THEATER TRANSLATION AS RECEPTION: 
THE EXAMPLE OF BRECHT'S GALILEO

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One commonly begins a discussion of a translation by referring to its original. In speaking of Brecht's play Galileo, we should have in mind the definitive version, the text corresponding to Brecht's Berliner Ensemble production of the play in 1953. This text, the publishers assure us, is the signed original to which all copies, all versions and translations, must correspond. The copyright notice in this edition not only reminds its reader that this text is Brecht's last and final version, but by claiming that the text published by Suhrkamp in 1955 was written (with the collaboration of Margaret Steffin) in 1938-39, it also seeks to erase differences between the first text and the last, on the familiar if unstated grounds that these texts are essentially identical; for copyright and so also for translation purposes, both are Brecht's play on Galileo.¹

Despite this assertion we can find considerable evidence to show that earlier "non-definitive" versions of the play have exercised a great deal of influence on Anglo-American translations of Galileo. The extent of this influence may lead us to suspect that the "definitive" Suhrkamp version (hereafter S text) is not so much a unique original from which all translations necessarily depart, as a particular version which the author's signature has legitimated as the definitive version. For earlier versions, the author's signature and thus the text's authority are necessarily provisional. In his continual revising, Brecht adopts the role of recipient of his text, reading and reworking it in the light of (his understanding of) historical demands on his theater. After Brecht's death in 1956, the authority of his signature invested in the S text is enforced by copyright; all subsequent translations are required to acknowledge this text as their source.²

This authority is retrospective as well as prescriptive; the copyright covers the two earlier versions of the play -- Die Erde bewegt sich and an English language version Galileo on which the actor Charles Laughton collaborated -- despite the fact that they differ in a number of ways from the definitive text. The force of the copyright suggests that textual identity involves institutional as well as linguistic matters.³ This does not invalidate the latter but suggests that the factors deciding whether a translation corresponds adequately to its source are never purely linguistic factors. We have to take into account not only the institution of copyright but also the question of the text's function within the
literary or theatrical institution. If the translated text functions as a representation of Brecht's play about Galileo, whether on stage or in print, then it is worth investigating as such.

This factor of reception is crucial; not only does it provide an explanation of Brecht's reading and rewriting of his play as a mode of critical reception, but it also serves to remind us that the continued life of texts is determined by reception. This is because reception is no passive or neutral absorption of the text, but an active concretization of a text under historical conditions which, differing considerably from the conditions of that text's production, influence the course of the concretization. In other words, our understanding of a text — especially a theater text — is shaped inevitably by the means and context of this concretization. The representation of a text, whether hypothetically by an individual reader or concretely by a stage production, determines our understanding of the text. We may go so far as to say that in concretizing the text, we do not so much (attempt to) reconstruct an original, but realize our reconstruction as the text, whose meaning arises in the event of the text's representation in which the recipient, reader or spectator is a necessary participant. This notion of textual meaning as event displaces the notion of text as object which can be completely known and exhaustively interpreted in favor of the idea of meaning realized by readers or spectators in a specific spatial and temporal context. This context is the site of the event, we may even say its theater, on which the stage is set for its reception by a particular audience.

When we speak of the reception of a particular text at a certain historical moment, the question of the nature of the recipient arises. We can avoid an unwieldy and rigid distinction between historically specific public and abstract individual addressee by considering the place and role of the translator whose response is at once individual and intended to represent a particular public. The translator therefore occupies the position in which the individual addressee acts in the public's place, in that his/her response not only reflects and recognizes public reception of a text but also anticipates and shapes this and future reception. By thus shaping reception, a translation frames the event of meaning. The context of translation determines our understanding of the text; it mediates our access to the source text. Just as reception is less a reconstruction of an original text as object and inviolate source of meaning than a concretization of meaning in a particular determining context, so translation is less a "faithful" reconstruction of an "original" than the production of a text that corresponds to a source text in ways that are determined as much by the context and the anticipated function of the translated text as by the linguistic structure of that source text. In the case of
theater, the text functions within a stage representation for a particular audience. We then identify the translated text as the translation of another (the source) text if it proves adequate to a function in the target literary or theatrical institution, corresponding to that of the source text in the source institution. In other words, the Anglo-American audience treats a translation of Galileo in a way similar to the German audience's response to Leben des Galilei. Thus we recognize a translation as much by its adequacy to function in a way similar to that of the source text as by its linguistic equivalence to that text. As the translation theorist Andre Lefevere comments: "Translation is the result of an activity which derives from a text in the source language a text in the target language which corresponds with the text in the source language in certain salient features and which can be substituted for it under certain circumstances." In its most extreme form this emphasis on function and reception as the determining features of a translation may lead one to dismiss completely the authority of the source text, a position Brecht sometimes adopts: "What keeps classical texts alive is the use that is made of them, even if this is [construed as] abuse...They are raped and pundered; in this way, they continue to exist." However extreme this polemic, Brecht's statement is valuable in that it clearly marks reception as the crucial factor determining the form as well as the value of the translated text. To say that there is no translation which is essentially good, but only translations which are good-for-something, allows the translator to bypass the impasse in the traditional opposition between a "faithful" but awkward translation and one which "betrays" its source in its "freedom". This bypass extends the range of the translator's choice.

