CHAPTER IV

DON JUAN

When Brecht set about adapting Molière’s comedy Dom Juan — the first adaptation of a major foreign play (Antigone had been filtered through Hölderlin’s translation) and the only French one — he was linking on to a European tradition that started in the seventeenth century and had undergone a variety of changes.¹ Molière’s Dom Juan appeared early on the scene in 1665, little more than a generation after the Spaniard Tirso de Molina’s El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra had set the ball rolling. The subject had become fashionable in the Parisian theatre, the Italian version by Cicognini was made popular by a commedia dell’arte troupe, and two French attempts by Dorimon and Villiers preceded Molière. Fundamental shifts in interpretation were already evident and Molière invested his hero, supposedly a Sicilian sensualist, with the quite distinct ethos of Parisian aristocrats; the other characters, too, are recognizably of Molière’s time. Over a hundred years later Mozart’s Don Giovanni incorporated the eighteenth-century view of the deceiver and led on to the narcissistic Romantic vision of Don Juan as a restless demonic spirit, a composite of l’homme révolté and l’homme fatal, acquiring metaphysical significance in his search for happiness, perfection, paradise. Perhaps E. T. A. Hoffmann, being transported by Mozart’s opera and consequently idealizing its hero, was most influential in establishing this conception; in his story Don Juan (1813) he muses on the superhuman aspirations that induce the transgressions of the seducer. Although Hoffmann extrapolates this aspect from his enthusiasm for Mozart’s music (which he described in a letter to Hippel in 1795) it is the interpretation of Don Juan that has predominated from the Romantics onwards,² more particularly perhaps in Germany where, consciously and unconsciously, his demonic striving has assimilated many Faustian elements. It is this detaching of the hero from the realities of society and his elevation into an absolute sphere that Brecht sets out to counter.

In his notes to Besson’s production of the adaptation for the Berliner Ensemble Brecht rails at the tradition of the bourgeois theatre that draws the sting of Molière and makes of DonJuan a tragic, superhuman hero:


Nichts in dem Text, der vorliegt, ermuntert eine solche Auffassung, die auch von einer völligen Unkenntnis der Zeit zeugt, in der Molière lebte, und der Stellung, die er zu ihr einnahm.³
A comment made during a discussion about *Don Juan* with his collaborators on 23 September 1953 also testifies to Brecht’s realization that he was swimming against the tide in reinstating a comic Don Juan (although it goes without saying that Brecht’s comedy, like Molière’s, would be eminently serious):

Bei Molière tritt Don Juan offen und schamlos auf, dafür ist er bei den Spaniern tragisch. Mehr und mehr wurde dieser Don Juan tragisch gespielt in den folgenden Jahrhunderten mit zunehmendem bürgerlichem Einfluß, sodaß wir jetzt, als wir es mit Ausländern besprachen — Volksbühnenkonferenz —, auf großes Erstaunen stießen, daß wir es komisch spielen.

If the theme tackled by Brecht in this adaptation was common, almost legendary, European property, the actual prototype he worked over was the unmistakable expression of a particular cultural and historical situation in France. For this reason, Brecht’s procedure of studying minutely Molière’s time and his attitude to it and setting about the adaptation with the insights thus gained in mind, inevitably had to be of a different nature from the similar method applied to the German dramatists Lenz and Hauptmann. Whereas the German plays were embedded in the more or less recent historical heritage of both Brecht and his public and presupposed all the subtle differentiation of fibres connecting the past and present of a nation in a living tissue, he was in the case of Molière approaching from outside, making a cooler and less involved appraisal, yet one that blunted or distorted many delicate and discriminating finesses in Molière’s play. The overall ethos of *le Grand Siècle*, Molière’s satire on medicine and hypocrisy, the ferreting activities of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, the *dévots* and their subterranean campaign that led to the banning of *Tartuffe* in 1664 (a year before *Dom Juan* had its brief fifteen performances), the libertinage of thought that was spreading so quickly were all topical for Molière and the Parisians. In adapting the play almost three hundred years later for a different language and culture Brecht had to reduce or exclude altogether some of these aspects (e.g. the attack on the medical profession is now vestigial) and switch the function of others to fit his own total assessment and image of Molière’s age and intent. It is thus difficult to accept at its face value Brecht’s assertion that his avowed Marxist attitude would allow the ‘pure’ viewpoint of Molière to emerge unalloyed, where it had been distorted by persistent bourgeois attempts to ‘interpret’. Many would claim that cunning interpretation is a cardinal modus operandi in Brecht’s adaptations, and he demonstrably imposes later points of view on those of the original author. This is not necessarily to be condemned; it is perhaps desirable that Brecht should have rethought the terms of *Dom Juan*. In any age the production of a play (classic or not) is a doubtful boon if the presentation is devoid of ideas that make the drama relevant to that age.

To establish the relationship of Brecht to Molière and his time in the proper perspective we must take into account the broad picture of the social history of the seventeenth century in France and in particular Brecht’s interpretation of it. Central to this age (later dubbed *le Grand Siècle*) is of course the
court culture pivoting on the power of Louis XIV, the prime example of an absolute monarch and one who used the energies of the middle classes to bolster his dominion, yet sat enthroned at the summit of a feudal pyramid that effectively crushed any attempt from below to alter the ossified social structure. The programme accompanying the Berliner Ensemble production of Don Juan carries a score of pages of documentary material indicating quite clearly the political and economic background to Molière's play; it contains descriptions of the wars waged by Louis XIV, the elaborate ceremonial of his levée, his lavish spending on palaces, pyrotechnics and prostitutes, the wretched lot of the submerged nine-tenths in their stinking misery, the organizing ability of Colbert, the draper's son who ruthlessly created the economic premisses for the King's splendour. Brecht and his collaborators analysed the royal exploitation of both nobility and middle class as they tussled for the King's favour. The middle classes, though instrumental in creating the trade and industry of a powerful France, were not conscious of their ability to act in unison and shape the society they formed part of. They were overawed by the dazzling apparatus of aristocracy surrounding the King and most often set the limit of their ambition in the aping of its manners — hence the cutting satire of Molière's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. During the discussion held in 1953 in which he was seeking to define the terms of the 'comedy' in Don Juan Brecht indicated that both these classes were 'komisch' either through situation or through aspiration:

Für Molière war maßgebend, daß durch dieses Vordringen des Bürgertums bestimmte adelige Gewohnheiten, Sitten, Ideen komisch wurden. Da stand er im Bunde mit dem Hofe. Der Hof zog die Bürgerlichen her, die Einfluß bekamen. Gleichzeitig komisch waren die eingefleischten Adligen, die als Höflinge Macht und Geld bekamen, sich aber ducken mußten. Zu gleicher Zeit war das Bürgertum komisch, das die abgewirtschafteten Höflinge nachzuahmen versuchte (Emporkömmlinge).4

Indeed, Molière's own position was not unambiguous: of humble origins, he arrived in Paris in 1658 after hard-won experience with his troupe roving in the provinces. He had the patronage of 'Monsieur' (the King's brother) and in 1665, after the suspension of Dom Juan, his company became the 'troupe du roi'. Molière was thus heavily dependent, financially and otherwise, on the court theatre and on private performances in the establishments of the nobility. However, though Molière wrote in his embittered preface to the banned Tartuffe: 'Si l'emploi de la comédie est de corriger les vices des hommes, je ne vois pas par quelle raison il y en aura de privilégiés', he was circumspect enough never to ridicule the royal personage himself and would appeal to Louis whenever his vitriolic 'peinture' got him into hot water. There is some justification for inferring from Molière's career a condoning of the evils of absolute monarchy (just as, for that matter, the position of Brecht in East Berlin after 1949 was determined by his equivocal relationship with the governmental apparatus which supplied his theatre with copious subsidies). But whereas Molière, even had he wanted to, could not make his portrait of a
young nobleman in *Dom Juan* so explicitly condemnatory that it would have implied a censure of the whole system of feudal aristocracy right up to and including the King, Brecht built his adaptation squarely on the historical rejection of this system with its concomitant ills. Brecht’s collaborator, Benno Besson, outlined the situation that might have motivated the Don Juan that Molière had converted into a French nobleman:

Geschichtlich für den Don Juan interessant ist auch das Zustandekommen einer einheitlichen Nation, die Zerschlagung des Adels in Frankreich, der Absolutismus Ludwig XIV., der sich auf ein Recht von Gottes Gnaden stützt, ökonomisch auf die bürgerliche Klasse gegen den Adel, die Verknechtung des Adels in Versailles, der mit Ehren und Geld zwar überschüttet wird, aber doch geknechtet. Die Position von Don Juan, der französischer Adliger ist, ist die, daß er nicht mehr zum Zuge kommt, was die normalen Appetite eines Adligen anbetrifft: Eroberung.

From this point Brecht could go on to transfer Don Juan’s instinct for conquest to the sexual sphere and emphasize his desire to emulate the deeds of Alexander. The axis of Brecht’s adaptation of Molière is thus constituted by this outright condemnation of the feudally stratified society that was to be overthrown by the French Revolution after a century of convulsions. In keeping with the confessedly Marxist viewpoint he brings to bear on the text Brecht introduces — in Sganarelle, the fisherman, oarsmen and servants — a coherent ethos of the have-nots that gives a consistent view of the aristocratic world from below, where Molière contented himself with only implying it.

Indicative of Brecht’s intent to attack every aspect of the nobility is his rendering of the expressions for them and the gentry that occur in *Dom Juan*. Not only are gentilhomme, *homme de qualité* and monsieur absorbed entirely into the aristocratic ambience but even that ubiquitous ideal of seventeenth-century France, the *honnête homme*, is unambiguously expressed in terms that bring into prominence class opposition. To Molière’s age the *honnête homme* suggested a person of good breeding, politeness and elegant manners, of a wide culture worn lightly and urbanely, and with a refined and easy way of handling the world. Though the *honnête homme* was not confined to any one class the tacit assumption was that only a member of the nobility or upper middle class had the wealth, leisure, heredity and power to develop such qualities. This is the factor that Brecht reveals and brings to the fore. In the very first scene of the adaptation Sganarelle talks of ‘les honnêtes gens’ as ‘die Großen dieser Welt’ (though also calling ‘un honnête homme’ ‘ein Mann von Welt’), and later Don Carlos, Elvira’s brother who is so passionately attached to honour, refers in the same breath to ‘gentilhommes’ as ‘Edelleute’ and ‘un honnête homme’ as ‘ein Edelmann’ (iii, 5), unconsciously voicing the unvarnished social reality. Don Juan too draws class distinctions when he catches sight of Don Carlos being attacked: ‘Un homme attaqué par trois autres?’ (Molière, iii, 2) becomes ‘Ein Edelmann von drei Rüpeln angefallen!’ At the other end of the scale Pierrot (Pieter) the fisherman describes Don Juan, ‘quelque gros, gros Monsieur’ whom he has saved in a shipwreck, as ‘ein ganz
großes Tier’ (II, 1) while his fiancée Charlotte talks of ‘les Monsieux’ as ‘die großen Herrn’. In these slight variations of phrase the class antagonism that smoulders through the play is already lit.

