

THE LIFE OF GALILEI

BRECHT'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE FINAL SCENE

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Translated from the German by Dr C. L. Fabri

In the 13th Scene (the 13th Scene is the final scene in the stage edition; it corresponds to Scene 14 in the printed edition of the Reclam Publishing Firm) Brecht shows his Galileo Galilei as a vain, angry old man: he has revoked, he has been arrested, he is demoralised. To be sure, he delivers the *Discorsi*—but the achievement is in the existence of a book written under deprivation, not in the (accidental) handing over. He has built up a new physics, but has destroyed the productive applicability of this physics; he has become technically the creator of new productive powers, but he has become their social traitor; he has delivered a revolutionary theory, but he has not created the practice. Even as he produces the analysis of his fall, a warning for coming generations, the work cannot balance the harm that his treachery has inflicted on society. The handing over of the book out of vanity remains a service to this society which, in the person of Andrea Sarti receives the *Discorsi*. And yet, quite rightly, '*A man who does what I have done, cannot be tolerated in the ranks of science*'.

All questions that Brecht has posed in the first twelve scenes of *The Life of Galilei*, he answers in this final scene, the most important and the most beautiful of the play, but naturally, at the same time he throws up numerous new questions.

Here is one of the turning points of the play, the great self-condemnation by Galilei: demonstration of a dazzling brain, and precisely because

In translating the German text, published in *Erinnerungen an Brecht*, Verlag Philip Reclam jun., Leipzig, 1966, a few modifications in punctuation and type-face were unavoidable. Quotations from the play are given in italics, single quotes; Brecht's instructions and exchanges with the cast within double quotes; emphases is given in bold type.

of the exact analysis, a cynical confession of a social crime. Nevertheless: "The play shows the dawn of a new era, and attempts to revise some prejudices about the birth of a new dawn", and: "*The Life of Galilei* is no tragedy", answers Brecht to the question, whether one ought to "keep to the first scene or to certain parts of the 13th scene as far as the basic note is concerned, for the **founding of a new era** by Galilei". (B. Brecht: *Anmerkungen zu Leben des Galilei*, 1938.)

Brecht puts the **greeting of the new era** in the play in this way through Galilei: '*For the old era is over, and it is a new era. For the last hundred years it is as if mankind would have been awaiting something. The towns are narrow and so are the heads. Superstition and pestilence. But now it is this: because it is so, it will not remain so. For everything moves, my friend.*'

Galilei has revoked. Galilei is arrested. Galilei is demoralised. Galilei condemns himself. And yet, in the 13th scene, Brecht nevertheless shows also the greeting of the new era: it is at the same time a continuation of the 1st scene, and a contradiction; at the same time a summing up of the whole play, the fable once again retold in a new manner, a simultaneous commentary and condemnation of the treachery and a declaration of what matters in the new era.

"The new era, that was something and is something, that concerns everything, leaves nothing unchanged, and yet will unfold its character, something in which there is place for all fantasy, something that can only be narrowed by far too circumscribed utterings. What is loved is the feeling of commencement, the situation of the pioneer, inspiring is the attitude of the beginners, love is the happy feeling of those who are oiling a new engine before it has shown its power, who fill up in an old map a white spot, of those who are breaking the soil for a new house, their house. This feeling is known to the research worker who is making a discovery, to those who change everything, the orator who prepares a speech that will create a new situation." (Brecht, *op.cit.*)

We meet the grown-up Andrea Sarti—a scientist now, himself a teacher and researcher—as he is building a new ethics, rejoicing over Galilei's supposed triumph over the powers, celebrating the cunning trick as a victory: '*You were hiding the truth. Before the enemy. Even in the field of ethics you were centuries ahead of us*'. But it turns out that the golden bridge is not passable for science: Galilei revoked out of fear. Not the conquest, but the still conquerable, the pioneer situation, the beginning that which drives to change, and demands change, these characterise the new era. '*I too*

would like to become a physicist, Mr. Galilei,' the young boy had said twenty years earlier (in the 1st scene) and Galilei replied laughing, 'I believe that, in view of the numberless questions which still have to be cleared up in our field' —(here is again someone who cannot resist thinking). Not the answers but the questions, not what has been achieved but the doubt in the achievement show that 'a new era has dawned a great period, in which it is a delight to live'.

The Rehearsals

Brecht directed the rehearsals from December 14, 1955 to March 27, 1956, altogether nineteen rehearsals. He attempted, because of his failing health, only two hours a day and never more than two scenes, mostly only one. Alongside came scenery rehearsals, dress discussions with actors, about the play, the technique with nine rehearsals, the 13th scene was the most often rehearsed (next to the first scene) with eleven rehearsals.

"Even more than with systems of philosophy, in the case of works of art it is hidden how they have been made. The makers do much to create the impression that everything happens, as it were by itself, as if an image were being made in a clear mirror that remains inactive. This, to be sure, is deception, and it seems it is surmised that it steps up the delight of the spectator, but this is not the case. The spectator, in any case the experienced one, enjoys in art the making of art, the active element of creation. In art we look upon nature herself as an artist." (From: Bertolt Brecht, *Building up a Part*. Laughton, Written in 1948).

The present observations must needs deal with the process of production, and in a phase in which the "particular of human coexistence" had yet to be found out by the producers—the players and the director—in order to be able to represent it. Although *The Life of Galilei* is a historical play as far as the time is concerned in which it plays, its message is in no way of a historical nature but actual.

Brecht used the history in order to make the actual message estranged, alienated. Otherwise both the time and the figure of Galilei would have had to be estranged in order to make the actual message clear. Through this is born, at the same time as the realisation of the actuality of the events—the responsibility of the scholar to the society, valid and necessary even today—is born a de-legendarisation of the figure of Galilei: it becomes evident that he was no hero but a socially rejected man.

"With Galilei it is not a question that a man had to stick to his opinion, stand by it, as long as he held it to be true, for which he would then

receive the title of a character...." "A new class, the bourgeoisie, would have stood more forcibly with a new industry in the plan; it was no more a matter of a scientific achievement, but of fighting, to evaluate this as great and universal. This evaluation followed in many respects, as the new class had to come to power and to destroy a ruling ideology that would have hampered it.

