

MATERIALIST AESTHETICS IN BRECHT AND GODARD

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Abstract

This study argues that *Verfremdung* in the works of Bertolt Brecht and Jean-Luc Godard may be seen as critiques in practice. It examines *Verfremdung* in the plays and theoretical writings of Brecht and in the films of Godard. The notion of critique employed in this study is derived from a reading of the works of Kant, Marx, Jakobson. This study argues that *Verfremdung* - as critique in practice - deconstructs dominant modes of representation in our culture, such as the 'aristotelian text', and renders them available for knowledge.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University.

L. Fitcher

5th day of February, 1988.

Preface

This study grew out of an interest in politics and art, an interest in attempts to produce 'critical' artworks. Two figures seem to be exemplary in this regard: Bertolt Brecht and Jean-Luc Godard. Both examine the relation between politics and art. Both are not afraid to experiment with the formal means at their disposal. (They are both Modernists.) By suggesting that Brecht and Godard's works are critiques in practice this study argues for their continued relevance to contemporary critical art.

I would like to thank two people and two institutions for their generous support. I wish to thank Professor Reingard Nethersole, my supervisor, who freely gave of her time and expertise when I needed it. I would also like to thank Peter-John Delport whose seminars in 1985 introduced me to the material that later found its way into the second chapter of this study. The University of the Witwatersrand and the Human Sciences Research Council I thank for their financial support.

Note: Throughout this study WA is used to denote: Brecht, B. Gesammelte Werke (Werkausgabe). 20 vols: Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1967.

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0. Introduction

0.1 The aim of this study

The aim of this study is to examine the role of *Verfremdung* in the dramatic works of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and in the cinematic works of Jean-Luc Godard (1930-). It shall be argued that *Verfremdung* may be seen as a 'critique in practice', a critique which deconstructs dominant modes of representation, such as the so-called *aristotelian* text, and renders them available for knowledge.

The *aristotelian* text, as it is outlined in the theoretical writings of Brecht, can be a play, a novel, or a film. In this study differences that exist between the theatre and the cinema are not examined, except in cases where specific cinematic devices enable Godard to find cinematic 'equivalents' of Brecht's *Verfremdungen*.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter (on materialism) focuses mainly on the notion of 'reflection' which has been a key element in traditional marxist theories of art and literature. It is argued that materialism is a matter of taking up a position, of intervening in the philosophical and cultural field. The second chapter (on materialism and critique) examines the way Marx (a materialist) produces a formal critique of the commodity-form.

Marx's critique is articulated with Jakobson's formal critique of aesthetic signification and aphasic disorders. The aim of this chapter is to produce a notion of critique (derived from the critiques of Kant,

Marx, Jakobson) which can be used to describe the works of Brecht and Godard. A distinction is drawn between critiques and critiques in practice which do not come to a conclusion. The third chapter (on Verfremdung) examines Brecht's writings on Verfremdung and Verfremdung in the works of Brecht and Godard. The fourth chapter (on Verfremdung and critique) draws together strands from the previous chapters and concludes the study. It focuses on the relation between the viewer and the artwork (play or film) and on the breaking up of representation, which is the key element in the critiques in progress of Brecht and Godard.

This study does not provide a history of Brecht's theatre or of Godard's cinema. It does not cover all aspects of their work. It draws on all of Brecht's writings, but concentrates on the epic plays such as Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder (1939), Der kaukasische Kreidekreis (1944/5), Der gute Mensch von Sezuan (1938/39), in which Verfremdung is most clearly at work. In the case of Godard, this study refers mainly to films produced between 1967 and 1973. It concentrates on his 'political' work as a Maoist with the Dziga Vertov Group. As the study focuses on Verfremdung it makes no attempt to describe, analyze, or comment on individual works in any comprehensive way, nor to relate the history or origins of them.

This study, by concentrating on Verfremdung as a critique in progress/practice, stresses the need to re-examine the notion of Verfremdung - to prevent it from being reduced to a series of techniques or formal devices and to provide an alternative to the view that stresses the link between Verfremdung and dialectics.

Brechtian dialectics, with its stress on process and contradiction, may be seen as an element of *Verfremdung* as critique in practice.

0.2 A survey of relevant literature

The relevant literature consulted during the course of this study can be divided into eight sections:

0.2.1 Primary texts: Brecht and Godard

The primary texts examined during the course of this study include plays and theoretical writings by Brecht and films, filmscripts and essays by Godard (see 5.1 below). In the case of Brecht attention was focused on the later (post-1933) epic plays and in the case of Godard works produced mainly between 1967 and 1973 were examined.¹

0.2.2 Secondary literature on Brecht

An enormous amount has been written on Brecht and his work. Here shall be noted only a few works that proved to be particularly useful for the purposes of this study. The works of Knopf, especially the Brecht-Handbuch (2 vols.), proved to be very helpful. Other important works include: Rüdiger-Weiler's Die Dramaturgie Brechts. Theater als Mittel der Veränderung, Mittenzweil's Gestaltung und Gestalten im Modernen Drama. Zur Technik des Figurenbaus in der sozialistischen und spätkbürgerlichen Dramatik, Steinweg's Das Lehrstück. Brechts Theorie einer politisch - ästhetischen Erziehung, Benjamin's Versuche über Brecht, Eckhardt's Das Epische Theater.² These works proved to be useful because they contained valuable material on the key notion of *Verfremdung*.

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0.2.3 Secondary literature on Godard

A number of writers have pointed out and examined the 'Brechtian' aspects of Godard's work. Lesage's doctoral thesis, 'The Films of Jean-Luc Godard and their Use of Brechtian Dramatic Theory', examines the ways in which Godard develops filmic equivalents of Brecht's Verfremdungseffekte (see 3.3 below). The aim of this study, however, is not to point out parallels between Brecht and Godard's works, but rather to examine the notion of Verfremdung. Among the most useful works on Godard are to be found: MacGabe's Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics, Monaco's The New Wave, MacBean's Film and Revolution, Roud's Jean-Luc Godard, Walsh's The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema.³

0.2.4 Theatre and cinema

The works in this section deal with aspects of drama and film. It was necessary to examine the differences between drama and film since Brecht and Godard work in these two different media. This study, however, does not deal with these differences, except in cases where specific filmic devices enable Godard to find cinematic 'equivalents' of Brecht's Verfremdungen. Among the works consulted the following were helpful: Lellis and Wead's Film: Form and Function, Monaco's How to Read a Film, Nichols' Movies and Methods (2 vols), Wollen's Signs and Meaning in the Cinema, Elam's The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama, Heath's Questions of Cinema, Ubersfeld's Lire le Théâtre and L'école du Spectateur, Clark's European Theories of the Drama.⁴ These and other works on drama and film served as an introduction to the media employed by Brecht and Godard.

0.2.5 Materialism

This section groups together works by Marx, Lenin, Althusser, Coletti and other materialists. In the first chapter attention focuses on the work of Macherey on materialism and on Lenin's Materialism and Empiriocriticism. In the second chapter Marx's Capital (vol. 1) is examined.⁵ This study focuses on materialism because previous studies of Brecht and Godard tend to ignore the philosophical framework in which *Verfremdung* operates. By arguing that *Verfremdung* be seen as a critique in practice this study attempts to draw attention to the philosophical issues involved in the work of *Verfremdung*.

0.2.6 Materialist aesthetics

This section groups together works on materialist or marxist aesthetics. These range from the works of Marx and Engels to the more recent work of Macherey and the work of authors associated with the journal Screen, such as Heath and McCabe.⁶ Heath and McCabe, who combine materialist aesthetics with insights drawn from semiotics and psychoanalysis, offer better tools for the study of *Verfremdung* than more orthodox materialists like Lukács. Lukács' notion of realism is useful insofar as it highlights what Brechtian realism is not.

0.2.7 Biographical and historical works

The works in this section deal with the historical contexts in which Brecht and Godard produced their works and with the influences to which they may have been exposed.⁷

0.2.8 Critique

One of the aims of this study is to produce a notion of critique which can be used to describe the work of Brecht and Godard. This notion of critique shall be derived from the critiques of Kant, Marx and Jakobson. The material collected in this section is the secondary literature on Kant, Marx and Jakobson.⁸

In the following three sections brief introductions to Brecht's epic theatre, to the aristotelian text, and to Godard's cinema shall be presented.

0.3 Brecht's epic theatre

The 'Anmerkungen zur Oper Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny' (1938)⁹ represent Brecht's first version of the theory of the epic theatre. They contain the now well-known schema which contrasts the 'dramatic' and the 'epic' theatres:

"Dramatische Form des Theaters	Epische Form des Theaters
Die Bühne verkörpert einen Vorgang	sie erzählt ihn
verwickelt den Zuschauer in eine Aktion und	macht ihn zum Betrachter, aber
verbraucht seine Aktivität	weckt seine Aktivität
ermöglicht ihm Gefühle	erzwingt von ihm Entscheidungen

vermittelt ihm Erlebnisse vermittelt ihm Kenntnisse

der Zuschauer wird in er wird ihr gegenübergesetzt
eine Handlung
hineinversetzt

es wird mit Suggestion es wird mit Argumenten
gearbeitet gearbeitet

die Empfindungen bis zu Erkenntnissen
werden konserviert getrieben

der Mensch wird als der Mensch ist Gegenstand
bekannt vorausgesetzt der Untersuchung

der unveränderliche der veränderliche und
Mensch verändernde Mensch

Spannung auf den Ausgang Spannung auf den Gang

eine Szene für die jede Szene für sich
andere

die Geschehnisse in Kurven
verlaufen linear

natura non facit saltus facit saltus

die Welt, wie sie ist die Welt, wie sie wird

was der Mensch soll was der Mensch muss

seine Triebe seine Beweggründe

das Denken bestimmt das das gesellschaftliche Sein
Sein bestimmt das Denken" 10

Although Brecht stated that the schema did not represent absolute oppositions, only shifts of accent, the schema tended to be absolutised (and therefore falsified) by his readers. The epic theatre, Brecht makes clear, is not diametrically opposed to the dramatic theatre - it adds to the dramatic theatre, it works over its elements. According to Brecht's table the dramatic theatre emphasizes a plot which implicates the spectator in a stage situation and wears down his capacity for action, whereas the epic theatre emphasizes a narrative which turns the spectator into an observer and at the same time arouses his capacity for action. In the dramatic theatre the human being is taken for granted and unalterable, whereas in the epic theatre he is the object of inquiry, alterable and able to alter. The dramatic theatre appeals to the spectator's feelings and forces him to share an experience presented on stage. The epic theatre appeals to the spectator's reason - it offers a picture of the world to be criticized. In the dramatic theatre scenes develop linearly - one scene makes another. In the epic theatre each scene works for itself in a process of montage. In the dramatic theatre the human being is regarded as a fixed point and his thought determines his being. In the epic theatre the human being is seen as a process whose thought is determined by his social being. One of the main results of the penetration of the "dramatic opera" by the epic theatre's methods (i.e. Verfremdung) is a 'radical separation of the elements'. In the dramatic theatre the elements of the production (words, music, setting) become integrated in an organic whole. The object of the epic theatre is to break up the synthesis (which encourages the viewer to become a passive consumer of the artwork), to separate out the elements, so that the

viewer may become an active participant in the production. In the "epic opera," Brecht insists, words, music and setting must become more independent of one another. (The importance of the separation of elements for the work of Brecht and Godard is discussed further in 4.4 below).

0.4 The aristotelian text

After 1933 Brecht began to systematically develop "eine antiaristotelische Dramatik". This is a drama that does not depend on empathy and mimesis.¹¹ It may be seen as a further development of the earlier conception of an epic theatre. The term 'antiaristotelian' does not imply that Brecht opposes Aristotle but rather that he opposes a dramatic tradition associated with Aristotle's name and his 'grossartige Poetik'.¹² i.e. a tradition of cathartic drama.

Brecht's antiaristotelianism is also not aimed at destroying aesthetics. Brecht's rejection of mimesis and illusionism is not directed at Aristotle (Brecht knew that the ancient Greek theatre, with its masks and comedy contained elements of *Verfremdung*) but at the European tradition of naturalism (later: socialist realism) with its identification of art and life (see 3.2.3). In the section that follows an attempt shall be made to clarify Brecht's distinction between aristotelian and non-aristotelian texts.

In Der Dreigroschenprozess¹³ Brecht speaks of the medium of film:

"Für die Dramatik ist die Stellung des Films etwa zur handelnden Person interessant. Er verwendet zur Verlebendigung seiner Personen, die nur nach Funktionen eingesetzt sind, einfach bereitstehende Typen, die in bestimmte Situationen kommen und in ihnen bestimmte Haltungen einnehmen können. Jede Motivierung aus dem Charakter unterbleibt, das Innenleben der Personen gibt niemals die Hauptursache und ist selten das hauptsächlichste Resultat der Handlung, die Person wird von aussen gesehen. Die Literatur braucht den Film nicht nur indirekt."¹⁴

The new medium of film (Brecht is writing at the beginning of the 1930's) interests Brecht insofar as it can become a model for a text structure that breaks with the structure of the dominant 'bourgeois novel':

"Der bürgerliche Roman gestaltet heute noch jeweils eine Welt. Er tut dies rein idealistisch aus einer Weltanschauung heraus, der mehr oder weniger privaten, jedenfalls aber individuellen Anschauung seines 'Schöpfers'. Innerhalb dieser Welt stimmen dann alle Einzelheiten natürlich genau, die, aus dem Zusammenhang gerissen, den 'Details' der Realität gegenüber keinen Augenblick waschecht wirken könnten."¹⁵

The 'bourgeois novel' briefly sketched here is an example of the aristotelian text structure Brecht wishes to subvert by using the film as an alternative model. It must be noted, however, that when Brecht praises 'the external action', the 'seeing from the outside' in film and says that for the film 'die Sätze nichtaristotelischer Dramatik (nicht auf Einfühlung,

Mimesis, beruhender Dramatik) 'are immediately acceptable,¹⁶ he is referring to the films of Charles Chaplin and the Soviet films of Nicolai Ekk. He is not referring to the dominant Hollywood cinema which, like the aristotelian, dramatic theatre and the bourgeois realist novel, does depend on empathy and mimesis. (It is precisely this 'aristotelian' cinema that Godard attempts to subvert.) When referring to films such as those of Chaplin and Ekk, Brecht speaks of a 'splendid inductive method':

"Der Film, der keine Welt gestalten kann (das Milieu bei ihm ist etwas ganz anderes), der auch niemandem gestattet sich (und nichts sonst) durch ein Werk auszudrücken, und keinem Werk, eine Person auszudrücken, gibt (oder könnte geben): verwendbare Aufschlüsse über menschliche Handlungen im Detail. Seine grossartig induktive Methode, die er zumindest ermöglicht, kann für den Roman von unabsehbarer Bedeutung sein, sofern der Roman selber noch etwas bedeuten kann."¹⁷

Klaus Kocks suggests that the opposition of aristotelian and non-aristotelian texts may correspond to an opposition of deductive and inductive method.¹⁸ Such a correspondance would enable one to apply Brecht's reflection on film to his epic plays. Brecht does speak of a 'Gesellschaft für induktives Theater'¹⁹ and of his inductive 'Vorgehen'²⁰ in the staging of his plays. The term 'deductive method' does not appear in Brecht's writings but in a note 'Über den aristotelischen Roman'²¹ he describes the deductive organization of the aristotelian text.

1. Let us suppose that the aristotelian novel is based on the sentence:

The courts (Justis) are unjust (1).

This is transformed (because of the form of the novel) into: A judge is unjust (2).

In a plot this is transformed (because of the form of the novel) into:

A Judge does something unjust (3).

2. Before we look at the sentence in its second and third form let us examine the first: The courts are unjust. Brecht means a judge, as he exists today, a bourgeois judge. Otherwise the first (more general) sentence would not be replaced by the second (in which one specific judge stands for all judges) and nothing would be said about the courts. If all judges are true to the courts and act unjustly by being true to the courts - then the courts are unjust too. (By courts Brecht means simply that which all judges do when they judge.) If the judges are not true to the courts, then the courts can be just. If the judges are unjust and not true to the courts and the courts are to be unjust as well, then this statement cannot be mastered by the plot of the aristotelian novel. To make this clearer, we can reconstruct the argument using the following symbols: Judge: X, Courts: Y, just: a, unjust: 7a, true to the courts: y, untrue to the courts: 7y, bourgeois: b, the aristotelian novel: N.

$(Y/7a) \in N$

$(X/7a) \wedge (x/y) \rightarrow (Y/7a)$

$(X/7a) \wedge (x/7y) \rightarrow (Y/7a) \vee (Y/a)$

$(X/7a) \wedge (x/7y) \wedge (Y/7a) \rightarrow X \notin N$

(X/y) (i.e. A judge is true to the courts) is thus a precondition for the construction of an aristotelian novel based on $(Y/7a)$.

3. The logic of the second sentence runs as follows:

X is a bourgeois judge.

Bourgeois judges are unjust.

Therefore X = unjust.

In the novel this sentence is of course 'carried out':

X on the left hand side is expanded psychologically and sociologically so that the right side emerges as 'unjust'. The concept 'unjust' may then simply be read off the behaviour and actions of X: Everything that X does and can do is called 'unjust'. To this purpose the 'something unjust' in the sentence in its third form is deduced from a category in which the judge X cannot interfere, namely from a broadly sociological one, in which he can act neither justly nor unjustly.

Brecht's analysis of the aristotelian novel's logic of construction starts out from an ideological project ('The courts are unjust') and describes its figuration according to the literary conditions of the aristotelian novel ('the form of the novel'). Brecht's analysis divides the literary form of the project into two levels.

On the first level the social condition (the field of the ideological project) is transposed onto a field of figures which is organized in a closed configuration. An individual character - the protagonist - represents the sociological state of affairs ('judge is unjust'/'a particular judge for all judges'). On this first level, then, the ideological project is transposed onto a closed constellation of interacting characters.

On the second level this constellation is reflected in the plot ('A judge does something unjust'). In the reception of the novel the construction process is to be reversed. In other words, the reader is lead from an individual act to an individual character trait and then to a social condition. The reference to the 'eternally human'²² which Brecht criticizes in aristotelian texts is a result of its deductive text construction.

In an essay entitled 'Über die Verwendung von Musik für ein episches Theater',²³ he again characterizes the aristotelian text.²⁴ Brecht's analysis may be summarised in ten points:

1. The plot is reducible to (is a function of) the character configuration.
2. The character configuration revolves around a central protagonist (or hero).
3. The protagonist has an 'inner being' that is relevant to the semantics of the whole text. (The world is seen from the perspective of the protagonist.)
4. The plot arranges narrative sequences (with relatively closed causality) that enable the reader to read the protagonist's semantics in 'spiritual conflicts'.
5. The plot, which is character-reducible, is directed towards an end. It's goal is the revelation of the protagonist's 'inner being' at the climax of the 'spiritual conflicts'.

6. The individual protagonist represents mankind.
7. The fact that the plot is a function of the character configuration and the configuration in turn a function of the semantic centre (the protagonist who stands for mankind) makes possible an identificatory reading of the text. Reader and protagonist form a semantic unity.
8. An identificatory (and cathartic) reading focuses on the 'eternally human' instead of on the social and the historical.
9. By focusing on semantic invariants (the 'eternally human') the aristotelian text does not 'intervene' in the historical process nor does it encourage the reader to do so.
10. The conditions of the historical process, especially insofar as they are changeable, do thus not figure in the aristotelian text.

These points characterize the traditional realist text, the Hollywood narrative film - those aristotelian texts that emphasize mimesis and empathy. Brecht and Godard break with this dominant mode of representation by subverting it from within, by separating out its elements and revealing their functions.

We may take Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder²⁵ as an example of an attempt to break with the aristotelian text. Narrative dominates over plot, the play is not determined by the unfolding of a central protagonist. None of the characters has an 'inner being' or consciousness that determines the meanings of the whole

text. We do not view the world only through the eyes of Mother Courage. The narrative sequence does not arrange events to force characters into spiritual conflicts. Individual episodes could be read on their own - they do not derive their meaning from the whole and their function is not to build up to a climax at the end but rather to present a montage of conflicting meanings. Mother Courage does not represent Mankind (the 'eternally human'), she represents a social role, a way of acting in a specific social situation. An identificatory reading is discouraged. A non-identificatory reading focuses on the social and historical relations represented and not on the 'eternally human'. By focusing on semantic variants (-specific meanings in specific circumstances) the text encourages the reader to consider not only Mother Courage's relation to history, but also the reader's own place in history. The reader may gain insight from Mother Courage's blindness. The historical and social conditions may thus be studied in their relation to the representations of these conditions.

The Dziga Vertov²⁶ films of Godard are on the whole more radical in their rejection of the non-aristotelian text. In the deconstructions they perform they go far further than Brecht since they reject narrative and character. It is debatable whether or not such 'formalism' is politically effective (see 4.4.1 below).

0.5 The films of Godard

The films Godard made between 1967 and 1973 must be seen as attempts at cinema: trials, experiments, Versuche. They are unfinished works in progress. They are self-reflexive and self-critical.

In December 1967 and January 1968 Godard shot Le Gai Savoir²⁷ for the French National Television Network, O.R.T.F. He edited it sometime after the events of May 1968²⁸ and it was first shown publicly in June 1969.

