

THE PROLETARIAN PERSPECTIVE:
THE STUDY OF A PRODUCTION OF
BERTOLT BRECHT'S
THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN

by

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Introduction

Bertolt Brecht, a major playwright speaking for the consciousness of the oppressed in twentieth-century theatre, can still be a revolutionizing force for a contemporary bourgeois audience. Some may believe that Marx's theoretical writings, on which Brecht grew as a playwright, are so firmly rooted in the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century that their importance today is minimal at most. I believe that the revolution which Brecht's theatre demands has not yet happened. Man is still divided and alienated by social, political, and economic forces greater than himself. Brecht's proletarian perspective, the subject of this thesis, urges that the struggle to reconcile that division must continue. There can be no compromise: the forces that alienate man inhibit his ability to grow as a conscious moral being. Every man and woman must participate in the quest for human identity.

Brecht's comic parable, *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*, has survived as a piece of theatre with profound revolutionary significance. The changes that have occurred in China since it was written (1939) in no way mar its drama but, rather, give it prophetic overtones that will only heighten its message. That message is clear: the revolution will happen. The dehumanizing forces of the capitalist world will be overthrown by the proletarian consciousness. It will happen violently and destructively,

or it will happen with understanding and patience.

In this thesis I will attempt to demonstrate the enduring power of Brecht's proletarian vision by reference to a production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN that I directed at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, in December, 1981. In this introductory chapter I will outline and discuss the theoretical writings that I used to prepare for an analysis of the play. An exhaustive survey of either Marxist theory or of the works of Carl Jung as they relate to Brechtian production are clearly outside the scope of this thesis: there are sufficient studies available for further research by the reader.¹ I will examine only those sources which contributed to the development of a production concept for THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN.

This chapter consists of three sections. Section I examines four areas of conflict apparent in both Karl Marx's writings and Brecht's THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, which form the basis of the proletarian perspective: 1) man versus history (the individual consciousness as shaped by industry: an historical product); 2) intellectual life versus material activity (modern industry as exemplified by the division of labor); 3) the pursuit of individuality versus communal needs (realized in Brecht by the conflict between the capitalist and the laborer); and 4) man versus My Lord Capital, his own alienated essence.

Section II analyzes man's struggle against the mythic forces within him. Using the works of Carl Jung, I will attempt to

establish, first, a conflict between the "real" man (the individual who finds his own solutions to human problems) and the "statistical" man, who relies upon the organized mass for such solutions. Second, I will examine the conflict between the "ideal" man, whose consciousness is shaped by Capitalism, and the "instinctual" man, whose consciousness does not conform to those ideologies. Last, I will discuss the conflict between man's individual consciousness versus his collective unconscious, concentrating on the loss of individuality within a revolutionary mass.

Section III explores how Brecht integrates the "conscious" and the "unconscious" by recreating the myth-making process on stage. First, I will examine how Brecht's Alienation-Effect disrupts myth's tendency to eternalize knowledge. Next, I will discuss how scientific perception is responsible for the split between body life and spirit life (our external perception vs. our unconscious perception). Then, I will analyze the influence that Christian ideology has had on the development of capitalist ideology. Essentially, man's belief in the Word (the spiritual authority of Christian ideology) has become a belief in Capital (the material authority of Bourgeois ideology). I will conclude this section with an exploration of myth and revolution as they relate to language and action in Brecht's dramaturgy.

After concluding this survey of the sources that I used to prepare for a production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, I will

analyze the script in Chapter Two of this thesis. In Chapter Three, I will discuss our work on the actual production: design conferences, the physical production, rehearsal techniques and the performances. In the concluding Chapter, I will evaluate the choices that we made during the production process in terms of their effectiveness during the actual performances.

Chapter One

Research

I

"Basically, Brecht's greatness, and his solitude, is that he keeps inventing Marxism."²

Brecht uses Marxist economic theory as the guiding principle behind the dramatic action of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN. By dramatizing the human struggles against greed and tyranny, against the industries of mass production which exploit labor and human creativity, and against man's own ignorance with regard to the world in which he lives and works, Brecht demonstrates how Capitalism oppresses man's human nature by shaping it according to its own ideology. The following section categorizes those struggles found in both Marx's writings and Brecht's THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN. These struggles form the basis of Brecht's proletarian perspective.

By locating a given economic situation within the historical circumstances that give rise to that situation, Brecht demonstrates the dramatic relationship between the present and the past. Man's present socio-economic condition is the result of all previous forms of human productivity. It does not exist in isolation--the external world around him is the accumulation of all past products of human labor. As a result, capitalism must be seen as "an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations."³ Capitalism is not natural

and eternal; it is not created by some divine force over which man has no control. Capitalism has been created by man and, thus, may be changed by him.

Brecht continually makes use of this notion in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN. His characters are shown in the work place or in the market place because they could not be studied as historical creatures anywhere else. Through his labor, man expresses himself. "The practical production of an objective world, the working up of inorganic nature, is the expression of man as a conscious species being."⁴ Man, however, is indebted to history for his means of production. He is not free to create his own objective world but, rather, must express himself according to the dictates of capitalism. Capitalism, an historical product, shapes his behavior, his view of life--his very nature.

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.⁵

A conflict arises when this historical consciousness, Capitalism, frees itself from physical labor, existing, as it were, in isolation. When "physical and mental labor become divided, consciousness can really imagine itself as being something other than the consciousness of existing practice."⁶ Capitalism, by dividing physical and mental labor, establishes itself as a natural and eternal condition, exactly opposite to its actual historical condition. When this happens, the "Idea" is born.

In Brecht's world, this Idea is represented by capitalist ideology; men no longer work for their own expression but for the fulfillment of the Idea.

It is not the general Idea that involves itself in opposition and combat and exposes itself to danger; it remains in the background, untouched and uninjured. This may be called the cunning of reason--that it sets the passions to work for itself, while that through which it develops itself pays the penalty and suffers the loss.⁷

By denying its historical circumstances, Capitalism remains unaffected and unchanged by the conditions of man's labor. As an idea, it imagines itself as existing prior to man's labor and not, as is really the case, because of man's labor. Man pays a penalty and suffers the loss of his humanity while Capitalism realizes itself in life.

This struggle between the Idea of capitalism and man manifests itself in the existing world as one between the capitalist and the laborer. In industry, men are divided between intellectual labor and physical labor. On the one hand, there are the individuals who design the means of production: capitalists, whose laws are the laws of acquisition. On the other hand, there are those that fulfill the design: laborers, who spend their lives in service to the designs of the capitalists. The laborers manufacture the world, but the capitalists reap the harvest.

The possibility, nay the fact, that intellectual and material activity--enjoyment and labour, production and consumption--devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation

in its turn of the division of labour.⁸

Like Marx, Brecht examines the polarization that is evident in the world. In Brecht's world, actual labor is worthless. Individuality and self-respect can only be gained through the acquisition of money. All men desire this individual identity, but because the modern mode of production channels all wealth into the hands of a few (the possessing class), only a few can possess enough material wealth to experience a sense of security. The rest of mankind, the proletarian class, lives in a degraded physical and moral condition: They, too, wish to experience a sense of security, but their individuality is brutalized and enslaved by the capitalists.

The accumulation of wealth at one pole of society involves the simultaneous accumulation of poverty, labour, torment, slavery, ignorance, brutalization, and moral degradation at the opposite pole--where dwells the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.⁹

The conflict between the possessing class and the proletarian class leads, as well, to a polarity of views on life. Due to the division of labor, the capitalist is the thinker; the laborer is the doer. As long as the laborers fulfill his Idea, the capitalist feels self-assured, even though that self-assurance is the result of an alienation from physical activity. The laborer, however, has no self-assurance. He is totally destroyed by his alienated condition. Having neither the Idea nor the material wealth of the capitalist, he faces an impoverished life

in all its wretchedness. He does not have the artifice of money to protect him from his alienation.

The possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, apprehends the alienation as its own power, and possesses in it the appearance of a human existence; the latter feels annihilated in this alienation, sees in it its own impotence and the reality of a non-human existence . . . the contradiction between its human nature and its life situation which is a manifest, decisive and total negation of this nature.¹⁰

Brecht dramatizes this struggle between the capitalist and the laborer as one between the private person and the communal being. In the dehumanized world of industry, the capitalist must act as a private person in the service of money: he must behave according to the laws of capital. In the community, the laborer has friends, relatives, and family: he must behave as a communal being dependent on the fellowship of others. Neither the capitalist nor the laborer, however, represents a real human being, because a real human being does not exist in the division of labor. There is only the alienated human being.

The division of labour is the political-economic expression of the sociality of labour within alienation. Or, since labour is only an expression of human activity within externalization, an expression of life as externalization of life, the division of labour is nothing other than the alienated, externalized positing of human activity as a real species-activity or activity of man as a species-being.¹¹

The human being in Brecht's world is not a total being; he is divided within himself just as he is divided in the world.

The major difference between the capitalist and the laborer is the obvious one--wealth. Wealth gives the capitalist a false sense of individual security while depriving him of his communal nature. Having no wealth, the laborer has no sense of security and is also deprived of his individual nature. This conflict between the capitalist and the laborer, between the private person and the communal being, is, for Brecht, as it was for Marx, the conflict that will end in the revolution of the proletarian class.

In the same way that a religious fanatic devotes his whole life to the service of God, the capitalist in Brecht devotes his life to the pursuit of wealth. His wealth defines him. The capitalist transforms all of life's inherent value into capital; he transforms "value (past labour, objectified labour, dead labour) into capital, into self-expanding value, into a monster quick with life, which begins to 'work' as if 'love' were breeding in its body."¹²

The capitalists' identity is, in fact, the identity of capital. As such, it can never be realized, for the identity of capital has but one ambition: to accumulate more and more wealth. The capitalist surrenders his humanity to this alien drive, isolating himself from the community of workers who support and feed his infinite greed.

As capitalist, he is only personified capital. His soul is the soul of capital. But capital has but a single life urge, the urge to self expansion . . . only in so far as the increasing appropriation of abstract wealth is the sole motive of his operation

does he function as a capitalist, or a personified capital endowed with will and consciousness.¹³

The laborer, on the other hand, has no individual identity. His labor is worthless to him since it only fulfills the greed of the capitalist. The more the laborer spends his life in service to the capitalist, the more destitute his humanity becomes. As the laborer feeds the greed of his capitalist exploiter, the dehumanizing forces which enslave him become stronger.

It is clear that the more the worker exerts himself, the more powerful becomes the alien objective world that he creates, the poorer he himself, his inner world, becomes; the less belongs to himself.¹⁴

This split in human nature between individual life and communal life is the result of elevating money to the level of a deity. In Capitalism, money becomes the ultimate moral determinant, defining vice and virtue, success and failure. Money has replaced God as a mysterious supernatural force secretly directing the fate of men:

Money is the jealous one God of Israel, beside which no other God may stand. Money dethrones all the gods of men and turns them into commodity. Money is the universal, independently constituted value of all things. It has, therefore, deprived the whole world, both the world of man and nature, of its own value. Money is the alienated essence of man's work and his being. This alien being rules over him and he worships it . . .¹⁵

Both the laborer and the capitalist expend their lives in service to this alien power, which, in turn, deprives them of their human worth. "To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must become nothing."¹⁶ The laborer and

the capitalist are given separate identities because they have different relationships with money.

The laborer sees his God as unreachable. The capitalist, however, both worships and fears his God, My Lord Capital.¹⁷ In his worship, he surrenders his will to the will of Capital, which manifests itself in the accumulation of wealth. He does not have time to use the commodities he has gathered except in secret sin, for he fears that the time spent in the enjoyment of his wealth will be time taken away from his worship of Lord Capital. He must never let My Lord Capital know that he enjoys the fruits of his servitude.

Therewith, in the capitalist's breast there develops a Faustian conflict between the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment . . . Only as the personification of capital is the capitalist respectable.¹⁸

My Lord Capital is the embodiment of the capitalist's highest and most powerful aspirations. In order to realize this mythic conception of himself, the capitalist must deprive the laborers of their essence by transforming the products of their labor into commodities. These commodities, owned by the capitalist, represent the physicalized essence of My Lord Capital. Since the capitalist must acquire more and more commodities in order to satisfy the infinite greed of My Lord Capital, he must create the social conditions that best foster the efficient organization of mass production. The more efficient these conditions become, the closer the capitalist gets to realizing his goal--the full

and complete manifestation of the mythic Lord Capital.

There is an irony at work in this process. As the capitalist struggles toward the realization of his mythic My Lord Capital, he creates the circumstances of his own demise. In his lust for greater productivity, he motivates the organization of the de-humanized forces of the laborer. "Fanatically bent upon the expansion of value, he relentlessly drives human beings to production for production's sake."¹⁹ Those de-humanized forces solidify into the class of men that Marx calls the proletariat.

The proletarian class, negated by capital, robbed of its value by the capitalists' overwhelming urge to accumulate wealth, becomes conscious of its own negation and takes on a new identity as the revolutionary proletariat. The proletariat struggles against My Lord Capital, its own alienated essence. The proletariat is "a dehumanization that is conscious of its dehumanization and therefore seeks to cancel itself."²⁰ It is "a most desperate spiritualism, total unreality of man, total reality of non-man."²¹

The proletariat has no voice but that of action. The mythic My Lord Capital is seen by the proletariat as the ideal of the capitalist. My Lord Capital has created the world--its language, its dreams, its human beings. That world is seen by the revolutionary proletariat as the complete negation of the laborer's humanity--his language and his dreams. "They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with

which old collapsing bourgeois society is pregnant."²² Since their very nature is the non-man, the complete and total negation of humanity, their act of rebellion is their own realization:

In announcing the dissolution of the existing world order, the proletariat merely reveals the secret of its own being, for it is the factual dissolution of this world order. In demanding the negation of private property, the proletariat merely elevates into a principle of society that society it has made into its principle.²³

The war between the revolutionary proletariat and My Lord Capital is the keystone of Brecht's dialectical world. My Lord Capital personifies the world as it is; he is greed and lust made flesh. This mythic god has succeeded in totally eliminating man from the world. The revolutionary proletariat is conscious of that elimination, which "represents the complete loss of man, and can only regain itself, therefore, by the complete resurrection of man."²⁴ The proletariat perceives the world as it changes and must be changed if humanity can survive. The proletariat must rebel against the world created by the capitalists' My Lord Capital.

II

"The gods whom we are called upon to dethrone are the idolized values of our conscious world."²⁵

As seen in the previous section, My Lord Capital, is responsible for the rise of the revolutionary proletariat. My Lord Capital rises up and becomes autonomous in man. In its autonomous existence, it creates the conditions whereby the proletariat comes into being. In the same way that My Lord Capital is both the protagonist and antagonist of Brecht's world, the proletariat, as it gathers itself into a collective mob, becomes a group protagonist searching for the overthrow of the existing world.

My Lord Capital and the proletariat are the dual protagonists of Brecht's dialectical world. As socio-economic forces, they are irreconcilably opposed. The individual capitalist and laborer also experience inner conflicts beyond their struggle within the larger social sphere. These inner conflicts allow Brecht to develop the capitalist and laborer as characters, not merely as representations of the social order.

In his dramaturgy, Brecht does not use the techniques of characterization that derive from the tenets of realism.²⁶ His characters are representations of people. According to Brecht, human nature is shaped by the conditions of one's economic class. Brecht goes on to demonstrate how the individual in a contemporary bourgeois society loses his dynamic nature and becomes a cog in

the organized mass. Brecht's question for the audience is: "What is the real nature of man and what type of world best suits him?" In order to provoke an answer to this question, Brecht explicitly reveals that the alienated condition of men and women is created by man and, thus, can be altered. Man can and must reorganize the world in a fashion that nurtures individual moral growth. The individual must find his true identity.

Carl Jung's thoughts on the relationship of the individual to his society have direct application to an interpretation of Brecht's alienated characters. Jung's humanism, his concern for the individual identity of the alienated human being, and Brecht's Marxism, his emphasis on the collective identity of an economic class, are unified in Jung's distinction between the "real" man and the "statistical" man. Brecht's characters are not simply representations; they have the internal dynamics of human beings. Brecht pits their internal dynamics against their social nature that is determined by economic class. In this way, Brecht creates a conflict between the "real" nature of man and the nature that is created by the economic image of the capitalist and laborer. The proletarian's call for revolution becomes a call for the resurrection of the "real" man in the world. "It is time we asked ourselves exactly what we are lumping together in mass organizations and what constitutes the nature of the individual human being, i.e. of the real man and not the statistical man."²⁷

By characterizing the individual as a social microcosm, Brecht dramatizes the conflict between the "real" nature of man and the "statistical" nature of man. He first establishes the individual as a member of a particular class, and then he disrupts that representation by giving both classes common needs.

The capitalist continually struggles with his communal nature. In order to realize his goals (the accumulation of capital and private property), he must repress his identity as a communal being. He cannot allow himself to feel any emotional connection with the laborer whom he exploits. If he did, he would experience the laborer's dehumanized condition, and his passion to accumulate wealth would be thwarted.

Before his emergence as the revolutionary proletariat, the laborer has the desire to accumulate wealth. Though not allowed by the capitalist to express this desire fully, among other laborers he is always struggling for economic superiority. His communal nature, however, makes this practice unwise, since he depends so heavily upon other laborers for his identity. If he crosses them, they may very well make him an outcast.

When the communal self recognizes the individual, or vice versa, the "real" man is created. The conflict arises when the "statistical" man attempts to separate the collective identity of men from the individual persona. The "real" man in Brecht's world is a composite of opposing values; he is a dynamic entity wherein is reflected the alienated condition of the society's

split personality. Capitalist society dissociates the capitalist from the laborer he exploits, establishing the conditions for the emergence of the "statistical" man, who functions according to the laws of mass production. The "statistical" man is a representative of social mores and customs and, as a representation, lacks the dynamics of a consciousness that is conscious of the collective's alienation. The "real" man, however, is "a social microcosm reflecting on the smallest scale the qualities of society at large, or conversely, as the smallest social unit, cumulatively producing the collective dissociation."²⁸ He has dreams and aspirations which his particular economic class will not allow him to realize. Whether he is a member of the proletarian or the possessing class, his "real" self is controlled by the statistical role he must play in society.

Capitalist ideology dissociates the individual from his community by making his identity dependent upon the accumulation of private property; it makes the community of laborers a collective mass whose sole function is its servitude to the individual capitalist. The "statistical" man presents this relationship between the individual and his community as harmonious. By denying the "real" man in himself, the "statistical" man transforms humanity into an ideological image whose being can be directed by those in positions of authority.

Ultimately everything depends on the quality of the individual, but the fatally shortsighted habit of our age is to think only in terms of large numbers and mass organizations, though one would think that the world has seen enough of what a well-disciplined mob can do in the hands of a single madman.²⁹

The "statistical" capitalist is a personification of the ideal of capital. In Brecht's world, that ideal is the ideal of capitalism: maximum production for minimum cost. In order to realize his ideal, however, the capitalist must exploit the laborer. He must mold the laborer and himself into an efficient, and smooth-running machine whose sole purpose is the accumulation of wealth. Neither the capitalist nor the laborer can escape this ideological image without negating their humanity.

The psyche is a phenomenon not subject to our will; it is nature, and though nature by skill, knowledge, and patience, can be modified at a few points, it cannot be changed into something artificial without profound injury to our humanity. Man can be transformed into a sick animal but not moulded into an intellectual ideal.³⁰

The ordering principal of Capitalism manifests itself in the form of an ideal of logic. Logic and reason are necessary for efficiency, and efficiency, in turn, is necessary for the successful operation of the laws of mass production. The capitalist tries to live his life according to the dictates of logic. Anything that does not fulfill these dictates will be repressed in his unconscious. This repressed self is the instinctual, irrational side of his personality. His ego-consciousness believes that the ideal of logic is attainable, but the unconscious, the

repository of those repressed instinctual needs, grows more and more powerful the longer those needs are repressed.

Just as the chaotic movements of the crowd, ending in mutual frustration, are impelled in a definite direction by a dictatorial will, so the individual in his dissociated state needs a directing and ordering principle. Ego-consciousness would like to let its own will play this role, but overlooks the existence of powerful unconscious factors which thwart its intentions.³¹

The conflict between the "real" man and the "statistical" man finds a parallel in the struggle between the "instinctual" man vs. the "ideal" man. The harder the capitalist drives himself and others towards the realization of his ideal, the more artificial the capitalist must become in order to keep his "real" nature and the laborer whom he exploits in check. When he represses this "real" communal nature, he objectifies humanity, transforming it into a "thing." This transformation allows him to project negative qualities on the mass of men he must exploit in order to survive. By making his "real" communal nature negative and by projecting it upon the mass of laborers, the capitalist is better able to control himself.

The capitalist blames the laborer for all the ills that he overlooks in himself. The laborer is seen by the capitalist as unclean, uncivilized, and unworthy of human consideration. He is seen as irresponsible and, thus, unable to manage his own affairs. The truth of the matter is, however, that the capitalist has projected his own repressed personality upon the laborer. While

the capitalist believes that he is behaving according to the laws of logic he is really behaving according to the laws of lust and greed. The laborer is the capitalist's dehumanized nature made manifest in the world. By projecting his own dehumanized condition upon the laborer, the capitalist feels justified in oppressing him.

The unconscious of one person is projected upon another person, so that the first accuses the second of what he overlooks in himself . . . it is, as it were, present before our eyes in all its parts, and is accessible to observation at any time.³²

Although satisfying to the capitalist, this process of projection is clearly unsatisfactory to the laborer. The capitalist can spend his life not caring if the laborer is in sympathy with him, but sooner or later the laborer will make the capitalist experience his dehumanized condition in the act of rebellion. "Such one-sidedness is always compensated psychologically by unconscious subversive tendencies. Slavery and rebellion are inseparable correlates." ³³

The capitalist's "ideal" self must remain oblivious to his instinctual unconscious. Such detachment leads, however, to idiosyncratic behavior that has no basis in humanity. In fact, human behavior is totally foreign to the ideal and, as a result, it must be seen as an enemy. The capitalist's desire to accumulate abstract wealth rules his heart and soul, forcing him to lose touch with human concerns and needs.

Alienation from the unconscious and from its historical conditions spells rootlessness. That is the danger that lies in wait for the conqueror of foreign land, and for the individual who, through one-sided allegiance to any kind of -ism, loses touch with the dark, maternal, earthy ground of his being.³⁴

Within the capitalist, conflict arises between his repressed instincts and his ideal of logic. This conflict will eventually split him into two personalities. On the one hand, his "ideal" self will rule his conscious life. In the factory environment or market place, the capitalist will behave according to the laws of mass production. Efficiency will be his primary objective, and he will come to believe that the laborer, whom he controls, is the living manifestation of lust and greed. Away from the laborer, however, the capitalist's instinctual self will lead a secret life. His instincts will undermine his logical self; they will drive him to behave in a manner unacceptable to his ideal of efficiency and respectability. This unacceptable behavior will first manifest itself in the form of fantasies, through which he can deceive himself and still protect his respectability. When these fantasies no longer satisfy the capitalist's need for instinctual behavior, they will create another personality which is capable of overthrowing the "ideal" self at any time.

These effects develop only when the individual comes up against a situation which he cannot overcome by conscious means . . . When the fantasies reach a certain level of intensity, they begin to break through into consciousness and create a conflict

situation . . . splitting him into two different personalities with different characters.³⁵

The individual laborer in a capitalist society also experiences an inner conflict. Because Capitalism defines individual identity by the accumulation of wealth, the impoverished laborer, trapped within a life situation where private property is an unrealizable dream, does not have the means whereby he may escape the demise of his personal identity. His "statistical" self, created by the capitalist for the fulfillment of the capitalist's greed and lust, is the only identity that he has available to him. This identity is totally unsatisfactory however it neither gives the laborer self-assurance nor material wealth. The "statistical" laborer is the good servant who, in his selflessness, works day and night for the good of the capitalist.

As a result, the laborer is unable to separate his impoverished consciousness from the richness of his collective unconscious. The selfless servant does not have the will to control his hunger and thirst. He must rely upon the capitalist for that control. The ideology that is forced upon the laborer by his capitalist exploiter is in direct conflict with his need to express his own individuality. Since the capitalist ideology is the only one available to him, however, he must accept it lest he slip into complete lawlessness. Without the ideological image of the selfless servant to control his behavior, the laborer will rebel.

Our religious and political ideologies are methods of salvation and propitiation which can be compared with primitive ideas of magic, and where such 'collective representations' are lacking their place is immediately taken by all sorts of private idiocies and idiosyncracies, manias, phobias, and deamonisms whose primitivity leaves nothing to be desired, not to speak of the psychic epidemics of our time before which the witch-hunts of the 16th century pale by comparison.³⁶

The collective hero rebels against the "statistical" image of the good servant. He is a wanderer, forever looking for that life situation that will allow his individuality to express itself. That situation, however, is not forthcoming. Every attempt at individual expression is thwarted by the capitalist's extreme greed. Each time the consciousness of the collective hero is thwarted, it returns to the collective unconscious that gives it life.

The heroes are usually wanderers, and wandering is a symbol of longing, of the restless urge which never finds its object, of nostalgia for the lost mother . . . He is first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness. But consciousness, continually in danger of being led astray by its own light and of becoming a rootless will o' the wisp, longs for the healing power of nature, for the deep wells of being and for unconscious communion with life in all its countless forms.³⁷

When the laborer loses his identity within the collective mass, he slips back into an unconscious state.

This unconscious state contains "everything psychic that has not reached the threshold of consciousness."⁴⁰ As the laborer loses his identity within the collective unconscious, the

unconscious, when activated, seeks to destroy the identity of the existing world. It seeks to destroy its own alienated essence, My Lord Capital. The unconscious laborer in Brecht's world is an unruly and disorderly human being. He is a revolutionary force whose sole objective is the elimination of the bourgeois society.

The proletarian's communal being is in full revolt against both the ideologies of the existing world and the world of his own consciousness. This revolution contains the forces whereby the new society may be created. "Great innovations never come from above; they come from below, just as trees never grow from the sky downward but upwards from the earth. The upheaval of our world and the upheaval of our consciousness are one and the same."³⁹ Without the guiding hand of consciousness, however, the proletarian's power to discriminate between creative and destructive forces is lost. Within the mob, the laborer can no longer distinguish between "the dark springs of instinct and intuition . . . all those forces which mere reasonableness, propriety, and the orderly course of bourgeois existence could never call awake" and "all those creative forces which lead man onwards to new developments, new forms, and new goals."⁴⁰

The laborer can no longer decipher between the object of its hatred, the capitalist world, and the object of its love, humanity. The laborer in the collective mass is transformed; he behaves in a manner antithetical to the "statistical" image that his capitalist exploiter has forced upon him. "The change

of character brought about by the uprush of collective forces is amazing. A gentle and reasonable being can be transformed into a maniac or a savage beast."⁴¹ The collective hero, driven to desperation by the one-sided tyranny of My Lord Capital, will stop at nothing. It will even destroy itself.

We are blissfully unconscious of these forces (forces in the unconscious) because they never, or almost never, appear in our personal relations or under ordinary circumstances. But if people crowd together and form a mob, the dynamisms of the collective man are let loose--beasts or demons that lie dormant in every person until he is part of a mob. Man in the mass sinks unconsciously to an inferior moral and intellectual level, to that level which is always there, below the threshold of consciousness, ready to break forth as soon as it is activated by the formation of a mass.⁴²

Brecht allows us to see this conflict between the unconscious "real" man and the conscious "statistical" man both in the world and within his characters. In the world, there is a conflict between the laborer and the capitalist. Within each individual there is also a struggle between the mythic forces that dominate his consciousness and his human nature, which cannot be denied its full expression. The laborer (in the world) and the unconscious self (within the laborer) will sacrifice both the world and himself in order for the revolution to occur. "It is certainly true that without the sacrifice of man as he is, man as he was--and always will be--cannot be attained."⁴³ For the proletarian perspective to be realized, the world must be changed.

III

"The task consists in integrating the unconscious, in bringing together 'conscious and 'unconscious.'" 44

Brecht's theatre challenges our basic perceptions of ourselves and the world we have created. By illustrating the dialectical relationship between the world as it is, and the world as it changes, Brecht's dramaturgy reveals the components of man's never-ending moral struggle between knowledge and the unknown. If humanity is to regain its rightful position in the world, it needs to be perceived as changeable and dynamic, not as static and fixed. Humanity or human nature needs to be approached in a new way each time it is encountered.

This section focuses upon the myths that solidify the world, leaving it perceived as fixed and static. These myths prohibit man's ability to understand himself and the world in which he lives. Brecht's ability to unmask these myths gives his theatre both its power and its message. By unmasking the myths of the Bourgeois world, Brecht allows the proletarian perspective, the emergence of the "real" man, to be given its voice in the shaping of man's moral consciousness. If the world is to be changed, man must expand the range of his perception, break the bonds of outmoded ideas and beliefs, and enter the unknown expanse of his moral universe.

The modern scientific world amasses large quantities of data dealing with the individual and society. This data illustrates

the particular, historical nature of man. An overview of this data reveals man's ideological nature as changeable and dynamic: his behavior patterns, his political structures, and his value systems have changed through time: man is capable of giving direction and form to his world.

Bourgeois society, however, inverts this historical, ideological nature into a metaphysical or eternal one: an historical value system is transformed into an eternal factual one. Bourgeois society exists on this principle: "it transforms history into nature."⁴⁵ Man's dynamic, ever-changing ideological nature is inverted into a fixed, perfectly realized one.

"The bourgeois class has precisely built its power on technical, scientific progress, on an unlimited transformation of nature."⁴⁶ In order to preserve itself, however, "bourgeois ideology yields in return an unchangeable nature . . . the basic idea of a perfectable mobile world, produces the inverted image of an unchanging humanity, characterized by an indefinite repetition of its identity."⁴⁶ By inverting the meaning of scientific knowledge, the bourgeoisie proves, as it were, that its money-morality is man's "real" moral nature. In this way, both the capitalist and the laborer are deceived into thinking that their alienated condition is inherent and not, as is truly the case, created by them, and, thus, subject to change.

This inversion process whereby "contingency appears eternal"⁴⁷ is successfully realized in a bourgeois society by the propagation

of myths. Myth presents an image of man that is unchanging and known, "for the very end of myth is to immobilize the world."⁴⁸ These myths, whose task it is to give "an historical intention a natural justification,"⁴⁹ cause us to encounter other human beings with preconceived notions about their nature and potential. As a result, we categorize people, judging them in accordance with these "scientificly proven" mythical notions; in the process, we negate their basic humanity. The myth replaces the "real" man as the motivating force behind all our social and economic solutions to human problems. Bourgeois society will not stop this process until "it has obscured the ceaseless making of the world, fixated this world into an object which can be forever possessed, catalogued its riches, embalmed it, and injected into reality some purifying essence which will stop its transformation, its flights towards other forms of existence."⁵⁰

Since myth obscures the true nature of the world, any attempt to change man and the world must begin first by challenging our basic perceptions of knowledge. The eternalized knowledge of bourgeois society is in direct conflict with the proletarian perspective which discards "all theories in order to adopt a completely new and unprejudiced attitude."⁵¹ By unmasking the myth that bourgeois ideology is natural and eternal, Brecht creates the material conditions whereby audiences have the opportunity to apprehend man with a humanistic understanding. Brecht's Alienation-Effect is essentially a theatrical device which

makes the world appear strange. By taking our world which we consider to be familiar and then making it appear unfamiliar, Brecht confronts audiences with a situation where their prior knowledge is useless. Audiences must discard their mythically-based notions which presuppose "all sorts of knowledge about mankind in general," and approach "the task of understanding with a free and open mind."⁵² By placing myth on this "new foundation--a foundation which appeals not only to sentiment but to reason," Brecht strives to create a theatrical experience in which audiences can reflect on how "it came about in the first place that humanity needed the improbability of religious statements, and what it signifies when a totally different spiritual reality is superimposed on the sensuous and tangible actuality of this world."⁵³

Brecht's Alienation-Effect serves two functions: it justifies the existence of ideology while it simultaneously unmasks the tendency of myth to invert the nature of the world. Although ideology springs from man's need for order and purpose, it can become a force that is superimposed on the true nature of the individual. Myth can be seen as society's attempt to transcend nature and enter totally into the superimposed world. In and of itself, ideology is neither positive nor negative: it is simply necessary. Humanity, however, must motivate ideology. Ideology must serve humanity: humanity must not be a slave to myth.

Bourgeois society's mythification of scientific knowledge not only prevents man's growth as a conscious moral being but

also splits man's consciousness in two. His physical perception (the province of the scientist) appears to be in direct opposition to his unconscious perception (the province of the mystic). On the one hand, the capitalist sees the world as the result of physical agencies (money rules the world). On the other hand, the laborer sees the world as the result of spiritual agencies (God and love direct the world). Since the capitalist is given the authority of the world, his perception rules the consciousness of man in a one-sided orientation. Good and evil (spiritual properties) are easily equated by him with wealth and poverty (physical properties). Man's unconscious perception is, as a result, degraded in the same way that the laborer himself is degraded.

These two seemingly opposite perceptions have a dynamic relationship. Our consciousness presents us "a picture of the outer world, but also of the world within, this being a compensatory mirror-image of the outer world . . . we stand between two worlds, or between two totally different psychological systems of perception, between perception of external sensory stimuli and perception of the unconscious."⁵⁴ The "real" man exists between these two perceptions of the one world. The two perceptions balance one another in a compensatory manner. In bourgeois society this balance is altered: physical perception and unconscious perception are divided between the capitalists and the laborers.

Brecht eliminates this mythic distinction between the physical and the spiritual. In Brecht's world, man's physical and spiritual views of existence are interdependent. They do not contradict one another, but rather they develop symbiotically. The more dominant one's external life becomes, the more impoverished is his internal compensatory response.. In other words, if money (the physical world) determines the ultimate value of man's labor, then love and friendship (the spiritual world) will be excluded from his value system. Modern man's belief in physical perceptions as the sole guide to his understanding of the world leads him inevitably towards his impoverished moral condition. Brecht's theatre wants us to reconcile ourselves to the "mysterious truth that the spirit is the life of the body seen from within, and the body the outward manifestation of the life of the spirit--the two being really one." ⁵⁵

The individual and his society must revolt against this situation and establish a world where these two systems of perception can work together for the betterment of man. In order for this revolt to occur, the conscious and the unconscious need to be integrated. Revolution achieves nothing unless man understands the conditions which made revolution necessary in the first place. The revolutionary must recognize that body and spirit are one and the same; then we will understand why "striving to transcend the present level of consciousness through acceptance of the unconscious must give the body its due, and why recognition

of the body cannot tolerate a philosophy that denies it in the name of spirit."⁵⁶

Brecht resolves this seeming contradiction between body and spirit by dramatizing the myth-making process in action. At the outset, he shows us a world where myth appears to be in harmony with nature. Next, he exposes his characters to those forces that created myth, allowing us to perceive the negative transformation of the individual into a living manifestation of the ideological. He allows us to feel and understand what it means to lose one's humanity by demonstrating the tendency of myth to split morality into good and evil, individuality into body and spirit, and humanity into possessor and dispossessed.

One of the forces that Brecht explores is Christianity. Christianity is responsible for the initial split in man's moral nature. By establishing a distinction between body and spirit, Christianity creates the conditions whereby evil and good enter man's consciousness. Man's "good" personality is supported by political systems; his "evil" personality is banished to the unconscious. Since it is the laborer who acquires the characteristics of the unconscious, it is the laborer who is considered "evil" and in need of redemption. His capitalist counterpart becomes, in turn, the ideal "good" human being. In this way, Christianity is absorbed into capitalist ideology.

Brecht makes this link between Christianity and Capitalism all too clear. Only wealthy people can afford to follow the

edicts of Christian ideology. Christianity, though originally a perception of the unconscious, is inverted via Capitalism's worldly authority into a social perception. Goodness becomes virtue; evil, vice. Capitalism becomes "the realized essence of Christianity . . . God is only idealized capital and heaven only the theoretical commercial world."⁵⁷ The God of Christian ideology becomes the capitalist God, My Lord Capital.

Christianity establishes itself in human consciousness by a system of creeds. Originally its purpose was to revitalize the world since it provided a key to unlock man's unconscious. When man's physical perception took a more dominant role in determining his actions and his understanding of the world, Christianity would unlock his unconscious perception, allowing it to swing man back to a more balanced perception of the world. In bourgeois society, however, the economic structures of Capitalism are too strong; Christianity is "too weak to swing the one-sided orientation of consciousness in a new direction against the pressures of society."⁵⁸ Christianity, as a result, loses its healing function (healing in the sense that it balances man's perception) and becomes an ideology in the service of Capitalism.

Brecht wants us to perceive the impotence of Christianity as a vehicle for social change. The Christian creeds do not motivate the balancing forces of the unconscious, but rather, they block the unconscious and support the ideal of Capitalism. Christian creeds are "codified and dogmatized forms of original

religious experience" and "dogma is the very thing and precludes immediate experience."⁵⁹ The myth of dogma is akin to the myth of knowledge; when dogma becomes an external expression of man's unconscious, it negates the dynamic process that leads man forward to new forms of awareness and life. Without these new forms of religious experience to revitalize man and his world, the power of Christian ideology becomes impoverished or, at worst, enslaved by its capitalist rulers.

As My Lord Capital becomes the more dominant God, the Christian promise of another worldly kingdom or paradise turns into "worldly promises about freedom from care for one's daily bread, the just distribution of material goods, universal prosperity in the future, and shorter working hours."⁶⁰ In this way, the unconscious laborer truly becomes the realized Christian-capitalist. He spends his life dreaming of a world paradise which is as far away as the other worldly paradise of Christian ideology. The capitalist holds the key to his earthly paradise.

The capitalist feeds this erroneous belief, for he is the one who makes the promises. He tells the laborer that he is "the lord of the earth, the air, and the water, and that on his decision hangs the historical fate of the nations." By creating this grandiose picture of the laborer, the capitalist hopes to passify the disgruntled laborer: heaven is just around the corner. The reality of bourgeois life is, however, exactly the opposite of the Capitalistic view. "In this reality man is the slave and

victim of the machines that have conquered space and time for him; he is intimidated and endangered by the might of the war technique which is supposed to safeguard his physical existence."⁶¹ But the capitalist will further the myth in order to further obscure the truth about man's impoverished and endangered existence. At no point does the capitalist want the laborer to see the world as it truly is; the laborer must remain ignorant.

Another myth that the capitalists propagate in order to preserve their authority is the myth of the State. The State is made mythical in that it is turned "into a quasi-animate personality from whom everything is expected."⁶² The myth of the State acts as a camouflage: the capitalist, the real authority of the world, can deceive the laborer into thinking that it is the State that ultimately determines his fate. The capitalist can claim that all social and economic ills are the province of this fictitious entity, the State.

Blinded by these mythical conceptions, the laborer will not turn to himself or other laborers for a solution to his problems. Rather, he invokes "justice" or "the law" to come to his rescue. But he and his fellow men are helpless against a world where Capitalist institutions are given full responsibility over the fate of men. They are not aware of the fact that the expression of their unconscious has been limited by these institutions. "Since the dawn of humanity there has been a marked tendency to limit this unruly and arbitrary 'supernatural' influence by means

of definite forms and laws. And this process has continued throughout history in the form of a multiplication of rites, institutions, and beliefs."⁶³ Unless the laborer becomes aware of the fact that these institutions not only limit the healing powers of the unconscious but actually make the need for redemption more acute, the revolution of man's moral consciousness can never occur.

Brecht's oppressed characters treat society, the State, and the Church as supreme beings. This elevation of these institutions to the level of a deity is a result of the fact that "our age, for all its irreligiousness, is hereditarily burdened with the specific achievement of the Christian epoch: the supremacy of the word, of the Logos, which stands for the central figure of our Christian faith."⁶⁴ The unconscious laborer believes that "the Word" of the State and Church is just. The social language of the State and Church is akin to God's spiritual language. "The word has literally become our god and so it has remained, even if we know of Christianity only from hearsay. Words like 'society' and 'State' are so concretized that they are almost personified."⁶⁴ The laborer identifies money as the source of his ills and believes that the "government" or the "Church" can solve those ills with money. In fact, he believes that language itself, if backed up by material wealth, can correct his social or personal problems. In other words, he believes that defining a problem in words will solve it. "In the opinion of the man in

the street, the 'State' is invoked, made responsible, grumbled at, and so on and so forth. Society is elevated to the rank of a supreme ethical principle; indeed, it is credited with positively creative capacities."⁶⁴

In Brecht's world, My Lord Capital is the keeper of the "Word." Only the capitalist has the power of language behind him: "his language is rich, multiform, supple, with all the possible degrees of dignity at its disposal: he has the exclusive right to meta-language (myth) . . . his language is plenary, intransitive, gestural, theatrical: it is Myth."⁶⁵ The capitalist catalogues the world and makes it his own. Since the proletarian consciousness is so impoverished, there is no barrier of language between the workers' needs and the object of those needs. The worker needs food, clothing, and shelter. He pursues these needs by actions, not words. The worker's erroneous belief in the need for language, however, causes these immediate needs to remain unfulfilled: the language of the capitalist immobilizes the actions which would fulfill the laborers' needs. The capitalist uses language to deceive the laborer into thinking that his plight is just and reasonable. The unenlightened laborer is left dreaming of a language through which he can fulfill his needs. This language is never forthcoming, because, as with material goods, the capitalist holds the key to language.

The laborer has only one language: action. He makes the world that the capitalist possesses via words. The proletarian

perspective would make the laborer conscious of his language:

Now the speech of the oppressed can only be poor, monotonous, immediate: his destitution is the very yardstick of his language: he has only one, always the same, that of his actions; meta-language is a luxury, he cannot yet have access to it. The speech of the oppressed is real, like that of the wood-cutter; it is a transitive type of speech: it is quasi-unable to lie; lying is a richness, a lie presupposes property, truths, and forms to spare.⁶⁶

Action becomes the revolutionary language of the unconscious.

Action is revolution. Christianity transforms the world in "the Word." It makes man's consciousness the one and only world.

But language is unable to capture the unconscious world of man.

Language suppresses the unconscious, which responds by creating fantasies that split the individual into two distinct personalities and the world into two distinct classes of men. But the supremacy of the word is limited. The suppressed language of the unconscious, action, can be heard "prowling about in its underground prison, ready at any moment to burst out with devastating consequences. When this happens in the individual it brings about a psychological revolution, but it can also take a social form."⁶⁷

When myth has completely negated action, there can be no retreat: revolution is the only alternative. The individual and the society will experience the collective unconscious in all its fury. Action will completely overcome the ability of the consciousness to translate action into language. "An unconscious that is in full revolt against conscious values . . . cannot possibly be assimilated to consciousness, while the reverse is

altogether out of the question."⁶⁸ Language, at this point, can only offer ridiculous alternatives. "We are confronted with an apparently irreconcilable conflict before which human reason stands helpless, with nothing to offer except sham solutions or dubious compromises."⁶⁸

Revolution, in Brecht, is akin to a religious experience: it transcends human understanding. By completely negating myth, revolution returns us to that time when language did not exist: "Revolution is defined as a cathartic act meant to reveal the political load of the world: it makes the world; and its language, all of it, is functionally absorbed in this making . . . Revolution excludes myth."⁶⁹ Brecht's theatre makes the revolutionary process, which is the dialectical process, the final stage of any ritual. Ritual and revolution are thus made inseparable correlates. Only in the bourgeois world is ritual made into past action by a predominance of mythical language. Ideally, however, ritual is a present action which reveals history in the making. By integrating action and language, the unconscious and the conscious, revolution and ritual, Brecht's theatre hopes to change the world by allowing us to perceive what our actions were originally meant to effect before Christian and Capitalist ideology abstracted those actions.