Galilei became noxious, harmful, when he carried his science into this battle and then left the battle." (*op. cit.*)

It is, therefore, not the character of Galilei that deserves interest but his social behaviour, as Brecht once said at a rehearsal, "It is not interesting that a man fights with himself, but that he fights with others." As a matter of fact, Brecht hardly ever spoke at rehearsals about the character of a figure, but of his manner of acting; he hardly ever talked about what a man was, but what he did. And when he said something characteristic about a figure, a personage, it related not to his psychology but to his social relationship. He showed the character of a figure in its attitude.

To the figure of Galilei, Brecht said in the rehearsals of more than 120 hours simply: "He is 46 years old and has not yet had time to create something right. He is somewhat bitter. He is physiologically not in the position to leave questions without answers. He is a victim of the temptations of science. At the end he is a promoter of the sciences and a social criminal. Basically, he forces from his very weak body a tremendous deed of heroism, in as much as he writes the *Discorsi*, and, in fact, risks his comfort, even if out of vanity—but he is vanquished by the temptations of science."

Brecht explained more about Galilei, generally speaking, only when he helped other actors with it to build up their characters.

To Ludovico: "For you Galilei is a sinister man, poor, many books, nothing reminds you of horses; a learned man with whom you are negotiating only because Mama has ordered you to."

To Priuli: "This is a great man with whom one must be patient. Alas, he has his merits—he does not take enough interest in practical matters."

To Andrea: "This is the lodger, the sublettee of Mother. He has little time, perhaps early in the morning, and one has to make him speak when he is in a good mood." And in the last scene: "This was originally a great man, your teacher, whom you had admired. Then, after the revocation, he is a ragged fellow, and when he had written the *Discorsi*, a great example."

To the learned men of the Florence Court: "This is a charlatan from the Republic of Venice (where there are many charlatans). A swindler.

The whole stuff is a swindle, for the ships' wharves."

To the Writers of the Inquisition: "This is a great personality whom the greatest cardinals are greeting. One has to speak to him full of respect."

To the iron smelter Vanni: "This is a learned man, who only thinks of noble things. One must take away from him, free him from, the practical matters."

Above all, Brecht tried again and again to find out the novelty, the innovation in the character of Galilei. He said: "Galilei must not be a man who possesses new ideas, but who is a new man. Otherwise it must come out like this: How should he not discover the Laws of Motion if he is Galilei?—How should Galilei, for example, show that when he watches the pendulum of the clock, he looks only at the regularity? And yet we must see that, for how will his fall affect us as criminal, as the fall of a man who ought to have known, had we not watched him—for example with the pendulum of the clock—how sharply he can observe?—How does a new character emerge? By handling his surroundings as old: the man who comes from Mars and is amazed at everything. This can not result if one considers research to be a character trait, feature—that is only the first approach of the actor to his role, the usual, the schematic approach. What is so in nature, is not, therefore, natural, not on the stage, one has to reach it through a struggle."

"Presentations in the bourgeois theatre always aim at the wiping out, smothering out of contradictions, at the deception of harmony, at idealisation. Circumstances are presented as if they could only be that way, not otherwise; characters as individualities, literally indivisibles, by nature, of 'a single mould', proving themselves in various situations, and actually existing without situations too. Where there is development, it is gradual, never a leap, and they always remain developments within a frame that can never be burst open.

This does not correspond to truth, and must be given up by a realistic theatre." (From Bertolt Brecht: *Nachtr. zum Kleinen Organon*).

Superfluous for those who have attended Brecht's rehearsals, but perhaps not altogether superfluous to point out: There was never any theorising at Brecht's rehearsals. Naturally he always had aims in view, and he attempted endlessly to find out how the theatre could achieve the task "to change the milieu, the surrounding world. For one could hope to shape the image of the world only if it assisted to change the world itself." (*Address at the Leipsic Cultural Congress, 1911*). But when Brecht made his Galilei, when he began with his observation of sun spots (Scene 8 of the

stage version), say "*My task is not to prove that I have been right so far, but to find out whether I was right*" then one must say about Brecht that during the rehearsals he never started out of preconceived opinions, but always tried to find out what was socially just and right. Besides, Brecht used regularly to interrupt his rehearsals at this sentence, and point out to his students that this was the most important sentence for a Marxist in the entire play.

When Brecht thought that he had found out what was true, the truth had to be brought out as discoveries by the actors, in order that later on the audience should also be able to rediscover it. But as one cannot discover what is shown as self-understood, he estranged, alienated whatever was self-understood, so that they would appear as unusual, astounding.

"It is one of the delights of our times which produces so many and varied alterations of nature, to grasp everything in a way that we can interfere with it. There is a lot in man, we say, one can make a lot out of him. He must not remain as he is; he ought not to be looked upon as he is, but also as he could be. We must not start from him, but start with him. And that means that I must not put myself in his position, but against him, representing all of us. That's why the theatre must estrange, alienate whatever it shows". (Brecht; *Kleines Organon for the Theater* ch. 46).

However, Brecht held the opinion that one had to find out first the usual in an action in order to show the unusual, and that the representation of a non-schematic attitude presupposes the knowledge of the schematic attitude.

Scene 13 was rehearsed for the first time at the 10th rehearsal, on December 28, 1955. The piece and the attitudes of the characters were already known to the actors from the previous rehearsals. Brecht started by going through the dialogue sentence by sentence, taking especial care of the emphasis, the accentuation. He talked a good deal. He gave rapidly the arrangement on the basis of the script book of the staging in California.

The scene is divisible into four events, which are different in theatrical action.

1st event: Galilei dictates to Virginia the letter to the archbishop.

2nd event: Galilei gets to know that his revocation has worked.

3rd event: Galilei confesses that he had written the *Discorsi*. Andrea builds up a new ethics.

4th event: Galilei analyses his fall.

To the 1st event: Galilei dictates a letter to the archbishop.

1. (10) rehearsal, 28, xii. 1955

Brecht explained to the character of Virginia: "Basic note; everything here is hopeless, everything is grey, there is only sharpness, fear that he will again get attacks of science, that everything will again be examined, that he will once again be thrown into jail. He is an old man, but a wicked one, it is not so easy with him."—"Do you understand Regine, if he does not want, he does not want. If he is angry, he will poison the atmosphere for half a year."

When Regine Lutz¹ asked whether she loved her father: "Yes, but that is a development. He has ruined her own life. In the 3rd scene she is pushed out of the court, then he prevents her marriage, and thus she is now a lay sister. Since Scene 6, that with the question after the father-confessor, there is a constant influence from the Church."