Godard chose a common television form - the interview as a model for Le Gai Savoir. In this film two characters, Emile Rousseau and Patricia Lumumba, discuss the relationship between politics and film in seven late-night meetings in a disused television studio. In 90 minutes they cover the areas that should be investigated in a critical cinema. Besides Patricia and Emile there are three other speaking 'characters' in the film: an old man and a young boy and girl who are being interviewed. Godard (the narrator) constantly comments on the interviews and on the 'progress' of the film. The film offers the viewer no conclusions to the questions it raises. The narrator claims that half the shots in the film are missing, thereby breaking the illusion of the integrated, aristotelian work of art. Monaco comments on the relationship established between the film and its audience:

"If we become too involved in the subject of the argument between Emile and Patricia, then the narrator raises us to another level. If we become fixed in the relationship between the narrator and his invented characters, then the film itself, by its very density and conflation of images and sounds, will distance us. It's essence is process."²⁹

The notion of process, which is an important element of Brechtian dialectics and *Verfremdung* shall be discussed

below (3.2.5). (The aristotelian realist film avoids process as much as possible.)

In Le Gai Savoir Godard also distances the viewer and prevents him from simply taking the details of the film 'at face value' by introducing elements of fantasy. For example, Emile (speaking with Patricia's voice) relates "how I killed Kennedy on orders from Lautréamont's ghost".³⁰

In Le Gai Savoir Patricia proposes a three-year plan for a revolutionary cinema:

"The first year we collect images and sounds (...)
the second year we criticize all that: decompose
them, reduce them, substitute them, and recompose
them. And then the third year, make two or three
models of reborn film."³¹

From 1968 to 1972 Godard, together with the Dziga Vertov Group, sought to put into practice the above proposals all at once. The nine films completed during this period collect images and sounds, criticize them, and recompose them - all at once.³² These films may be seen as experiments, the works appear 'unfinished'. Failed experiments are valuable if they can reveal 'what went wrong'. Leblanc speaks of films such as these, which call attention to their own devices and their own processes of construction, when he says:

"These films do not offer the audience any pseudo-satisfactions; instead they take the entirely new step of inviting them to stand on the same footing as the makers of the film and take a conscious part in the work that produced (and

through them continues to produce) the images and sounds. In these films, images and sounds at last no longer deny the process by which they came to be imprinted on the film stock ... This break is materialism.³³

By calling attention to their own devices (this is the work of *Verfremdung*) these films stop the viewer from being seduced by the spectacle. The viewer is encouraged to critically consider the account of reality presented by the spectacle. In 1969 Godard declared:

"A political film is obliged to discover what it has invented ... television and film do not record moments of the real but simply moments in the dialectical process. Areas/Eras of contradiction that have to be examined."³⁴

Brechtian dialectics is a method of revealing such areas of contradiction - it produces contradiction where before there appeared to be a unity. *Vent d'est* is perhaps the most thorough of the *Dziga Vertov* films. It is composed of clashing discourses and images that do not congeal into a unity. The film tries to summarize the contemporary Maoist political situation and the role of the militant film maker. It refuses to provide a coherent narrative, it collects narrative fragments and juxtaposes them. It is not a 'popular' film and was shown only to small audiences composed of people committed to the search for a 'political' cinema. (Godard stresses that one must always bear one's audience in mind and not ignore the context of reception. In 1970 and 1972 Godard and Gorin accompanied their films on a tour of American college

and university campuses in order to meet and engage in a direct dialogue with their audiences.)

In 1972 Godard and Gorin produced Tout va bien which was an attempt to appeal to a wider audience. It is a film containing many epic elements. It is self-reflexive. In 1970 Godard said in an interview:

"A movie is not reality, it is only a reflection. Bourgeois film-makers focus on the reflections of reality. We are concerned with the reality of that reflection."³⁵

'Bourgeois' realist film-makers use familiar means of representation. They have established the dominant norm. Tout va bien attempts to maintain a tension between familiar and unfamiliar means of representation.

On the one hand it takes from the aristotelian cinema the star-system (actors as heroes), a certain degree of psychological detail (identifiable characters), an almost coherent plot. (It is necessary to work over the elements of the aristotelian text, to adopt some of its elements, if the film is to reach a mass audience.) On the other hand, Tout va bien introduces (epic) devices designed to reveal the operations of dominant narrative cinema. Examples of this self-reflexivity include:

"The parallel tracking shot over a cross-section of the occupied factory, in which all the rooms are seen at one side to the viewer/camera (...), showing the 'factory' to be clearly a stage set, built in a studio; the non-naturalistic use of

sound-over - the presence of voices without naturalistic spatial or temporal contexts; the rigidly formalized parallel tracking shots (...) the obvious choreographing of action in relation to the camera; the long tracking shot along the surface of a brick wall (...) which seems to suggest the two-dimensionality of the cinema screen and to hint at the illusory nature of the screen's representation of three-dimensional space."³⁶

The devices are not in themselves subversive or radical. It is the use to which they are put that can make them so. Attention is thus drawn to the functioning of devices (see 1.4 below). Godard refers to this question when he says:

"Die Art, wie man die Geschichte erzählt - mit Film, mit Fernsehen oder mit Bildern -, scheint mir sehr wichtig, weil sie nicht lügt. Muss sie auch gar nicht, denn man kann sie lügen lassen, aber ein Bild ist nur ein Faktum, nur ein Moment eines Faktums, es ist nicht alles. Die Lüge liegt in der Verwendung. Ich will nichts sagen. Meine einzige Absicht ist, die Möglichkeit herzustellen dass man sich etwas sagt."³⁷

This attitude coincides with Brecht's: to provoke discussion, to provoke critique. The aim of this study is to suggest that the works of Brecht and Godard are critiques in practice. Critiques in practice provide the elements for a critique.

Notes: Introduction

1. For a list of the distributors of Godard's films see: Lesage, J. Jean-Luc Godard: a Guide to References and Resources. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1975, p. 423. This work also contains synopses of all the films referred to in this study.
2. See: Knopf, J. Bertolt Brecht. Ein kritischer Forschungsbericht. Fragwürdiges in der Brecht-Forschung. Frankfurt. & M.: Athenäum, 1974. Knopf, J. Brecht-Handbuch. Theater. Stuttgart: G.B. Metzler, 1980. Knopf, J. Brecht-Handbuch. Lyrik, Prosa, Schriften. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1984. Rülicke-Weiler, K. Die Dramaturgie Brechts. Theater als Mittel der Veränderung. Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1968. Mittenzwei, W. Gestaltung und Gestalten im Modernen Drama. Zur Technik des Figurenbau in der sozialistischen und spätbürgerlichen Dramatik. Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau, 1969. Steinweg, R. Das Lehrstück. Brechts Theorie einer politisch - ästhetischen Erziehung. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1972. Benjamin, W. Versuche über Brecht. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1966. Eckhardt, J. Das Epische Theater. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983. See also 5.2 below for works by Adler, Brandt, Bentley, Best, Brüggemann, Demetz, Bormans, Betz, Buck, Brauneck, Bloch, Dyk et. al., Dahlke, Dickson, Esslin, Fuegi, Friedrich, Flashar, Grimm, Gersch, Heinemann, Hacks, Hinck, Hecht, Hoover, Ihring, Jost, Jendriek, Kocks, Koller, Kesting, Kopelew, Lindner, Müller, Mayer, Mews, Melchinger, Mittenzwei, Needle and Thomson, Pavis, Pike, Raddatz, Schuhmacher, Shall, Steinweg, Symington, Szczesny, Schmitt, Spalter, Suvin, Thole, Vassen, Willet, Weber, Witte. Other, more detailed references can be found in the notes below.
3. See: Lesage, J. The films of Jean-Luc Godard and Their Use of Brechtian Dramatic Theory. Phd. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1976. McCabe, C. Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics. London: Macmillan, 1980. Monaco, J.F. The New Wave. Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974. MacBean, J.R. Film and Revolution. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975. Roud, R. Jean-Luc Godard. London: Secker and Warburg, 1970. Walsh, M. The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema.

London: British Film Institute, 1981. Lesage, J. Visual Distancing in Godard. In: Wide Angle. 1976. vol. 1, no. 3. pp.4-13. See also 3.2 below for works on Godard by Altman, Baudry, Collett, Brown, Clouzot, Cott, Christie, Cameron, Dawson, Farber, Gianetti, Goodwin, Guzzetti, Gow, Gilliat, Henderson, Kolker, Kavanagh, Kovacs, Luddy, Lou Sin Group, Lokin, McBride, Mellen, Mussman, Polan, Perlemutter, Roud, Rosenbaum, Silverstein, Simons, Sarris, Uhde, Williams, Wollen.

4. See: Lellis, G. and Wead, G. Film: Form and Function. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. Monaco, J.F. How Read a Film. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. Nichols, B. Movies and Methods. 2 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977 and 1985. Wollen, P. Signs and Meaning in the Cinema. 3rd ed. London: Secker and Warburg, 1972. Elam, K. The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama. London: Methuen, 1980. Heath, S. Questions of Cinema. London: Macmillan, 1981. Ubersfeld, A. Lire le Théâtre. Paris: Editions sociales, 1981, and L'École du Spectateur: Lire le Théâtre 2. Paris: Editions sociales, 1982. Clark, E.H. European Theories of the Drama revised ed. New York: Crown, 1978. See also 3.2 below for further works by Andrew, Bennet, Bordwell, Branigan, Bazin, Burch, Comolli, Casty, De Lauretis and Heath, Dyer, Esslin, Ellis, Eberwein, Heath, Heath and Mellencamp, Lotman, Mast and Cohen, Metz, Mellencamp and Rosen, Neale, Schmid, Wright, Wiles, Williams.
5. See: Marx, K. Capital volume One. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. Lenin, V.I. Selected Works. Volume 2. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1934. Macherey, P. In a materialist way. In: Montefiore, A. ed. Philosophy in France today. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp.136-154. See also 3.2 below for works by Althusser, Colletti, Anderson, Brewer, Coward and Ellis, Lecourt, Marx, McLellan, New Left Review, Poulantzas, Therborn, Jay.
6. See: Bakendell, L. and Morawski, S. eds. Marx and Engels on Literature and Art. St. Louis: Telos Press, 1973. Macherey, P. A Theory of Literary Production. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. Easthope, A. The Trajectory of Screen, 1971-79. In: Barker, F. ed. The Politics of Theory - Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature July 1982.

Colchester: University of Essex, 1983, pp.121-133.
See also 5.2 below for works by Arvon, Anderson, Bizstray, Brewster, Della Volpe, Eagleton, Fischer, Lang and Williams, Gallas, Heath, MacCabe, Johnson, Jay, Jameson, Lukács, Lehmann, Lovell, Marcuse, Raddatz, Trotsky, Vazquez, Williams, Zmegac, Wolf.

7. See: Frisch, W. Brecht in Augsburg. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1976. Grimm, R. Brecht's Beginnings. In: The Drama Review, 1967, vol. 12, no. 1. Hillier, J. ed. Cahiers du Cinéma 1960-1968: New Wave, New Cinema, Re-evaluating Hollywood. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968. Harvey, S. May '68 and Film Culture. London: British Film Institute, 1980. Kasting, M. Bertolt Brecht in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1975. Lyon, J.K. Bertolt Brecht in America. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980. Lellis, G. Bertolt Brecht, 'Cahiers du Cinéma' and Contemporary Film Theory. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982. Lethen, H. Neue Sachlichkeit, 1924-1932: Studien zur Literatur des Weissen Sozialismus. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1970. Willet, J. The New Sobriety. London: Thames and Hudson, 1978. Baxandall, L. Brecht in America, 1935. In: The Drama Review, 1967, vol. 12, no. 1. See also 5.2 below for works by Bunge, Dort, Fargier, Glucksmann, Laci, Melchinger, Leblanc, Touraine, Völker, Willet, Lunn.
8. See: Kant, I. Critique of Pure Reason. London: Macmillan, 1982. Wilkerson, T.E. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. A Commentary for Students. London: Clarendon Press, 1976. Marx, K. Capital. op. cit. Sayer, D. Marx's Method. New Jersey: Harvester Press, 1983. Colletti, L. Marxism and Hegel. London: Verso, 1979. Jakobson, R. Selected Writings, vol. 2. The Hague: Mouton, 1971. Barthes, R. Elements of Semiology. London: Cape, 1967. See 5.2 below for works by Brewer, Lodge, Culler, Saussure, Deleuze, Lemaire.
9. WA 17., pp.1004-1016.
10. Ibid., p.1009 f.
11. WA 18., p.171.
12. WA 15., p.298.

13. WA 18., pp. 139-209.
14. Ibid., p.157f.

For material on the relation between Brecht and film see: Gersch, W. Film bei Brecht. Berlin: Henschel, 1975. Heath, S. From Brecht to Film: Theses, Problems. In: Screen, 1975-76. vol. 16, no. 4, pp.34-45. Korte, H. ed. Film und Realität in der Weimarer Republik. München: Hanser, 1978. Witte, K. Brecht und der Film. In: Arnold, H.L. ed. Text und Kritik, 1978 Bertolt Brecht Sonderband 1, pp.81-99.

15. Ibid., p.157.
16. Ibid., p.171.
17. Ibid.
18. Kocks, K. Brechts Literarische Evolution. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1981.
19. WA 15., p.305 ff.
20. Ibid., p.422 ff.
21. WA 18., p.17 f.
22. Ibid., p.170.
23. WA 15., pp.472-482.
24. Cf. Kocks, K. op. cit., p.68 f.
25. WA 4., pp.1347-1438.
26. The Dziga Vertov Group was formed by Godard and Gorin in the late 1960's with the aim of producing critical, revolutionary films at a time when France was in the midst of a wave of student riots and industrial unrest. For material on the events of 'May '68' in France see the works of Harvey, Posner, Touraine, Glucksmann in the bibliography. The group was named after the Russian revolutionary film-maker Dziga Vertov (1896-1956). For material on Vertov see under Vertov, Enzensberger, Williams, Crofts and Rose, in the bibliography.
27. See Lesage, J. Jean-Luc Godard: a Guide to References and Resources. op. cit., pp.89-92.,

- Monaco, J.F. The New Wave op. cit., pp.203-212.,
MacBean, J.R. op. cit., pp.61-78.
28. For material on the political events of 'May '68' in France see the references in note 26 above.
 29. Monaco, J.F. op. cit., p.206.
 30. Ibid.
 31. Ibid., p.212.
 32. Not all the films produced between 1967 and 1973 are strictly 'Dziga Vertov' films. The name is used here as a convenient label. The nine films are Un Film comme les autres (1968), One Plus One (1968), British Sounds (1969), Pravda (1969), Vent d'est (1970), Luttes en Italie (1970), Vladimir et Rosa (1970), Tout va bien (1972), Letter to Jane (1972).
 33. In: Harvey, S. op. cit., p.62.
 34. In: Monaco, J.F. op. cit., p.221.
 35. Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga Vertov Group. In: Evergreen Review, 1970. vol. 24, no. 83.
 36. Harvey, S. op. cit., p.67.
 37. Godard, J.-L. Einführung in eine wahre Geschichte des Kinos. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1984, p.218.

1. Materialism

The aim of this chapter is to do three things: first of all it examines the notion of 'being materialist' as it is discussed by Pierre Macherey.¹ Both Brecht and Godard claimed to be materialists. Brecht was an independent, unorthodox Marxist and critical of Stalinist cultural policies, while during the late sixties Godard was a committed Maoist and sharply critical of the French Communist Party. Secondly, this chapter examines the notion of 'reflection' which has played a central role in traditional Marxist criticism, especially in relation to notions of realism. The tendency of 'reflectionism' in Marxist criticism may be seen as a way of resisting formalist theories of literature which isolate literary works from history. This chapter shall show that the formalism of the Russian formalists can be used to counter the reductive notion of reflection as it is to be found in the works of Lenin and Lukács and at the same time be productively articulated with the aesthetic concerns of Brecht and Godard. The conception of the art work which Lukács elaborates may be likened to Brecht's conception of the aristotelian text (see 1.2.1 below).

1.1 Being materialist

Pierre Macherey draws a distinction between being materialist and being a Materialist. Although Macherey discusses philosophy and doing philosophy in a materialist way, his comments and conclusions are relevant to the field of literature and cinema.

Materialisms (there are more than one) are theories of matter.² Soviet Marxist 'Dialectical Materialism' is a

philosophical system of knowledge which

"...enunciates, promulgates, and enacts 'general laws' of material reality - nature and history, considered in their joint transformations and with regard to the development of the positive systems of knowledge which take over the various sectors of that reality, these laws have both retrospective and prospective significance."³

Macherey suggests that this path (undertaken by Engels in The Dialectics of Nature) leads nowhere. It is not possible to put materialism into a dialectical form:

"For while the dialectic may be genuinely materialist, it is the very refutation of materialism and if it is closely bound up with the fact of being materialist, this is precisely because it shows the impossibility of a materialist knowledge, a system of knowledge concerned with materialism. The essential lesson to be drawn, then, from Engels's attempt is that it is no longer possible to be a Materialist."⁴

1.1.1 Materialism as a manner of intervention

Macherey starts from another presupposition: "that materialism be not a doctrine, not a theory, not a body of knowledge, but a manner of intervention, a philosophical 'position'".⁵ A position is not the theory of an object; it is not the discourse in which an object is represented and constituted. A position is the manifestation of an 'orientation', of a 'tendency', of a 'way of moving through' the philosophical field itself (not 'reality').⁶

Materialism here is almost equated with a 'style' - a style of thinking, a way of proceeding. When Brecht explains what Marxism means to him, he is careful to distinguish between Marxism and the notion of a 'Weltanschauung'. A 'Weltanschauung' is a 'picture of the world' ('Weltbild'), a hypothetical knowledge of the way in which things happen. This hypothetical knowledge, he says, is usually formed in accordance with some ideal of harmony. Marxism on the other hand means for Brecht the positing of certain methods of looking and certain criteria.

"(Die marxistische Lehre) lehrt eingreifendes Denken gegenüber der Wirklichkeit, soweit sie dem gesellschaftlichen Eingriff unterliegt. Die Lehre kritisiert die menschliche Praxis und lässt sich von ihr kritisieren."⁷

Brecht stresses that when one presents incidents on stage one must not imagine that one is illustrating 'Marxist principles' of which there are many. "Ihr müsst alles untersuchen und alles beweisen. Die Klärung eurer Vorfälle kann nur durch andere Vorfälle geschehen."⁸ Materialism is a way of intervening - for Brecht and Godard it is a way of intervening in the field of cultural (ideological) representations. It is a way of moving through this field and of taking up a position within it.

One does not choose to take up a position in this field. Every philosophical reflection, says Macherey, knowingly or unknowingly, is such a taking-up of position.

"To do philosophy as a materialist, however, is to pose the question of this intervention; to

question oneself as to its conditions, its stakes and the obstacles it encounters, insofar as it is an objective practice of intervention transforming the domain upon which, or rather within which, it acts; it is to change, not its object, but its objectives, and so also to change the manner of its intervention."⁹

According to Macherer, there is no such thing as 'pure philosophical knowledge'.¹⁰ The Materialist standpoint does not end up with a system of knowledge - no matter what its content might be. However,

"... it does bring a new dimension to the work of theoretical investigation by revealing that there are no independent theoretical effects. By this I mean not only that there are no theoretical effects unrelated to the material conditions of the practice within which they are produced and in which they are rooted, but also that no theoretical effect can itself be grasped in its isolated individual unity, independently of all the other theoretical effects together with which it is produced in a complex and conflictual field, the field of practice."¹¹

The complex and conflictual field of practice (which is the field Brecht and Godard explore in their works) is determined by the category of contradiction.

1.1.2 The category of contradiction

The dialectic and its category of contradiction govern the materialist standpoint on practice. Practice is the form in which contradiction develops.

"Contradiction is what determines practice, and practice is the form within which contradiction develops. The field of practice is thus not a neutral, homogeneous space substantially organized around a single principle functioning as its centre or its subject (man, for instance); rather it is torn by the concrete confrontation of unequal tendencies which develop along moving lines of force, between which any equilibrium will necessarily be unstable."¹²

The materialist dialectic is a dialectic without teleology. Its complex movement is not steered a priori towards a resolution. The contradictions of practice are indefinitely open. They do not obey the law of a universal form of contradiction. (See 3.2.5 below for the role of dialectics in Brecht and Godard. Brecht, especially, stresses the view that the contradictions of practice are indefinitely open.) Practice opens up an objective space common to philosophy, art and history.

Theoretical effects cannot be disengaged from their confrontation with adverse theoretical effects. The thesis of the unity of opposites (the material aspect of the Hegelian dialectic) postulates the necessarily conflictual nature of all achievement: only by abstraction can these antagonistic elements, autonomous only in theory, be separated.¹³ The interweaving of irreconcilable elements (which Brecht and Godard exploit) is what gives Hegelian discourse its efficacy:

"The characteristic of Hegelian discourse, and that which gives it its peculiar efficacy, is precisely this interweaving of two adverse and

irreconcilable theses, which cannot be reduced to their mere juxtaposition; indeed, far from cancelling out each other's effects - as they would if they were really independent - they work together in the space, at once theoretical and practical, that is opened up by their division.¹⁴

Macherey maintains that Marx and Engels unwittingly abandoned the materialist standpoint on the dialectic when they tried to purge Hegelian thought of all idealist elements. They wished to dissociate the opposites 'rational kernel' and 'mystical wrapping' ('method' and 'system'). Their blunder corresponds precisely to the illusion of an independent theoretical knowledge, realized in the form of a doctrinaire materialism.¹⁵

1.1.3 Materialism with a capital M

The materialist position 'as embodied in discourses of a theoretical nature' is never to be found without an opposing position which may be called 'idealist'. Idealism confirms it in its identity by sending back to it its image in reverse. However, materialism is also

"... pervaded, in the very movement of its production, by this antagonism which works within it, and which takes the form not of abstract confrontation, indifferent and merely formal, but of an internal contradiction based upon the principle of the unity of opposites. If there is a 'struggle' between materialism and idealism, this is a struggle of tendencies, set against one another in practice in a common combat to which all are equally committed, even if the conflict

develops in unequal forms. It is not some external dialogue between two independent and divergent protagonists, the debate between whom might finally be settled in favour of one rather than the other. If materialism there is, then it is in the very development of idealism that it must be sought ...¹⁶

The idea of a struggle between materialism and idealism may not be reduced to a classificatory principle which would enable one formally to distinguish between systems and their 'philosopher' authors according to whether they belong, implicitly or explicitly, to one or the other of these tendencies. 'Materialism, with a capital M, is also Idealism.'¹⁷ The materialism/idealism distinction must be a distinction between tendencies. To work in a materialist way is to be conscious of and make explicit this distinction, it is to recognize the dialectical relationship between the two tendencies. A materialist aesthetic, then, cannot be separated from idealist elements.