Brecht's theatre brings us to the moment of crisis in this process of integrating revolution and ritual. Brecht dramatizes that point where ritual and revolution are met. Without the

integration of revolution and ritual, the alienated man will rise up with such tremendous force that the new life offered by the unconscious will be lost amongst the bombs and blood of purely revolutionary activity. Brecht suspends the action between "annihilation and new life"⁷⁰ and demands that we, as individual audience members, choose where the next step will carry us.

"All of Brecht's plays end on an implicit 'find the solution' addressed to the spectator in the name of that decipherment to which the spectacle's materiality must lead him: consciousness of unconsciousness, consciousness the audience must have of the unconsciousness prevailing on the stage."⁷¹ Brecht's theatre asks the question: "Are we to continue in our ignorance and greed, or are we going to face the new world with an open and free mind?" Brecht's drama defines our task as nothing less than remaking our world and ourselves.

Chapter Two

Script Analysis

I

China during the 1930's was a battleground of conflicting values. The ancient feudal customs had begun to crumble beneath the pressure asserted by highly advanced Western technology and scientific methods. Still suffering from the trauma caused by powerful Western influences, China was divided internally by two radically different ideological systems. On the one hand, there was Chiang Kai-shek's capitalist version of the new China and, on the other, there was the communism of Mao Tse-tung. Both ideologies, inspired and supported by Western ideas, were determined to destroy the superstitious and economically outdated ideas and policies of the feudal China.¹

Brecht sets *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN* in this reality of a rapidly changing China in order to illustrate a similar condition in the Western World. By placing his Setzuan at the beginning of the scientific age with the aeroplane as a cause for awe and wonder and the assembly line as a new and more efficient means of production, Brecht dramatizes our own historical past in the making. He shows us the forces that created the world in which we now live by showing us our world as it was before and at the inception of the advent of science. Setzuan is a world in transition. Modern technology is intermingled with more

"primitive" eastern forms of labor. Brecht illustrates how the new replaces the old. The past does not simply evolve into the present, nor is it the same as the present--the past conflicts with the future: this conflict is the present condition of western man. A water seller with visions of ancient eastern gods can live side by side with a pilot who dreams of machines in the sky. A young capitalist manufacturer can compete for control of the city with an old barber with large landholdings.

Brecht's Setzuan is a metaphor for the image of a rapidly changing society. The changes that occur during the course of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN can be divided into four distinct, yet interrelated, conflicts. They are: 1) the gods versus the world; 2) Shen Te versus the proletarian and the possessing classes; 3) Shui Ta versus the proletarian and possessing classes; and, 4) the possessing class versus the proletarian class. These four conflicts are progressive in nature and lead to the eventual formation of the revolutionary proletariat. This section of Chapter II will analyze these struggles in terms of their relationship to the rise of the proletarian consciousness and the proletariat's call for social change.

As THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN opens, three gods enter this changing world determined to prove that the ancient ways are still applicable. The resulting conflict is the key theme in the play. The gods' world is the static, fixed world of moral precepts: it is not based upon the consciousness of existing practice.

The gods have no concept of the world of business: they "never meddle in economics."² Their world is based upon a consciousness that has freed itself from the reality of working men and women and entered the realm of pure theory. Wong, the water seller, characterizes their condition: men work, the gods do not.³ The gods are the judges of work; they determine value.

Because the world works and the gods do not, they are impotent in the world. The gods can quote the laws of heaven and hope that they are followed, but the gods can neither force men to obey them nor punish men for their disobedience. The only power they have comes from the obedience and subsequent labor of followers like Wong. It is in the consciousness of men that goodness conflicts with evil. The idea of moral opposites, in and of itself, suffers no loss and experiences no conflict; it is so detached from the world, so alien to the actuality of life, that its path only crosses with the world's in the realm of abstract notions and theories.

Wong's struggle to protect Shen Te's goodness from the evil in the world is the active, dynamic part of the conflict between the gods and the real world of men. Wong, the follower, suffers the consequences of the gods' desire to find a good person who can remain good. The gods suffer a horrible fate only in Wong's dreams: Wong believes in their sufferings, but in actuality they remain untouched and unaffected by the cruelty and poverty of life. Wong never becomes conscious of the fact that the gods'

suffering is really a projection of his own suffering caused by his belief in the gods and their mission. During the course of the play, however, he does become conscious of the fact that the gods cannot "save" Shen Te. Man alone is capable of rescuing goodness from evil. Wong's growing consciousness provides the throughline of the dramatic action that will eventually lead to the emergence of the revolutionary proletariat.

Shen Te's commitment to the gods leads to the second level of conflict: Shen Te versus the greed of the possessing class and the unenlightened proletarian class. The gods recognize the fact that Shen Te cannot fulfill the role of the good person without their financial support: in Setzuan, behavior, whether good or evil, is determined by one's financial status. The gods give Shen Te money in order to help her to be good. What they do not realize, however, is that money makes Shen Te a member of the possessing class. As a member of that class, she must follow the laws of capital and protect her wealth from the greed of others. Goodness and Capitalism are incompatible. Although sharing wealth is the ultimate "good," Shen Te suffers because her generosity is in conflict with the laws of capital. Her goodness forces her to recognize the communal needs of others, but her capital commands her to accumulate wealth. If she gives her money away, then she will not be able to make more money. Without a continual source of revenue, Shen Te will fall from the ranks of the possessing class.

The conflict between Shen Te's desire to do good deeds and her desire to remain a member of the possessing class is demonstrated immediately: Shen Te uses the money given to her by the gods to buy a Tobacco Shop. With the shop, Shen Te hopes to do good deeds and still make enough money to secure her personal independence and position within the economic structure of Setzuan. This action does not resolve any conflict: it only deepens it, making the possibility for resolution that much more remote. On the one hand, there is the penniless, jobless, and homeless proletarian class that comes to her shop seeking food, clothing, and shelter. They are so impoverished and hungry that Shen Te simply does not have enough material wealth to feed or help them. In their unconscious condition, these laborers do not realize that their hunger and greed will destroy Shen Te, the very source of their present economic salvation. Their numbers are too great. The unconscious laborer has only one dream: he wants to become a member of the possessing class. He does not want to help Shen Te survive in business: he wants to make Shen Te's Tobacco Shop his own.⁴ In this way, he believes that he will free himself from his impoverished moral and physical condition. As a result, the proletarian class overruns Shen Te's shop, ransacks her stock, and claims her property as rightfully theirs. Shen Te is powerless to stop them. She must do good deeds in order to please the gods who gave her the Tobacco Shop with the provision that she remain "good." By doing good deeds, however, she is threatened

with the complete loss of her personal security and freedom. Shen Te must watch helplessly as the Family of eight, Mrs. Shin, the Unemployed man, and eventually Yang Sun take her shop from her.

This is only one side of the conflict, however. On the other hand, there is Shen Te's struggle with the members of the possessing class. Both her landlady, Mi Tzu, and a fellow business person, the Carpenter, come to Shen Te with financial demands and ultimatums. The Carpenter, who is on the verge of losing his business, must lie and cheat to exact a fee for his renovation of Shen Te's shop. He comes to the shop to get Mrs. Shin, the previous owner of the Tobacco Shop, to pay for some shelves he installed. Mrs. Shin has transferred the debt, however, to the shop's new owner, Shen Te. Upon seeing the inexperienced new owner, the Carpenter decides to raise the price of the shelves to an exorbitant amount. Because Shen Te wants to do what is right in the eyes of the gods, she does not argue with the Carpenter over the amount of the bill. As in her conflict with the proletarian class, Shen Te is powerless against the excessive greed of the Carpenter. She does whatever the Carpenter asks so as not to displease the gods.

Shen Te's conflict with the financially secure and powerful Mi Tzu demonstrates exactly how powerless the ideal good person is when faced with the reality of money and class. Mi Tzu comes to the shop with the intention of having Shen Te sign a lease. When she discovers such a large number of destitute people in the shop, however, she immediately attacks Shen Te's reputation

and questions her ability to run a successful business. Shen Te quickly learns how money and respectability go hand in hand in the world of Setzuan. Respectable people are wealthy and do not associate with the poor. When faced with Mi Tzu's demands for references, Shen Te realizes that economic survival in Setzuan can only be accomplished by acquiring the support of other members of the possessing class. Shen Te, the working woman, does not fit Mi Tzu's image of the "good" business person--who should be shrewd, respectable, and male.⁵ Shen Te's recognition of the relationship between "respectability" and wealth is a turning point in the action of the play. She adopts a disguise as Shui Ta, a respectable and adventurous young businessman, who will challenge Setzuan's feudal economic structure with modern capitalistic methods.

THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN poses the question: "Can the Christian idea of goodness survive in the world of business?" We see immediately that it cannot: by the end of Scene One, Shen Te is ready to rid herself of goodness and don the disguise of her imaginary cousin, Shui Ta. She must lie about her real identity and hide her natural goodness in order to save herself and her shop from the greed of others and the gods' possible disapproval. The ruthless businessman, Shui Ta, knows the laws of business and how to manipulate them in his favor. His image is all that Shen Te needs: by severing the emotional ties that Shen Te, the "good" woman, has with the collective suffering of

the proletarian class, Shen Te, the survivor, acquires the power to fight for her shop, her stock, and her personal freedom. She now can respond "naturally" to any economic situation (as "naturally" as any capitalist would). With Shen Te's creation of Shui Ta, the next level of conflict begins: Shui Ta versus the proletarian and possessing classes.

The character of Shui Ta is the result of Shen Te's rapid education in the ways of business at the hands of Mrs. Shin, the wife, the husband, and the nephew. Their image of socio-economic power becomes Shui Ta's persona. Shui Ta is a composite of characteristics that they describe to Shen Te when she is overly generous with the Unemployed man and threatened by the Carpenter and Mi Tzu. In other words, Shui Ta is the result of the proletarian's collective imagination. He is what they fear most about the world: the man who is "sharp as a razor" and who "pays on the nail."⁶ Shen Te learns from their fear and eventually exploits that fear, using it against the proletarian class for her personal survival.

The image of Shui Ta enables Shen Te to earn the respect of the proletarian class: suddenly, she looks the part of a business person: she is cool and efficient, and she is male. Shui Ta possesses a presence that demands obedience. The poor "thieves"⁷ know that any sign of disobedience on their part will mean the arrival of the police. Shui Ta has the power of the authorities to back up his efficient personality. As a capitalist, Shui Ta

can buy the support of other rich people. With their support, Shui Ta can easily deal with the sometimes aggressive behavior of the wife and husband.⁸ When they refuse to obey her, she has the Policeman arrest them. The tables are turned. In Scene One, Shen Te, the good woman, was powerless against the proletarian class. In Scene Two, the proletarian class is powerless against Shui Ta, the shrewd businessman.

Against other members of the possessing class, the image of Shui Ta alone is not enough. Shen Te must now radically alter her whole personality. The conflict between Shui Ta and the Carpenter is one of bluff and counterbluff in strictly financial terms. Shui Ta is willing to pay twenty silver dollars for the shelves, exactly one fifth of the Carpenter's asking price. When the Carpenter threatens to take the shelves away if his terms are not met, Shui Ta evaluates the situation and discovers the weakness in the Carpenter's position: the shelves "were made to measure. They're no use anywhere else."⁹ Shui Ta uses this information to his own advantage; he calls the Carpenter's bluff and enlists the aid of the husband in having the shelves removed. As in Shui Ta's conflict with the proletarian class, the Carpenter has no alternative but to accept Shui Ta's offer of twenty silver dollars. This offer is a fair offer; it is an attempt to make the Carpenter honest.

The struggle between Shui Ta and Mi Tzu takes place on a totally different level. Whereas Shen Te can play the cool and

efficient businessman with the Carpenter and the proletarian class, with Mi Tzu that tact only leads to trouble. Mi Tzu is part of an established class in Setzuan. In order to enrich this conflict, Brecht uses elements of the ancient Chinese feudal economy in his characterization of Mi Tzu. Before the advent of Western culture, land was owned by a very few. The great majority of people lived in servitude to the landowners, and the middle class was virtually non-existent. In *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*, this feudal economy coexists with a developing capitalist system. Shui Ta represents that development. The capitalist system has no trouble dealing with the large proletarian class which has no rights or economic power. The insecure financial status of the middle class makes it easy prey to the aggressive and prosperous capitalists, as exemplified by the conflict between Shui Ta and the Carpenter. With Mi Tzu, a representative of the land-rich feudal economy, Shui Ta has neither the capital nor the land to bargain from a position of strength. When Shui Ta gets tough with Mi Tzu and defends Shen Te's reputation, Mi Tzu does not even flinch. She simply demands six months rent in advance, an amount that she knows Shui Ta will be unable to pay. Without capital, Shen Te discovers that even Shui Ta is powerless when it comes to open conflict with the Mi Tzu.

As Shui Ta discovers in his struggle for survival against the feudal possessing class, he must divert their greed and power by whatever means become available to him. Shui Ta learns that all

actions are transactions: human beings are as negotiable as cigars.¹⁰ As Shui Ta learns from the Policeman, he must turn Shen Te into a commodity in order to assure economic survival. Shui Ta must arrange to have Shen Te sold to the highest bidder in marriage. The practice of using people as collateral occurs several times during the play. Shui Ta uses Shen Te as collateral to ensure the continued support of Shu Fu, a wealthy barber who tries to buy Shen Te's love with a blank check. Later in the play, he gives Yang Sun to Mi Tzu as part of a business deal that will save the Tobacco factory.

Shui Ta's realization that he needs Shen Te in order to survive creates the conditions that motivate the action of the remainder of *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*. Shen Te leads a double life throughout the action of the play: Shen Te needs Shui Ta, and Shui Ta needs Shen Te, but they cannot be in the same place at the same time.¹¹ Shen Te is torn between her will to be good and her will to be self-sufficient and wealthy. One will pushes her towards the unconditional love of neighbor. The other pushes her towards financial security. This dual objective influences all of Shen Te's actions. Shen Te loves Yang Sun, but ultimately denies that love in order to save the Tobacco Shop. Shen Te loves her unborn child, but Shui Ta represses that love in order to develop the Tobacco factory into "twelve magnificent super Tobacco Markets."¹² Shui Ta, the capitalist, dominates the action of the play until the endangered goodness of Shen Te becomes the

motivation for revolt.

With Shui Ta's rise as a factory magnate, we have the beginning of the fourth and final level of conflict: the possessing class versus the revolutionary proletariat. The factory is the logical solution to Shen Te's immediate problems: the factory was originally created to give the pregnant Shen Te economic security and the laborers a steady job and home. Although Shui Ta uses Shen Te and Yang Sun as objects to trade against the economic superiority of Shu Fu and Mi Tzu, his real power comes from his ability to organize the unconscious laborers into an efficient profit-making machine. By giving the laborers a minimum of food, clothing, and shelter, Shui Ta can reap large returns on his initial investment. This gives him a better position from which to challenge Mi Tzu and Shu Fu for control of Setzuan. While Shui Ta, Mi Tzu, and Shu Fu struggle for economic superiority, the organized proletariat of Shui Ta's factory is brought to the point of revolt by the dream-inspired Wong. Their rise to consciousness and the need for direct action signals the conclusion of the play's action.

The survival of Shui Ta's factory is dependent upon the complete negation of the communal consciousness of Shen Te. The subsequent disappearance of Shen Te provides the unifying element for proletarian action. When the unconscious laborers transform into the revolutionary proletariat, they have a dual objective. They want to save Shen Te, the good woman, and

eliminate the tyrant, Shui Ta. The irony of the situation is that they want to destroy the force (Shui Ta) that has robbed them of their humanity and, at the same time, reestablish the force that made it necessary for Shui Ta to come into existence in the first place, i.e., the goodness of Shen Te. The revolutionary proletariat, though conscious of the need for direct action on their part, is not conscious of the role that the unconscious laborer played in the formation of Shui Ta's cruelty and the resulting dehumanization of their class.

In the last scene of the play, the battle lines between the classes are clearly drawn: there are no defectors. No character acts against the dictates of his own class. The trial scene is reminiscent of the Last Judgement. Shen Te/Shui Ta is on trial for the murder of Shen Te. The gods, who have returned to Setzuan to sit in judgement over men, are the forces that were initially responsible for that murder. As the Policeman, Mi Tzu, and Shu Fu defend the reputation of Shui Ta with characteristic eloquence, the Family of eight, the unemployed man, the old couple, the Carpenter, and Wong attack Shui Ta for his deeds. The newly formed middle class, consisting of Mrs. Shin and Mrs. Yang, watch the proceedings in silence. When the courtroom is cleared for Shui Ta's final testimony, it becomes clear that Shui Ta alone is not responsible for the murder of Shen Te: all men are responsible. This fact is concealed from the characters of the drama, (with the possible exception of Mrs. Shin), until the

final moments of the play. The towns people reenter the courtroom, armed and expecting a final confrontation with Shui Ta. Instead, they encounter the exposed truth of Shen Te's double identity. The gods, sensing the end of their mission, flee the world still clinging to the illusion that their outmoded ideas about morality and goodness will survive. Shen Te kneels center stage surrounded by a hostile and confused mob, her cries for help go unanswered by a singing chorus of escaping gods.

The conflict between the revolutionary proletariat and the possessing class that is mirrored in the duality of Shen Te/Shui Ta is a conflict between the divided consciousness of the modern world. Brecht does not offer a resolution to that conflict because there is none, save for the complete negation of a class system engendered by a capitalist economy. That solution cannot be achieved by an open confrontation between the two classes. The conflict must first be understood as an irreconcilable contradiction within the consciousness of man. THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN leads us to that understanding: the individual is a mirror of his world; unless men work collectively for the betterment of man, the betterment of the individual's personal condition is a mere illusion. Man must change so that the world can be changed.

II

The characters in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN can be grouped into two categories: laborers or capitalists. In this section I will discuss first, the conflict that both classes share: the conflict between a character's collective identity and his individuality. Second, I will isolate this conflict within the capitalist and explore how it manifests itself as a conflict between his instinctual being and his soul as a personification of My Lord Capital. In the final part of this section, I will analyze this conflict as it pertains to the laborer: a conflict between his collective unconscious and his ego-consciousness that leads to his loss of individuality and his complete submergence in the revolutionary mass.

All of the characters in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN share one major dilemma: their human identity is in conflict with their collective identity. Man's human identity is a social microcosm; as human beings, men have the needs of both the laborer and the capitalist. The laborer serves: the capitalist is served. The "real" man is one who can express both selves freely and openly. In the feudal system of Setzuan, however, the individual is one or the other of these collective images; his humanity is split. He is not allowed to express himself as a total being. The laborer must repress his individualistic, capitalistic tendencies; the capitalist must repress his

communal proletarian needs. As a result, the human being is negated and can only express himself in despair.

If the system permits, the individual can serve others with his labor, which is also an expression of himself as a conscious being. The conflict between the server and the one who is served arises when one individual serves another involuntarily: he is a servant because of the limits established by his economic class. Shen Te is naturally good. When she lends her room to the gods for a night, she wishes to help her friend, Wong. Her act is a willful act of self-expression. When the gods command her to lead a good life, however, she is no longer working for herself, responding logically to situations, etc. She is responding to an idea presented by the gods. She is transformed from a person who chooses to do good into an intellectual ideal, a person who must be good.

This intellectual ideal cannot survive in the real world. By giving in to people's demands, Shen Te's very existence is threatened. As a result, her passion for goodness is in conflict with her passion for survival. Her passion for survival manifests itself in the capitalist world by way of the respectable Shui Ta. Shen Te's human nature is split between these two collective images: the good laborer, the Angel of the Slums, and My Lord Capital, Shui Ta.

Both of these collective images are imposed upon Shen Te from the outside. The image, "Angel of the Slums,"¹³ is forced

upon her by the gods' denial of her true human condition; the respectable Shui Ta is forced upon her by the extreme hunger and greed of the family. She uses their suggestion of "a rich cousin"¹⁴ as the means by which she can regain control of her shop. By way of Shen Te's double life, Brecht reveals how human nature becomes alienated by forces external to man; since each image is a contradiction of the other, he reveals that within man there is a conflict between the human and ideological images of man's world. Brecht's revelation of this conflict in human nature is based on the idea of love: love of neighbor, love of an individual, and love of an unborn child.¹⁵ By loving her neighbor, Shen Te confronts the collective history of oppression. As members of the proletarian class, Mrs. Shin, the Family of eight, the Carpenter, etc. represent the laborer as he exists in the real world of men. Their behavior is governed by centuries of greed and de-humanization. One "good" person is no match for the extreme degradation that they impose. It is impossible to "love" these neighbors in this world. Shen Te's reliance upon Shui Ta for survival represents the only possible solution to the problem of her existence.

By loving Yang Sun, Shen Te attempts to save one soul from becoming de-humanized by the world. The man with whom she falls in love is one who has not yet been corrupted by the existing world; Yang Sun is still a dreamer with ambitions that go beyond the accumulation of wealth. In him, Shen Te sees someone who

was like herself prior to the intervention of the gods and the establishment of her tobacco shop. Since she cannot "love" her proletarian neighbors, the products of a past process of proletarian de-humanization, she chooses to love an individual member of the proletarian class, who is experiencing the dehumanizing process as it exists in the present. She attempts to do her good deeds for a fledgling soul; she hopes to alter the course of a single human being headed tragically towards a fate similar to her own.

Shen Te's love for her unborn child is a manifestation of her human nature. First, she hoped to alter the past; second, the present, and finally, she will attempt to change the world that her child will enter. She becomes totally future-directed. The first two stages allowed for a conflict between her two collective identities: this stage, however, permits no such conflict. The desire to accumulate wealth operates according to the belief that a future generation will reap the benefits of past and present suffering. By de-humanizing the laborer and making him work for the future, the capitalist frees himself from the existing world. Shen Te's complete surrender to the will of My Lord Capital represents the goal which all capitalists inevitably share.

Each stage of Shen Te's growth as a split human being ends in failure for the "real" man. As exemplified by Yang Sun's suicide attempt, the "real" man in Setzuan lives only in despair.

The first stage ends with Shen Te's realization that she must sell herself in marriage in order to save the shop. The second stage ends with Shen Te husbandless and homeless. The final stage ends with the complete negation of both the Angel of the Slums and My Lord Capital. Shen Te is left with no viable alternative to the dilemma of her dual passions: the passion for goodness and the passion for survival. Her neighbors, her lover, and her child face the same tragic conclusion.

Yang Sun grows in a manner parallel to Shen Te. Whereas Shen Te's development is divided into three stages centered on the idea of love, Yang Sun's development exists in two stages centered on his occupation: there is Yang Sun, the flyer, and Yang Sun, the business manager. The flyer is a romantic figure; he is thoroughly modern. In Yang Sun's mind, flying is the means by which he will escape the impoverished world of men. But the inventions of science are not accessible to members of the proletarian class; they are controlled by the capitalists. In order for Yang Sun to fly, he must procure enough money to bribe the director of the air field.

When we first meet Yang Sun, he is in a state of despair. He has just learned that pilots are not hired according to their abilities. Rather, the pilots who are flying have been those who could pay off the people in power. Brecht lets us meet this Yang Sun, the impoverished "real" man, before he is corrupted by the forces of the capitalist world. He is destitute and overcome

by despair. His suicide attempt, though lacking in determination, is indicative of the real condition of the individual without the affirmation of money. The laborer, deprived of the means by which his dream might be realized, lacks the confidence and desire to assert himself in any capacity: he is even incapable of a successful suicide.

Until Scene Six and the dissolution of his proposed marriage to Shen Te, Yang Sun's character is determined by his passion for flying. His cruelty to Shen Te, his treatment of her as a commodity, and his dependency upon lies are the result of his struggle with the capitalist system. He is not, however, consumed by an urge to accumulate wealth as the capitalist is. He will do only what is necessary for him to realize his dream of becoming a pilot. He uses capitalist means to achieve his objective in the same way that Shen Te uses Shui Ta--through the first half of the play--sparingly and with reservations. In order to win against Shu Fu, Mi Tzu, and Shui Ta, Yang Sun must be heartless; he must show no emotional concern for others since emotions are considered a weakness in capitalist ideology. "One weakness is enough, and love is the deadliest."¹⁶ Yang Sun must behave like a capitalist; he must repress his real nature by turning his love of flying into a business proposition.

Yang Sun, the business manager, is a man who has succeeded in totally repressing his real instinctual self. Though by Scene Nine Yang Sun has accumulated enough capital to bribe the

airfield director, he is no longer interested in going to Peking. He is consumed by his success in the tobacco industry. His love of flying has been replaced by a love of money and power. His concern for Shen Te and his unborn son becomes an instrument that he uses to blackmail Shui Ta. He has regressed from a man who chastizes whores (in Scene Three) to a man who will satisfy the lust of Mi Tzu for a more lucrative business deal. The ideal of capital has destroyed his humanity by transforming his behavior into the personification of My Lord Capital.

Whereas Shen Te and Yang Sun are developing characters, Shu Fu and Mi Tzu are established capitalists. The "real" man within them has been totally negated. Unlike Shen Te and Yang Sun, who are struggling with their humanity in a capitalist system, they are already inhuman. They are consummate liars: they lie to others and to themselves with such conviction that they believe their lies. They believe that their actions are respectable and honorable. Shu Fu masks his lechery with philanthropy. He believes that he is helping Shen Te when he gives her a blank check because he wants Shen Te to believe that he is good. Mi Tzu believes she is helping the "poor, deserted Mr. Yang Sun!"¹⁷ because her ideal of respectability does not allow her to express her instinctual, sexual needs in any other way. Shu Fu's lie is that he is helping Shen Te because she is good. Mi Tzu's lie is that she wants Yang Sun because he is a good manager. The truth of their respective desires is that their passion for

pleasure is in conflict with their passion for wealth. As a result, they must reduce all activities--love and lust--to a financial arrangement.

As consummate capitalists, Shu Fu and Mi Tzu are without scruples. All desires that do not conform to the ideal of capital expansion must be perverted to give the appearance of either charity or sound business. Just as Shen Te's love for her child results in the extreme brutalization of the laborer, so Shu Fu's and Mi Tzu's need for companionship leads to a perversion of their love for money. By reducing Shen Te and Yang Sun to commodities, Shu Fu and Mi Tzu are allowed to express their passion for pleasure in an acceptable manner. They can continue to conduct their lives as business as usual.

The laborer in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN has three stages of development: he is 1) a jobless wanderer; 2) a factory worker; and, 3) the revolutionary proletariat. As a jobless wanderer the laborer experiences an inner conflict between his communal nature and his individualistic nature. On the one hand, Mrs. Shin, the Unemployed man, and the Family of eight, etc., depend on one another and on Shen Te's goodness for their survival. On the other hand, their opportunistic natures drive them to exploit other laborers and to deprive Shen Te of her home and shop. Mrs. Shin can alternately affirm her group identity with the family by siding with them against the Unemployed man and accuse that same family of exploiting the goodness of Shen Te.

The Carpenter can demand an extraordinary amount of money for his shelves even when he knows that Shen Te cannot pay for them. After losing his business, he then seeks her aid for his children and himself. Like both Shen Te and Yang Sun, their humanity is struggling against the forces of capitalism. To escape the dehumanized and impoverished condition of the proletarian class, they must behave like the capitalist; escape, however, means surrendering their humanity and communal nature to the soul of capital.

When the laborers become factory workers the conflict between their communal nature and their individualistic nature is negated. As a factory worker, they fulfill one purpose and one purpose only: to satisfy Shui Ta's lust for capital. The unemployed man's action of overpaying Yang Sun is the last human act we see a laborer commit. After that, Yang Sun forces them into behaving efficiently, according to the laws of mass production. Their opportunism can no longer function: they cannot wander from place to place searching for an opportunity to express themselves in their work. The laborer within the factory must function as a cog in the capitalist's machine.

As a member of the revolutionary proletariat, the laborer rebels against this loss of individual identity by creating a mob identity antithetical to the laws of production. The need to destroy Shui Ta is counter-balanced by a need to rediscover Shen Te. The laborer is not conscious of the fact that he is,

in part, responsible for the creation of Shui Ta and the demise of Shen Te. He can only perceive his de-humanized condition and his total loss of individual personality. Revolution is the only means still available to him for his real self, (albeit impoverished and negated), to realize itself in the existing world. The laborer in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN realizes his real self by negating the world of the capitalist.

Wong is the leader of the collective mass. Whereas the body of laborer's growth as characters can be divided into three stages, Wong's growth is divided into two: he is, at first, the unconscious laborer and he becomes the rebellious leader. Typical of an unconscious human being, Wong relies upon dreams and intuition for guidance. He is the supreme primitive: he does whatever he has to do in order to survive, from using a false bottom in the cup of water that he sells to greeting the gods at the city gates in order to gain their favor. He is ignorant of good and evil as moral laws or codes of behavior. To serve the gods is good; not to serve them is evil.

Wong's understanding of the capitalist's world is minimal at most. His unconscious image of the good servant controls his behavior. During the course of the play, however, Wong is educated in the ways of the world. The more he comes to understand how the world operates, the less feasible is his role as the good servant. In his unconscious existence, the urgency of his dream of Shen Te's impending death impels him to act: his

love for Shen Te's humanity becomes the motivating force behind his behavior as the rebellious laborer.

As the rebellious laborer, Wong gathers the other dehumanized laborers together. Under normal conditions, he would be afraid of Shu Fu and Mi Tzu, but in his activated unconscious state, his need to rescue Shen Te totally blinds him to the reality of punishment at the hands of these capitalist tyrants. Only death can end his rebellious force. Wong's belief in the salvation of the people of Setzuan, mirrored in his belief in the Angel of the Slums, is the object of his need. To gain their salvation, he risks everything: he confronts Shui Ta, reveals Shen Te's secret, accuses Shu Fu of evil in front of the judges, and motivates the job into confronting the tyranny of the capitalist world. Throughout the revolution, Wong never loses sight of Shen Te. His sole motivation is to save Shen Te from the greed and lust of the capitalist world. Wong's growth as a conscious human being, who knows that Shen Te needs the help of others and that the gods cannot offer her that help, is the culmination of the dramatic action. Brecht intends for the audience to learn what Wong learns: men must help one another in the struggle against tyranny and oppression.

III

THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN revolves around one central theme: "Can the traditional idea of goodness, the Christian idea, survive in the contemporary bourgeois world, the world of capitalist ideology?" This theme resolves itself, as it were, by negating itself. Christianity and Capitalism are revealed as inseparable correlates. Christian ideals, emphasizing the communal nature of man, create a situation whereby the individualistic ideals of capitalism come into being. The distinction between spiritual life and material life no longer holds true. As soon as the gods pay Shen Te the thousand silver dollars, they can no longer claim a separation between heaven and earth. By the play's conclusion, the more important theme is whether or not humanity can survive in a world dominated by the dual worship of Capital and God. As long as man's essence is objectified in the form of dieties, his humanity will forever remain impoverished and degraded.

Brecht chose Setzuan as the locale of the play not only for its historical value (discussed in Section One of this chapter), but for its unfamiliarity to a Western audience. By placing his vision of Western civilization in an Eastern setting, Brecht isolates those specific characteristics of Western man that are alienated from the natural human traits common to all men. The three forms of Western thought introduced in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN are Christian ideology, Capitalism, and scientific

knowledge. By placing these three products of the Western world in the world of Setzuan, Brecht reveals them as phenomena that are superimposed upon the natural order of men. Christianity and Capitalism are specifically static in their nature and inhibit man's growth as a moral, free-thinking individual. Scientific knowledge is specifically a system of perception which denies the existence of powerful irrational forces within man and nature.

In China, scientific knowledge is an alien form of consciousness. Although Western man believes himself to be the master of science, in Brecht's estimation he is as removed from it as the typical Chinese peasant. Science is as far away from the ordinary Western individual as the airplane is from Yang Sun. the myth of the Western world convinces him, however, of the opposite view. Western man believes that the products of science will save him from hunger and poverty, from ignorance about himself and the world in which he lives, and from being lead astray by instinctual forces beyond his control. The truth of the matter is that science in a bourgeois society is controlled by the capitalists. Like Yang Sun, the individual must pay for the power of science. Since the only people who can afford to pay for this privilege are the capitalists, science remains the sole possession of that class.

In the hands of the capitalist, science is a device used in industry to transform the means of production. With it, the capitalist can increase the rate of production; this increase in

production does not benefit the laborer, however. The laborer remains hungry and poor. He is forced by the capitalist to follow the guidelines of mass production. These guidelines categorize the laborer, making him an object; he has no conscious human identity. Within the dictates of mass production, the laborer's sole function is to increase production; he is possessed by the capitalist in the same way that the products of his labor are possessed.

When the capitalist transforms the laborer into an object, he does not allow for the expression of the unconscious. By repressing the unconscious, the capitalist creates the conditions whereby man becomes a one-sided being. Man in the capitalist society is totally controlled by science's ideal of logic and efficiency. The capitalist attempts to live his life by this ideal and he expects the laborer to follow his example, even though the laborer does not benefit financially from it.

The myth that science can transform man into a scientific ideal is unmasked in *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*. Brecht allows the audience to perceive the evolution of the world of Setzuan from a feudal society into a capitalistic one. This evolution of the world is paralleled by the evolution of Shen Te into the unnatural and artificial Shui Ta. By paralleling these two developments, Brecht reveals that science is a dehumanizing agent. In the hands of the capitalist, science perverts human nature; it does not realize its potential to benefit man. It forces him

to deny his unconscious being by establishing a system of laws and codes designed to make him more reasonable and efficient.

Although Christianity (through the intervention of the gods) motivates the action of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, it is shown from the very beginning of the play as having no real social authority. Not even Wong, in his unconditional servitude, has any real concern for Christian laws; he will obey the gods blindly upon command, but his actions do not follow any conscious Christian plan. He remains an unconscious human being easily directed by the will of others. Shen Te, as the Angel of the Slums, is the only person in the play who attempts to live her life according to Christian values. The conflicts she faces as a result of adopting the will of the gods to be "good," leads her to create the artificial personality of Shui Ta. Brecht uses this sequence of events to reveal the interdependency of Christian and Capitalist ethics.

Shen Te, a woman born in the country, raised in the country, and truly in love with the ways of nature, comes to the city where she finds that prostitution is the only occupation available to her. She becomes a prostitute in order to survive. In Setzuan, the prostitute is a common occurrence. Women either marry or become prostitutes. Shen Te chooses prostitution because her independent nature will not allow her to marry outside the office of love. Since prostitution is necessary for her survival, she does not experience any guilt feelings about it; only the appearance of the gods causes guilt. The world of Setzuan is

devoid of any distinction between good and evil before the arrival of the gods. China had a humanistic code of ethics before the advent of Western ideology, and the audience sees the emergence of imposed Christian views first-hand. Christianity is not a fact of life in Setzuan as it is in Western culture. The myth that Western man is Christian by nature is clearly disrupted by Brecht's Alienation Effect. By creating a Christian of Shen Te before the audience's eyes, Brecht reveals Christianity as an unnatural ideology superimposed upon the humanity of men and women.

The creation of Shui Ta follows a similar development. The gods instigate Shen Te's goodness, first, by simply telling her that she is good and, second, by giving her one thousand silver dollars. The image of Shui Ta is created, first, by the family's suggestion that she should have a rich cousin to handle her business affairs and, second, by their robbing her of her home, her shop, and her stock, i.e., the products that the gods invested in her. Money materializes from the suggestion of words. From the word, "good," Shen Te creates an entire persona who lives according to the laws of Christianity; from the phrase, "rich cousin," she creates the infamous Shui Ta who lives according to the laws of Capitalism. Christianity, which has its spiritual authority grounded in the "word," is made manifest by the material authority of money. Capitalism, which has its authority grounded in the concept of private property, is, in turn, motivated by the spiritual authority of the "word." Shui Ta, the capitalist

hero, is the direct result of Shen Te's Christian persona. By showing the audience the conditions whereby the capitalist is necessary for the survival of the Christian, Brecht unmaskes the myth that spiritual forces are distinct from physical forces. The things that are Caesar's cannot be separated from the things that are God's. Capitalism is the material manifestation of the Christian view.

Christianity separates Shen Te into good and evil personalities according to the perspective from which they are viewed. From the gods' point of view, the Angel of the Slums is good; her cousin is evil. From the capitalist point of view, Shui Ta is good; Shen Te is evil. The relationship between Christianity and Capitalism is dynamic. Shui Ta's behavior negates the actions of Shen Te, and vice versa. As the action of the play reveals, the more dominant Shui Ta becomes in the material world of Setzuan, the less visible is Shen Te. Her presence as the Angel of the Slums becomes totally represented by the existence of the tobacco factory. The communal purpose of the Tobacco Shop is transformed into the profit-making tobacco factory. With the creation of the factory, Brecht reveals how Christianity's originally spiritual purpose is perverted by the capitalists' need to transform human beings into "things." Shen Te, the Christian who sheltered and fed the poor, is transformed into a factory owner who shelters and feeds the poor, but at the cost of their own humanity.

With her pregnancy, Shen Te's energies become totally

directed towards the accumulation of material wealth. Instead of promising her child spiritual happiness, she promises him a secure life, a life that only wealth can assure. The goals of Christianity become the goals of Capitalism. In the same way that Christianity promises the Christian a future of happiness in heaven, Shen Te promises her child a future of material prosperity. She will suffer a life of complete alienation from the community and from herself in order to attain this goal.

The laborers of Setzuan are also susceptible to material promises. Throughout the first half of the play they rely on the moment, the chance opportunity to earn or steal their daily bread. At the mere suggestion of a secure job, a home, and a weekly pay check, they surrender their freedom. Their impoverished condition drives them to this security, but their fear of Shui Ta and the police also diverts them from their search for Shen Te and her goodness. Capitalist ideology makes their search not only unwise, but impossible. By promising the laborer the possibility of becoming a member of the bourgeoisie, Capitalism transforms spiritual authority into wealth, and maintains its control over the exploited and dehumanized laborer.

Money motivates the realization of what words suggest. The capitalist speaks and his wealth gives his words both credibility and power. Both the world and the language of that world belong to the capitalist. The capitalist urges language to create myths about the world that oppress the humanity of the laborer. He

relies upon the false tale, the elaborately constructed argument, and the clever turn of phrase to deceive the laborer into thinking that his designs have goodness and the community of men at heart. As the speeches of Shu Fu, Mi Tzu, the Policeman, Shui Ta, and finally Yang Sun demonstrate, the Capitalist's command of language is used as a disguise. Their behavior contradicts, i.e., Shu Fu expounds philanthropic ideas while lusting after Shen Te (Scene Seven) and the Policeman lectures Shui Ta on the meaning of love while taking a bribe (Scene Two)--to cite just two examples.

Shen Te's use of language is different, however. She does not use language as a disguise. Her words are simple and truthful. By contrasting her speech with that of Shui Ta, Brecht emphasizes the dual function of language: it can be used poetically (as with Shen Te), or it can be used mythically (as with the capitalists). Its mythic function, as established by Christian ideology, is the function that the capitalist exploits for his own good. With his eloquence, the capitalist hopes to demonstrate his respectability and worth as a human being. Brecht, however, constructs the capitalist's speeches in such a manner that they conflict openly with his behavior. His actions deny the validity of his words.

The laborer, however, remains oblivious to this discrepancy between action and word. Shen Te is continually victimized by the promises of others. From Yang Sun's and Shu Fu's false promises of love and aid and Mi Tzu's empty claims of

respectability, to the gods' final demand for her continuing worship in the face of obvious calamity, Shen Te listens and suffers the consequences. Only as Shui Ta, is she able to decipher the lies of other capitalists.

The laborer uses action, not language, as a means of expressing himself. The capitalist may control the world, but he cannot create the world. The laborer actually creates the world. By buying the laborer's work, the capitalist alienates the laborer from himself. For the laborer to reclaim his identity, he must act outside of the jurisdiction of money; he must rebel. Like the mob of factory workers outside of Shui Ta's office, the laborers must, first, break the manacles of their economic class (they must sacrifice their jobs, their homes, and their dreams of a secure life) and, second, they must expose the lie of language. The capitalist's promises of material prosperity must cease to have effect. Actions must speak louder than words.

This struggle between the actions of the laborer versus the language of the capitalist is apparent in the courts of Setzuan. The laborers have brought Shui Ta to trial for his actions. In the courts of justice, however, it is language that determines the value of one's actions. The capitalists speak eloquently on their own behalf: they claim great humanitarian deeds and exhibit self-righteous behavior. The laborers have nothing but their anger to show for themselves. Stripped of the value of their work by their capitalist exploiters and lacking the command

of language that capitalist justice demands, their side of the story is a garbled, enigmatic blur. Exploiting the mythic function of language, the capitalist deprives action of its inherent meaning. Brecht, however, lets the audience perceive this mythic function at work. He dramatizes the contradiction between action and words. The audience must discover the truth of the characters' actions. By exposing bourgeois language as dogmatic, ideological, and inherently false, Brecht unmaskes the use of myth as a means of exploitation.

THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN ends in ambiguity. Shen Te's actions have revealed her nature as both good and evil. The gods cling to their Christian ideals in the face of obvious contradiction. The Ideas of this world, its dogmatic and ideological superstructure, remain untouched by the reality of human action. As a result, man is left without a language that he can use to understand his world and himself. The events which happen around him are as incomprehensible to him as the descent of a god-machine. The fact that man is responsible for the condition of his world, that his actions create the world, eludes him. The people of Setzuan stand face to face with the living incarnation of their world: the half-tyrant, half-mother, Shen Te. They have no words to describe her. Man's true human nature denies rational explanation; it is paradoxical and changeable. In his epilogue, Brecht explicitly states that the condition of man, like the condition of the theatrical experience, is shaped solely by the

actions of human beings living in the real world. As long as myth defines the image of man's being, his actions will be directed by forces beyond his conscious control. His labor will fulfill the lust and greed of alien beings.

Chapter Three

The Production

THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN is a proletarian drama: its themes are proletarian, its point of view is proletarian, and its voice is directed towards a proletarian audience. Since we would be doing the production in a bourgeois society, I was concerned about the preconceived mythic notions about men and the world that the audience would bring to the play. If the production did not disrupt those notions at the outset, it would not be hard to imagine an audience seeing Shu Fu as a wise and generous liberal and Shen Te as a simple-minded fool. If handled poorly, the laborers could easily be viewed as the motivating force behind the ills of the existing world. Without clearly demonstrating the economic conditions as responsible for the behavior of the proletarian class, the play's message would be perverted into one that supports the oppression of man and control of his unruly human nature.

For THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN to succeed as a proletarian drama, it is crucial that the audience become conscious of the economic conditions that shape man and his world. The audience must witness and understand that the "real" man is not presented in the action of the play. The audience must become conscious of the fact that the characters in this play are alienated: they are driven towards the only goal that bourgeois society allows them to realize: the accumulation of wealth and private property.

On the one hand, the audience needs to follow the action and the characters as they live in the play; on the other hand, the audience needs to understand that the action and characters are colored by a proletarian perspective and that the actors and the production ensemble want to make that perspective known.