Brecht did not offer more at this rehearsal. Busch² sat, during the dictation, leaning back in his chair, listening; Regine Lutz on the bench next to him, diligently but mechanically writing, "this is business correspondence"—Brecht attached importance to it that she should let the audience observe—as she observed it herself—that Galilei, with his formulations to the archbishop "made a game of him",

On the whole Virginia was constructed as the superior person who forces the father to dictate. It turned out that Galilei, who considered his daughter to be unintelligent, had underestimated her. Now she knows her father and knows how to handle him.

Galilei appeared as somewhat childish, old, decrepit, but with great moments of insight, Virginia as elderly, sour.

3. (25) rehearsal; 20. i. 1956

Brecht attempted a version entirely differing from the previous one. It shows Galilei as a spiritually totally intact man, who gives in to Virginia by writing the letter, but whom he treats ironically and mockingly, *'I leave myself entirely to your judgment'* given with undisguised scorn.

This made him humanly more negative—he had not only ruined Virginia, but he is even amused at her expense—spiritually it made him look more advantageous.

"Regine, the danger is always that he overdoes things, he lays things on too thickly, he knows no measure: either—or."

¹ Regine Lutz played "Virginia".

² Ernst Busch played "Galilei".

Brecht cancelled the note of hopelessness construed in the previous rehearsal: "Regine, it works as if you would have become indifferent to everything. She is not that, but morose, grey, tremendously earnest."

But both versions are in defence of Galilei instead of abandoning him. In the first version he aroused sympathy, as he was on the defensive against his daughter, in the second his spiritual superiority gave even to his revocation a touch of the grandiose. One could not believe of him that he revoked out of fear, as here too it is "lip service that he practises".

4. (26) rehearsal, 21. i. 1956

Before the rehearsal Brecht had a conversation with Busch, in which he declared that both the previous versions,

1. Galilei as a childish old man, but with great moments of his old spiritual stature, who is dominated by his daughter whom he had underestimated and

2. Galilei in full possession of his spiritual forces, who mocks in a wicked way over his daughter whom he had ruined, are really two layers of the self-same character, and Brecht's real intention is, in fact, in a third direction: Galilei must be shown as a social criminal, a complete rotter. His crime becomes even worse because he, in full possession of his spiritual forces, can still analyse clearly. It was an accident with Galilei that the analysis concerned himself, even as the social side of his science did not matter to him.

Brecht explained to Regine Lutz how she should read out the letter: "There is a manner, you know, in which some people talk to their dogs, quite stupid...."—"A little less voice, it is evening, please, take that into your play...."

Lutz: "I think, when one sits together with such an old man, one gives unwillingly more voice (volume). He hears badly...." Brecht laughs. "No, he sees badly, he hears well."—"Still too lively, that's too lively. She should be so — she is care-worn, used up, dried up, deadly serious."

Lutz: "Do you find the posture also too strong."—"No, she stands upright, but the voice is too lively. Think of it, she is forty. She must be a child at the beginning, then forty years, that is like sixty today. It is not at all so easy, how to do that."

Lutz: "Suppose I tried to be sullen, morose?"

"Yes, try that. The sentences are written to that idiotic imitation of children: 'Now how does it go with the little foxie today?' These

silly things, to disregard so much the dogs. This is being hung up, like a roller.”—“You know, Regine, you have a terrible life. The trouble is—he is an incurable drunkard. He is overstuffed and earthy and a sinner and sensuous. You must forgive everything, forbid everything, fight everything. He is also vicious—and one never knows any minute when he will finally break out. Then he will be transferred to Rome, and it’s over with whatever comfort there is.”

5. (27) rehearsal, 23. i. 1956

On the basis of the analysis of the last rehearsal, Brecht tried out the version of “the complete rotter”.

Instructions for Virginia: “Regine, he wants to read Horace. It would be beautiful if you could arm yourself with greater Christian patience. You observe quickly, how thick the air is, as always when he talks of such things as ‘*Christian loving-kindness*’. That sounds ugly in his mouth.” “I would wait with that sentence on Horace, I would look at him for a second, and only then talk softly, in front. Through this it will be a little noted by you too. After all, Horace was a heathen!” “Subdue, please, these revolutionary things in him. Would he have a wee bit of poetry? All these things, pleasures of the flesh!”—“Now there enter quite friendly tones, now she wants something.”—“Regine, you’re still far too goodly. These religious people are monstrously wicked.”—“She doesn’t wash herself any more. Only inwardly, inwardly she becomes more and more beautiful every day.”—“The whole day long you are making sacrifices, the whole day long, you are offering yourself, piece by piece.”

Lutz : “Is that not comic?”

“No, not at all. She is an instrument, and he has ruined her, her existence is shattered. You know, there are some of those girls—every step that they make, they make them only for God, otherwise they would not make them at all.”

6. (55) rehearsal, 20. iii. 1956

The scene is fundamentally established.

Virginia starts her answers piously and approvingly—the aggression comes from Galilei, angrily, sharply.

To the letter: Notwithstanding the opinion of the archbishop that Galilei has not improved, notwithstanding the opinion of Galilei who considers the archbishop a dunderhead, and notwithstanding the opinion of Virginia who doubts Galilei’s repentance, quite good counsel for the populace from the Church is the outcome, naturally at the expense of the popu-

lace, who have to pay for the game Galilei-Virginia-Archbishop, "Soup instead of better payment". The recognition that Galilei in his exile amuses himself still at the expense of the populace, helped to make him unsympathetic.

Before she sat down, Lutz dragged in Galilei's experimental instrument from behind, and the ball trailed along on the ground. Through this accident the object underwent a pretty estrangement: it obtained suddenly a new function, viz. it lost the original.

"When you come to '*In order that you might grasp...*' do not look at the father, this does not please him at all."

Lutz : "Not — do you see now?"

"No, he considers that the archbishop is a dunderhead. You know that. It would be fine if one could hear this weak-mindedness out of the Ephesian-epistles, that trashy novel." (*Note by the Translator:* Brecht clearly uses the plural, though there is only one epistle to the Ephesians in the New Testament).