1.2 Reflection

The classic Marxist theses on literature and art focus on the notion of reflection.¹⁸ To understand the classic Marxist conception it is therefore necessary to explore the philosophical category of reflection.

1.2.1 Marxist theses on literature and art

In The German Ideology (1846) Marx presents an elementary materialist explanation of ideological effects and art:

"We set out from real, active men. and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence.¹⁹

In this reductive account art is 'explained' by material causes but it is incorporated in 'all the rest of ideology'. The materialist element in the account is the critique of the illusion of the independence of the art work. Through a system of mediations art (an objective practice) is linked to other forms of social practice. Art 'reflects' reality in the sense that it cannot be understood in isolation from the material conditions which produce it (and reproduce it). Such conditions are historical, not eternal.

The materialist explanation put forward by Marx in 1846 does not enable one to give an account of a history of art since art is no longer seen as having a history of its own, it 'has no history'. The existence and development of art is determined externally to it. It is simply the consequence of an objective reality. Art appears to have lost both its autonomy and its 'reality'. Macherey has argued that such a 'theory' is, in fact, not very materialist at all:

"Firstly, it gives a mechanical explanation of effects, by reference to causes which are external

to, and exist independently of them. Thus determination is interpreted unilaterally in terms of subordination, and objective reality proposed as an 'order' to which artistic production must, by its very nature, conform. We can see that it is but a short step from this notion to a doctrine of artistic control which purports to mould artistic activity in accordance with the mechanisms of 'social life', with the presupposition that this social life is itself regulated like a machine and eternally subordinated to the laws by which it was originally constituted: here again we note the foreclosure and consequent disappearance of history."²⁰

In The German Ideology Marx defines ideology. He writes: "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness is (...) the language of real life."²¹ Art, a duplicate of real life, is a 'phantom'. Art as representation 'expresses' social reality. To interpret art, then, is to seek an original behind the duplicate, is 'to find content through form'. If art-as-language 'translates' reality, then art must be translatable into reality. (This is a programme for a hermeneutics.) Macherrey argues that it is not enough to state that art reflects reality and takes it for its model:

"What remains to be defined is what kind of material reality it constitutes in itself, with a defined place within the totality of objective processes, and not outside them, on the deceptive fringe of an illusion. In fact what makes the concept of ideology articulated in The German Ideology untenable is its reduction of ideology to

the status of a system of ideas, artificially separated from that substantive content which it merely gives an ideal form."²²

This definition can be corrected if ideologies and art are defined as material objective practices which participate effectively in the development of material life.²³

Ascribing a 'function' to art may represent a step forward for then art's products are no longer seen as ineffectual images of 'reality', but are invested with a certain reality of their own. In the preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, written fifteen years after The German Ideology, Marx writes:

"With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic - in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."²⁴

If 'to fight out' the conflicts which determine material life means 'to resolve' these conflicts, then what is the nature of such a resolution? Art that resolves conflicts by reconciling their disparate aspects in an overall image may be said to effect an imaginary, subjective solution. This seems to be the view of Lukács:

"The greater the writer, the more contradictory aspects of his time are expressed in his work. But it remains equally true that, the greater he is, the more capable he is of synthesizing them in his work in a living and dynamic unity ..."²⁵

In Lukács' aesthetic, which derives from Hegel, art as a substitute for reality, reveals the 'essential' meaning of the world. The 'great' artwork, a 'living', organic unity, is capable of representing a world in its totality. Lukács, in fact, is a champion of the aristotelian text. This accounts for his conflict with Brecht. The case of Lukács also shows how dominant the aristotelian text is in our culture: it is defended by a marxist like Lukács and by the non-marxist champions of realism.²⁶

It might be argued that art does not effect an imaginary resolution, but a real resolution. In this case the reflection is separated from its object by a certain distance. (A distance in time, for example. See Marx on Balzac, and Brecht on Kafka.^{26A}) Such a view considers art an anticipation - great art anticipates a future reality.

"But in that case is not the artistic effect destroyed at the very moment when its success is confirmed? When it reveals a reality in its own image, which it has in some measure preceded, and with which it reveals a complete identity, it loses all interest of its own. (...) We are still left with the same objection: if art is absolutely determined by its material conditions, then nothing can properly be 'left' of it, apart perhaps from its procedures, its artifices, its techniques."²⁷

The question of what is 'left' is touched on by Marx in the introduction to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. When commenting on the development of Greek art Marx introduces the notion of an 'unequal relationship between the development of material and production'. He writes:

"... is Achilles possible with powder and lead? Or the Iliad with the printing press, not to mention the printing machine? Do not the song and the saga and the muse necessarily come to an end with the printer's bar, hence do not the necessary conditions of epic poetry vanish?

But the difficulty lies not in understanding that the Greek arts and epic are bound up with certain forms of social development. The difficulty is that they still afford us artistic pleasure and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model."²⁸

If art reflects a certain reality two questions present themselves:

- (a) Does art maintain a measure of autonomy in relation to its model, and
- (b) Can art survive its model? Where does the eternal charm of Greek art come from?²⁹

Macherey and Balibar believe that this question itself is mistaken:

"There is no good answer to this question, quite simply because there is no eternal charm in Greek

art (...) Homer's Iliad, the 'work' of an 'author' exists only for us, and in relation to new material conditions into which it has been reinscribed and reinvested with a new significance: however odd it may seem, it did not exist for the Greeks and the problem of its conservation is thus not a relevant one. To go further: it is as if we ourselves had written it (or at least composed it anew). Works of art are processes and not objects, for they are never produced once and for all, but are continually susceptible to 'reproduction': in fact, they only find an identity and a content in this continual process of transformation. There is no eternal art, there are no fixed and immutable works."³⁰

Aristotelian texts pretend to be objects, to be produced once and for all. They deal with the 'eternally human', man's neverchanging 'basic nature'. They assume that they will always be read in the same way, always be self-evident and realistic. Non-aristotelian texts (Brecht and Godard show) are clearly processes and draw attention to this fact. They 'make strange' that which is self-evident.

The notion of art centered around the problem of imitation/reflection was not invented by Marxism. It can be traced back to Plato. (Books II and III of the Republic.³¹) Art-as-image is not specific to Marxism - according to Macherey it is 'totally foreign' to Marxism and can only be appropriated by Marxists 'as the result of a misapprehension'.³²

The notion of reflection criticized so far, is not a materialist one: it is abstract and subjective.

"It is abstract because, in order to postulate a correspondance between art and reality, it begins by separating them - situated in opposition to the model which it is to reproduce, art is an extenuated form, a reduced yet identical 'echo' of that reality which it gives an artificially identical, 'similar' representation. Excluded from reality, enclosed in its specialized status of (...) quasi-reality: absent from itself, since its only function is to allude to what it is not, but deprived of any objective consistency since it is nothing but illusion, it serves as a substitute reality insofar as it retains a trompe l'oeil form of that reality. Thus the mechanical notion of reflection necessarily involves the separation of form and content, which can only be reintegrated after they have been postulated as separate from each other: their mutual adaptation, in the construction of aesthetic effect, is what, from this point of view, provides an index of the 'accuracy' or 'objectivity' of the work of art."³³

The above notion of reflection is subjective since it requires the 'guarantee' of a subject (an agent). Art-as-image is formed in the consciousness of a subject. The quasi-reality of aesthetic images

"... is that of a series of representations which, in confronting reality, induce it to reflect itself. This subjectivist position thus perpetuates exactly that process of abstraction which we have attacked, and of which it is an aspect: separation of subject and object reproduces analogously that of form and content. It is now easy to see why, from such a point of

view, aesthetic effects should be intrinsically inconsistent and 'imaginary', since their consistency is outside themselves, in the objective reality which it is their sole function to express."³⁴

The subject which is a 'base' for a fiction is not of itself fictive, it is not an illusory standpoint per se. Art finds its subject, that is, its 'point of application' and its guarantee, in the consciousness of the audience to which it is addressed. (This is where it 'realizes' itself) - the idealist notion of reflection leads to a theory of the audience as consciousness and as subject. Art as mechanical reflection of reality treats its 'conjure' as a subject, postulates him as a subject, that characteristic figure of bourgeois judicial ideology.³⁵

Art-as-image also finds its subject(s) in the reality which it imitates. This functioning as subject of reality extends that which preceded it.

"... reality is reflected in art, and through art in the consciousness of its audience, insofar as it is itself a subject capable of renewing and reproducing itself in its own self-consciousness. The reality which realist art imitates is already a fact of consciousness, whether acknowledged as such or not: it coincides with the ideology of a society or a period of history whose aim is to reconstitute and recognize themselves, to turn in on themselves and acquire identity and self-mastery in the transparency of their own myths."³⁶

Individuals acquire identity and self-mastery when they recognize themselves in the myths and ideological representations that dominate in the society in which they live. The aristotelian text is seen to be realistic because at its centre stands a protagonist with an identity and the power of self-mastery. By breaking with the aristotelian text, by refusing to provide the reader with a fixed, recognizable identity, Brecht and Godard draw attention to the reader's own identity and to the way in which it has been constructed in a particular society at a particular time.

Traditional aesthetics speaks of a third figure of the subject: the author. The author is seen as an intermediary who effects adaptations between art and reality, image and model, form and content.

"For the fusion of the two subjects - reality and audience - to operate, that is, for the users for whom art is intended as a recognition of themselves through their own myths (the myths which invade their consciousness as their very own), for the ideological function of art, that of domination, there arises the need for the link provided by the third figure, himself a free and conscious personality, God of himself and his work: the Creator, the Author."³⁷

The author in traditional criticism is either seen as the 'creator' who independently 'creates' an artwork and is responsible for its effectivity, or he is seen as an objective 'recorder' of reality who reflects 'things as they are'. The author has a message which he wishes to communicate and the object of traditional

criticism is to uncover this message, this deeper meaning of the art work. (We saw above (c.4) how an author's 'sentence'/message is transformed into a plot in the aristotelian text.) Brecht and Godard shift the emphasis from meaning to the production and functioning of meaning. Their works raise questions and provoke the reader into confronting them. In an interview Godard said: "... I'm not trying to convince people (...) it looks as though we're trying to have the last word. But we're trying to have the first word."³⁸

This attitude breaks with the traditional view of the author who always has (or is supposed to have) the last word. Traditional criticism values those interpretations of a work that best reveal the voice of the author.

The idealist notion of reflection is simple: "The function of reflection is an image, it may be defined by its unique property, its similarity; we may say that such a definition is dictated by the category of identity."³⁹ The materialist notion of reflection, however, is a complex one. Several aspects of it need to be distinguished (for example, the objectivity of the reflection, the exactitude of the reflection.) In 1.3 arguments in Lenin's Materialism and Empirio-criticism (1908) are identified. These are then mobilized against the idealist notion of reflection. It shall be shown that Lenin's notion of reflection is not concerned with realism but with materialism. In the following section Lenin's writings on Tolstoy shall briefly be examined.

1.2.2 Lenin on Tolstoy

Lenin's articles on Tolstoy (1908-1911)⁴⁰ were political interventions in which he tried to show that Tolstoy's oeuvre 'reflects' an epoch - a 'political' epoch - not necessarily Tolstoy's lifetime. Lenin examines the complex and ambiguous relation between a text and ideology. He distinguishes between Tolstoy the writer and his works and Tolstoy the thinker and his views. From Lenin's point of view the latter is obviously reactionary and politically unacceptable. The artist Tolstoy, however, receives Lenin's highest admiration. There is a third Tolstoy: Tolstoy the person, the aristocrat. (Vulgar marxists assume that since the aristocracy is often at the centre of the 'Tolstoyan scene' Tolstoy also 'represents' that class in his work.) Lenin maintains that Tolstoy's advocacy of non-resistance to social evil does not make him a representative of the nobility - rather, it articulates the 'mood' of the Russian peasantry. The aristocrat adopts the position of the peasant masses in his work. Lenin writes:

"Tolstoy mirrored their sentiments so faithfully that he imported their naiveté into his own doctrine, their alienation from political life, their mysticism, their desire to keep aloof from the world, 'non-resistance to evil', their impotent imprecations against capitalism and the power of money."⁴¹

Lenin stresses the link between literature and the class struggle. However, literature is not reducible to an expression of a class, not even reducible to an expression of the political peasant movement.

Repeatedly Lenin speaks of the 'sentiment' of the peasant (a complex, contradictory attitude of a great mass of people towards 'social life') and suggests that Tolstoy's work 'works over' an ideology.

Lenin's work on Tolstoy stands in contrast to Lukács work on Tolstoy. For Lukács Tolstoy is primarily an object of literary history. He highlights Tolstoy's role in the development of European Realism.⁴² Lukács' aesthetic is a normative aesthetic. It prescribes Tolstoy, Balzac, Mann as models of what literature should strive for. He sets these up in opposition to the 'distortions' of Modernism.⁴³ For Lukács the work of art is a specific form of knowing. The artistic totality (intensive) mirrors the social totality (extensive). Totality becomes, for Lukács, a criterion of aesthetic judgment. A 'true' reflection mirrors the social totality. The aim of 'great art' is to give a reflection of reality...

"... in welchem der Gegensatz von Erscheinung und Wesen, von Einzelfall und Gesetz, von Unmittelbarkeit und Begriff usw. so aufgelöst wird dass beide im unmittelbaren Eindruck des Kunstwerks zur spontanen Einheit zusammenfallen, dass sie für den Rezeptiven eine unzertrennbare Einheit bilden. Das Allgemeine erscheint als Eigenschaft des Einzelnen und des Besonderen, das Wesen wird sichtbar und erlebbar in der Erscheinung."⁴⁴

The unity of 'Erscheinung' and 'Wesen' in the immediacy of the 'Eindruck' is only possible in a closed, 'organic', work. (This is the aristotelian text.) Brecht's aesthetic, which is based on Verfremdung,

breaks with this closed, well-rounded text which is designed to evoke an illusionistic reception.

In contrast to Lukács Lenin suggests that the immediate material of literature is ideology (not 'reality'), or rather, ideological representations of reality. This does not mean that knowledge is ignored. Lenin knows that "Tolstoy had a surpassing knowledge of rural Russia, the mode of life of the landlords and peasants ..."⁴⁵ The aesthetic work is related to an ideology: "Tolstoyism in its real historical content, is an ideology of an Oriental, an Asiatic order."⁴⁶ At the same time the work 'transcends' the ideology Lenin condemns. It does this by virtue of the fact that Tolstoy reflects some of the 'essential aspects'⁴⁷ of reality. He grasps a specific historical period - he sees it as a time of upheaval and disorder, but he does not see the order which determines that disorder. Unlike Lukács Lenin acknowledges the necessarily partial, incomplete, fragmentary character of 'artistic reflection'. Macherey comments:

"We are not concerned with just any reflecting surface which would give a direct reproduction of any object. And rather than the facile notion of a distorting mirror, Lenin suggests a fragmented image. Could it be a broken mirror?"⁴⁸

The problem with Lenin's notes on Tolstoy is that they rely on the notion of the 'great artist' and of the 'great work'. He does not deal with art in its specificity. He does not deal with its formal devices and the transformation of devices it may or may not undertake. The metaphor of the mirror does not explain 'reflection' because it does not deal with the formal

organization of the text. Reflection in the work of Lukács takes on two meanings. Firstly, art is seen as a mode of reflection of reality in human consciousness. In this sense all art works are reflections. Lukács refers here to the epistemology of Lenin. Secondly, reflection is seen in a narrower sense - only 'realistic' artworks are 'true' reflections. Realistic reflections are 'true',⁴⁹ 'rich',⁵⁰ 'exact',⁵¹ 'adequate'.⁵² These value-judgments imply that there are reflections that are not 'correct'. Lukács uses Lenin's epistemological notion of 'reflection' to establish a normative aesthetic that champions a 'realism' based on the conventions of nineteenth century realist literature. In the following section it shall be argued that Lenin's philosophical category of reflection (see 1.3 below) concerns materialism, not realism. The metaphor of reflection does not adequately account for the relation between works of art and reality, nor does it justify Lukács attacks on Brecht's non-aristotelian texts. Brecht's realism is not bound to the forms of the nineteenth century, it does not set out to create a 'world'. Brecht writes:

"Wir werden nicht nur dann von realistischer Schreibweise sprechen, wenn man zum Beispiel 'alles' riechen, schmecken, fühlen kann, wenn 'Atmosphäre' da ist und wenn Fabeln so geführt sind, dass seelische Expositionen der Personen zustande kommen. Unser Realismusbegriff muss breit und politisch sein, souverän gegenüber den Konventionen.

Realistisch heisst: den gesellschaftlichen Kausalkomplex aufdeckend/die herrschenden Gesichtspunkte als die Gesichtspunkte der

Herrschenden entlarvend / vom Standpunkt der Klasse aus schreibend, welche für die dringendsten Schwierigkeiten, in denen die menschliche Gesellschaft steckt, die breitesten Lösungen bereit hält / das Moment der Entwicklung betonend / konkret und das Abstrahieren ermöglichend."⁵³

Brecht's realism allows for a practice of writing that need not necessarily involve verisimilitude (in the narrow sense of recreating the appearances of things) and which is compatible with the use of phantasy and invention.⁵⁴ The materialist reflection (if one wishes to speak of reflection) is, as Lecourt shows through Lenin, a reflection without a mirror. This notion is examined in the following section.

1.3 Lenin and reflection

In 1908 Lenin writes Materialism and Empirio-criticism⁵⁵ in order to combat the rise of Russian empirio-criticism.⁵⁶ Lenin's text is complex because it encompasses a constellation of strategic positions and because Lenin fights on all fronts at once - but always with the same weapon - the so-called 'reflection thesis'.⁵⁷

Lecourt argues that

- (a) the reflection in the reflection thesis is a reflection without a mirror, and
- (b) contrary to all appearances, Lenin does not defend or propose a sensualist theory of knowledge.

1.3.1 Lenin's 'sensualism'

Sensualist interpretations of Lenin's reflection thesis may be seen to be the result of a failure to distinguish between the thesis itself and Lenin's illustrations of it. Lenin defends the reflection thesis on the plane of the psycho-physiological process of perception. He illuminates the thesis with examples drawn from the scientific analysis of sensory phenomena. If one takes these scientific illustrations for the philosophical content of the thesis one arrives at a sensualist theory of knowledge. Lenin does not confront the empiriocritics' theory of knowledge with another (marxist) theory of knowledge. He confronts it with the natural sciences in order to reveal the false connection between its philosophical theses and scientific results. It is not a question of confronting two philosophies on the basis of one of their elements (the theory of knowledge). That would presuppose that idealism and materialism can meet on common ground. Such a common ground does not exist for Lenin.

1.3.2 The theory of reflection

What is meant when Lenin speaks of the theory of reflection as a materialist theory of knowledge? The Leninist theory is constructed around the reflection thesis. This thesis is a double thesis. The first thesis is a philosophical thesis. The second thesis is agnoseological thesis - but since it is placed second in the sequence of theses, it does not unfold as a theory of knowledge.

1.3.2.1 The two-questions-double-reflection-thesis

Lenin wishes to show that the Russian empiriocritics have lost sight of the basic question which divides philosophy into two camps:⁵⁸ the question of the primacy of being over consciousness. Lenin emphasizes that this is the primary question. In the following three extracts from Lenin's work the notion of a sequence or hierarchy of philosophical questions can be seen. In the first extract Lenin comments on an interpretation of Engels given by the Russian empiriocritic Bazarov:

"You are muddling things, Comrade Bazarov! You have substituted for the question of the existence of things outside our sensations, perceptions, ideas, the question of the criterion of the correctness of our ideas of 'these same' things, or, more precisely, you are hedging the former question with the help of the latter. But Engels says explicitly and clearly that what distinguishes him from the agnostic is not only the agnostic's doubt as to whether our images are 'correct', but also the agnostic's doubt as to whether we may speak of the things themselves, as to whether we may have 'certain' knowledge of their existence. Why did Bazarov resort to this juggling? In order to obscure and confound what is the basic question for materialism (...), viz, the question of the existence of things outside our mind, which, by acting on our sense organs, evoke sensations. It is impossible to be a materialist without answering this question in the affirmative, but one can be a materialist and still differ on what constitutes the criterion of

the correctness of the images presented by our senses."⁵⁹

The same reasoning can be found in Lenin's discussion of causality:

"The really important epistemological question that divides the philosophical trends is not the degree of precision attained by our descriptions of causal connections, or whether these descriptions can be expressed in exact mathematical formulae, but whether the source of our knowledge of these connections is objective natural law or properties of our mind, its innate faculty of apprehending certain a priori truths and so forth. This is what irrevocably divides the materialists Feuerbach, Marx and Engels from the agnostics (Humeans) Avenarius and Mach."⁶⁰

Both texts make it clear: there is a sequence of questions, but one is basic - the relation between being and consciousness. Lenin draws attention to this fact because the empiriocritics answer the basic question in the idealist sense (primacy of consciousness over being), but then mask this solution in their manifest philosophical discourse. They do this by reversing the sequence of the questions, by posing the basic question once the second question has already been answered. Lenin tears the two questions apart in order to free the basic question from the dominance of the second.

