, by Shakespeare's imagery, which fully and richly reflects the texture of meaning. Brecht who, after all, translated nearly ninety per cent of the text, made a few incisions (as shown) but could not exchange the entire 'skin'. He wanted to adapt, not write a new play. Thus, the language is often inconsistent with the altered meaning of the play.

Brecht often hurt his version, in comparison with Shakespeare's, equally as much by what he cut out as by what he left in. This study has attempted to establish that Brecht, in his version, eliminates or ignores the following Shakespearean motives or layers of meaning:

- 1) the problem, or double standard, of language as the vehicle of human expression on the one hand, and of social interaction of the other; the ambiguity of 'eloquent' action.
- 2) the problem of understanding, of knowledge of self and of others; Coriolanus does not know himself, and he is not known by anyone (with the possible exception of Virgilia). Brecht clearly had to make this 'hero' known to the people, they had to see through him.
- 3) all 'psychoanalysis', or Shakespeare's involvement with a great man's hidden springs of word and action.
- 4) the dramatic antithesis of war and peace, or the hero's tragic move from the "casket" to the "cushion".
- 5) the threat to the body of the state by sub-human forces of destruc-

tion (Menenius' fable, animal and disease imagery).

Brecht was not only unable, in many instances, to reconnect the loose ends of these patterns of meaning in his new, superimposed 'system', but was also unable to supply dramatic alternatives that would compensate for the loss. The dramatic fascination, e.g. of Shakespeare's 'negative' soul-searching (above #2) could not be matched aesthetically by Brecht's enlightened, demystified picture of Coriolan as well as of Volumnia, Menenius, and Aufidius. The most drastic aesthetic loss is, of course, that of the imposing stature of the hero. No one, not even Brecht, could have filled the gaping vacuum created by the revocation of a commanding hero who gives the entire play the aura of an inward monodrama. Ernst Busch, the most famous actor in Brecht's company, consequently refused to play the fall of a hero who was never given any kind of plateau from which he could fall. The same applies to the reduction of the subsidiary figures. Menenius, the sadly ineffective old drinker and joker who tells the pretty fable of a good and productive state becomes a slyly eloquent, upper-class speaker. Volumnia, the possessive and power-hungry mother, loses her rich but unified profile, in order to fill three distinguishable roles which are hardly compatible: that of the unfeeling 'noble' sadist, the wise politician (in contrast to her son) who honours the historical moment, and the tragic mother Rome who finally confronts and conquers her own son. Brecht's citizens and tribunes (practically his own creations) are too one-dimensionally 'ideal', as models of socially and historically productive behaviour, to

compensate for the reductions and inconsistencies in the critically alienated aristocratic characters. Brecht assures us, in his 'Studium', that

wir können den Shakespeare ändern,
wenn wir ihn ändern können.⁴

He has not proven, with his only complete Shakespearean adaptation, that 'we' can.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹GW, XV, 198.

²Ibid, p. 73.

³GW, VIII, 1221.

⁴Ibid.

⁵This method of production attracted Brecht especially, cf. GW, XV, 335; XVI, 585.

⁶GW, XVI, 586.

⁷Ibid, p. 589.

⁸Ibid, p. 591.

⁹GW, XVIII, 225.

¹⁰GW, XV, 333.

CHAPTER I

¹"Studium des ersten Auftritts in Shakespeares 'Coriolanus'," GW, XVI, 870-888. Hereafter referred to as 'Studium'.

²Günter Grass, in Spandauer Volksblatt (March, 1964).

³Ibid, p. 202.

⁴Ibid, p. 214.

⁵Ibid, p. 208.

⁶I. Fradkin, "Brecht, die Bibel, die Aufklärung und Shakespeare," in KuL, 13 (1965), 156-175.

⁷I. Fradkin, "Die 'Bearbeitungen' von Bertolt Brecht," in KuL, 16 (1968), 159-170.

⁸Lawrence Lerner, "'Coriolanus': Brecht and Shakespeare," in ShN, 17 (1967), 56.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Paolo Chiarini, "Dichtung und Ideologie," in WB, Sonderband Bertolt Brecht (1968), pp. 195ff.