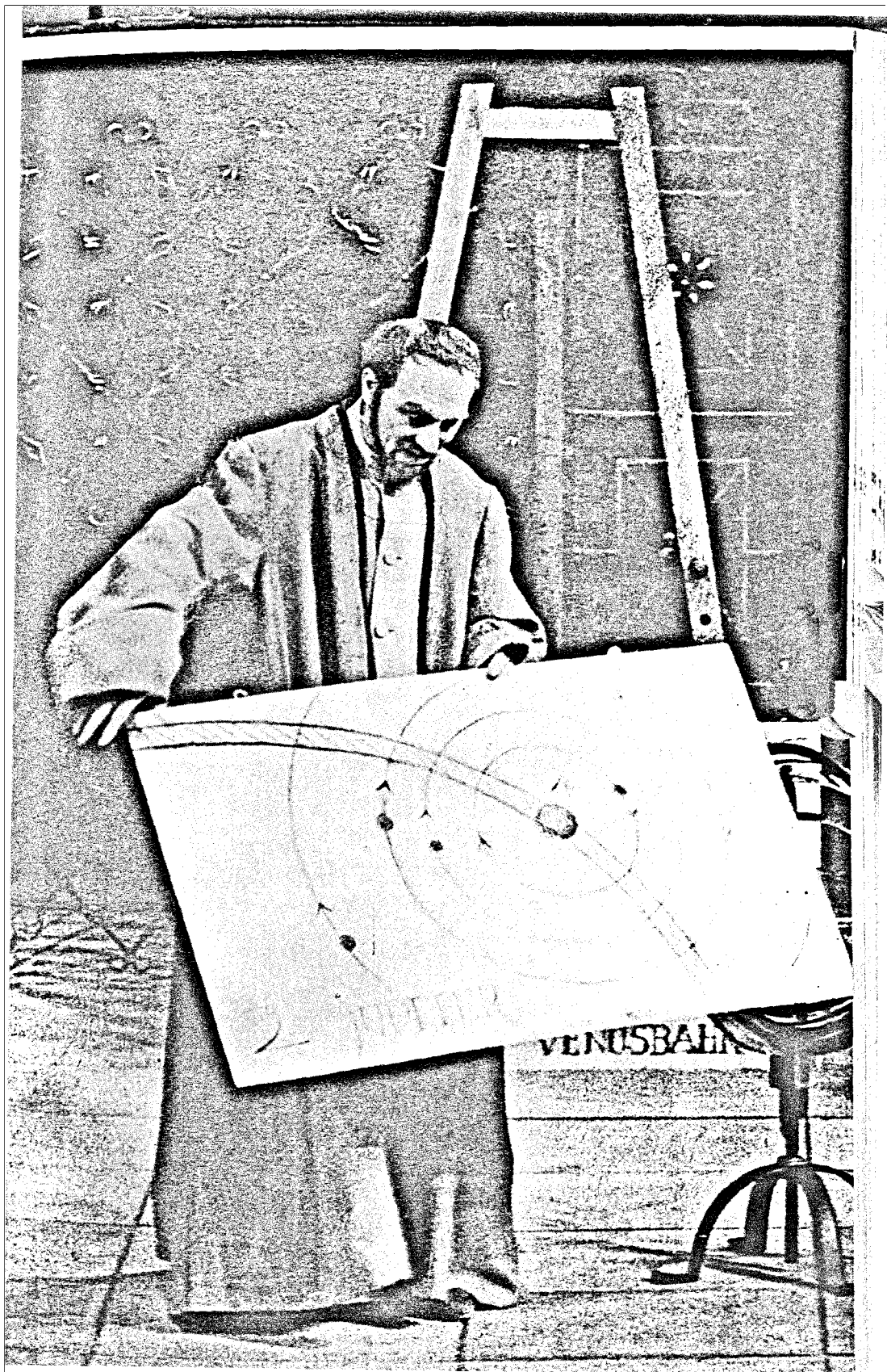
7. (56) rehearsal, 21. iii. 1956

Brecht started the rehearsal once again with an analysis of the character of Galilei. If he had built up, in the rehearsals up to now, the "rotter", he now brought out the positive aspects of the character.

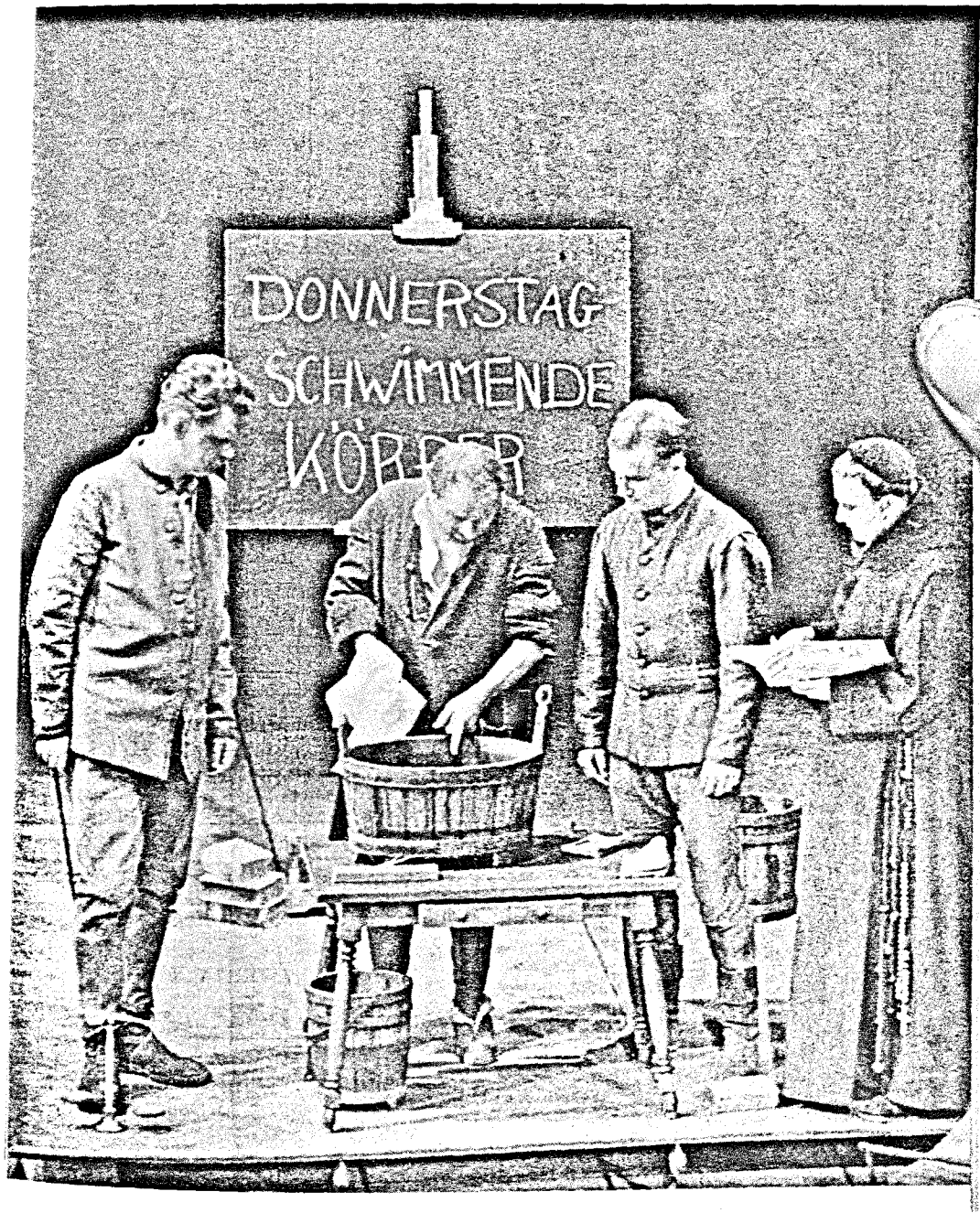
"Galilei is shown as a man who is right, one of the greatest heroes of the subsequent five hundred years, who tramples down all opposition—but who falls later and becomes a criminal. This is one of the greatest difficulties: to bring the criminal out of the hero. And yet: he is a hero—and yet: he becomes a criminal. You cannot leave that to the public. You have to bring that out and hope that it will be received by the public."—"Besides, he is not simply a man who is guilty—it is society that is guilty, who make production into a crime. Naturally, the Inquisition is more guilty than Galilei and he is also the injured person. But it must comprise the fallen man, who has injured himself through his fall: who is wicked and vain, who will admit nothing, who wants to pump the student who comes: he is to say something positive, but there is nothing. And he, impertinent and provocative : '*I am quite healthy. I am going towards my spiritual recovery*'.