Lecourt argues that it is the righting of the sequence of questions that explains Lenin's reflection thesis. This philosophical thesis is a double thesis which

allows us to pose the two questions in the correct order:

- (a) the primacy of being over consciousness
- (b) the objectivity of knowledge.

The reflection thesis, then, is a double thesis in which the thesis of the objectivity of knowledge (reflection) is subordinate to the thesis of the primacy of matter over thought (reflection). The second question in the sequence may be formulated philosophically and correctly: If the primacy of being over consciousness is accepted, if it is accepted that *consciousness is a reflection of being*, then one must ask through what mechanisms does this reflection gain in exactitude and move along the path to objectivity. This question inaugurates investigations in the fields of natural science and historical materialism.

The Leninist reflection thesis breaks with idealist theories of knowledge. If one remains at the level of description one may say that in idealist theories of knowledge the second question dominates the first. The second question is posed in the following form: what guarantees that the knowledge of a given subject coincides with the object it is considering? In short, the question of the objectivity of knowledge is seen as the question of the basis of the truth of the knowledge. The question of the *basic grounds for truth* can be answered in two ways: either one puts the content of knowledge into the object (the subject has to find it there) or one puts the content of knowledge into the subject (the subject rediscovers it in the object). Whichever option one chooses, one is dealing with a closed system in which subject and object mirror

each other. Knowledge is then seen as a passive inscription of contents of consciousness.

Lenin shows that the structure of idealist theories of knowledge is determined by the place which the second question occupies in the philosophical system. The correct placing of the second question leads to a break with the mirror-form of idealist theories of knowledge. Lenin's theory of reflection may be seen as a systematic deconstruction of the mirror.

1.3.3 Literature and art

Lenin's discussion of reflection is relevant to the problem of literature and art. Balibar and Macherey write:

"A rigorous use of this complex structure eliminates the seeming opposition of two contrary descriptions: that between formalism and the 'critical' or 'normative' use of the notion of 'realism'. That is, on one side an intention to study the reflection 'for itself', independent of its relationship to the material world; on the other, a confusion of both aspects and an assertion of the primacy of thought, a reversal of the materialist order."⁶¹

Lenin's definition of reflection allows one to articulate two aspects (which must be kept separate and in a constitutive order): "Literature as an ideological form (amongst others), and the specific process of literary production".⁶² The specific processes of literary production and the specific constituent elements of literature were studied by the

Russian formalists.⁶³ Their work sheds further light on the notion of reflection. Their work on the devices of literature and their functions is relevant to a study of Brecht and Godard.

1.4 The Russian formalists: significations, devices, functions

In the process of trying to resolve the question of literature's specificity ('literariness') by considering the formal properties governing the structure of literary texts, the Russian formalists also questioned the theory of reflection. They showed that literary forms are necessarily semiotic mediations of reality - they signify reality, they do not reflect it. A term such as 'realism' only makes sense if it is applied to systems of literary representation that have become conventionalized (e.g. the nineteenth century 'realist' novel). In 'On Realism in Art' (1921)⁶⁴ Jakobson maintains that all literary forms are ... conventional modes of signifying reality. The Futurist 'defamiliarizations' did not reveal the world 'as it is truly'. The Futurists were simply employing another mode of signification and establishing another convention.

The Russian formalists suggested that the literariness of a text depends not only on its mode of signification but also on the relation that is established between it and texts in other 'literary systems'. The art work (a literary system) places a group of its elements in the foreground - they form the 'dominant'.⁶⁵ Bennet points out that the 'dominant' through which a text enters

into literature - that is, its ability to defamiliarize - is essentially a relational property:

"A text can fulfil the literary function of defamiliarization only in relation to some established norm of the familiar. But as this, too, is liable to change, then the function of any given text must itself vary as between different moments of its historical existence."⁶⁶

When Brecht questions the ahistorical essentialism in Lukács' defence of nineteenth century realism, he draws attention to the fact that the effectivity of literary devices depends upon the historical context in which they are received and interpreted. Eagleton comments on this fact:

"You thus cannot determine the realism of a text merely by inspecting its intrinsic properties. On the contrary, you can never know whether a text is realist or not until you have established its effects - and since those effects belong to a particular conjuncture, a text may be realist in June and anti-realist in December."⁶⁷

The effect of defamiliarization (of 'making strange'), which for the formalists is the 'literary' effect, depends not on the device itself but rather on the use to which it is put. This is why Brechtian *Verfremdung* cannot be reduced to *Verfremdungseffekte*. *Verfremdung* emphasizes the function to which devices are put in an art work. The formalists equate 'literariness' with the ability to defamiliarize. Defamiliarization becomes an end in itself. For example, Shklovsky writes:

"Art exists that one may recover the sensations of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object, the object is not important."⁶⁸

It shall be shown in the third chapter that such a conception of 'making strange' does not account for the critical element in *Verfremdung*. However, *Verfremdung* might be seen as the formalist defamiliarization put to use in a critique. *Verfremdung* exploits the critical potential of the formalist defamiliarization. Literary works defamiliarize reality but reality as it is mediated through the forms of another form of cognition. Literature and art subvert the linguistic, perceptual and cognitive forms (formal devices) which conventionally condition our access to 'reality'. Bennet points out that these forms, in their 'taken-for-grantedness', present the particular 'reality' they construct as reality itself. (The aristotelian text reinforces the 'taken-for-grantedness' of these forms). Bennet writes:

"Literature thus effects a two-fold shift of perceptions. For what it makes appear strange is not merely the 'reality' which has been distanced from habitual modes of representation but also those habitual modes of representation themselves. Literature offers not only a new insight into

'reality' but also reveals the formal operations whereby what is commonly taken for 'reality' is constructed".⁶⁹

The aristotelian, realist text no longer is 'literature' in this sense - it has become one of the forms of cognition that conventionally condition our access to social reality. Hence they need to be analyzed and criticized. Formal artistic devices can be used to subvert habitual, conventionalized representations. Being materialist means taking up a position in relation to these habitual representations, it means questioning the manner of one's response to them, the manner of one's intervention.

In the next chapter an attempt is made to articulate materialism and critique together in a common space. It shall be shown that materialism and a formal critique (derived ultimately from Kant) are not incompatible.

Notes: Chapter One

1. Macherey, P. In a materialist way. In: Montefiore, A. ed. Philosophy in France today. London: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp.136-154.
2. For an account of the derivation and development of the term 'materialism' see Williams, R. Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. Glasgow: Fontana, 1976, p.163 ff.
3. Macherey, P. op. cit., p.136.
4. Ibid, p.137.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. WA 16., p.531.
8. Ibid.
9. Macherey, P. op. cit., p.138.
10. Ibid., p.139.
11. Ibid., p.140.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p.141.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p.142.
17. Ibid., p.142f.
18. See Balibar, E. and Macherey, P. On Literature as an Ideological Form. In: Young, E. ed. Untying the Text: a Post-Structuralist Anthology. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp.79-99. Also: Macherey, P. Problems of Reflection. In: Barker, F. et. al. eds. Literature, Society and the Sociology of Literature. University of Essex Conference Proceedings, 1977, pp.41-54.

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18. See Balibar, E. and Macherey, P. On Literature as an Ideological Form. In: Young, E. ed. Untying the Text: a Post-Structuralist Anthology. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp.79-99. Also: Macherey, P. Problems of Reflection. In: Barker, F. et. al. eds. Literature, Society and the Sociology of Literature. University of Essex Conference Proceedings, 1977, pp.41-54.

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21. Marx, K. and Engels, F., op. cit.
22. Macherey, P. op. cit., p.43.
23. Ibid.
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- 26A. See: WA 19., p.447. Praver, S.S. Karl Marx and World Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp.181, 318.
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30. Macherey, P. op. cit., p.46. See also Macherey, P. - interview given in Red Letters, 1977. no. 5.
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50. Ibid., p.332.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p.365.
53. WA 19., p.362. See also: WA 19., pp.286-382.
54. Ibid., p.348.
55. Lenin, V.I. Materialism and Empirio-criticism.
In: Selected Works. Vol. II. London: Lawrence &
Wishart, 1934.
56. Empirio-criticism (a philosophy of the modern
natural sciences) was developed by the physicist
Ernst Mach (1838-1916). His Russian followers,
Bogdanov, Bazarov and others, sought to combine
empirio-criticism and marxism. Together with
materialists they emphasized the primacy of matter
over mind. On the other hand, they sided with the
idealists when they claimed that matter was merely
an outward manifestation of their sense
impressions. Empirio-criticism: empirical because
they claimed that all knowledge of the world is
gained via sense impressions, and critical because
they claimed that all knowledge is restricted to
the content of sensory experience. Thus it was
unnecessary to imagine a source of these
sense impressions outside of themselves.
57. Lecourt, D. Lenin: philosophische Strategie. Von
der Widerspiegelung (ohne Spiegel) zum Prozess
(ohne Subject). Frankfurt a.M.: Ullstein, 1975.
58. That is, idealism and materialism.
59. Lenin, V.I, op. cit., p.176.
60. Ibid., p.221.
61. Balibar, E. and Macherey, P. op. cit., p.83.
62. Ibid.
63. For an introduction to Russian Formalism see
Erich, V. Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine.
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66. Bennet, T. op. cit., p.67.
67. Eagleton, T. 'Aesthetics and Politics'. In: New Left Review, 1978. no. 107, p.28.
68. In: Lemon, L.T. and Reis, M.J. op. cit., p.12.
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2. Materialism and Critique

Kant produces a critique of 'pure reason', Marx produces a critique of the commodity-form, Jakobson produces a critique of aesthetic signification. This chapter compares these three critiques and reveals their common elements. It shall then be shown how critique can be used to clarify the works of Brecht and Godard. The works of Brecht and Godard, it is argued, are critiques in progress.

2.1 Kant and Marx

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781)¹ is "essentially an inquiry into the conditions that render possible true knowledge".² It performs a transcendental deduction upon Newtonian physics to reveal the conditions of possibility of representation. Marx's critique in the first chapter of Capital³ is deployed in the field of action and performs a deduction upon a failed synthesis - the commodity - and dissolves it into its constituent elements. Marx thus extends the Kantian critique from the domain of truth and objectivity into the domain of action and production.

Kant's critique, which was deployed against dogmatic rationalism (Leibnitz) and sceptical empiricism (Hume), marks the threshold of the modern episteme as outlined by Foucault.⁴ Critique enables one to deduce a priori principles which make a certain experience or representation possible. These principles are universal and necessary. This is the advantage deductive arguments have over empirical induction which can only provide probabilistic hypotheses. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason contains many arguments, some

of which may, as Colletti has shown, be exploited by a materialist.

In Marxism and Hegel⁵ Colletti examines the relation between Kant and Marx and bridges the gap between critique and materialism. He uses only certain aspects of Kant's work. He is concerned above all with materialism in gnoseology. Critique, like materialism, presupposes an heterogeneity of being and thought. Colletti writes:

"Metaphysics is the identity of thought and being; its contents are 'already' within thought, they are independent of experience, i.e. supersensible. (...) Critical thought, contrariwise, identifies itself with the position that presupposes the heterogeneity, i.e. a real and not formal (or purely 'logical') difference between being and thought."⁶

Existence is not a predicate, it is not a concept. The conditions as a result of which something is given us to be known are not to be confused with the conditions as a result of which something is taken up into thought; the possibility in reality is not identical with the logical possibility; 'logical process' is not to be confused with 'process in reality'.⁷

Kant argues that the logical conditions of possibility of experience may not be equated with the real conditions of the things-in-themselves. Kant's premise is that the rule governing thought is a rule of non-contradiction. In other words, non-contradiction in thought does not imply a non-contradictory reality. Kant writes:

"There is no conflict in the concept of a thing unless a negative statement is combined with an affirmative; purely affirmative concepts cannot, when combined, produce any cancellation. But in the sensible intuition, wherein reality (e.g. motion) is given, there are conditions (opposite directions), which have been omitted in the concept of motion in general, that make possible a conflict (though not indeed a logical one), namely, as producing from what is entirely positive, a zero (= 0). We are not, therefore, in a position to say that since conflict is not to be met with in the concepts of reality, all reality is in agreement with itself."⁸

The distinction between real conditions and logical conditions marks the difference between Kant and Hegel. Like Hegel, Kant accepts that thought is a totality (a synthesis of self and other) but he considers it to be only one element in the process of reality. Hegel absorbs the process of reality within the logical process, thus transposing logic onto autology.⁹ Kant's critique enables one to take up a materialist position on the contradictions of reality without having to posit the reflection of such contradictions in the laws of thought. It also shows that a materialist reading must proceed inductively and deductively. Colletti writes:

"Reality, in fact, is that which is objective, and the objective - contrary to idealism - is precisely that which is external to and independent of thinking subjectivity. It is no less true, however - contrary to empiricism or 'primitive' materialism - that an indispensable condition for

discriminating the objective from the subjective and, therefore, reality from illusion, is, most assuredly, thought - in a word, subjectivity itself. All of which means that induction and deduction here reciprocally, imply and mutually require one another; for, just as reality is anterior and independent, and thought in relation to it is something on which limiting conditions are placed, so it is also true that we can only arrive at a recognition of that reality deductively, i.e. through a process from which reality emerges as the result of a sifting and a selection carried out by thought."¹⁰

According to Kant, thought appropriates the concrete and reproduces it as concrete for thought. This is a movement from the abstract to the concrete. Marx also makes use of the logico-deductive method.¹¹ Marx writes: "... the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is merely the way in which thought appropriates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete that has assumed a mental form."¹² However, Marx also states that thought itself is "a product of the elaboration of perception and representation".¹³ Here the concept follows reality. Thus the conditions that make concepts possible are external to the concepts themselves.

Marx's method is outlined in A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859) where he writes:

"... it seems to be the correct procedure to commence with the real and concrete, with the real premiss; in the case of political economy, to commence with population which is the basis and

the subject of the entire social act of production. Yet, on closer consideration it proves to be wrong. Population is an abstraction, if we leave out, for instance, the classes of which it consists. These classes, again, are but an empty word, unless we know what are the elements on which they are based, such as wage-labour, capital, etc. These imply, in their turn, exchange, division of labour, prices, etc. If we start out, therefore, with population, we do so with a chaotic conception of the whole ..."¹⁴

The transcendental condition of possibility of population is exchange-value. In other words a concept in reality is only intelligible on the basis of an a priori deduction. There are two presuppositions: a presupposition in reality (the fact of population) and a logical presupposition (exchange-value).

The distinction between logical presuppositions and presuppositions in reality helps explain Marx's method of analysis in the first chapter of Capital.

In Capital Marx performs a transcendental deduction of the conditions of possibility of the commodity (thus also of capitalist production). He begins with the most abstract form of the labour product - the commodity-form - moves to the money form, and then to capital. (The deduction moves from the universal to the particular to the individual.) The commodity, Marx shows, is the (necessary) condition of the money-form, which, in turn, is the condition of capital. In reality the foundation of the process is capital - the historical development of capital moves through the same space as the logical deduction but not in the same

direction. This means that Marx presents a transcendental deduction and an inverted transcendental deduction. The historical development of capital can only be analysed by deducing its conditions of possibility in the commodity and in ^{the} case of the commodity Marx makes use of the logical deduction.

In chapter one of Capital the object of critique is a social form. Capitalist production is made intelligible through the deduction of the conditions of possibility of the commodity form. The formal critique is not opposed to historical knowledge - it makes historical knowledge possible. Marx writes:

"... our method indicates the point where historical investigation must enter in (...) In order to develop the laws of bourgeois economy (...) it is not necessary to write the real history of the relations of production (...) but the correct observation and deduction of these laws always leads to primary equations (...) which point to a past lying behind this system. These indications (...) then also offer the key to the understanding of the past - a work in its own right."¹⁵

In Marx's Method,¹⁶ Sayer comments on Marx's analysis of the social form of the commodity and his deduction of its conditions of possibility. He draws an analogy between Kant and Marx:

"Marx's investigation proceeds from what experience shows to be the case to the conditions that must prevail if experience of that kind is to be possible. He reasons from the phenomenal to its

grounds of possibility, from the forms in which economic phenomena present themselves 'on the surface of society' to the 'material ground-work or set of conditions of existence', the network of essential relations peculiar to the modes of production in question, which explain why the phenomena should take such forms. It was exactly this kind of inference from phenomena to their presuppositions which Kant termed a 'transcendental analytic.'¹⁷

When Marx deploys the transcendental deduction he does so in order to uncover relations that constitute the conditions of existence of the social forms being analysed. He questions the conditions of experience (the commodity is an experiential given) from the side of being. His formal transcendental deduction is thus not deployed in the space of a transcendental subjectivity.

2.2 The commodity and value

Marx's critique examines the conditions of possibility of experience. The analysis of the commodity-form is a deduction from an experiential given (commodity as an object in the circuit of exchange) to its non-experiential conditions of existence (commodity as a set of relations). The analysis of the value-form, on the other hand, moves from the non-experiential to the experiential (money). (The transcendental question asks: Given that X exists, what else must be the case? X exists, but what are its conditions of existence? It shall later be argued that the works of Brecht and Godard may be seen as critiques in practice (*Verfremdung* being the critique at work). We may say

that the works of Brecht and Godard ask the question: Given that aristotelian texts exist, what else must be the case? Given that aristotelian texts exist which are experienced in certain ways (identificatory reading, etc.), what else must be the case? How must the aristotelian text be organized for it to function as it does in contemporary Western society? The texts of Brecht and Godard take an experiential given (the aristotelian text, ideological representations) and deconstruct it.)

2.2.1 The commodity-form

Marx decomposes the commodity into two elements: use-value and exchange-value. The commodity seeks to unite these elements into a synthetic unity.

2.2.1.1 Use-value

Insofar as a commodity meets a need it has a use-value (it is realized in consumption). Use-value has a qualitative and a quantitative aspect. Attributes and measures (which express the two aspects of use-value) depend on that which produces value: labour. Labour also has a dual form: useful labour (qualitative aspect) and actual labour-time (quantitative aspect).

2.2.1.2 Exchange-value

Exchange-value is "a quantitative relation of proportion, in which use-values of one kind exchange for use-values of another kind."¹⁸ Quantity seems to precede quality. "As use-values, commodities differ above all in quality, while as exchange-values they can only differ in quantity, and therefore do not contain

an atom of use-value."¹⁹ For this to be so, exchange-value represents a common element in all commodities. (Quantitative differences can only be measured on the basis of a common quality.) The common element exchange-value represents is value (something which is not immediately visible on the surface of commodities.) Value (abstract labour), then, is the qualitative equivalent. Socially necessary labour-time is the quantitative measure of abstract labour. A commodity has value - this means that it is a product of abstract labour and that it can be exchanged. (This statement is repressed by capitalist production because it questions the non-symmetrical relation between use-value and exchange value.)

If socially necessary labour-time determines value then what determines the value of labour? Marx shows that the value of labour is determined by the amount of labour used in the production of labour-power. He deduces the commodified status of the labour-power which produces value. Socially necessary labour-time is the single measure of value in the capitalist mode of production. By speaking of labour-power instead of labour, Marx dissolves the hypostasis which turns the commodity into a universal object and reveals it to be a social relation.

The commodity is an hypostasis because at the heart of exchange-value labour-power is elided. Labour-power is elided because in the circuit of exchange exchange-value functions as a representation of value. In the circuit of exchange we see objects (commodities) - not the labour-time (their common condition).

The 'labour-power' of a writer cannot be equated with the labour-power that is elided in the commodity.

However, a parallel can be drawn between the commodity and the realist (aristotelian) text, in the sense that the realist text stresses that it is a finished 'art-work', a product, an object. Production is denied. The realist, aristotelian text is clear, self-evident. It is easily consumed, easily exchanged. Realist texts have traditionally been valued to the extent that they are 'true to life'. The works of Brecht and Godard stress that artworks are formal relations and social processes.

Commodities may be seen as formal relations and social processes. Marx shows commodity reification to be an hypostasis: commodities become things when labour-power (production) is elided by exchange-value. (Value may thus not be separated from a specific form of society in which labour-power is bought and sold. The form of labour as the necessary condition of the commodity leads Marx to analyze the conditions under which labour-power is produced. Useful labour is deduced as a trans-historical a priori. Abstract labour is the form particular to the capitalist mode of production).

2.2.2 The value-form

"Everyone knows, if nothing else, that commodities have a common value-form which contrasts in the most striking manner with the motley natural forms of their use-values. I refer to the money-form. Now, however, we have to perform a task never even attempted by bourgeois economics. That is, we have to show the origin of this money-form, we have to trace the development of the expression of value contained in the value-relation of

commodities from its simplest, almost imperceptible outline to the dazzling money-form."²⁰

In the first part of Chapter One Marx decomposes, analyzes the commodity. In the second part of the chapter he shows the synthetic steps of combination from the simple form of value to the money-form given to experience. (Thus, in Chapter One, Marx crosses the same field of experience in the opposite operations of analysis and synthesis.)