As in the case of other adaptations Brecht seeks in Dom Juan a play standing in a disturbing and provocative critical relationship to its time or containing themes that can be developed and magnified in this direction. In Dom Juan he found, in addition, an abundance of implicit condemnations of Molière’s social environment that could easily germinate into full-blown life in an age when the restraints imposed by Molière’s own situation were no longer operative. However, when Brecht rhetorically asks ‘Wie soll man Molière spielen?’ and asserts that a Marxist approach will allow the full power of a work to be felt without warping or distorting the original author’s intention, we must be on our guard. There is no guarantee of the nature of Molière’s attitude to his time apart from the play itself, and any alteration — whether in text or production — is bound to result in a different play that may or may not be congruent with Molière’s opinions. What is certain is that Molière obviously could not have at his disposal all the apparatus of a Marxist interpretation of history and even less a view of his own time filtered through three centuries. So it is not surprising that, despite his protestations, Brecht does in fact craftily put his own interpretation on the text he claims to study ‘as accurately as possible’ and superimposes on it a pattern (and a new rhythm) derived from modern political thought. This he does while ostensibly uncovering the subtle range of beauty and reality in his source:

Die alten Werke haben ihre eigenen Werte, ihre eigene Differenziertheit, ihre eigene Skala von Schönheiten und Wahrheiten. Sie gilt es zu entdecken. Das bedeutet nicht, daß man Molière so spielen soll, wie er 170x gespielt wurde; es bedeutet nur, daß man ihn nicht so spielen sollte, wie er 1850 gespielt wurde (und 1950). Gerade die Vielfalt der Erkenntnisse und Schönheiten seiner Werke erlaubt es, Wirkungen aus ihnen zu holen, die unserer Zeit gemäß sind.¹⁰

Brecht goes on to cite one of the effects of Besson’s production that emerged from a discussion with students at Leipzig University who found ‘die Satire auf die feudale Auffassung der Liebe als einer Jagd noch so aktuell, daß sie mit vielem Gelächter über die heutigen Herzensbrecher berichteten.’ He is convinced that they would have been far less interested by ‘dämonische Seelentöter’.

The various hints suggesting that the points of view of Molière and Brecht do not tally are brought together and formulated in the note Zur Figur des Don Juan:

This opens a wide gulf between the two dramatists and is a serious charge against Molière’s outlook and way of life. But the accusation derives from a misunderstanding of the epicurean thought of the seventeenth century. Molière was indeed a follower of Gassendi whose anti-abstractionist rejection of systems of philosophy and religion led him to rehabilitate the teachings of Epicurus. This Greek philosopher had taught that happiness was the *summum bonum*, but a happiness emanating from peace of mind resulting from the assiduous cultivation of all the virtues, not just the satisfaction of sensual enjoyment. The all-important stress is on the repose of mind — and consequent absence of pain — that virtue entails. In seventeenth-century France this form of epicureanism gained a strong foothold among the *libertins*, the free-thinkers who adopted an empirical approach to religious matters and many of whom sought a heightening of life — moral and spiritual — in the moderate, balanced pursuit of civilized and refining activities. It is thus necessary to be very tentative as to the nature of Molière’s epicureanism: if he was a disciple of Gassendi it would be manifested in a serious endeavour to equate pleasure and virtuous conduct, if he ‘voted for Don Juan’ sensuous delights and good living would be ends in themselves. Brecht clearly comes down against Molière who is even accused of mocking the divine judgement as if he considered heaven a rather suspicious invention designed to kill all joy in life. The charge is difficult to substantiate from evidence in the text, which actually shows signs of the struggle Molière had to weld into his realistic treatment of the theme the traditional elements (statue’s appearance, descent into the abyss) that were expected by the public.

Brecht appears to ignore this aspect of the genesis of the play and, with a residual rancour against Molière for his assumed connivance at ‘parasitical enjoyment of life’, proceeds to turn Don Juan into an exquisite fop given over entirely to licentious self-gratification. He becomes the predatory tiger in the social sphere, disrupting the human community to snatch his booty where he will. To drive this view home Brecht sprinkles the text with stage directions and remarks by the characters that maintain the tone of self-indulgence generating all of Don Juan’s actions. For example, a tailpiece is added to Sganarelle’s instructions concerning the boat trip (‘Und vergiß den Wein nicht’ (1,4); and later on Don Juan orders: ‘Was ich sagen wollte, es muß eine Chaise bereit stehen, wenn wir mit dem Boot zurückkommen’ (1,7). The wine serves its purpose after the shipwreck when Don Juan escapes from the pair of fisher-girls he has been courting (end II, 5): Sganarelle is ordered to crack a bottle with them while his master pursues his machinations. Even under pressure Don Juan’s epicurean tastes do not falter, for he has the sangfroid to call after the defeated tailor Dimanche as he leaves the house empt-handed: ‘Schicken Sie mir zwei Röcke von der üblichen Art! Ich verlobe mich’ (IV, 6). The very way in which Brecht several times weaves this trait of fastidiousness into the structure of a scene is sufficient indication of its intrinsic importance. Throughout Don Juan’s first encounter with his father (brought forward from IV, 4 in Molière to I, 6) while the old man’s tirade
flows over him, he coolly arranges the details of the boat outing with Sganarelle. The same technique recurs in IV, 9 when a second visit by his irate father is unexpectedly announced while Don Juan is having his make-up put on: ‘DON JUAN zu La Violette: Geh, halte ihn eine Weile auf. Zu Sganarelle. Lege mir etwas Weiß auf. Sganarelle schminkt ihm.’ He follows this up with a laconic ‘Ein Fleck unter die Augen’ in answer to Sganarelle’s shocked astonishment that Elvira’s words of warning have had no effect on his master. The next scene (when Don Luis does manage to burst in with his vehement denunciations) is also punctuated by the servants coming and going with letters and flasks of wine. The most significant revelation of Don Juan’s concern for and reliance on impressive externals is added in III, 5, when he catches sight of his fleeing quarry Angelika and orders Sganarelle to dress him carefully, if hurriedly, in his own clothes while the wounded Don Carlos lies by untended:

DON JUAN: Schnell, Schurke, schnell! Die Kleider her! Sie füttert auf der Lichtung Rehe!


DON JUAN: Perücke!

DON CARLOS zu DON JUAN, dem Sganarelle die Perücke richtet: Mein Herr! — DON JUAN der noch nicht vollends hergerichtet ist, bedeutet ihm durch eine Handbewegung zu warten.

Don Juan is thus reduced to a cowardly dandy flaunting the finery of his appearance and a lavish setting to achieve his seductions. To reinforce this image Brecht inserts the completely new motif (introduced in IV, 8) of Don Juan’s detailed preparations for an intimate tête-à-tête supper party during which he plans to take the fortress that is Angelika:


This is a clever conversion of the awkward scenes in Molière (IV, 7 and 8) where the Statue makes its first appearance on stage, moving and speaking with a total lack of verisimilitude; beyond this, it enables Brecht to exploit Don Juan’s para-military tactics in the epicurean sphere and preludes IV, 11 where we are escorted on to the actual field of amorous battle: Während dieser Szene wird der Tisch vollends gedeckt, und Diener bringen die ankommenden Musiker mit ihren Instrumenten im Blattwerk der Bäume unter. Don Juan intends to use this scene as a rehearsal of his manoeuvres for capturing Angelika. At this point Don Juan acts out — with interspersed comments by
his servants — how he will receive Angelika, and then Sganarelle goes to answer a knock. That the knock on the door heralds the entrance of the Statue and not Angelika, his daughter, does not hinder Brecht from pursuing the epicurean thread to the very end. In the following scene Don Juan is engulfed in the abyss, seinen Hut vergeblich festhaltend, and the final laments of the bystanders peering down into the gaping hole confirm the hold that unproductive pleasure has in this society:

**DIMANCHE**: ... Die zwei Röcke, gnädiger ... Ah! Mein bester Kunde! ... **SERAFINE**: Ah! Wer ißt nun meine Enten in Orangen? ... **DIE FISCHERMÄDCHEN**: Ah! Wer nimmt unsere Austern?

To be sure, the specific comic dimension nevertheless takes over as the final stage direction unmistakably establishes the absurdity of this superficial epicureanism: *Aus der Höhe nieder flattert langsam Don Juans Hut.*

The deployment of epicurean elements in *Don Juan* illustrates one aspect of the reinterpreted personality of the hero that Brecht is anxious to delineate; for him the demonic seeker and irresistible lover give way to the ruthless campaigner exploiting every advantage of position and power:

> Der große Verführer läßt sich nicht zu besonderen erotischen Kunstgriffen herab. Er verführt durch sein Kostüm (und diese Art, es zu tragen), seine Stellung (und die Unverschämtheit, sie zu mißbrauchen), seinen Reichtum (oder seinen Kredit) und seinen Ruf (oder die Sicherheit, die ihm seine Berühmtheit bei sich selbst gewährt). Er tritt auf als sexuelle Großmacht.¹²

This is the language of *Realpolitik* transferred to the field of love, the amoral premisses of power politics intervening in and poisoning the personal relationship of individual to individual. The target of criticism is Don Juan and through him the behaviour of the class he stands for: his costume he parades before the fisher-girls and Angelika; his rank is brought to bear on Pieter (who is sent on an errand while Don Juan courts his fiancée); his wealth procures food, wine, finery and hired assassins; while his reputation gives him the hollow pretensions and dangerous activities of a misplaced Alexander the Great. The contextual relevance of the Macedonian general (who is mentioned only fleetingly in Molière’s play) is seized on and expanded by Brecht to bolster his revision of Don Juan’s personality — similar procedure to that adopted in *Der rote Hahn* where the peripheral Navy Day of Hauptmann’s play is amplified into thematic significance. In Molière’s second scene Don Juan confesses to Sganarelle the thrill he experiences in gradually overcoming the resistance of his prey and concludes his amorous philosophy with: ‘Il n’est rien qui puisse arrêter l’impétuosité de mes désirs: je me sens porté à aimer toute la terre; et comme Alexandre, je souhaiterais qu’il y eût d’autres mondes, pour y pouvoir étendre mes conquêtes amoureuses.’ One critic thinks that in this speech ‘the imagery of military strategy, and particularly the final sentences leading up to the reference to Alexander, suggest that Dom Juan derives intellectual rather than sensual satisfaction from his conquests’.¹³
Another adduces the same outburst as evidence that Dom Juan is not simply a sensualist but ‘un artiste de la séduction’. Brecht emphatically does not share this indulgent view of military tactics in the sphere of love: for him Don Juan is not satisfying intellectual and artistic (i.e. aesthetic) urges in imitating Alexander; on the contrary, he is unscrupulously applying all the power he can muster as an aristocrat to achieve certain selfish ends. His is not the private activity deriving from purely mental or aesthetic delight, it is the brutal and destructive assault of a ‘sexuelle Großmacht’ on the rights of others.