The stress on function and reception is not, however, an invitation to complete license on the translator's part, but instead a reminder that s/he translates to make a text available to director, spectator or reader, and is thus unlikely to avoid comparing translation with source. Even Brecht's polemical point takes up a position with respect to the source, however defiantly. We should recognize that the notion of the source is a necessary working hypothesis which guides the translator's activity. In order to begin translating, s/he must have some idea of a source text, whether that text is the original or not (one can translate a translation). Furthermore, within the context of translation, we can reasonably assume that we receive the translation as translation, that is, with the source text in mind, however much a theatrical representation may have obscured that source. The source text thus functions as a norm both on the linguistic level and beyond which conditions our understanding of what constitutes an adequate translation, as a text that acknowledges this norm. Nonetheless the authority of the norm is not absolute nor is the source text simply an object waiting to be
uncovered. To assert that the translation is the ideally transparent revelation of an original is to disavow the mediation necessarily involved in every reconstruction, translation or interpretation of a text. So, although we should rightly beware of any translation attempts that claim to recover the pristine essence of an original, we should retain the notion of "original" as hypothesis, while remembering that a translated text can, in its turn, become a source text (and thus an "original") for a new translation. We shall see that this is precisely what happens in the case of Brecht's *Galileo*.

The first version of the play, called *Die Erde bewegt sich*, was the product of Brecht's collaboration with Margaret Steffin in 1938-39. Now out of print and almost forgotten, this version remains significant chiefly as a thematic and formal point from which Brecht's subsequent revisions depart and to which they insistently return: the question of Galileo's status as a hero who, in a moment of apparent weakness, as he recants his teaching, saves science for posterity. In this version, Brecht stresses the value of Galileo's action, probably as an endorsement of the cunning necessary to fight Hitler's regime. He emphatically unstresses it ever after as he grows more critical of a "heroic" representation of Galileo which, in encouraging the audience's empathy with Galileo, blunts the play's critical edge: "Life of Galileo is technically a big step backward...far too opportunistic...one would have to rewrite the piece entirely, without the interiors, the atmosphere, the empathy." From the work on the next version -- known as the Laughton version -- to his last revisions for the Berliner Ensemble production in 1953, Brecht continued to address the problem. To ensure the Verfremdung of the central character in a play which, even it its definitive version, seems to encourage considerable audience identification, is no simple task for director, actor and spectator as well as translator. Brecht's recognition of the problem's persistence is clear in a note written at about the same time as the Berlin production: "One of the greatest difficulties: how to emphasize the criminal within the hero...we cannot leave that to the public. We must emphasize it [nonetheless] and hope that the public gets the idea." Reviews of the Berliner Ensemble production as well as the Laughton version reveal the extent and the intensity of the audience's empathy with Galileo. The conflict between this empathy and Brecht's expressed intention is most apparent in the penultimate scene of the play in which Galileo repudiates Andrea's (and the spectator's) praise for his cunning in the service of pure science by condemning himself for "betraying his profession" through alienating himself from the needs of the people, a condemnation which actors and reviewers alike persist in reading against the grain.

The difficulties in representing this scene clearly have ramifications for the staging and reception of the play, and so also for its translation. I shall there-
fore use this scene as a touchstone in an investigation of the translated texts and their contexts. As the central concern here is the interrelationship between text and context in the function of the text, I shall concentrate less on a close textual comparison than on mapping the changing relationships between text and context as they are represented by the (reception of the) translations.