2.2.2.1 The simple form of value

The simple form of value is expressed by the equation: $x_A = y_B$. Commodity A is expressed relative to commodity B. It is therefore the relative value-form. Commodity B serves as the material equivalent of A. It is therefore the equivalent value-form. A can only have the relative form if B has the equivalent form. A and B have different use-values - their common element is value. A thus finds its value reflected in B. (The use-value of B functions as a mirror for the value of A. Exchange-value is the simple form of value.)

The simple value-form expresses the value of A in only one commodity (B). Value, however, must be able to represent the relations between all commodities. Therefore the simple form of value passes to the expanded form.

2.2.2.2 The expanded form of value

The expanded form of value is expressed by the equation: expanded relative form = particular

equivalent form. The mirro. . . lation referred to above is now expanded. In this case every commodity functions as the equivalent by which commodity A may be expressed. However, in the expansion, the equivalent form remains particular while the relative form is universalized. (An infinite number of equivalents exist - but each one is a particular expression of A's relative value.)

The proportions in which exchange takes place (in this form) are determined by the magnitude of their values. But at this stage no single representation of abstract labour is possible. Marx writes:

"Firstly, the relative expression of value of the commodity is incomplete, because the series of its representations never comes to an end (...). Secondly, it is a motley mosaic of disparate and unconnected expressions of value. And lastly, if, as must be the case, the relative value of each commodity is expressed in this expanded form, it follows that the relative form of value of each commodity is an endless series of expressions of value which are all different from the relative form of value of every other commodity."²¹

To solve the problem of the expanded value-form Marx makes use of an inversion. It was said that the value of A was expressed by an infinite number of commodities. By inverting the positions of the relative and equivalent forms A expresses the infinitude of commodities which previously functioned as its equivalent.

2.2.2.3 The general form of value

The inversion is expressed by the following equation: relative form = universal equivalent form. Where there was a particular equivalent before there is now a universal equivalent. The value of a commodity is expressed in terms of something common to all commodities. The universal equivalent is the unique representation of value which is produced by abstract labour. All commodities are represented by the universal equivalent.

"In this manner the labour objectified in the values of commodities is not just presented negatively, as labour in which the abstraction is made from all the concrete forms and useful properties of actual work. Its own positive nature is explicitly brought out, namely the fact that it is the reduction of all kinds of actual labour to their common character of being human labour in general, of being the expenditure of human labour power."²²

The universal equivalent represents the value of every commodity and it relates every commodity to every other one as values. Money functions as the universal equivalent.

2.2.2.4 The money-form

The money-form is expressed by the equation: relative form = culturally determined universal equivalent. Social custom allows money to function as the universal equivalent. Money is the privileged representation of value and thus of the commodity itself. Money - a

thing - represents social relations. It is a sign of the elision of labour-power (see below).

"Value, therefore, does not have its description branded on its forehead; it rather transforms every product of labour into a social hieroglyphic. Later on, men try to decypher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of their own social product: for the characteristics which objects of utility have of being values is as much men's social product as is their language."²³

Realism is the privileged form of representation in our culture. Social custom allows realism to function like a kind of universal equivalent. By this is meant that realism claims to be intelligible to everyone. It denies the fact that it is caught up in, and represents, social relations.

The commodity, says Marx, is transformed by value into a 'social hieroglyphic'. It was shown above how Marx set out to decypher the hieroglyphic. In the next section it shall be shown how Marx's analysis of the commodity as an hypostasis can be further clarified by referring to the linguistic formalism of Jakobson.

2.3 Jakobson: linguistic formalism

At its most fundamental level, true knowledge in the modern episteme may be defined by the synthesis of three functions. As soon as one of these functions is positively specified independently of its position in the synthesis an hypostasis is produced. (It shall be shown that the commodity is a failed synthesis and therefore an hypostasis.) True knowledge is the

synthesis of the functions of syntax, logic, and truth. Syntax has to be specified as a function of logic and truth. Logic has to be specified as a function of syntax and truth. Truth has to be specified in terms of logic and syntax. Judgement (thought) links beings and representations according to the rules of thought. Its synthesis is an order-dependent functional unity.

Critique shows experience to be a synthesis of sensations, concepts and rules. When positively specified independently of their place in the synthesis these functions produce hypostases: rationalist hypostasis in the case of concepts, and empiricist hypostasis in the case of sensations. The sign is a 'picture' of the order-dependent synthesis:

Signifier (S) } Referent (R)
 signified (s) }

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A signifier (word-image) and a signified (concept) are bound with a referent (object) in an order-dependent synthesis. Any of the three functions, if specified in its positivity alone, would constitute an hypostasis. Judgement and a well-formed utterance are dependent on the articulation of the three functions. (The signifier governs syntactic operations; the signified governs logical operation and makes predication possible; the arrow governs referential theories of truth. The bar-line shows that identity-conditions structure the unity of signifier and signified. The bracket shows the prior unity of the sign (signifier and signified) before it is linked to the referent (through the arrow)).

The model of the linguistic sign (an order-dependent synthesis) pictures the conditions of possibility of all synthetic knowledge and of experience. In the

following section Jakobson's work on aphasia shall briefly be examined. Normal speech is a synthesis - aphasia produces failed syntheses (i.e. hypostases).

2.3.1 Aphasic disorders

In 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasia'²⁵ and 'Aphasia as a Linguistic Topic',²⁶ Jakobson analyses two linguistic operations:

"Any linguistic sign involves two modes of arrangement.

(1) Combination. Any sign is made up of constituent signs and/or occurs only in combination with other signs. This means that any linguistic unit at one and the same time serves as a context for simpler units and/or finds its own context in a more complex linguistic unit. Hence any actual grouping of linguistic units binds them into a superior unit: combination and contexture are two faces of the same operation.

(2) Selection. A selection between alternatives implies the possibility of substituting one for the other, equivalent to the former in one respect and different from it in another. Actually, selection and substitution are two faces of the same operation."²⁷

Speech is the synthesis of the operations of combination and selection. Speech is situated at the intersection of the horizontal axis of combination and the vertical axis of selection. The figurative horizontal and vertical axes are termed syntagm and

paradigm. Speech implies the selection of certain linguistic units and their combination into larger units of greater complexity. Combination functions on the basis of contiguity. In a spoken chain of words no two words can be uttered at the same time and each word or element "derives its value from its opposition to what precedes and what follows".²⁸ Words in a spoken chain can be said to be united in praesentia.

Selection, on the other hand, functions on the basis of similarity. Whenever a word is selected in speech the possibility of substituting one word for another is implied. A number of associations can be made between words on the basis of similarity: 'education' can be associated, through its meaning, to 'upbringing' or 'training', and through its sound, to 'educate', 'educator', or to 'application', 'vindication'. "Each group forms a potential mnemonic series (...) the terms are united in absentia."²⁹

We thus have three pairs of terms that correspond to the two figurative axes:

selection	and	combination
similarity	and	contiguity
paradigm	and	syntagm.

Jakobson distinguishes between two types of aphasia on the basis of disfunctions on either of these axes. The failure of syntagmatic combination results in contiguity disorders. A patient suffering from such a disorder is unable to combine linguistic elements to form greater units or to hierarchise structures. The operations of selection, however, continue: "the patient uses metaphors and similarities. For example: spyglass for microscope, fire for light. Homonyms

abound."³⁰ Concepts acquire primacy. The primacy of the signified is accompanied by the erosion of the signifier.

The failure of paradigmatic selection, on the other hand, results in similarity disorders. The patient has difficulty in finding his words. The framework of the discourse is intact but he is unable to name things or to associate on the basis of words. The metaphoric function of language is affected while the metonymic function is not. Aphasics of this type "readily associate by metonymy: the word 'fork' will be more easily associated with 'knife' than with 'pike', 'to smoke' will be associated with 'pipe' (by substitution of the thing for the use). These aphasics proceed, therefore, by sliding, by the displacement of one term by another which is contiguous to it."³¹ Contiguity is projected onto the axis of selection and substitution. Syntactic rules acquire primacy in this disorder and conceptualization is impaired.

In normal speech the utterance is situated at the intersection of syntagm and paradigm - vertical operations (selection) continually cross horizontal operations (combination). All pathologies of the sign are either failures of combination (and the attempt to articulate similarity through the primacy of the signified) or they are failures of selection (and the attempt to articulate contiguity through the primacy of the signifier). In syntagm pathologies substitution is projected onto the horizontal axis. In paradigm pathologies contiguity is projected onto the vertical axis.

According to Jakobson the two forms of violating

functions can also be seen in literary signification. Symbolist poetry emphasizes metaphoric substitutions - it reflects contiguity disorders and an emphasis on the specific signification. Paradigmatic selection is projected into the space of the syntagm. The realist novel, however, emphasizes narrative contiguity - it reflects substitutive disorders and an emphasis on the syntactical system and the meaning it generates. Syntagmatic combination is projected into the space of the paradigm. Hypostases are formed as soon as there exist fixations upon one of the two axes. Such a fixation represents the necessary condition of possibility for an hypostasis. The order given by the intersecting axes of syntagm and paradigm conditions not only normal speech but also true knowledge, action and experience, that is, all synthetic operations based on order-dependent rules. In the following section attention shall be focused again on the commodity but this time the analysis of the two axes of language shall be used to clarify Marx's critique. This is possible because the commodity is an hypostasis and an hypostasis can only exist where there is a fixation upon one of the axes of language.

2.4 The commodity-form as a sign

Commodities relate to one another as values in the circuits of exchange. Value, the universal equivalent makes exchange relations possible. Money is thus the necessary condition of exchange. It is exchange-value at the highest level of generality. It is the universal representation of value. The money-form represents the use-value/value opposition.

"We have seen that the money-form is merely the reflection thrown upon a single commodity by the

relations between other commodities. That money is a commodity is therefore only a discovery for those who proceed from its finished shape in order to analyse it afterwards."³²

Money is both universal equivalent and particular commodity, both syntax and sign. Money has a positivity over and above its (synthetic) function of making exchange possible. This positivity indicates its character as *hysteresis*. (Money is a system and an independent element in that system.)

The linguistic sign and the commodity are structurally analogous but not structurally isomorphic. The sign is an order-dependent synthesis, whereas the commodity is a failed synthesis.

$$\left. \begin{array}{c} S \\ s \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow R \quad \left. \begin{array}{c} \text{exchange-value} \\ \text{use-value} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \text{need}$$

Exchange-value should be linked to use-value by identity conditions and together they should be bound to social need. (Such a synthesis is a well-formed sign). However, exchange-value and use-value are only linked by a strained analogy. The complex is linked to need in a very rudimentary way. The elements of the synthesis come apart because exchange-value (with its doubled form) achieves positivity beyond use-value and need (outside the order-dependent unity) - in the circuits of exchange.

"A commodity is a use-value or object of utility, and a 'value'. It appears as the two-fold thing it really is as soon as its value possesses its own particular form of manifestation, which is

distinct from its natural form. This form of manifestation is exchange-value, and the commodity never has this form when looked at in isolation, but only when it is in a value-relation with a second commodity of a different kind."³³

In the circuits of commodity exchange meaningful relations are only possible on the basis of diagonal relations between the signifier of one sign and the signified of another. Exchange-value does not link use-value with need (need is replaced with variable imaginary needs) and articulates a second order of positivity outside the limits of order-dependence. In the name of exchange relations it violates the conditions of synthesis. In the process the use-value of the relative commodity is obscured. The use-value of the equivalent commodity is used to sanction the positivity of the exchange relation. It is not possible to infer specific use-values on the basis of their exchange-values. (Thus the commodity is not an indexical sign.)

All systemic (syntactic) relations are governed by the operations of signifiers. In the circuits of commodity exchange, however, relations are the result of a diagonal crossing of the signifier of one commodity with the signified of another. This means that exchange-value establishes a second order of positivity, a positivity outside the limits of order-dependence. Order-dependence, which guarantees the formation of a synthesis, means that a signifier (a code) uniquely links together a signified (a representation) and a referent (a being). If the link between the being and the representation is not unique, then either under-determination or over-determination of the signified by

the referent occurs. In the case of contiguity disorders under-determination of the signified by the referent occurs. This means that there are more signifieds than corresponding referents in the utterance. It was noted above that aphasics suffering from such a contiguity disorder make use of homonyms that exhaust the possibilities of referentiality. In the case of similarity disorders over-determination of the signified by the referent occurs. This means that there are more referents in the utterance than there are signifieds to which they might be linked. *Aphasics suffering from similarity disorder emphasize syntactic combinations but are confronted by objects for which they cannot find concepts. That is, there are referents that are fictitious. Only when the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes intersect can over- and under-determination be prevented. The signifier is supposed to make sure that the link between the signified and the referent is unique. The doubled status of the signifier in the commodity (as value and exchange-value) results in the over-determination of signifieds by referents.*

One can thus say that capitalist production is the over-determination of signifieds by referents. Like the realist text it produces fictitious referents where referents do not exist. The capitalist commodity-producing industries rely on the production of artificial needs. Relations of exchange are linked by the universal equivalent but this universal equivalent is, it has been shown, also an element in the system.

The system-syntax of the exchange-circuit is more important than any act of particular signification-selection. The circuit of exchange is based on the

impossibility of sustaining selection before a set of over-determined signifieds. The projection of contiguity onto selection necessarily proliferates referentiality. When value is represented by exchange-value a functional synthesis is broken, similarity disorder results and a hypostatic product is produced.

The doubled status of the signifier as value and exchange-value is possible (Marx shows in Chapter one) because the commodity exists on the basis of an elision. The movement of exchange-value is only possible through the elision of labour-power in the commodity. Circulation thus elides production. The syntagm/paradigm intersection is separated out by the elision of labour-power in exchange-value.

Marx's deduction of the necessary conditions of possibility of the commodity-form deconstructs the commodity-form and reveals how it violates a function and produces hypostases in the circuits of exchange. Marx's critique confronts the representations people in capitalist societies give themselves of themselves.

The commodity (and commodity-exchange) is, in a sense, a cultural myth. Marx's critique makes it possible to know what eludes man's consciousness. The elision of labour-power at the heart of the commodity eludes man's consciousness: the commodity is seen as an object, not as a set of relations. The works of Brecht and Godard are critiques in progress. Like Marx's critique, their works challenge the representations people in contemporary Western societies give themselves of themselves, their cultural myths. They challenge the dominance of the aristotelian, realist texts, by

deconstructing them, by dissolving their syntheses. (See chapter 4) The works of Brecht and Godard are critiques in progress - they do not come to conclusions, they allow the reader to form his own conclusion by examining the deconstructions and displacements effected by the work of *Verfremdung*. The attempts at non-aristotelian texts are thus essentially reactive - they work over aristotelian texts and show how they operate and what they elide. Given that there are aristotelian texts which encourage identification with a protagonist, which insist on mimesis etc., what else must be the case? What is elided in such texts? These are some of the transcendental questions which are implicit in the works of Brecht and Godard.

In the following chapter the 'traditional' notion of *Verfremdung* as it is to be found in the works of Brecht and Godard and in those of their critics, is examined. In the fourth chapter, *Verfremdung* as critique is further discussed, especially in relation to the Brechtian notion of the 'separation of the elements' of representation. Here it shall simply be noted that Brecht's rejection of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (a work which integrates, fuses all its elements, that is, the aristotelian text) may be seen as a rejection of the naturalization of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Realism stresses the product and not its production (like the commodity it elides production). The repression of production takes place because realism has as its basic philosophy of language an identity: the signifier is treated as identical to a pre-existent signified. "Not only do signifier and signified seem to unite, but in this confusion, the signifier seems to be erased or to become transparent so as to let the concept present

itself, just as if it were referring to nothing but its own presence."³⁴ (Derrida) The subject is inscribed as the place of intelligibility: "in order that it should be intelligible, the reader has to adopt a certain position (of homogeneity, of truth) with regard to the text."³⁵ The fixing of the signifier/signified identity sets the subject in the place of mastery (judge). In order for the spectator in a theatre of *Verfremdung* not to be able to provide a centre for the play in his judging consciousness the separation between signifier and signified must be emphasized. Only in this way will the spectator be made aware of the production of meaning, a production in which he is implicated.

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3. Verfremdung

The aim of this chapter is to describe the notion of Verfremdung as it is to be found in the works of Brecht and those of Brecht scholars.¹ Attention shall also be drawn to elements of Verfremdung in the works of Godard.

In an introduction to a recent anthology of works on Verfremdung in literature,² Hermann Halmers distinguishes between Verfremdung in a broad sense and Verfremdung in a narrow sense. Verfremdung in a broad sense refers to the specific nature of the work of art, of poetic language. It refers to the art work's ability, through various devices, to 'make strange' what was once 'natural', 'usual'. This tradition of Verfremdung as 'making-strange' begins with Aristotle (onoma xenikon = strange expression)³ and can be found also the writings of the Baroque (alienatio⁴), Romanticism (Novalis)⁵ and Russian formalism (ostranenie).⁶ Verfremdung in the broad sense may thus be said to refer to the 'literariness' of literature.

Verfremdung in the narrow sense may be seen as a special form of Verfremdung in the broad sense. Its aim is no longer simply to draw attention to the work as art and its devices. Verfremdung in the narrow sense is linked to criticism (of society, of norms) through its emphasis on conflict and heterogeneity. The theory of the critical Verfremdung begins with Hegel's discussion of Socratic irony⁷ and is most clearly elaborated in the work of Brecht.

3.1 Brecht's sources

Unlike 'Entfremdung', which derives from the Latin 'abalienare',⁸ 'Verfremdung' is a relatively modern term. According to Grimm's Wörterbuch it was first used in Berthold Auerbach's novel Neues Leben (1842).⁹ 'Verfremdung' first appears in Brecht's writings in 1934.¹⁰ Thereafter he used it both as a noun and as a verb ('verfremden'). Some confusion has arisen due to the fact that before 1936 (and even on a few occasions after 1936) Brecht used the term 'Entfremdung'. Critics have tried to link Brecht's use of the term 'Verfremdung'/'Entfremdung' to Hegel ('Entäusserung'),¹¹ to Marx ('Entfremdung'),¹² to Bacon,¹³ to Korsch.¹⁴ Although Brecht's definitions may overlap with and be derived from the work of these authors, none of them can be said to be the source of Brecht's 'Verfremdung'. The specificity of Brecht's notion is lost if it is reduced to any of these 'sources'. Similarly, attempts to link Brecht to Russian formalism tend to be reductive - they blur the distinction between Verfremdung in the broad and narrow senses.

3.2 Content of the term 'Verfremdung'

3.2.1 Brecht's definitions

Brecht tried to define Verfremdung on a number of occasions. The best known definition dates from 1939/40:

"Einen Vorgang oder einen Charakter verfremden heisst zunächst einfach, dem Vorgang oder dem Charakter das Selbstverständliche, Bekannte,

Einleuchtende zu nehmen und über ihn Staunen und Neugierde zu erzeugen. (...)

Verfremden heisst also Historisieren, heisst Vorgänge und Personen als historisch, also als vergänglich darstellen. Dasselbe kann natürlich auch mit Zeitgenossen geschehen, auch ihre Haltungen können als zeitgebunden, historisch, vergänglich dargestellt werden."¹⁵

Another definition reveals *Verfremdung's* link to dialectics:

"Verfremdung als ein Verstehen (verstehen - nicht verstehen - verstehen), Negation der Negation."¹⁶

The link to dialectics suggests that *Verfremdung* may not be reduced to a formal device, i.e. 'making strange' (*Verfremdung* in the broad sense). (For further discussion of dialectics in relation to Brecht and Godard, see below 3.2.5.)

3.2.2 Anti-empathy

Brecht regarded empathy as one of the pillars of the dominant aesthetic of his day.¹⁷ The emphasis on empathy and catharsis through mimesis can be traced back to Aristotle's *Poetics*¹⁸ (see 0.4 above). (Brecht's rejection of empathy is thus a key element of his antiaristotelianism.) Brecht writes:

"Der Schauspieler ahmt den Helden nach (den Oedipus oder den Prometheus), und er tut es mit solcher Suggestion und Verwandlungskraft, dass der Zuschauer ihn darin nachahmt und sich so in Besitz der Erlebnisse des Helden setzt."¹⁹

It shall be seen later that Brecht adopts various strategies to prevent the complete transformation of an actor into a character. Godard sometimes does away with 'characters': the figures (actors) are used to symbolise social roles or concepts. For example, in Vent d'est symbolic characters are taken from the 'western':²⁰ a cavalryman (= the ruling class), a woman in a flounced petticoat and a young man (= bourgeois youth who ally themselves with the working class), an Indian (= Third world struggles), a union representative (= unions that sell-out, revisionist Communist parties). In Luttes en Italie²¹ the major figure (Paola) never develops into a 'character'. She is shown in symbolic tableaux that represent social and personal situations. In this film, as in Vent d'est, the viewer is not offered a narrative to follow. The viewer is forced to evaluate a montage of discourses, if he is to receive the film at all.

In Vent d'est²² Godard also investigates empathy by filming a torture scene twice. In the first scene the cavalry officer is shown torturing the girl-militant. Godard shot the scene from behind the girl's right shoulder so that the viewer sees only the torturer's face as he wrings her neck and shouts at her. Someone off-screen throws thick red paint onto her hair. According to MacBean:

"The visual effect, with its rich interplay of colours and textures, is quite striking, and it serves to distance us from the action and the potential emotion it might otherwise arouse."²³

This is followed by a scene shot in traditional Hollywood style. This time the torturer holds the

girl from behind, so that both faces can be seen in frontal close-up. Framing, composition and lighting all draw attention to the girl's face and her expression of pain. No paint is thrown. Attention is focused on the person in pain (on the imitation). In the context of a Hollywood film (in which mimesis is not seen to be mimesis) such a scene might well seem frightening. In Godard's movie the frightening effect is greatly reduced, because attention is drawn to the difference between the two scenes and to the effect of imitation.