With the aim of castigating Don Juan’s tactics as socially reprehensible Brecht in his adaptation increases the references to Alexander. In 1, 7 Don Juan confesses to Sganarelle in cold statistics his need for urgency: ‘Geduld? Das ist gerade, was ich nicht habe. Schurke, ich bin 31 Jahre alt. Alexander starb mit 33. Er hatte 618 Städte erobert. Es ist klar, ich muß mich beeilen. Los jetzt! Das Boot!’; and on the heels of the rebuff given to his opportunist advances by his rejected wife in iv, 8 he turns his attention to Angelika: ‘Sganarelle, was wird aus unserem Ruf? Er ist in der Liebe wie im Krieg mehr wert als alles andere. Die Festung ergibt sich dem, dem sich schon Festungen ergeben haben. Sie nimmt es als ein Naturgesetz hin. Der Ruf Alexanders hat ihm mehr Städte unterworfen als seine Waffenmacht. Dem Feldherrn ohne Ruf bleibt nur übrig, wie ein Berserker zu kämpfen. Auf eine Niederlage [i.e. Elvira’s refusal to stay] muß sofort ein Sieg folgen.’ The frenetic quality of this Don Juan is unmistakable, as is the incongruity of his actions and their aim; like an automaton he wields his destructive power, but there is neither pleasure nor profit in it. The robot-like exercise of his powers is underlined in iv, 11 when he rhetorically rehearses Angelika’s arrival with Sganarelle as audience. In an earlier version the intentionally hollow pathos of his effusions (not untinged by an obvious irony) was crowned by a superficial comment (later suppressed) on feminine psychology:

Das weibliche Geschlecht nämlich, mein lieber Sganarelle, wünscht nichts, als von allen Skrupeln befreit zu werden, die es hindern, uns zu lieben. Um von uns sich umarmen zu lassen, genügt ihnen jedoch der absurdeste Grund. Es macht ihnen das größte Vergnügen, sich einzureden, sie täten, was sie auf jeden Fall tun wollen, ausschließlich um Reiche zu retten oder zu zerstören oder aus noch dümmeren Motiven.

The cumulative effect of these pseudo-military attitudes of Don Juan is to point their essential meaninglessness. Brecht and his collaborators discussed Don Juan’s absurdity in this respect:

BRECHT: Molière wollte den Hof kritisieren; die Eroberung dieses bürgerlichen Finanzmannes [presumably Colbert] war eine solide Angelegenheit. Er schuf Handelsbeziehungen, die sich mehr oder weniger lohten. Es gab auch Kriege auf dem Gebiet, die Sinn hatten, Handelsverträge, dann kriegerische Abenteuer, die zur Ausbreitung der Macht beitrugen. Das übertragen auf das Gebiet der Erotik, so vertritt Don Juan einen Eroberer, bei dem nichts herauskommt.

BESSON: Die Komik des Don Juan scheint mir einer der Hauptpunkte: mit
Legionen zieht er ins Feld für merkwürdige Ziele. Einen Traum verfolgt er, den Traum des Alexander, der durch das Mittelalter geht.\textsuperscript{15}

The image of Alexander is thus no longer an arbitrary comparison to express the purposive drive of Don Juan nor can it now be interpreted positively as showing his aesthetic pleasure in ever more successful solutions to the game of seduction. By divorcing the means from the ends in the actions of Don Juan, Brecht achieves the true comedy of this figure, for now he is shown in his real isolation in a society where his function and therefore his power are rapidly becoming redundant. Brecht reduces to social terms a fact intuitively perceived by Molière in whose play the irresistible lover, in contrast to tradition, does not make even one conquest.

If Brecht appropriates the terms of Alexander the Great’s exploits to mark his more overt condemnation of Don Juan, he also retains a further much-debated aspect of the hero, namely his atheism and seventeenth-century libertinage, but in a somewhat different focus from Molière. This element was of vital topical importance for the French playwright in his tussle with the forces of established religion and morality that had succeeded in suppressing his masterpiece Tartuffe in the previous year. Molière’s immediate antagonists in this affair were the faux dévots, many of them in the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, the sanctimonious hypocrites who exerted secret pressures and on whom he tried to take some measure of revenge on his own ground in Don Juan. Thus, Dom Juan’s notorious ‘Je crois que deux et deux sont quatre’ in III, 1 and his mocking trifling with the faith of the Poor Man in the following scene are not to be taken as a profession of atheistic sentiments on Molière’s part, as a foretaste of the free-thinking Enlightenment, but rather as a bitter — if oblique — attack on the dévots. Certainly Dom Juan has little in common with the earnest libertin of Molière’s time, but, in view of the fact that Molière retains the traditional fate of the hero, the play has actually been seen as a criticism of libertinage. Brecht of course was not concerned with the personal beliefs of Don Juan as an individual; he directed his attention primarily to the wider field into which these views fitted and so treated him as the representative of his class in a distinct historical and social context. In common with other commentators Brecht detected the essential root of libertinage — which, revealingly, was especially widespread among the younger nobility in Paris — in the overweening power of the aristocracy and its gradual divorce from any meaningful function it might once have had in society, culminating now in a disregard of those very factors it had assiduously promoted to establish its power.\textsuperscript{16} Brecht could thus in his notes draw attention to the negative nature of Don Juan’s atheism:

Don Juan ist kein Atheist im fortschrittlichen Sinn. Sein Unglaube ist nicht kämpferisch, indem er menschliche Aktionen fordert. Er ist ein Mangel an Glauben. Da ist nicht eine andere Überzeugung, sondern keine Überzeugung. — Don Juan glaubt vielleicht sogar an Gott, er will nur nichts von ihm hören, da dies sein Genußleben stören würde. — Er benutzt jedes Argument — ohne eines davon zu glauben —, das die Dame legt, wie jedes, das ihn von der Dame befreit.\textsuperscript{17}
And Besson’s production reasserted the serious comedy inherent in Don Juan’s specious atheism:

Er [Besson] stellt die Komik der Don-Juan-Figur wieder her, ... indem er die sozialkritische Aussage des Stückes wiederherstellte. In der berühmten Bettlerszene, die bisher dazu benutzt wurde, Don Juan als Freigeist und damit fortschrittlichen Typ hinzustellen, zeigte Besson lediglich einen Libertin, zu arrogant, irgendwelche Verpflichtungen anzuerkennen, so daß sichtbar wurde, wie die herrschende Clique sich auch über den staatlich konzessionierten und befohlenen Glauben hinwegsetzte.¹⁸

Though retaining the Poor Man scene Brecht negated the validity of the religious exchanges by having him erroneously address Sganarelle (disguised at this point as Don Juan) as the gentleman and by interpolating impatient expletives such as ‘in Teufels Namen!’ and ‘Ihr Dummköpfe!’ in Don Juan’s utterances.

In the adaptation Don Juan’s apparent atheism is thus stripped of any pretensions to an intellectual basis and is exploited as one symptom of the decay of feudal aristocracy; indeed, in discussing Don Juan’s disastrous end Brecht ascribes to Molière his own arguments for condemning Don Juan’s anti-social misuse of atheism:

Der Atheismus des großen Parasiten täuscht viele; sie fallen darauf herein, bewundern ihn, rühmen ihn als fortschrittlich. Aber Molière war weit entfernt davon, seinen Don Juan wegen seines Atheismus als einen vorurteilsfreien Mann zu empfehlen; er verurteilt ihn dafür — entzieht er sich, wie der ganze Hofadel der Zeit, durch seinen zynischen Unglauben lediglich den elementaren sittlichen Anforderungen! Molière läßt ihn am Ende vom Himmel bestrafen, aber nur in komisch-theatralischer Weise, damit überhaupt den Verbrechen endlich ein Ende gesetzt wird. In einer Gesellschaftsordnung wie dieser gibt es keine Instanz, die dem Parasiten Einhalt gebieten könnte, als — allenfalls — der Himmel, das heißt die Theatermaschinerie. Wenn der Bühnenboden sich nicht öffnen würde, das glänzende Scheusal zu verschlingen, ginge es ungehindert und unhinderbar weiter über die Erde.¹⁹

In unpublished programme notes to the Berlin production Brecht slyly indicated how he turned to account the totally artificial and improbable crushing of the parasitical Don Juan by a deus ex machina rather than a deus ex coelo:

Die steinerne Statue des Komturs holt ihn [Don Juan] in die Hölle. Lachend zeigt Molière, daß nur das sehr unwahrscheinliche Eingreifen des Himmels im Frankreich Ludwigs XIV. die frechen Übergriffe und Ausschweifungen der Adligen hätte verhindern können.²⁰

The quasi-magical conclusion to the play that Molière kept in deference to a strong tradition allowed Brecht to turn it surreptitiously into a dialectical pointe: only a blatantly fairy-tale ending of this nature would be sufficient to check the arrogant dominance of the nobility, yet the very unlikelihood of this really happening highlights the ineffectualness of established religion,
which anyway stands itself in a symbiotic relationship to what it should condemn.21

From whatever point this play is approached it becomes evident that Brecht wanted to exclude deliberately and systematically every aspect of Don Juan that was purely individual and unique to this particular figure and that could not be shaped in such a way that the sociological motivation emerged sharply. The whole raison d'être of the adaptation is expressed cryptically in the notes: ‘Wir haben von der (Molière näheren) Satire mehr als von der halbtragischen Charakterstudie. Der Glanz des Parasiten interessiert uns weniger als das Parasitäre seines Glanzes.”22 The social dimension is indispensable to satire and Brecht categorically rejects the opportunity of treating Don Juan as a ‘tragic hero’ — the reactions of an ÓEdipus, a Hamlet, a Phèdre betray little of the social fabric in which they live. Hence Brecht’s interest not so much in the fine feathers of Don Juan but in the behaviour they facilitate and the consequences for others; Brecht’s aim is not to paint an uncommitted portrait of the parasite but to bring out the parasitical — and therefore undesirable — essence of the figure. The comedy becomes in every essential a hostile revelation of the presumption of the feudal aristocracy in France, as manifested in the particular exploits of Don Juan. Brecht re-structures situations and dialogues to create a critical distance between audience and Don Juan, to obviate empathetic immersion in the details of his personality and to focus attention on to the group he is typical of in all he does. Since the target of Brecht’s satire is the dominant aristocracy it is to be expected that the most decisive alterations carried out should be found largely in the presentation of the nobleman Don Juan as well as in the interplay of Sganarelle with him, servant and master, and their conscious and unconscious behaviour as determined by their respective social standing in mutual reference groups.