During this rehearsal scene it was remarkable that Ernst Busch never attempted to reproduce the feelings that he himself might have had in some or the other situation, but that he attempted, by study-

Photographs : P 15, Ernst Busch as Galilei. P 16, Galilei with Cardinal Bellarmin (Ernst-Otto Fuhrmann).









ing the facts and circumstances to find out Galilei's way of thinking and feeling. He never lived through a situation, he thought it out. It was observed that during the whole rehearsal time he never spoke in any but the third person, never asked: "What do I do now?" but: "What would Galilei do now?"

Busch was not happy to show Galilei as a rotter who condemns himself cynically. His admiration for Galilei was very great. In *Dialektik auf dem Theater* Brecht writes about Busch regarding his "Coriolan": "He will transfer his own worth upon that of the hero, and he will be able to understand him, his greatness as well as his sumptuousness. Something similar has happened here too, Busch's co-feeling with Galilei did not make it easy for him to abandon him. That Busch has enacted this contradiction, gave the character, as represented by him, an additional interest."

To the 2nd event: Galilei learns that his revocation has worked.

1. (10) rehearsal, 28. xii. 1955

Busch declared that the Church is represented by the daughter, not by the monk. The latter is only the jailor, the turnkey, an unimportant person. When Church matters are brought up, then one must speak to Virginia—to him at the most "about" and not "to" the Church.

Andrea is now an independent scholar. He goes north, in order to be able to work.

Galilei angles. He would like to hear that research is advancing elsewhere.

"Schall, Galilei is isolated, and he has also become old. Sure, he is a wicked old man, but a great man. Thus it isn't as if you were carrying out your instruction with great reluctance. He attempts to look cold, but doesn't manage it. You understand, you are an enemy, you put that across the footlights, but you want to be an enemy. But in reality, you are not."—"Schall, he holds up the appearance that, though the instruction is unpleasant to him, he will nevertheless not decline it."—"Schall, never look at him; don't look at him, that's bad, it isn't good for him; if you look at him it will become difficult for him. He will always look down to the floor, not with the head, only with the eyes. Stiff attitude, yes, it must come out, he is learning himself."

Photographs: P 17, Galilei's house: Federzoni (Gert Schaefer), Galilei, Andrea (Ekkehard Schall), Kleiner Monch (Lothar Bellag). P 18 Galilei with Alter Cardinal (Wolf Backendorff).

After the communication by Andrea that Descartes too does not write any more, Brecht said: "Busch, it would be fine, if one made here a nerve-wracking pause, a long pause, that is a mad, an extravagant sentence. The audience does not know that, and it will be difficult for them to understand : what, is that a blow to Galilei when a rival does not work any more?" (Brecht laughed heartily after this instruction).

When Galilei hears that Federzoni is once again polishing lenses, according to the directions in the book, laughter must follow. Busch laughed with the action: '*This serves him right. He who knows no Latin, can, of course, not study.*' But he also brought it out that he was not laughing about Federzoni, but the monstrosity of the procedure: about a society in which such remarkable things occur. Not bitterly, amusedly laughing, he shewed the educational privileges of a class society as already remarkable: he even brought it out that from the point of view of a classless society there was something comic in such a happening.

3. (25) rehearsal, 20. i. 1956

"Schall, the situation is illegal. You must talk before these warders, you must consider that. You understand him excellently, but you don't go into that. It says here: '*I fear, there are countries...*' but what you understand is: *I hope, thank God, there are countries...* He says: '*I am worrying about a few friends...*', but you understand: *I still hope about my scholarly friends whom I have put on the path of knowledge. That they have not been put off by my revocation?* But now come blows after blows. In fact, in every sentence we have revocation, revocation, revocation... everything is shattered, let him not keep any illusions. And notwithstanding all that, you still find this in the text: Galilei would not find it pleasant or convenient, if suddenly it would be made known in England or Prague, after an interview with a scholar, that he is still the old man. Andrea should tell them there, Galilei has actually become a Catholic. Even when he had written the work, he disapproves of it himself. He has finished with his past. Andrea must accept that from him."

4. (26) rehearsal. 21. i. 1956

"Schall, start this scene uncertainly: '*How are you?*' He is your great teacher. Your turning comes only when he talks of the Church."

"Busch, '*Through the depth of my repentance*'—provocatively, the young fellow must swallow this. But, Schall, '*Your complete submission...*' you give the theme, the headline!"