The notion of empathy stems from a conception of art that stresses the autonomy of art. Brecht writes:

"Dem Dichter wird seine eigene Welt zugestanden, sie hat eine eigene Gesetzmäßigkeit. Sind die oder jene Elemente verzeichnet, so müssen nur auch alle andern Elemente verzeichnet werden und das Prinzip der Verzeichnung einigermaßen einheitlich sein, damit das Ganze gerettet wird."²⁴

The aristotelian text is perceived of as an autonomous whole. Brecht and Godard resist this notion. (See also 3.3.5 below.)

Brecht counters empathy with 'Distanz'. 'Distanz' means drawing a distinction between art and 'reality'. What is shown on stage or screen is 'artificial'. The actors do not 'become' the characters they present on stage. In Brecht's play Die Mutter (1930) there is a scene in which the circumstances of a demonstration are reported, recounted, reflected upon. The people who took part in the demonstration re-enact the event. Even one of the demonstrators who died takes part in

the report.²⁵ The viewer is made aware of the difference between reality and events on the stage (cf. 3.2.3), a difference the aristotelian text attempts to disguise.

The first schematic outline of the differences between the dramatic and the epic theatres was published in 1930 (the 'Mahagonny-notes'. See 0.3 above). Brecht never departed from the 1930 schema, although he did modify some of the formulations later.²⁶ In the original 1930 version empathy is opposed by 'Ratio'. In the 1938 version, which is reproduced in Brecht's Gesammelte Werke, he left out the empathy/reason opposition because readers had mistakenly read it as an absolute opposition instead of a shift of emphasis. Brecht writes:

"Das epische Theater bekämpft nicht die Emotionen, sondern untersucht sie und macht nicht halt bei ihrer Erzeugung. Der Trennung von Vernunft und Gefühl macht sich das durchschnittliche Theater schuldig, indem es die Vernunft praktisch ausmerzt."²⁷

Brecht opposes empathy because he wishes viewers the freedom to think about events presented on the stage. (For further discussion of empathy/identification, see 4.2 below.)

3.2.3 Anti-naturalism

Brecht acknowledges the historical achievements of the naturalist theatre,²⁸ but rejects it in favour of a form of realism that is not based on a mere reflection (however 'realistic') of the world. Brechtian realism

suggests that the world as it is presented to a person in photo-realistic images does not of its own accord reveal its functioning. A photograph of a factory, no matter how accurate or complex, does not reveal anything about its social reality - work, production.²⁹ Thus there arises the need for literarization, for formulation (see 4.4.). In Godard's films images are often covered with writing and print. In this way images can be contextualized and brought into relation with other images. In Vent d'est an image of Stalin is repeated and it changes its meaning depending on the context in which it appears. One of the problems that dominates the Dziga Vertov films is the problem of 'building images'. In an interview Godard states:

"The old principle says 'go and fetch images and then try to edit them'. The point we are at now (1971) is to build images - build images as simple as possible so that you can build your analysis."³⁰

The surface of the aristotelian text, the image, the reflection, must be fractured. The theatrical equivalent of Godard's writing over images is provided by titles, placards, projections that serve to fracture the 'scene' on stage. (See 3.2.3.1 below.) That which happens behind the facade³¹ must become visible. The social relations into which people enter knowingly or unknowingly must be 'pictured' on stage and screen in such a way that they become comprehensible and changeable. What once belonged to the realm of metaphysics, fate, nature must now be seen to be part of culture and history. The aristotelian text treats man as a fixed nature (the eternal human), it naturalizes culture, turns history into nature.

Brecht writes:

"Die Vorgänge hinter den Vorgängen, die das Schicksal bestimmen, das heisst in die eingreifend man in das Schicksal der Menschen eingreifen kann, gehen also unter Menschen vor sich."³²

Brecht criticizes Naturalism for treating man as a 'piece of nature' and not as a social being (as a member of a class). In Luttes en Italie (1969) a woman is shown in symbolic tableaux, often static, in poses that represent her social and personal situation. These scenes are repeated in different combinations as the woman (a militant actress) becomes more aware of her ideological position. She rethinks subjectivity in class terms and raises the question 'How can one be a militant actress on Italian TV?'³³

3.2.3.1 Titles and synopses

In the epic theatre the titles of scenes and summaries of events still to be staged are printed on banners, posters or projected onto screens. Through these means the viewer's attention is directed to the course of the narrative. The suspension of suspense (attention fixed on the finish, the outcome) focuses the spectator's attention on how things proceed on stage instead of what is still to come. The spectator is encouraged to scrutinize the way characters behave.³⁴

3.2.3.2 The stage

Influenced by the example of Piscator, with whom Brecht collaborated,³⁵ Brecht emphasizes the technification of his theatrical production. He draws attention to the

technology involved. He incorporates projections and film.³⁶ He displays other technical devices - such as the source of the lighting.³⁷ In aristotelian productions, in contrast, everything is usually arranged so that the technical means of production are hidden or disguised, so as to heighten the illusion of reality. Brecht's curtain only masks the lower half of the stage so that the viewer is made aware of the activity going on 'behind the scenes' during scene changes. He writes:

"Die Zuschauer werden der geschäftigen Vorkehrungen gewahr, welche für sie auf der Bühne getroffen werden. Wenn auch die Überraschung gewahrt bleibt, wird doch die Arbeit oben nicht verborgen; die neue Szenerie wird nicht hervorgezaubert!"³⁸

Godard, also, draws attention to the technical means at his disposal. (Film, in itself, is of course a 'technological' medium.) He scratches the surface of the film (of the celluloid itself);³⁹ he introduces cameramen and technicians into the film; they themselves are in the process of filming;⁴⁰ through a formalistic handling of the camera he draws attention to the presence and activity of the camera in the production of images;⁴¹ and he uses video technology to superimpose and manipulate images.⁴²

Brecht always insists that the stage design,⁴³ the setting, be granted independence (see 4.4 below). Projections serve as visual aids, they adopt an attitude towards events on the stage. Brechtian stage properties are often stylized but not simplistic - they are adorned with realistic details. These details feed the viewer's imagination but do not encourage free association.⁴⁴

In Tout va bien (1972) Godard makes use of an elaborate set: a cross-section of a factory, in which all the rooms are open on one side to the camera and viewer. The 'factory' is clearly a set, built in a studio (see 0.5 above).

3.2.3.3 The narrator

In Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis⁴⁵ the stories of Gruscho and Azdek are told by a singer and also directed by him on the stage. He comments on the roles and adds what the characters leave out. He gives them instructions as to what attitudes to adopt.

A separation between the narrator and the object of the narration comes about through changes in the speech and attitude of the narrator who is set apart as a singer. By commenting on events on the stage (or by directing them) the narrator emphasizes the artifice and non-naturalism of the artwork.

Godard plays with the function of the narrator (and that of the 'author') by himself pretending (on the sound-track) not to know what is happening in the 'story'. Marina Vlady, who acts in Godard's Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle (1966) speaks of her role:

"I have in effect no text to learn, since Jean-Luc speaks the text to me at the moment the scene is shot ... Jean-Luc gives me banal sentences to say, like 'pass me the salt', and then, at the same time, during the scene, he asks me questions, to which I must reply point blank, by means of a microphone which he speaks into and an earphone behind my ear."⁴⁶

This procedure (which cannot be inferred from the film itself) tends to make her delivery 'flat' and hesitant. She sometimes appears unable to quite hear Godard's questions. Of course, the viewer does not know that this causes her hesitant delivery. Some of her lines, however, are clearly answers to questions the viewer cannot hear. Some sentences begin with 'yes' and 'no', some are separated by pauses for the unheard question. Guzzetti comments on Godard's procedure in this scene:

"The status of the lines as answers evokes Godard's agency and method and thereby invites a critical attitude toward what the lines declare: as answers, they cannot be construed as self-sufficient, unmediated expressions of the character. The actress, instead of becoming the character, answers questions about it."⁴⁷

Godard is Vlady's director - his questions to her are inaudible to the viewer. His voice-over commentary, however, is audible to the viewer but not to Vlady.

Taken together:

"The inaudible questions and the voice-over commentary suggest the force of the opposition that the film requires between the image and the world that image shows. They also specify that as spectators we belong neither to the space of the spectacle nor to that of the production."⁴⁸

In the same film Godard describes the actress in the image incorrectly. Traditionally (in aristotelian films) voices on the sound-track are matched to characters in the image (in a dialogue for example) or

they are the voice of a narrator who explains the images and binds them in a meaningful narrative. In Godard's Vent d'est, however, many voices compete in a montage of discourses that need to be 'scanned' in an activity of articulation.

3.2.3.4 Trials and demonstrations

Unlike the closed aristotelian text, epic plays accentuate their status as experiments, as 'Versuche'. Plays like Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis are framed by a prologue and an epilogue (these are 'undramatic' elements). Such plays may be likened to laboratory demonstrations. The epilogue may directly address the viewer and present him with conclusions (or questions) drawn from the demonstration. This strategy results in a break with the naturalistic/realist notion of an immediate reflection of reality.

Scientific models (e.g. the model of the atom) do not 'reflect' the atom. Similarly Brecht's models represent things which are 'normally' invisible. Such models can only be called 'true' if they can be applied in practice, if they render action possible.⁴⁹

Many of Godard's Dziga Vertov films are trials, 'Versuche', in the sense that they are 'unfinished'. They are also (Vent d'est for example) self-critical - critical of their own procedures and conclusions.

3.2.4 Historicizing

There are two senses in which *Verfremdung* can mean historicizing. Either past events are shown to have taken place in the past or contemporary events are

presented as though they were already past events. In both cases events are shown to be historical.⁵⁰

At the end of Godard and Gorin's Tout va bien a voice off declares: "... They learned to think of themselves historically. Let each of us be our own historian ..."⁵¹

In the earlier Vent d'est we hear:

"We are never exactly contemporary with our present. History comes forward masked, is inscribed on the screen with the mask of the previous sequence and we no longer recognize anything in the film. The fault is of course not history's, it is that of our gaze, filled with the sounds and images we have been taught."⁵²

One can say that the task Godard set himself between 1968 and 1973 was to unteach the sounds and images that filled his gaze and that of the viewer. A 'concrete analysis of a concrete (historical) situation'⁵³ is only possible if one first takes into account (analyses) the relations between sounds and images that constitute the various existing representations of that situation.

3.2.5 Dialectic

Brecht also called his theatre a 'dialectical' theatre.

It must be stated at the outset that Brecht did not produce a systematic account of the dialectic. Brecht's writings on the dialectic are fragments, notes. He explicitly does not answer the question:

"Was ist wohl Dialektik?"⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the term 'Dialektik' constantly reappears in his work and he chose to call his theatre a dialectical theatre when the term 'Epik' was interpreted too formalistically for his liking. What, then, does the dialectic mean for Brecht?

Steinweg argues⁵⁶ that in its most general form dialectics is for Brecht a method, a 'Denkmethode', which enables a person to intervene in the processes of social development and mobilize against dominant ideologies. Brecht writes:

"In Wirklichkeit ist die Dialektik eine Denkmethode oder vielmehr eine zusammenhängende Folge intelligibler Methoden, welche es gestattet, gewisse starre Vorstellungen aufzulösen und gegen herrschende Ideologien die Praxis geltend zu machen. Man mag mit gewissem Erfolg in Form gewagter Deduktionen das Verhalten der Natur als dialektisch beweisen können, aber viel leichter ist es, auf schon erreichten handgreiflichen und unentbehrlichen Erfolge dialektischen Verhaltens, das heisst der Anwendung dialektischer Methoden in bezug auf gesellschaftliche Zustände und Vorkommnisse, also die Natur der Gesellschaft, und zwar unserer Gesellschaft, hinzuweisen. Ich kann mir denken, dass eins gleich eins ist, und ich kann mir denken, dass eins nicht gleich eins ist. Genügt nicht, zu sagen, dass das letztere zu denken günstiger ist, nämlich, wenn ich in bestimmter Weise handeln muss?"⁵⁷

Dialectics as a 'Denktechnik' is part of the 'Technik', an element of the forces of production. As such it is

an antagonistic factor in society.⁵⁸ Wherever dialectics enters a revolutionary effect is felt⁵⁹ because in contrast to other attempts to know reality,⁶⁰ dialectics recognizes the 'knower' as a determining factor.⁶¹ 'Erkenntnis' is inextricably linked to 'Handeln' "Man kann die Dinge erkennen, indem man sie ändert." "Man kann also die Dinge nur deswegen erkennen, dass sie sich, und nur dort, wo sie sich ändern."⁶² In the dialectic the one who speaks (knows) is also the one who acts. "(Der Aussagende) muss auftreten als einer, der für das Zustandekommen des Vorausgesagten nötig ist."⁶³

A vital element of the dialectic for Brecht is the notion of the constant development and of the historicity of all things and relationships. Brecht writes: "Dinge sind Vorkommnisse. Zustände sind Prozesse. Vorgänge sind Übergänge."⁶⁴ Development (a process in which oppositions come into conflict) is, for Brecht, endless and has no foreseeable goal. "Wirklicher Fortschritt ist nicht Fortgeschrittenes, sondern Fortschreiten. Wirklicher Fortschritt ist, was Fortschritt ermöglicht oder erzwingt."⁶⁵

When Brecht was asked in 1956 whether his plays would have a critical role to play in a communist society, he replied:

"Auf keinen Fall ist das epische Theater eine Übergangserscheinung, denn vollkommene Beziehungen zwischen den Menschen können nie eintreten, weder im Kommunismus noch in den darauf folgenden Phasen. Das Prinzip der Entwicklung ist anzuwenden in allen Phasen."⁶⁶

Dialectics, for Brecht, is not an ahistorical ('eternal') 'Eigenschaft der Natur' reflected in the heads of dialecticians.⁶⁷ Such dialecticians Brecht likens to palmists.⁶⁸ Dialectics is an instrument, a tool, not a 'law'. Although Brecht does sometimes speak of 'die Dinge', as in "Dialektik, die das Verhalten der Dinge und Menschen beschreibt",⁶⁹ he explicitly distances himself from a 'dialectics of nature'.⁷⁰

Steinweg writes:

"... such Engels' 'Naturdialektik' ... er
anscheinend mehr gesellschaftspol. als
naturwissenschaftlichen Erkenntniswert." 1

Historical development is more likely to be influenced if it is not seen as an uninterrupted flood of events⁷² but rather as a process in which different phases⁷³ can be distinguished. "Prozesse kommen in Wirklichkeit überhaupt nicht zu Abschlüssen. Es ist die Beobachtung, die Abschlüsse benötigt und legt".⁷⁴ It is an observing subject that divides a process into phases in order to know it better. Steinweg points out that it is this notion of breaking up a process into phases and moments that lies at the root of Brecht's theatrical 'separation of the elements' (see 4.4).

Since historical developments do not proceed in a linear fashion,⁷⁵ the various phases may be said to develop unevenly. Each phase may be subject to various laws and determinations - and thus relatively autonomous. "Kultur", says Brecht, "ist (...) als selbst entwickelnder Faktor (...) und vor allem als Prozess anzusehen".⁷⁶ In the historical process,

different phases (which are subject to different determinations) are bound to clash and to contradict each other. Steinweg recommends replacing the term 'phase' by the more concrete term '(gesellschaftliche) Formation'.⁷⁷

"Gegenätze sind zwischen Formationen leichter vorstellbar als zwischen Phasen, und in Bezug auf den hier diskutierten Aspekt sind die beiden Begriffe äquivalent. Die Schwierigkeit, dass der eine Begriff die zeitliche, der andere die räumliche Dimension repräsentiert, wird behoben, wenn man sich klar macht, dass die verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Formationen einen historischen Schwerpunkt haben, d.h. auch bei gleichzeitigem Bestehen an unterschiedlichen 'Zeiten' orientiert sind."⁷⁸

Social formations are also in the process of forming and transforming themselves. The various phases overlap. The aim of a dialectical thinker is to uncover oppositions and contradictions.⁷⁹

"Der Dialektiker arbeitet bei allen Erscheinungen und Prozessen das Widersprüchliche heraus, er denkt kritisch, das heißt, er bringt in seinem Denken die Erscheinungen in ihre Krise, um sie fassen zu können."⁸⁰

A dialectical theatre is a theatre that uncovers contradictions in all events and characters. It reveals wholes as contradictory and overdetermined, as 'unities of opposites'. Knopf comments:

"Das verweist wiederum darauf, dass es keine Eindeutigkeit und absolute Einheitlichkeit gibt,

wie die Widersprüchlichkeit zugleich als historisch - gesellschaftlicher Ausdruck der dargestellten Verhältnisse erscheint; sie sind von Menschen gemacht, also kritisierbar und veränderbar."⁸¹

Brecht's dialectic with its emphasis on the primacy of process and contradiction is clearly related to the anti-empathy strategies (3.2.2), the moves against naturalism (3.2.3), historicizing (3.2.4), and thus to Brecht's antiaristotelianism. The aristotelian text with its deductive logic, its linear narrative (history), its naturalist equation of art and reality, cannot account for, or tolerate contradiction and process. It cannot account for contradiction and process without breaking open its closed form and becoming 'dialectical' - but then it ceases to be an aristotelian text (or is a bad one).

3.3 Verfremdungseffekte

Verfremdungseffekte are the devices Brecht uses to produce the work of Verfremdung and they are to a large extent borrowed from many theatre traditions: the theatre of the middle ages, of the baroque age, of ancient Rome, of China.⁸² However, these devices may not be formally isolated. In new contexts old devices may serve new functions. Like the Russian formalists (see 1.4 above) Brecht emphasizes the functions of structural textual elements and not their meaning. His and Godard's works ask what the function of a given element is in the production of meaning. Verfremdung as critique in practice makes visible the functioning of elements by separating them out from the unity (synthesis) in which they were bound together to produce meaning (cf. 2.4 above).

3.3.1 Quoting

The Brechtian actor is not to become transformed into a character. The role he plays is a quotation, a text in inverted commas, a text composed of words spoken and gestures demonstrated. The viewer *sees* both the actor and the fictional character (see 4.2.3).

Sometimes the Brechtian actor may interrupt the events on stage and 'summarize' events already presented (cf. 3.2.3.1 above). The effect of this is to distance the viewer from the events, to enable him to gain an overview, or to focus on an important element in the play, in the 'Fabel'.

In Godard's Vent d'est an early scene focuses on a person being made-up, an actor adopting a role, a garish mask of paint.⁸³ In the same film a voice on the sound-track comments on events on the screen and the sound track, summarizes, questions, and even criticizes the film. At times image and sound do not connect. A letter is read but the actor does not speak on the screen.

3.3.2 Transposition into the third person

An actor may distance himself (and the viewer) from the character he is portraying by adding 'he said' to whatever the character says. In Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis a love scene is played in such a distanced manner.⁸⁴ In Le Gai Savoir the two main characters describe each other in the third person. In another scene each character stands behind the other and lends the other his or her voice.

3.3.3 Transposition into the past

A scene witnessed on stage may be retold, reported (and thus repeated in another form) by one of the characters. In Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti a scene is followed by its repetition, it is retold. Puntila comes to realize what he is like in his drunken state and the viewer is offered a second characterization of Puntila. The viewer is shown the contrast between the drunken and the sober Puntila.⁸⁵ Events thus repeated are distanced, cited. (cf. Ventr d'est in which an image is repeated/distanced. See 3.2.3 above.)

3.3.4 Stage directions and commentaries

Stage directions are almost entirely absent in the classical drama - they are not necessary because all the figures' actions and reactions are conveyed through the spoken word.⁸⁶ Brecht undermines the primacy of the word by making the stage directions explicit. The word is to be an expression of an attitude, which in turn is the result of actions. (The scene in Die Mutter referred to in 3.2.2 above is an example of stage directions being made explicit.) Making explicit the direction and production of a scene means making explicit (visible) processes. (This is also the role Brecht gives to dialectics, to make visible contradictory processes, to show conflicting developments. See 3.2.6 above.)

3.3.5 The fixing of the 'Nicht-Sondern'

The fixing of the 'Nicht-Sondern' entails two things. The presentation of past events must show that a past

reality no longer exists, it has been replaced by a new reality. The presentation of contemporary events, however, must show the contradictions inherent in that reality. It must show that to decide in favour of a specific course of action is to decide against other courses of action.

"Das was er (der Schauspieler) nicht macht, muss in dem enthalten und aufgehoben sein, was er macht. So bedeuten alle Sätze und Gesten Entscheidungen, bleibt die Person unter Kontrolle und wird getestet."⁸⁷

The aristotelian text with its deductive logic is not capable of dealing with contradiction. Its presentations of contemporary events will smooth over contradictions or transform them into subjective contradictions. Brecht writes:

"Die aristotelische Dramaturgie berücksichtigt nicht, das heisst gestattet nicht zu berücksichtigen die objektiven Widersprüche in den Prozessen. Sie müssten in subjektive (im Helden verlagerte) umgewandelt werden."⁸⁸

The fixing of the 'Nicht-sondern' ensures that actions are not seen as being necessary or inevitable. By focusing on historical alternatives Brecht stresses the need to regard the world (and the artwork) not as a self-evident given but as an object to be scrutinized and criticized. Brecht speaks of the need to ask questions that 'render action possible',⁸⁹ action in the world outside the theatre.