Molière had not made it his concern to show the aristocracy to be bad per se (even had he wished to, he would scarcely have survived the repercussions) but limited himself to showing Dom Juan as a nobleman who also happened to be bad. To put the audience in the picture in the expository first scene Sganarelle describes to Gusman some of his master’s more relevant characteristics and uses the celebrated phrase ‘Mais un grand seigneur méchant homme est une terrible chose’, a comment that has been worried by critics ever since but is seldom taken to apply to anyone beyond the particular nobleman Dom Juan. Paradoxically, though not unexpectedly, the lines that include this one disappear from the adaptation. Dom Louis’s tirade in iv, 4, so clearly based on a worthy belief in firm principles that make a man into a nobleman and that Dom Juan is regretfully not living up to, is re-fashioned by Brecht to show Dom Louis’s fear for the good image of the class they belong to, not for the qualities this class should display; so the emotional

Ne rougissez-vous point de mériter si peu votre naissance? Êtes-vous en droit, dites-moi, d’en tirer quelque vanité? Et qu’avez-vous fait dans le monde pour être gentilhomme? ... Apprenez enfin qu’un gentilhomme qui vit mal est un monstre
dans la nature, que la vertu est le premier titre de noblesse, que je regards bien moins
au nom qu'on signe qu'aux actions qu'on fait, et que je serais plus d'état du fils d'un
crocheteur qui serait honnête homme, que du fils d'un monarque qui vivrait comme
vous.

turns into the calculating, rational

Mit welchem Recht genießest du unsere Privilegien? Was hast du getan in der Welt,
ein Edelmann zu heißen? Glaubst du, es sei noch rühmlich, aus edlem Blut abzustam-
men, wenn man ein Schandleben führt? Kannst du nicht mehr erröten? Soll es
heißen, ein Edelmann ist ein Ungeheuer in der Natur? Soll es heißen, die Söhne der
Lastträger stellen die unseren in den Schatten, was die Tugend betrifft, sind sie
besser?23

Brecht is thus bent on making Don Juan representative of his class (which,
being parasitical, can have only negative characteristics) and he lets no
opportunity slip by of emphasizing the hero’s lying, ruthless, egoistic and
irresponsible behaviour. The deepening of the Alexander theme is an example
of this blackening of the nobility, drawing attention to their overbearing
exercise of power. But Brecht goes much further in putting the qualities Dom
Louis refers to in an equivocal light, so that in the dramatic context of the play
they negate themselves. When Don Juan outrageously pretends to Elvira in
1, 3 that he has left her through fear of the divine wrath for his ‘adultery’ in
snatching her from the convent, the sole addition is his ‘ Gnädige Frau, um
dem Himmel und aller Kreatur gerecht zu werden, müssen wir oft schmerzliche
Opfer bringen —’. And in 1, 6 (absorbing most of Molière’s iv, 4) Brecht
again has Don Juan hypocritically plead to his father the obligations
demanded of a nobleman’s honour — in order to rid himself of his
troublesome wife (by allowing her to return to the convent whence he had
abducted her) and loosen the parental purse-strings.

Further, Brecht deprives Don Juan of the attribute of courage. Molière
did not discredit his Dom Juan for taking sensible measures to elude the
twelve horsemen searching for him. Brecht, on the other hand, makes the
most of Don Juan’s fear at the thought of the three fishermen pursuing him
after he himself had taught them to wield their oars as weapons:

DON JUAN: In der Tat, das Spiel scheint zu ungleich. Mit roher Gewalt will ich
nichts zu tun haben. Das Schicksal trennt uns. Adieu, meine schönen Kinder, ich
kann Ihnen nichts abschlagen. Sganarelle, ich sehe mich in der Lage, dir einen
Herzenswunsch zu erfüllen, Sganarelle, du kannst meinen Rock anziehen, gib mir
deine Lumpen.

SGANARELLE: Gnädiger Herr, Sie belieben zu spaßen. Soll ich in Ihren Kleidern
sterben?

DON JUAN: Nicht, wenn es nicht nötig ist. Bereite alles für die Heimreise vor!24

When a little later Don Juan is about to give chase to a new beauty, Angelika,
whom he has just glimpsed in the park, Sganarelle has to restrain him as he has
forgotten he is wearing his servant’s clothes. Don Juan hurriedly urges him to
give him back his finery, but while Sganarelle is reluctantly unbuttoning his
coat their attention is diverted by the oarsmen’s attack on a nobleman. Whereas Molière’s Dom Juan goes himself to the aid of the belaboured gentleman, Brecht strikes a markedly different note:

DON JUAN: Was ist das? Ein Edelmann, von drei Rüpeln angefallen!
SGANARELLE: Die Ruderer!
DON JUAN: Der Kampf ist zu ungleich; eine solche Feigheit kann ich nicht mit ansehn. Komm dem Mann sofort zu Hilfe! Ich selbst schlage mich nicht mit Leuten, die mit Balken zuhauen. In den Kampf, Schurke! Er gibt Sganarelle einen Fußtritt, der diesen auf den Kampfplatz befördert, und geht abseits.25

The motif of an exchange of clothes between Don Juan and Sganarelle (although used by Cicognini, Dorimon and Villiers) is dropped at the rudimentary stage at the end of Molière II, 5 (‘DOM JUAN: Je veux que Sganarelle se revête de mes habits’) and Sganarelle turns up in the next scene in the guise of a doctor. Brecht falls back on the original idea of an exchange of clothes, not in order to achieve the comic misunderstandings that this transparent device traditionally causes but to focus attention on the relationship between clothes and wearer and call in question the worth of a Don Juan masquerading under his finery and, indeed, the intrinsic value of the finery itself that evokes such predictable reactions in others. Mention has been made of the scene where Don Juan ignores the battered Don Carlos while hurriedly changing back to rush off after Angelika—a case of dog eat dog. When the preparations are completed Don Carlos pours out profuse thanks, only to be brusquely cut short by Don Juan whose thoughts are elsewhere:

DON JUAN sich ungeduldig umblickend: Ich habe nur getan, mein Herr, was Sie an meiner Stelle auch getan hätten.
SGANARELLE beiseite: Nämlich nichts.
DON CARLOS: Tatsächlich genügte Ihr Auftauchen. Ihre gebieterische Erscheinung, Ihre Stimme, gewohnt des Befehlens . . . [he then describes his encounter with the oarsmen] Mich nicht kennend, belästigten sie mich mit der Geschichte eines Edelmannes, von dem sie behaupteten, er schulde ihnen Geld, und den sie gräßlich verleumdeten. Als ich ihnen Vorhaltungen machte über die schändliche Beschimpfung unseres Standes, ließen sie sich zu solchen Injurien hinreißen, daß ich sie, ungeachtet ihrer Überzahl, bestrafen wollte.26

The audience knows, and Sganarelle voices, the irony of what Don Juan says: the audience also knows that the imperious presence and the commanding voice belong to the servant who, though unwillingly booted into battle, did in fact rescue Don Carlos. Aristocratic apparel is thus shown to be an external camouflage, the noble beneath exposed as the miserable wretch he is. The physical visual impact of this dissociation between the man and his clothes is of course heightened by the dramatic irony of Don Carlos in a sense defending the very man he wishes to kill; it becomes questionable what ‘die schändliche Beschimpfung unseres Standes’ really means. Molière, of course, has no ambiguities in the equivalent scene (III, 3) where Dom Juan says: ‘Je n’ai rien fait, Monsieur, que vous n’eussiez fait en ma place’ and asserts that it would have
been as cowardly as the robbers not to have gone to Don Carlos’s aid. The latter had himself not got into the fight because of an insult to his class: ‘... j’ai fait rencontre de ces voleurs, qui d’abord ont tué mon cheval, et qui, sans votre valeur, en auraient fait autant de moi.’

What Brecht is aiming at altogether in the sequence of scenes spanned by the exchange of clothes (III, 1–5) is an alienation of ‘noble appearances’. This is the point of the scene with Don Carlos and is even more wittily structured in III, 1 where we see Don Juan and Sganarelle in a neglected park, the servant having donned his master’s clothes:

**SGANARELLE**: ... Erlauben Sie, gnädiger Herr, daß ich mich eine Weile setze. Die Aufregungen, die Last Ihrer Kleider und nicht zuletzt dieses Korbes haben mich stark ermüdet.

**DON JUAN**: Dummkopf, wozu mußt du auch diesen Korb mitschleppen? Habe ich dir befohlen, ihn mitzunehmen? Don Juan schlept keine Körbe.

**SGANARELLE**: Ihre Kleider haben mich nicht so verändert, daß ich die Pflicht, mich um Don Juans Magen zu kümmern, außer acht lasse. Laßt uns speisen, gnädiger Herr.


While on the one hand it is evident that though Sganarelle is now wearing the finery he will not be let off any of his chores as servant, he must on the other attempt to impersonate in both clothes and manners. For this reason he can still be exploited by his master while at the same time providing him with a camouflage in case of danger. Even Sganarelle’s veiled references to the state of his health do not bring him any food, and while they discuss doctors and religion he serves Don Juan wine to his meal. Only at the end of the scene, when Don Juan wishes to ask for directions to the town and they call to a passing Poor Man, is Sganarelle able to pounce on the food, for it would indeed have seemed odd if the servant ate while his master went hungry. Even now Don Juan manages to put a brake on Sganarelle’s voracity: ‘Iß wenigstens anständig. Du bist ich, vergiß das nicht. Sganarelle macht sich ans Essen, er ist verschwenderisch wie Don Juan.’ Throughout the next scene, notorious in Molière for Dom Juan’s efforts to get the pious Poor Man to blaspheme for the sake of a Louis d’or, the latter naturally addressed Sganarelle as if he were master. All these scenes, then, are pressed into service by Brecht to demonstrate how noble appearances may cover nothing but meanness, how clothes and not qualities make the aristocrat.

While outer appearances are analysed to show up very vividly the ‘Glanz des Parasiten’ and ‘das Parasitäre seines Glanzes’, the same end is achieved
no less effectively in the inherent dialectical tension between master and servant which runs through the play and generates the consequences of the disguise motif. This relationship (with a long tradition in the theatre and especially in comedy) is actual and visual as well as being dramatically urgent throughout the action. Though Molière makes good use of the confidant Sganarelle it is left to the adaptation to make the lower classes — valet, servants, fishermen — really an organic yet contradictory element of the play, functionally integrated in the image of society presented. Sganarelle is naturally the focus of his class (he is after all present in all but two scenes of the adaptation; Don Juan is absent from six) but not the only one to establish a reaction to his master. In this respect Brecht adds a dimension to Molière’s play. The remarks and actions of Pierrot, Ragotin and the fisher-girls mark out an area of society that has its own ideas, shows critical insight and is not afraid to voice its sometimes inimical opinion. Brecht typically constructs in this way a reflective aspect to the ‘comedy’, the historical perspective of the audience is fostered by those moments that are themselves comments on Don Juan’s behaviour and thereby alienate it.