Brecht worked on the dialogue, sentence by sentence, specially taking care of emphases.

...*'The teaching will be promoted there.'*

"There—that is almost like a cry for help."

"... promoted there"

"No, this interrupts the entire dialogue, unless the word *there* comes. You know, when you wish that they should be promoted, that is entirely different from promoted *there*."

'... *there* will be promoted.'

"Yes, now he is in a difficult situation, he has excited the young man, drove him into a nasty mood, he had trusted him too much."

"Well now, Schall, give back the ball, *'there too, because of your revocation'...*"

"Really?"

"With that Galilei can simply get ruined, now he is in a nice mess."

6. (55) rehearsal, 20. iii. 1956

Brecht had meanwhile sharpened Galilei's attitude (op. I. event, 4th rehearsal). The dialogue between Galilei and Andrea now became a fight. *'I am worrying'* becomes no more worrying, but an impertinent assertion for the priest.

'My superiors look after my healing again..' "That must sound arrogant, he is hitting back."

'I can hear Fabrizio moaning'—"Angry! Evil! Once again he is victorious over reason!"

'Under spiritual control..'—"Busch, you are yearning for the control, you have nothing against it, let him put that in his pipe and smoke it!"

'Through the depth of my repentance..' "Sharp, as a rectification, put that in your pipe!"

Brecht declared that Galilei did not know the publications mentioned by Andrea. He has no inkling of what had passed in between, he is really frightened.

When he speaks of his relapses — "The sickness is growing every hour. His talk with Andrea is a last attempt to destroy the fever."

8. (58) rehearsal, 22. iii. 1956

Brecht declares that Andrea condemns Galilei as a traitor, but admires him as a teacher. He represents his scientific point of view against him with great force.

Galilei's attitude changes during this conversation. Brecht declared, "this unfolds itself in the following manner," thus:

1. When Galilei says that scientific studies under the supervision of the Superiors could be permitted to him, this was truly what he meant.

2. When he learns about the general destruction in the field of science, he cannot bear it any longer, he must contradict it. Now Galilei is lost. "now he begins to fish, he wants to prove that it is a false assertion, too unfavourable, it is impossible that everything has gone to the dogs, he is exaggerating out of wickedness....."

3. He confesses that he has again written.

To 1 '.....that in a modest measure scientific studies under spiritual control should be permitted' "This is a terrible sentence. He has now dropped anchor, and this is his deepest, real meaning. When he had read Montaigne and he had read him, this is historical—then it is clear that Montaigne would have advised him to do this treachery : that under no circumstances whatsoever should he get into danger, under none whatever. They are stupidities, the passions, they must be mastered, taken in hand. This is all nonsense. That is the great opinion of the bourgeoisie, no trace of idealism, nowhere, that is 1900, that is also the way in the German Classicism, anyhow come down, under the circumstances of the German misery, and which, as a consequence, must never be compared with the Italian Classicism, with the English Classicism, not even with the French, we must get this absolutely right, this is his real opinion."

To 2 : "Now he knows this destruction, this monstrous destruction, the desert desolation in the field of science. And he cannot bear that, that Galilei cannot bear, now he must contradict. Now he feels the urge, which his brain is fighting back, as if it were a dirty, dank story against Rome, he tries absolutely to push that down, he must not say it."

To 3 : "And suddenly he feels that he had said it."

9. (59) rehearsal, 23. iii. 1956

Generally, Brecht explained many things, but the most important during this rehearsal were the emphases. He explained to Schall a contradiction in his character: "You know, you must play two things. You play the external coolness, which you feel you are obliged to have, but

otherwise this does not agree with Fabrizio, this is not true, you push it out; you wanted to see once more, before you left Italy, your teacher. This is a necessity that you, nevertheless, fight against. You feel here obliged, as a representative of Italian science, to play the hero.

"Always watch him when he does not look—always look at him, fascinated. You are still bound to him, that is natural, you have not yet finished the matter, in no way. Precisely because everything went to the dogs, exactly because of that. Thus, you have here this double tactic : that these cold things are coming, but when he does not look, then you look at him. Galilei looks disturbed, he looks old, he is in a terrible position. But you want to engrave him in your memory for yourself, for you are going away. You will never see him again. You saw him last time at that terrible thing, the revocation, when he was totally disturbed. You are showing the bewilderment into which he had precipitated you: the monstrous authority which he possesses, rightly, but otherwise this evil example that he had given. He forces you to hate him, doesn't he?"

To the 3rd., event—Galilei confesses that he had written the *Discorsi*. Andrea builds up a new morality.

1. (10) rehearsal, 28. xii. 1955

Galilei has confessed that he had written the *Discorsi*. Brecht declared that he now handles Andrea as someone who had misled him to act against his own well-being.

However, for Andrea everything is now different. When he looks at the *Discorsi* he is convinced that he had never understood anything until now: now Galilei is a great man, even ethically centuries ahead of his own times. He went into the camp of the reactionaries, because he needed the respite for his work.

"The 'joke' is : you are enormously enthused about the book, and that the master had proved himself in this way: at the same time to talk like a realist, quite coldly, like an engineer, with cold logic — and even that is false!" (Brecht laughed heartily about this analysis of his own). "You are erecting him a golden bridge, back to the estimation of science and he declares to you : nothing of the kind, he was afraid!"

"Schall, these are sentences out of Schiller, great pathos!"

Schall : "This is altogether a Schillerian scene!"

"You understand, Schall, when you came earlier, it was fully natural and understood by you, that he had revoked out of fear—and now this

has become unthinkable. After the gigantic achievement of the *Discorsi* it is no more valid."

"Busch, the sentence '*my vanity had held me back*' sounds really vain, this must be the vainest sentence of the whole play."

3. (25) rehearsal, 20. i. 1956

Brecht explained that '*I have written again*,' because of its illegality should sound somewhat as if he said '*I have once again become drunk*.' The effect on Andrea is, on the one hand, greatly exciting, on the other hand a great despair. "He has bought himself the leisure through the revocation, in order to write the work, but he is lost—This, then, is a misfortune : for him, for you, for the whole scientific world. And only then does it turn out that he has saved it too."—"Galilei has in no way decided to hand over the work. He is only beginning to fight with himself."

Brecht rehearsed the 'theory' of Andrea only once, then he worked on the reaction of Andrea to Galilei's communication, that he had revoked out of fear.