¹¹Ibid, p. 215.

¹²Johannes Kleinstück, "Bertolt Brechts Bearbeitung von Shakespeares 'Coriolanus'," in LJGG, 9 (1968), 319-332.

¹³Ibid, p. 324.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 322.

¹⁵J. Kuczynski, Gestalten und Werke: soziologische Studien zur deutschen Literatur (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1969), p. 387.

¹⁶Rodney Symington, Brecht und Shakespeare (Bonn: Bouvier, 1970),

¹⁷David McCann, Shakespeare in Brecht's Dialectic Theater. A Study of the Coriolanus Adaptation (Diss. Univ. Cal., Berkely, 1970).

¹⁸Ibid, p. 260.

¹⁹Ibid, p. 95.

²⁰Ibid, p. 53.

²¹Ibid, p. 18.

²²Ibid, p. 40.

²³Ibid, p. 5.

²⁴Ibid, p. 264.

²⁵Paul Kussmaul, Bertolt Brecht und das englische Theater (Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1964).

²⁶Martin Brunkhorst, Shakespeares 'Coriolanus' in deutscher Bearbeitung (Berlin, 1973).

CHAPTER II

¹'Studium,' p. 888.

²Ibid. In theory as well as in practice, Brecht emphasized the first scene of Coriolan as the basis for his entire adaptation. The theory, i.e., 'Studium', is a very important source for the interpretation of Brecht's adaptation.

³Symington points out (Brecht und Shakespeare, p. 190) that Brecht, through a very small change, i.e., "Hail, noble Martius" (I, i, 162) becomes "Heil, Freund Marcus" (2402), further strengthens the relationship between Coriolan and Menenius, which then weakens the latter's effect as a friend to the people by labelling him friend to the people's enemy.

⁴The 'Studium' clearly reveals that Brecht sees the people 'marching' together' (p. 870).

⁵In vivid contrast to Shakespeare, Brecht actually stresses the immense psychological difficulty and unwillingness the plebeians face in their revolt (see 'Studium', p. 870: "Der Aufstand ist für die Massen eher das Unnatürliche als das Natürliche, und so schlimm die Lage auch sein mag, aus der nur der Aufstand sie befreien kann, ist der Gedanke an ihn ebenso anstrengend wie für die Wissenschaftler eine neue Anschauung über das Universum.").

⁶Brecht speaks in 'Studium' of the "Tragödie des Volks..., das einen Helden gegen sich hat" (p. 877).

⁷Cf. Oscar James Campbell, "Shakespeare's Satire: 'Coriolanus'," in Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Coriolanus', ed. James E. Phillips (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 27. Hereafter Interpretations.

⁸The best account of the play's imagery is found in Maurice Charney, Shakespeare's Roman Plays. The Function of Imagery in the Drama (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 142-196. Hereafter Imagery.

⁹Shakespeare, by comparison, charges the citizens to "examine... things rightly" (805). Brecht's "Denken", with its systematic orientation, is emphatically opposed to Shakespeare's empirical "examine".

¹⁰It is always puzzling to compare Brecht's theoretical programme with his dramatic practice. In 'Studium', he states and restates his purpose: to bring the 'real' Shakespeare to life again. It is striking how consistently he refrains from questioning, not to mention refuting Shakespeare himself. The object of his criticism is exclusively the "bürgerliche Theater" (cf. p. 870). In his dialogue about Menenius and his fable, we find the statement, "Ich bin von dem Gleichnis nicht überzeugt" (p. 871), implying that to take the fable at face value is in keeping with the traditional understanding, but not with

Shakespeare. In practice, Brecht changes Shakespeare's intentions to the point of recklessness; in theory, his assumption that he himself is of a great realistic tradition which should be uncovered, is of utmost importance to him. Certainly in the case of Coriolan, what he actually does and what he says he does cannot be reconciled, even if we submit that he intended to reveal a 'meaning' of which Shakespeare himself, bound by historical limitations, was not yet aware.

¹¹See 'Studium', p. 872.