Our investigation then properly begins with the Laughton version, that is, the English-language text _Galileo_ produced by Brecht and Laughton, collaborating for the play directed by Joseph Losey, and starring Laughton in Los Angeles in 1947 (hereafter the L text). The impact of this "non-definitive" version on the Anglo-American theatrical institution is considerable. We can assume that any post-1955 English-language translator of _Leben des Galilei_, even though working primarily from the S text, is not likely to ignore an earlier English-language version. His/her translation will bear traces of the L text as well as of the definitive version. We can at first glance find evidence for this impact on the covers of the translations. Both Desmond Vesey's (1960) and John Willett's (1980) volumes depict Laughton rather than Ernst Busch in the role of Galileo, even though we might expect a photograph of the latter's performance, given that the Berliner Ensemble production in 1953 is the acknowledged basis for the S text. Alluding to Laughton's performance, on the other hand, helps facilitate the absorption of these later translations into the Anglo-American canon by covertly suggesting that the play is already there. This gesture of retrospective appropriation essentially corresponds to the S text's appropriation of _Die Erde bewegt sich_. The impetus behind both moves is the delineation of a smooth genealogical line which denies the mediation and thus any breaks or detours resulting from the translation or reception of a text.

The L text announces itself as the "Laughton version." Though this suggests no definitive claims, when it was published, this text was nonetheless the only text, in English or in German to bear Brecht's signature (the copyright is in his name). Brecht claimed that he and Laughton shared the responsibility for the translation. Whatever the value of counter-claims that other unacknowledged translators were involved, we should take Brecht's assertion seriously for two reasons. We should recognize, first of all, that Laughton's priority here has less to do with his (limited) access to German than with the prestige his fame as an actor lent to the play. More important, the collaboration between Brecht and Laughton provides significant comment on the peculiarities of theater translation:

The awkward circumstance that one translator knew no German and the other scarcely any English compelled us...to use acting as our means of translation.
We were forced to do what better equipped translators should do too: to translate \textit{Gestus}. For language is theatrical insofar as it primarily expresses the mutual attitude of the speakers. . . (W., p. 134)

Brecht's emphasis on the intelligible (and intelligent) combination of word and gesture that gives us the \textit{Gestus} informs his understanding of translation. If we bear in mind that the \textit{Gestus} must, in Brecht's formulation, always represent social relations, as well as the actor's representation of those relations,\textsuperscript{17} then his requirements for Laughton's performance and his consequent revisions can be seen as a continued attempt to hone this representation.

Honing the representation, making the translation "work on stage" nowhere means for Brecht that the translation may be linguistically inept or insufficiently rigorous. On the contrary, Brecht recognizes that "linguistic" and "theatrical" concerns cannot be easily separated. He never forgets that language on stage is always accompanied by gesture and that this relationship between language and gesture requires -- on the part of director, actor and translator -- a precise awareness of pace or "tempo-rhythm", to use Stanislavski's term. Because of the demands of the stage action, the running time of any utterance cannot be ignored: "In theatre translation, the problem of the running time is intensified because an author's sentences are generally lengthened by the translator."\textsuperscript{18} It is important to realize here that the relationship between word and gesture on stage is not merely associative but rather a synthesis: "Gesture is that meaningfulness which is moving, in every sense of the word: what moves the words and what moves us."\textsuperscript{19}

Brecht's work on Galileo seeks again and again to make these two movements coincide, to ensure, in other words, that the audience grasps the essential \textit{Gestus} of Galileo's crime. The difficulty of this endeavor is clear in the difference between Brecht's intended representation of the penultimate scene -- the self-denunciation -- and Laughton's actual performance. Brecht writes: "In the Californian version. . .Galileo interrupts his pupil's hymns of praise to prove to him that his recantation had been a crime. . .In case anyone is interested, that is also the opinion of the playwright" (W., p. 131). And of the penultimate scene in particular, he notes that Galileo should be seen as one who prostitutes his intellect for those in power: "On no account should the actor make use of his self-analysis to endear the hero [sic] to the audience by his self-reproaches. All it [the analysis] does is to show that his brain is unimpaired, no matter what area he turns it to" (W. p. 130). He goes on to speak of Laughton's efforts to arrive at the desired representation: "Anxious to show that the crime makes the criminal more criminal, L. insisted, during the adaptation of the original [the 1938–39]
version, on a scene in which Galileo collaborates with the authorities in full view of the audience and frankly shows...his cynicism without entirely being able to conceal the effort this ignominious exercise costs him" (W., p. 154). Yet Brecht simultaneously acknowledges the risk involved in these efforts: "L. was fully aware of the recklessness with which he swam against the stream by throwing away his character — no audience can stand a thing like that" (W., p. 154). In fact, audience resistance to Laughton's strategy of "acting against the grain" — in the form of persistent identification with Galileo — serves to demonstrate this difficulty of representation, as the reviews of the California production indicate. 20 Eric Bentley's comment can be taken as representative. He maintains that, despite Brecht's intentions, one can stay "pro-Galileo till the end," in that despite his self-denunciation, Galileo emerges as a "winning rogue." 21