"No—That is fear. That cannot be, that must not be, that is impossible. Look now, if someone comes towards you with a knife and wants to thrust it into your chest : No! Frightened, dry, without saliva."

"No—fearfully, it does not fit at all into the legend that he was afraid, there must be something else behind it."

'*Thus it was not a plan*.' Brecht pronounced this sentence for us with a small, tired voice, not as a question, but as a statement.

"Schall, make yourself now once again strong; the main thing is, he has delivered it."

4. (26) rehearsal, 21. i. 1956

Brecht rehearsed only the first part of the scene, up to the confession that Galilei had written the *Discorsi*. He discussed with the actors: "We must build this up first, that's a great thing. We want to see how long he remains polite: Andrea wants to go, and Galilei says, in order to retain him something or the other, he has relapses, he has written again, the *Discorsi*—what ! let's have it ! Let's have the '*Discorsi*' ! We must get that."

"Schall, your stiff attitude is fine, if only you allow yourself now and then to collapse. This is not a question of character, it is a strain, you pull yourself together. It was always a strain to talk to him."—"You must not run, Schall. No going. Only sympathy, sympathy with Galilei,

with the entire scientific world, with oneself, tremendous disappointment—and he is now thinking it over whether he should confess him that there exists a copy.”

‘Here’—that must be the most quiet, whether loud or soft, here, under the eyes of the monks?”

5. (27) rehearsal 23. iii. 1956

Brecht worked on the ‘new morality’ of Andrea.

“You know, the whole story becomes profitable for you. There is wonderful humour in it, in this new morality, a cunning, a ruse. You are radiant that you have now discovered this, you throw out the ballast of three hundred years of prejudices! Everything becomes so easy, everything is permitted, at last one can work.”

“...‘a popular point of your teachings’—you had just said : ‘science has acquired a public,’ and now it has become for you a kind of mob, you build up your theory the way it suits you. When you pronounce these brutal sentences, all walk over corpses, even the audience must observe that, something doesn’t clap there! That’s what he has brought out, but it’s all false!”

6. (55) rehearsal, 20. iii. 1956

Brecht explained that Andrea should achieve for a short time to carry Galilei with him with his new morality, in any case for a short period, to doubt, until he recognizes that this bridge that is being built here for him, wont hold.

At the text ‘*Better to be soiled than empty*’ Busch thought that though he had never said that, yet the theory is attractive. Busch played that leaning back in the chair, with folded arms, meditating and yet every moment watching the young man.

Brecht worked with Schall from sentence to sentence: what the audience expected and what Galilei did. And he demanded from Schall to act out the surprise over the unexpected.

When he came to ‘*in Florence he bowed before the child*,’ Schall actually bowed. Brecht said laughing: “Yes, Schall, keep that, that bowing, it becomes ridiculous. He really did bow at that time—and through that the maggot in your theory becomes visible: One begins to observe that something does not click!”

It was really comic, how Galilei’s bow, removed from the point of

view and estranged, alienated through Andrea's bowing, has become now, afterwards, recognizably ridiculous.

To the sentence '*sold to the Senate someone else's telescope*' Brecht said: "Schall, you can bring that home even now delicately to him. For scientists the worst is still, up to today, what Galilei had done. He ought not to have done that. That revocation—he was threatened then. But the story with the telescope transgressed into private property, thus, in brief, deeply!"

"In the Andrea scene the passionate nature of scientists must be shown, they are not diplomats or politicians! There is true passion there. You are building up a Galilei-image for the following centuries: in fact, it is the image that has remained with us up to the present day, in the classic standard works."

7. (56) rehearsal, 21. iii. 1956

Brecht declared: "Here the work of science is being enacted and it turns out that this is so little in the tradition of stage acting that no one gets excited about science. Actors are accustomed to get excited when a battle is lost—but not about science.

"But Man gets excited, even scientists. That was the great sensation of the century in this field, without the four laws of motion by Galilei there is in fact, no modern physics. This is totally decisive: a revolutionary work, technically, spiritually, physically—it isn't that '*I have again written a novel, my seventeenth,*' no, this isn't the same thing."

"If that isn't that way, Schall, that you extricate from him the work, in order to get across the frontier with it, then it doesn't come out."

"Galilei must attempt to resist. First of all it has been stated that 'science is ruined, the Church sits with its fat arse on it, Descartes doesn't work any more. Galilei sits in his prison, and he has not learned what light was, the cold answers, the polite interest of Andrea excite him, he can't stand it.—So he tells him that he had again written, he talks of the *Discorsi*. That must have a colossal effect, as the H-bomb!"—"The word '*Discorsi*' he ought not to have mentioned, now he is in mortal danger. Busch, you pull yourself again together, you have told him too much, now you lie again to him, impudently."

'*Human weaknesses do not concern science at all ! No ?*' Here a great question is thrown up. Everyone in the audience must answer that. That asks for a pause. Out of a hundred intellectuals a hundred, let us

say ninety-nine, carried over from science to politics ninety-five, will agree, consent: human weaknesses do not concern science (politics) at all."

Brecht made Schall speak the 'new morality' with great pathos, make large movements, "he works himself into the theory, he is captured by it."

"Talk with great, Schillerian pathos, Schall, act a Don Carlos." And Brecht said enthusiastically, "He talks marvellously but naturally because the text is by me."

To the IV. event—Galilei analyses his fall.

1. (10) rehearsal, 28. xii. 1955

Brecht told us that this scene was the strongest in California, not because of the spiritual contents, but because of the teacher-student encounter. That was the theatrical contents of the scene, in any case very difficult to represent.

Galilei, he said, was now a wicked old man, who declares to the student what he thinks of him: a dunderhead whom he must bring home the ABC of his science, analytical thinking.

Andrea, he said, was mistaken when he construed that Galilei—when he made his revocation—was some three centuries ahead of his times. But now Galilei utters a sentence with which he is actually three hundred years ahead of his times: *'I stand for the idea that the sole purpose of science consists in easing the burden of human existence!'* "

3. (27) rehearsal, 23. i. 1956

'Welcome to the gutter, Brother'..... Schall stood with hanging shoulders, looking at Busch astonished, stunned, as if he were a scorpion. Busch acted the bad temper marvellously; he let it be seen how much it bored him to have to teach once again the erstwhile student.

'What dost thou work for?'—"Impatiently: what dost thou work for, after all? For God knows what, may be only in order to buy a new pair of boots!"