The fixing of the 'Nicht-Sondern' implies also that the spoken word (poetry) is not separate from the events

presented in the play. Knopf comments:

"... das gesprochene dichterische Wort (...) erhält seinen Realismus nicht aus sich selbst (bzw. aus dem Sinnkosmos der Dichtung), es ist Ausdruck von Handlung, die wiederum nicht notwendig so ist, wie sie auch auf Handlung verweist, die ausserhalb der Dichtung gültig ist."⁹⁰

The artwork, for Brecht, is thus not autonomous, and is not allowed to become autonomous.

3.3.6 Songs

Brecht insists on the 'separation of elements' of a stage production (see § 4 below). Music and song are to be treated as independent art forms. However, when Brecht stresses the separation (break) between the events on stage (the story) and the performance of songs, he does not imply that the songs are merely inserts which can be left out. Songs enable actors to step apart from their roles and to articulate thoughts which are 'out of character'. Brecht uses lighting to set apart the performance of songs.

Songs are an epic element in that they disrupt dramatic suspense. They break the flow of the narrative. They serve as commentaries, summaries, footnotes. The same song can serve two different purposes. In the Dreigroschenoper the 'Salomon-song' declares the amorality of an amoral society,⁹¹ whereas in Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder it suggests that it is unreasonable to be humane in an unreasonable war situation.

Songs add to the complexity of figures by emphasizing the discrepancy between action and thought. Mother

Courage, for example, does not learn the lessons of the songs. (The viewer must learn from her blindness.)

3.3.7 Music

Almost all Brecht's epic plays included musical elements produced by the composers he collaborated with: Paul Dessau, Hanns Eisler, Paul Hindemith, and Kurt Weill.⁹²

Music, like the song and the setting, falls under the 'separation of elements.' Music is given an independent role. The separation does not reduce the music to 'Situationsmusik'.⁹³ Music in the epic theatre does not serve the spoken word, nor does it dominate it. Brecht stresses the need for separation and clarity - the words must be heard and understood, the music may adopt an attitude to the speech (see 4.4. below).

In Godard's film Le Weekend music is separated out and draws attention to itself. In the aristotelian work music is an important element in the production of dramatic suspense, one speaks of music creating an atmosphere. Often music serves to reflect the 'inner feelings' of the protagonist. In the scene from Le Weekend a young woman retells an erotic experience. The music on the soundtrack is oppressively loud and sometimes drowns out her words. The music appears quite unrelated to her speech and ignores the potential tension and excitement in it. In the traditional cinema music helps to create suspense. In Godard's film, the music, by drawing attention to itself, demonstrates the ways in which music can function in a film.⁹⁴

3.3.8 Direct address to the viewer

The aristotelian text does not openly acknowledge the presence of the viewer. There is no open communication between the stage/screen and the viewer (see 4.1 and 4.2 below). Since the viewer in the epic theatre is made aware of the gulf between the artwork and the world (a distance the aristotelian text denies) there need be no pretense of erecting a 'fourth wall' between the stage and the auditorium. The staging becomes a public activity.

In Vent d'est Godard wishes to attack what he calls the 'bourgeois'⁹⁵ concept of representation. He analyses this concept of representation (which has been called realistic) by systematically separating out the traditional elements of bourgeois realist cinema. This cinema pretends to ignore the presence of the viewer. Acting style, dialogue, sound, etc. conspire to turn the viewer into an eavesdropper and a voyeur. There is a scene in Vent d'est in which Godard deliberately breaks through the fourth wall. A voice on the soundtrack informs the viewer that

"In a few seconds you will see and hear a typical character in bourgeois cinema. He is in every film and he always plays a Don Juan type. He will describe the room you are sitting in."⁹⁶

The viewer is then presented with a close-up of a handsome young actor who stands beside a stream and looks directly at the camera. Behind him rises the embankment of the opposite side of the river. This background is filmed so that depth perception is greatly reduced - the image is thus flattened.

While the man speaks in Italian, voices on the soundtrack translate his speech into both English and French. The translation is presented indirectly:

"He says the room is dark. He sees people sitting downstairs and also up in the balcony. He says there is an ugly old fogey over there, all wrinkled; and over here he says he has spotted a good-looking young chick. He says he would like to lay her. He asks her to come up on the screen with him. He says it's beautiful up there, with the sun shining and green trees all around and lots of happy people having a good time. He says if you don't believe him, look ..."⁹⁷

The camera suddenly draws back and upward: the young man is kept in focus in the right-hand corner of the frame while on the left (apparently below the man) a 'breathtakingly beautiful'⁹⁸ scene of a waterfall and a natural pool with swimmers is revealed. A simple camera movement has effected a 'complex restructuring of space'⁹⁹ and invites the viewer 'into' the image. Traditional realist cinema emphasizes depth-of-field photography and disguises its own presence - its act of producing and presenting the image to the viewer (see the next chapter for a discussion of the position of the viewer in relation to the representation). Brecht's theatrical practice also draws attention to the use of the stage space. Actors are placed on the stage and move on the stage in choreographed movements that draw attention to a design underlying the production.¹⁰⁰ There is no attempt to give a naturalistic representation of space. In a sense the whole stage directly addresses the viewer - it is all arranged for his benefit.

In this chapter the elements of *Verfremdung* were outlined. It was shown how *Verfremdung* is a dialectical (in Brecht's sense) method of breaking with the aristotelian realist text. In the next chapter *Verfremdung* shall be brought in relation to critique.

Notes : Chapter three

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14. See: Korsch, K. Karl Marx. New York: Russell and Russell, 1963. Korsch, K. Marxism and Philosophy. London: New Left Books, 1971. Müller, K.-D. Brecht, Me-Ti und die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Lehrer Karl Korsch. In: Brecht Jahrbuch 1976. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1977.
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16. Ibid., p.360.
17. Ibid., p.298.
18. Aristotle et. al. Classical Literary Criticism. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983, pp.31-75. See also: Flashar, H. Aristoteles und Brecht. In: Poetica, 1974. no. 6, p.17ff.
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54. WA 15., pp.211-225. WA 16., p.867ff., p.923. a.o.
55. WA 15., p.211f.
56. Steinweg, R. Das Lehrstück. Brachts Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1972, pp.108-119. See also: Rülke-Weiler, K. op. cit., pp.55-65, 240-242. Mittenzwei, W. op. cit., pp.240-260.
57. WA 20., p.152.
58. Ibid., p.76.
59. WA 15., p.212.
60. WA 16., p.868.
61. WA 17., p.1061.
62. WA 20., p.172.
63. Ibid., p.190. See also: p.168.
64. WA 12., p.527.

65. WA 17., p.1015.
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67. WA 20., p.152.
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70. Ibid., p.152.
71. Steinweg, R. op. cit., p.112. See also: WA 12., p.532.
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84. WA 5., p.2017f.
85. WA 4., pp.1633-1646. WA 15., p.344f.
86. Cf. Knopf, J. op. cit., p.389.
87. WA 15., p.343.
88. WA 16., p.653.
89. Heath, S. From Brecht to Film: Theses, Prolegomena. In: Screen, 1974-76. vol. 16, no. 4, p.35.

90. Knopf, J. op. cit., p.390. See also: W 15., p.343, p.356, p.409f.
91. Cf. Knopf, J. op. cit., p.190.
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99. Ibid., p.126.
100. See: Needle, J. and Thomson, P. op. cit., pp.140-166. Also: Brecht, B. et. al. op. cit.

4. Verfremdung and critique

The aim of this chapter is to draw together various strands in the previous chapters. In the introduction the characteristics of the aristotelian text were briefly outlined. The aristotelian text is one of the objects of the critiques of Brecht and Godard. In the first chapter it was suggested that materialism involves the question of tendencies and the taking up of a position. Brecht and Godard are materialists because they make explicit their taking up of position, their interventions in contemporary culture. It was also shown that even Lenin's original notion of reflection cannot be used to justify establishing realism as a norm (as Lukács does). In the second chapter Marx's materialist formal critique was shown to offer a model of a formal critique that is materialist and very similar to the critiques in progress of Brecht and Godard. A distinction was drawn between critiques and critiques in progress (or critiques in practice) which make critiques possible, which provide the elements for a critique. In the third chapter Verfremdung was examined as it is to be found in the works of Brecht and Godard. Verfremdung is the key element of Brechtian aesthetics and it is that upon which the critiques in progress are based. In this chapter the link between Verfremdung and critique is further explored. This chapter focuses on the relation between the viewer/reader and the representation/presentation on the Brechtian stage and the Godardian screen.

4.1 Representation

Barthes has described the project of visual representation (which includes representation in the

theatre and in the cinema) as follows:

"The theatre is precisely that practice which calculates the place of things as they are observed: if I set the spectacle here, the spectator will see this; if I put it elsewhere, he will not, and I can avail myself of this masking effect and play on the illusion it provides. The stage is the line which stands across the path of the optic pencil, tracing at once the point at which it is brought to a stop and, as it were, the threshold of its ramification. Thus is founded (...) representation.

Representation is not defined directly by imitation: even if one gets rid of notions of the 'real', of the 'vraisemblable', of the 'copy', there will still be representation for so long as a subject (author, reader, spectator or voyeur) casts his gaze towards a horizon on which he cuts out the base of a triangle, his eye (or his mind) forming the apex. The 'Organon of Representation' (...) will have as its dual foundation the sovereignty of the act of cutting out (découpage) and the unity of the subject of that action."¹

1. this passage Barthes describes not only the elements of representation but also the relations that bind them together. He shows how a representation is brought into existence through a process.² The process of representation depends on a subject (spectator or author) who is situated at a particular point and sets apart through the use of vision a certain segment of space. Representation thus is a fixing of positions,

positions of the subject.

"The scene, the picture, the shot, the cut-out rectangle, here we have the very condition that allows us to conceive theatre, painting, cinema (...)."13

Barthes reminds us that the epic theatre proceeds by successive tableaux. 'Tableau' is a term used also by Benjamin in his commentary on Brecht's theatre. Benjamin writes:

"Das epische Theater, meint Brecht, hat nicht so sehr Handlungen zu entwickeln, als Zustände darzustellen. Darstellung ist aber hier nicht Wiedergabe im Sinne der naturalistischen Theoretiker. Es handelt sich vielmehr vor allem darum, die Zustände erst einmal zu entdecken. (Man könnte ebensowohl sagen: sie zu verfremden.) Diese Entdeckung (Verfremdung) von Zuständen vollzieht sich mittels der Unterbrechung von Abläufen. Das primitivste Beispiel: eine Familienszene. Plötzlich tritt ein Fremder ein. Die Frau war gerade im Begriff, eine Bronze zu ergreifen, um sie nach der Tochter zu schleudern; der Vater im Begriff, das Fenster zu öffnen, um nach einem Schutzmann zu rufen. In diesem Augenblick erscheint in der Tür der Fremde. 'Tableau' (...)."14

We saw earlier (0.3) that Brecht's 'narratives' are composed of scenes that are constructed in such a way that they could stand on their own - unlike scenes in an aristotelian text they are not subordinated to a plot. Many of Godard's Dziga Vertov films reject

narrative completely and emphasize contradictions between their various elements. For example Vent d'est forces the viewer to articulate the various elements before the film can be 'received' at all. Benjamin speaks of *Verfremdung* as an interruption in a process. The interruption draws attention to the process. Similarly, Brecht writes:

"Der Fluss der Begebenheiten, die Aufeinanderfolge von Repliken, Bewegungen, Reaktionen hat etwas Undeutliches, Unverfolgbares, da man nicht dazwischenkommt mit dem Prüfen, indem immerfort ein Fluss von Stimmungen und gefühlsmässigen Notierungen jenen Fluss begleitet.

Insofern der Fluss (das Prozessmässige) selber eine wichtige Tatsache der Wirklichkeit darstellt, kann er auch dargestellt werden, aber dann muss er selber als Ganzes, eben als Fluss, verfremdet werden, dass heisst in dieser seiner Besonderheit als Fluss, als schwer Stellbares, Spurenloses (wenn auch Spuren Hinterlassendes) ausgestellt werden."⁵

The notion of tableau may also be linked to Diderot's Enlightenment theory of painting⁶ and Lessing's notion of the 'pregnant moment'.⁷ Barthes writes:

"In order to tell a story, the painter has only an instant at his disposal, the instant he is going to immobilize on the canvas, and he must thus choose it well, assuring it in advance of the greatest possible yield of meaning and pleasure. Necessarily total, this instant will be artificial (unreal; this is not a realist art), a hieroglyph

in which can be read at a single glance (at one grasp, if we think in terms of theatre and cinema) the present, the past and the future; that is, the historical meaning of the represented action. This crucial instant, totally concrete and totally abstract, is what Lessing subsequently calls (in the Laocoon) the pregnant moment. Brecht's theatre, Eisenstein's cinema are series of pregnant moments: when Mother Courage bites on the coin offered by the recruiting sergeant and, as a result of this brief interval of distrust, loses her son, she demonstrates at once her past as tradeswoman and the future that awaits her - all her children dead in consequence of her money-making blindness."⁸

In Brecht's work it is the 'social gest'⁹ that represents the pregnant moment. Godard speaks of his desire to film 'critical moments':

"Ein kritischer Film (...) Es ist ein Film, der Elemente von etwas zeigt und dabei beiträgt, kritisch auf eine Sache zu schauen. 'Kritisch' hat mehrere Bedeutungen: der kritische Punkt ist der Moment, wo es umschlägt, der Siedepunkt des Wassers oder auch ein bestimmter Moment in einer dramatischen Situation.

(...) Ich habe mich immer bemüht, möglichst kritische Momente zu filmen."¹⁰

Barthes suggests that the pregnant moment shows how Brecht differs from those champions of the Text,¹¹ modernist avant-gardists whose formal experiments lead to a breakdown of representation. (Brecht recognizes

Verfremdung in the work of the surrealists but maintains that they remain caught up in their Verfremdungen.¹² Film and theatre are 'in' representation. The cinema screen reproduces the conditions of the 'four walled' theatre - it too holds a coherent subject/spectator in position. Brecht and Godard work in and on representation - their work of Verfremdung is 'a work within representation that produces an understanding of its formations and of the construction of the subject in the positions assigned by those formations'.¹³ Representations are displaced - so as to reveal the contradictions underlying their coherence. The aristotelian, realist text, in contrast, does not produce an understanding of its formations - these are taken for granted. Any contradictions that arise are resolved in a narrative/plot. The aristotelian text also does not draw attention to the place of the viewing subject. It pretends that the viewer is a free, independent subject who merely needs to open his eyes to 'see what's going on'.

4.1.1 Separation and fetishism

The film-maker Resnais says of his film Stavisky (1974):

"Just as with Brecht you knew you were at the theatre, so I want you never to forget in my work that you are at the cinema. What I show on the screen is filmed images which announce themselves as such. This is my anti-illusionist side: a conjuror does not hide his skill, and neither do I."¹³

Resnais, the conjuror, claims to be both an anti-illusionist and an illusionist. Here Verfremdung is

reduced to a technique. The illusion of representation is left intact. The illusion is identified as such. Verfremdung is reduced to 'a simple demonstration of the illusion and (...) the equation of distance and separation'.¹⁴ What is meant by separation? (Distance is the Brechtian 'Distanzierung', the 'making strange' that distances the viewer.)

Heath argues that separation is the mode of classic (realist) theatre and cinema: it is the very mode of representation. It is the mode of the aristotelian text and Brecht and Godard therefore refuse it (see 4.1.2 below). Heath then goes a step further and suggests that the structure of representation is the structure of fetishism:

"... the subject is produced in a position of separation from which he is confirmed in an imaginary coherence (the representation is the guarantee of his self-coherence) the condition of which is the ignorance of the structure of his production, of his setting in position."¹⁵

The mechanism of fetishism is outlined in Freud's paper 'Fetishism' (1927). In this paper Freud recalls a 'most extraordinary case' in which

"... a young man had exalted a certain sort of 'shine on the nose' into a fetishistic precondition. The surprising explanation of this was that the patient had been brought up in an English nursery but had later come to Germany, where he forgot his mother-tongue almost completely. The fetish, which originated from his earliest childhood, had to be understood in

English, not German. The 'shine on the nose' (in German 'Glanz auf der Nase') was in reality a 'glance at the nose'. The nose was thus the fetish, which, incidentally he endowed at will with the luminous shine which was not perceptible to others."¹⁶

According to Freud a fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in. The fetish disavows the knowledge of the missing penis. Freud:

"... the subject's interest comes to a halt half-way, as it were; it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish."¹⁷

It is the notion of disavowal that is important. Heath comments on the structure of fetishism:

"Knowledge is disavowed in horror of what it entails (the woman lacks a penis, she is castrated, therefore I too may be castrated); the fetish assures the subject's position, his identity. (...) fetishism is a structure (...) that (...) focuses a centre, the subject it represents, which derives its unity, its untroubled centrality, from the split it operates between knowledge and belief, between knowledge which disperses the stability of the subject, opens a production of desire in which the subject has everything to lose, and belief in which the subject positions himself in his structural plenitude."¹⁸

In Freud's case, as in the theatre or the cinema, a subject is positioned for the representation (fetish):

identity in separation. What happens to this 'identity in separation' in the works of Brecht and Godard?

4.1.2 *Verfremdung*: a refusal of separation

In an art of representation a spectator in a theatre or a cinema is positioned (confirmed) in a perspective which is the perspective of a subject confirmed in the structure of fetishism. Brecht's *Verfremdung*, Heath argues, seeks to undermine this 'fixed position of separation - representation - speculation'.¹⁹ Benjamin also describes a refusal of separation which characterizes the epic theatre of *Verfremdung*:

"Worum es heute im Theater geht (...) Es geht um die Verschüttung der Orchestra. Der Abgrund, der die Spieler vom Publikum wie die Toten von den Lebendigen scheidet, der Abgrund, dessen Schweigen im Schauspiel die Erhabenheit, dessen Klingen in der Oper den Rausch steigert, dieser Abgrund, der unter allen Elementen der Bühne die Spuren ihres sakralen Ursprungs am unverwischbarsten trägt, ist funktionslos geworden. Noch liegt die Bühne erhöht, steigt aber nicht mehr aus einer unermesslichen Tiefe auf; sie ist Podium geworden. Auf diesem Podium gilt es, sich einzurichten."²⁰

Brecht wrote in his journal (17.10.40) that the 'nicht-aristotelische dramaturgie' has nothing to do with the struggle between 'realistische' and 'idealistische dramatik' since it concerns only the "verkehr zwischen kunstwerk und publikum".²¹ It is a question of establishing "einen neuen kontakt (...) zwischen Bühne

und Zuschauer."²² "Die Vorstellung von einer vierten Wand, the fiktiv die Bühne gegen das Publikum abschliesst (...) muss natürlich fallengelassen werden."²³

4.2 Identification

Identification plays an important role in the aristotelian text. Brecht and Godard's attempts at undermining identification consist in the breaking down of the separation referred to above. The refusal of separation is the work of Verfremdung - it 'distances' the spectator by unsettling his 'position', by placing him in a critically shifting perspective. Identification in this case is to be equated with empathy: "Einfühlung des Zuschauers in die handelnden Personen, die von den Schauspielern nachgeahmt werden".²⁴

4.2.1 Tragedy and catharsis

Brecht opposes identification vehemently because identification is a key element in tragedy, in the theatre of catharsis. When Brecht discusses King Lear,²⁵ for example, he stresses the fact that this tragedy moves from a socio-political problem (the division of Lear's kingdom) to a revelation of the 'Human Condition' (Lear as the universal representative of humanity). Identification depends on separation from the viewed representation. The pity-and-fear of catharsis is an effect of identification. Thus in order to combat catharsis the theatre and cinema of Verfremdung undermines separation.

Heath points out²⁶ that Brecht's rejection of the whole context of cathartic drama distinguishes him from

Lukács. Both Brecht and Lukács see catharsis as a broad aesthetic category. However, they view catharsis from completely different points of view. Lukács claims that the viewer or reader of a work of art feels:

"... a sorrow, and even a sort of shame, at never having perceived in reality, in his own life, something which is given so 'naturally' in the work. It is not necessary to go into detail how an initial fetishising consideration, its destruction by an unfetichised image in the work of art, and the autocriticism of subjectivity are contained in this wetting up of contrast and this perturbation. Rilke gives a poetic description of an ancient Apollo. The poem culminates - exactly in line with our discussion - with an appeal by the statue to the person contemplating it: 'You must change your life.'²⁷

In this account subject and representation are assumed. The objective (apparently 'unfetichised') image in the work of art represents the subject to himself in a totality. Subject and representation are not posed as problems. 'You must change your life' concerns a change, not of the subject, but of subjectivity. Lukács claims that catharsis "addresses itself to the essence of man"²⁸ and it is in terms of such a notion of catharsis that he attempts to understand Brecht's work. He finds in Brecht's work 'a complex dialectic of good and evil'. Problems of society have become problems of humanity, subsuming the inner conflicts and contradictions of the warring parties.²⁹ Brecht's work, on the contrary, does not revolve around subjectivity and humanity. His works produce (social,

political, ideological) interruptions (ruptures) - not totalities. Brecht and Godard's work break up totalities (identities) so that they may be analyzed. This is the work of critique in practice.