Our production concept focused upon two worlds: the primitive and the modern. The primitive world contains the irrational forces of nature and the collective unconscious: it is the world inhabited by the alienated laborer. The primitive world represents the Eastern half of the half-Westernized city of Setzuan. Its laws are based upon the needs of the moment: food, clothing, and shelter. Its view of life is clearly concerned with the fate of men as communal beings. In the primitive world, the individual as an isolated entity is unknown. The salvation of the community is primary, not the salvation of a single human being.

The modern world contains the rational ideologies of bourgeois society: it is the world inhabited by the capitalists. The modern world represents the Western half of the city of Setzuan. Its laws are based upon the needs of mass production and the accumulation of private property. Its view is ideological: it is concerned with the fate of the individual as a living manifestation of ideological laws. Whereas the primitive world is not concerned with the individual as distinct from his community, the modern world is not concerned with the community of men, except as a means for furthering the growth of the individual capitalist. The

salvation of the capitalist is at stake, not the salvation of the laborers whom he exploits.

We wanted the audience to be conscious of these two polar worlds, not only as separate realities, but as conflicting representations of a single world. There is only one world, which is divided between unconscious forces (represented by the proletarian class) and conscious ideologies (represented by the possessing class). To clearly demonstrate the city of Setzuan as schizophrenic, we needed to physicalize the dynamic relationship between the unconscious and conscious worlds. Since the unconscious laborer creates the material world that the capitalist possesses, the laborer is the means by which the world can be changed. Our production would demonstrate the world as it changes, by exposing the static, fixed world of the possessing class as temporal and finite.

The proletarian perspective implies a concern for the survival of men as a group of free-thinking individuals: we conceptualized this idea in the phrase, "the need to touch." By turning the laborer and himself into a "thing," the capitalist loses touch with his humanity. The laborer loses touch with the products of his work; he becomes alienated from the expression of himself as a conscious human being. In a bourgeois society, neither the laborer nor the capitalist can function according to human laws. Either he remains trapped as the laborer is in the primitive world of unconscious behavior, or, like the capitalist, he

ascends into the mythical world of ideological precepts. In either case, the "real" human nature of the individual is lost. To demonstrate this proletarian perspective, we needed to demonstrate that both the primitive and modern worlds are clearly unacceptable as environments conducive to the betterment of man's human nature. Both worlds are alien to man: they transform man into a dehumanized and degraded moral being. In THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, the "real" man is presented in despair; the "statistical" man feels self-assured and affirmed.

In this Chapter I will discuss our work on the production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN. First, I will outline the specific conventions that I established in staging THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN. Second, I will analyze the physical production: the set, the costumes, and the lighting. Third, I will explore the relationship of the music to the play's action (Stefan Wolpe's piano score and improvised incidental music). I will conclude this Chapter with a discussion of the specific rehearsal techniques that we used to create the alienated characters of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN.

The Staging

My first consideration in directing THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN involved my selection of the text. I chose Eric Bentley's 1956 translation of the script, but decided to use the ending that Brecht wrote for the original German production.¹ In focusing

totally on Shen Te's conflict with the gods, Bentley's revised ending weakened the proletarian's role in the play. Brecht intended for the conclusion of the play to be an unresolved conflict between the capitalist and the proletarian mass. The gods' ascent into heaven makes a ludicrous statement about their role as divine figures. Bentley's ending depicts the pregnant Shen Te helpless and alone. She is no longer the "Angel of the Slums" nor the indestructible My Lord Capital; she is one woman suffering against insurmountable forces. By limiting the play's conclusion to the fate of Shen Te, Bentley leaves the proletarian's quest for justice unresolved. Brecht's ending leaves the people of Setzuan confronting the split personality of their world. Brecht intended to demonstrate the absurdity of justice in an alienated world. All men are responsible for the crimes committed by Shui Ta. No man is innocent: the condition of the world is the responsibility of all men.

I emphasized the proletarian nature of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN by creating the continuing life of the world of Setzuan. The interior scenes, i.e., in the Tobacco Shop, the office, the restaurant, the factor, and the courtroom scene, were played against the backdrop of the city. The world of Setzuan and its inhabitants remained in the consciousness of the audience. I did not want the audience to identify solely with the plight of Shen Te. I wanted them to be aware of the laborers' growing unrest, their paranoia, and their dehumanized condition. The

backdrop was a powerful visual device; it was also an effective means of materializing the nature of Setzuan's feudalistic/capitalistic society.

Another convention that I established in order to emphasize the proletarian perspective of the play, was to have all of the scene changes executed by those actors playing the proletarian class. THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN was performed for the common laborer who spends his day working for the fulfillment of others. At the end of each scene, the actors would establish a tableau; the laborers not involved in the scene would step into the tableau and observe the action. This ritualistic action created a sense of participation by the actors and increased the prevailing paranoia on stage. By having the actors simply watch the conclusion of each scene, their concern for the outcome of the play was established. That concern parallels the concern that the characters have for the outcome of Shen Te.

I also decided to emphasize the distinction between the primitive laborer and the modern capitalist in their acting styles. By giving the capitalists masks, I made it necessary for them to externalize their actions with simple, yet artificial gestures. As a result, they became more theatrical in appearance; they presented themselves to the audience. The capitalist characters were not natural: their humanity was hidden beneath the artificiality of the mask.

The laborers had different kinds of masks. In contrast to

the metallic masks of the capitalists, the laborers had masks made of mud and grease: filth was the disguise which hid their humanity. Their acting style, however, remained natural. In order to alienate their behavior, I gave them mannerisms which read as impoverished or Chinese. They crouched rather than sat; they bowed, instead of shaking hands; they showed signs of extreme physical torment, i.e., instead of walking upright, they were bent.

Another staging convention I established in order to emphasize the distinction between primitive and modern modes of behavior was derived from the characters' respective identities as communal or individualistic beings. I emphasized the group identity of the laborer. I rarely isolated a laborer: I presented them in groups. I emphasized Shen Te's physicality: she touched other people, looked them in the eyes, and made physical contact.

With the capitalists, I reversed Shen Te's physicality. I emphasized their individuality by exaggerating the distance they kept from other people: they were isolated human beings with no real sense of communion with others. To contrast Shen Te's behavior, Shui Ta rarely touched another person; he never looked another person in the eyes when addressing them. He was careful in maintaining his distance.

As the narrator of the play and as leader of the proletarian mass, Wong demanded special consideration. Wong is the only character in the play who escapes corruption. Whereas the other

laborers continually fall prey to the forces of the capitalist world, Wong's behavior is never governed by greed. Though living in relative isolation, Wong has a true communal nature. I decided that the clearest way to demonstrate Wong's peculiarity as a character was to make him child-like in appearance, yet passionate in spirit. He is a simple man who possesses a great love for mankind.

The gods possess one similarity with Wong: they remain uncontaminated by the world. They are, however, the exactly opposite of Wong in spirit: they have none. Unlike men, the gods do not have a humanity to repress; they are the mouthpiece of the Idea. I decided to make them like Wong in appearance, i.e., child-like, yet totally lacking a communal sense. To emphasize their hollowness, I gave the three gods different levels of detachment: the first god was the most detached, and the third god had the most compassion. In this way, I associated seniority with the level of detachment. The higher the god, the less concern he has for the fate of men.

Wong's relationship with the gods also needed special consideration. I wanted to make the audience aware of the fact that Wong encounters the gods in his dreams: in his willing servitude to the gods he is alienated and dehumanized by them. Therefore, I established a convention whereby Wong and the gods never really encounter one another (I am speaking here of the dream sequences, not the Prologue or Scene Ten). By placing the gods upstage of

Wong and projecting their image on a screen behind Wong, I created the impression that their realities were separate and distinct. This convention also reinforced Wong's role as narrator. Wong addressed the audience at the same time that he addressed the gods behind him.

The Physical Production

We decided that the set needed to fulfill two functions: 1) it needed to physicalize the evolution of the primitive, unconscious world into the modern, rational world, and 2) it needed to emphasize the proletarian perspective. Using the notion that the rational order of the modern world inhibits our ability to touch other men, we developed a kinetic set consisting of six rectangular cubes. At the beginning of the play, these cubes were set in a way that made their order appear random; as the play progressed and Shui Ta emerged, the set changed shape, forming a progressively more structured pattern. In Scene Eight (set in the Tobacco factory), the set became a symmetrical series of parallel units between which the laborers were isolated from one another. By demonstrating the world as a changing entity, we hoped to reveal the created nature of capitalist ideology. (See figures A - I.)

The laborers moved the scenic units. In the same way that the laborer is responsible for the creation of the world, he was responsible for the creation of the drama. The set changes

were choreographed in a manner that revealed the laborer's changing nature as coincidental with the world's changing nature. The more structured the world became, the more orderly were the set changes. At the beginning of the play, I chose random patterns of movement which suggested near collision. In the later stages of the action, the units were moved in linear patterns with drill-like precision.

Though the set units were, in theory, rectangular cubes (See Figure Q), in actuality they were imperfect shapes. Their appearance was derived from the Chinese architecture of the 1930's. The bricks from which Chinese buildings were constructed eroded faster than they could be replaced. As a result, the architecture appeared to be in a state of continual disrepair. Four of the units were covered with scrap canvas, cardboard, rusted tin, and rotten wood. Two units, representing the houses of the rich, were predominantly stone in appearance. The overall effect was a world where the forces of nature are barely contained. Only the rich people in the community can afford to keep their houses intact. The laborer, the maker of the world, struggles to maintain his fragile existence. (See Figures J - N).

Several of the units had a layered effect which is typical of Chinese village architecture. Hanging from the sides of buildings were baskets, bicycle wheels, or any number of discarded objects. This characteristic added to the proletarian aspect of the drama. By using real objects for this effect, as opposed to

visual representations, we were able to give the set a para-theatrical look. Not only did the actors move the units: they also stored their props and costumes on them. There was the sense that the actors had created the set out of the discarded objects of their world.

Wong's world needed an identity separate from that of the city at large. It needed to be isolated visually from the corrupt world of Setzuan. We lowered the apron to audience level and played that space as Wong's den. Wong played in this lower world with the city behind him. From this vantage point, Wong's role as narrator was enhanced: he addressed the audience on their own level. In order to further separate Wong's den from the world of Setzuan, an inner curtain was lowered upstage of the apron. The gods entered Wong's dreams behind and through this curtain.

The inner curtain paralleled the gods' world as represented by the backdrop. (See Figure P.) Since a fundamental characteristic of the gods is their lack of human substance, we decided that the most effective means of representing their world was with a two-dimensional surface. By contrasting the solid units of the city with the backdrop of the city painted in the style of an ancient Chinese scroll painting, we created a distinction between the changing world of man and the unchanging world of the gods. By cutting a city gate through this two-dimensional surface, we created the impression that the transition between

the two worlds was immediate and without compromise. The two worlds did not blend, they were in conflict with each other.

Another major set piece was the god-machine. We wanted to emphasize the fact that the gods in Scene Ten were escaping from the plight of Shen Te and the revolutionary mob outside of the courtroom. We also wanted to emphasize their situation as one where the existing world order is confronted with an irreconcilable conflict between classes. In order to do this, we combined a number of different images, stressing: 1) the super-natural nature of the event; 2) the bureaucratic nature of the god's expedition; and, 3) the image of the airplane. By having the god-machine resemble an airplane, we were able to create the impression that the gods, like diplomats in a hostile world, were fleeing a situation that they were responsible for creating. In order to enhance the laissez-faire attitude of the gods, we had the gods sing their song from the windows of the ascending plane.

The tree from which Yang Sun attempts to hang himself was another major element of the design. (See Figure 0.) The tree represented nature unshaped by man. Paralleling the progression of the stage design from randomness to rational order, we altered its position on stage so as to emphasize its growing lack of predominance. By the end of the play, the tree had gone from its central position in the Prologue to a position in the stage left wings.

All of the elements of the design emphasized the theatrical

nature of the event from a proletarian perspective rather than a bourgeois one. The real objects, the rough edges, the exposed, rusted steel frames of the rectangular units, and the functional nature of the set units emphasized the fact that the world had been created with care and sweat--not from an image of beauty, as in the bourgeois theatre--but from a fierce dedication to the reality of things.

The costumes reinforced our concept of the distinction between the primitive and modern worlds. The proletarian perspective was emphasized by creating a distinction between the laborer's clothing and the capitalist's costumes: the laborer's clothing was functional; the capitalist's costumes were impractical. Above all, we wanted to establish the laborer as earthy and the capitalist as artificial.

The laborers wore layers of deteriorating rags. We combined elements of traditional Chinese dress and Western dress. The laborers' costumes looked as if they had been constructed from discarded clothing. By using a wider range of colors and then dulling those colors with dirt, we gave the laborer a hint of Westernization. The impression we wanted to create was that the laborer clothes himself from the deteriorated remains of the capitalists' clothing.

In order to represent the primitive nature of the laborer, we emphasized his physicality. He was barefoot and his costume allowed for his skin to be exposed. Thus, the laborer was

touchable. At times we wanted the laborer to appear undesirable. In order to do this, we covered his exposed skin with a layer of mud and grease. He could be touched, but only at the cost of covering oneself in filth.

The capitalists, on the other hand, wore clothing that in no way supported their needs as human beings. They were literally covered from head to toe, with the only exposed skin being their mouths, chins, and jaws. They wore clothing that was thick and artificial. Their clothing gave their bodies an irregular shape. Unlike the laborer, whose costume conformed to his body, the capitalist wore a costume that was wired into fixed shapes.

We also decided to give the capitalist an almost god-like appearance. We elevated his shoes and padded his clothes. Next to the laborer, the capitalist stood tall and proud. He glistened under the lights. His beauty appeared totally out of place, however. Next to the dehumanized and filthy laborer, his appearance seemed ludicrously self-indulgent. His size, though awesome, made it impossible for him to move freely and easily. We wanted to create the impression that the capitalist achieves the ideal of a life free from the filth of the existing world, but he does so at the cost of his humanity. The capitalist is a deformed being, incapable of experiencing the reality of things.

We decided to emphasize the simplicity of the gods. Their dress paralleled the simple lines of the painted backdrop. In order to manifest the fact that they became influenced by the

existing world, they acquired more earthly possessions as the play progressed, not only to defend themselves against an angry populace, but to cover their tattered garments. As a result, they became closer in appearance to the laborer. In Scene Ten, however, they returned to their original appearance, save for the addition of a symbol of their authority as judges--a mask.

The lighting needed to fulfill three primary functions:

- 1) it needed to follow the action of the play as it evolved from a primitive world into a modern one; 2) it needed to clarify the action of the play, rather than the mood of the action; and,
- 3) it needed to emphasize the proletarian perspective. We avoided the clear white light that Brecht specifies in favor of colored light, which allowed for more choices in realizing our goals.

In order to follow the progression of the play from its random order to its rational one, we decided upon a light which changed in intensity, increasing or decreasing in warmth. By using a neutral density filter, we were able to create a moodless environment that supported the evolutionary condition of the world. At the beginning, we used a light that emphasized the characters' human qualities. By Scene Eight, these qualities were blanketed in an intense, institutional light that made their human qualities harsh and sterile.

At times, we used the light to create a powerful theatrical effect. By using high side lighting, we were able to cast long shadows off the set units. We used these long shadows during

the set changes in order to heighten the effect created by the choreography. The more random the choreography, the more confused was the dance of shadows on the stage floor. When the choreography became organized and precise, the shadows moved in linear patterns.

For the Wong/gods scenes, we developed a lighting effect that clarified the appearances of the gods as dreams. We also wanted to contrast their mythic appearance as almighty forces directing the course of human events, with their real appearance as impotent and pathetic symbols of authority. In order to achieve this effect, we used back light that revealed their presence behind the inner curtain. Before their entrance the back light was lowered in on a baton. As the lighting instrument descended, the gods' shadows, which were cast on the inner curtain, grew to immense sizes. When the gods entered, their immense appearance shrank suddenly and drastically. As a result, the distinction between the gods' mythic image and their real image was brought to the consciousness of the audience.

A final major lighting effect was used at the play's conclusion. We illuminated the gods' airplane with a brilliant pink light. This effect not only emphasized the unnaturalness of the event, but it also stressed the absurdity of it. By having the gods ascend in this pink light, we were able to demonstrate the fact that the gods' existence lacks significance. Their existence in a world plagued by extreme poverty and brutality is, at best,

a cruel joke.

The Music

For the six songs in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, we used the piano score composed by Stefan Wolpe. This music was chosen over the orchestrated music of Paul Dessau because I felt that a single piano would be more appropriate for the proletarian perspective. An orchestrated piece seemed too sophisticated. At one time, I considered mixing the musical forms, but that plan altered as I began to understand the play in a more ritualistic way. I decided, instead, to mix the clarity of the piano with an improvised, ritualistic sound. The songs had a Western flavor, but the incidental music underscoring Shen Te's monologues and the set changes had Eastern overtones. This distinction emphasized the specific nature of the songs as commentaries on the alienated condition of Western society. The monologues that I chose to underscore with the oriental, ritualistic sound were specifically related to those moments when a more romantic energy prevailed.

Stefan Wolpe's music is both simple and jarring. He juxtaposes a simple melodic line with another simple melodic line, creating a pattern of dissonance. The combination of the dissonance of the music and the bitter irony of Brecht's lyrics created a style of music that had the savageness of jazz and the simplicity of the ballad. The gods' hymn, by contrast, is a cruel parody on the traditional religious hymn. Brecht's lyrics are

ironic, but Wolpe's rollicking melody and tempos are in direct contrast to the sacred tone of the religious hymn.

Vocally, I wanted the songs to reinforce the proletarian perspective. The meaning of the words and the economic class of the characters were far more important to me than the beauty of the singer's voice. When the songs became lyric in tone, I had the singers shout the words rather than sing them. The overall effect of this device was that it created the impression of a crude, untrained voice: the emphasis remained on the inherent value of the lyrics as they related to the action of the play and the condition of the world.

All of the songs were sung directly to the audience. The action stopped, the lights changed, and the singer moved down stage to sing the song in a presentational style. This particular convention isolated the songs from the spoken material. The five songs sung by the members of the proletarian class had the quality of Greek choral odes. At the end of Scene Nine and at the point in Scene Ten before the re-entrance of the mob, a proletarian group chanted "Kill Shui Ta." This device also emphasized the importance of the proletarian "chorus."

The incidental music was created improvisationally. We used a combination of traditional and untraditional musical instruments. The traditional instruments were: an E-flat chime, three bamboo wind chimes, one metal wind chime, a vibraphone, a marimba, and six wood blocks of various pitches. The untraditional

instruments included a 21' 1 1/2" piece of black metal pipe suspended from the ceiling, a trash can, four brake drums from a truck, and two coil springs from an automobile. By using the more traditional instruments at the beginning of the play, we were able to create a sound dominated by earth noises and delicate tinkles. This oriental sound underscored Wong's opening monologue and the first few set changes. As the world became more structured, the harsher sounds of the untraditional instruments began to take over. By Scene Eight, the incidental music had almost completely lost its delicate oriental overtones and had become a series of clashing metallic sounds.

Shen Te's monologues in Scenes Four and Eight were also underscored by incidental music. These two monologues are preludes to key moments in Shen Te's life. They represent the height of her romantic spirit: in the first monologue she talks about her love for Yang Sun and in the second, she has just realized that she is pregnant with their child. The incidental music underscoring these monologues emphasized the romantic, fantastic quality of Shen Te's spirit.

We also used incidental music to underscore the departure of the gods in Scene Ten. The effect we were after here was a cacophonous conflict of indescribable sounds. We wanted to emphasize the fact that the world of Setzuān has gone haywire. When the rational order of the existing world confronts the irrational energy of the revolutionary proletariat, the result

is an irreconcilable and incomprehensible mixture of emotions and needs.

All of the sound effects were created live from a unit in the wings on stage right. We created the effect of rain in Scene Three in order to punctuate the solitude of Yang Sun and Shen Te; in Scene Nine we used rain again as a prelude to the growing unrest of the revolutionary proletariat. For the sound of the airplane, we created an effect that represented the awesome potential of science. There were other incidental sounds used solely to clarify off stage action: boxes crashing, dogs barking, etc.

Casting and Rehearsals

I had several major objectives in mind when I cast THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN: 1) for the capitalists, I needed strong physical types who could take command of the stage; 2) for the laborers, I needed actors who could manifest the physical deterioration of their class; 3) for Shen Te and Yang Sun, I needed actors who could evoke both empathy and fear; 4) for Wong, I needed an agile actor capable of playing a child-like character, yet strong enough to lead the revolution; and, 5) for the gods, I needed actors with a comic sensibility. Working with a limited acting pool, I did my best to find actors with at least one of these required traits.

Since I wanted the capitalists to have a physically dominating appearance, it was essential that the actors I cast in the roles

of Shu Fu, Mi Tzu, and the Policeman have bodies that could reflect the grandeur of the possessing class. I also needed actors with an ample dexterity of wit communicating the feigned innocence inherent in the language of the capitalists. Since they would also be wearing masks, I wanted actors who were at ease physicalizing their actions in simple controlled movements.

My major requirement for the laborers was that they possess an unsophisticated manner. In contrast to the capitalists' grandeur, the laborers needed a rough, natural appearance. For them, I needed actors who, in a sense, were non-actors. If necessary, they could be laborers from the community. In the same way that a Morality Play is performed by and for the common laborer, Brecht's THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN could be played by members of the proletariat class who viewed life from a proletarian perspective.

The characters of Shen Te and Yang Sun are the major developing characters in the play. In order to dramatize their transformation into capitalist characters, I needed actors who were flexible enough to change from one persona to another. They also needed the physical size to command the actors playing these parts needed to have a command of language. In order to realize the poetic nature of Shen Te, the actress playing her had to be simple and direct. The actor playing Yang Sun, however, need not have the grace and wit of the established capitalists.

Casting Wong was perhaps the most difficult problem I faced.

To combine his child-like state of mind with his fierce passion for goodness, I needed an agile actor capable of physicalizing Wong's stages of adversity. He needed to play an action through to its pitiable conclusion without ever losing sight of its hopeful possibilities. The actor playing Wong had to understand the unconditional optimism of Wong's child-like personality.

The gods, like the capitalists, had to possess an agile wit. Since I decided to play the gods in a Punch and Judy style, the actors portraying them needed to possess an understanding of low, slapstick comedy. Physically, I wanted the gods to be lean: emphasizing the simplicity of their dress and behavior.

One of my major concerns throughout the rehearsal process was the education of the cast regarding the proletarian perspective. Since the majority of the actors were bourgeois in spirit and in practice, I faced a situation where the needs and aspirations of the proletariat were basically unknown by the actors. My first major task involved communicating to them the reality of a world ruled by poverty and brutality.

The cast spent the first three rehearsals reading through the script. For the first two rehearsals, I gave each actor a part that I knew he would not be playing. My hope was that the actor would pay more attention to the world of the play than he would to his own character. In the next three rehearsals we divided each scene into its component parts. At these rehearsals, I took every available opportunity to emphasize the condition of

the world. The actors were also encouraged to explore a wide range of choices, even in the most seemingly obvious circumstances. By pointing out the social conditions and the possibility of alternant modes of behavior, I wanted to establish Brecht's perspective on human nature: social conditions determine the particular choices that an individual makes.

The second method I employed in order to educate the actors about the reality of their dehumanized condition, was a slide presentation of life in China before the revolution. The slides were of statues depicting the inhuman treatment of the Chinese peasant by his feudal landlord. They showed the laborer as a beast of burden, beaten and robbed of his worth by the smiling, self-assured capitalist exploiter. Throughout the slide show, I emphasized the laborers' physical deformity, their suffering expression, and their lack of self-respect. With the capitalists, I emphasized their grandeur and extreme self-confidence. Some slides depicted the revolution and needed no directorial commentary.

Another aspect of the world of Setzuan that needed development was the laborer's conflict with himself: a struggle between his needs as a communal being and his needs as an individual. To develop the laborer's communal nature, I employed improvisational techniques. I had the laborers create group improvisations on the theme of family. Not only did this develop their identity as an ensemble, it also emphasized the social pecking order that is so evident in the script among members of the proletarian class.

Since the laborers' needs as individuals are so dependent on their hunger and poverty, and since the actors portraying the laborers were removed from any real knowledge of such an extreme economic depression, I focussed their individual objectives on the acquisition of specific objects. I had them improvise situations which demanded that they fight to the death for the possession of an object as simple as a tea pot. In this way, I hoped to establish a value system that was similar to their characters' codes of behavior. For a laborer living in Setzuan, owning a bottle of wine is equal in value to a contemporary American owning a sail boat or a home in the country.

Since the capitalists in the play were wearing masks, I held two special mask workshops in the techniques of personifying a mask physically. Outside of the workshops, I emphasized the need to remain detached from the world, untouched by the suffering and misery of the laborer. I stressed the fact that the capitalist characters 1) never reveal their true meaning (they always lie); and, 2) always conclude their actions with a transfer of money. By limiting the capitalists' behavior to these two actions, I made their characters recognizable as a group.

I also emphasized the inflated language of the capitalists. Nothing is more important to a capitalist than his words. I had the actors playing the capitalist characters spend many rehearsals doing nothing more than revel in the language. This

technique not only increased the actors' ability to lie effectively, but it transformed their characters into worshippers of language and its power.

Chapter Four

Evaluation

An evaluation of a production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN in Brechtian terms must address the production's effectiveness as a vehicle for social change. Brecht was not concerned so much with a production's educational value (so often considered Brecht's theatrical intention) as he was inspired by the ability of theatre to motivate an audience to discover its own answers to human problems. Brecht's theatre has one major objective: to change the world. Brecht does not want a theatre that merely gives enjoyment to its audience or that merely instructs the audience about the ideological nature of its world. The former affirms the mythical concepts already existing in the Western world; the latter paralyzes the need for action and revolt by presenting a cleverly constructed, dogmatic view of life. Brecht's theatre leads an audience along a path to discovery.

How can the theatre be both instructive and entertaining? How can it be divorced from spiritual dope traffic and turned from a home of illusions to a home of experiences? How can the unfree, ignorant man of our century, with his thirst for freedom and his hunger for knowledge; how can the tortured and heroic, abused and ingenious, changeable and world-changing man of this great and ghastly century obtain his own theatre which will help him to master the world and himself?¹

My expectations for this production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN were not as ambitious as Brecht's. Brecht's audience

was eager for change; the audience in Blacksburg, Virginia is, for the most part, complacent and content. The capitalist ideology is so firmly rooted in the American consciousness that our impoverished humanity is glorified by the mythic dreams of wealth and success. To believe that those dreams could be shattered through the experience of one production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN would be both foolhardy and absurd. One theatrical experience does not a revolution make.

The proletarian perspective, which this production tried to demonstrate, is as alien to a contemporary Blacksburg audience as Einstein's Theory of Relativity is to a Newtonian physicist. If this production could convince just one theatre-goer that the capitalist world in which we live is unnatural and unsupportive to the growth of the communal being, then this production was successful. If, on the other hand, it only strengthened the mythic conception that capitalist ideology is the only system of economic survival which assures the individual's freedom as a private person, then the production was a failure. The individual and the society must pursue its "real" identity. If this production helped in any way to further that pursuit, then its intention was realized.

This evaluation is divided into three parts. The first part analyzes Brecht's vision of the theatre in relationship to the bourgeois theatre. The second part illustrates the essential differences between Brecht's audience and the audience that viewed

the Blacksburg production. The third and final part of this evaluation will discuss the major weakness of this production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN: the failure of this production to translate the human argument of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN into conscious, ideological terms.

Before I can evaluate this production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, I must first distinguish Brecht's perception of the theatrical event from two other perceptions predominant in the contemporary American theatre. One perspective on theatre is a right-wing bourgeois perspective. Roland Barthes calls this perspective: "Myth on the Right;"² it is the perspective that most Americans are accustomed to seeing in the theatre. The "Myth on the Right" perspective emphasizes the beauty and grace of the theatrical form. Characters must be beautiful; their beauty is determined by an audience's ability to clearly define them as being either good or evil characters. In this type of theatre, vice and virtue as social mores must be easily and quickly recognizable. The world of the play must be seen as an unalterable given which therefore need not be understood as changeable by the audience. "The theatre as we know it shows the structure of society (represented on the stage) as incapable of being influenced by society (in the audience)."³ An audience member with the "Myth on the Right" perspective enters the theatre saying: "As a member of the bourgeois community (conditioned by experiences and social forces beyond my control) there

are certain expectations which I demand from a theatrical event:

1) the theatre must present the notion that good characters conquer evil ones; 2) it must present characters and situations that I know and am comfortable with; and, 3) I must be able to feel for these 'good' characters, laughing with them and/or crying for them. In short, I must enjoy the theatrical event as I would enjoy my favorite sporting event; otherwise, the event becomes an unsatisfying burden which I need not bear."

By emphasizing beauty, this perspective makes enjoyment the sole determinant of artistic worth. It does not eliminate the need for some kind of moral, social, or spiritual edification; on the contrary, the "Myth on the Right" perspective uses the mythical truths of bourgeois society, which are already implanted in the consciousness of an audience, to justify its very existence as theatre. By supporting the truths that an audience already knows, this type of theatre is easily accepted as belonging to an audience in the same way that a child is easily accepted by its parents: the child does not question the views of the parents.

"Myth on the Right" theatre bludgeons an audience with elaborate and spectacular artifices designed to titillate the senses and excite the mind to the detriment of true understanding. As a result, the audience becomes emotionally enthralled by theatrical artifice to the point of personal identification. We recognize ourselves on the stage because the characters there have the same ideals we have. If they question those ideals,

they either fall into the "evil" category of human nature and, thus, die at the hands of the "good" guys, or they are quickly and efficiently put on the right track again by a well-meaning friend. In either case, the ideals of capitalist society are glorified and served by this type of theatre. From this perspective, the more involved an audience becomes with the beauty of the ideals, the higher the quality of the theatre.

The second perspective of theatre that needs to be distinguished from the theatre of Brecht is the left-wing bourgeois theatre. This perspective has the same attitude towards beauty found in the "Myth on the Right" perspective. The difference between the two lies in the amount of "evil" that the good guys are allowed to have without breaking the mores of capitalism. The left-wing perspective revels in the plight of the underdog. Abused by one or two evil members of the ruling class, misguided by the excessive greed of a few of his fellow men, or lied to and cheated by a few ill-adjusted friends, the underdog is seen as the true hero if, despite his misfortune, he is able to learn the ways of "good" people.

The left-wing perspective dilutes the mythic conceptions of capitalist ideology and admits some of the dehumanizing tendencies, but it also glorifies the individual's struggle against these few "bad" people. At no time, however, does this type of theatre make revolution a necessary means to end the suffering and enslavement of the underdog. By revelling in the plight of the

underdog, this perspective elevates revolution itself to a myth; it defines a revolution as theory, not as a call to action. This perspective separates the greed and tyranny of people from their socio-economic conditions; it defines evil as a problem in conduct, not as a problem within the very structure of society. An audience member who has this perspective on theatre enters the theatre saying: "Capitalism, in and of itself, is not bad; people are. I will be fulfilled by the theatrical event if I can feel for the plight of the abused and forgotten people of this earth. If the drama denounces the inherent evil in people, I can leave the theatre content in the knowledge that my convictions have been affirmed."

This perspective emphasizes the instructional capabilities of theatre. It does not eliminate the need for artifices; on the contrary, unlike the "Myth on the Right" perspective which presents artifice openly and clearly as artifice, the left wing perspective presents artifice as if it were real. By diluting myth, this perspective creates illusions which mask the ideological forces behind them. These illusions stifle the need for revolutionary action while simultaneously expounding revolutionary rhetoric. The left-wing perspective deadens an audience's need for direct and conclusive action by keeping a firm and methodical hold on the themes of the drama. These themes, realized in the language of the playwright, are pointed out with such precision and in such a conscious manner that the audience is lulled into

complacency. We believe that we understand why suffering exists: suffering is not a by-product of the societal structure; it is an eternal, metaphysical problem of man's God-given nature. Language becomes the only viable means of changing one's nature; action is the insignia of the barbarian. Instead of motivating the audience into finding solutions to human problems, this perspective makes compact and cryptic statements on the condition of man's moral being. The more the audience becomes involved in these language-themes, the more effective the theatre has been.

Brecht's perspective, the proletarian perspective, is in opposition to both these bourgeois perspectives. The proletarian perspective has its heart and soul rooted in action, i.e., revolution. Revolution is opposed to both artifice and language: both are undeniably possessed by the bourgeoisie. Language and artifice immobilize the world, thus making it capable of being possessed. By mixing classes, the possessed and the possessors, Brecht creates the conditions whereby the actions of one class, the possessed, can be negated by the artifices and language of the other, the possessors. These conflicts between dissimilar classes, between action and artifice, are designed "in such a way as to 'shock' people into new recognitions and understanding."⁴ In short, the mythic notion of a separation between good and evil characters, vice and virtue, and underdog and king are dispelled at the same time that they are created. These value judgements are temporal in nature; they have no validity except to the

people that make them or enforce them. Metaphysically, there are no good guys or bad guys or underdogs or kings. In the end, there are only people, all of whom are struggling against a social system that is designed to undermine their value as human beings. An audience member with a proletarian perspective enters the theatre saying: "As a human being in search of my 'real' identity, I demand a theatrical experience that will help me and my fellow men to change the world and ourselves. Any theatre that does not further this objective is in conflict with the objective and, as a result, must be destroyed."

By emphasizing the need for definitive action against the immobilizing power of artifice and language, the proletarian perspective makes "the joy of liberation"⁵ the single most important element of the artistic product. This perspective does not eliminate the need for either artifice or language; the proletarian perspective employs them in order to give definition, by contrast, to the meaning and power of action. This perspective recognizes the myths of our society and signifies them on stage. As significations with no pretence towards truth, these myths lose their power to immobilize an audience either emotionally or intellectually. No one can get involved with a signification to the point of identification. For the characters on stage, however, the significations have an immobilizing presence. Thus, the audience can view and understand the relationship between the characters and the myths.

"The joy of liberation" is not a metaphysical concept in Brecht's usage; it is an elevated state of awareness caused by the juxtaposition of seemingly irreconcilable phenomena. On the one hand, Brecht makes the audience aware of the physical incongruities between two dissimilar classes. On the other hand, he parallels these incongruities with the incongruities between language and action. When the incongruities between classes of people are represented on stage by significations, the incongruities between language and action take on the nature of a philosophical argument. The audience sees and understands what the characters do not see or understand. They will leave the theatre with the joy of having been liberated from the ignorance and unconsciousness rampant on the stage.

"The joy of liberation" is the key to understanding Brecht's revolutionary message. In order to change the world, one must first educate the oppressed: Brecht's *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN* demonstrates the myths used by capitalist ideology to oppress the proletarian class and keep them in a state of unconsciousness about the world and themselves. To liberate the audience from their ignorance is the single most important mission that Brecht's theatre serves.

As a result, the differences between Brecht's audience and the audience for this production of *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN* is an important factor in determining the success or failure of the production. Brecht's audience lived with the conflicting values

of Western thought. The conflict between Capitalism's pursuit of individual identity through the accumulation of private property and Communism's pursuit of a communal identity through the selfless dedication to the State was a part of his audience's immediate experience. Unlike a contemporary Western audience, which enters the theatre with preconceived notions about the nature of man and the world, Brecht's audience entered the theatre searching for solutions to some very immediate social problems. The capitalist myths existed in their world in a weakened condition: Germany was still in the midst of an economic depression; Facism was at the height of its power, co-existing with a Russian Socialist State. THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN had immediate application to the questions that Brecht's audience posed: the theatrical event might be enough to topple the weakened capitalist myths. The audience might not agree with the ideology underscoring Brecht's play, but they at least recognized it; they could leave the theatre either knowing the "joy of liberation" from ignorance or enraged by the "lies" and "misrepresentations" abundant in Brecht's dramaturgy. In either case, the result was a more intense relationship with the material presented in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN. Its immediacy for Brecht's audience spurred subsequent ideological arguments after the production was over.

The audience for this production does not live in such a world, however. Living as we do in the strongest capitalist country on earth, the myths which dehumanize and enslave us appear

to be totally natural. As a result, most people in this country (at least most of the people who attend the theatre in Blacksburg, Virginia) do not even see themselves as members of the proletarian class. Needless to say, Brecht's theatre demands a proletarian audience. But the audience members in Blacksburg believe that their depressed economic situation is temporary. They may strike it rich; they might win a sweepstakes or lottery, or they might own their own business. When they do (as the myth says) they will be free to enjoy life. Communism, in such a country, is considered evil; it deprives people of their basic human rights. Whereas Brecht's audience saw the struggle between Communism and Capitalism in human terms--two ideological systems competing with each other for the control of man's identity--the American audience sees the struggle in purely mythical terms. Communism is a system of lies; Capitalism is a system of personal independence and freedom. Even if the Blacksburg audience experienced "the joy of liberation," they would leave the theatre and enter a life situation which totally denies (or attempts to deny) the irreconcilable conflict between man's individual identity through the accumulation of private property and his communal identity. Without his life parallel, the human argument demonstrated in THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN cannot find an ideological argument to give it a conscious base of support.

The purpose of this production, i.e., to change the world through the "joy of liberation" was doomed to failure from the

outset. An American audience does not understand the ideological contradictions in their world which foster a proletarian perspective. The American laborer believes in the power of capital; he dreams of becoming a member of the possessing class. He does not see the exploitation of his labor as the result of Capitalism; instead, he sees it as a stepping stone to his becoming, eventually, the exploiter himself.

In this country, we have very few archetypal images of exploitation through which we may enrich our consciousness. The bourgeoisie is too strong and wise to allow a potentially dangerous situation to go unchecked. Today, the bourgeoisie admits many of its lesser sins in order to cover up "its principle evil."⁶ In this way, it shows the American worker that it "cares" for his well being.

The wealth of the American laborer is another reason for his lack of interest in questioning the very foundations of his world. The American laborer is, for the most part, comfortable and content. The standard of living is higher here. Through foreign investments, however, we indirectly dehumanize and degrade the laborers of Third World countries in order to assure the well being and contentment of our own laborers. A major portion of the population enjoys the fruits of this exploitation without ever realizing the amount of suffering that is caused by our economic prosperity.

As a result, the picture that THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN

pains of the capitalist world is too far removed from our present life situation. We do not understand extreme hunger and suffering or what extreme oppression can cause a person to do: instead of being motivated by extreme economic conditions, Shen Te seems simply foolish or naive to us. "The Angel of the Slums" is a totally fictional character, too good to be true, in the eyes of a people who are all dreaming of economic superiority.

Because of this basic misunderstanding about the economic conditions motivating the action of the play, it was impossible for the production to leave the audience with an experience of joy. The audience did not know the questions they needed to ask about themselves and the world. Without these questions, they could not carry the production into their own lives. To this audience, the play was about China, a country where people are too stupid to manage their business and personal affairs. The audience was, in a word, mystified by the true meaning of the action represented on stage.

Without an ideology to support the action, this production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN failed to make the conscious, political statement which the audience could apply to the American way of life. In order to make this production more effective, the dehumanized and fantastical significations of the Western half of Setzuan needed to be more firmly rooted in the modern world of business. We needed to witness the foreign world of Setzuan being invaded by a modern capitalistic mentality. This

invasion is a key element in the play: we failed to manifest that invasion forcefully enough.

The American business world is a corporate one. Its major weapon of enslavement is the power of advertising: everything from soap to politicians succeed or fail on the ability of the advertising campaign to sell their image to the American public. The advertisement is the source of the American myth: it creates our dreams and ambitions. If we were to succeed in "shocking" the audience into new recognitions and understanding, we needed to capture this mentality more completely. In his translation, Eric Bentley deleted most of Brecht's specific ideological references, which related specifically to the Germany of the 1930's. We should have found ways to restore and update those ideological references. The audience needed a specific political reality in order to understand THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN as a piece of revolutionary theatre.

Our production team concentrated on making the production visually stimulating: we captured the form of the world, the texture, colors, sound, etc. But we failed to associate these significations of the world of Setzuan with a specific political reality. As a result, the audience could understand the plot of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN as action, but they did not relate to the larger idea of capitalism's effect on the humanity of its inhabitants. The audience asked: "Why is this happening to these people?" They did not say: "This is happening to me and

the people I work for and with!" I am happy to say, however, that eight months after the production closed, I now hear some people relating the action of the play to their own lives. If this is a sign of some success, I accept it as proof of this production's minimal effectiveness. At least, this production did not strengthen the influence of the capitalist myths.

Endnotes

Chapter One

- ¹ Other than the works of Roland Barthes, whose perspective is clearly Marxist and whose works I cite extensively in this thesis, other writers who explore the relationship between Brecht and Marx are: 1) Walter Benjamin, *UNDERSTANDING BRECHT*, trans. Anna Bostock, (London: NLB, 1973); 2) Keith A. Dickson, *TOWARDS UTOPIA*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); and, 3) John Willett, *THE THEATRE OF BERTOLT BRECHT*, (New York: New Directions, 1959).

Martin Esslin discusses Carl Jung's psychoanalytical theories in *BRECHT: THE MAN AND HIS WORK*, (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961). Frederic Ewen in *BERTOLT BRECHT: HIS LIFE, HIS ART, AND HIS TIMES*, (New York: The Citadel Press, 1967), also applies Jungian thought to Brecht's work.

- ² Roland Barthes, "The Tasks of Brechtian Criticism," in *BARTHES: CRITICAL ESSAYS*, trans. Richard Howard, (Northeastern University Press, 1972), p. 71-76.
- ³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY*, part I and III, (International Publishers, New York, 1939), p. 35.

(All the translations of Marx and Hegel, unless otherwise stated, are taken from Robert Tucker's *PHILOSOPHY AND MYTH IN KARL MARX*, Cambridge University Press, 1972.)

- ⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *HISTORISCH-KRITISCHE GESAMTAUSGABE, ERSTE ABTEILUNG*, (Marx-Engel Verlag G.M.B.H., Berlin, 1927-1932), Vol. III, p. 88-89. (Hereafter cited as MEGA, followed by the volume number. The separately published parts of Vol. I will be cited 1/1 and 1/2.)
- ⁵ Karl Marx, *A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY*, (Charles H. Kerr, Chicago, 1904), p. 11.
- ⁶ MEGA, V, p. 21. (Translation taken from Hans Barth's *TRUTH AND IDEOLOGY*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1976.)
- ⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, (Kegan Paul, London, 1896), Vol. III, p. 33.

- 8 Marx, GERMAN IDEOLOGY, p. 21.
- 9 Karl Marx, CAPITAL, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, (J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1933), p. 714.
- 10 Marx, MEGA, III, p. 206.
- 11 Ibid., p. 139.
- 12 Marx, CAPITAL, p. 189.
- 13 Ibid., p. 139.
- 14 Marx, MEGA, III, p. 83.
- 15 Marx, MEGA, 1/1, p. 603.
- 16 Ludwig Feuerbach, THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, (Harper & Bros., New York, 1956), p. 26.
- 17 Marx, CAPITAL, p. 708.
- 18 Ibid., p. 651-653.
- 19 Ibid., p. 651.
- 20 Marx, MEGA, III, p. 206.
- 21 Ibid., p. 212.
- 22 Karl Marx, SELECTED WORKS, (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958 - Vol. I and 1951 - Vol. II), p. 523.
- 23 Marx, MEGA, 1/1, p. 620.
- 24 Ibid., p. 619-620.
- 25 Carl Jung, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," in CIVILIZATION IN TRANSITION, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 88.
- 26 For the most concise description of Brecht's views on characterization consult "A Short Organum for the Theatre," in BRECHT ON THEATRE, ed. and trans. John Willett, (Hill and Wang, New York, 1957), Sections 34-68.