In II, 3 Molière portrays a servile fear in Pierrot who catches Dom Juan kissing the hand of his fiancée Charlotte; when Dom Juan buffets him he cringes away and takes refuge behind the girl. In II, 4 of the adaptation Pierrot stands up to the aristocrat’s arrogance and presumption, thus establishing a critical position. A little later, after Mathurine and Charlotte have successfully entreated Don Juan to flee from the coming oarsmen, II, 7 closes with the stage direction: Die Fischermädchen schauen sich an, fangen an zu lachen und geraten so in Gelächter, daß sie sich auf den Boden setzen müssen, lines that evoke — if more modestly — the type of ‘historical moment’ described for the end of Scene 6 in Mutter Courage in the notes to that play. This is the alienation that isolates the characters from their situation and enables them — and with them the audience — to view what they are doing coolly and dispassionately: the laughter of the fisher-girls is the dialectical synthesis of their historical situation within the play and the knowledge that such a situation (nobleman seducing poor women) was to be superseded in time. Similarly in IV, 1 Don Juan’s riding-master Ragotin answers Sganarelle’s query as to whether Angelika is coming or not in flat, unemotional words and tones that pinpoint his condemnation of what he is doing, without for all that preventing him from carrying out his orders:


This reply prompts Sganarelle, who is implicated up to the neck in his master’s affairs, to one of the few demonstrations of fear that Brecht allows him:
Glücklicher Mensch! Ich weiß zu viel. Ich fühle, wie sich über diesem Haus ein fürchterliches Unwetter zusammenzieht, und ich fürchte sehr, der Blitz könnte mit dem Herrn auch den Diener treffen.

In the ensuing scene — totally new in the adaptation — Sganarelle gets the cook Serafine to read his hand, half-scared and half-blustering — a reminiscence of the soldiers' reactions to Mutter Courage's black crosses:

SGANARELLE zögert: Ich will die volle Wahrheit.
SERAFINE nimmt seine Hand: Ich sage immer die volle Wahrheit.

Apart from his — justifiable — fear of an approaching catastrophe, and some signs of panic (in iv, 8 Sganarelle sees flashes of lightning mit Schrecken and trembles, while he admonishes Don Juan 'Der Himmel möge Ihnen verzeihen'; in iv, 12 he swoons as the statue is about to lead Don Juan off), the cowardliness of the servant is played down by Brecht. Many asides in Molière's text that serve to show how Sganarelle is coerced into doing his master's bidding disappear from the adaptation ('Ah! quel abominable maître me vois-je obligé de servir!' (1, 3); 'O complaisance maudite! à quoi me réduis-tu?' (iv, 5)). So, of course, do the incidents in Molière iii, 3–4 where Sganarelle watches from behind a tree while Dom Juan goes to the aid of Dom Carlos and where he runs off to hide when Dom Alonso lights on his master and wants to attack him.

As a matter of fact it is of little moment whether Sganarelle shows fear or not; this will not make him a hero or otherwise, nor will it throw light on the intent and quality of the adaptation. Indeed, in keeping with his partiality for copious and explicit stage directions in all his plays, Brecht inserts many exact indications in the text that in the convention of Molière's time were left to actor and producer; the impression is thus given that Don Juan relies first and foremost on the most primitive communication between master and servant — physical force, especially towards Sganarelle: droht ihm mit dem Stock, bedroht ihn, nimmt ihn am Ohr, winkt Pieter zu sich are typical stage directions. Molière's valet is a plaintive, whining, would-be moralist who lives in fear of his master and, where possible, comments on his unjust power in asides for the benefit of the audience. In this respect he is an interpretative intermediary between hero and audience, but the more he fulfils his role the less is he capable of really being rooted in the action of the play. In the last analysis master and servant move through the play along parallel tracks that nowhere cross, despite apparent clashes of mind in the pseudo-arguments on religion, philandering and fidelity; on the other hand Sganarelle is the ubiquitous foil to Don Juan and his censure of the latter inevitably imparts to the audience some criticism of the irresponsible noblemen of seventeenth-century France. Further, this does not mean that Sganarelle is colourless and amor-
phous: the contradictory forces of moral sense and terrified (yet lucrative) submission produce a tension in his character that is entirely his own. Brecht makes him more than "un mélange d'esclave romain et de larbin moderne"\(^{28}\) by articulating the element of class consciousness more flexibly; where Molière had allowed Sganarelle to voice criticisms of Dom Juan that anyone could have made, that is, criticisms founded on a 'universal' morality, Brecht derives them more strictly from Sganarelle's particular and unique position as paid servant. This adds a serious facet to his personality that was lacking in Molière for, instead of mouthing received moral principles, he now anchors his comments in the realities of his own experience of his master — in matters of money, brutality, opportunism. That Sganarelle does not turn his element of class consciousness to use, that he fails to arrive at positive action, can be accounted a failure on his part. Brecht endows him with a later historical insight into the class structure of his time but Sganarelle nevertheless remains caught in a comfortable acquiescence in the status quo; he lacks the energy for revolution.

The very first speech of the play in its altered form brings together these two factors that will dominate Sganarelle throughout: participation in Don Juan's exploitation of his fellow-men and simultaneous condemnation of it in socio-political terms. Brecht indicates the setting: \textit{Eingang eines vornehmen Stadthauses. Davor Gepäckstücke}; then Sganarelle appears and \textit{fischt aus Don Juans Gepäck eine Schnupftabakdose und betrachtet sie.} Already, before uttering a word, Sganarelle has climbed on the band-wagon of those who have and hold: within the limits of his subordinate position he is going to exploit every chance and — where possible — batten on Don Juan; his master's snuff will be a minor perquisite. The confused and aimless tirade against the enemies of snuff\(^{29}\) (dragging in Aristotle and philosophy) is adroitly channelled by Brecht into a penetrating criticism of the rich entrenched behind their comforts: 'c'est la passion des honnêtes gens' becomes 'er [der Tabak] ist die Leidenschaft der Großen dieser Welt', and Sganarelle adds in the adaptation:

\textit{Ah, sie wählen ihre Leidenschaften mit Bedacht! ... Nur der Tabak ist es, der die Großen dieser Welt instand setzt, die Leiden zu vergessen, besonders die der anderen. Ein paar Bauernhöfe gehen einem in die Binsen? Nehmen wir eine Prise Tabak, und alles sieht nicht halb so schlimm aus. Ein Bittsteller wird unangenehm, ein Gläubiger zudringlich? Nehmen Sie eine Prise Tabak, mein Guter, seien Sie Philosoph!}

In the light of these remarks the remainder of his speech (which modifies the original slightly) invites a fresh reaction: snuff appears as a means of stifling opposition, while the dubious reliability of Sganarelle is made plain as he offers Gusman his master's snuff-box.

In Molière too Sganarelle had kept his eye to the main chance but in the adaptation this trait is deliberately fostered to underline his acquiescence in exploitation; there are several instances where Sganarelle shows harshness and unscrupulousness in dealing with others, especially those below him. He is ordered by Don Juan in a new scene (1, 5) to hire some oarsmen and teach them to use their oars as weapons:
DON JUAN: Ertheile den Kerlen den nötigen Unterricht.
SGANARELLE: Geld wäre da der beste Lehrer, gnädiger Herr.
DON JUAN wirft ihm eine Börse zu: Das muß genügen.
SGANARELLE prüft die Börse: Mit 20 Dukaten wird es gehen. Er steckt die Börse ein:
Hierher, Leute! Wir bezahlen eure Dienste mit zwei Dukaten pro Mann.
Die Ruderer sind überglücklich.

SGANARELLE hart: Fechten könnt ihr also nicht. Ich werde euch Unterricht geben müssen.
ANGELOT: Unterricht im Totschlagen? Die scheinen keine Religion zu haben.
SGANARELLE: Wir bezahlen nicht zwei Dukaten für's Rudern.
ANGELOT zu den zwei anderen: Wollt ihr für zwei Dukaten Mitmenschen totschlagen?
BERTHELOT: Mein Herr, er hat recht, dafür sind in der Tat zwei Dukaten zu wenig.
COLIN zu Angelot: Du würdest es nicht einmal für drei machen, wie, Angelot?
ANGELOT schüttelt den Kopf.
BERTHELOT zu Angelot: Für vier?
SGANARELLE: Drei Dukaten kommen überhaupt nicht in Frage.
ANGELOT: Vier Dukaten sind eine Menge Geld. Er schüttelt aber doch noch den Kopf.
COLIN: Er hat einfach ein zu weiches Gemüt.
SGANARELLE: Drei Dukaten von uns erpressen zu wollen, das nennt ihr ein zu weiches Gemüt.
BERTHELOT: Unter fünf Dukaten nichts zu machen.
DON JUAN ruft Sganarelle zu: Wird's bald?
SGANARELLE knirschend: Gut, ich werde euch den horrenden Preis von vier Dukaten . . .
ANGELOT: Fünf!
SGANARELLE: Gut. Aber Achtung kann ich vor euch nicht mehr haben; Freunde sind wir nicht mehr . . .
SGANARELLE: Geh zum Teufel!
COLIN: Aber zu zweit schaffen wir es nicht.
DON JUAN zu Sganarelle: Erhöhe den Sold.
COLIN ruft Angelot nach: Sechs Dukaten! Komm sofort zurück!
ANGELOT kommt langsam zurück: Jetzt sind es schon sechs geworden. Das tut mir leid.

In the hard, pitiless bargaining that goes on in this scene Sganarelle, who wishes to keep back all the money he can for himself, meets his match; the simple oarsmen know the rules of this game and get the better of him. Sganarelle cannot swallow the thought of this 'wasted' money and in ii, 3, after the shipwreck, when he and Don Juan stand bedraggled on the beach, he is all for making off before 'these damned boatmen' can find them and demand payment. As he says reproachfully to his master: 'Und Sie haben ihnen, als das Gewitter aufzog, um sie zum weiteren Warten zu bewegen, dreimal den Lohn verdoppelt! Unsere Kasse aber hat die Flut verschlucken.' Later, in ii, 7, the new character Doctor Marphurius (who himself covertly desires to make money from duels: 'Ich spreche nicht vom Geld, ich spreche von der Heilkunst') says he has met some angry oarsmen:
MARPHURIUS: Sie schreien frech in der Gegend herum, ein edler Herr schulde ihnen 54 Dukaten! ... 
SGANARELLE: Schufte! 54 Dukaten!

Likewise, when Pieter stands up to the nobleman importuning his fiancée, Sganarelle takes the side of might and threatens him in intimidating tones: ‘Hör zu, mein Junge, schrei nicht, verschwinde.’ Pieter, however, will not allow himself to be browbeaten: ‘Ich will aber schreien.’