Brecht's response to these reviews confirms the determining effect of reception on translation. In order to avoid what he considered an "undesirable" reception, he made substantial changes in his (re)translation of the text for the Berliner Ensemble. As Willett's notes accompanying his edition indicate, Brecht attempted to reinforce the socio-political implications of Galileo's betrayal by rewriting dialogue and stage directions. He adds, for example, to Galileo's long self-denunciation speech which begins: "In meinen freien Stunden, deren ich viele habe. . .", references to "das Elend des Vielen" (S., p. 124) at the hands of "das Geschlecht erfinderischer Zwerge" (S., p. 126). He also incorporates elements from Laughton's performance which were not in the L text, such as the laugh which accompanies Galileo's allusion to Federzoni's lack of formal education (S., p. 120). Brecht comments: "The laughter in the picture [in the model book] was not suggested by the text and it was frightening" (W., p. 155), and follows this description with an interpretation of Laughton's action: "The laugh. . .does not contain bitterness about a society that treats science as something secret. . ., but a disgraceful mocking of Federzoni's inadequacies." It is precisely this interpretation of Brecht's which his revisions were to facilitate. He acknowledges the actor's contribution to translation, since that contribution can be made to reinforce a specific judgment of the action. Brecht would have his judgment of Galileo ideally contained in the actor's representation, or, as Bentley has it, Brecht would like Galileo to speak with his master's voice. 22

It is to this voice of authority that translators of the S text, Leben des Galilei, have to respond, whether that response is respectful or defiant. English-language translations of this text vary between these two poles. Desmond Vesey's translation, published in Britain in 1960, attempts to echo the S text as closely as possible. John Willett's translation, published in 1980 with accompanying notes
and commentary, sets up an elaborate dialogue with the S text. Finally, the playwright Howard Brenton's translation, the text commissioned for the British National Theatre's production of The Life of Galileo in 1980, acts like a megaphone, amplifying and perhaps distorting certain aspects of the text. While Bentley, writing as late as 1966 in the context of the L text, continues to invoke the authority of this version, finding its "ambiguity...more human and more richly dramatic" than later ones, and asserting that no actor has yet surpassed Laughton's sympathetic combination of "every appearance of intellectual brilliance" with every appearance of physical indulgence,23 later translators are (legally) obliged to acknowledge, explicitly or not, Brecht's attempts to separate the "rogue" from the "merciless self-analyst."

To call Vesey's translation an echo of the S Text should draw attention to his emphasis on linguistic equivalence at the expense of theatrical function. Less concerned than Brecht and Laughton with the production of a theater text than with a faithful representation of the S text, Vesey attempts to follow the German as closely as possible. This does not mean that Vesey's text "reads like German" but rather that his text reflects his interest in reconstructing the S text as text instead of producing a text with a corresponding function, whether theatrical or literary, to that of the source text. Ironically, this fidelity to the word gives rise to a text that is not only ill-suited to the stage but also often simply ponderous, because it takes insufficient account of tempo-rhythms. Consider the following slight but significant example from the self-denunciation scene:

Andrea: ...Ihre Hände sind befleckt, sagen wir. Sie sagen: Besser befleckt als leer.