- 27 Carl Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," CIVILIZATION IN TRANSITION, p. 277.
- 28 Ibid., p. 286.
- 29 Ibid., p. 275.
- 30 Carl Jung, "A Psychological View of Conscience," CIVILIZATION IN TRANSITION, p. 440-441.
- 31 Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," p. 278.
- 32 Carl Jung, "The Role of the Unconscious," CIVILIZATION IN TRANSITION, p. 25.
- 33 Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," p. 253.
- 34 Carl Jung, "Mind and Earth," CIVILIZATION IN TRANSITION, p. 49.
- 35 Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," p. 281-282.
- 36 Carl Jung, "The Transformation of Libido," in SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION, trans. R. F. C. Hull, (Pantheon Books, New York, 1956), p. 156.
- 37 Jung, "The Origin of the Hero," SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION, p. 205.
- 38 Jung, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," p. 87.
- 39 Jung, "The Role of the Unconscious," p. 8.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Carl Jung, "The Autonomy of the Unconscious," in PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION, trans. R. F. C. Hull, (Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 15.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Jung, "The Role of the Unconscious," p. 10.
- 44 Jung, "The Battle for Deliverance from the Mother," in SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION, p. 301.

- 45 Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," MYTHOLOGIES, trans. Annette Lavers, (Hill and Wang, New York, 1972), p. 129.
- 46 Ibid., p. 141-142.
- 47 Ibid., p. 142.
- 48 Ibid., p. 155.
- 49 Ibid., p. 142.
- 50 Ibid., p. 155.
- 51 Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," p. 250.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Jung, "Symbols of the Mother and of Rebirth," in SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION, p. 227.
- 54 Jung, "The Role of the Unconscious," p. 17-18.
- 55 Jung, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," p. 94.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Moses Hess, SOCIALISTISCHE AUFSATZE, ed. Theodor Zlocisti, trans. Robert Tucker in PHILOSOPHY AND MYTH IN KARL MARX, (Welt-Verlag, Berlin, 1921), p. 170.
- 58 Jung, "The Role of the Unconscious," p. 19.
- 59 Jung, "Dogma and Natural Symbols," in PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION, p. 46.
- 60 Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," p. 260.
- 61 Ibid., p. 267.
- 62 Ibid., p. 255.
- 63 Jung, "The Autonomy of the Unconscious," p. 19.
- 64 Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," p. 286.
- 65 Barthes, "Myth Today," p. 148-149.

- 66 Ibid., p.148.
- 67 Jung, "The Role of the Unconscious," p. 13.
- 68 Jung, "Commentary on the Golden Flower," in *ALCHEMICAL STUDIES*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, (Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 16.
- 69 Barthes, "Myth Today," p. 146.
- 70 Jung, "The Battle for Deliverance from the Mother," p. 293.
- 71 Barthes, "Literature and Signification," in *BARTHES: CRITICAL ESSAYS*, p. 263.

Chapter Two

- 1 Information about China during the 1930's was gathered from William Hinton's *FANSHEN: A DOCUMENTARY OF REVOLUTION IN A CHINESE VILLAGE*, (Vintage Books, New York, 1966).
- 2 Bertolt Brecht, *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*, trans. Eric Bentley, (Grove Press Inc., New York, 1965), p. 17.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid., p. 27-36.
- 5 Ibid., p. 31-33.
- 6 Ibid., p. 30 and 33.
- 7 Ibid., p. 44.
- 8 Ibid., p. 44-45.
- 9 Ibid., p. 43.
- 10 Ibid., p. 49.
- 11 Ibid., p. 93.
- 12 Ibid., p. 124.
- 13 Ibid., p. 63.

- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 30.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 137.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 81.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 108.

Chapter Three

- ¹ Bentley's 1948 edition (published by The University of Minnesota Press).

Chapter Four

- ¹ Bertolt Brecht, "On Experimental Theatre," from BRECHT ON THEATRE, trans. John Willett, (Hill and Wang, New York, 1964), p. 135.
- ² Barthes, "Myth Today," p. 147.
- ³ Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre," from BRECHT ON THEATRE, p. 189.
- ⁴ Walter Benjamin, UNDERSTANDING BRECHT, trans. Anna Bostock, (Western Printing Services, Bristol, 1973). p. XIII.
- ⁵ Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre," p. 196.
- ⁶ Barthes, Myth Today," p. 154.

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- Jung. THE SYMBOLIC LIFE, trans. R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Rough Sketches

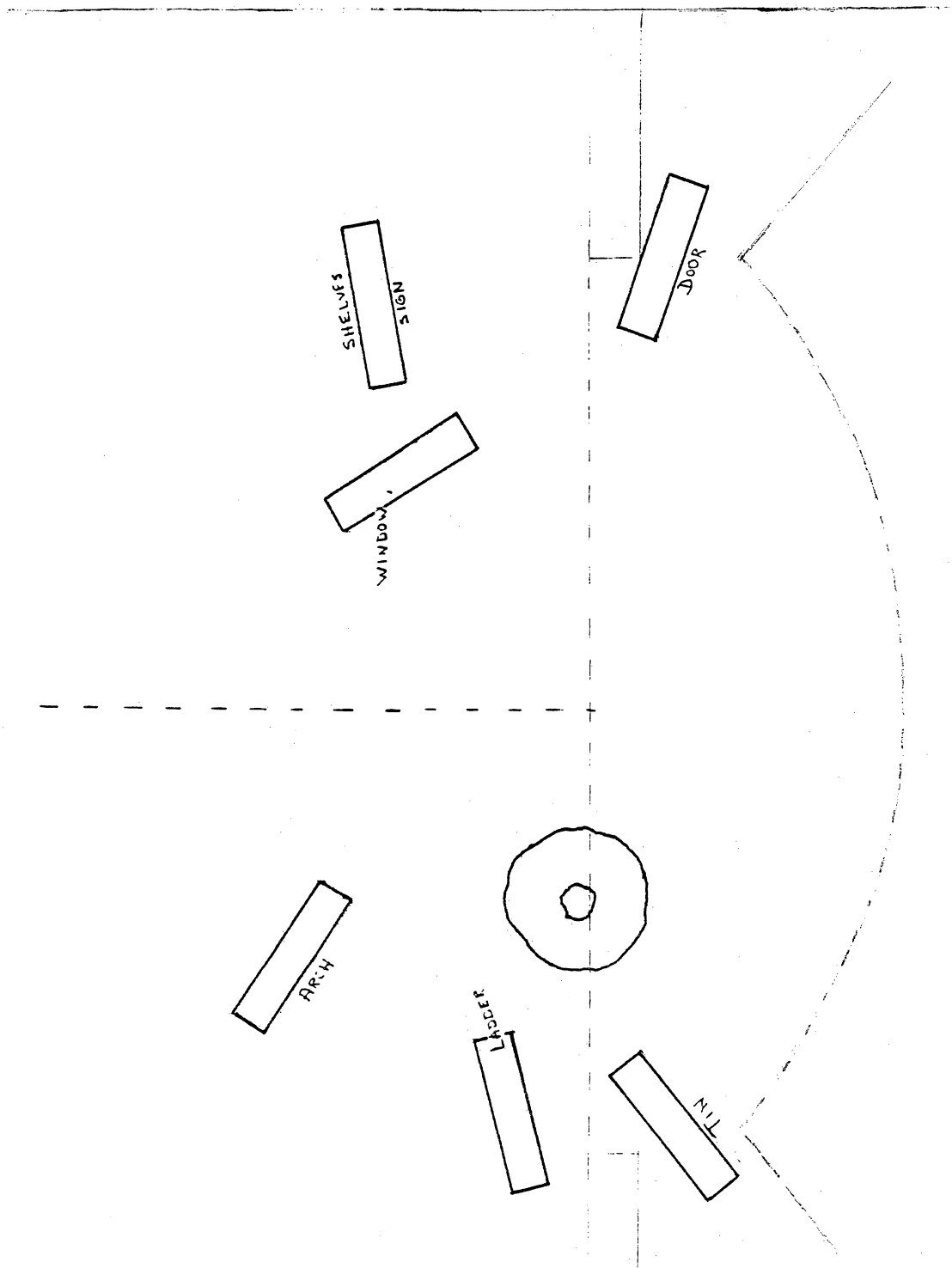


Figure A -- The Prologue , The City of Setzuan.

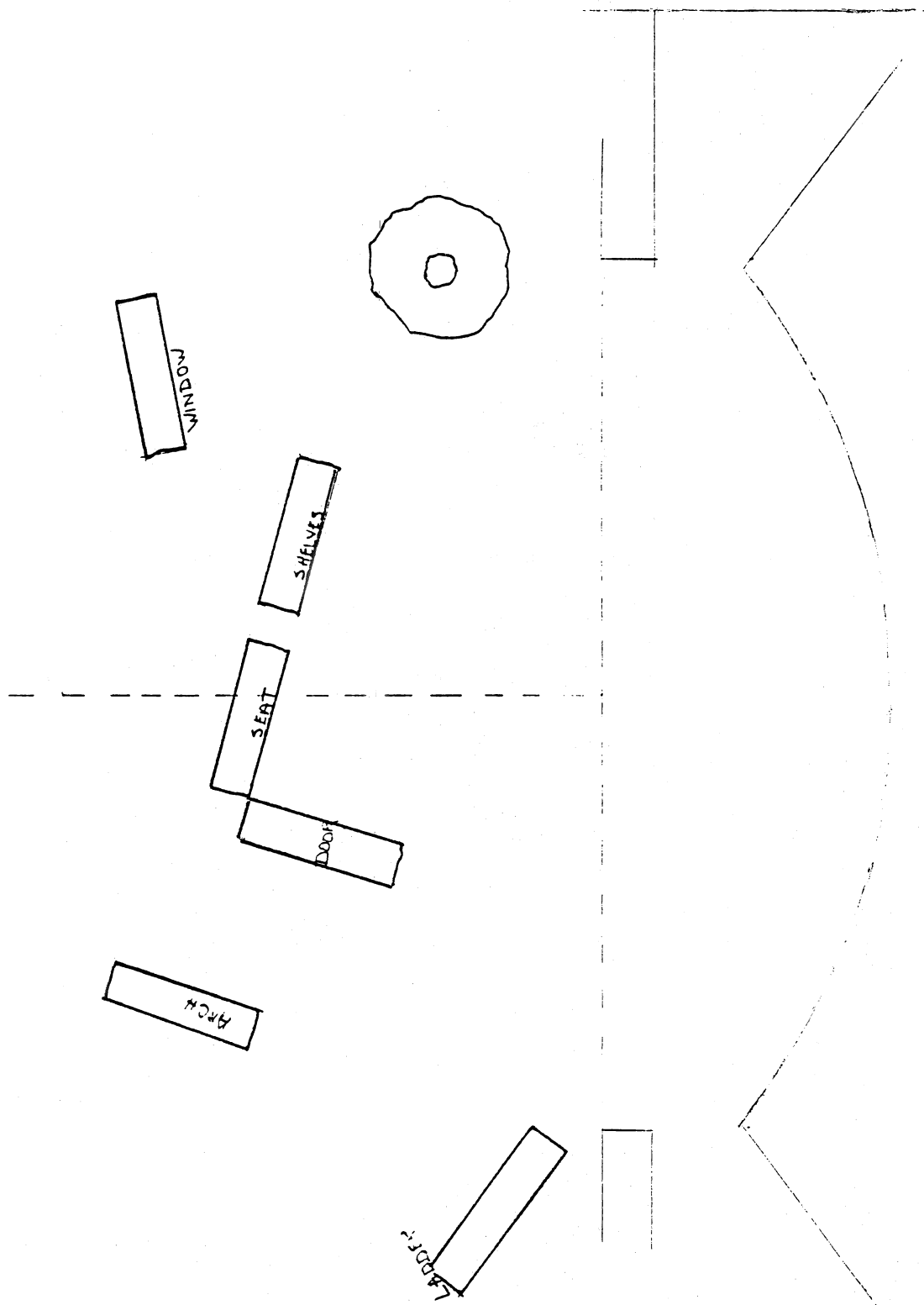


Figure B -- Scenes 1, 2, & 5, The Tobacco Shop.

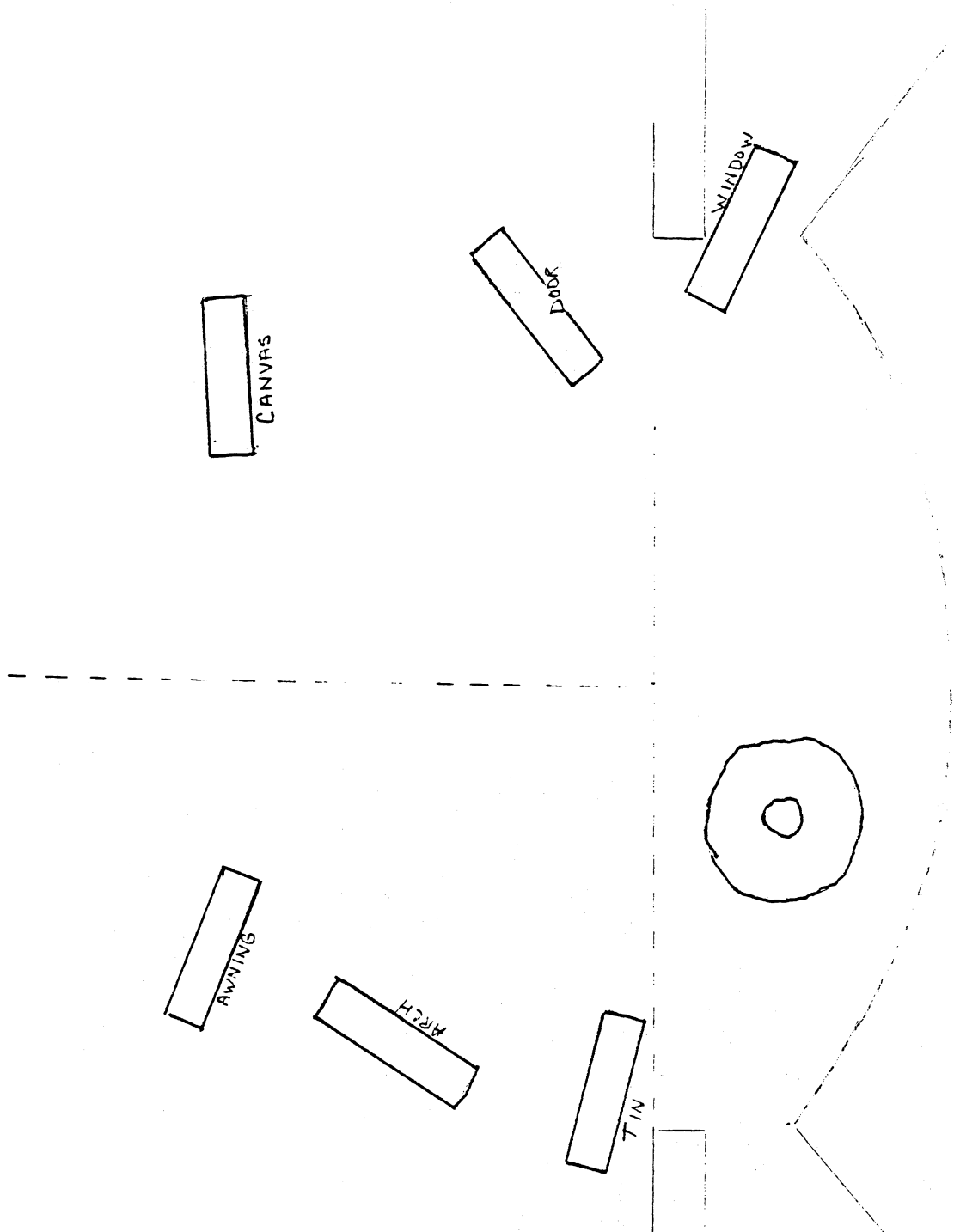


Figure C -- Scene 3, The Park.

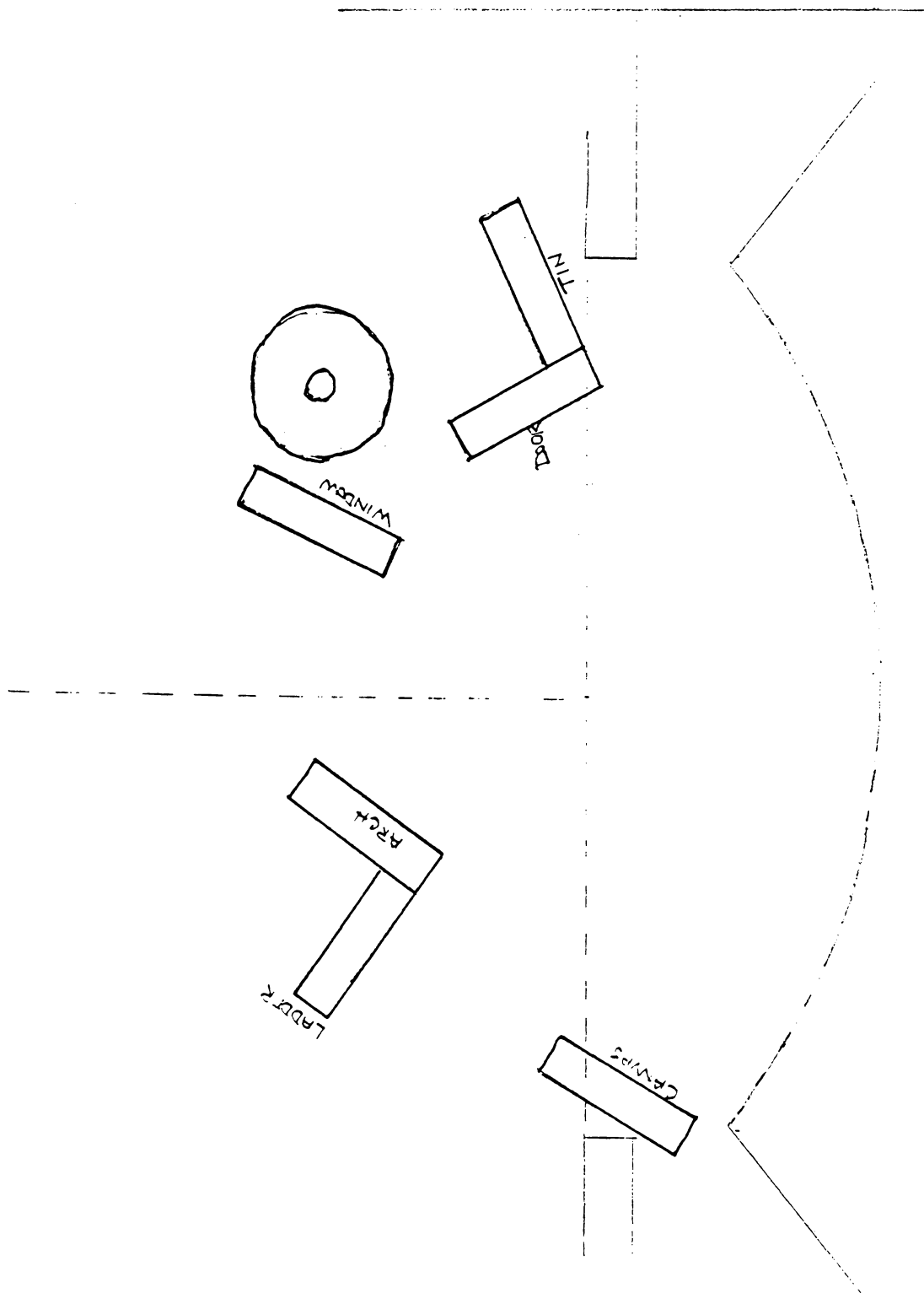


Figure D -- Scene 4, The Square.

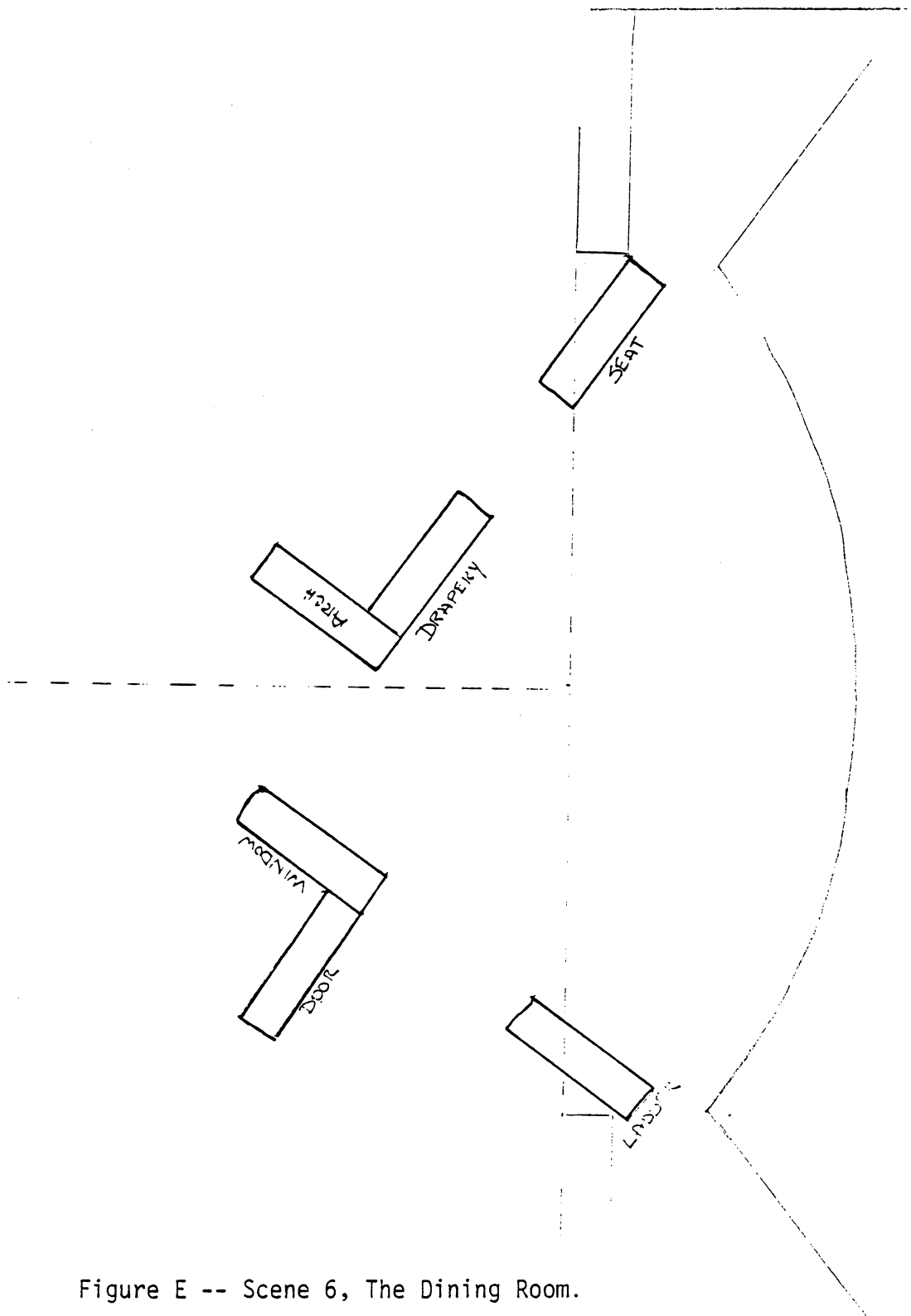


Figure E -- Scene 6, The Dining Room.

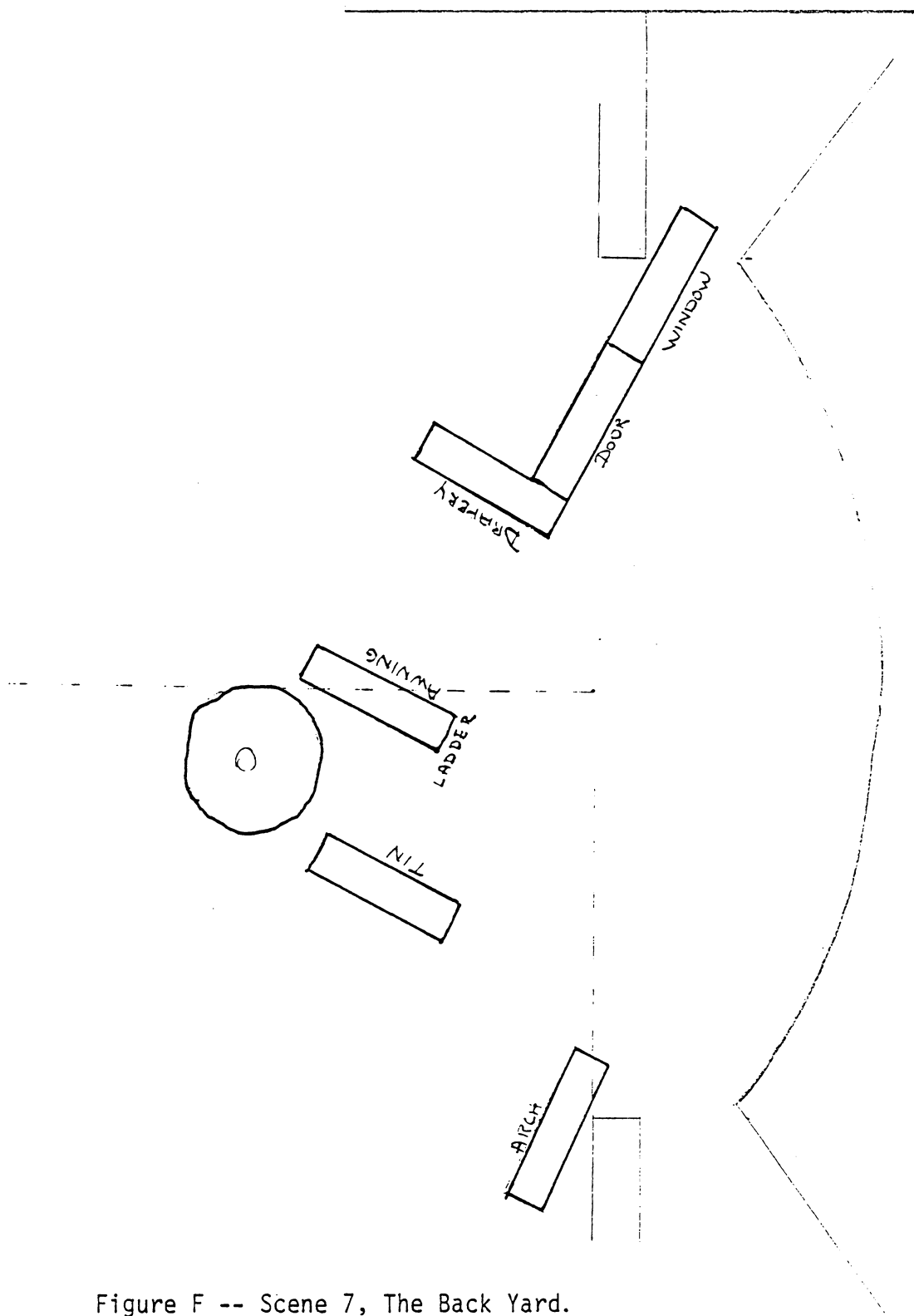


Figure F -- Scene 7, The Back Yard.

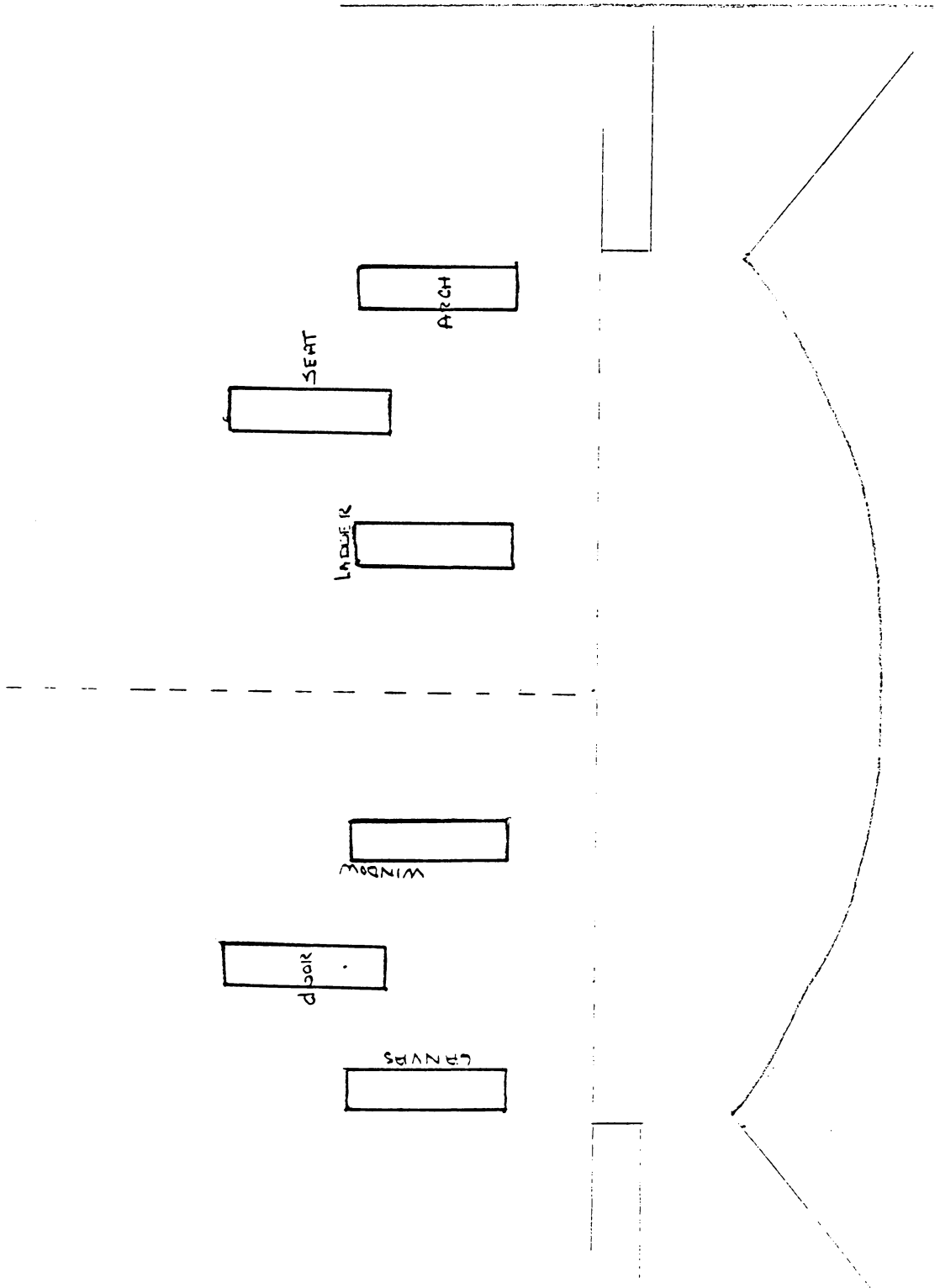


Figure G -- Scene 8, The Tobacco Factory.

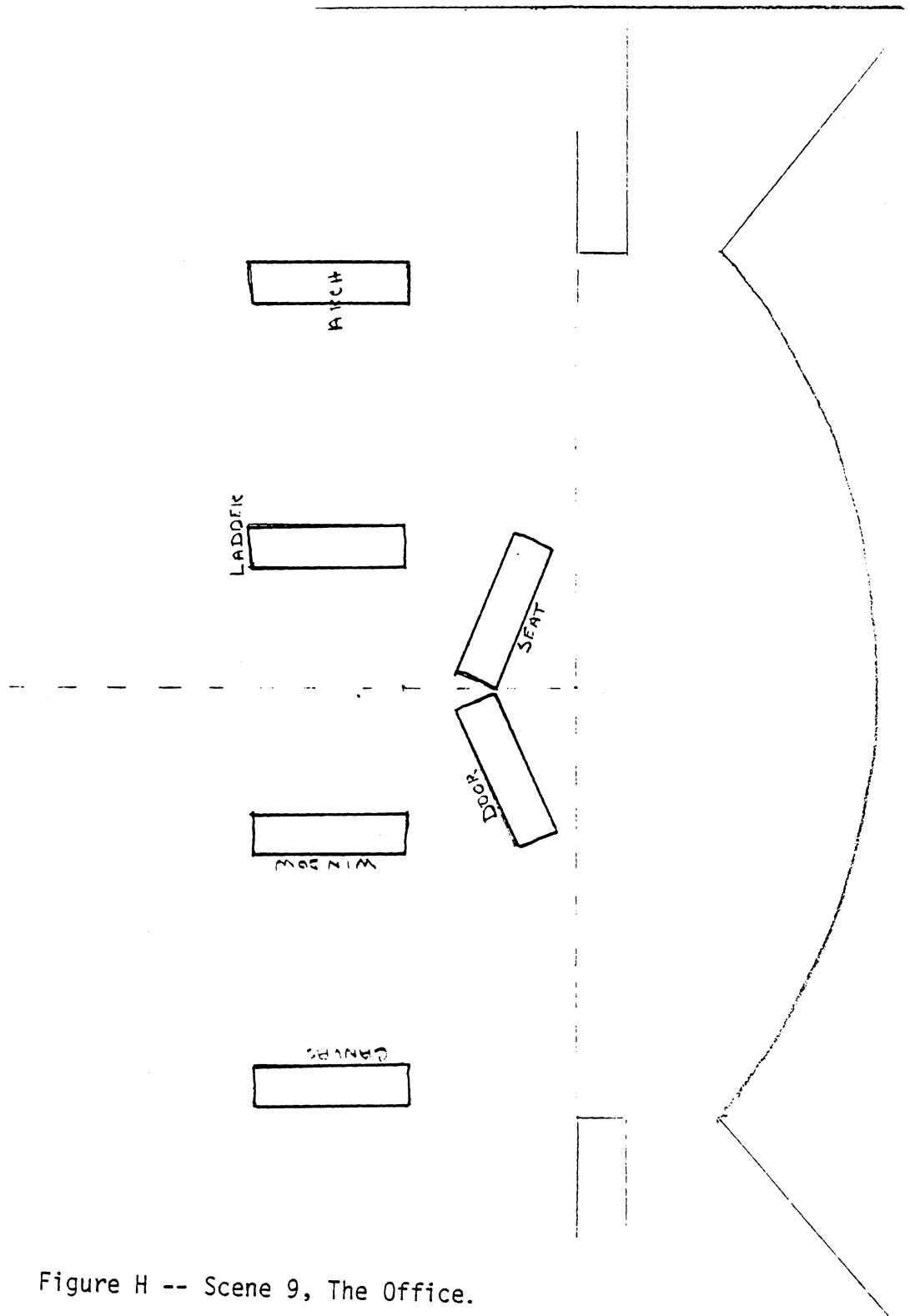


Figure H -- Scene 9, The Office.

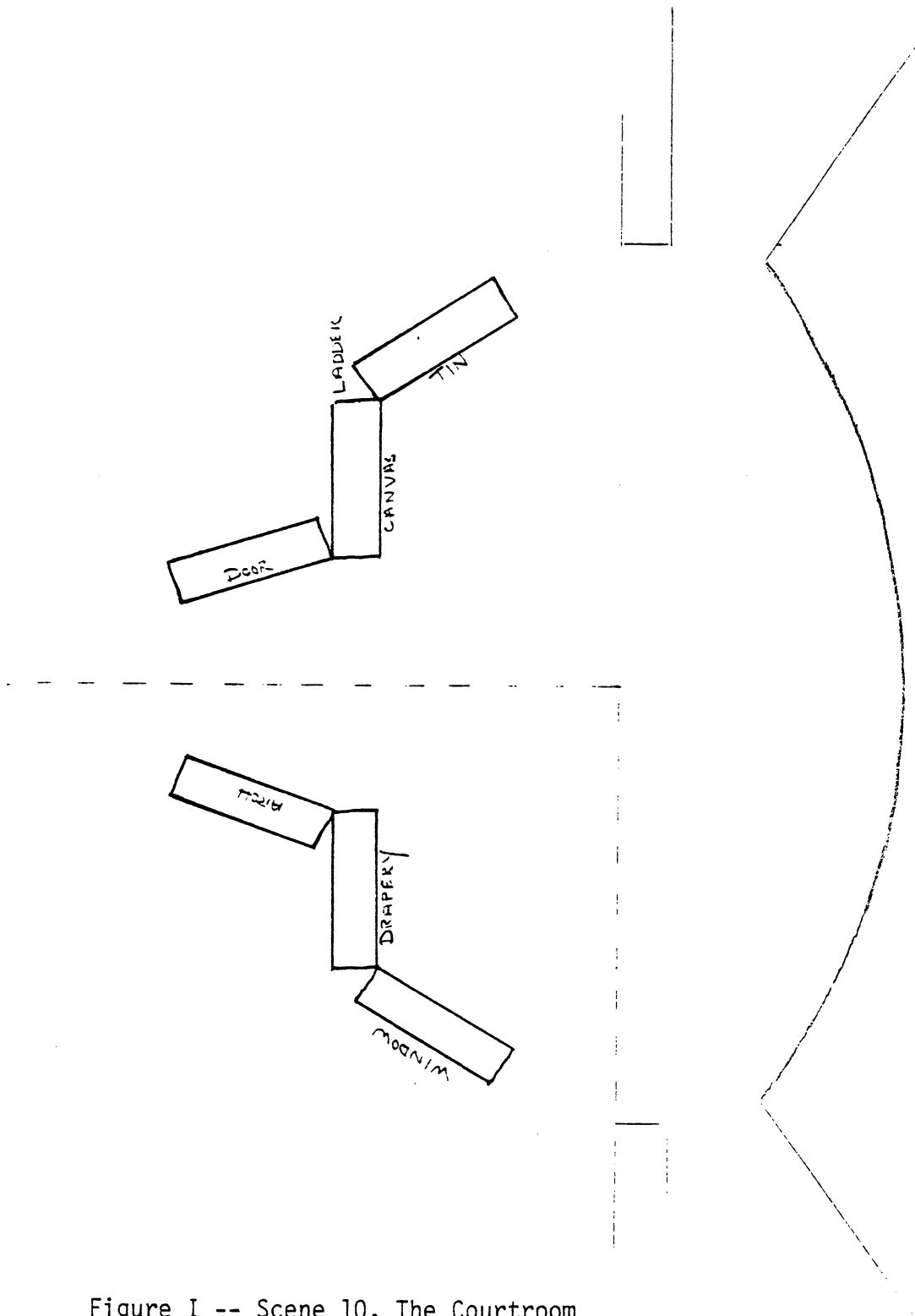


Figure I -- Scene 10, The Courtroom.

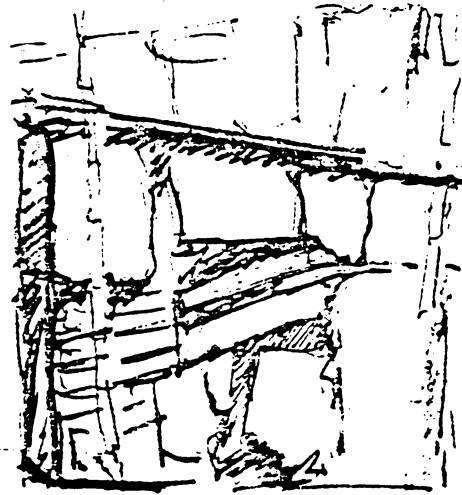


Figure J: the Window unit.

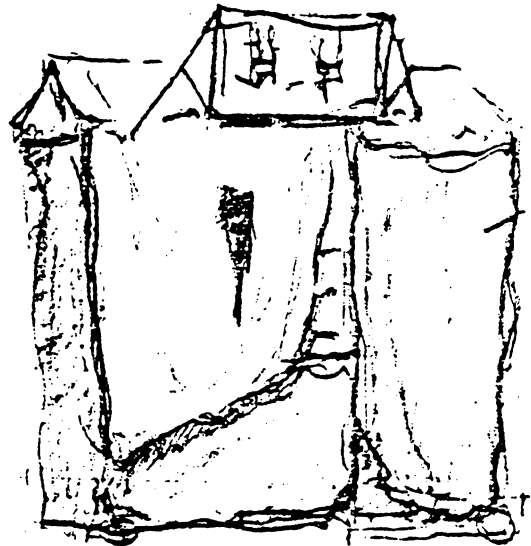
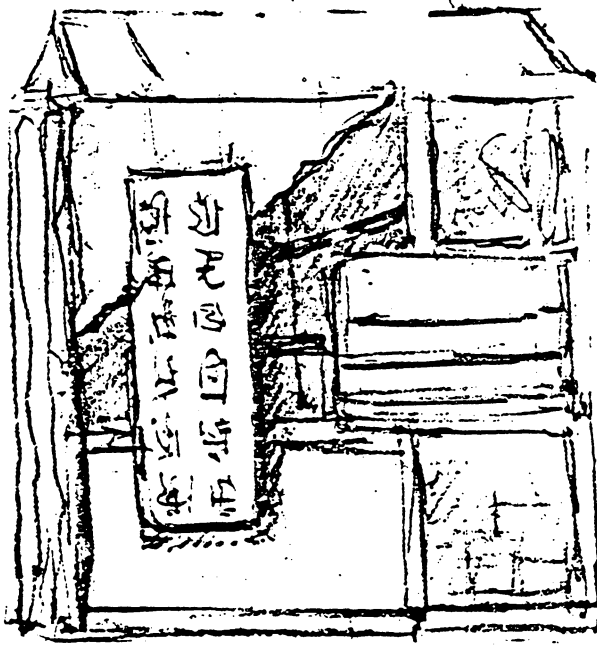


Figure K: the Shelf unit.

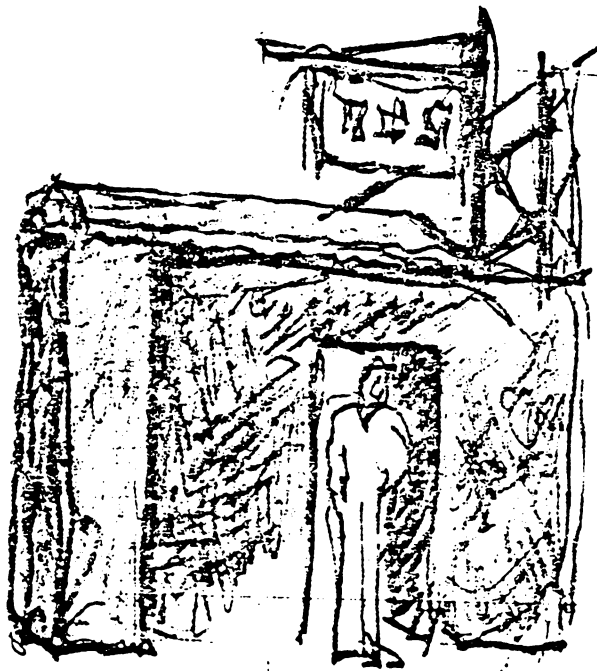


Figure L: the Arch unit (both sides are almost identical); the Door unit is of similar construction.