These activities of Sganarelle as an exploiter of others makes him a ruthless illustration of survival through asocial behaviour in an asocial society, like the beatnik self-centred poet Baal in Brecht’s very first play. Sganarelle lives according to the philosophy sung about in the second finale of Die Dreigroschenoper (‘Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral’). This is the practical means of survival in a disordered society also expressed in the lines Jenny sings in Scene 16 of Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (‘Und wenn einer tritt, dann bin ich es / Und wird einer getreten, dann bist’s du’); a pragmatism that operates right down the line and leaves no room for ideals or mercy. It is not only Sganarelle who acts by this code; the oarsmen, too, are prepared to sell their services dearly for a nefarious purpose and to insult and fight the nobility when looking for their money. Even Molière’s peasant-girls Charlotte and Mathurine, to whom (in II, 4) Dom Juan makes simultaneous promises and who then keep their dispute on a fairly genteel verbal level, are turned by Brecht (II, 5) into two boisterous fisher-girls who engage in a vituperative clog-fight echoing the ‘Eifersuchtsduett’ of Polly and Lucy fighting over Macheath in Die Dreigroschenoper:

CHARLOTTE: Oh, doch. Sie zieht eine Holzpantine aus.
MATHURINE: Du hinterlistige Person! ... 
DON JUAN zu Mathurine: Lassen Sie doch; sie ist vom Teufel besessen!
MATHURINE: Das werde ich ihr schon austreiben. Nimmt ebenfalls eine Holzpantine in die Hand.
CHARLOTTE: Du tücksches Aas! ... 
MATHURINE: Was ich mir denke? Von dir? Sie schlägt zu; Charlotte schlägt zurück ... 
CHARLOTTE: Schietkram! ... 
MATHURINE: Scheusal! ... 
CHARLOTTE: Selber Scheusal! ... 
MATHURINE: Daß ich nicht lache! ...

Both struggles, here and in Die Dreigroschenoper, are tooth and nail for a prize, with no quarter given. But it is eventually Sganarelle, poised between the privileges of the few and the powerlessness of the underdogs, who gives the cue for amoral opportunism to those of his class. In this respect he has the quality of hardness born of necessity that is not evident in the more light-hearted treatment by Molière. J. Arnavon ascribes Sganarelle’s irresponsible advice to the Poor Man (‘Va, va, jure un peu, il n’y a pas de mal’ (III, 2)) to ‘la mollesse de sa conscience, qui n’a rien du héros ni du martyr’ and to his ‘facilité et bongarçonnisme’.

There is not the same easygoing Sganarelle in
the adaptation: here he is in earnest whether in grabbing what he can or in condemning the state of things that drives him to it.

This then is the polarity of Sganarelle evidenced in the nexus of his specific socio-historical situation: if he were not forced by circumstances perhaps he would not be brutal, but we do not know for sure. Many of his actions are unscrupulous because the urge to survive forces him to exploit his fellows. His is a betrayal of his class parallel to the examples in Scene 4 of Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe, where a lad is prepared to take on the clothing and job of the worker Luckerniddle who has disappeared into the boiling-vat, Luckerniddle’s wife is ready to forget him in exchange for twenty free canteen meals, and Gloomb leaps at the chance of replacing the foreman in the hated job that has caused the loss of his own fingers; but Johanna saw in this free-for-all only proof of ‘der Armen Armut’. This is one side to Sganarelle: the fear for his position that emerges as a swashbuckling bravado in his submission to his master’s morality. In his very first appearance we witness how some of Don Juan’s overbearing attitudes have rubbed off on him but are conditioned too by his feeling of powerlessness to alter things. Sganarelle says to Guzman:

Eines muß man ihm immerhin lassen: er zieht die Weiber an wie süßer Essig Fliegen. Keine, die diesem Magneten widerstehen kann. Sein armer alter Vater weiß nicht, wie er die immer neue Schande überstehen soll! Und die Schulden! Aber was kann man tun? Nichts kann man tun.

The approach of Don Juan cuts short this speech, and the scene ends with Sganarelle callously shrugging his shoulders at Guzman’s predicament as to what he should say to his mistress. Nonetheless, though fear and expediency qualify Sganarelle’s behaviour to a great extent, the adaptation does bring a far more ironical tone into this figure and, while Molière had relied on the aside to complete Sganarelle’s dual outlook, Brecht uses more the direct comment to establish the valet’s sceptical aversion from Don Juan’s morals. A step in this direction is represented by Sganarelle’s tongue-in-cheek rejoinders (e.g. ‘Sie können nichts dafür. Bei Ihrer Anziehungskraft, bei Ihrem Feuer!’ (1, 2)) that preserve the ambiguity of his identification with and censure of Don Juan’s mode of action, as in 1, 4:

SGANARELLE: Und unsere Briefe? Und unsere Geschenke?
DON JUAN: Alles zurückgeschickt.
SGANARELLE: Was? Die Dame verabscheut Sie!
DON JUAN: Sie bildet sich das nur ein. Sie will diesen Burschen tatsächlich morgen heiraten. Ich werde hier zum Äußersten greifen. Sie wird entführt.
SGANARELLE: Oh! Nein! . . .
DON JUAN droht ihm.
SGANARELLE: Ach, gnädiger Herr! — Das wird wieder eine Ihrer . . .
DON JUAN: Meiner —
SGANARELLE: . . . großen Aventüren!

But the switch to a completely new characteristic in the figure of Sganarelle is essentially to be found in those additions to — and omissions from — the source play that convey his view of Don Juan as a type, a paradigm of the
ethos of the governing aristocracy. In so far as Don Juan is a portrait of the French nobleman of his time it can be said that Molière's Sganarelle also has this dimension, at least embryonically. But where Molière puts the individuality of his personages first Brecht shifts the centre of gravity to their socially conditioned and representative behaviour. The factor introduced by Brecht (which Molière obviously could not have at his disposal) is the historical awareness incorporated in Sganarelle; this allows him to stand aside and comment on situations with an assessment of his times that in actuality belongs to a much later period. Brecht thus employed the same device as in other adaptations but kept it within the logical bounds of his material. Sganarelle could not be turned into a politically conscious left-wing activist like Rauert in the adaptation of Der rote Hahn — this would have been too crudely anachronistic; his political awareness has to be limited and remains in spe, more like that in Der Hofmeister. What Sganarelle sheds by distancing himself decisively from his master (even if only at a few points) is the aura of ludicrous buffoonery surrounding the traditional valet to Don Juan; what he acquires is a serious dignity that sharpens the dialectic of his acquiescence and independence.

Within the limitations imposed by historical time and the accepted lines of the play Sganarelle is comparable to that other Brechtian servant in Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti who dissociates himself sharply from the actions of his master while at the same time humouring him. In this latter play there is no hindrance — and therefore no ambiguity — to the chauffeur's attitude. Brecht could deploy at will the class consciousness of Matti, and indeed gave directions to this effect in the notes: the material subjection but intellectual superiority of Matti to his master were to be crucial in establishing the antagonism between their respective classes. The intellectual superiority is bound to be with Matti as he is the analytic commentator on Puntila's trickery and hypocrisy and in scene after scene soberly and dispassionately strips off the veil of specious plausibility from the lies and presumptions of Puntila and his cronies. This is the quality that Brecht adds in his Sganarelle; with cool scepticism he deflates certain of Don Juan's antics, orientates his behaviour and gives it more than individual significance within a historical context. In keeping with this dignity he accords the valet Brecht wisely eradicated the whole sequence in Molière iv, 3 where Sganarelle, who also owes Dimanche money, prevaricates with a flurry of fine phrases and promises directly imitated from his master's handling of the merchant. This was a scene that raised a laugh at the valet's expense, but his pretentious aping aroused a stereotyped ridicule that came nowhere near the mordant satire of Dom Juan's encounter with Dimanche. For the same reason Brecht omitted most of Molière iv, 7 in which, after being invited by Dom Juan to join him at table, Sganarelle is involved in a comic ballet with the flunkeys deftly removing his dishes one after the other before he can touch them. This makes Sganarelle look foolish in front of the lower servants and would fit ill with the independence that Brecht wants to attribute to him. The same is true of the following scene which
is left out in its entirety; this was the unexpected first appearance of the Statue, and Dom Juan had ordered the abjectly frightened Sganarelle to sit down with them despite his protestations that hunger and thirst have left him.

These excisions remove Sganarelle from the sphere of the comic valet of the *commedia dell’arte*, traditionally the focus of derision and buffoonery, and stand him on his own feet as a sensible observer not afraid to make trenchant comments on his master, either in word or deed. Thus, instead of acquiescing as Don Juan taunts the Poor Man in iii, 2, Sganarelle (who in disguise is now taken for the master) tries to moderate the baiting and Don Juan has to jolt him out of his passivity before he will tell the Poor Man to blaspheme. His reluctance to join in his master’s sport is patent. Right at the opening of the adaptation Sganarelle’s remarks on the use of snuff, mentioned above, are sufficient indication of where he stands in the clash between the top dogs and the underdogs. These are backed up by quips and asides throughout the play, and in ii, 6 he evinces class solidarity with the fisher-girls as he advises them to be on their guard against Don Juan, whose success he ascribes solely to the power of his position:

**SGANARELLE:** Ihr armen Dinger! Fallt mir nicht auf den rein. Der! Kunststück, euch den Kopf zu verdrehen!

**DON JUAN tritt näher.**

**SGANARELLE:** Gebt mir seinen Rock, seine Bänder und seine Federn, und ich verführ’ euch spielend; aber dann habt ihr was davon! Ich rate euch zum Guten: Nehmt euch vor dem in acht! **Bemerkt Don Juan:** Nehmt euch in acht vor dem, der schlecht von meinem Herrn spricht . . .

**DON JUAN:** Sganarelle . . . **Nimmt ihn am Ohr.**

**SGANARELLE:** Ihr kennt meinen Herrn nicht!

Molière’s Sganarelle had also warned the girls in ii, 4 against his master’s philandering (which he treats as a personal characteristic, not the consequence of social power) but without the brutally realistic tone of the adaptation. The movement of the scene is unchanged by Brecht but while Molière’s Sganarelle, on sighting his master, had exclaimed ‘Monsieur est homme d’honneur’, Brecht, by switching to the ironical ambiguity of ‘Ihr kennt meinen Herrn nicht!’, shows how Sganarelle tries to convey caution to the threatened girls.

Another significant illustration of this shift in him from sighing resignation to militant opposition occurs in iv, 11 (a merging of Molière v, 2 and v, 4). Brecht takes over the gist of Dom Juan’s speech in which he cynically claims that ‘la profession d’hypocrite’ will provide a perfect cover for his pursuits; the adaptation transforms ‘Enfin c’est là le vrai moyen de faire impunément tout ce que je voudrai’ into the more vivid ‘Wenn es einem ehrlichen Mann verboten ist, sich die Nase zu schneuzen, so ist es einem Heuchler erlaubt, eine ganze Stadt zu stehlen. Laß sie uns denn stehlen!’ This is then followed by Don Juan’s surprise announcement that the Komtur’s daughter Angelika is coming to supper and by his rehearsal of her reception, at the end of which
Sganarelle’s accumulated hate for his master’s privileged impunity bursts out uncontrollably:

Und ehrlich währt am kürzesten, und Lügen haben lange Beine, und wer zuerst lacht, lacht am besten, und wer zuletzt kommt, mahlt zuerst, und faule Fische, gute Fische, und vergib uns unsere Unschuld, und das Kamel geht durch das Nadelöhr! Ah, zu denken, daß eine Persönlichkeit wie die Ihre alles tun kann, ohne daß irgendeine Macht einschreiten könnte! Gibt es wirklich niemanden, den der Himmel schicken könnte? Findet er keinen?