¹²Una Ellis-Fermor, Shakespeare the Dramatist, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 76. In her discussion of Coriolanus' imagination, she convincingly explains that his "magnitude of spirit and imagination" was moulded from birth in the worship of the Roman state, that the imagination then substituted for itself an ideal Rome, and later, even an ideal Antium and Aufidius.

¹³GW, XVIII, 1252.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 1253.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 1254.

¹⁶Cf. Walter Sokel, 'Brecht's Split Characters and his Sense of the Tragic,' in Brecht: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Peter Demetz (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 127ff.

¹⁷'Studium', p. 872.

¹⁸In 'Studium', Brecht considers making use of the double aspect of this strategy: the force of 'necessity' and the lure and exploitation of "naive Patriotismus, den man so oft bei dem gemeinen Mann trifft" (p. 884). He suggests that two "Kriegsinvaliden, sich des gemeinsamen letzten Krieges erinnernd,..sich umarmen, angefeuert von allen Seiten, und zusammen weghumpeln." (p. 885).

¹⁹We read in 'Studium' that Brecht admired Shakespeare's idea to have Coriolanus introduce and inform the public of the tribunes' election: "Es ist ein wunderbarer Kunstgriff, dass Shakespeare die Nachricht von der Etablierung des Tribunats in den Mund des Marcius legt." (p. 879). The frustration of the now fettered hero becomes immediately impressive. But why does Brecht change what he so admired? Obviously for 'dialectic' reasons: the deepest misery of the people is 'turned' into their triumph with the news brought by the messenger from outside, from the 'realm of history', so to speak. This is now quite in accordance with Marx' theory of the revolution; the historical reversal of the class roles occurs at the point of their most radical conflict.

²⁰'Studium', p. 883.

CHAPTER III

¹'Studium,' p. 877.

²GW, XV, 193.

³Ibid, p. 269.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid, pp. 269f.

⁶GW, XVI, 593.

⁷GW, XX, 61.

⁸GW, XV, 119.

⁹GW, XVI, 592f.

¹⁰Ibid, p. 587.

¹¹'Studium,' p. 879.

¹²Charles Hofling, An Interpretation of Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus'," in Interpretations, p. 84.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴See the analogy of his own child, act I, iii.

¹⁵Even if we understand the ego with C.H. Cooley as a "looking-glass self" (see P.R. Hofstätter, Fischer Lexikon der Psychologie [Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1957], p. 81), denoting the establishment of personal identity via the judgment of society, we realize that such an ego is absent or consciously suppressed in Coriolanus.

¹⁶O.J. Campbell in his article in Interpretations, initiates the most drastic and comprehensive attempt of reading the entire play as a satire. He understands Coriolanus' furious outbreaks as "choler...of wounded pride" (p. 32) and his helpless response to manipulative incitements as the "automatic result of an over-stimulated reflex mechanism"(p.35). The debacle of such an "automaton", according to Campbell, arouses nothing but "amusement seasoned with contempt" (ibid.), its purpose, "a satiric

representation of a slave of passion designed to teach an important political lesson." (p. 35). This interpretation is quite untenable, not only in view of its basic reiteration of the 'wounded pride' thesis, but also because Campbell completely suppresses the condition of the comical contrast: Coriolanus' superhuman greatness and valour in war.

¹⁷Here Brecht makes good use of Plutarch, Shakespeare's principle source. For Plutarch, Coriolanus was a character typifying the warring and transitional times of very early Rome. This was a time when Rome was still struggling against the threat of extinction from inside as well as outside, against social chaos and conquering tribes, like the Volscians, but was moving towards the establishment of a firmly lawful citizen's state.

¹⁸Charney, Imagery, p. 158.

¹⁹Hofling, Interpretations, pp. 90ff.

²⁰As Charney lists them in 'Imagery', the people are most frequently referred to as "dogs, hounds, curs, rats, rascals (lean deer not fit to be hunted), hares, geese, asses, mules, camels, wolves, crows, goats, foxes, cats, kites, minnows, a multiplying spawn and a beastly herd", p. 169.

²¹'Studium,' p. 878.

²²As shown above, the human condition (its instability, etc.) which Coriolanus strives to overcome, strongly accentuated in Shakespeare's plebeians, and with quite a negative bias. They are also deserving of the hero's' invectives, whereas Brecht's rational and fearless plebeians are not.