'Many thanks, sir,' said Busch drily, lightly, humorously, declining. Brecht, laughed heartily: "That is colossal, Busch, magnificent. Why not? He has once again given in to his evil urges, now he bites. This ought to go over into complete emptiness and stupidity, only not noble, he has delivered it now, now he is only an evil-minded old man!"

During the sentence *'Hast thou any inkling who could have sent the*

geese?' Brecht let Virginia prepare Galilei's bed for the night's rest, a counter-piece to the first scene which began by Mrs. Sarti arranging his bed after his getting up in the morning. "A simple affair", remarked Brecht.

8. (58) rehearsal, 22. iii. 1956

Brecht declared that Galilei had underestimated himself with the revocation.

"He was not at all so weak as he thought he was, he was fairly strong. For a while he was stronger than the Pope and the whole Inquisition. He oughtn't under any circumstances, to be tortured. Not to speak of killing. He would not have been safe in Rome, had Rome been only Rome, but Rome was also dependent on Paris, on Madrid, this is what he forgot to think of, that's the whole joke!

"He sometimes says intelligent things. For example in the 8th scene he explains to his students that the clergy had created for him this great reputation because he kept silent. But now he has this reputation, and then he forgets it again that he has got it. I believe that is completely realistic."

'Knowledge, acquired through doubt'—"Busch, the word 'doubt' uttered around 1600, the positive doubt, the search in science, that is like Uranium, that is like the word criticism today! That is most important"—"Such a colossal error, that which I have wrought here, that cannot be suffered in science. I have used up all my meritorious services. This was a professional error; it was a misfortune that precisely in my time precisely my science had changed so colossally."

"I think we ought to try and attempt to tell the story, without any attempt to make it clear, somewhat haughtily, with the assurance of a great genius, even a little bit arrogant, don't you think? Thus it comes out that the whole can be understood by itself. If the audience did not understand it, you'll hear at the end that the man had condemned himself. They'll understand, no doubt, a number of sentences, some will not understand a thing, that's how it is in the theatre."

Hailing the New Age

The fable of a play can be told in different ways. Brecht once told the story of *Galilei* by quoting an English children's verse:

Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall,
All the King's horses and all the King's men
Cannot put Humpty-Dumpty together again.

(Translator's note : The above incorrect English quotation is given in the above manner in the German text.)

"Really nothing else happens after that". said Brecht, but he added at once the "joke of the thing" to it, by quoting Karl Valentin whom he still admired:

"Two boys climbed up a ladder,
the one above was rather clever,
the one below was rather dull,
Suddenly the ladder had a fall.

"which method allows the theatre, the method of social science, material dialectic, to put to use for its illustrations. This method deals, in order to come to the mobility of society, with social circumstances as processes, and follows these in their contradictions. Everything for it exists only, in as much as it changes, that is as long as it is in disunity with itself. This is valid also for the feelings, opinions and attitudes of man, in which the occasional manner of his social co-existence always finds expression."

(Bertolt Brecht: *Kleines Organon fuer as Theater*, chapter 45).

Brecht shows the transitoriness of every event and action through the contradictions that becomes apparent: Galile's urge to do research is a mortally dangerous burden that he can not resist, but society is grateful for his *Discorsi*. Galilei delivers the *Discorsi* out of vanity, complaining of his recidivism and condemning it, but the handing over remains a service to society.

Galilei's cynicism contains scientific honesty and Andrea's morality—"Fear does not fit the production of the *Discorsi*".....contains lack of analytical thinking. Galilei's confession of his crime contains a refusal to excuse himself. Andrea's defence—and Galilei did in fact find time through the revocation to write the book—contains his corruption through the delivery of the book. Galilei's analysis proves that his brains have not been disturbed, but the lucidity of his thinking makes his crime the more worthy of condemnation. Galilei's cynical self-condemnation contains the lesson: for Andrea, for us.

"Then came the secrecy of the gigantic source of energy through the military and the politicians, which excited the intellectuals. The freedom of research, the exchange of discoveries, the international community of research scientists were silenced by the authorities who were strongly distrusted. Great physicians left fleeing the service of their warlike governments; one of the most renowned of them took on a teaching post that forced him to spend his working time on the teaching of the most elementary

tenets to beginners, only in order to avoid working under these authorities. It has become outrageous, disgraceful to discover something." (Bertolt Brecht: *Aufbau einer Rolle: Laughton*. Written in 1948).

Galilei: '*acts with knowledge acquired through doubt*', and Brecht: "Busch, the word 'doubt' uttered around 1600, the positive doubt, the search in science, that is like Uranium, that is like the word criticism today! That is most important!"

Not simply the doubt, but "positive doubt", doubt for the recognition of truth is what drives Galilei to do research; society must thank this joy in doubt for his discoveries, his inventions. But Galilei lived in a society in which doubt becomes vice, depravity something he strove against, that is to say when the results of his doubts, the truth, had to be suppressed, by the ruling class in order not to become a weapon in the hands of the oppressed.

"Galilei abandons the fight, he hands over the results of his research to the rulers, *to use them, not to use them, to misuse them as it may please them,*' And Galilei condemns his own denial. *'He who does not know the truth, is simply a dunderhead. But he who knows it and calls it a lie, that is a criminal.'* Yet no less than himself, Galilei also condemns a society that expects from him to pay with his life for the truth, a society in which productivity turns against the producers, in which achievement becomes a crime. Galilei has not risen to the "expectation" (which does not prevent him from hoping it from his students), but his complaint against society remains. The contradiction can not be solved individually, only socially and by fighting, it cannot be solved in a class society, but only through its overthrowing.

"Galilei demands in final analysis, a solution: He mocks and jeers at Andrea's corrupt morality, the moral justification of a "science for science's sake", for, even now: *'I hold and consider that the sole aim of science consists in easing the burden of human existence.'*

"But that is only possible in a society that does not have to fear doubt, but in which doubt and criticism are levers to development, in which contradictions are no more antagonistic, but will be solved in principle in the course of development through the fight of opinions, in which truth will make the development of society manageable.

"They want to do wonders with their machines. What sort? They don't need God any more, in any case, but what sort of wonders should they be? For example, there should be no more above and below, they don't need it any more, says the Inquisitor in the 11th scene.

"To ease the burdensomeness of human existence": this is the aim of science in these new times, and it is attainable, in that society itself eases its existence.

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