Vesey translates Galileo's response as follows:

Galileo: Better tainted than empty. Sounds realistic, sounds like me. New science, new ethics. (V., p. 115)

In contrast, Brecht/Laughton chose the following:

Galileo: Better stained than empty. Sounds realistic, sounds like me. (L., W., p. 259)

To this Willett adds, following the S text's edition: "New science, new ethics" (W., p. 106).
Given that Galileo has already repudiated Andrea's praise, this particular reply is certainly meant ironically; it is likely that Galileo would be parodying Andrea's rhetoric. In this case, "Better stained than empty" improves on "Better tainted than empty," not simply because this smooths out the rhythm of Galileo's reply, but because this very smoothness emphasizes a certain sarcastic sing-song element in his retort and so brings the spectator back to the Geustus of merciless self-analysis which informs the exchange.

In contrast to Vesey's text, which does not immediately announce itself as a translation (the cover announces simply "The Life of Galileo by Bertolt Brecht"), Willett's makes this clear from the start by mentioning the notes and commentary surrounding the translation. This acknowledgement serves as much to set this new translation apart from Vesey's as to indicate the debt they both owe to the S text. That a new translation appears at all implies a demand for one. It suggests that Galileo is at this point sufficiently absorbed into the Anglo-American canon to warrant the effort and scholarship required to produce a text that, serving as an educational and as a stage edition, reinforces its place in the canon. Published in 1980, in both Britain and the U.S., as Volume 5, no. 1 of the Collected Plays, this edition is clearly intended to replace both the Laughton and the Vesey texts as the definitive translation of the definitive text. To say that Willett's translation sets up a dialogue with its source in no way contradicts this claim for authority. The chronological account of earlier versions and the scene by scene comparison accompanying the translation are to be read as evidence for the legitimacy of this claim.

The opposite is the case with Howard Brenton's (hereafter B) text. If Willett's translation claims to be the culmination of all previous attempts at English-language renderings of Galileo, Brenton's is unashamedly a particular version tailored to the demands of the National Theatre production.24 His aims as a marxist playwright are to produce a text that reflects his understanding of the Brecht play's status as a marxist classic. In the "Translator's Note" he takes pains to distance himself from those such as Bentley who try to emphasize Brecht's "humanism:"

One word of warning, if warning it be to you. There has been a lot of loose talk about Brecht's "Humanism," his "Ambiguity." Brecht was a humanist, for marxism is, to a marxist, the true humanism. Brecht was a dab hand at saying two things at once - Ambiguity. But he was a communist. Oh yes, like it or not, he was a communist and a communist writer. . .[and] set out to justify the ways of communism to men and women.
With this declaration, Brenton focuses directly on the play's function which, as he conceives it, is to remind a latter-day audience of the urgency of Brecht's critique of scientists' irresponsibility, and he attempts to justify the changes he makes to the text on the grounds of his uncompromising commitment to this critique.

While acknowledging the force of Brenton's emphasis on a tendentious element in Galileo and of his evaluation of the play as "desperately timely," given its allusions (especially at the end) to the horrors of nuclear war, we must nonetheless look at the consequences for translation of Brenton's aggressive engagement. This tends to magnify and sometimes to distort what is more subtly but no less effectively expressed in the S text. Consider, for example, the exchange between Galileo and Priuli, the university bursar, in the first scene:

Priuli: Herr Galilei, wir wissen, Sie sind ein grosser Mann. Ein grosser, aber unzufriedener Mann...Galilei: Ja, ich bin unzufrieden, was ihr mir noch bezahlen würdet, wenn ihr Verstand hättest. (S., p. 20)

In translating "unzufrieden" with "angry" rather than "dissatisfied," Brenton blunts the edge of the critical emphasis on Galileo's productive restlessness by introducing an element of undirected aggression. In this, and in a number of other places in his text, Brenton's promotion of what he understands to be the "marxist Brecht" tends to distort as it magnifies some of the play's essential Gesamtk - in particular, Galileo's peculiar combination of "intellectual brilliance" and "physical indulgence."

Despite this manifest carelessness, which may well be due to the relative haste with which this text was prepared for the stage, Brenton's reading and representation of Galileo does more than point to the play's timeliness. While we should not entirely ignore local distortions nor dismiss the claim that Brenton's fame (like Laughton's before him) carried more weight in his commission than his competence in German, we should nonetheless acknowledge the value of Brenton's sense of the play on stage, which can be seen locally in his response to tempo-rhythm, as well as in his understanding of the possible relationships between the translated text and the time and place of the theatrical production. His sensitivity to tempo-rhythms is clear, for example, in his rendering of Galileo's "New Age" speech in the first scene of the play. Where the S text reads:

Dadurch ist eine Zugluft entstanden, welche sogar den Fürsten und Prälaten die goldbesteckten Röcke lüftet, so dass fette und dünne Beine darunter sichtbar werden, Beine wie unsere Beine. (S., p. 9)
Brenton translates:

So a wind of questions lifts the gold embroidered robes of princes and prelates, to show -- just fat or thin legs, legs like our legs. (B., p. 3)

Brenton's pause, instead of the conjunction "so that," which both Willett and Vesey use, is a masterly stroke, as it introduces a crucial moment of suspense before the mocking revelation of the "legs," which is intended to demystify the figures of authority. Whatever the relative value of Brenton's local changes to the S text, the value of his text as a whole depends on his conception of that text's theatrical function and reception, in particular, on his anticipation of the audience's response to Galileo's self-denunciation. In keeping with his Marxist critique of the scientist's alienation from social injustice, we might expect a deliberate refusal to treat Galileo heroically. In fact, Brenton's insistence on including in the production the last scene of the play -- "Galileo's book crosses the Italian frontier" -- on the grounds that it is the most effective way to draw audience attention away from identification with the man to recognizing critically the implications of his work, is crucial, especially in contrast to the "traditional" omission of this scene, established by the (post-Brechtian) Berliner Ensemble productions of the Play: 27 "It's a matter of taking the theatrical 'high' away... without this scene, people would think of Galileo at the end, not of his science." 28 This awareness of affect complements and mediates Brenton's polemic in the "Translator's Note": the play is incomplete without the spectator's critical reception.

In the final analysis, Brenton does to Brecht's text what Brecht was accustomed to do to his own and others'. He reworks the text in response to his understanding of the demands of contemporary (and in this case, British) theater and society. In other words, he undertakes the translation with a dual awareness of reception: on the one hand, his role as active recipient, as critical heir, of the play, on the other, his understanding of the reception that he anticipates and also encourages for this translation. Brenton thus acknowledges, even emphasizes, the appropriating moment in the process of reception. To receive a text is not simply to accept it but to take it up in a place different from that of its source, that is, to translate it.

We can generalize from Brenton's particular concerns (the impact of the National Theatre production of Brecht's Galileo) to assert that the translator must work with a sense of the place of his/her text. Without this in view, theater translation would remain unfocused and ineffective, since the lack of a sense of place
implies a lack of a sense of the audience's reception. This reception is for the
translator as much the anticipated as the recorded reception. As the translated
text occupies the site of reception by articulating a response to a given source
text, so it opens up a place (or places) for future reception of both source and
translated texts.

In evaluating the translated text, we must take into account the place(s) of this
text, so as to establish the context within which to judge it. In the case of
Brecht's Galileo and, I would argue, of theater texts in general, the appropriate
context follows from a recognition that the place of such texts is in particular
theaters in which the conditions of reception are historically specific. In the
texts considered here, this recognition varies from Vesey's indifference to the
matter to Brenton's prescription. In between, Willett's translation, together with
his and Ralph Manheim's notes and commentary, recognizes the theatrical place of
the text without prescribing a particular (kind of) stage production. This text is
more comprehensive than Brenton's, since it allows for different (combinations of)
readings as well as stage productions. One can choose to ignore the notes, but one
cannot deny that they modify the quality of the translation by suggesting alternatives to it. Brenton's text and the Brecht/Laughton collaboration, on the other
hand, may be limited, but they are also sharpened by the frame of a particular (series of) stage production(s). Each represents a choice, a selective concretization
within the range of possibilities, and, as such, is not better in any absolute
sense than any other concretization but more or less appropriate to the conditions
of its reception. So the evaluation of a translation is, like any representation of
that translation, a provisional but necessary answer to a double question: how far does the production of a translated text fit and/or form the site of its reception?