Deftly Brecht telescopes into this inversion of proverbial phrases all the incoherent, illogical arguments that Sganarelle stutters out in Molière: on tobacco (i, 1), on God and religious faith (iii, 1), and at this point on damnation (v, 2):

Sachez, Monsieur, que tant va la cruche à l'eau, qu'enfin elle se brise; et comme dit fort bien cet auteur que je ne connais pas, l'homme est en ce monde ainsi que l'oiseau sur la branche; la branche est attachée à l'arbre; qui s'attache à l'arbre, suit de bons préceptes; etc. etc.

By reversing the apparently reliable logic of gnomic sayings Brecht cunningly achieves two goals through Sganarelle’s words: he describes the reality of Don Juan’s behaviour and indicates the intrinsic disjointedness of a social order in which Don Juan can freely act out his deceits, and at the same time he presents Sganarelle as a coolly thinking observer resisting the status quo with factual succinctness, like the unemployed Rauert in Der rote Hahn.

The social and historical comment projected through the new configuration of Sganarelle’s character is crowned in the final added scene (iv, 13) which shows how all the figures in the play are in one way or another conformists to and promoters of the society they live in despite their temporary protests and rebelliousness in the course of the action. As Don Juan descends into the pit they crowd round the edge and give vent to their material reactions at the dandy’s disappearance — and not one mentions his soul:

LA VIOLETTE: Welch ein Unglück! Er ist weg!
ANGELIKA: Ich habe mich ein wenig verspätet. Sieht das Loch: Ah! Entsetzlich!
DIMANCHE zwei Röcke bringend: Eine Erpressung! Die zwei Röcke, gnädiger . . . Ah! Mein bester Kunde!
ELVIRAS BRÜDER: Wo ist der Schurke? — Ah! Die Ehre unserer Familie ewig befleckt!
SERAFINE: Ah! Wer ißt nun meine Enten in Orangen?
MARPHURIUS: Ah! Das Duell!
DON LUIS: Ah! Mein Sohn! Mein Erbe!
DIE RUDERER: Ah! Wo ist er? — Vierundfünfzig Dukaten futsch!
DIE FISCHERMÄDCHEN: Ah! Wer nimmt unsere Austern? — Der schöne gnädige Herr!

Alle stehen erschüttert vor dem Loch. Aus der Höhe nieder flattert langsam Don Juans Hut.
SGANARELLE: Mein Lohn! Mein Lohn!
This twist in the tail of the play grew out of the embryonic ‘Mes gages! Mes gages!’, Sganarelle’s despairing cry at the loss of his master that Molière found in Cicognini and that Brecht kept as the closing line.

An analysis of the manifold changes that a committed playwright such as Brecht makes in adapting another man’s work (changes in conception of character and role, in plot and action, in content and ideological purpose) cannot ignore their structural consequences. This must not be reduced to a routine of counting scenes; nor is it at all significant that Brecht points out how the producer Besson had made the superficial modification of removing the traditional 5-Act division of Dom Juan (Brecht had done that himself so often that with him it was now almost a convention in reverse). The internal logic and rhythm of the play is the important aspect of structure. In the case of Don Juan the question arises as to how far and how successfully Brecht related alterations in content to consonant changes in form; indeed, whether his adaptation is more or less ‘dramatic’ than his source. The critic Reinhold Grimm devotes some attention to a formal comparison of the two plays, and though he first pays tribute to Brecht’s sense of theatre (‘Diese Neufassung quillt über von glänzenden Einfällen und szenischen Erfindungen’) he questions whether Brecht actually succeeded in making this adaptation fit the paradigm of epic theatre and even suggests it is less epic than Molière. After quoting a French editor’s assertion that Molière’s aim ‘fut, évidemment, non de nouer une intrigue dans une crise brève comme la foudre, mais de dérouler autour de la forte personnalité du héros, pour mieux l’éclairer, une diversité d’aventures humaines’, Grimm continues:

Diese Definition, bis auf die positive Bewertung des Helden und die Überbetonung der Persönlichkeit, hätte Brecht ohne weiteres übernehmen können, sollte man meinen ... Verblüffenderweise ist beinah das Gegenteil der Fall. Gewiß, das von Molière vorgegebene Schema einer episierenden Reihe von Begebenheiten behält Brecht bei. Innerhalb dieses Schemas aber hebt er schon bestehende Zusammenhänge hervor und fügt neue ein, so daß der Kausalnexus dichter wird. Dazu kommt, daß die oft sehr langen Repliken des Franzosen in kleinere, dramatisch bewegtere Dialogstücke aufgelöst werden; außerdem steigert die ständige Berufung auf den von Anfang an prophozenen Zorn des Himmels das Präzipitieren der Handlung und erhöht die Spannung.

In support of his argument Grimm enumerates the main alterations made by Brecht. Yet the examples given can more cogently be seen to strengthen the epic structure: the oarsmen hired by Don Juan — equivalent to Molière’s peasants — are identical with the robbers who attack Don Carlos and incorporate the lower class element that both obeys and strikes against authority; the incident of Sganarelle dining with Don Juan which is removed to the roadside, now does more than just illustrate the servant-master relationship and is dovetailed with the exchange of clothes (this adumbrated in Molière) so that both elements establish the alienation of noble appearances and create that dual perspective of the social données of the time that complies
with Brecht’s definition in *Kleines Organon für das Theater*: ‘Eine verfremdende Abbildung ist eine solche, die den Gegenstand zwar erkennen, ihn aber doch zugleich fremd erscheinen läßt.’

The omission of the first apparition of the statue of the Komtur provides Grimm with what he takes to be indisputable proof that Brecht was making an ‘Aristotelian’ drama of *Dom Juan*; he sees in the one and only appearance of the Statue, ‘wirkungsvoll aufgespart’ until the end, a revocation of Brecht’s stubborn principle that his theatre could only exist in and through a concordance of ideological content matched with epic form. Grimm claims that Brecht’s own description of *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar* as ‘aristotelische (Einfühlungs)Dramatik’ could apply even more aptly to *Don Juan*. But other reasons can be found for the exclusion of the Statue’s first arrival. It must be remembered that Molière too was manipulating a traditional plot and material and had to use great ingenuity in his effort to blend the supernatural elements with his socio-psychological study of contemporary maurs. Most critics have undoubtedly felt that the French playwright failed to marry the warring disparates, with a consequent arbitrariness in both motivation and final solution. Arnavon constantly harps on the weakness of the motifs that Molière had to incorporate in deference to tradition (the Statue, the ‘souper’, the spectre) and categorically states that in production ‘plus le merveilleux, seule partie réellement faible de la comédie, sera diminué, plus l’œuvre grandira en force, en portée, en durée’. It is thus premature to judge the mere fact that Brecht reduces the Statue’s appearances to one; this can only be done after investigating the functional value of the change.

In this respect Grimm equates the two arrests of Macheath in *Die Dreigroschenoper* — the reasons for which Brecht explained in detail in his notes — with the two appearances of the Statue, though in terms of function the two cases bear no resemblance to each other. *Die Dreigroschenoper* deals with bourgeois notions as its central theme and endeavours to work out a congruent form. Since Brecht wishes the exemplary life of Macheath the highwayman to dispel the erroneous belief that ‘ein Räuber sei kein Bürger’ (itself begotten of another false idea that ‘ein Bürger sei kein Räuber’) he depicts his ‘hero’ with all the habits of a Bürger. It is in fact the obstinate adherence to an ordered routine that makes Macheath as predictable as any Bürger; the regular patronage of prostitutes — even when on the run — is the habit specifically selected by Brecht (not least because it is ostensibly frowned on by society) in the form of *two* arrests in a whorehouse to convey the affinity between a ‘Räuber’ and ‘Bürger’ in Macheath. The question of this repetition touches on the essence of Brecht’s conception of drama and he was very alive to it; hence the explanation in the notes entitled *Warum zwei Verhaftungen des Macheath und nicht eine*?

Diese erste Gefängnisszene ist, aus dem Geschichtswinkel der deutschen Pseudoklassik betrachtet, ein *Umweg*, nach unserer Ansicht ein Beispiel primitiver epischer Form. Sie ist nämlich ein Umweg, wenn man wie diese rein dynamische Dramatik, der Idee das Primat zuverteild, den Zuschauer ein immer bestimmteres Ziel wünschen
seen in this light the apparent holding up of the action by the dual arrest actually depicts the most significant fact about Macheath's character and serves the integral *dramatic* purpose of bringing about his downfall. There is thus no real point of comparison between the number of Macheath's arrests and the Statue's appearances in *Don Juan*. Molière had introduced the Statue three times (one in each final scene of Acts III, IV, V); the first time, in the mausoleum, it had nodded; on the second occasion it had entered, sat down at Dom Juan's table and invited him to dine the following night; on the third, it had led the libertine off to his doom. Brecht telescoped the first two incidents into the mausoleum scene (III, 8), dropping the entirely irrelevant and somewhat farcical visit to Dom Juan's house but retaining the essential invitation, though with the important difference that it is now Don Juan who insolently invites the Statue to dine *à trois* (the spice for him will be the Statue's daughter whom he is seducing). The essential dramatic fact of the invitation that points towards the end of the play is thus present in both original and adaptation; and if Molière's play is first and foremost a portrait of the unprincipled nobleman of his time and Brecht's a critical depiction of the extent and misuse of this power, neither relies intrinsically on the Statue nor even on the hero's catastrophic end.

Many dramatic elements that are to be found among the traditional features of the Don Juan legend were re-introduced by Brecht to add incisiveness to his thesis: Angelika, the Komtur's daughter (Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*), described as 'eine minderjährige Tochter' (I, 2) and promised as 'angenehme Gesellschaft' in the invitation to her father, adds piquancy to Don Juan's pretence of reform (IV, 10); the exchange of clothes between servant and master — used in Dorimon's version — gave way in Molière to a doctor's garb and what was at that time a topical polemic on medicine; the oarsmen in Brecht participate more meaningfully in the action than do Molière's peasants. Brecht also achieved a subsidiary concentration of the action largely by omitting many of the rhetorical *longueurs* in Molière's text; the sermonizing diatribes by Don Juan's father and the wordy involutions around their honour by Elvira's brothers are two of them. Parallel with this is the reduction of formal aspects of Molière's language: except for the purpose of parody the poetic, near-verse flight of classical French prose (the rhythm of Molière's prose in *Dom Juan* is demonstrably rich in alexandrines) would have been an erratic block protruding incongruously from the bed of social comment in the adaptation.