²³The East German people's rebellion and the government's "Lösung", as Brecht saw it, immediately comes to mind:

Die Lösung

Nach dem Aufstand des 17. Juni
 Liess der Sekretär des Schriftstellersverbands
 In der Stalinallee Flugblätter verteilen
 Auf denen zu lesen war, dass das Volk
 Das Vertrauen der Regierung verscherzt habe
 Und es nur durch verdoppelte Arbeit
 Zurückerobern könne. Wäre es da
 Nicht doch einfacher, die Regierung
 Löste das Volk auf und
 Wählte ein anderes? ('Buckower Elegien, GW, X, 1010)

²⁴See Die Massnahme, GW, II, pp. 632ff.

²⁵Rome is for him, as Donald A. Stauffer remarks in 'Roads to Freedom: "Coriolanus"', in Interpretations, truly matria, not patria (p. 43). For Shakespeare, such a relationship is not pathological at all, but quite healthy. In Richard II, e.g. the banished Bolingbroke betrays his unswaying filial love for his country:

Then England's ground farewell: sweet soil adieu,
My mother and my nurse that bears me yet.
Where 'er I wander, boast of this I can,
Though banished, yet a true-born Englishman. (456)

Coriolanus is the last of the 'Histories' and this Rome is clearly that England of the 'Histories'. Yet it is also a tragedy. and while Coriolanus, like Bolingbroke's, umbilical cord, so to speak, is never severed, even during banishment, the Englishman returns to serve England, whereas the Roman returns to destroy Rome.

²⁶Conspicuously, he never addresses one without addressing the other. Thus, on his return from Corioli, when he calls out "O mother! Wife!" (842), after Volumnia's ninety six line speech, we would expect him to address his mother only, in view of Virgilia's silence.

²⁷He even makes the people--whom she so hates--acknowledge this fact, see act V, iii, p. 2487.

CHAPTER IV

¹It has been observed that this play is most drastically stripped of soliloquy. It has fewer lines of soliloquy than any other Shakespearean play outside the comedies.

²Shakespeare took this motive of the rough-hewn soldier with blunt and unpolished language from Plutarch.

³Harley Granville-Barker makes the excellent observation that Coriolanus' ideal knowledge also has the power of real foresight. He foresees the first and second Volscian attacks, and that the newly created tribunate will increase its power and its demands. And he is not incorrect in his protest against the "popular shall...the greater poll...the yea and no of general ignorance" which is allowed greater importance than experienced wisdom. (Antony and Cleopatra. Coriolanus, Vol. III of Prefaces to Shakespeare [New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965], p. 105. Hereafter Prefaces.)

⁴In contrast to Plutarch's Life, Coriolanus is isolated even from his 'lovers', Volumnis, Menenius, Aufidius.

⁵Una Ellis-Fermor observes that after his banishment, Coriolanus' "familiar outbursts disappear" (Shakespeare the Dramatist, p. 19), implying that he reaches a new level of development. But this seeming restraint is, in reality, only the paralysis of the "dull actor who has forgot his part". He later remembers his part, spontaneously, when prompted by Aufidius in a familiar manner (cf. act III, iii).

⁶John Dover Wilson, "Introduction," Coriolanus, The New Shakespeare, ed. John Dover Wilson (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960), pp. ix-liii.

⁷Ibid, p. xxxiii.

⁸Ibid, p. xxxiv.

⁹Cf. Granville-Barker, Prefaces, III, pp. 99-100.

CHAPTER V

¹McCann, p. 54.

²GW, VIII, 1252.

³GW, XV, 119.

⁴'Studium', p. 879.

Primary sources:

Brecht, Bertolt. Gesammelte Werke. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967.

Sisson, Charles, ed. William Shakespeare: The Complete Works. London: Odhams Press, 1953.

Secondary sources:

Alexander, Peter, ed. Studies in Shakespeare. British Academy Lectures. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964.

Brunkhorst, Martin. Shakespeares 'Coriolanus' in deutscher Bearbeitung. Berlin, 1973. Rev. by Rud. Stamm. Arcadia, 10 (1975), 317-319.