FOOTNOTES

1Documentation of this difference was provided for the first time eight years after the publication of the

2The edition of the Suhrkamp text I shall be using is: Bertolt Brecht, Leben des Galilei (Frankfurt:
Suhrkamp, 1980). The English translations of this text are:
The Life of Galileo, tr. Desmond Vesey (London: Methuen, 1960), hereafter V.
(Includes editorial notes and commentary and selected comments by Brecht).
The Life of Galileo, tr. Howard Brenton (London: Methuen, 1980), hereafter B.
The earlier "non-definitive" English version: Galileo, tr. Charles Laughton (New York: Grove Press, 1952),
reprinted as an appendix to The Life of Galileo, eds. Willett and Manheim, pp. 201-265; hereafter L.
For the concept of "institution," see Peter Bürger, Theorie der Avantgarde (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 15: "The status [of art] (the institution of art) represents the limiting conditions within which single works are produced and received." (My translation) This concept covers two aspects of these limiting conditions: 1) the constraints exercised on the work by the apparatus (both ideological and technical) of publishing, distribution, staging, etc., and 2) the norms set by the canon, not only of accepted texts, but of directing, acting styles, etc.

Cf. H. R. Jauss, Towards an Aesthetic of Reception, tr. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 19: "The historical life of the literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressee. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon of experience in which the perpetual inversion occurs from passive absorption [Aufnahme] to critical understanding, from passive to active reception. . . The historicity of literature, as well as its communicative nature, assumes a dialogic and also developing relationship among work, public and new work." (Translation modified) Although Jauss refers specifically to literary texts, his comments are also valid for theater texts, particularly in his discussion of the relationship between text and critical recipient whose activity leads to the production of a new text.


As note 3 suggests, Jauss presumes a collective public role for the addressee of a text — to avoid the "psychological labyrinth" (p. 22) of individual response — without specifying the complexity of collective reception. Iser, on the other hand, defines his applied reader as a "textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient. . . the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures" (p. 34). Although he also allows for the reader's intervention in the meaning event, in the form of the "structured act" of reading, Iser's avowedly "transcendent model" (p. 38) remains an abstract hypothesis, which, whatever the insights it may offer into the phenomenology of reading, lacks the historical aspect of Jauss' formulation.

In current translation studies, "source language text" denotes the text to be translated; see Susan Bassnett-McGuire, Translation Studies (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 2.

"Target language text" denotes the end product of the translation and, by analogy, "target (language) institution" the institution of theater or literature which forms the context of the translated text.


"Heilig machen die Sakritale," in Gesammelte Werke, XV, 335.

"One of the most telling cases in this respect is that of Peter Weiss' Mard-Sade. For an English (speaking) audience, this text is completely represented, that is, replaced, by Peter Brook's 1968 production of the play. The mediation of translator Geoffrey Skelton, "versifier" Adrian Mitchell and even of the changes resulting from Brook's direction are seldom mentioned.

Quoted by Willett, p. 131, Brecht notes: "The first version of the play ended differently. . . [Gallileo] uses the visit of Andreas to smuggle the book across the frontier. His recantation had given him the chance to create a seminal work. He had been wise."

Quoted by Käthe Rülicke, "Bemerkungen zur Schlußszene," in Materialien, p. 121.

Gesammelte Werke, XVI, 694.

Lyon, pp. 171ff.


See note 14.


Bentley, ed., *Seven Plays*, p. xxvi.


This connection is reflected on the cover of the text. Instead of the (by now) customary allusion to Laughton's performance, the cover of Brenton's text is the same as that of the National Theatre program -- a photograph of the earth rising.

See, for example, the jargon which Brenton rather inconsistently attributes to the young Andrea in the first scene by translating Andrea's question about "dem Kippernikus und seinem Drehen" by the somewhat technical "that Kippernickus and his revolving" (B., p. 3), whereas Willett has the more colloquial "that Copper Knickers and turning" (W., p. 8).

For Brenton's reliance on Yeşey's translation, see Richard Ockenden's review article in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 August, 1980, and Michael Haye, "Smoking Theatre" in *Time Out*, 7 August, 1980. James Tregloan, in the above edition of the ILS and in a later report on a conference on play translation (ILS, 12 September, 1980), notes that Brenton received what his agent called "a large cash payment" for his work, whereas the brothers Plaice, who provided Yeşey with a "working translation," were not acknowledged. Tregloan suggests that the "recent spate of theatre translations by well-known playwrights" is some cause for alarm, since a number of these translators turn out to have little or no access to the source language, though they seem quite undeterred nonetheless, as Christopher Hampton's (alleged) comment implies: "If you're asked to translate a play you've always loved, it's very hard to turn it down on the grounds that you don't know the language." Whatever the legal aspects of the case, this statement reminds us that Brenton's desire, like Hampton's, to retranslate a familiar text indicates the extent of its absorption into the target theatrical institution.