However dramatic Brecht may appear to have made his adaptation, a careful examination of the text shows that the ideological content and the epic form are not independent of one another as Grimm argues, and that the critical comment on social realities impinges on the audience through both the interaction of characters and the formal means by which this is presented. In all essentials Brecht has epicized the action. He presents a cowardly Don
Juan who relies on the power of his position; the discrepancy between his words and actions therefore relativizes both (e.g. in II, 7; III, 1–5). Sganarelle, too, is ambivalent in his actions, attitudes, asides — as are the oarsmen in their willingness and yet unreliability as trained thugs. The several instances of ‘interleaved’ scenes — preparations for abducting a fresh quarry (I, 4), Don Juan dressing while Don Carlos lies wounded (III, 5), Don Juan at his toilet while his irate father waits, and his cold-blooded reawakening of feeling for Elvira (IV, 9), etc., are examples of the epic technique that alienates by mutually distancing both incongruent substances in the scene. Similarly, the alienating effect of mime and run-through is pressed into service — Sganarelle telling Don Juan what violent abuse he would hurl at a hypothetical master (I, 2), Sganarelle instructing the boatmen in the use of their oars as weapons (I, 5), the dumb show of the fight between oarsmen and noblemen (III, 4), Don Juan rehearsing the seduction of Angelika, thus exposing his unfeeling egoism (IV, 11). The tendency to mime was already present in Molière (lurking as it does close below the surface of all comedy) but Brecht handles it deliberately as a powerful constituent of epic technique, in that it allows the actor to put a model — a stylized abstraction — before the audience; the actor can detach himself from the personality he is portraying and this diminishes the ‘Aristotelian’ empathy and constantly jerks the audience back into critical distance.

There can be no doubt that in the adaptation Don Juan is more negatively and Sganarelle more positively presented, but it is false to infer that, like a see-saw movement — the people are therefore on the way to being idealized. Brecht’s play is a trenchant and all-pervading criticism of the assumptions of the whole of that society, at every level; if Don Juan struts on to the stage as a ‘sexuelle Großmacht’, his behaviour is nevertheless half-expected and also half-accepted by those who suffered the ravages of his actions. All the ‘lower’ characters are shown as conformists and time-servers and the ludicrousness of their compliance culminates in the actual spatial arrangement of the final scene as Don Juan’s feathered hat floats down among them. A strong leaning to social comment flavours Molière’s play too, though the censure here is concentrated on the representative of one narrow — though dominant — class.

The exigencies of the traditional Don Juan plot, made even more restrictive through the popularity of the theme in the preceding years, hampered Molière’s freedom in his treatment of it and forced him to retain the cumbersome supernatural paraphernalia connected with Don Juan’s punishment. The linking of Don Juan and the divine judgement opened the door to those metaphysical and philosophical interpretations that take off from strict reality and measure Don Juan with the inflated rules of the absolute and the general. For this reason the critic is tempted to remove Molière’s hero to the safely determined symbolic sphere of the myth: ‘Au fond, Don Juan doit être considéré comme appartenant au domaine de la fable plutôt qu’à une
In making such a comment the critic is corroborating the evidence found in numerous artistic formulations of the Don Juan theme. Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* is probably the most renowned treatment based on an interpretation within the religious framework. Here Don Juan operates on such a gigantic scale that he is no longer judged an ordinary man — he is elevated instead to the sphere of legend and direct confrontation with the deity. His profligacy is of such dimensions that divine wrath and retribution automatically assert themselves in the emissary from the beyond — the statue of the Commander which is a baroque invention of the Spanish religious plays that first forged the Don Juan theme. Quite clearly such a positive rounded view of Don Juan and his fate rests on an unshakable belief in an eternal order that allows the demonic to appear on earth — whether in the guise of a profligate or a natural catastrophe — in order to prove its own divine power and permanence. This is the essential myth of Don Juan that must necessarily exclude such disturbing possibilities as a psychological interpretation (in which Don Juan can be seen to express the fulfilment of driving fantasies in individual men) or the social considerations that preoccupy Brecht.

In this respect, perhaps, Brecht really diverges from Molière, so that the adaptation finally reveals itself as working both with and against Molière just as *Der Hofmeister* was with and against Lenz. Brecht takes over those components that have a direct social bearing — such as the episodes involving the fishermen or Dimanche — but stops short of anything that might allow Don Juan the slightest hope of escape into the realm of mythology. Hence the subduing of the spectre, Statue and religious allusions; all the divine machinery calculated to instil awe-struck silence and respect in the audience is reduced to a minimum and remains in Brecht too only a concession to the inherited plot. Instead Brecht builds into his adaptation the factor of the historical perspective. In this way the adaptation is partly a re-interpretation of Don Juan the French nobleman (from a twentieth-century documentary point of view) and partly a comment on Molière’s own attitudes as expressed in the detail of *Dom Juan*. In his conception of the hero Brecht puts on the stage a model of the overbearing attitudes of a ruling social class, a representative of uncurbed impunity rather than just a particular individual; and he so organizes the adaptation that Don Juan acquires weight and value as a model through the articulation of social awareness in Sganarelle. The servant becomes the dynamic fulcrum of the adaptation as so frequently in Brecht’s work where the audience is made to look at the great from below, through the eyes and life of the anonymous underling.

The question remains: is *Don Juan* a comedy, and of what nature? Molière called his work a *comédie* despite the disaster that overtakes the hero; it is less the substance than the manner that makes Molière’s play unquestionably comedy. This is borne out by his own pronouncements on ‘la comédie’ in the *Préface à Tartuffe*: ‘On connaîtra sans doute que, n’étant autre chose qu’un poème ingénieux, qui, par des leçons agréables, reprend les défauts
des hommes, on ne saurait la censurer sans injustice.' And after the banning of Tartuffe he was moved to defend his play in the Premier Placet addressed to the King: 'Le devoir de la comédie étant de corriger les hommes en les divertissant, j'ai cru que, dans l'emploi où je me trouve [i.e. as 'chef de la troupe du roi'], je n'avais rien de mieux à faire que d'attaquer par des peintures ridicules les vices de mon siècle.' The important fact for Molière was the aesthetic 'par des leçons agréables' and 'en les divertissant'; the didactic message ought to reach the audience entirely in terms of its presentation, or the playwright should desist from attempting to convey it.

Given Brecht's views on the function of drama, it is not surprising that he shows a bias towards comedies as models for his adaptations. This tallies with his own proclaimed distaste for tragedy that is prone to cloak social realities in favour of the 'universal' in human nature. Most dramatists and theorists, from Lessing to Sternheim, see tragedy as concerned with the individual and comedy with the social nexus. If there is any justification for this differentiation of tragedy and comedy, then Brecht's characters are firmly anchored in comedy: they are not just exemplars of human 'vices' (the miser, the bully, the hypocrite, etc.) but they are constructed in such a manner as to illustrate how such characteristics are more often than not a concomitant of a particular social group in a historically specific context. Brecht demonstrates how human behaviour is largely the outcome of conditioning through social, political and economic influences, how the individual characteristics become a variable in the formula composed of factors derived from social impulses. In Don Juan the audience is invited to examine closely the 'Parasitäre seines Glanzes' (the type), not the 'Glanz des Parasiten' (the individual).

The characters in a play are a matter of content, but the question of illusion is the concern of form. Lessing indicated how the tragedian must promote and sustain the illusion of the audience while the comic dramatist may fracture it with impunity:

Der tragische Dichter sollte alles vermeiden, was die Zuschauer an ihre Illusion erinnern kann; denn sobald sie daran erinnert sind, so ist sie weg . . . Dem komischen Dichter ist es eher erlaubt, auf diese Weise seiner Vorstellung Vorstellungen entgegenzusetzen; denn unser Lachen zu erregen, braucht es des Grades der Täuschung nicht, den unser Mitleiden erfordert.40

The shattering of the theatrical illusion has, of course, become a commonplace of Brecht's drama. The technique of alienation is his method of achieving this and it provides a deliberate means of countering the willing absorption of the audience into the 'suspension of disbelief'. Brecht recognized that alienation was an essential element in comedy ('Allgemein angewendet wird der V-Effekt in der Komödie, besonders der niedrigen'), and he fostered its dynamic intervention by every means at his command — in the structure of individual scenes and their interaction, in language and the parody generated by discrepant levels, in techniques of acting. In Don Juan Brecht intensifies the devices that had already served Molière to destroy the illusion and hinder
indiscriminate empathy; from the start the attention of the spectator is
demanded on two separate but simultaneous levels, that of the assimilation of
real happenings before his eyes and that of a distancing critical assessment of
their bearing in a socio-historical context. This is the essence of Brecht's
comedy (and his drama in general): the event and its evaluation, the history
and the historian are inextricably welded together in the one complex, so that
each tempers the other in a continuous dialectical discourse. For this reason,
all Brecht's drama is comedy, and all his comedy serious, built as it is on the
twin pillars of the aesthetic and the ethical, enthralment and detachment,
'lachen' and 'verlachen'. 42 Though Brecht manipulates the Don Juan theme
more consciously than Molière in order to depict a certain society through
its representatives, he recognizes the aesthetic need for this didactic pre-
occupation to be totally absorbed into the autonomy of the drama, and the
value of contradictions and inconsistencies in human beings. 43 Whether in his
own plays or in adaptations Brecht seldom allowed sociological behaviourism
to overwhelm his sense of theatre. In Molière too he acknowledged a sharp
critical insight akin to his own that expressed itself in the satire of Don Juan
at a distance of three centuries.

NOTES
1 L. Weinstein, *The Metamorphoses of Don Juan* (Stanford, 1959), surveys in detail the
vast literary heritage of the Don Juan theme with its many idiosyncratic and spectac-
cular accretions, without mentioning Brecht's reworking of Molière. Brecht probably
used E. Neresheimer's translation of *Dom Juan* as the basis for his adaptation.
nineteenth-century brand of the Romantic in the 'dilettante' conception. In the
Romantic epoch, however, Stendhal stands out with his characteristically realistic
slant; compare De l'Amour, II, in *Œuvres complètes*, edited by P. Arbelet and E. Cham-
3 *GW*, 17/1259.
4 BBA 1579/06.
attention to the absence of a positive bourgeoise in Molière's works; its representatives
are almost always ineffectual and no more likely to throw up the ideal of the honnête
homme than is the nobility.
6 BBA 1579/05.
7 Bénichou, op. cit., pp. 214 f., detects, however, a perhaps unconscious attack on the
monarchy in Molière.
8 BBA 1579/05.
9 See Chevalier de Méré: 'Si quelqu'un me demandait en quoi consiste l'honnêteté, je
dirais que ce n'est autre chose que d'exceller en tout ce qui regarde les agréments et les
bienséances de la vie.' Quoted in Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et opuscules*, edited by L.
10 This and the following quotation, *GW*, 17/1260.
11 *GW*, 17/1258.
12 *GW*, 17/1257 f.
15 BBA 1579/08.
16 See Bénichou, op. cit., pp. 171 f., who ascribes the phenomenon of libertinage to the
post-Renaissance decline of the aristocracy.
17 *GW*, 17/1258.
Brecht has a fondness for such scenes that involve disguise, as they inevitably lay bare the essentials of socially-conditioned reality — it is easier to change one's clothing than one's habits and nature. Compare Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, in which Grusche pretends to be a lady but is found out because she knows how to make a bed, and where Azdak has to teach the disguised and fleeing Großfürst how to eat like a hungry man if he wishes to escape detection.

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