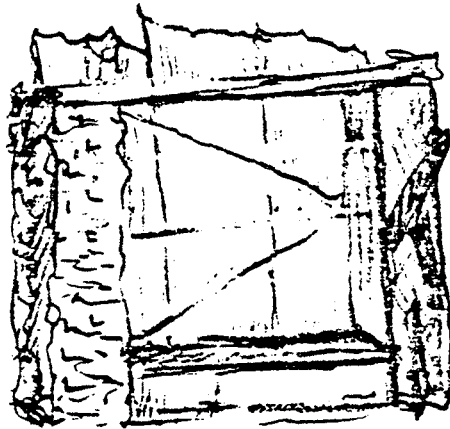
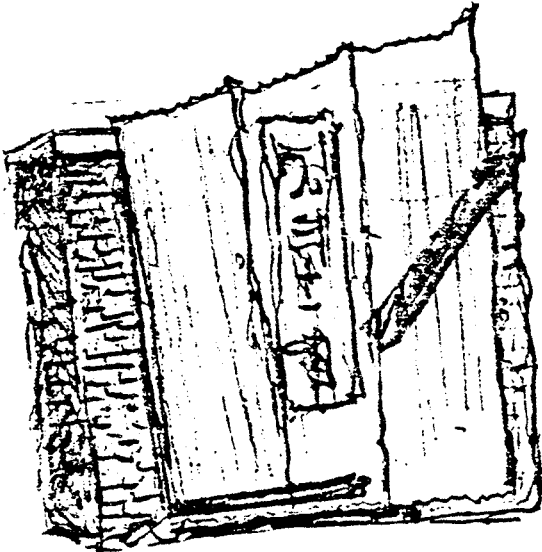


Figure M: the Bench unit.

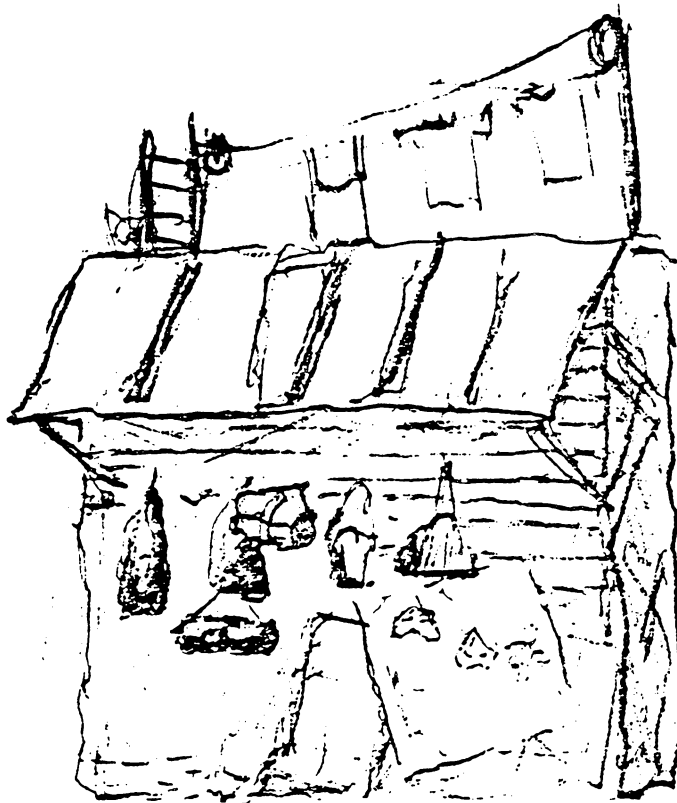


Figure N: the Clothesline unit.

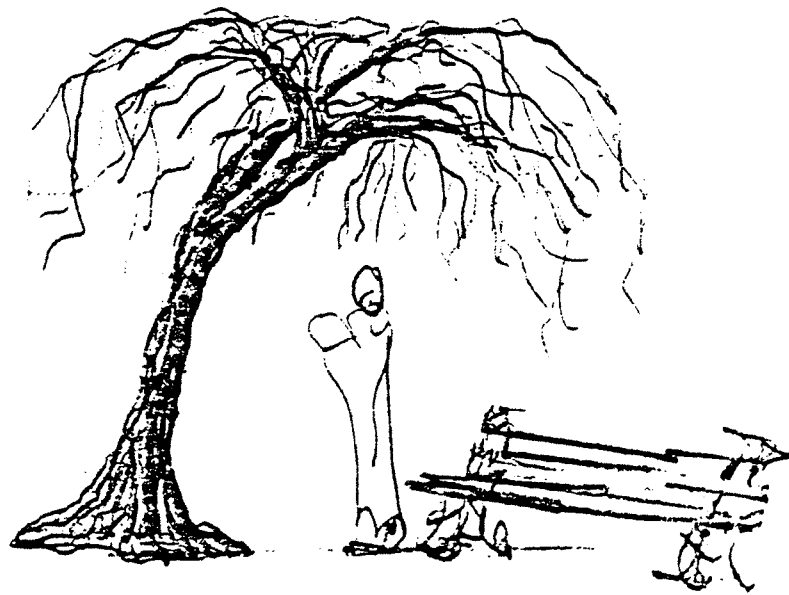


Figure 0: the Tree.

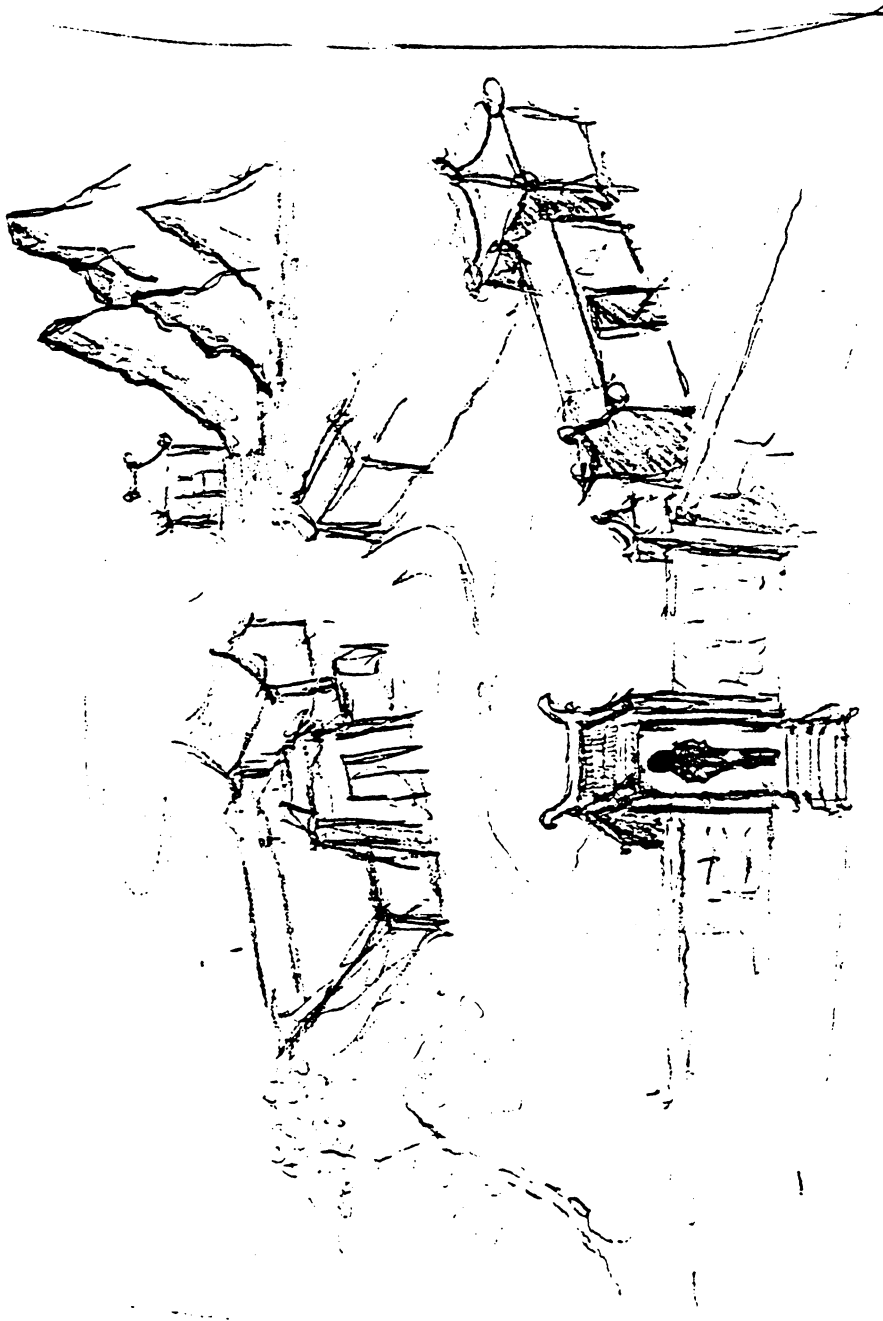


Figure P: the Backdrop.

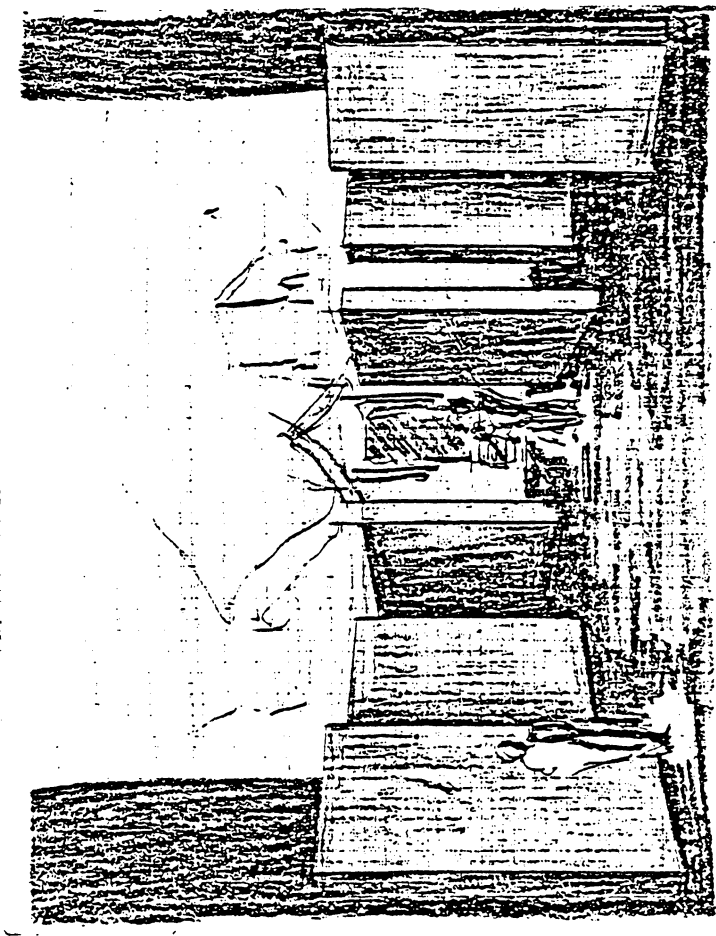


Figure Q: a geometrical sketch.

Appendix II: Production Book

CHARACTERS

Wong, <i>a water seller</i>	1
Three Gods	
Shen Te, <i>a prostitute, later a shopkeeper</i>	
Mrs. Shin, <i>former owner of Shen Te's shop</i>	
A Family of Eight (<i>husband, wife, brother, sister-in-law, grandfather, nephew, niece, boy</i>)	2
An Unemployed Man	
A Carpenter	3
Mrs. Mi Tzu, <i>Shen Te's landlady</i>	
Yang Sun, <i>an unemployed pilot, later a factory manager</i>	
An Old Whore	
A Policeman	
An Old Man	
An Old Woman, <i>his wife</i>	
Mr. Shu Fu, <i>a barber</i>	
Mrs. Yang, <i>mother of Yang Sun</i>	
Gentlemen, Voices, Children (<i>three</i>), <i>etc.</i>	

1--Played by a woman: [she played Wong as a man, however.]*

2--The nephew doubled as the waiter.

3--The carpenter doubled as the gentleman and the priest.

* [] indicates director's note.

PROLOGUE

At the gates of the half-Westernized city of Setzuan. Evening. WONG the water seller introduces himself to the audience.

WONG: I sell water here in the city of Setzuan. It isn't easy. When water is scarce, I have long distances to go in search of it, and when it is plentiful, I have no income. But in our part of the world there is nothing unusual about poverty. Many people think only the gods can save the situation. And I hear from a cattle merchant—who travels a lot—that some of the highest gods are on their way here at this very moment. Informed sources have it that heaven is quite disturbed at all the complaining. I've been coming out here to the city gates for three days now to bid these gods welcome. I want to be the first to greet them. What about those fellows over there? No, no, they work. And that one there has ink on his fingers, he's no god, he must be a clerk from the cement factory. Those two are another story. They look as though they'd like to beat you. But gods don't need to beat you, do they?

THREE GODS appear.

What about those three? Old-fashioned clothes—dust on their feet—they *must* be gods! (*He throws himself at their feet.*) Do with me what you will, illustrious ones!

FIRST GOD (*with an ear trumpet*): Ah! (*He is pleased.*) So we were expected?

- 1--Stage black.
- 2--Lights up; music begins. Wong is up center at the city gates; he is illuminated by a shaft of light coming through the gate. All the people of Setzuan are in tableau on the midstage plane. [The overall effect is: 1)a mixture of classes, 2)the city's over-crowded conditions, and 3)an atmosphere of sweat, sex, and danger.]
- 3--Gong sounds; Wong passes through the midstage tableau and addresses the audience down center. [He is excited about his "good" news.]
- 4--[Wong introduces himself with a job description. He accepts the poverty of the world. He thinks the gods have divine power.]
- 5--[Fact for the gods: heaven is disturbed by the condition of the world.]
- 6--Gong sounds; tableau breaks: the people come to life and move in every direction. [A change from stillness to confusion.]
- 7--[A characteristic of the gods is that they do not work.]
- 8--The gods enter through the city gates.
- 9--The characters that Wong makes reference to are focussed in the down left or down right areas.
- 10--The stage is almost cleared of the people of Setzuan.
- 11--The gods wander through the city, avoiding contact with the crowd. They cross down right.
- 12--[This is a sincere question.]
- 13--Wong crosses left.
- 14--[Establish immediately Wong's unconditional servitude.] Wong crosses to the gods; they meet center. Wong throws himself at their feet.
- 15--[Wong's servitude is good news to the gods.]
- 16--The gods are staged in a row: first god, second god, and third god--with the first god closest to Wong.

Bertolt Brecht

WONG (<i>giving them water</i>): Oh, yes. And I <i>knew</i> you'd come.	1 2
FIRST GOD: We need somewhere to stay the night. You know of a place?	3
WONG: The whole town is at your service, illustrious ones! What sort of a place would you like?	4
<i>The GODS eye each other.</i>	
FIRST GOD: Just try the first house you come to, my son.	
WONG: That would be Mr. Fo's place.	
FIRST GOD: Mr. Fo.	5
WONG: One moment! (<i>He knocks at the first house.</i>)	6
VOICE FROM MR. FO'S: No!	7
WONG <i>returns a little nervously.</i>	8
WONG: It's too bad. Mr. Fo isn't in. And his servants don't dare do a thing without his consent. He'll have a fit when he finds out who they turned away, won't he?	9
FIRST GOD (<i>smiling</i>): He will, won't he?	10
WONG: One moment! The next house is Mr. Cheng's. Won't he be thrilled!	11 12
FIRST GOD: Mr. Cheng.	
WONG <i>knocks.</i>	13
VOICE FROM MR. CHENG'S: Keep your gods. We have our own troubles!	14

- 1--Wong keeps a distance between himself and the gods.
- 2--[Wong does not understand the gods' meaning: he repeats the same information as if it were new.]
- 3--[Wong believes that everyone will welcome the gods.]
- 4--[Establish immediately the gods' hierarchy.]
- 5--Wong crosses to the down left door unit.
- 6--The third god acts as secretary: he records the events and names encountered during the gods' visit.
- 7--The "No!" comes from off stage immediately after Wong's knock. [The rich want no visitors.]
- 8--Wong crosses back to the gods.
- 9--[Wong covers up the lack of reverence shown to the gods by the people of Setzuan. The gods are wise to Wong's cover up.]
- 10--Wong does not go to the next house: he crosses up right to the arch unit.
- 11--[Wong wants to keep the gods' spirits up.]
- 12--The third god records the name.
- 13--Cheng's voice is heard as soon as Wong reaches the unit.
[The rich people of Setzuan know that the gods mean trouble.]
- 14--[The gods hear Cheng's comment. Wong tries to cover it up.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

WONG (<i>back with the GODS</i>): Mr. Cheng is very sorry, but he has a houseful of relations. I think some of them are a bad lot, and naturally, he wouldn't like you to see them.	1
THIRD GOD: Are we so terrible?	2
WONG: Well, only with bad people, of course. Everyone knows the province of Kwan is always having floods.	3
SECOND GOD: Really? How's that?	4
WONG: Why, because they're so irreligious.	
SECOND GOD: Rubbish. It's because they neglected the dam.	5
FIRST GOD (<i>to SECOND</i>): Sh! (<i>To WONG</i> :) You're still in hopes, aren't you, my son?	6 7
WONG: Certainly. All Setzuan is competing for the honor! What happened up to now is pure coincidence. I'll be back. (<i>He walks away, but then stands undecided.</i>)	8 9
SECOND GOD: What did I tell you?	
THIRD GOD: It <i>could</i> be pure coincidence.	10
SECOND GOD: The same coincidence in Shun, Kwan, and Setzuan? People just aren't religious any more, let's face the fact. Our mission has failed!	11
FIRST GOD: Oh come, we might run into a good person any minute.	12
THIRD GOD: How did the resolution read? (<i>Unrolling a scroll and reading from it</i> :) "The world can stay as it is if enough people are found (<i>at the word "found" he unrolls it a little more</i>) living lives worthy of human beings." Good people, that is. Well,	13

- 1--Wong crosses back to the gods, bowing profusely.
- 2--[The third god is concerned about their image.]
- 3--[Wong is superstitious.]
- 4--[The second god makes fun of Wong's superstitious nature.]
- 5--[The second god is a realist and a cynic. His statement reveals the lack of power that heaven has over acts of nature: science has the power to control them.]
- 6--Through out the scene, the first god keeps an eye on the behavior of the second god.
- 7--[The first god encourages Wong.]

- 8--Wong crosses up left and stands unable to decide what to do.
- 9--[Wong's attempts to find lodging for the gods have been limited to the houses of the rich: he equates goodness with wealth.]
- 10--[The third god is mostly optimistic.]
- 11--[The second god is mostly pessimistic.]
- 12--[The first god is mostly a diplomat: he strikes a balance between the other two gods.]

- 13--[A major theme: a static conception of the world presented by the dogmatic and simplistic mission of the gods versus a changing world where people are not concerned with being good but surviving.]

Bertolt Brecht

what about this water seller himself? *He's* good, or I'm very much mistaken.

SECOND GOD: You're very much mistaken. When he gave
us a drink, I had the impression there was something
odd about the cup. Well, look! (*He shows the cup to*
the FIRST GOD.)

FIRST GOD: A false bottom!

SECOND GOD: The man is a swindler.

FIRST GOD: Very well, count *him* out. That's one man
among millions. And as a matter of fact, we only
need one on *our* side. These atheists are saying, "The
world must be changed because no one can *be*
good and *stay* good." No one, eh? I say: let us find
one—just one—and we have those fellows where
we want them!

THIRD GOD (*to WONG*): Water seller, is it so hard to find
a place to stay?

WONG: Nothing could be easier. It's just me. I don't go
about it right.

THIRD GOD: Really?

He returns to the others. A GENTLEMAN passes by.

WONG: Oh dear, they're catching on. (*He accosts the*
GENTLEMAN.) Excuse the intrusion, dear sir, but
three gods have just turned up. Three of the very
highest. They need a place for the night. Seize this
rare opportunity—to have real gods as your guests!

GENTLEMAN (*laughing*): A new way of finding free rooms
for a gang of crooks. (*Exit GENTLEMAN.*)

- 1--[The gods' expectations are great.]
- 2--The second god crosses to Wong's water bucket, left of center, and picks up the cup. He returns to the other two gods and shows them the cup. [The second god is very observant.]
- 3--[Wong does what he has to in order to survive.]
- 4--[The first god decides that "enough" people mean only one person: his challenge is what the plot of the play will attempt to resolve.]
- 5--The third god crosses to Wong, still standing up left.
- 6--[Wong blames himself for his failure.]
- 7--Gentleman enters right.
- 8--The third god crosses back to the other two gods.
- 9--The gentleman crosses down center, eying suspiciously the three gods.
- 10--Wong stops the gentleman left of down center; the gentleman appears trapped between the three gods and Wong.
- 11--[The action of the first beat reaches desperate proportions: Wong accosts a stranger on the street, his speech sounds like a typical salesman's advertising ploy; the gods make themselves presentable.]
- 12--The gentleman exits left, fighting Wong off with his cane.
- 13--[A basic social attitude: anyone looking for something free must be poor and, thus, a crook.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- WONG (*shouting at him*): Godless rascal! Have you no religion, gentleman of Setzuan? (*Pause.*) Patience, illustrious ones! (*Pause.*) There's only one person left. Shen Te, the prostitute. She *can't* say no. (*Calls up to a window:*) Shen Te! 1
2
- SHEN TE *opens the shutters and looks out.* 3
- WONG: Shen Te, it's Wong. *They're* here, and nobody wants them. Will you take them? 4
- SHEN TE: Oh, no, Wong, I'm expecting a gentleman. 4
- WONG: Can't you forget about him for tonight?
- SHEN TE: The rent has to be paid by tomorrow or I'll be out on the street. 5
6
- WONG: This is no time for calculation, Shen Te.
- SHEN TE: Stomachs rumble even on the Emperor's birthday, Wong. 7
- WONG: Setzuan is one big dung hill! 8
- SHEN TE: Oh, very well! I'll hide till my gentleman has come and gone. Then I'll take them. (*She disappears.*) 9
- WONG: They mustn't see her gentleman or they'll know what she is. 10
- FIRST GOD (*who hasn't heard any of this*): I think it's hopeless. 11
- They approach WONG.*
- WONG (*jumping, as he finds them behind him*): A room has been found, illustrious ones! (*He wipes sweat off his brow.*) 12

- 1--The end of the first beat: Wong crosses down left to address the audience.
- 2--[Shen Te is introduced as someone who can not say "No." She is naturally a good person.]
- 3--Wong crosses to the up left window unit. Shen Te opens the window; she is lit from behind.
- 4--[Shen Te does not want to lose a night's earnings.]
- 5--[A social condition: landlords will throw you out on the street if you do not pay the rent on time.]
- 6--The gods exit into the right wings, exploring the city.
- 7--[Shen Te is not ignorant of the social conditions.]
- 8--[Shen Te has pity for Wong's plight.]
- 9--Shen Te closes the window.
- 10--Wong crosses down center to address the audience.
- 11--Voices are heard off right. The gods enter running; they run into Wong.
- 12--[Wong can not reveal to the gods Shen Te's profession: this is an important distinction between the first and the second beat.]

Bertolt Brecht

SECOND GOD: Oh, good.

THIRD GOD: Let's see it.

WONG (*nervously*): Just a minute. It has to be tidied up a bit. 1

THIRD GOD: Then we'll sit down here and wait. 2

WONG (*still more nervous*): No, no! (*Holding himself back.*) Too much traffic, you know. 3

THIRD GOD (*with a smile*): Of course, if you want us to move. 4

They retire a little. They sit on a doorstep. WONG sits on the ground. 5

WONG (*after a deep breath*): You'll be staying with a single girl—the finest human being in Setzuan!

THIRD GOD: That's nice.

WONG (*to the audience*): They gave me such a look when I picked up my cup just now. 6

THIRD GOD: You're worn out, Wong. 7

WONG: A little, maybe. 8

FIRST GOD: Do people here have a hard time of it? 9

WONG: The good ones do. 10

FIRST GOD: What about yourself? 11

WONG: You mean I'm not good. That's true. And I don't have an easy time either!

During this dialogue, a GENTLEMAN has turned up

- 1--The gods start to cross towards the up left units; Wong stalls them.
- 2--[The third god is understanding.] The gods start to cross to the down left door unit; Wong stops them.
- 3--[The streets are quite deserted by this time.]
- 4--Wong crosses right; the gods follow.
- 5--The first and second gods sit on a bench by the down right unit. The third god sits on the ground.
- 6--[Throughout the scene, Wong has been running back and forth between the houses and the gods.] Wong crosses with his cup, left on the ground by the third god, to his water buckets.
- 7--Wong crosses back to the gods.
- 8--[The first god does not recognize the obvious.]
- 9--The same gentleman enters left; he crosses to Shen Te's window unit.
- 10--The gentleman whistles.
- 11--[Wong is not good in the gods' eyes even though he is their faithful servant.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

in front of Shen Te's house, and has whistled several times. Each time WONG has given a start. 1

THIRD GOD (*to WONG, softly*): Psst! I think he's gone now.

WONG (*confused and surprised*): Ye-e-es. 2

The GENTLEMAN has left now, and SHEN TE has come down to the street.

SHEN TE (*softly*): Wong!

Getting no answer, she goes off down the street. WONG arrives just too late, forgetting his carrying pole.

WONG (*softly*): Shen Te! Shen Te! (*To himself*): So 3
she's gone off to earn the rent. Oh dear, I can't
go to the gods *again* with no room to offer them. 4
Having failed in the service of the gods, I shall run
to my den in the sewer pipe down by the river
and hide from their sight!

He rushes off. SHEN TE returns, looking for him, but finding the GODS. She stops in confusion. 5

SHEN TE: You are the illustrious ones? My name is Shen 6
Te. It would please me very much if my simple room
could be of use to you.

THIRD GOD: Where is the water seller, Miss . . . Shen Te?

SHEN TE: I missed him, somehow.

FIRST GOD: Oh, he probably thought you weren't coming, 7
and was afraid of telling us.

THIRD GOD (*picking up the carrying pole*): We'll leave 8
this with you. He'll be needing it. 9

1--The gentleman exits left.

2--Shen Te enters down left of window unit; she carries a lantern. Shen Te crosses behind her window unit, looking for Wong. Wong sees her as she is leaving: he chases after her. Shen Te crosses up right. Wong can not find her. [Coincidence plays a major role in the development of the action.]

3--[Wong blames himself again: one of his major characteristics.]

4--Wong crosses down left to address the audience. [All asides to the audience are physicalized by a move down stage.]

5--Wong exits left.

6--Shen Te enters up right; she crosses down center, still looking for Wong. Shen Te crosses right where she sees the gods still seated.

7--[The first god has experience with worshippers: he knows the reason for Wong's behavior. The gods' apparent blindness to the reality of the world is a lie; it is part of their defence against the corruption of the world.]

8--Shen Te and the gods cross towards the window unit.

9--[The third god is looking out for Wong.]

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- Led by SHEN TE, they go into the house. It grows dark, then light. Dawn. Again escorted by SHEN TE, who leads them through the half-light with a little lamp, the GODS take their leave.* 1
2
3
- FIRST GOD: Thank you, thank you, dear Shen Te, for your elegant hospitality! We shall not forget! And give our thanks to the water seller—he showed us a good human being. 4
- SHEN TE: Oh, I'm not good. Let me tell you something: when Wong asked me to put you up, I hesitated. 5
- FIRST GOD: It's all right to hesitate if you then go ahead! And in giving us that room you did much more that you knew. You proved that good people still exist, a point that has been disputed of late—even in heaven. Farewell! 6
7
- SECOND GOD: Farewell!
- THIRD GOD: Farewell!
- SHEN TE: Stop, illustrious ones! I'm not sure you're right. I'd like to be good, it's true, but there's the rent to pay. And that's not all: I sell myself for a living. Even so I can't make ends meet, there's too much competition. I'd like to honor my father and mother and speak nothing but the truth and not covet my neighbor's house. I should love to stay with one man. But how? How is it done? Even breaking a few of your commandments, I can hardly manage. 8
9
10
- FIRST GOD (*clearing his throat*): These thoughts are but, um, the misgivings of an unusually good woman! 11
- THIRD GOD: Good-bye, Shen Te! Give our regards to the water seller! 12

- 1--Shen Te and the gods exit up left. The lights signify the passing of time.
- 2--A cock crows. The end of the second beat.
- 3--Shen Te and the gods enter from up left and cross down center. Shen Te still has a lantern.
- 4--[The gods are very friendly.]
- 5--[Shen Te is honest: it is important to establish this fact early.]
- 6--[The gods do not want to hear the truth: all they want is a good person.]
- 7--The gods cross up center in a hurry to leave. [Shen Te does not want them to leave with a false impression of her.]
- 8--[Shen Te tells them all: this resembles a confession.]
- 9--Shen Te crosses down left, hiding her face.
- 10--The first god crosses to Shen Te.
- 11--[The first god excuses her of her sins: this is not forgiveness, but obviously a cover up. The second god shows his disapproval of the action.]
- 12--The gods again try to exit up center.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SECOND GOD: And above all: be good! Farewell! 1

FIRST GOD: Farewell!

THIRD GOD: Farewell!

They start to wave good-bye. 2

SHEN TE: But everything is so expensive, I don't feel
sure I can do it! 3

SECOND GOD: That's not in our sphere. We never meddle
with economics. 4

THIRD GOD: One moment. (*They stop.*) Isn't it true
she might do better if she had more money?

SECOND GOD: Come, come! How could we ever account
for it Up Above? 5
6

FIRST GOD: Oh, there are ways. (*They put their heads
together and confer in dumb show. To SHEN TE,
with embarrassment:*) As you say you can't pay
your rent, well, um, we're not paupers, so of course 7
we insist on paying for our room. (*Awkwardly
thrusting money into her hand.*) There! (*Quickly.*)
But don't tell anyone! The incident is open to
misinterpretation.

SECOND GOD: It certainly is!

FIRST GOD (*defensively*): But there's no law against it! 8
It was never decreed that a god mustn't pay hotel
bills! 9
10

The GODS leave.

- 1--The gods exit like dominoes, one right after the other.
- 2--Shen Te stops them.
- 3--[A social condition: in order to be good, one needs money.]
- 4--[The second god sticks to the divine rules: reveals the relationship of the gods to the world.]
- 5--The gods huddle in dumb show. Shen Te crosses down left. [The dumb show is indicative of the style of acting the gods must have.]
- 6--[There is a higher authority.]
- 7--[The gods recognize the need for money. Like the people of Setzuan, they too are corrupted by it.]
- 8--The gods exit up center. The second god argues with the first god.
- 9--When the gods reach the upstage stairs, the gong sounds: Shen Te and the gods go into tableau. The people of Setzuan enter the tableau to observe her good fortune. [With Shen Te frozen center and the people surrounding her, the overall effect is one of impending doom while the gods watch from their elevated height.]
- 10--Scene change lights and music begin.

1

A small tobacco shop. The shop is not as yet completely furnished and hasn't started doing business.

SHEN TE (<i>to the audience</i>): It's three days now since the gods left. When they said they wanted to pay for the room, I looked down at my hand, and there was more than a thousand silver dollars! I bought a tobacco shop with the money, and moved in yesterday. I don't own the building, of course, but I can pay the rent, and I hope to do a lot of good here. Beginning with Mrs. Shin, who's just coming across the square with her pot. She had the shop before me, and yesterday she dropped in to ask for rice for her children. (<i>Enter MRS. SHIN. Both women bow.</i>) How do you do, Mrs. Shin.	1
MRS. SHIN: How do you do, Miss Shen Te. You like your new home?	2
SHEN TE: Indeed, yes. Did your children have a good night?	3
MRS. SHIN: In that hovel? The youngest is coughing already.	4
SHEN TE: Oh, dear!	5
MRS. SHIN: You're going to learn a thing or two in these slums.	6
SHEN TE: Slums? That's not what you said when you sold me the shop!	7
	8
	9

1--Shen Te down center addresses the audience. The people of Setzuan are in tableau in the upstage areas.

2--The gong sounds to break the tableau.

3--[Shen Te is elated.]

4--Mrs. Shin enters the shop. Shen Te and Mrs. Shin meet center.

5--[The children are important to Mrs. Shin's motivations: the emphasis on the family unit within the proletarian class.]

6--[Mrs. Shin has experience at getting what she wants.]

7--[Shen Te and pity.]

8--[Mrs. Shin treats Shen Te as if Shen Te owed her something.]

9--[These are the slums of Setzuan.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

MRS. SHIN: Now don't start nagging! Robbing me and my innocent children of their home and then calling it a slum! That's the limit! (<i>She weeps.</i>)	1 2
SHEN TE (<i>tactfully</i>): I'll get your rice.	3
MRS. SHIN: And a little cash while you're at it.	
SHEN TE: I'm afraid I haven't sold anything yet.	
MRS. SHIN (<i>screeching</i>): I've got to have it. Strip the clothes from my back and then cut my throat, will you? I know what I'll do: I'll dump my children on your doorstep! (<i>She snatches the pot out of SHEN TE's hands.</i>)	4
SHEN TE: Please don't be angry. You'll spill the rice.	5
<i>Enter an elderly HUSBAND and WIFE with their shabbily dressed NEPHEW.</i>	6 7
WIFE: Shen Te, dear! You've come into money, they tell me. And we haven't a roof over our heads! A tobacco shop. We had one too. But it's gone. Could we spend the night here, do you think?	8 9
NEPHEW (<i>appraising the shop</i>): Not bad!	10
WIFE: He's our nephew. We're inseparable!	11
MRS. SHIN: And who are these . . . ladies and gentlemen?	12
SHEN TE: They put me up when I first came in from the country. (<i>To the audience:</i>) Of course, when my small purse was empty, they put me out on the street, and they may be afraid I'll do the same to them. (<i>To the newcomers, kindly:</i>) Come in, and welcome, though I've only one little room for you—it's behind the shop.	13 14 15 16

- 1--The husband, wife, and nephew enter up left as part of the continuing life of the city.
- 2--[Mrs. Shin uses her children to get what she wants: she plays on Shen Te's natural pity.]
- 3--Shen Te crosses up left to shelf unit. [Shen Te comforts Mrs. Shin by giving her gifts.]
- 4--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shen Te. [Mrs. Shin is capable of being savage. Her desperation is extreme.]
- 5--[Shen Te does her best to appease Mrs. Shin.]
- 6--The major action of the scene happens in and around center stage. The city life happens around the action.
- 7--The wife enters. The husband and nephew wait at the door.
- 8--[The wife, like Mrs. Shin, does not beat around the bush.]
- 9--[The tobacco shop is a common business adventure in Setzuan.]
- 10--The nephew crosses down right, looking through some of the stock.
- 11--The wife crosses to the nephew and stops him from upstaging her.
- 12--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shen Te at center. [Mrs. Shin and the wife are competing against one another for the attention of Shen Te.]
- 13--The unemployed man enters right as part of the city life.
- 14--Shen Te crosses down center to address the audience.
- 15--Shen Te crosses up right to the husband.
- 16--[The fact that Shen Te is from the country is important to the development of her character.]

Bertolt Brecht

HUSBAND: That'll do. Don't worry.	1
WIFE (<i>bringing SHEN TE some tea</i>): We'll stay over here, so we won't be in your way. Did you make it a tobacco shop in memory of your first real home? We can certainly give you a hint or two! That's one reason we came.	2 3
MRS. SHIN (<i>to SHEN TE</i>): Very nice! As long as you have a few customers too!	
HUSBAND: Sh! A customer!	4
<i>Enter an UNEMPLOYED MAN, in rags.</i>	
UNEMPLOYED MAN: Excuse me. I'm unemployed.	
MRS. SHIN <i>laughs</i> .	5
SHEN TE: Can I help you?	
UNEMPLOYED MAN: Have you any damaged cigarettes? I thought there might be some damage when you're unpacking.	6
WIFE: What nerve, begging for tobacco! (<i>Rhetorically.</i>) Why don't they ask for bread?	7
UNEMPLOYED MAN: Bread is expensive. One cigarette butt and I'll be a new man.	8
SHEN TE (<i>giving him cigarettes</i>): That's very important —to be a new man. You'll be my first customer and bring me luck.	9 10
<i>The UNEMPLOYED MAN quickly lights a cigarette, inhales, and goes off, coughing.</i>	
WIFE: Was that right, Shen Te, dear?	11

- 1--Shen Te crosses to the crates left of center and starts to pour tea for her guests.
- 2--The wife crosses to Shen Te and takes her teapot away.
[The wife takes over the shop almost immediately.]
- 3--The husband and nephew peruse the tobacco stock.
- 4--The unemployed man enters the shop. [He is physically sick.]
- 5--Shen Te and the unemployed man meet center.
- 6--The wife crosses to Shen Te. [She does not like what is happening: the more Shen Te gives to others, the less she can give to her and her family.]
- 7--[A person can not afford to beg for bread.]
- 8--Mrs. Shin is up left, amazed at Shen Te's generosity.
- 9--[Shen Te feels successful at being a good person.]
- 10--The unemployed man exits. Shen Te follows him to the door, then crosses behind the counter. She records the transaction.
- 11--Mrs. Shin, the wife, the husband, and the nephew surround Shen Te during the next few lines.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

MRS. SHIN: If this is the opening of a shop, you can hold
the closing at the end of the week.

1

HUSBAND: I bet he had money on him.

SHEN TE: Oh, no, he said he hadn't!

2

NEPHEW: How d'you know he wasn't lying?

SHEN TE (*angrily*): How do you know he was?

3

WIFE (*wagging her head*): You're too good, Shen Te,
dear. If you're going to keep this shop, you'll have
to learn to say no.

HUSBAND: Tell them the place isn't yours to dispose of.
Belongs to . . . some relative who insists on all ac-
counts being strictly in order . . .

4

MRS. SHIN: That's right! What do you think you are—a
philanthropist?

SHEN TE (*laughing*): Very well, suppose I ask you for
my rice back, Mrs. Shin?

WIFE (*combatively, at MRS. SHIN*): So that's *her* rice?

5

Enter the CARPENTER, a small man.

6

MRS. SHIN (*who, at the sight of him, starts to hurry
away*): See you tomorrow, Miss Shen Te! (*Exit
MRS. SHIN.*)

7

CARPENTER: Mrs. Shin, it's you I want!

WIFE (*to SHEN TE*): Has she some claim on you?

8

SHEN TE: She's hungry. That's a claim.

1--[The laborers know that Shen Te's goodness is unwise.]

2--[The laborer thinks that everyone is lying except himself.]

3--[The first sign of Shen Te's anger.]

4--[The first seed of Shui Ta is planted.]

5--[The battle between Mrs. Shin and the wife continues.]

6--The end of the first beat: the carpenter enters the shop and Mrs. Shin exits hurriedly.

7--[One swindle leads to another swindle.]

8--Shen Te crosses to the carpenter down right of the counter.

Bertolt Brecht

- CARPENTER: Are you the new tenant? And filling up the shelves already? Well, they're not yours till they're paid for, ma'am. I'm the carpenter, so I should know. 1
- SHEN TE: I took the shop "furnishings included."
- CARPENTER: You're in league with that Mrs. Shin, of course. All right. I demand my hundred silver dollars. 2
- SHEN TE: I'm afraid I haven't got a hundred silver dollars.
- CARPENTER: Then you'll find it. Or I'll have you arrested.
- WIFE (*whispering to SHEN TE*): That relative: make it a cousin. 3
- SHEN TE: Can't it wait till next month?
- CARPENTER: No!
- SHEN TE: Be a little patient, Mr. Carpenter, I can't settle all claims at once. 4
- CARPENTER: Who's patient with me? (*He grabs a shelf from the wall.*) Pay up—or I take the shelves back!
- WIFE: Shen Te! Dear! Why don't you let your . . . cousin settle this affair? (*To CARPENTER:*) Put your claim in writing. Shen Te's cousin will see you get paid. 5
- CARPENTER (*derisively*): Cousin, eh?
- HUSBAND: Cousin, yes. 6
- CARPENTER: I know these cousins!
- NEPHEW: Don't be silly. He's a personal friend of mine. 7
- HUSBAND: What a man! Sharp as a razor! 8

1--[The carpenter plays on the fact that Shen Te is an inexperienced woman in business.]

2--[The carpenter's demands are outrageous.]

3--[The second seed of the cousin is planted.]

4--The carpenter crosses to the up left shelf unit.

5--[The wife takes over for the defenseless Shen Te. The carpenter suspects that the cousin is false.]

6--[The whole family joins in the plot to deceive the carpenter.]

7--[The capitalist has good qualities according to the family.]

8--The wife, husband, and nephew surround the carpenter.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

CARPENTER: All right. I'll put my claim in writing. (*Puts shelf on floor, sits on it, writes out bill.*)

WIFE (*to SHEN TE*): He'd tear the dress off your back to get his shelves. Never recognize a claim. That's my motto.

SHEN TE: He's done a job, and wants something in return. It's shameful that I can't give it to him. What will the gods say?

HUSBAND: You did your bit when you took us in.

Enter the BROTHER, limping; and the SISTER-IN-LAW, pregnant.

BROTHER (*to HUSBAND and WIFE*): So this is where you're hiding out! There's family feeling for you! Leaving us on the corner!

WIFE (*embarrassed, to SHEN TE*): It's my brother and his wife. (*To them:*) Now stop grumbling, and sit quietly in that corner. (*To SHEN TE:*) It can't be helped. She's in her fifth month.

SHEN TE: Oh yes. Welcome!

WIFE (*to the couple*): Say thank you. (*They mutter something.*) The cups are there. (*To SHEN TE:*) Lucky you bought this shop when you did!

SHEN TE (*laughing and bringing tea*): Lucky indeed!

Enter MRS. MI TZU, the landlady.

MRS. MI TZU: Miss Shen Te? I am Mrs. Mi Tzu, your landlady. I hope our relationship will be a happy one. I like to think I give my tenants modern, per-

- 1--The brother and sister-in-law enter up left as part of the city life.
- 2--[Throughout this scene, there is a rapid deterioration of Shen Te's good nature as well as the loss of her job as hostess.]
- 3--The carpenter crosses down center and sits.
- 4--[Claims must be put in writing.]
- 5--[More training for Shen Te on the ways of business.]
- 6--[Shen Te is conscious of the gods.]
- 7--[Shen Te's freedom of movement is limited. The family has control of the shop. Her domain is behind the counter.]
- 8--The brother and sister-in-law enter the shop.
- 9--[There is a struggle within the family.]
- 10--The brother and sister-in-law cross left; Shen Te stays behind the counter.
- 11--A clock tolls.
- 12--Mi Tzu enters the shop. The family scatters. [They begin to act like customers.]
- 13--Mi Tzu crosses to the counter with the lease, then she takes a sweep of the whole shop. [Mi Tzu takes command of the stage, completely dominating the shop and its people.]

Bertolt Brecht

sonalized service. Here is your lease. (*To the others, as SHEN TE reads the lease:*) There's nothing like the opening of a little shop, is there? A moment of true beauty! (*She is looking around.*) Not very much on the shelves, of course. But everything in the gods' good time! Where are your references, Miss Shen Te? 1

SHEN TE: Do I *have* to have references? 2

MRS. MI TZU: After all, I haven't a notion who you are!

HUSBAND: Oh, *we'd* be glad to vouch for Miss Shen Te! We'd go through fire for her! 3

MRS. MI TZU: And who may *you* be?