4.2.2 The hero

The aristotelian text revolves around a central protagonist, a hero. The viewer is encouraged to identify with the protagonist and to see the world through his eyes. Brecht and Lukács do not agree on the function and role of catharsis. Consequently they hold differing views on the hero. For Lukács the novel that represents the conflict between the hero and the world, the biography of the hero, forms a totality. (cf. 1.2) Brecht, on the other hand, wishes to displace the hero and challenge his mediating function. "Der Mensch steht in der Mitte, aber nur relativ."³⁰ Brecht criticised his early play Trommeln in der Nacht (1919) for not displacing the hero:

"... es war mir nicht gelungen, den Zuschauer die Revolution anders sehen in lassen, als der 'Held' Kragler sie sah, und er sah sie als etwas Romantisches. Die Technik der Verfremdung stand mir noch nicht zur Verfügung."³¹

Most of Godard's Dziga Vertov films do not even form 'characters' and certainly not heroes. Heath argues that the theory of Verfremdung demands that one examine the effect of the hero in all 'its' material extensions. He cites an example from the field of film: the voice of a woman militant in an interview is spoken over by a famous actress. The actress replaces the militant's 'flat', 'almost anonymous' voice with a

kind of heroisation (emphatic emotion, individual pain). In this way a political speech concerning a specific struggle is replaced by a non-political 'human message'.³² Godard has experimented with voice-overs. In Vent d'est some voices on the sound track appear to have little or no relation to the accompanying visual image.

4.2.3 Acting as quotation

Verfremdung may thus be seen as a work against separation-and-identification, a work that locates and refuses the effects of identification. Heath stresses,³³ however, that it is not a question of simply positing separation against identification (the structure of fetishism shows that the poles of separation and identification are really inter-dependent). Identification is not simply excluded - Brecht deals with this aspect in a number of places. For example:

"Auch eine Spielweise, welche die Identifizierung des Zuschauers mit dem Schauspieler nicht anstrebt (und welche wir eine 'epische' nennen), ist ihrerseits nicht interessiert an der völligen Ausschlussung der Identifizierung."³⁴

Brecht proposes 'acting as quotation' to counteract identification. Brecht derived this mode of acting from Chinese theatre - the Chinese actor not only represents but also foregrounds the process of representation:

"Die Chinesen zeigen nicht nur das Verhalten der Menschen, sondern auch das Verhalten der

Schauspieler. Sie zeigen, wie die Schauspieler die Gesten der Menschen in ihrer Art vorführen. Denn die Schauspieler übersetzen die Sprache des Alltags in ihre eigene Sprache. Sieht man also einem chinesischen Schauspieler zu, dann sieht man nicht weniger als drei Personen gleichzeitig, einen Zeigenden und zwei Gezeigte."³⁵

Godard sometimes plays with the relation between actor, character, and director, as in the early film Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle (1966) (see above 3.2.3.3).

4.2.4 The position of the spectator: critical

Acting-as-quotation (presentation-as-quotation) entails an ongoing disruption/displacement of identification. It transforms a totality into a play of contradictions. The displacement of identification means that the spectator is no longer fixed in a position apart - as the receiver of the representation. The aim is to pull the spectator out of a position of passivity and into an activity of reading. The spectator is not to be separated - he is to be included in a process. Brecht writes:

"Die Gesamtheit des Theaters muss umgestaltet werden, nicht nur der Text oder der Schauspieler oder selbst die ganze Bühnenaufführung - auch der Zuschauer wird einbezogen, seine Haltung muss geändert werden. (...) als Zuschauer fällt der einzelne und ist nicht mehr Mittelpunkt, er ist nicht mehr Privatperson, die die Veranstaltung von Theaterleuten 'besucht', die sich was vorspielen lässt, die die Arbeit des Theaters genießt, er

ist nicht nur mehr Konsument, sondern er muss produzieren. Die Veranstaltung ohne ihn als Mitwirkenden ist halb (wäre sie ganz, so wäre sie jetzt unvollkommen). Der Zuschauer, einbezogen in das theatrale Ereignis, wird theatraleisiert. So findet weniger 'in ihm' und mehr 'mit ihm' statt...³⁶

The viewer must become a producer, the viewer must complete the critique. Brecht speaks of how greatly impressed he was by the films of Eisenstein.³⁷ Eisenstein is the major theoretician of montage in the cinema. Montage requires the active involvement of the viewer - it makes possible, through the process of cutting, the juxtaposition of elements (images, sounds), a complex process of reading. In the history of the cinema classic realist cinema (the aristotelian text) has resisted montage - classic narrative cinema privileges the sequence-shot which corresponds to an ideology of 'the direct', of realism).³⁸ Godard makes full use of the cinematic medium to exploit montage's ability to expose contradiction. Montage, with its potential for juxtaposing contradictory elements, is a 'dialectical' tool (Dialectical in Brecht's sense: see 3.2.5 above).

The critical position in which Brecht wishes the spectator to be placed means not only that the spectator is required to be critical (to criticize), but also that his own position is given as critical ('in crisis'). This shows, says Heath, that *Verfremdung* for Brecht is not a 'form' but a 'mode of analysis'.³⁹ That is, it is a critique in practice.

If *Verfremdung* is a mode of analysis then it cannot be reduced to a form or a series of techniques or devices

(such as the *Verfremdungseffekte*). It is not possible to divide dramatic and filmic works into 'Brechtian' and 'non-Brechtian' sets simply on the basis of the presence or non-presence of a certain series of techniques. *Verfremdung* is not a form - it is the link between a form and a content. In order to distance, a reference point is needed - a meaning.⁴⁰ Mention has already been made of the film *Stavisky* (4.1.1). In this case the 'Brechtian techniques' do function in such a way that they refer to the illusion of its representation but they do not serve to question the representation. In fact, the 'Brechtian' techniques confirm its coherent and assumed positions. (See the knowledge/belief split upon which the structure of fetishism depends, 4.1.1 above.)

4.3 The reality of the illusion.

No spectator takes the illusion of the presentation of representation as 'reality'. It is rather a question of the illusion of 'reality'. Brecht writes:

"Der Zuschauer bleibt sich immer bewusst, dass er im Theater ist. Die Illusion, die er genießt, ist ihm als solche bewusst. Die Ideologie der Tragödie lebt von diesem gewollten Widerspruch."⁴¹

Tragedy is a prime example of the aristotelian text. In the aristotelian theatre and cinema the reality of the illusion is all-important. If *Verfremdung* is a mode of analysis that focuses on, works over, this reality of the illusion, then it can be seen as an intervention in the field of ideology.

4.3.1 Ideology

The following brief notes on ideology are derived mainly from the work of Althusser.⁴² The reality of the illusion (which *Verfremdung* draws attention to) is the field of ideological representation.

In a given social formation, in a given mode of production, ideology functions as

"A set of practical norms which govern the attitude and the practical stance adopted by men with regard to the real objects and the real problems of their social and individual existence, and of their history."⁴³

Ideology consists of a set of representations, of a specific social reality. Althusser stresses that ideology has a material existence and is defined in 'ideological apparatuses', such as schools, families, churches, etc.⁴⁴ Ideology represents the relation between individuals and their 'world'. Individuals in a particular society gain access to the world, to sociality, through ideology, through the significations and representations dominating that particular society at that time. Individuals become conscious of the world and of their place in it through ideology. Ideological representations can express a will (conservative, conformist, reformist or radical) or a hope (wish).⁴⁵ If this is so then ideological representations need not represent 'real' social relations, they may represent 'imaginary' relations.⁴⁶ Such representations clearly obscure parts of social reality and this in turn serves the interests of certain sectors of the population. Ideology consists

of two things: a practice of representation and a subject for that representation. Coward and Ellis comment on the relation between ideological representations and subjects:

"Ideological representations fix the category of subject as a closure, a structural limit. The subject is constituted of, and in, contradiction, but sociality necessitates that there should be a subject in order that any predication, and therefore communication, can take place. This (necessary) subject of sociality only ever appears in a specific ideological formation, that is it appears as the fixed relation of the subject to what it predicates, and this relation must necessarily be ideological. Thus the imaginary identity of ideology closes off the movement of contradictions, calling upon the subject as consistent. It puts the subject in the position of a homogeneous subject in relation to meaning, a subject who thinks himself/herself to be the point of origin of ideas and of actions. (...) Ideology produces the individual in a relation to representation within the social process in which he or she is situated, as an identity (a point of self-reference) rather than a process. The practice of ideology then expresses a will, a purpose, a fixed position or tendency."⁴⁷

The emphasis on closure, on the need for a consistent subject, on the masking of contradiction is the same emphasis that exists in the aristotelian text. Ideological representations, like the realist aristotelian text, are effective because they appear to be 'natural', 'the way things are'. It is precisely this 'naturalness' that *Verfremdung* 'makes strange'.

4.3.2 Displacement

Representation determines a position for the viewer-subject. Ideological representations (the reality of the illusion on stage and screen) which determine subject-positions are the object of critique in the theatre-cinema of *Verfremdung*. The aristotelian text is not equipped to challenge ideological representations - it is the privileged reproducer of the ideological representations. *Verfremdung* operates a critical displacement of representation. The works of Brecht and Godard represent ideology, for they cannot escape it. However, this representation of ideology (received representations, cultural myths) is itself represented. Althusser calls ideological representations the mirror in which a society may recognize (but not know) itself:

"What is the ideology of a society or a period if it is not that society's or period's consciousness of itself, that is, an immediate material which spontaneously implies, looks for and naturally finds its forms in the image of a consciousness of self living the totality of its world in the transparency of its own myths?"⁴⁸

The 'spontaneously lived ideology' of everyday life not only enables the individual to 'recognize' himself in the human world but also connects him with what is 'represented' on stage or screen. The question of the critical text then becomes:

"What is the fate of this tacit identity, this immediate self-recognition, what has the author already done with it? (...) What will become of

this ideological self-recognition? Will it exhaust itself in the dialectic of consciousness of self, deepening its myths without ever escaping them? Will it put this infinite mirror at the centre of action? Or will it rather displace it, put it to one side, find it and lose it...?"⁴⁹

In the works of Brecht and Godard representations are shown and displaced. This is not a theatre-cinema of heroes. It is not the case that the spectator is held apart from the spectacle and made to identify with a hero (a totalizing consciousness). The spectator is included in the representation (effect of recognition), is included in the displacement, in the movement from illusion to critique. He is both witness and participant. Althusser writes:

"The play itself is the spectator's consciousness - for the essential reason that the spectator has no other consciousness than the content that unites him to the play in advance, and the development of this content is the play itself: the new result which the play produces from the self-recognition whose image and presence it is. Brecht was right: if the theatre's sole object were to be even a 'dialectical' commentary on this eternal self-recognition and non-recognition - then the spectator would already know the tune, it is his own. If on the contrary, the theatre's object is to destroy this intangible image, to set in motion the immobile, the eternal sphere of the illusory consciousness' mythical world, then the play is really the development, the production of a new

consciousness in the spectator - incomplete, like any other consciousness, but moved by this incompleteness itself, this distance achieved, this inexhaustible work of criticism in action."⁵⁰

It is not a question of replacing ideology with 'pure' knowledge. It is a question of displacing the formations of ideology from within ideology. (Heath: "It is not simply that what is represented is ideological but that the terms of representation are equally so.")⁵¹ The work of *Verfremdung* is in the field of representation itself, the field in which ideology interpellates subjects in reality.

It is now necessary to turn again to *Verfremdung* in a little more detail. This time attention shall focus on the 'separation of elements' Brecht speaks of in the 'Mahagonny-notes'. The separation of elements, it shall be shown, is designed to dissolve identities into their constituent parts, thereby making them available for knowledge.

4.4 The separation of elements

In the notes to the opera Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (1929), to which Godard refers in Tout va bien (1972), Brecht defines epic theatre as one in which a radical 'separation of the elements' takes place. In the opera the elements 'music', 'word', and 'setting' are to be separated. The three elements are to be granted greater independence than in the 'dramatic' opera. In the case of music, for example, the following shift of emphasis is to take place:

"Dramatische Oper

Die Musik serviert

Musik den Text steigernd

Musik den Text behauptend

Musik illustrierend

Musik die psychische

Situation malend"⁵²

Epische Oper

Die Musik vermittelt

den Text auslegend

den Text voraussetzend

Stellung nehmend

das Verhalten gebend

The written text (on the titles and placards - see 3.2.3.1) is seen to be as important as the spoken word. The setting ('Bild', projections) is also granted a new independence: "Die Projektionen Nehers sind ebenso ein selbstständiger Bestandteil der Oper wie Weills Musik und der Text. Sie bilden ihr Anschauungsmaterial."⁵³ None of the three elements is allowed to dominate the other two.

Metz distinguishes between five different elements in the cinema: moving images, recorded speech, recorded music, recorded noise and written titles. Godard explores the possibilities of a separation of these elements. Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle might, for example, be considered an epic film. Writing is most obviously separated out in this film: bookcovers keep interrupting the action. Brecht speaks of 'literarising' the theatre: "Die Literarisierung bedeutet das Durchsetzen des 'Gestalten' mit 'Formuliertem'".⁵⁴ Formulation punctures representation. Writing can puncture (or punctuate) the unity of the image and force upon the viewer an attitude of 'complex seeing'.⁵⁵ (Brecht) One might say that Godard, with his montages on the sound track and the disruption of the relationship between sound and image, encourages in the reader an attitude of 'complex listening'.

A too formalistic reading of the notion of a separation of elements might suggest that the ideal epic work would be one in which the elements are not at all related to one another. But this is to misunderstand the purpose of the separation. Brecht writes:

"Solange 'Gesamtkunstwerk' bedeutet, dass das Gesamte ein Aufwaschen ist, solange also Künste 'verschmolzt' werden sollen, müssen die einzelnen Elemente alle gleichermaßen degradiert werden, indem jedes nur Stichwortbringer für das andere sein kann. Der Schmelzprozess erfasst den Zuschauer, der ebenfalls eingeschmolzen wird und einen passiven (leidenden) Teil des Gesamtkunstwerks darstellt. Solche Magie ist natürlich zu bekämpfen. Alles, was Hypnotisierversuche darstellen soll, unwürdige Räusche erzeugen muss, benebelt, muss aufgegeben werden."⁵⁶

The 'integrated'⁵⁷ artwork Brecht attacks is the aristotelian text which stresses the 'organic' fusion of its elements. The separation of the elements separates the spectator out of the unity (homogeneity) of the artwork. He enters into an activity of reading. Ultimately the separations and displacements of Verfremdung make possible a production of knowledge. What is required is not a text that confers a unity (gives a position to) the subject, but rather one which requires the subject to enter an activity of articulation. The contradictions of this articulation reveal the contradictions of the reader's position, both within and without the cinema or theatre. MacCabe relates the problem of the 'separating out' of the subject to certain psychoanalytic notions - some of which shall be examined in the following section.⁵⁸

4.4.1 Identity and separation

An object isolated in the undifferentiated continuum of existence is defined through a set of differences which it is not. Consciousness must ignore this set of differences if it is to master reality. (Freud perceived the unconscious in the disruption of the homogeneous world of consciousness by such chains of differences. Not only is pleasure opposed to desire but also belief to knowledge. MacCabe writes:

"Caught in the homogeneous state of consciousness the object finds itself trapped in the unity of belief, i.e. conferred an identity. In order for knowledge to occur, there must be separation so that this identity is broken down into a set of relationships. On the one hand we find identity and there we can discover pleasure and belief, and on the other we can produce separation and there we will find desire and knowledge (...) the separation of which Brecht talked always takes place where there is an identity. The political question becomes then one of locating an identity which must be separated out so that it can become an object of knowledge."⁵⁹

The identities Brecht and Godard separate out are the (ideological) representations human beings in our society give themselves of themselves. The aristotelian, realist text reproduces, solidifies these representations. Consequently Brecht and Godard's critiques in practice subvert the aristotelian text and reveal its conditions of possibility.

The question of the separating out of an identity (a synthesis) is posed slightly differently by Benjamin in

his definition of the *gest* as an interruption which results in an object being separated out into a set of relationships. Benjamin writes:

"Die Stauung im Lebensfluss, der Augenblick, das sein Ablauf zum Stehen kommt, macht sich als Rückflut fühlbar: das Staunen ist diese Rückflut. (...) Wenn aber der Strom der Dinge an diesem Fels des Staunens sich bricht, so ist kein Unterschied zwischen einem Menschenleben und einem Wort. Beide sind im epischen Theater nur der Kamm der Welle. Es lässt das Dasein aus dem Ritt der Zeit hoch aufsprühen und schillernd einen Nu im Leeren stehen, um es neu zu betten."⁶⁰

The theatre of *Verfremdung* shows that the unity of life ('human experience') and the unity of a word in speech can only be defined through a set of differences (relationships). The interruption of the *gest* exposes a set of relations. MacCabe notes, however, that these relationships will only appear astonishing insofar as they have first been subsumed under an identity:

"... it is when the world of pleasure and belief is interrupted that we set up desire and knowledge but it is necessary to start there where there is an identity in order to achieve the separation."⁶¹

If the separation of elements does not rest on a prior identity (unity, synthesis), if there is no identity to bribe the viewer with, then the viewer may remain uninvolved in the process of the spectacle on stage or screen. He may simply see the spectacle as process and be bored by it. Without the lure of identity the viewer may sink further into the world of belief (a

move reinforced by his resistance to the spectacle). This raises the problem of address and Brecht and Godard's audiences. It is the problem of confronting an aesthetically 'conservative' mass audience (an audience addicted to aristotelian texts) with a 'radical' aesthetic practice. Brecht, in a move to make his theatre more appealing to a mass audience, stresses the need for art to be entertaining as well as instructive. Consequently he incorporates elements of popular mass culture into his work (the songs, for example). Godard's solution, on the other hand, is to produce films for a small, 'advanced', audience, an audience composed of viewers committed to the same issues that Godard deals with. The nature of the lure of identity and pleasure is historical, not timeless. It is determined by the specific historical conjuncture. It is thus entirely possible for works to lose their ability to set in motion critiques.

The political question for a text asks: Does it address a specific identity (or identities)? Does it confirm these identities (as does the aristotelian text) or does it dissolve them into a network of relationships? Does it make these available for knowledge and action? Does it raise questions that render action possible?⁶² MacCabe writes:

"Insofar as any individual is a contradictory set of these identities, it is not a question of addressing an individual in his or her totality but of isolating one of those images, that of husband or wife, mother or son, intellectual or worker, and attempting, by means of that action of 'freezing' which Benjamin describes, to demonstrate that identity as a set of social

relations, a demonstration which does not take place either in the text or in the reader's head but in the active relation between both."⁶³

It may be the case that the identities are too 'fixed' for the artist to dissolve. Through the force of habit and schooling the mass audience may forever resist sacrificing the pleasures of identification. Given a plurality of representations an individual can occupy in turn many subject-positions. The works of Brecht and Godard are reactive in the sense that they react to an already established social norm.

45. Critique: conclusion

Brecht pinned his hopes on a new 'modern' spectator, a critical spectator who would be amused and provoked into thinking (and acting) by his anti-aristotelian texts. He writes of this ideal spectator:

"Er wünscht nicht, bevormundet und vergewaltigt zu werden, sondern er will einfach menschliches Material vorgeworfen bekommen, um es selber zu ordnen. Deshalb liebt er es auch, den Menschen in Situationen zu sehen, die nicht so ohne weiteres klar sind, deshalb braucht er weder logische Begründungen noch psychologische Motivierungen des alten Theaters. Ein Mensch natürlich, der nichts von einem Forscher an sich hat, sondern der lediglich ein Geniesser ist, wird diese Stücke darum für unklar halten, weil sie die Unklarheit menschlicher Beziehungen gerade gestalten. Die Beziehungen der Menschen unserer Zeit sind unklar."⁶⁴

On another occasion he says that Marx is the only spectator for his plays. When he read Das Kapital he understood his plays. Brecht writes:

"Ich entdeckte natürlich nicht, dass ich einen ganzen Haufen marxistischer Stücke geschrieben hatte, ohne eine Ahnung zu haben. Aber dieser Marx war der einzige Zuschauer für meine Stücke, den ich je gesehen hatte. Den einen Mann mit solchen Interessen mussten gerade diese Stücke interessieren. Nicht wegen ihrer Intelligenz, sondern wegen der seinigen. Es war Anschauungsmaterial für ihn. Das kam, weil ich so wenig Ansichten besaß wie Geld und weil ich über Ansichten dieselbe Ansicht hatte wie über Geld: Man muss sie haben zum Ausgeben, nicht zum Behalten."⁶⁵

Brecht and Godard's works of Verfremdung are critiques in practice. In other words they provide the elements - the 'Anschauungsmaterial' - for a critique of the dominant aristotelian text and of the representations of which it is composed. By participating in a critique in practice (a Brechtian performance or a Godardian film) the viewer is made to question his own position in relation to the critique in practice. He is given the opportunity to complete the critique, to conclude the analysis.

The critiques of Brecht and Godard draw attention to the artifice of the artwork. The next step in a study of Brecht and Godard's work would be to investigate the relation between the artwork and the world of the reader. How does the 'Spiel', the playing on stage and screen 'intervene' in the world of action? How can a

construct such as an artwork actually intervene in the life of the political and economic body? These questions, which are to be found in the writings of Kant, Schiller, Jakobson and contemporary semioticians,⁶⁶ are of the utmost importance for a study of Brecht and Godard and should form the basis for further investigation.

Notes : Chapter four

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24. WA 15., p.240.
25. WA 15., pp.299-302. Also: WA 16., p.615f.
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27. Cited by Heath, S. Ibid., p.110.
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33. Ibid.
34. WA 15., p.387.
35. Ibid., p.427f.
36. Ibid., p.222.

37. WA 20., p.46. See also: Eisenstein, S. Film Sense and Film Form. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947, 1949. Friedrich, R. Brecht and Eisenstein. In: Teloa, 1977. no. 31. See also: Ivanov in 5.2.
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