Charney, Maurice, ed. Shakespeare's Roman Plays. Discussions of Literature. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1965, pp. 109-156.

-----Shakespeare's Roman Plays. The Function of Imagery in the Drama. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961, pp 142-196.

Chiarini, Paolo. "Dichtung und Ideologie." WB, Sonderband Bertolt Brecht (1968), pp. 195ff.

Clarke, Charles. Shakespeare-Characters. London: Smith, Elder, 1863.

Clemen, Wolfgang. The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery. New York: Hill and Wang, 1951.

Demetz, Peter, ed. Brecht: A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962.

Ellis-Fermor, Una. Shakespeare the Dramatist. Ed. Kenneth Muir. London: Methuen, 1961.

Esslin, Martin. Brecht: A Choice of Evils. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959.

Ewen, Frederic. Bertolt Brecht. His Life, his Art and his Times. New York: Citadel Press, 1967.

Fradkin, I. "Brecht, die Bibel, die Aufklärung und Shakespeare." KuL, 13 (1965), 156-175.

- "Die 'Bearbeitungen' von Bertolt Brecht." KuL, 16 (1968), 159-170.
- Goddard, Harold. The Meaning of Shakespeare. Chicago and London: Univ. of Chichag Press, 1969.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. Antony and Cleopatra. Coriolanus, Vol. III of Prefaces to Shakespeare. New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965.
- Grass, Günter. "Über meinen Lehrer Döblin und andere Vorträge." Literarisches Colloquium 1968. Spandauer Volksblatt (Mar. 1964).
- Grimm, Reinhold. Bertolt Brecht: Die Struktur seines Werkes. Nürnberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1960.
- Brecht und die Weltliteratur. Nürnberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1961.
- Guggenheimer, Walter. Alles Theater. Ausgewählte Kritiken 1947-1965. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966.
- Hoffmeier, Dieter. "Notate zur B. Brechts Bearbeitung von Shakespeares 'Coriolan', zur Bühnenfassung und zur Inszenierung des Berliner Ensembles." SJH, 103 (1967), 177-195.
- Huffman, Clifford. 'Coriolanus' in Context. Lewisburg: Buchnell Univ. Press, 1971.
- Kleinstück, Johannes. "Bertolt Brechts Bearbeitung von Shakespeares 'Coriolanus'." LJGG, 9 (1968), 319-332.
- Knusden, H. "Shakespeare auf Berliner Bühnen 1945-1955." SJH, 91 (1955), 251-259.
- Kuczynski, J. Gestalten und Werken: soziologische Studien zur deutschen Literatur. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1969, pp. 387ff.
- Kussmaul, Paul. Bertolt Brecht und das englische Drama der Renaissance. Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1974.
- Lerner, Lawrence. "'Coriolanus': Brecht and Shakespeare." ShN, 17 (1967), 56.
- McCann, David. Shakespeare in Brecht's Dialectic Theater. A Study of the 'Coriolanus' Adaptation. Diss. Univ. Cal., Berkley, 1970.
- Mayer, Hans. Bertolt Brecht und die Tradition. Pfullingen: Neske, 1961.
- Parker, R.B. "Dramaturgy in Shakespeare and Brecht." UTQ, 32 (1962-1963), 229-246.

- Phillips, James, ed. Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Coriolanus'.
A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970.
- Pohl, Rainer. Strukturelemente und Entwicklung von Pathosformen in der
Dramensprache Bertold [sic] Brechts. Bonn: Bouvier, 1969.
- Sens, S.K. "What Happens in 'Coriolanus'?" SQ, IX (1958), pp. 331-345.
- Symington, Rodney. Brecht und Shakespeare. Bonn: Bouvier, 1970.
- Towne, Jackson. "A Psychoanalytic Study of Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus'."
Psychoanalytic Review, 8 (1921), pp. 84-91.
- Wilson, John Dover. "Introduction." Coriolanus. In The New Shakespeare.
Ed. John Dover Wilson. London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960, pp.
ix-liii.
- Witzmann, Peter. Antike Tradition im Werke Bertolt Brechts. Berlin:
Akademie Verlag, 1964, pp. 100ff.