HUSBAND (*stammering*): Ma Fu, tobacco dealer.

MRS. MI TZU: Where is your shop, Mr. . . . Ma Fu? 4

HUSBAND: Well, um, I haven't got a shop—I've just sold it. 5

MRS. MI TZU: I see. (*To SHEN TE:*) Is there no one else that knows you? 6

WIFE (*whispering to SHEN TE*): Your cousin! Your cousin! 7

MRS. MI TZU: This is a respectable house, Miss Shen Te. I never sign a lease without certain assurances.

SHEN TE (*slowly, her eyes downcast*): I have . . . a cousin. 8

MRS. MI TZU: On the square? Let's go over and see him. What does he do? 9

SHEN TE (*as before*): He lives . . . in another city. 10

1--[Mi Tzu's command of the language: she has a good speech prepared.]

2--Mi Tzu stops center stage.

3--The husband crosses up left of Mi Tzu.

4--[A good reference owns property: goodness and wealth are equated.]

5--[The wife does not want to get involved.]

6--Shen Te stands down right of counter, bewildered.

7--The wife crosses to Shen Te. [Another seed of the cousin is planted.]

8--[Shen Te lies: it is difficult for her to do.]

9--[Mi Tzu recognizes the lie; she plays with Shen Te.]

10--[Shen Te knows that the gods are watching.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- WIFE (*prompting*): Didn't you say he was in Shung? 1
- SHEN TE: That's right. Shung.
- HUSBAND (*prompting*): I had his name on the tip of my tongue. Mr. . . .
- SHEN TE (*with an effort*): Mr. . . . Shui . . . Ta. 2
- HUSBAND: That's it! Tall, skinny fellow!
- SHEN TE: Shui Ta!
- NEPHEW (*to CARPENTER*): You were in touch with him, weren't you? About the shelves?
- CARPENTER (*surlily*): Give him this bill. (*He hands it over.*) I'll be back in the morning. (*Exit CARPENTER.*) 3
4
- NEPHEW (*calling after him, but with his eyes on MRS. MI TZU*): Don't worry! Mr. Shui Ta pays on the nail!
- MRS. MI TZU (*looking closely at SHEN TE*): I'll be happy to make his acquaintance, Miss Shen Te. (*Exit MRS. MI TZU.*) 5
6
- Pause.*
- WIFE: By tomorrow morning she'll know more about you than you do yourself. 7
- SISTER-IN-LAW (*to NEPHEW*): This thing isn't built to last. 8
- Enter GRANDFATHER.* 9
10
- WIFE: It's Grandfather! (*To SHEN TE:*) Such a good old soul!
- The BOY enters.* 11

- 1--[The family comes to the aid of Shen Te: against Mi Tzu they behave as a unit.]
- 2--The family encircles Mi Tzu standing center.
- 3--The carpenter crosses to Shen Te with bill, then he exits.
- 4--[Mi Tzu never lets Shen Te know what she is thinking.]
- 5--The end of the second beat: Mi Tzu exits.
- 6--The grandfather, the boy, and the niece enter up left as part of the city life.
- 7--The family takes over the shop again. They rearrange the furniture.
- 8--Shen Te crosses behind the counter.
- 9--[The overcrowded condition of the world is paralleled by the overcrowded condition of the shop.]
- 10--The grandfather enters the shop; the wife greets him.
- 11--The boy enters the shop.

Bertolt Brecht

BOY (*over his shoulder*): Here they are!

WIFE: And the boy, how he's grown! But he always could eat enough for ten.

Enter the NIECE.

WIFE (*to SHEN TE*): Our little niece from the country. There are more of us now than in your time. The less we had, the more there were of us; the more there were of us, the less we had. Give me the key. We must protect ourselves from unwanted guests. (*She takes the key and locks the door.*) Just make yourself at home. I'll light the little lamp.

NEPHEW (*a big joke*): I hope her cousin doesn't drop in tonight! The strict Mr. Shui Ta!

SISTER-IN-LAW *laughs*.

BROTHER (*reaching for a cigarette*): One cigarette more or less . . .

HUSBAND: One cigarette more or less.

They pile into the cigarettes. The BROTHER hands a jug of wine round.

NEPHEW: Mr. Shui Ta'll pay for it!

GRANDFATHER (*gravely, to SHEN TE*): How do you do?

SHEN TE, *a little taken aback by the belatedness of the greeting, bows. She has the carpenter's bill in one hand, the landlady's lease in the other.*

WIFE: How about a bit of a song? To keep Shen Te's spirits up?

1--The niece enters the shop.

2--[A social condition: the poorer the family is, the more members there are.]

3--The wife takes Shen Te's key from around her neck, crosses to the door and locks it, and then puts the key around her own neck.

4--The nephew, the brother, and the husband start playing cards, using the crate as a card table: [they celebrate their good fortune.]

5--[The family now takes over the stock. The wife already possesses the key to the shop.]

6--[The invented capitalist is a joke in the haven of the tobacco shop.]

7--The grandfather is still standing down right of the door: [he has been ignored throughout the scene.]

8--Shen Te stays behind the counter, watching the action in dismay.

9--[The song is part of the celebration.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

NEPHEW: Good idea. Grandfather: you start!

SONG OF THE SMOKE

GRANDFATHER:

I used to think (before old age beset me)
That brains could fill the pantry of the poor.
But where did all my cerebration get me?
I'm just as hungry as I was before.
So what's the use?
See the smoke float free
Into ever colder coldness!
It's the same with me.

HUSBAND:

The straight and narrow path leads to disaster
And so the crooked path I tried to tread.
That got me to disaster even faster.
(They say we shall be happy when we're dead.)
So what's the use?
See the smoke float free
Into ever colder coldness!
It's the same with me.

NIECE:

You older people, full of expectation,
At any moment now you'll walk the plank!
The future's for the younger generation!
Yes, even if that future is a blank.
So what's the use?
See the smoke float free
Into ever colder coldness!
It's the same with me.

NEPHEW (*to the BROTHER*): Where'd you get that wine?

SISTER-IN-LAW (*answering for the BROTHER*): He pawned
the sack of tobacco.

1--Light change.

2--Each member of the family begins to sing as they cross down center. The rest of the family continues playing cards and drinking wine, responding minimally to the song.

3--[The wife sings the husband's part because of vocal problems.]

4--When the wife comes down center to sing, she brings the grandfather a cup of tea.

5--[Of the three parts of the song, only the wife's has positive energy: the other two characters are not able to participate in the family's good fortune.]

6--When the niece comes down center to sing, the wife crosses back to the card game.

7--[The niece sings her part without emotion.]

8--[The inner turmoil of the family is over possessions: there is harmony as long as no one's acts individualistically.]

Bertolt Brecht

HUSBAND (*stepping in*): What? That tobacco was all we
had to fall back on! You pig! 1

BROTHER: *You'd* call a man a pig because your wife was
frigid! Did you refuse to drink it?

They fight. The shelves fall over. 2

SHEN TE (*imploringly*): Oh don't! Don't break everything!
Take it, take it, take it all, but don't destroy a gift
from the gods! 3

WIFE (*disparagingly*): This shop isn't big enough. I should
never have mentioned it to Uncle and the others.
When *they* arrive, it's going to be disgustingly over-
crowded. 4
5
6

SISTER-IN-LAW: And did you hear our gracious hostess?
She cools off quick!

Voices outside. Knocking at the door. 7

UNCLE'S VOICE: Open the door!

WIFE: Uncle! Is that you, Uncle?

UNCLE'S VOICE: Certainly, it's me. Auntie says to tell you
she'll have the children here in ten minutes. 8

WIFE (*to SHEN TE*): I'll have to let him in. 9

SHEN TE (*who scarcely hears her*): 10
The little lifeboat is swiftly sent down
Too many men too greedily
Hold on to it as they drown. 11

- 1--The brother and husband fight for the wine.
- 2--The husband kicks a bag of loose tobacco.
- 3--Shen Te crosses center trying to break up the fight.
- 4--The nephew helps the husband beat up the brother.
- 5--The boy steals the wine and runs over by the counter to drink it. The wife and niece chase him. [The whole tobacco shop is in a state of confusion.]
- 6--Shen Te picks up the spilt tobacco stage center. The brother helps her.
- 7--The knock on the door is loud and demanding.
- 8--[In Shen Te's mind, there is an endless flow of people coming to live in her shop.]
- 9--Gong sounds: everyone goes into tableau except Shen Te.
- 10--Shen Te delivers this poem to the audience from a kneeling position; the family surrounds her in their tableau.
- 11--Scene change lights.

1a

Wong's den in a sewer pipe.

WONG (*crouching there*): All quiet! It's four days now since I left the city. The gods passed this way on the second day. I heard their steps on the bridge over there. They must be a long way off by this time, so I'm safe. (*Breathing a sigh of relief, he curls up and goes to sleep. In his dream the pipe becomes transparent, and the GODS appear. Raising an arm, as if in self-defense:*) I know, I know, illustrious ones! I found no one to give you a room—not in all Setzuan! There, it's out. Please continue on your way!

FIRST GOD (*mildly*): But you did find someone. Someone who took us in for the night, watched over us in our sleep, and in the early morning lighted us down to the street with a lamp.

WONG: It was . . . Shen Te that took you in?

THIRD GOD: Who else?

WONG: And I ran away! "She isn't coming," I thought, "she just can't afford it."

GODS (*singing*):

O you feeble, well-intentioned, and yet feeble chap
Where there's need the fellow thinks there is
no goodness!
When there's danger he thinks courage starts to
ebb away!

- 1--During the scene change, the apron is lowered to audience level.
- 2--Light change.
- 3--Wong enters through the pit door; he addresses the audience from center.
- 4--Wong sleeps on the edge of the forestage: [this is done because of sightline problems.]
- 5--The gods' shadows appear; they come through the curtain and cross down center, standing above Wong. They wake him from his sleep. Wong jumps into the pit.
- 6--Before Wong is able to escape through the pit door, the first god speaks.
- 7--[Wong is over-joyed.]
- 8--[Wong thinks in terms of the financial.]
- 9--[The gods do this poem in a sing-song manner.]
- 10--All the scenes with Wong and the gods are staged with the gods directly behind Wong with Wong looking front as if the gods were being projected over the audience: [to physicalize the dream.]
- 11--[With the first god, establish the fact that the gods think of Wong as a child: thus motivating his child-like behavior.]

Bertolt Brecht

Some people only see the seamy side!
What hasty judgment! What premature desperation!

1

2

WONG: I'm *very* ashamed, illustrious ones.

FIRST GOD: Do us a favor, water seller. Go back to Setzuan.
Find Shen Te, and give us a report on her. We hear
that she's come into a little money. Show interest in
her goodness—for no one can be good for long if
goodness is not in demand. Meanwhile we shall con-
tinue the search, and find other good people. After
which, the idle chatter about the impossibility of
goodness will stop!

3

4

The GODS vanish.

5

6

7

1--Wong beats himself for his lack of faith.

2--[The gods chastise Wong in order to get him to obey them.]

3--[An ironic statement: the more goodness is in demand,
the harder it is to stay good.]

4--[Said to the second god: the continuing conflict between
the first and second gods.]

5--The gods exit, one after the other.

6--Wong is left staring in the audience's direction.

7--Gong sounds; scene change lights.

2

A knocking.

1
2

WIFE: Shen Te! Someone at the door. Where is she anyway?

NEPHEW: She must be getting the breakfast. Mr. Shui Ta will pay for it.

The WIFE laughs and shuffles to the door. Enter MR. SHUI TA and the CARPENTER.

3

WIFE: Who is it?

SHUI TA: I am Miss Shen Te's cousin.

WIFE: What?

SHUI TA: My name is Shui Ta.

WIFE: Her cousin?

NEPHEW: Her cousin?

NIECE: But that was a joke. She hasn't got a cousin.

HUSBAND: So early in the morning?

4

BROTHER: What's all the noise?

5

SISTER-IN-LAW: This fellow says he's her cousin.

6

BROTHER: Tell him to prove it.

7

1--Gong sounds: the tableau breaks.

2--The scene begins with the family settling in for a long stay: the wife is making tea, the nephew is sitting at the counter, checking through the books, the boy is playing with a deflated ball at center stage, the niece puts on make-up at the crate, the grandfather sits at the crate, the brother is asleep on the bench unit, the sister-in-law sits beside him on the bench, and the husband is asleep in the back room.

3--Shui Ta enters, standing in the doorway. The carpenter is behind him.

4--The husband enters from the back room.

5--The brother is awakened.

6--[The family groups together in order to struggle against Shui Ta.]

7--The carpenter has remained outside.

Bertolt Brecht

NEPHEW: Right. If you're Shen Te's cousin, prove it by getting the breakfast.

SHUI TA (*whose regime begins as he puts out the lamp to save oil; loudly, to all present, asleep or awake*):
Would you all please get dressed! Customers will be coming! I wish to open my shop!

1

2

HUSBAND: *Your* shop? Doesn't it belong to our good friend Shen Te?

3

SHUI TA *shakes his head.*

SISTER-IN-LAW: So we've been cheated. Where *is* the little liar?

SHUI TA: Miss Shen Te has been delayed. She wishes me to tell you there will be nothing she can do—now I am here.

4

WIFE (*bowled over*): I thought she was good!

NEPHEW: Do you have to believe *him*?

HUSBAND: I don't.

NEPHEW: Then do something.

HUSBAND: Certainly! I'll send out a search party at once. You, you, you, and you, go out and look for Shen Te. (*As the GRANDFATHER rises and makes for the door.*) Not you, Grandfather, you and I will hold the fort.

5

6

SHUI TA: You won't find Miss Shen Te. She has suspended her hospitable activity for an unlimited period. There are too many of you. She asked me to say: this is a tobacco shop, not a gold mine.

7

8

- 1--Shui Ta crosses to the counter and puts the lamp out.
The carpenter follows.
- 2--Shui Ta keeps his distance from the family members
throughout the early part of this scene: [Shen Te esta-
blishes Shui Ta by appearance rather than action.]
- 3--Shui Ta stays by the counter. The family groups toge-
ther center.
- 4--Shui Ta says most of his lines out, not directing them
at any one person in particular: [the capitalist has a
detached quality--impersonal.]
- 5--[The husband takes charge: throughout the play, establish
the husband as a deteriorated head of the family. The
wife is the family's true leader.]
- 6--The grandfather starts to leave; the husband stops him.
- 7--[Establish the grandfather as being made useless by the
domination of the wife.]
- 8--Shui Ta begins to pick up articles of clothing that the
family has left on the floor.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

HUSBAND: Shen Te never said a thing like that. Boy, food!
There's a bakery on the corner. Stuff your shirt full
when they're not looking! 1
2

SISTER-IN-LAW: Don't overlook the raspberry tarts.

HUSBAND: And don't let the policeman see you.

The BOY leaves. 3

SHUI TA: Don't you depend on this shop now? Then why
give it a bad name by stealing from the bakery?

NEPHEW: Don't listen to him. Let's find Shen Te. She'll
give him a piece of her mind.

SISTER-IN-LAW: Don't forget to leave us some breakfast.

BROTHER, SISTER-IN-LAW, and NEPHEW leave. 4

SHUI TA (*to the CARPENTER*): You see, Mr. Carpenter,
nothing has changed since the poet, eleven hundred
years ago, penned these lines: 5
6

A governor was asked what was needed
To save the freezing people in the city.
He replied:
"A blanket ten thousand feet long
to cover the city and all its suburbs." 7

He starts to tidy up the shop.

CARPENTER: Your cousin owes me money. I've got wit-
nesses. For the shelves. 8

SHUI TA: Yes, I have your bill. (*He takes it out of his
pocket.*) Isn't a hundred silver dollars rather a lot? 9
10
11

- 1--[The family tries to prove their determination to Shui Ta by sending the boy on a stealing expedition.]
- 2--[The family forces Shui Ta into taking more severe action.]
- 3--The boy exits.
- 4--The brother, sister-in-law, and nephew exit.
- 5--[Shui Ta has succeeded in weakening the family unit.]
- 6--Shui Ta begins to clean the shop without interruption.
- 7--[Shen Te speaks behind the mask of Shui Ta: Shen Te has a moment of reflection; she still uses, however, Shui Ta's voice.]
- 8--The end of the first beat: the carpenter crosses to Shui Ta at center: [there is a marked difference between how the carpenter deals with Shui Ta and how he dealt with Shen Te.]
- 9--Shui Ta crosses behind the counter.
- 10--The grandfather remains seated; the wife and husband look on from up center.
- 11--Shui Ta cleans his desk as if the carpenter's presence were none of his concern.

Bertolt Brecht

CARPENTER: No deductions! I have a wife and children.	1
SHUI TA: How many children?	2
CARPENTER: Three.	
SHUI TA: I'll make you an offer. Twenty silver dollars.	3
<i>The HUSBAND laughs.</i>	
CARPENTER: You're crazy. Those shelves are real walnut.	
SHUI TA: Very well. Take them away.	4
CARPENTER: What?	
SHUI TA: They cost too much. Please take them away.	
WIFE: Not bad! (<i>And she, too, is laughing.</i>)	5
CARPENTER (<i>a little bewildered</i>): Call Shen Te, someone! (<i>To SHUI TA:</i>) She's good!	
SHUI TA: Certainly. She's ruined.	
CARPENTER (<i>provoked into taking some of the shelves</i>): All right, you can keep your tobacco on the floor.	6
SHUI TA (<i>to the HUSBAND</i>): Help him with the shelves.	7
HUSBAND (<i>grins and carries one shelf over to the door where the CARPENTER now is</i>): Good-bye, shelves!	8
CARPENTER (<i>to the HUSBAND</i>): You dog! You want my family to starve?	
SHUI TA: I repeat my offer. I have no desire to keep my tobacco on the floor. Twenty silver dollars.	9 10

1--[The carpenter plays it tough, emphasizing his family.]

2--[Shui Ta is not all business: the number of children matters.]

3--[Twenty dollars is a reasonable amount.]

4--Shui Ta goes back to working on his books.

5--[Throughout this scene, the husband and wife are impressed with Shui Ta's control of the situation.]

6--The carpenter crosses up left to the shelf unit.

7--The husband crosses up left to the shelf unit, gets a shelf, and carries it to the door.

8--[The carpenter begins to break.]

9--The husband crosses to the up right bench unit and gets a long shelf.

10--Shui Ta addresses the carpenter directly.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

CARPENTER (*with desperate aggressiveness*): One hundred!

SHUI TA *shows indifference, looks through the window. The HUSBAND picks up several shelves.*

CARPENTER (*to HUSBAND*): You needn't smash them against the doorpost, you idiot! (*To SHUI TA:*) These shelves were made to measure. They're no use anywhere else!

SHUI TA: Precisely.

The WIFE squeals with pleasure.

CARPENTER (*giving up, sullenly*): Take the shelves. Pay what you want to pay.

SHUI TA (*smoothly*): Twenty silver dollars.

He places two large coins on the table. The CARPENTER picks them up.

HUSBAND (*brings the shelves back in*): And quite enough too!

CARPENTER (*slinking off*): Quite enough to get drunk on.

HUSBAND (*happily*): Well, we got rid of him!

WIFE (*weeping with fun, gives a rendition of the dialogue just spoken*): "Real walnut," says he. "Very well, take them away," says his lordship. "I have three children," says he. "Twenty silver dollars," says his lordship. "They're no use anywhere else," says he. "Pre-cisely," said his lordship! (*She dissolves into shrieks of merriment.*)

SHUI TA: And now: go!

- 1--The husband carries the long shelf to the door.
- 2--Shui Ta goes back to his books.
- 3--The husband smashes the shelf on the door frame.
- 4--[The wife loves the display of wit by Shui Ta.]
- 5--[When the carpenter gives up, there is a drastic change in his behavior.]
- 6--The carpenter exits.
- 7--The husband replaces the shelves.
- 8--The wife pours tea for everyone.
- 9--The wife crosses to Shui Ta, still standing behind the counter.
- 10--[The wife is trying to strike up a friendship with Shui Ta. Shui Ta ignores this ploy.]

Bertolt Brecht

HUSBAND: What's that?

SHUI TA: You're thieves, parasites. I'm giving you this
chance. Go! 1

HUSBAND (*summoning all his ancestral dignity*): That sort
deserves no answer. Besides, one should never shout
on an empty stomach. 2 3

WIFE: Where's that boy?

SHUI TA: Exactly. The boy. I want no stolen goods in this
shop. (*Very loudly.*) I strongly advise you to leave!
(*But they remain seated, noses in the air. Quietly.*)
As you wish. (SHUI TA *goes to the door*. A POLICE-
MAN *appears*. SHUI TA *bows*.) I am addressing the
officer in charge of this precinct? 4 5

POLICEMAN: That's right, Mr., um, what was the name,
sir?

SHUI TA: Mr. Shui Ta.

POLICEMAN: Yes, of course, sir.

They exchange a smile. 6

SHUI TA: Nice weather we're having. 7

POLICEMAN: A little on the warm side, sir.

SHUI TA: Oh, a little on the warm side. 8

HUSBAND (*whispering to the WIFE*): If he keeps it up till
the boy's back, we're done for. (*Tries to signal SHUI
TA.*)

1--[Shui Ta becomes more aggressive.]

2--The husband sits, summoning up all his dignity.

3--The policeman enters right, patrolling his beat.

4--Shui Ta crosses to the door and addresses the policeman on the street.

5--The policeman stays on the street.

6--The wife sits with the husband at the table.

7--The policeman crosses to Shui Ta.

8--Shui Ta alternately delivers his lines to the family and to the policeman.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHUI TA (*ignoring the signal*): Weather, of course, is one thing indoors, another out on the dusty street!

POLICEMAN: Oh, quite another, sir!

1

WIFE (*to the HUSBAND*): It's all right as long as he's standing in the doorway—the boy will see him.

SHUI TA: Step inside for a moment! It's quite cool indoors. My cousin and I have just opened the place. And we attach the greatest importance to being on good terms with the, um, authorities.

2

POLICEMAN (*entering*): Thank you, Mr. Shui Ta. It is cool!

3

HUSBAND (*whispering to the WIFE*): And now the boy won't see him.

SHUI TA (*showing HUSBAND and WIFE to the POLICEMAN*): Visitors, I think my cousin knows them. They were just leaving.

4

HUSBAND (*defeated*): Ye-e-es, we were . . . just leaving.

SHUI TA: I'll tell my cousin you couldn't wait.

5

Noise from the street. Shouts of "Stop, Thief!"

POLICEMAN: What's that?

The BOY is in the doorway with cakes and buns and rolls spilling out of his shirt. The WIFE signals desperately to him to leave. He gets the idea.

POLICEMAN: No, you don't! (*He grabs the BOY by the collar.*) Where's all this from?

6

- 1--Shui Ta steps inside. The husband crosses to check if the policeman is going to enter.
- 2--[This scene is played with the husband and wife staying in a small group a considerable distance away from Shui Ta and the door.]
- 3--The policeman enters and crosses immediately in the direction of the family: [Shui Ta can get help from the authorities.]
- 4--Shui Ta crosses down right of the counter as if to say to the policeman, "You know what to do with them."
- 5--The husband, wife, and grandfather start to exit when a crash is heard off right.
- 6--The boy enters. The policeman lifts him off the ground by his arm.

Bertolt Brecht

BOY (*vaguely pointing*): Down the street.

POLICEMAN (*grimly*): So that's it. (*Prepares to arrest the BOY.*)

WIFE (*stepping in*): And we knew nothing about it. (*To the BOY:*) Nasty little thief! 1

POLICEMAN (*dryly*): Can you clarify the situation, Mr. Shui Ta?

SHUI TA *is silent.* 2

POLICEMAN (*who understands silence*): Aha. You're all coming with me—to the station. 3

SHUI TA: I can hardly say how sorry I am that my establishment . . .

WIFE: Oh, he saw the boy leave not ten minutes ago!

SHUI TA: And to conceal the theft asked a policeman in? 4

POLICEMAN: Don't listen to her, Mr. Shui Ta, I'll be happy to relieve you of their presence one and all! (*To all three:*) Out! (*He drives them before him.*) 5

GRANDFATHER (*leaving last, gravely*): Good morning!

POLICEMAN: Good morning! 6

SHUI TA, *left alone, continues to tidy up.* MRS. MI TZU breezes in. 7
8

MRS. MI TZU: You're her cousin, are you? Then have the goodness to explain what all this means—police dragging people from a respectable house! By what right 9
10

- 1--The wife attempts to spank the boy.
- 2--Shui Ta remains down left of counter. He does not turn around.
- 3--The husband and wife look for an opportunity to get the boy away from the policeman and, thus, escape.
- 4--Shui Ta speaks directly to the wife.
- 5--The wife crosses to the table and sits; she drinks her tea: [an act of defiance.]
- 6--The husband exits; the policeman grabs the grandfather and takes him outside. The policeman is still holding the boy.
- 7--The policeman reenters and drags the wife off.
- 8--Shui Ta crosses to the wife and takes the key from around her neck.
- 9--The end of the second beat: Shui Ta crosses to the table and pours himself some tea.
- 10--Mi Tzu enters and crosses center.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

does your Miss Shen Te turn my property into a house of assignation?—Well, as you see, I know all!

SHUI TA: Yes. My cousin has the worst possible reputation: that of being poor. 1

MRS. MI TZU: No sentimental rubbish, Mr. Shui Ta. Your cousin was a common . . .

SHUI TA: Pauper. Let's use the uglier word. 2

MRS. MI TZU: I'm speaking of her conduct, not her earnings. But there must have *been* earnings, or how did she buy all this? Several elderly gentlemen took care of it, I suppose. I repeat: this is a respectable house! I have tenants who prefer not to live under the same roof with such a person. 3

SHUI TA (*quietly*): How much do you want? 4

MRS. MI TZU (*he is ahead of her now*): I beg your pardon. 5

SHUI TA: To reassure yourself. To reassure your tenants. How much will it cost? 6

MRS. MI TZU: You're a cool customer.

SHUI TA (*picking up the lease*): The rent is high. (*He reads on.*) I assume it's payable by the month? 7

MRS. MI TZU: Not in her case. 8

SHUI TA (*looking up*): What?

MRS. MI TZU: Six months' rent payable in advance. Two hundred silver dollars. 9

SHUI TA: Six . . . ! Sheer usury! And where am I to find it? 10

1--[Shui Ta's sarcastic reply has no effect on Mi Tzu.]

2--Shui Ta crosses to the counter.

3--Mi Tzu stays center. When she speaks she does not talk directly to Shui Ta.

4--Shui Ta is looking through his books as he speaks.

5--Mi Tzu turns and looks at Shui Ta.

6--Shui Ta looks at Mi Tzu: [they both evaluate the situation.]

7--Shui Ta stays behind the counter.

8--Mi Tzu crosses to Shui Ta and changes the terms of the lease right before his eyes.

9--Mi Tzu crosses down right of center.

10--Shui Ta crosses to Mi Tzu.

Bertolt Brecht

MRS. MI TZU: You should have thought of that before. 1

SHUI TA: Have you no heart, Mrs. Mi Tzu? It's true Shen
Te acted foolishly, being kind to all those people, 2
but she'll improve with time. I'll see to it she does. 3
She'll work her fingers to the bone to pay her rent,
and all the time be as quiet as a mouse, as humble
as a fly.

MRS. MI TZU: Her social background . . . 4

SHUI TA: Out of the depths! She came out of the depths!
And before she'll go back there, she'll work, sacrifice,
shrink from nothing. . . . Such a tenant is worth
her weight in gold, Mrs. Mi Tzu.

MRS. MI TZU: It's silver we were talking about, Mr. Shui
Ta. Two hundred silver dollars or . . . 5

Enter the POLICEMAN. 6

POLICEMAN: Am I intruding, Mr. Shui Ta?

MRS. MI TZU: This tobacco shop is well known to the
police, I see. 7

POLICEMAN: Mr. Shui Ta has done us a service, Mrs. Mi
Tzu. I am here to present our official felicitations!

MRS. MI TZU: That means less than nothing to me, sir. 8
Mr. Shui Ta, all I can say is: I hope your cousin
will find my terms acceptable. Good day, gentlemen.
(*Exit.*) 9

SHUI TA: Good day, ma'am.

Pause.

1--Mi Tzu prepares to leave.

2--Shui Ta blocks her exit.

3--[There is a lot of Shen Te behind this speech.]

4--Mi Tzu crosses down right; Shui Ta follows.

5--Mi Tzu crosses center; Shui Ta stays down right.

6--The policeman enters.

7--The policeman crosses down right of center, splitting the difference between Shui Ta and Mi Tzu.

8--[Mi Tzu and the policeman do not get along: Mi Tzu is the lone woman in a man's world.]

9--Mi Tzu exits hurriedly.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- POLICEMAN: Mrs. Mi Tzu a bit of a stumbling block, sir? 1
- SHUI TA: She wants six months' rent in advance. 2
- POLICEMAN: And you haven't got it, eh? (SHUI TA is silent.) But surely you can get it, sir? A man like you?
- SHUI TA: What about a woman like Shen Te? 3
- POLICEMAN: You're not staying, sir?
- SHUI TA: No, and I won't be back. Do you smoke? 4
- POLICEMAN (*taking two cigars, and placing them both in his pocket*): Thank you, sir—I see your point. Miss Te—let's mince no words—Miss Shen Te lived by selling herself. "What else could she have done?" you ask. "How else was she to pay the rent?" True. But the fact remains, Mr. Shui Ta, it is not respectable. Why not? A very deep question. But, in the first place, love—love isn't bought and sold like cigars, Mr. Shui Ta. In the second place, it isn't respectable to go waltzing off with someone that's paying his way, so to speak—it must be for love! Thirdly and lastly, as the proverb has it: not for a handful of rice but for love! (*Pause. He is thinking hard.*) "Well," you may say, "and what good is all this wisdom if the milk's already spilt?" Miss Shen Te is what she is. Is *where* she is. We have to face the fact that if she doesn't get hold of six months' rent pronto, she'll be back on the streets. The question then as I see it—everything in this world is a matter of opinion—the question as I see it is: *how* is she to get hold of this rent? How? Mr. Shui Ta: I don't know. (*Pause.*) I take that back, sir. It's just come to me. A husband. We must find her a husband! 11
- Enter a little OLD WOMAN. 12

- 1--The policeman crosses center.
- 2--Shui Ta stays down right.
- 3--Shui Ta crosses to behind the counter.
- 4--Shui Ta offers the policeman cigars; the policeman takes two.
- 5--The policeman crosses down center.
- 6--The policeman speaks out towards the audience; only when Shui Ta approaches him does he speak directly to him: [the policeman speaks rapidly, more amazed by his eloquence than at helping Shui Ta.]
- 7--Shui Ta crosses to the crate, pours tea, and brings it to the policeman.
- 8--Shui Ta crosses to the up left shelf unit.
- 9--Shui Ta crosses to the policeman and gives him a pipe: [the whole exchange of goods is very presentational.]
- 10--Shui Ta crosses to the up left shelf unit.
- 11--Shui Ta crosses to the policeman and offers him a bowl of nuts. The policeman takes a handful.
- 12--The old woman enters, interrupting the policeman.

Bertolt Brecht

- OLD WOMAN: A good cheap cigar for my husband, we'll
have been married forty years tomorrow and we're
having a little celebration. 1
2
- SHUI TA: Forty years? And you still want to celebrate?
- OLD WOMAN: As much as we can afford to. We have the
carpet shop across the square. We'll be good neigh-
bors, I hope?
- SHUI TA: I hope so too.
- POLICEMAN (*who keeps making discoveries*): Mr. Shui
Ta, you know what we need? We need capital. And
how do we acquire capital? We get married. 3
- SHUI TA (*to OLD WOMAN*): I'm afraid I've been pestering
this gentleman with my personal worries. 4
- POLICEMAN (*lyrically*): We can't pay six months' rent,
so what do we do? We marry money. 5
- SHUI TA: That might not be easy.
- POLICEMAN: Oh, I don't know. She's a good match. Has
a nice, growing business. (*To the OLD WOMAN:*)
What do you think?
- OLD WOMAN (*undecided*): Well— 6
- POLICEMAN: Should she put an ad in the paper? 7
- OLD WOMAN (*not eager to commit herself*): Well, if *she*
agrees—
- POLICEMAN: I'll write it for her. *You* lend us a hand, and
we write an ad for you! (*He chuckles away to him-* 8

1--Shui Ta crosses to the old woman: [he is thankful for the interruption.]

2--Shui Ta crosses to the up left shelf unit; the old woman follows. The policeman sits on one of the smaller crates: [his behavior is unaffected by the presence of the old woman; he speaks as if she were not in the room.]

3--[The policeman is still speaking out towards the audience.]

4--Shui Ta crosses to the counter; the old woman follows.

5--The policeman speaks to the old woman.

6--The policeman crosses to the old woman; the old woman does not know what to say.

7--[The policeman does not let the old woman think.]

8--The policeman crosses to the crate and sits. Shui Ta stays behind the counter. The old woman is with Shui Ta.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

self, takes out his notebook, wets the stump of a pencil between his lips, and writes away.)

1

SHUI TA (*slowly*): Not a bad idea.

POLICEMAN: "What . . . *respectable* . . . man . . . with small capital . . . widower . . . not excluded . . . desires . . . marriage . . . into flourishing . . . tobacco shop?" And now let's add: "Am . . . pretty . . ." No! . . . "Prepossessing appearance."

2

3

SHUI TA: If you don't think that's an exaggeration?

4

OLD WOMAN: Oh, not a bit. I've seen her.

The POLICEMAN tears the page out of his notebook, and hands it over to SHUI TA.

SHUI TA (*with horror in his voice*): How much luck we need to keep our heads above water! How many ideas! How many friends! (*To the POLICEMAN:*) Thank you, sir, I think I see my way clear.

5

6

1--The old woman tries to pay Shui Ta for the cigar but Shui Ta is lost in thought.

2--[The policeman is having a merry time.]

3--The old woman crosses to the policeman.

4--Shui Ta crosses center.

5--Shui ta speaks directly to the audience. He then speaks to the policeman who hands him the advertisement; the old woman smiles.

6--The gong sounds: tableau.

3

Evening in the municipal park. Noise of a plane overhead. YANG SUN, a young man in rags, is following the plane with his eyes: one can tell that the machine is describing a curve above the park. YANG SUN then takes a rope out of his pocket, looking anxiously about him as he does so. He moves toward a large willow. Enter two prostitutes, one the OLD WHORE, the other the NIECE whom we have already met.

NIECE: Hello. Coming with me?

YANG SUN (*taken aback*): If you'd like to buy me a dinner.

OLD WHORE: Buy you a dinner! (*To the NIECE:*) Oh, we know him—it's the unemployed pilot. Waste no time on him!

NIECE: But he's the only man left in the park. And it's going to rain.

OLD WHORE: Oh, how do you know?

And they pass by. YANG SUN again looks about him, again takes his rope, and this time throws it round a branch of the willow tree. Again he is interrupted. It is the two prostitutes returning—and in such a hurry they don't notice him.

NIECE: It's going to pour!

Enter SHEN TE.

- 1--Tableau: the niece and the old whore are in the extreme up right area.
- 2--The gong sounds: the lights change. Yang Sun enters left and crosses down right towards the willow.
- 3--The niece crosses down right towards Yang Sun who is now standing on the bench.
- 4--The old whore crosses to the niece: [the old whore is like a mother to the niece.]
- 5--The old whore drags the niece off left.
- 6--Yang Sun throws the rope over a limb.
- 7--The two whores enter up left and cross center.
- 8--Shen Te enters up right and crosses down left; she walks slowly.
- 9--Yang Sun stands on the bench, wanting to be left alone.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- OLD WHORE: There's that *gorgon* Shen Te! That *drove*
your family out into the cold! 1
- NIECE: It wasn't her. It was that cousin of hers. She of-
fered to pay for the cakes. I've nothing against her. 2
- OLD WHORE: I have, though. (*So that SHEN TE can hear.*)
Now where could the little lady be off to? She may
be rich now but that won't stop her snatching our
young men, will it? 3
- SHEN TE: I'm going to the tearoom by the pond.
- NIECE: Is it true what they say? You're marrying a widower
—with three children? 4
- SHEN TE: Yes. I'm just going to see him. 5
- YANG SUN (*his patience at breaking point*): Move on
there! This is a park, not a warehouse! 6
- OLD WHORE: Shut your mouth!
- But the two prostitutes leave.* 7
- YANG SUN: Even in the farthest corner of the park, even
when it's raining, you can't get rid of them! (*He*
spits.) 8
- SHEN TE (*overhearing this*): And what right have you to
scold them? (*But at this point she sees the rope.*) Oh! 9
- YANG SUN: Well, what are you staring at?
- SHEN TE: That rope. What is it for?
- YANG SUN: Think! Think! I haven't a penny. Even if I 10

- 1--The old whore stops left of center and taunts Shen Te.
- 2--[Shen Te tried to make up for the cruel actions of Shui Ta.]
- 3--Shen Te tries to walk around the old whore but the old whore confronts Shen Te directly.
- 4--The niece breaks up the confrontation.
- 5--[Shen Te is going to meet her future husband.]
- 6--[Yang Sun's attitude toward women is created in part by the economic conditions: only rich women are saved from a life of prostitution.]
- 7--The old whore and the niece exit right.
- 8--Yang Sun spits at the old whore.
- 9--Shen Te crosses to Yang Sun in order to defend the whores' life style.
- 10--[The connection is made between money and Yang Sun's suicide attempt.]

Bertolt Brecht

had, I wouldn't spend it on you. I'd buy a drink of water.

The rain starts.

SHEN TE (*still looking at the rope*): What is the rope for?
You mustn't!

YANG SUN: What's it to you? Clear out!

SHEN TE (*irrelevantly*): It's raining.

YANG SUN: Well, don't try to come under this tree.

SHEN TE: Oh, no. (*She stays in the rain.*)

YANG SUN: Now go away. (*Pause.*) For one thing, I don't like your looks, you're bowlegged.

SHEN TE (*indignantly*): That's not true!

YANG SUN: Well, don't show 'em to me. Look, it's raining.
You better come under this tree.

Slowly, she takes shelter under the tree.

SHEN TE: Why did you want to do it?

YANG SUN: You really want to know? (*Pause.*) To get rid of you! (*Pause.*) You know what a flyer is?

SHEN TE: Oh yes, I've met a lot of pilots. At the tearoom.

YANG SUN: You call *them* flyers? Think they know what a machine is? Just 'cause they have leather helmets? They gave the airfield director a bribe, that's the way *those* fellows got up in the air! Try one of them

1--The rain begins.

2--Shen Te crosses to Yang Sun, trying to take the rope away from him; Yang Sun threatens her; she crosses left.

3--Shen Te stands with her head bowed.

4--[A reference to Shen Te's prostitution.]

5--The end of the first beat: Shen Te crosses to the bench; Yang Sun stays standing.

6--Yang Sun is constantly forcing Shen Te to swallow her pride.

7--[The overall character of the scene must avoid sentimentality.]

8--[The theme of science: money is necessary.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

out sometime. "Go up to two thousand feet," tell them, "then let it fall, then pick it up again with a flick of the wrist at the last moment." Know what he'll say to that? "It's not in my contract." Then again, there's the landing problem. It's like landing on your own backside. It's no different, planes are human. Those fools don't understand. (*Pause.*) And I'm the biggest fool for reading the book on flying in the Peking school and skipping the page where it says: "We've got enough flyers and we don't need you." I'm a mail pilot with no mail. You understand that?

1

2

3

4

SHEN TE (*shyly*): Yes. I do.

5

YANG SUN: No, you don't. You'd never understand that.

SHEN TE: When we were little we had a crane with a broken wing. He made friends with us and was very good-natured about our jokes. He would strut along behind us and call out to stop us going too fast for him. But every spring and autumn when the cranes flew over the villages in great swarms, he got quite restless. (*Pause.*) I understand that. (*She bursts out crying.*)

6

YANG SUN: Don't!

7

SHEN TE (*quieting down*): No.

8

YANG SUN: It's bad for the complexion.

9

SHEN TE (*sniffing*): I've stopped.

She dries her tears on her big sleeve. Leaning against the tree, but not looking at her, he reaches for her face.

1--[Yang Sun wants respect.]

2--[Yang Sun treats the aeroplane like a woman.]

3--[A social condition: money is necessary for success.]

4--Shen Te sits on the bench.

5--Yang Sun crosses right of the tree.

6--[Shen Te's love of nature: the fact that she was
brought up in the country. Yang Sun brings out her
poetic nature.]

7--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te, standing behind her.

8--[Yang Sun must see that Shen Te is different from
other women.]

9--[A joke.]

Bertolt Brecht

- YANG SUN: You can't even wipe your own face. (*He is wiping it for her with his handkerchief. Pause.*) 1
- SHEN TE (*still sobbing*): I don't know *anything!* 2
- YANG SUN: You interrupted me! What for?
- SHEN TE: It's such a rainy day. You only wanted to do . . . *that* because it's such a rainy day. (*To the audience:*)
- In our country 3
 The evenings should never be somber
 High bridges over rivers
 The gray hour between night and morning 4
 And the long, long winter:
 Such things are dangerous
 For, with all the misery,
 A very little is enough 5
 And men throw away an unbearable life.
- Pause.* 6
- YANG SUN: Talk about yourself for a change.
- SHEN TE: What about me? I have a shop.
- YANG SUN (*incredulous*): You have a shop, have you? 7
 Never thought of walking the streets?
- SHEN TE: I did walk the streets. Now I have a shop.
- YANG SUN (*ironically*): A gift of the gods, I suppose!
- SHEN TE: How did you know? 8
- YANG SUN (*even more ironical*): One fine evening the gods turned up saying: here's some money! 9

1--Yang Sun wipes Shen Te's face with a handkerchief;
Shen Te pulls away.

2--Yang Sun crosses right.

3--Shen Te delivers the poem from the bench: [it is done
simply with no great emotion.]

4--[Shen Te's pity.]

5--Yang Sun stands with his hand on the tree.

6--Yang Sun breaks Shen Te's reverie.

7--[Yang Sun can not believe that Shen Te has a shop:
all women if not rich or married must be prostitutes,
especially women who sit down and talk to strangers.]

8--[Shen Te takes Yang Sun's statement as factual.]

9--[Shen Te realizes that Yang Sun is making fun of her.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHEN TE (*quickly*): One fine morning.

YANG SUN (*fed up*): This isn't much of an entertainment.

Pause. 1

SHEN TE: I can play the zither a little. (*Pause.*) And I can
mimic men. (*Pause.*) I got the shop, so the first
thing I did was to give my zither away. I can be as
stupid as a fish now, I said to myself, and it won't
matter. 2 3

I'm rich now, I said
I walk alone, I sleep alone
For a whole year, I said
I'll have nothing to do with a man.

YANG SUN: And now you're marrying one! The one at
the tearoom by the pond? 4

SHEN TE *is silent.* 5

YANG SUN: What do you know about love? 6

SHEN TE: Everything. 7

YANG SUN: Nothing. (*Pause.*) Or d'you just mean you
enjoyed it?

SHEN TE: No.

YANG SUN (*again without turning to look at her, he strokes
her cheek with his hand*): You like that? 8

SHEN TE: Yes. 9

YANG SUN (*breaking off*): You're easily satisfied, I must
say. (*Pause.*) What a town! 10

1--The end of the second beat: Shen Te cross down center.

2--[Shen Te is now more aggressive; she takes pride in herself.]

3--[An ironic statement.]

4--[Yang Sun has heard the conversation at the beginning of the scene.]

5--Shen Te sits.

6--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te and sits beside her.

7--[Shen Te is sincere.]

8--[Yang Sun tests Shen Te.]

9--[Shen Te's answer is in response to Yang Sun's degraded condition: she pities him.]

10--[Yang Sun thinks everyone in Setzuan is easily satisfied.]

Bertolt Brecht

SHEN TE: You have no friends?	1
YANG SUN (<i>defensively</i>): Yes, I have! (<i>Change of tone.</i>)	
But they don't want to hear I'm still unemployed.	2
"What?" they ask. "Is there still water in the sea?"	3
You have friends?	
SHEN TE (<i>hesitating</i>): Just a . . . cousin.	4
YANG SUN: Watch him carefully.	
SHEN TE: He only came once. Then he went away. He	
won't be back. (YANG SUN <i>is looking away</i> .) But to	5
be without hope, they say, is to be without goodness!	
<i>Pause.</i>	
YANG SUN: Go on talking. A voice is a voice.	
SHEN TE: Once, when I was a little girl, I fell, with a load	6
of brushwood. An old man picked me up. He gave	
me a penny too. Isn't it funny how people who don't	7
have very much like to give some of it away? They	
must like to show what they can do, and how could	
they show it better than by being kind? Being wicked	
is just like being clumsy. When we sing a song, or	
build a machine, or plant some rice, we're being	
kind. You're kind.	8
YANG SUN: You make it sound easy.	
SHEN TE: Oh, no. (<i>Little pause.</i>) Oh! A drop of rain!	9
YANG SUN: Where'd you feel it?	10
SHEN TE: Between the eyes.	
YANG SUN: Near the right eye? Or the left?	

1--[Shen Te's reply to Yang Sun is tough.]

2--[Yang Sun respects Shen Te for being forceful.]

3--Yang Sun crosses right.

4--[Shen Te realizes why Yang Sun is so cruel by comparing his cruelty to Shui Ta's.]

5--[Shen Te is not without hope: she is beginning to change her mind about the marriage plan.]

6--Shen Te crosses to Yang Sun.

7--[A life of goodness is but a memory.]

8--[Yang Sun begins to soften.]

9--Shen Te crosses right, out from under the tree.

10--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te: [this is the second moment of physical contact.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHEN TE: Near the left eye. 1

YANG SUN: Oh, good. (*He is getting sleepy.*) So you're
through with men, eh?

SHEN TE (*with a smile*): But I'm not bowlegged. 2

YANG SUN: Perhaps not.

SHEN TE: Definitely not. 3

Pause. 4

YANG SUN (*leaning wearily against the willow*): I haven't
had a drop to drink all day, I haven't eaten anything
for *two* days. I couldn't love you if I tried. 5

Pause. 6

SHEN TE: I like it in the rain.

Enter WONG the water seller, singing. 7

THE SONG OF THE WATER SELLER IN THE RAIN 8

"Buy my water," I am yelling
And my fury restraining
For no water I'm selling
'Cause it's raining, 'cause it's raining!
I keep yelling: "Buy my water!" 9
But no one's buying
Athirst and dying
And drinking and paying!
Buy water!
Buy water, you dogs!

Nice to dream of lovely weather!
Think of all the consternation
Were there no precipitation

1--Yang Sun remains close to Shen Te.

2--[The important thing here is to establish the fact that Shen Te loves Yang Sun and that Yang Sun gives her reasons to believe that he loves her. If the audience does not believe that her love is based upon some kind of factual evidence, then Shen Te's character will fall into total disbelief.]

3--Yang Sun kisses Shen Te lightly and quickly.

4--The end of the third beat: Yang Sun collapses by the trunk of the tree.

5--[This is an apology.]

6--Shen Te crosses from under the tree; she stands in the rain down right.

7--Wong enters from up left. Shen Te and Yang Sun stay motionless.

8--Wong crosses down left and sings his song directly to the audience.

9--[The song reveals Wong's ability to laugh off his hard life.]

Bertolt Brecht

Half a dozen years together! 1
 Can't you hear them shrieking: "Water!"
 Pretending they adore me?
 They all would go down on their knees
 before me!
 Down on your knees!
 Go down on your knees, you dogs!

What are lawns and hedges thinking?
 What are fields and forests saying?
 "At the clouds's breast we are drinking!
 And we've no idea who's paying!"
 I keep yelling: "Buy my water!"
 But no one's buying
 Athirst and dying
 And drinking and paying!
 Buy water!
 Buy water, you dogs!

The rain has stopped now. SHEN TE sees WONG and runs toward him. 2

SHEN TE: Wong! You're back! Your carrying pole's at the shop. 3

WONG: Oh, thank you, Shen Te. And how is life treating you?

SHEN TE: I've just met a brave and clever man. And I want to buy him a cup of your water. 4

WONG (*bitterly*): Throw back your head and open your mouth and you'll have all the water you need—

SHEN TE (*tenderly*):

I want *your* water, Wong
 The water that has tired you so

1--[Some of the "Buy water" lines are shouted rather than sung.]

2--The rain stops. [Shen Te breaks Wong's reverie.]

3--Shen Te crosses to Wong: [the action immediately takes a more upbeat tempo.]

4--[Shen Te is excited.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

The water that you carried all this way
The water that is hard to sell because
it's been raining.

I need it for the young man over there—he's a flyer!

A flyer is a bold man:
Braving the storms
In company with the clouds
He crosses the heavens
And brings to friends in faraway lands
The friendly mail!

1

*She pays WONG, and runs over to YANG SUN with the
cup. But YANG SUN is fast asleep.*

2

SHEN TE (*calling to WONG, with a laugh*): He's fallen
asleep! Despair and rain and I have worn him out!

3

4

1--Shen Te delivers this poem to the audience.

2--Shen Te crosses back to Yang Sun and kneels beside him.

3--Wong crosses to the bench.

4--The gong sounds: tableau.

3a

Wong's den. The sewer pipe is transparent, and the GODS again appear to WONG in a dream.

1
2

WONG (*radiant*): I've seen her, illustrious ones! And she hasn't changed!

FIRST GOD: That's good to hear.

WONG: She loves someone.

FIRST GOD: Let's hope the experience gives her the strength to stay good!

WONG: It does. She's doing good deeds all the time.

FIRST GOD: Ah? What sort? What sort of good deeds, Wong?

3

WONG: Well, she has a kind word for everybody.

FIRST GOD (*eagerly*): And then?

WONG: Hardly anyone leaves her shop without tobacco in his pocket—even if he can't pay for it.

4

FIRST GOD: Not bad at all. Next?

WONG: She's putting up a family of eight.

FIRST GOD (*gleefully, to the SECOND GOD*): Eight! (*To WONG:*) And that's not all, of course!

5

1--[Wong is in a good mood before the gods enter.]

2--The gods' entrance is punctuated by the barking of dogs. The gods are being chased. The second god smacks the dog with a piece of rope that he now carries with him: [throughout the play, the gods' physical condition gets worse i.e. their clothing becomes shredded, the third god breaks a leg, the second god wears glasses etc. This parallels their spiritual deterioration.]

3--This line is delivered to the second god: [the first god is hopeful; the second god does not believe anything that Wong says.]

4--[The first god wants the news right this minute; Wong is intent on taking his time.]

5--This line is delivered to the second god: [throughout this scene, the first and second god exchange glances and sneers. They have been arguing over the plight of their mission before their entrance.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

WONG: She bought a cup of water from me even though it was raining.

FIRST GOD: Yes, yes, yes, all these smaller good deeds! 1

WONG: Even they run into money. A little tobacco shop doesn't make so much.

FIRST GOD (*sententiously*): A prudent gardener works miracles on the smallest plot. 2

WONG: She hands out rice every morning. That eats up half her earnings.

FIRST GOD (*a little disappointed*): Well, as a beginning . . . 3

WONG: They call her the Angel of the Slums—whatever the carpenter may say! 4

FIRST GOD: What's this? A carpenter speaks ill of her? 5

WONG: Oh, he only says her shelves weren't paid for in full.

SECOND GOD (*who has a bad cold and can't pronounce his n's and m's*): What's this? Not paying a carpenter? Why was that? 6

WONG: I suppose she didn't have the money.

SECOND GOD (*severely*): One pays what one owes, that's in our book of rules! First the letter of the law, then the spirit. 7

WONG: But it wasn't Shen Te, illustrious ones, it was her cousin. She called *him* in to help.

SECOND GOD: Then her cousin must never darken her threshold again!

1--[Again, the gods have great expectations.]

2--[The first god has many dogmatic statements.]

3--The second god begins hammering his book of rules with the rope he has collected.

4--The end of the first beat: the gods start to leave.

5--The first god stops the second god, restraining him.

6--[The second god is fed up with man's lack of spiritual determination.]

7--[The second god's attitude on life.]

Bertolt Brecht

WONG: Very well, illustrious ones! But in fairness to Shen Te, let me say that her cousin is a businessman.

FIRST GOD: Perhaps we should inquire what is customary?
I find business quite unintelligible. But everybody's doing it. Business! Did the Seven Good Kings do business? Did Kung the Just sell fish?

SECOND GOD: In any case, such a thing must not occur again!

The GODS start to leave.

THIRD GOD: Forgive us for taking this tone with you, Wong, we haven't been getting enough sleep. The rich recommend us to the poor, and the poor tell us they haven't enough room.

SECOND GOD: Feeble, feeble, the best of them!

FIRST GOD: No great deeds! No heroic daring!

THIRD GOD: On such a *small* scale!

SECOND GOD: Sincere, yes, but what is actually *achieved*?

One can no longer hear them.

WONG (*calling after them*): I've thought of something, illustrious ones: Perhaps you shouldn't ask—too—much—all—at—once!

1--[Wong defends Shui Ta's actions but the gods have no understanding of the world of business.]

2--The first and second gods start to leave; the third god crosses to Wong: [the third god shows his compassion.]

3--This line is spoken to the third god: [the second god has very little patience with the third god.]

4--The gods exit. The gong sounds: light change.

5--Wong says his lines in the shadows.

4

The square in front of Shen Te's tobacco shop. Besides Shen Te's place, two other shops are seen: the carpet shop and a barber's. Morning. Outside Shen Te's the GRAND-FATHER, the SISTER-IN-LAW, the UNEMPLOYED MAN, and MRS. SHIN stand waiting.

1

SISTER-IN-LAW: She's been out all night again.

MRS. SHIN: No sooner did we get rid of that crazy cousin of hers than Shen Te herself starts carrying on! Maybe she does give us an ounce of rice now and then, but can you depend on her? Can you depend on her?

2

Loud voices from the barber's.

VOICE OF SHU FU: What are you doing in my shop? Get out—at once!

3

VOICE OF WONG: But sir. They all let me sell . . .

WONG comes staggering out of the barber's shop pursued by MR. SHU FU, the barber, a fat man carrying a heavy curling iron.

4

5

SHU FU: Get out, I said! Pestering my customers with your slimy old water! Get out! Take your cup!

6

He holds out the cup. WONG reaches out for it. MR. SHU FU strikes his hand with the curling iron, which is hot. WONG howls.

7

SHU FU: You had it coming, my man!

1--Tableau: city life. On the upstage plane, carts are being pushed, children are playing, etc. In the playing area, the sister-in-law is with the grandfather by the down right unit. The unemployed man is sitting with Wong's water buckets by the up left unit; the old woman is sweeping down left. Mrs. Shin is pacing in the center stage area. Gong sounds: tableau breaks.

2--[Mrs. Shin can never get enough of Shen Te's goodness.]

3--Voices are heard behind the up right arch unit.

4--Wong enters through the arch; he is being chased by Shu Fu who carries a curling iron.

5--The crowd scatters.

6--Shu Fu chases Wong center. Mrs. Shin crosses right.

7--Shu Fu hits Wong on the hand with the curling iron.
Wong collapses on the ground.

Bertolt Brecht

Puffing, he returns to his shop. The UNEMPLOYED MAN picks up the cup and gives it to WONG.

UNEMPLOYED MAN: You can report that to the police.

WONG: My hand! It's smashed up!

UNEMPLOYED MAN: Any bones broken?

WONG: I can't move my fingers.

UNEMPLOYED MAN: Sit down. I'll put some water on it.

WONG *sits*.

MRS. SHIN: The water won't cost you anything.

SISTER-IN-LAW: You might have got a bandage from Miss Shen Te till she took to staying out all night. It's a scandal.

MRS. SHIN (*despondently*): If you ask me, she's forgotten we ever existed!

Enter SHEN TE down the street, with a dish of rice.

SHEN TE (*to the audience*): How wonderful to see Setzuan in the early morning! I always used to stay in bed with my dirty blanket over my head afraid to wake up. This morning I saw the newspapers being delivered by little boys, the streets being washed by strong men, and fresh vegetables coming in from the country on ox carts. It's a long walk from where Yang Sun lives, but I feel lighter at every step. They say you walk on air when you're in love, but it's even better walking on the rough earth, on the hard cement. In the early morning, the old city looks like

1
2

3

4

5
6

1--Shu Fu exits. Wong crosses down left, away from Shu Fu's house. Mrs. Shin and the sister-in-law stay down right, away from the action. The unemployed man crosses to Wong with his water buckets.

2--Wong and the unemployed man sit down. The unemployed man helps Wong with his hand.

3--[The importance of this scene is that Wong gets an education in the practicalities of justice.]

4--The end of the first beat: Shu Fu enters and stands in the arch. The gong sounds: tableau and music.

5--Shen Te enters up center; she crosses down center with her bowl of rice; she puts the bowl of rice on the ground.

6--[The music is simple, reminiscent of tribal village music.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- a great heap of rubbish! Nice, though, with all its little lights. And the sky, so pink, so transparent, before the dust comes and muddies it! What a lot you miss if you never see your city rising from its slumbers like an honest old craftsman pumping his lungs full of air and reaching for his tools, as the poet says! (*Cheerfully, to her waiting guests:*) Good morning, everyone, here's your rice! (*Distributing the rice, she comes upon WONG.*) Good morning, Wong, I'm quite lightheaded today. On my way over, I looked at myself in all the shop windows. I'd love to be beautiful.
- She slips into the carpet shop. MR. SHU FU has just emerged from his shop.*
- SHU FU (*to the audience*): It surprises me how beautiful Miss Shen Te is looking today! I never gave her a passing thought before. But now I've been gazing upon her comely form for exactly three minutes! I begin to suspect I am in love with her. She is overpoweringly attractive! (*Crossly, to WONG:*) Be off with you, rascal!
- He returns to his shop. SHEN TE comes back out of the carpet shop with the OLD MAN, its proprietor, and his wife—whom we have already met—the OLD WOMAN. SHEN TE is wearing a shawl. The OLD MAN is holding up a looking glass for her.*
- OLD WOMAN: Isn't it lovely? We'll give you a reduction because there's a little hole in it.
- SHEN TE (*looking at another shawl on the OLD WOMAN's arm*): The other one's nice too.
- OLD WOMAN (*smiling*): Too bad there's no hole in that!

- 1--[Emphasize the fantastical nature of this monologue.]
- 2--Shen Te kneels to pick up her rice bowl.
- 3--The gong sounds: tableau breaks and music ends.
- 4--Shen Te crosses up right with her rice bowl; she sets the bowl on the ground. The grandfather, sister-in-law, Mrs. Shin, and the unemployed man cross to the bowl to get their daily meal.
- 5--The unemployed man crosses back to Wong.
- 6--Shen Te crosses left and enters the Carpet shop.
- 7--Shu Fu crosses center; he delivers his monologue from center stage.
- 8--Shu Fu kicks at Wong; Wong and the unemployed man cross even further down left. Shu Fu exits.
- 9--Shen Te enters, followed by the old woman and the old man. They cross down center.
- 10--The old woman adjusts the shawl on Shen Te's shoulders; the old man holds a mirror.
- 11--[The old woman is looking out for Shen Te.]

Bertolt Brecht

SHEN TE: That's right. My shop doesn't make very much.

OLD WOMAN: And your good deeds eat it all up! Be more careful, my dear. . . . 1

SHEN TE (*trying on the shawl with the hole*): Just now, I'm lightheaded! Does the color suit me? 2

OLD WOMAN: You'd better ask a man.

SHEN TE (*to the OLD MAN*): Does the color suit me? 3

OLD MAN: You'd better ask your young friend. 4

SHEN TE: I'd like to have your opinion. 5

OLD MAN: It suits you very well. But wear it this way: the dull side out. 6

SHEN TE *pays up*. 7

OLD WOMAN: If you decide you don't like it, you can exchange it. (*She pulls SHEN TE to one side.*) Has he got money? 8

SHEN TE (*with a laugh*): Yang Sun? Oh, no.

OLD WOMAN: Then how're you going to pay your rent? 9

SHEN TE: I'd forgotten about that.

OLD WOMAN: And next Monday is the first of the month! Miss Shen Te, I've got something to say to you. After we (*indicating her husband*) got to know you, we had our doubts about that marriage ad. We thought it would be better if you'd let *us* help you. Out of our 10

1--The old woman speaks to Shen Te over her shoulder.

2--[Shen Te's pregnancy.]

3--Shen Te crosses to the old man.

4--The old man hides behind the mirror.

5--Shen Te coaxes the old man.

6--The old man crosses right and gives the mirror to the old woman; he crosses to Shen Te and totally rearranges the shawl.

7--Shen Te gives the old woman money for the shawl; the old woman gives it and the mirror to the old man. The old man crosses into the Carpet shop.

8--The old woman arranges the shawl the way it was before the old man fiddled with it.

9--[In love, Shen Te has forgotten the practicalities of of life.]

10--[The old woman is looking out for the inexperienced Shen Te: the old woman knows that Shen Te is vulnerable.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

savings. We reckon we could lend you two hundred silver dollars. We don't need anything in writing—you could pledge us your tobacco stock.

1

SHEN TE: You're prepared to lend money to a person like me?

OLD WOMAN: It's folks like you that need it. We'd think twice about lending anything to your cousin.

2

OLD MAN (*coming up*): All settled, my dear?

3

SHEN TE: I wish the gods could have heard what your wife was just saying, Mr. Ma. They're looking for good people who're happy—and helping me makes you happy because you know it was love that got me into difficulties!

4

The OLD COUPLE smile knowingly at each other.

OLD MAN: And here's the money, Miss Shen Te.

He hands her an envelope. SHEN TE takes it. She bows. They bow back. They return to their shop.

5

SHEN TE (*holding up her envelope*): Look, Wong, here's six months' rent! Don't you believe in miracles now? And how do you like my new shawl?

6

WONG: For the young fellow I saw you with in the park?

SHEN TE *nods*.

MRS. SHIN: Never mind all that. It's time you took a look at his hand!

7

SHEN TE: Have you hurt your hand?

8

1--[The old people are "good" people.]

2--[Another example of human love: all examples of tenderness need to be pointed.]

3--The old man enters with a bag of money.

4--[Shen Te is still aware of the gods.]

5--Shen Te kisses the old man on the forehead; the old man bows repeatedly. The old woman drags the old man into the shop.

6--Shen Te crosses down left to Wong: [Shen Te is elated.]

7--The end of the second beat: Mrs. Shin crosses to Shen Te.

8--[Shen Te, in her excitement and love, has failed to recognize that Wong has been hurt. This is similar to her forgetfulness concerning the rent. Shen Te is no longer aware of the suffering of others: she is only aware of her love for Yang Sun.]

Bertolt Brecht

- MRS. SHIN: That barber smashed it with his hot curling iron. Right in front of our eyes. 1
- SHEN TE (*shocked at herself*): And I never noticed! We must get you to a doctor this minute or who knows what will happen? 2
- UNEMPLOYED MAN: It's not a doctor he should see, it's a judge. He can ask for compensation. The barber's filthy rich. 3
- WONG: You think I have a chance?
- MRS. SHIN (*with relish*): If it's really good and smashed. But is it? 4
- WONG: I think so. It's very swollen. Could I get a pension?
- MRS. SHIN: You'd need a witness.
- WONG: Well, you all saw it. You could all testify. 5
- He looks round. The UNEMPLOYED MAN, the GRANDFATHER, and the SISTER-IN-LAW are all sitting against the wall of the shop eating rice. Their concentration on eating is complete.* 6
- SHEN TE (*to MRS. SHIN*): You saw it yourself. 7
- MRS. SHIN: I want nothing to do with the police. It's against my principles. 8
- SHEN TE (*to SISTER-IN-LAW*): What about you?
- SISTER-IN-LAW: Me? I wasn't looking.
- SHEN TE (*to the GRANDFATHER, coaxingly*): Grandfather, you'll testify, won't you? 9

1--[Wong's education in Setzuan's style of justice begins.]

2--The grandfather crosses center, watching the action.

3--[The unemployed man is experienced in the ways of begging.]

4--[In order to survive Wong's hand would have to be really
smashed up: a social comment.]

5--Everyone scatters. Mrs. Shin crosses far right; the
unemployed man turns left, away from Wong. The sister-
in-law goes back to eating.

6--Shen Te crosses to Mrs. Shin.

7--Mrs. Shin turns away.

8--Shen Te crosses up right to the sister-in-law who is
still busy eating; the sister-in-law goes on eating.

9--Shen Te crosses to the grandfather who is still standing
center.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- SISTER-IN-LAW: And a lot of good that will do. He's simple-minded. 1
- SHEN TE (*to the UNEMPLOYED MAN*): You seem to be the only witness left. 2
- UNEMPLOYED MAN: My testimony would only hurt him. I've been picked up twice for begging. 3
- SHEN TE:
Your brother is assaulted, and you shut your eyes?
He is hit, cries out in pain, and you are silent?
The beast prowls, chooses and seizes his victim, and you say: 4
"Because we showed no displeasure, he has spared us."
5
If no one present will be a witness, I will. I'll say I saw it.
- MRS. SHIN (*solemnly*): The name for that is perjury. 6
- WONG: I don't know if I can accept that. Though maybe I'll have to. (*Looking at his hand.*) Is it swollen enough, do you think? The swelling's not going down? 7
- UNEMPLOYED MAN: No, no. the swelling's holding up well. 8
- WONG: Yes. It's *more* swollen if anything. Maybe my wrist is broken after all. I'd better see a judge at once. 9
- Holding his hand very carefully, and fixing his eyes on it, he runs off. MRS. SHIN goes quickly into the barber's shop.* 10
- UNEMPLOYED MAN (*seeing her*): She is getting on the right side of Mr. Shu Fu. 11

- 1--The sister-in-law crosses to the grandfather and takes him away from Shen Te. The grandfather resists.
- 2--Shen Te crosses to the unemployed man.
- 3--[This is a true statement.]
- 4--Shen Te does this speech in the center stage area, directing it mainly to Mrs. Shin and the unemployed man.
- 5--[The unconscious laborer has no positive, active unity with other laborers.]
- 6--Wong crosses to Shen Te.
- 7--The unemployed man crosses to Wong.
- 8--The unemployed man crosses to Wong's water buckets and gets them for him.
- 9--Wong exits up left.
- 10--Mrs. Shin sneaks into Shu Fu's shop.
- 11--The unemployed man crosses to Shen Te.

Bertolt Brecht

SISTER-IN-LAW: You and I can't change the world, Shen Te.

SHEN TE: Go away! Go away all of you!

1

The UNEMPLOYED MAN, the SISTER-IN-LAW, and the GRANDFATHER stalk off, eating and sulking.

To the audience:

They've stopped answering
They stay put
They do as they're told
They don't care
Nothing can make them look up
But the smell of food.

2

Enter MRS. YANG, Yang Sun's mother, out of breath.

3

MRS. YANG: Miss Shen Te. My son has told me everything. I am Mrs. Yang, Sun's mother. Just think. He's got an offer. Of a job as a pilot. A letter has just come. From the director of the airfield in Peking!

4

5

SHEN TE: So he can fly again? Isn't that wonderful!

MRS. YANG (*less breathlessly all the time*): They won't give him the job for nothing. They want five hundred silver dollars.

SHEN TE: We can't let money stand in his way, Mrs. Yang!

6

MRS. YANG: If only you could help him out!

7

SHEN TE: I have the shop. I can try! (*She embraces MRS. YANG.*) I happen to have two hundred with me now. Take it. (*She gives her the old couple's money.*)

8

1--Shen Te chases the people away. The sister-in-law and the grandfather exit up right. The unemployed man exits up left.

2--Shen Te crosses down center to address the audience.

3--Shen Te crosses down left.

4--The end of the third beat: Mrs. Yang enters right, running; she crosses to Shen Te.

5--[This signals the end of the first portion of the play: Shen Te's love of neighbor. Now, the love of husband becomes Shen Te's major motivation.]

6--Shen Te crosses center.

7--Mrs. Yang crosses to Shen Te.

8--Shen Te gives Mrs. Yang the bag of money.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

It was a loan but they said I could repay it with
my tobacco stock.

MRS. YANG: And they were calling Sun the Dead Pilot of
Setzuan! A friend in need! 1

SHEN TE: We must find another three hundred.

MRS YANG: How?

SHEN TE: Let me think. (*Slowly.*) I know someone who
can help. I didn't want to call on his services again,
he's hard and cunning. But a flyer must fly. And I'll
make this the last time. 2

Distant sound of a plane. 3

MRS. YANG: If the man you mentioned can do it. . . . Oh,
look, there's the morning mail plane, heading for
Peking!

SHEN TE: The pilot can see us, let's wave! 4

They wave. The noise of the engine is louder.

MRS. YANG: You know that pilot up there? 5

SHEN TE: Wave, Mrs. Yang! I know the pilot who will
be up there. He gave up hope. But he'll do it now.
One man to raise himself above the misery, above
us all. (*To the audience:*) 6

Yang Sun, my lover: 7

Braving the storms 8

In company with the clouds

Crossing the heavens

And bringing to friends in faraway lands

The friendly mail! 9

1--[Mrs. Yang is an important motivation for many of Yang Sun's future actions.]

2--[Shen Te calls in Shui Ta in order to give Yang Sun what he wants.]

3--The plane sound is heard: [all the sounds for the production are done live.]

4--Shen Te crosses down right, waving.

5--Mrs. Yang alternately waves and looks at the bag of money.

6--Mrs. Yang crosses up left of Shen Te.

7--The gong sounds: Mrs. Yang goes into tableau; the people of Setzuan enter the tableau. The plane sound stops.

8--Shen Te turns and addresses the audience.

9--Scene change lights.

4a

In front of the inner curtain. Enter SHEN TE, carrying Shui Ta's mask. She sings.

1
2

THE SONG OF DEFENSELESSNESS

3

In our country
A useful man needs luck
Only if he finds strong backers
Can he prove himself useful.
The good can't defend themselves and
Even the gods are defenseless.

Oh, why don't the gods have their own ammunition
And launch against badness their own expedition
Enthroning the good and preventing sedition
And bringing the world to a peaceful condition?

Oh, why don't the gods do the buying and selling
Injustice forbidding, starvation dispelling
Give bread to each city and joy to each dwelling?
Oh, why don't the gods do the buying and selling?

She puts on SHUI TA's mask and sings in his voice.

4
5
6

You can only help one of your luckless brothers
By trampling down a dozen others.

Why is it the gods do not feel indignation
And come down in fury to end exploitation
Defeat all defeat and forbid desperation
Refusing to tolerate such toleration?

Why is it?

7

- 1--The inner curtain is lowered but the apron is not.
- 2--Shen Te enters right and crosses down center; she is carrying the mask of Shui Ta.
- 3--When Shen Te starts to sing, the shadows of five town's people appear on the curtain upstage of her.
- 4--Shen Te puts on Shui Ta's mask: [this action is done ceremoniously.]
- 5--Shui Ta does not sing: he speaks the words to the song.
- 6--Improvised music interacts with the piano music during Shui Ta's portion of the song.
- 7--The gong sounds: scene change lights.

5

Shen Te's tobacco shop. Behind the counter, MR. SHUI TA, reading the paper. MRS. SHIN is cleaning up. She talks and he takes no notice.

1
2

MRS. SHIN: And when certain rumors get about, what happens to a little place like this? It goes to pot. I know. So, if you want my advice, Mr. Shui Ta, find out just what has been going on between Miss Shen Te and that Yang Sun from Yellow Street. And remember: a certain interest in Miss Shen Te has been expressed by the barber next door, a man with twelve houses and only one wife, who, for that matter, is likely to drop off at any time. A certain interest has been expressed. He was even inquiring about her means and, if *that* doesn't prove a man is getting serious, what would? (*Still getting no response, she leaves with her bucket.*)

3
4
5
6

YANG SUN'S VOICE: Is that Miss Shen Te's tobacco shop?

7

MRS. SHIN'S VOICE: Yes, it is, but it's Mr. Shui Ta who's here today.

SHUI TA runs to the mirror with the short, light steps of SHEN TE, and is just about to start primping, when he realizes his mistake, and turns away, with a short laugh. Enter YANG SUN. MRS. SHIN enters behind him and slips into the back room to eavesdrop.

8
9
10

YANG SUN: I am Yang Sun. (SHUI TA bows.) Is Shen Te in?

- 1--Tableau: Shui Ta is sitting at the counter, reading a newspaper; Mrs. Shin is down center on her knees, scrubbing the floor with a rag. The Tobacco shop is fully stocked with cigars and cigarettes. On the street stage right, the wife, the husband, and the nephew are huddled in a group. On the street stage left, the grandfather is asleep against a building.
- 2--The gong sounds: tableau breaks.
- 3--[Mrs. Shin knows that if Shen Te goes off with Yang Sun, Mrs. Shin's good fortune will go off with them.
- 4--Shui Ta looks up from his newspaper; he looks at Mrs. Shin who is still talking but not looking his way. He looks at his paper.
- 5--Mrs. Shin looks at Shui Ta. Shui Ta does not look up.
- 6--Shui Ta crosses to Mrs. Shin; he stands there, holding out a coin. Mrs. Shin takes the coin and leaves with her bucket.
- 7--Yang Sun's voice is heard off right.
- 8--Shui Ta runs to the mirror on the up left shelf unit; he checks himself out in the mirror: [this is Shen Te responding to Yang Sun's voice.]
- 9--Shui Ta crosses quickly to the counter.
- 10--Yang Sun enters and crosses center. Mrs. Shin enters behind Yang Sun and sneaks into the back room.

Bertolt Brecht

SHUI TA: No.	1
YANG SUN: I guess you know our relationship? (<i>He is inspecting the stock.</i>) Quite a place! And I thought she was just talking big. I'll be flying again, all right. (<i>He takes a cigar, solicits and receives a light from SHUI TA.</i>) You think we can squeeze the other three hundred out of the tobacco stock?	2 3 4
SHUI TA: May I ask if it is your intention to sell at once?	5
YANG SUN: It was decent of her to come out with the two hundred but they aren't much use with the other three hundred still missing.	
SHUI TA: Shen Te was overhasty promising so much. She might have to sell the shop itself to raise it. Haste, they say, is the wind that blows the house down.	6
YANG SUN: Oh, she isn't a girl to keep a man waiting. For one thing or the other, if you take my meaning.	
SHUI TA: I take your meaning.	
YANG SUN (<i>leering</i>): Uh, huh.	
SHUI TA: Would you explain what the five hundred silver dollars are for?	
YANG SUN: Want to sound me out? Very well. The director of the Peking airfield is a friend of mine from flying school. I give him five hundred: he gets me the job.	7 8
SHUI TA: The price is high.	
YANG SUN: Not as these things go. He'll have to fire	

1--Shui Ta does not look at Yang Sun: [again, this is the reality of the impersonation preventing Shen Te from behaving normally.]

2--Yang Sun crosses up left, inspecting the stock.

3--Yang Sun crosses to the counter; he takes a cigar from a box.

4--Shui Ta crosses down right of the counter; Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta and solicits and receives a light from him.

5--Yang Sun crosses to the crates, now used as a display table; he sits on the edge: [he gets to the point.]

6--Shui Ta crosses down right of center.

7--Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta; he has a letter.

8--[Yang Sun wants the job more than anything else, even Shen Te.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

one of the present pilots—for negligence. Only the man he has in mind isn't negligent. Not easy, you understand. You needn't mention that part of it to Shen Te.

1

SHUI TA (*looking intently at YANG SUN*): Mr. Yang Sun, you are asking my cousin to give up her possessions, leave her friends, and place her entire fate in your hands. I presume you intend to marry her?

2

YANG SUN: I'd be prepared to.

Slight pause.

SHUI TA: Those two hundred silver dollars would pay the rent here for six months. If you were Shen Te wouldn't you be tempted to continue in business?

YANG SUN: What? Can you imagine Yang Sun the flyer behind a counter? (*In an oily voice.*) "A strong cigar or a mild one, worthy sir?" Not in this century!

SHUI TA: My cousin wishes to follow the promptings of her heart, and, from her own point of view, she may even have what is called the right to love. Accordingly, she has commissioned me to help you to this post. There is nothing here that I am not empowered to turn immediately into cash. Mrs. Mi Tzu, the landlady, will advise me about the sale.

3

4

5

Enter MRS. MI TZU.

6

MRS. MI TZU: Good morning, Mr. Shui Ta, you wish to see me about the rent? As you know it falls due the day after tomorrow.

7

SHUI TA: Circumstances have changed, Mrs. Mi Tzu: my

8

1--Yang Sun crosses to the crates.

2--Shui Ta crosses left of Yang Sun and then circles upstage of him. Shui Ta is still looking away from Yang Sun; he looks at him only when Yang Sun cannot see him face to face.

3--[This is difficult for Shui Ta to do.]

4--Shui Ta crosses up center, preparing to leave.

5--The end of the first beat: Mi Tzu enters and crosses to Shui Ta: [the coincidence of Mi Tzu's sudden appearance.]

6--Shui Ta crosses down right of the counter.

7--[Shui Ta had planned on getting the two hundred back from Yang Sun and then paying the rent.]

8--Yang Sun crosses up left.

Bertolt Brecht

cousin is getting married. Her future husband here, Mr. Yang Sun, will be taking her to Peking. I am interested in selling the tobacco stock.

- MRS. MI TZU: How much are you asking, Mr. Shui Ta? 1
- YANG SUN: Three hundred sil—
- SHUI TA: Five hundred silver dollars.
- MRS. MI TZU: How much did she pay for it, Mr. Shui Ta?
- SHUI TA: A thousand. And very little has been sold.
- MRS. MI TZU: She was robbed. But I'll make you a special offer if you'll promise to be out by the day after tomorrow. Three hundred silver dollars. 2
- YANG SUN (*shrugging*): Take it, man, take it. 3
- SHUI TA: It is not enough. 4
- YANG SUN: Why not? Why not? Certainly, it's enough.
- SHUI TA: Five hundred silver dollars.
- YANG SUN: But why? We only need three! 5
- SHUI TA (*to MRS. MI TZU*): Excuse me. (*Takes YANG SUN on one side.*) The tobacco stock is pledged to the old couple who gave my cousin the two hundred. 6
7
- YANG SUN: Is it in writing?
- SHUI TA: No.
- YANG SUN (*to MRS. MI TZU*): Three hundred will do. 8

1--Mi Tzu directs this line in Yang Sun's direction.

2--Mi Tzu crosses up left in the direction of Yang Sun.

3--Yang Sun crosses center.

4--Shui Ta crosses down right.

5--Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta.

6--Shui Ta crosses further right, motioning for Yang Sun to follow.

7--Shui Ta still can not look at Yang Sun: [this is one reason Shui Ta can not effectively deal with the boldness of Yang Sun. Shen Te's love of Yang Sun is the other reason..]

8--Yang Sun crosses to Mi Tzu.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- MRS. MI TZU: Of course, I need an assurance that Miss Shen Te is not in debt. 1
- YANG SUN: Mr. Shui Ta?
- SHUI TA: She is not in debt.
- YANG SUN: When can you let us have the money?
- MRS. MI TZU: The day after tomorrow. And remember: 2
I'm doing this because I have a soft spot in my heart
for young lovers! (*Exit.*) 3
- YANG SUN (*calling after her*): Boxes, jars and sacks—three
hundred for the lot and the pain's over! (*To SHUI TA:*) 4
Where else can we raise money by the day after
tomorrow?
- SHUI TA: Nowhere. Haven't you enough for the trip and 5
the first few weeks?
- YANG SUN: Oh, certainly.
- SHUI TA: How much, exactly.
- YANG SUN: Oh, I'll dig it up, even if I have to steal it.
- SHUI TA: I see. 6
- YANG SUN: Well, don't fall off the roof. I'll get to Peking 7
somehow.
- SHUI TA: Two people can't travel for nothing.
- YANG SUN (*not giving SHUI TA a chance to answer*): I'm
leaving *her* behind. No millstones round *my* neck!
- SHUI TA: Oh. 8

1--Mi Tzu cross down left. Shui Ta stays down right.

2--Mi Tzu crosses to Shui Ta: [Mi Tzu likes nothing more than beating a man at a man's game.]

3--Mi Tzu exits. Yang Sun crosses to the door and helps her up the steps.

4--Yang Sun crosses to the counter and starts looking through the books.

5--Shui Ta crosses to Yang Sun and grabs the book.

6--Shui Ta crosses left, away from Yang Sun.

7--[If Shui Ta is going to get tough with Yang Sun, Yang Sun is going to get tough with Shui Ta.]

8--Shui Ta turns and looks directly at Yang Sun.

Bertolt Brecht

YANG SUN: Don't look at me like that!

SHUI TA: How precisely is my cousin to live?

1

YANG SUN: Oh, you'll think of something.

SHUI TA: A small request, Mr. Yang Sun. Leave the two hundred silver dollars here until you can show me two tickets for Peking.

YANG SUN: You learn to mind your own business, Mr. Shui Ta.

2

SHUI TA: I'm afraid Miss Shen Te may not wish to sell the shop when she discovers that . . .

3

YANG SUN: You don't know women. She'll want to. Even then.

SHUI TA (*a slight outburst*): She is a human being, sir! And not devoid of common sense!

4

YANG SUN: Shen Te is a woman: she is devoid of common sense. I only have to lay my hand on her shoulder, and church bells ring.

5

SHUI TA (*with difficulty*): Mr. Yang Sun!

YANG SUN: Mr. Shui Whatever-it-is!

SHUI TA: My cousin is devoted to you . . . because . . .

YANG SUN: Because I have my hands on her breasts. Give me a cigar. (*He takes one for himself, stuffs a few more in his pocket, then changes his mind and takes the whole box.*) Tell her I'll marry her, then bring me the three hundred. Or let her bring it. One or the other. (*Exit.*)

6

7

8

1--Shui Ta turns away from Yang Sun.

2--Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta; he stands behind him.

3--[Shui Ta will use money in order to assure a successful marriage.]

4--Shui Ta turns and speaks directly into Yang Sun's face.

5--[This fight is done face to face.]

6--Yang Sun crosses to the counter and takes the box of cigars.

7--Yang Sun crosses to the door: these last lines are done from the steps.

8--Yang Sun exits.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- MRS. SHIN (*sticking her head out of the back room*): Well, he has your cousin under his thumb, and doesn't care if all Yellow Street knows it! 1
- SHUI TA (*crying out*): I've lost my shop! And he doesn't love me! (*He runs berserk through the room, repeating these lines incoherently. Then stops suddenly, and addresses MRS. SHIN.*) Mrs. Shin, you grew up in the gutter, like me. Are we lacking in hardness? I doubt it. If you steal a penny from me, I'll take you by the throat till you spit it out! You'd do the same to me. The times are bad, this city is hell, but we're like ants, we keep coming, up and up the walls, however smooth! Till bad luck comes. Being in love, for instance. One weakness is enough, and love is the deadliest. 2
3
4
5
6
7
- MRS. SHIN (*emerging from the back room*): You should have a little talk with Mr. Shu Fu, the barber. He's a real gentleman and just the thing for your cousin. (*She runs off.*) 8
- SHUI TA:
A caress becomes a stranglehold
A sigh of love turns to a cry of fear
Why are there vultures circling in the air?
A girl is going to meet her lover. 9
- SHUI TA *sits down and* MR. SHU FU *enters with* MRS. SHIN. 10
- SHUI TA: Mr. Shu Fu? 11
- SHU FU: Mr. Shui Ta.
- They both bow.*

- 1--The end of the second beat: Mrs. Shin peeks through the curtain on the back room.
- 2--Shui Ta crosses to the counter and grabs it for support; he backs up into the upstage corner of the shop. These lines are spoken in Shen Te's normal voice.
- 3--Mrs. Shin enters from the back room.
- 4--Shui Ta crosses to Mrs. Shin; Mrs. Shin retreats as Shui Ta advances.
- 5--Shui Ta has his hand almost around the throat of Mrs. Shin; Mrs. Shin crosses to the counter.
- 6--Shui Ta stays by the crate.
- 7--[Shen Te's hatred of the city: it is here that Shui Ta's ruthlessness is justified. Shui Ta is a survivor; Shen Te is not.]
- 8--Mrs. Shin exits.
- 9--Shui Ta speaks to the audience: he uses Shen Te's normal voice.
- 10--Shu Fu enters followed by Mrs. Shin. Mrs. Shin sneaks into the back room.
- 11--Shu Fu and Shui Ta meet center; they bow.

Bertolt Brecht

SHUI TA: I am told that you have expressed a certain interest in my cousin Shen Te. Let me set aside all propriety and confess: she is at this moment in grave danger.

SHU FU: Oh, dear!

SHUI TA: She has lost her shop, Mr. Shu Fu.

SHU FU: The charm of Miss Shen Te, Mr. Shui Ta, derives from the goodness, not of her shop, but of her heart. Men call her the Angel of the Slums.

SHUI TA: Yet her goodness has cost her two hundred silver dollars in a single day: we must put a stop to it.

SHU FU: Permit me to differ, Mr. Shui Ta. Let us, rather, open wide the gates to such goodness! Every morning, with pleasure tinged by affection, I watch her charitable ministrations. For they are hungry, and she giveth them to eat! Four of them, to be precise. Why only four? I ask. Why not four hundred? I hear she has been seeking shelter for the homeless. What about my humble cabins behind the cattle run? They are at her disposal. And so forth. And so on. Mr. Shui Ta, do you think Miss Shen Te could be persuaded to listen to certain ideas of mine? Ideas like these?

SHUI TA: Mr. Shu Fu, she would be honored.

Enter WONG and the POLICEMAN. MR. SHU FU turns abruptly away and studies the shelves.

WONG: Is Miss Shen Te here?

SHUI TA: No.

WONG: I am Wong the water seller. You are Mr. Shui Ta?

1

2

3

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7

8

9

10

1--Shu Fu crosses down right.

2--Shu Fu crosses to Shui Ta.

3--[Shu Fu has a poetic spirit: a big man with a light tongue.]

4--Shu Fu crosses left.

5--Shu Fu crosses right.

6--Shu Fu crosses to Shui Ta.

7--Shu Fu and Shui Ta bow to one another

8--Wong enters, followed by the policeman.

9--Shu Fu crosses up left and stands with his back to the action.

10--Wong crosses to Shui Ta who is standing center; Shui Ta looks away.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHUI TA: I am. 1

WONG: I am a friend of Shen Te's.

SHUI TA: An intimate friend, I hear.

WONG (*to the POLICEMAN*): You see? (*To SHUI TA:*) It's because of my hand.

POLICEMAN: He hurt his hand, sir, that's a fact.

SHUI TA (*quickly*): You need a sling, I see. (*He takes a shawl from the back room, and throws it to WONG.*) 2

WONG: But that's her new shawl!

SHUI TA: She has no more use for it.

WONG: But she bought it to please someone! 3

SHUI TA: It happens to be no longer necessary.

WONG (*making the sling*): She is my only witness.

POLICEMAN: Mr. Shui Ta, your cousin is supposed to have seen the barber hit the water seller with a curling iron. 4
5
6

SHUI TA: I'm afraid my cousin was not present at the time.

WONG: But she was, sir! Just ask her! Isn't she in? 7

SHUI TA (*gravely*): Mr. Wong, my cousin has her own troubles. You wouldn't wish her to add to them by committing perjury?

WONG: But it was she that told me to go to the judge! 8

1--The policeman crosses to the right of Wong.

2--Shui Ta crosses to the back room and gets the shawl; he returns and throws the shawl at Wong; he then crosses down left.

3--Wong crosses to the counter and puts the shawl around his arm.

4--The policeman crosses to Shui Ta.

5--Shu Fu lights a cigar.

6--[Throughout this scene, the policeman must be aware of the presence of Shu Fu.]

7--Wong crosses to the policeman; Wong starts to cross to the back room but the policeman grabs his arm.

8--Wong crosses down center to address Shui Ta.

Bertolt Brecht

SHUI TA: Was the judge supposed to heal your hand?

MR. SHU FU *turns quickly around*. SHUI TA *bows to*
SHU FU, *and vice versa*.

1

WONG (*taking the sling off, and putting it back*): I see
how it is.

2

POLICEMAN: Well, I'll be on my way. (*To WONG:*) And
you be careful. If Mr. Shu Fu wasn't a man who
tempers justice with mercy, as the saying is, you'd
be in jail for libel. Be off with you!

3

4

Exit WONG, followed by POLICEMAN.

SHUI TA: Profound apologies, Mr. Shu Fu.

5

SHU FU: Not at all, Mr. Shui Ta. (*Pointing to the shawl.*)
The episode is over?

SHUI TA: It may take her time to recover. There are some
fresh wounds.

SHU FU: We shall be discreet. Delicate. A short vacation
could be arranged. . . .

SHUI TA: First of course, you and she would have to talk
things over.

6

SHU FU: At a small supper in a small, but high-class,
restaurant.

SHUI TA: I'll go and find her. (*Exit into back room.*)

7

MRS. SHIN (*sticking her head in again*): Time for con-
gratulations, Mr. Shu Fu?

8

- 1--Shu Fu turns around abruptly; Shui Ta and Shu Fu bow to one another.
- 2--Wong backs up, taking the shawl from around his arm; he leaves the shawl on the counter.
- 3--The policeman acknowledges Shu Fu; Shu Fu crosses to the policeman and passes him several large coins.
- 4--The policeman drags Wong off.
- 5--Shu Fu crosses down right of the crate; Shui Ta is still down left.
- 6--Shui Ta crosses to Shu Fu.
- 7--Shui Ta crosses to the back room; Shu Fu crosses to the counter and picks up the shawl: he brings it to his nose.
- 8--Mrs. Shin enters from the back room and crosses to the left of center: [she startles Shu Fu.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHU FU: Ah, Mrs. Shin! Please inform Miss Shen Te's guests they may take shelter in the cabins behind the cattle run!

MRS. SHIN *nods, grinning.*

SHU FU (*to the audience*): Well? What do you think of me, ladies and gentlemen? What could a man do more? Could he be less selfish? More farsighted? A small supper in a small but . . . Does that bring rather vulgar and clumsy thoughts into your mind? Ts, ts, ts. Nothing of the sort will occur. She won't even be touched. Not even accidentally while passing the salt. An exchange of ideas only. Over the flowers on the table—white chrysanthemums, by the way (*he writes down a note of this*)—yes, over the white chrysanthemums, two young souls will . . . shall I say "find each other"? We shall NOT exploit the misfortune of others. Understanding? Yes. An offer of assistance? Certainly. But quietly. Almost inaudibly. Perhaps with a single glance. A glance that could also —also mean more.

MRS. SHIN (*coming forward*): Everything under control, Mr. Shu Fu?

SHU FU: Oh, Mrs. Shin, what do you know about this worthless rascal Yang Sun?

MRS. SHIN: Why, he's the most worthless rascal . . .

SHU FU: Is he really? You're sure? (*As she opens her mouth.*) From now on, he doesn't exist! Can't be found anywhere!

Enter YANG SUN.

1--Mrs. Shin exits the shop; she crosses to the street where she informs the husband, wife, and nephew of Shu Fu's offer.

2--Shu Fu crosses down center to address the audience: he uses the whole down center area during this monologue.

3--[Shu Fu continually composes poetry.]

4--Shu Fu crosses right.

5--Shu Fu is holding the shawl and smoking a cigar. Shu Fu brings the shawl to his nose.

6--Mrs. Shin enters and crosses up left of Shu Fu: [she startles him again.]

7--Shu Fu crosses to Mrs. Shin.

8--[Shu Fu and Mrs. Shin have exchanged favors many times.]

9--Yang Sun enters.

Bertolt Brecht

- YANG SUN: What's been going on here? 1
- MRS. SHIN: Shall I call Mr. Shui Ta, Mr. Shu Fu? He 2
wouldn't want strangers in here!
- SHU FU: Mr. Shui Ta is in conference with Miss Shen Te.
Not to be disturbed.
- YANG SUN: Shen Te here? I didn't see her come in. What 3
kind of conference?
- SHU FU (*not letting him enter the back room*): Patience,
dear sir! And if by chance I have an inkling who you 4
are, pray take note that Miss Shen Te and I are about
to announce our engagement.
- YANG SUN: What? 5
- MRS. SHIN: You didn't expect that, did you? 6
- YANG SUN *is trying to push past the barber into the*
back room when SHEN TE comes out. 7
8
9
- SHU FU: My dear Shen Te, ten thousand apologies! Per-
haps you . . . 10
- YANG SUN: What is it, Shen Te? Have you gone crazy?
- SHEN TE (*breathless*): My cousin and Mr. Shu Fu have
come to an understanding. They wish me to hear Mr.
Shu Fu's plans for helping the poor. 11
- YANG SUN: Your cousin wants to part us. 12
- SHEN TE: Yes.
- YANG SUN: And you've agreed to it?

- 1--Yang Sun crosses center; Mrs. Shin crosses left.
- 2--Mrs. Shin signals to Shu Fu.
- 3--Yang Sun starts to cross towards the back room; Shu Fu stops him.
- 4--Shu Fu crosses to the waste basket down right of the counter; he throws the shawl into the basket.
- 5--Yang Sun crosses to Shu Fu.
- 6--Mrs. Shin takes a couple of steps in Yang Sun's direction.
- 7--Yang Sun starts toward the back room again. Shu Fu grabs his arm and spins him around.
- 8--Shu Fu pulls out a pair of scissors.
- 9--Shen Te enters from the back room: [she has heard the fight and is coming out to stop it.]
- 10--Shu Fu drops his scissors. Shen Te crosses down left of center.
- 11--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te.
- 12--Mrs. Shin picks up Shu Fu scissors and hands them to him.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHEN TE: Yes.

1

YANG SUN: They told you I was bad. (SHEN TE *is silent.*)
And suppose I am. Does that make me need you
less? I'm low, Shen Te, I have no money, I don't
do the right thing but at least I put up a fight! (*He
is near her now, and speaks in an undertone.*) Have
you no eyes? Look at him. Have you forgotten
already?

2

SHEN TE: No.

YANG SUN: How it was raining?

SHEN TE: No.

YANG SUN: How you cut me down from the willow tree?
Bought me water? Promised me money to fly with?

SHEN TE (*shakily*): Yang Sun, what do you want?

3

YANG SUN: I want you to come with me.

4

SHEN TE (*in a small voice*): Forgive me, Mr. Shu Fu,
I want to go with Mr. Yang Sun.

YANG SUN: We're lovers you know. Give me the key to
the shop. (SHEN TE *takes the key from around her
neck.* YANG SUN *puts it on the counter.* To MRS.
SHIN:) Leave it under the mat when you're through.
Let's go, Shen Te.

5

6

7

SHU FU: But this is rape! Mr. Shui Ta!!

YANG SUN (*to SHEN TE*): Tell him not to shout.

8

SHEN TE: Please don't shout for my cousin, Mr. Shu Fu.

9

1--Shu Fu stands center, watching Yang Sun and Shen Te; Mrs. Shin is upstage of the counter.

2--Yang Sun touches Shen Te on the cheek.

3--Shen Te turns to Yang Sun.

4--Yang Sun holds her by her arms.

5--Yang Sun takes the key from around Shen Te's neck and crosses to Mrs. Shin; he gives it to her.

6--Yang Sun crosses to the waste basket and gets the shawl.

7--Shu Fu starts to cross towards the back room.

8--Yang Sun stops him with his voice.

9--[Shen Te comforts Shu Fu.]

Bertolt Brecht

He doesn't agree with me, I know, but he's wrong.
(To the audience:)

I want to go with the man I love
 I don't want to count the cost
 I don't want to consider if it's wise
 I don't want to know if he loves me
 I want to go with the man I love.

YANG SUN: That's the spirit.

And the couple leave.

1

2

3

4

1--Shen Te crosses down center to address the audience.

2--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te and puts the shawl around her shoulders.

3--The gong sounds: tableau--the people of Setzuan enter the tableau.

4--Scene change lights and music.

5a

In front of the inner curtain. SHEN TE in her wedding clothes, on the way to her wedding.

SHEN TE: Something terrible has happened. As I left the shop with Yang Sun, I found the old carpet dealer's wife waiting on the street, trembling all over. She told me her husband had taken to his bed sick with all the worry and excitement over the two hundred silver dollars they lent me. She said it would be best if I gave it back now. Of course, I had to say I would. She said she couldn't quite trust my cousin Shui Ta or even my fiancé Yang Sun. There were tears in her eyes. With my emotions in an uproar, I threw myself into Yang Sun's arms, I couldn't resist him. The things he'd said to Shui Ta had taught Shen Te nothing. Sinking into his arms, I said to myself:

To let no one perish, not even oneself
To fill everyone with happiness, even oneself
Is so good

How could I have forgotten those two old people?
Yang Sun swept me away like a small hurricane.
But he's not a bad man, and he loves me. He'd rather work in the cement factory than owe his flying to a crime. Though, of course, flying is a great passion with Sun. Now, on the way to my wedding, I waver between fear and joy.

1--The inner curtain is lowered. The gong sounds.

2--Shen Te enters left and crosses down center to address the audience.

3--The shadows of the people of Setzuan appear on the inner curtain; music begins.

4--[The music builds to a climax.]

5--The gong sounds: tableau.

6--Act break.

6

The "private dining room" on the upper floor of a cheap restaurant in a poor section of town. With SHEN TE: the GRANDFATHER, the SISTER-IN-LAW, the NIECE, MRS. SHIN, the UNEMPLOYED MAN. In a corner, alone, a PRIEST. A WAITER pouring wine. Downstage, YANG SUN talking to his MOTHER. He wears a dinner jacket.

YANG SUN: Bad news, Mamma. She came right out and told me she can't sell the shop for me. Some idiot is bringing a claim because he lent her the two hundred she gave you.

MRS. YANG: What did you say? Of course, you can't marry her now.

YANG SUN: It's no use saying anything to *her*. I've sent for her cousin, Mr. Shui Ta. He said there was nothing in writing.

MRS. YANG: Good idea. I'll go and look for him. Keep an eye on things.

Exit MRS. YANG. SHEN TE has been pouring wine.

SHEN TE (*to the audience, pitcher in hand*): I wasn't mistaken in him. He's bearing up well. Though it must have been an awful blow—giving up flying. I do love him so. (*Calling across the room to him:*) Sun, you haven't drunk a toast with the bride!

YANG SUN: What do we drink to?

1--Tableau: Mrs. Shin, the husband, the unemployed man, the sister-in-law, and the grandfather are sitting at the table. Shen Te is pouring wine. The waiter is standing by the up left unit. The priest is sitting on the stage right bench unit. Mrs. Yang and Yang Sun are talking down center. The niece is listening in from up right.

2--The gong sounds: tableau breaks.

3--The niece crosses center: [she is trying to hear what Yang Sun and Mrs. Yang are talking about.]

4--Mrs. Yang crosses up center and exits. Yang Sun crosses to the table. The niece sits at the table.

5--Shen Te crosses down left to address the audience.

6--Shen Te crosses center.

7--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHEN TE: Why, to the future!

YANG SUN: When the bridegroom's dinner jacket won't
be a hired one! 1

SHEN TE: But when the bride's dress will still get rained
on sometimes!

YANG SUN: To everything we ever wished for! 2

SHEN TE: May all our dreams come true!

They drink.

YANG SUN (*with loud conviviality*): And now, friends, 3
before the wedding gets under way, I have to ask the
bride a few questions. I've no idea what kind of wife
she'll make, and it worries me. (*Wheeling on SHEN*
TE.) For example. Can you make five cups of tea 4
with three tea leaves?

SHEN TE: No.

YANG SUN: So I won't be getting very much tea. Can you 5
sleep on a straw mattress the size of that book? (*He*
points to the large volume the PRIEST is reading.)

SHEN TE: The two of us?

YANG SUN: The one of you.

SHEN TE: In that case, no. 6

YANG SUN: What a wife! I'm shocked!

While the audience is laughing, his MOTHER returns.
With a shrug of her shoulders, she tells YANG SUN 7

1--Yang Sun crosses up right and around the table, leaving Shen Te center: [Yang Sun is keeping his spirits up, but he has difficulty dealing with Shen Te directly.]

2--[Yang Sun is putting on a good act, however.]

3--Yang Sun addresses the crowd: [he is teasing Shen Te.]

4--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te.

5--The priest slams his book shut: [he is disturbed by the "dirty" talk.]

6--[Shen Te knows how to deal with Yang Sun's attempts to embarrass her.]

7--Mrs. Yang enters up center.

Bertolt Brecht

- the expected guest hasn't arrived. The PRIEST shuts the book with a bang, and makes for the door.* 1
- MRS. YANG: Where are you off to? It's only a matter of minutes. 2
- PRIEST (*watch in hand*): Time goes on, Mrs. Yang, and I've another wedding to attend to. Also a funeral.
- MRS. YANG (*irately*): D'you think we planned it this way? I was hoping to manage with one pitcher of wine, and we've run through two already. (*Points to empty pitcher. Loudly.*) My dear Shen Te, I don't know where your cousin can be keeping himself! 3
4
5
6
- SHEN TE: My cousin?! 6
- MRS. YANG: Certainly. I'm old-fashioned enough to think such a close relative should attend the wedding.
- SHEN TE: Oh, Sun, is it the three hundred silver dollars? 7
- YANG SUN (*not looking her in the eye*): Are you deaf? Mother says she's old-fashioned. And I say I'm considerate. We'll wait another fifteen minutes.
- HUSBAND: Another fifteen minutes. 8
- MRS. YANG (*addressing the company*): Now you all know, don't you, that my son is getting a job as a mail pilot? 9
- SISTER-IN-LAW: In Peking, too, isn't it?
- MRS. YANG: In Peking, too! The two of us are moving to Peking! 10
- SHEN TE: Sun, tell your mother Peking is out of the question now. 11

1--The priest stands, getting ready to leave.

2--Mrs. Yang crosses to the priest.

3--[Mrs. Yang is worried about the cost of the party.]

4--Mrs. Yang sits the priest; she calls to Shen Te who
is still standing center.

5--Yang Sun crosses up left and talks to some of the guests.

6--[Shen Te is immediately alerted by the mention of her
cousin.]

7--Shen Te crosses to Yang Sun: the end of the first beat.

8--[The guests are getting impatient: they want the food to
arrive.]

9--Mrs Yang crosses to the table: [Mrs. Yang has to brag
about her son.]

10--Yang Sun cross left, away from Shen Te.

11--Shen Te crosses down left; she motions to Yang Sun to
follow her. Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

YANG SUN: Your cousin'll tell her. If he agrees. I don't agree.

SHEN TE (*amazed, and dismayed*): Sun!

YANG SUN: I hate this godforsaken Setzuan. What people! Know what they look like when I half close my eyes? Horses! Whinnying, fretting, stamping, screwing their necks up! (*Loudly.*) And what is it the thunder says? They are su-per-flu-ous! (*He hammers out the syllables.*) They've run their last race! They can go trample themselves to death! (*Pause.*) I've got to get out of here.

1

SHEN TE: But I've promised the money to the old couple.

YANG SUN: And since you always do the wrong thing, it's lucky your cousin's coming. Have another drink..

2

SHEN TE (*quietly*): My cousin can't be coming.

YANG SUN: How d'you mean?

3

SHEN TE: My cousin can't be where I am.

YANG SUN: Quite a conundrum!

SHEN TE (*desperately*): Sun, I'm the one that loves you. Not my cousin. He was thinking of the job in Peking when he promised you the old couple's money—

4

YANG SUN: Right. And that's why he's bringing the three hundred silver dollars. Here—to my wedding.

SHEN TE: He is not bringing the three hundred silver dollars.

5

YANG SUN: Huh? What makes you think that?

1--[Yang Sun wants to escape the people of Setzuan: this is an important fact in the motivation of Yang Sun's betrayal of Shen Te. He loves Shen Te but, more importantly, he must get out of Setzuan.]

2--Yang Sun crosses to the table to get a glass of wine.

3--Yang Sun crosses back to Shen Te.

4--[The other guests are alerted to the argument between Shen Te and Yang Sun.]

5--[Shen Te is almost pushed into telling Yang Sun about her double identity.]

Bertolt Brecht

SHEN TE (*looking into his eyes*): He says you only bought
one ticket to Peking. 1

Short pause.

YANG SUN: That was yesterday. (*He pulls two tickets part
way out of his inside pocket, making her look under
his coat.*) Two tickets. I don't want Mother to know.
She'll get left behind. I sold her furniture to buy these
tickets, so you see . . . 2
3

SHEN TE: But what's to become of the old couple?

YANG SUN: What's to become of me? Have another drink.
Or do you believe in moderation? If I drink, I fly
again. And if you drink, you may learn to under-
stand me. 4

SHEN TE: You want to fly. But I can't help you.

YANG SUN: "Here's a plane, my darling—but it's only got
one wing!" 5

The WAITER enters. 6
7

WAITER: Mrs. Yang!

MRS. YANG: Yes?

WAITER: Another pitcher of wine, ma'am?

MRS. YANG: We have enough, thanks. Drinking makes me
sweat.

WAITER: Would you mind paying, ma'am?

MRS. YANG (*to everyone*): Just be patient a few moments 8

1--[Shen Te is wise to Yang Sun's double cross.]

2--[Yang Sun is lying to Shen Te.]

3--[Yang Sun is double-crossing his mother as well as Shen Te: he does not have two tickets.]

4--Yang Sun hands Shen Te the glass of wine; he raises his voice so everyone can hear.

5--Yang Sun crosses to the table; Shen Te stays down left.

6--The waiter enters right. Yang Sun crosses up center and exits.

7--The waiter crosses center and calls Mrs. Yang over.

8--The crowd starts to exit: Mrs. Yang crosses to them and stops them.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

longer, everyone, Mr. Shui Ta is on his way over! (*To the WAITER:*) Don't be a spoilsport.

WAITER: I can't let you leave till you've paid your bill, ma'am.

MRS. YANG: But they know me here!

WAITER: That's just it.

1

PRIEST (*ponderously getting up*): I humbly take my leave. (*And he does.*)

2

MRS. YANG (*to the others, desperately*): Stay where you are, everybody! The priest says he'll be back in two minutes!

3

YANG SUN: It's no good, Mamma. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Shui Ta still hasn't arrived and the priest has gone home. We won't detain you any longer.

4

5

They are leaving now.

GRANDFATHER (*in the doorway, having forgotten to put his glass down*): To the bride! (*He drinks, puts down the glass, and follows the others.*)

6

Pause.

SHEN TE: Shall I go too?

YANG SUN: You? Aren't you the bride? Isn't this your wedding? (*He drags her across the room, tearing her wedding dress.*) If we can wait, you can wait. Mother calls me her falcon. She wants to see me in the clouds. But I think it may be St. Nevercome's Day before she'll go to the door and see my plane thunder by. (*Pause. He pretends the guests are still present.*) Why

7

8

1--[Mrs. Yang is well known for her cheating.]

2--The priest exits.

3--The crowd starts to leave again: Mrs. Yang crosses to them to stop them.

4--Yang Sun enters from up center; he ushers the crowd out: the end of the second beat.

5--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shen Te: [establish a truly caring side of Mrs. Shin's personality.]

6--Yang Sun crosses to Mrs. Shin and escorts her out.

7--Yang Sun crosses to Shen Te and drags her to the stage right bench unit; he sits her down.

8--Yang Sun crosses to table and talks to the empty chairs as if they were the guests.

Bertolt Brecht

such a lull in the conversation, ladies and gentlemen?
Don't you like it here? The ceremony is only slightly
postponed—because an important guest is expected at
any moment. Also because the bride doesn't know
what love is. While we're waiting, the bridegroom will
sing a little song. (*He does so.*)

1
2

THE SONG OF ST. NEVERCOME'S DAY

3

On a certain day, as is generally known,
One and all will be shouting: Hooray, hooray!
For the beggar maid's son has a solid-gold throne
And the day is St. Nevercome's Day
On St. Nevercome's, Nevercome's, Nevercome's Day
He'll sit on his solid-gold throne
Oh, hooray, hooray! That day goodness will pay!
That day badness will cost you your head!
And merit and money will smile and be funny
While exchanging salt and bread
On St. Nevercome's, Nevercome's, Nevercome's Day
While exchanging salt and bread
And the grass, oh, the grass will look down at the sky
And the pebbles will roll up the stream
And all men will be good without batting an eye
They will make of our earth a dream
On St. Nevercome's, Nevercome's, Nevercome's Day
They will make of our earth a dream
And as for me, that's the day I shall be
A flyer and one of the best
Unemployed man, you will have work to do
Washerwoman, you'll get your rest
On St. Nevercome's, Nevercome's, Nevercome's Day
Washerwoman, you'll get your rest

4

5
6
7

MRS. YANG: It looks like he's not coming.

8
9

The three of them sit looking at the door.

1--The waiter enters and starts to clean the table

2--Mrs. Yang exits up center.

3--Yang Sun crosses down center: the lights change and the piano music begins.

4--The waiter starts stacking the chairs on the table.

5--Mrs. Yang enters and stands up right of center.

6--The waiter crosses to Mrs. Yang; she motions him away.

7--The waiter exits up left.

8--The gong sounds: tableau--the people of Setzuan enter the tableau.

9--Scene change lights and music.

6a

Wong's den. The sewer pipe is again transparent and again the GODS appear to WONG in a dream.

1

WONG: I'm so glad you've come, illustrious ones. It's Shen Te. She's in great trouble from following the rule about loving thy neighbor. Perhaps she's *too* good for this world!

2

3

FIRST GOD: Nonsense! You are eaten up by lice and doubts!

4

WONG: Forgive me, illustrious one, I only meant you might deign to intervene.

FIRST GOD: Out of the question! My colleague here intervened in some squabble or other only yesterday. (*He points to the THIRD GOD who has a black eye.*) The results are before us!

5

6

WONG: She had to call on her cousin again. But not even he could help. I'm afraid the shop is done for.

THIRD GOD (*a little concerned*): Perhaps we should help after all?

FIRST GOD: The gods help those that help themselves.

WONG: What if we *can't* help ourselves, illustrious ones?

Slight pause.

SECOND GOD: Try, anyway! Suffering ennobles!

7

1--[Wong is worried as the scene begins.]

2--The gong sounds: the sound of children is heard behind the inner curtain; they are chasing the gods as they enter.

3--The gods cross down center.

4--[The third god is hiding his face through the beginning of this scene.]

5--The first god reveals the third god's black eye.

6--[The gods have no real power over men.]

7--[The second god quotes the book of rules: the irony is that the gods' suffering is not ennobling them.]

Bertolt Brecht

FIRST GOD: Our faith in Shen Te is unshaken!

THIRD GOD: We certainly haven't found any *other* good people. You can see where we spend our nights from the straw on our clothes.

WONG: You might help her find her way by—

FIRST GOD: The good man finds his own way here below!

1

SECOND GOD: The good woman too.

FIRST GOD: The heavier the burden, the greater her strength!

THIRD GOD: We're only onlookers, you know.

FIRST GOD: And everything will be all right in the end, O ye of little faith!

2

They are gradually disappearing through these last lines.

3

4

1--[More dogmatic statements about man.]

2--[This resembles a religious pep talk.]

3--The gods exit; the gong sounds.

4--Scene change lights and music.

7

The yard behind Shen Te's shop. A few articles of furniture on a cart. SHEN TE and MRS. SHIN are taking the washing off the line. 1

MRS. SHIN: If you ask me, you should fight tooth and nail to keep the shop. 2

SHEN TE: How can I? I have to sell the tobacco to pay back the two hundred silver dollars today.

MRS. SHIN: No husband, no tobacco, no house and home! What are you going to live on?

SHEN TE: I can work. I can sort tobacco.

MRS. SHIN: Hey, look, Mr. Shui Ta's trousers! He must have left here stark naked! 4

SHEN TE: Oh, he may have another pair, Mrs. Shin. 5

MRS. SHIN: But if he's gone for good as you say, why has he left his pants behind?

SHEN TE: Maybe he's thrown them away.

MRS. SHIN: Can I take them? 6

SHEN TE: Oh, no. 7

Enter MR. SHU FU, running. 8

SHU FU: Not a word! Total silence! I know all. You have

1--Tableau: Mrs. Shin is on the ladder built into the up right unit; she is taking clothes off the line. Shen Te stands to Mrs. Shin's left; she is taking the clothes from Mrs. Shin and putting them in a basket. There is a cart down right; it is loaded with bags and a few chairs.

2--The gong sounds: the tableau breaks.

3--[Mrs. Shin does not want to lose her major source of income; she is also concerned about Shen Te as a person: she already suspects that Shen Te is pregnant.]

4--Mrs. Shin takes Shui Ta's trousers off the line.

5--Shen Te takes the trousers and crosses left towards the trash barrel behind her shop.

6--Mrs. Shin climbs down the ladder.

7--Shen Te throws the trousers into the trash.

8--Shu Fu enters up center; he is running. Shu Fu crosses to Shen Te who is standing in front of her door.

Bertolt Brecht

- sacrificed your own love and happiness so as not to hurt a dear old couple who had put their trust in you! Not in vain does this district—for all its malevolent tongues—call you the Angel of the Slums! That young man couldn't rise to your level, so you left him. And now, when I see you closing up the little shop, that veritable haven of rest for the multitude, well, I cannot, I cannot let it pass. Morning after morning I have stood watching in the doorway not unmoved—while you graciously handed out rice to the wretched. Is that never to happen again? Is the good woman of Setzuan to disappear? If only you would allow *me* to assist you! Now don't say anything! No assurances, no exclamations of gratitude! (*He has taken out his check-book.*) Here! A blank check. (*He places it on the cart.*) Just my signature. Fill it out as you wish. Any sum in the world. I herewith retire from the scene, quietly, unobtrusively, making no claims, on tiptoe, full of veneration, absolutely selflessly . . . (*He has gone.*)
- MRS. SHIN: Well! You're saved. There's always some idiot of a man. . . . Now hurry! Put down a thousand silver dollars and let me fly to the bank before he comes to his senses.
- SHEN TE: I can pay you for the washing without any check.
- MRS. SHIN: What? You're not going to cash it just because you might have to marry him? Are you crazy? Men like him *want* to be led by the nose! Are you still thinking of that flyer? All Yellow Street knows how he treated you!
- SHEN TE:
- When I heard his cunning laugh, I was afraid

1--[Shu Fu has a heightened poetic sensibility.]

2--Shu Fu backs Shen Te up.

3--Shu Fu crosses center: [he is talking to himself as much as he talks to Shen Te.]

4--Shu Fu crosses to the cart and signs the blank check.

5--Shu Fu exits up center; he backs out on tiptoe.

6--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shen Te and practically drags her over to the check.

7--[Mrs. Shin cannot believe that Shen Te still loves Yang Sun.]

8--[Shen Te defends her love of Yang Sun.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- But when I saw the holes in his shoes, I loved him
dearly. 1
- MRS. SHIN: Defending that good-for-nothing after all that's
happened! 2
- SHEN TE (*staggering as she holds some of the washing*):
Oh! 3
- MRS. SHIN (*taking the washing from her, dryly*): So you
feel dizzy when you stretch and bend? There couldn't
be a little visitor on the way? If that's it, you can for-
get Mr. Shu Fu's blank check: it wasn't meant for a
christening present! 4
5
6
- She goes to the back with a basket. SHEN TE's eyes
follow MRS. SHIN for a moment. Then she looks down
at her own body, feels her stomach, and a great joy
comes into her eyes.* 7
- SHEN TE: O joy! A new human being is on the way. The
world awaits him. In the cities the people say: he's
got to be reckoned with, this new human being! (*She
imagines a little boy to be present, and introduces him
to the audience.*) This is my son, the well-known
flyer! 8
- Say: Welcome
To the conqueror of unknown mountains and
unreachable regions
Who brings us our mail across the impassable deserts!
- She leads him up and down by the hand.*
- Take a look at the world, my son. That's a tree. Tree,
yes. Say: "Hello, tree!" And bow. Like this. (*She
bows.*) Now you know each other. And, look, here
comes the water seller. He's a friend, give him your 9
10

- 1--Shen Te crosses to the basket.
- 2--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shen Te.
- 3--Shen Te lifts the basket; she has to put it down.
- 4--Mrs. Shin takes the basket.
- 5--Mrs. Shin crosses left and exits into the shop.
- 6--Wong and little Feng enter up center; the gong sounds:
tableau and music begins.
- 7--The end of the first beat: Shen Te crosses center to
address the audience: [this monologue parallels the
monologue in scene four; both monologues have a
fantastical quality.]
- 8--[Shen Te imagines a little boy standing next to her.]
- 9--Shen Te crosses up right towards the tree: [in this
monologue the reality of life is more imposing; this
is paralleled in the music.]
- 10--Shen Te crosses to Wong and the child who are in tableau
up center.

Bertolt Brecht

hand. A cup of fresh water for my little son, please. 1
 Yes, it is a warm day. (*Handing the cup.*) Oh dear, a
 policeman, we'll have to make a circle round *him*. 2
 Perhaps we can pick a few cherries over there in the
 rich Mr. Pung's garden. But we mustn't be seen. You
 want cherries? Just like children with fathers. No, no,
 you can't go straight at them like that. Don't pull. We
 must learn to be reasonable. Well, have it your own
 way. (*She has let him make for the cherries.*) Can
 you reach? Where to put them? Your mouth is the
 best place. (*She tries one herself.*) Mmm, they're 3
 good. But the policeman, we must run! (*They run.*)
 Yes, back to the street. Calm now, so no one will
 notice us. (*Walking the street with her child, she*
sings.) 4
 Once a plum—'twas in Japan—
 Made a conquest of a man
 But the man's turn soon did come 5
 For he gobbled up the plum 6
Enter WONG, with a CHILD by the hand. He coughs. 7
 SHEN TE: Wong!
 WONG: It's about the carpenter, Shen Te. He's lost his shop,
 and he's been drinking. His children are on the streets.
 This is one. Can you help? 8
 SHEN TE (*to the CHILD*): Come here, little man. (*Takes*
him down to the footlights. To the audience:) 9
 You there! A man is asking you for shelter!
 A man of tomorrow says: what about today?
 His friend the conqueror, whom you know,
 Is his advocate!
 (*To WONG:*) He can live in Mr. Shu Fu's cabins. I 10
 may have to go there myself. I'm going to have a

- 1--The policeman enters the tableau up right.
- 2--Shen Te crosses right towards an imaginary tree.
- 3--Shen Te crosses down left.
- 4--Shen Te crosses center.
- 5--[Shen Te is having a good time despite the impossibility of her situation.]
- 6--The gong sounds: the tableau breaks and the music ends.
[This marks the end of the second section of the play's action: the love of husband. The third section begins: the love of child.]
- 7--Wong and little Feng cross to Shen Te.
- 8--Feng crosses to Shen Te; Shen Te takes Feng's hand.
- 9--Shen Te and Feng cross down center.
- 10--Shen Te and Feng cross to Wong who is standing left of center.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

baby. That's a secret—don't tell Yang Sun—we'd only be in his way. Can you find the carpenter for me?

WONG: I knew you'd think of something. (*To the CHILD:*) Good-bye, son, I'm going for your father.

SHEN TE: What about your hand, Wong? I wanted to help, but my cousin . . .

WONG: Oh, I can get along with one hand, don't worry. (*He shows how he can handle his pole with his left hand alone.*)

SHEN TE: But your right hand! Look, take this cart, sell everything that's on it, and go to the doctor with the money . . . 2

WONG: She's still good. But first I'll bring the carpenter. I'll pick up the cart when I get back. (*Exit WONG.*) 3
4

SHEN TE (*to the CHILD*): Sit down over here, son, till your father comes. 5

The CHILD sits cross-legged on the ground. Enter the HUSBAND and WIFE, each dragging a large, full sack.

WIFE (*furtively*): You're alone, Shen Te, dear? 6

SHEN TE *nods*. The WIFE beckons to the NEPHEW off-stage. He comes on with another sack.

WIFE: Your cousin's away? (SHEN TE *nods*.) He's not coming back?

SHEN TE: No. I'm giving up the shop. 7

WIFE: That's why we're here. We want to know if we can

1--Feng stays with Shen Te.

2--Shen Te crosses to the cart down right and rolls it up center towards the alley.

3--Wong crosses to Shen Te.

4--Wong exits.

5--Shen Te crosses left with Feng; she sits the child down left of the door. The garbage can is down left of Feng.

6--The wife enters right, followed by the husband and the nephew. They each drag a heavy sack of tobacco.

7--Shen Te crosses to the wife; they meet center.

Bertolt Brecht

leave these things in your new home. Will you do us this favor?

SHEN TE: Why, yes, I'd be glad to.

HUSBAND (*cryptically*): And if anyone asks about them, say they're yours.

1
2

SHEN TE: Would anyone ask?

WIFE (*with a glance back at her husband*): Oh, someone might. The police, for instance. They don't seem to like us. Where can we put it?

3

SHEN TE: Well, I'd rather not get in any more trouble . . .

WIFE: Listen to her! The good woman of Setzuan!

4

SHEN TE *is silent*.

HUSBAND: There's enough tobacco in those sacks to give us a new start in life. We could have our own tobacco factory!

5

SHEN TE (*slowly*): You'll have to put them in the back room.

6
7

The sacks are taken off-stage, while the CHILD is alone. Shyly glancing about him, he goes to the garbage can, starts playing with the contents, and eating some of the scraps. The others return.

8
9

WIFE: We're counting on you, Shen Te!

SHEN TE: Yes. (*She sees the CHILD and is shocked.*)

10

HUSBAND: We'll see you in Mr. Shu Fu's cabins.

1--The husband and the nephew cross to Shen Te.

2--[The husband lets the robbery slip.]

3--[The wife corrects the husband.]

4--[The wife reprimands Shen Te.]

5--[The idea of the tobacco factory is planted in Shen Te's mind.]

6--The wife, the husband, and the nephew cross left and enter the shop.

7--Shen Te crosses down center.

8--Feng crosses to the garbage can.

9--The wife, the husband, and the nephew enter from the shop.

10--Shen Te turns and sees Feng eating food out of the garbage.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

NEPHEW: The day after tomorrow.

SHEN TE: Yes. Now, go. Go! I'm not feeling well. 1

Exeunt all three, virtually pushed off.

He is eating the refuse in the garbage can!
Only look at his little gray mouth! 2

Pause. Music.

As this is the world my son will enter 3
I will study to defend him.
To be good to you, my son,
I shall be a tigress to all others 4
If I have to. 5
And I shall have to.

She starts to go.

One more time, then. I hope really the last. 6

Exit SHEN TE, taking Shui Ta's trousers. MRS. SHIN enters and watches her with marked interest. Enter the SISTER-IN-LAW and the GRANDFATHER. 7

SISTER-IN-LAW: So it's true, the shop has closed down. 8
And the furniture's in the back yard. It's the end of 9
the road!

MRS. SHIN (*pompously*): The fruit of high living, selfishness, and sensuality! Down the primrose path to Mr. Shu Fu's cabins—with you!

SISTER-IN-LAW: Cabins? Rat holes! He gave them to us because his soap supplies only went moldy there!

Enter the UNEMPLOYED MAN. 10

- 1--Shen Te crosses to the family; they exit up center.
- 2--Shen Te crosses center to address the audience.
- 3--Shen Te crosses to Feng; she takes Shui Ta's pants out of the garbage.
- 4--Shen Te sits Feng down.
- 5--Mrs. Shin enters right; she watches Shen Te.
- 6--Shen Te enters the shop.
- 7--The sister-in-law and the grandfather enter up center.
- 8--Mrs. Shin crosses down right.
- 9--The sister-in-law crosses to Mrs. Shin. The grandfather crosses down left to Feng.
- 10--The unemployed man enters up center and crosses to the sister-in-law.

Bertolt Brecht

UNEMPLOYED MAN: Shen Te is moving?

SISTER-IN-LAW: Yes. She was sneaking away.

MRS. SHIN: She's ashamed of herself, and no wonder!

UNEMPLOYED MAN: Tell her to call Mr. Shui Ta or she's done for this time!

SISTER-IN-LAW: Tell her to call Mr. Shui Ta or *we're* done for this time.

Enter WONG and CARPENTER, the latter with a CHILD on each hand.

1

CARPENTER: So we'll have a roof over our heads for a change!

2

MRS. SHIN: Roof? Whose roof?

CARPENTER: Mr. Shu Fu's cabins. And we have little Feng to thank for it. (*FENG, we find, is the name of the CHILD already there; his FATHER now takes him. To the other two:*) Bow to your little brother, you two!

3

4

The CARPENTER and the two new arrivals bow to FENG. Enter SHUI TA.

5

UNEMPLOYED MAN: Sst! Mr. Shui Ta!

6

Pause.

SHUI TA: And what is this crowd here for, may I ask?

WONG: How do you do, Mr. Shui Ta. This is the carpenter. Miss Shen Te promised him space in Mr. Shu Fu's cabins.

7

- 1--Wong, the carpenter, and his two other children enter up center.
- 2--Wong crosses right; the carpenter and his children cross center.
- 3--Feng crosses to the carpenter.
- 4--The carpenter puts his hat on Feng's head; he makes the other two children bow to their little brother.
- 5--The end of the second beat: Shui Ta enters from the shop.
- 6--The carpenter and his children cross up right towards Wong.
- 7--Wong crosses center to address Shui Ta who is standing in the doorway.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHUI TA: That will not be possible.

CARPENTER: We can't go there after all? 1

SHUI TA: All the space is needed for other purposes.

SISTER-IN-LAW: You mean we have to get out? But we've
got nowhere to go. 2

SHUI TA: Miss Shen Te finds it possible to provide employ-
ment. If the proposition interests you, you may stay
in the cabins. 3
4

SISTER-IN-LAW (*with distaste*): You mean *work*? Work for
Miss Shen Te? 5

SHUI TA: Making tobacco, yes. There are three bales here
already. Would you like to get them? 6

SISTER-IN-LAW (*trying to bluster*): We have our own to-
bacco! We were in the tobacco business before you
were born!

SHUI TA (*to the CARPENTER and the UNEMPLOYED MAN*):
You *don't* have your own tobacco. What about you?

*The CARPENTER and the UNEMPLOYED MAN get the
point, and go for the sacks. Enter MRS. MI TZU.* 7

MRS. MI TZU: Mr. Shui Ta? I've brought you your three
hundred silver dollars. 8

SHUI TA: I'll sign your lease instead. I've decided not to
sell. 9

MRS. MI TZU: What? You don't need the money for that
flyer?

1--The carpenter crosses to Wong.

2--The sister-in-law crosses center.

3--Shui Ta crosses center, addressing the crowd.

4--Wong and the carpenter cross up right.

5--[The sister-in-law is more aggressive than ever before.]

6--[Shui Ta uses the family's idea for his own gain.]

7--The carpenter, his eldest son, and the unemployed man
enter the shop.

8--Mi Tzu enters up center; she crosses to Shui Ta.

9--The sister-in-law crosses right towards Mrs. Shin.

Bertolt Brecht

SHUI TA: No.

MRS. MI TZU: And you can pay six months' rent?

SHUI TA (*takes the barber's blank check from the cart and fills it out*): Here is a check for ten thousand silver dollars. On Mr. Shu Fu's account. Look! (*He shows her the signature on the check.*) Your six months' rent will be in your hands by seven this evening. And now, if you'll excuse me.

MRS. MI TZU: So it's Mr. Shu Fu now. The flyer has been given his walking papers. These modern girls! In my day they'd have said she was flighty. That poor, deserted Mr. Yang Sun!

1
2

Exit MRS. MI TZU. The CARPENTER and the UNEMPLOYED MAN drag the three sacks back on the stage.

3

CARPENTER (*to SHUI TA*): I don't know why I'm doing this for you.

SHUI TA: Perhaps your children want to eat, Mr. Carpenter.

SISTER-IN-LAW (*catching sight of the sacks*): Was my brother-in-law here?

4

MRS. SHIN: Yes, he was.

SISTER-IN-LAW: I thought as much. I know those sacks! That's our tobacco!

5

SHUI TA: Really? I thought it came from my back room! Shall we consult the police on the point?

6

SISTER-IN-LAW (*defeated*): No.

1--Mi Tzu crosses to Mrs. Shin and the sister-in-law.

2--Mi Tzu exits up center.

3--The carpenter, his son, and the unemployed man enter from the shop; each is dragging a sack of tobacco.

4--The sister-in-law crosses to Shui Ta.

5--[The sister-in-law is attacking Shui Ta; Shui Ta does not even flinch.]

6--[Shui Ta does not look at the sister-in-law.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHUI TA: Perhaps you will show me the way to Mr. Shu Fu's cabins? 1

Taking FENG by the hand, SHUI TA goes off, followed by the CARPENTER and his two older children, the SISTER-IN-LAW, the GRANDFATHER, and the UNEMPLOYED MAN. Each of the last three drags a sack. Enter OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN. 2
3

MRS. SHIN: A pair of pants—missing from the clothesline one minute—and next minute on the honorable backside of Mr. Shui Ta. 4

OLD WOMAN: We thought Miss Shen Te was here.

MRS. SHIN (*preoccupied*): Well, she's not. 5

OLD MAN: There was something she was going to give us.

WONG: She was going to help me too. (*Looking at his hand.*) It'll be too late soon. But she'll be back. This cousin has never stayed long. 6

MRS. SHIN (*approaching a conclusion*): No, he hasn't, has he? 7

8
9

1--Spoken to the sister-in-law: [Shui Ta makes the very pregnant sister-in-law drag a sack.]

2--Shui Ta takes Feng's hand and exits up right. The carpenter and his two other children follow. They are followed by the sister-in-law, the unemployed man, and the grandfather. Each of the last three has a sack. The grandfather has difficulty with his sack so the unemployed man helps him.

3--The old man and woman enter up center.

4--Mrs. Shin crosses to the garbage can.

5--Mrs. Shin crosses down left.

6--Wong crosses to the old couple.

7--Mrs. Shin addresses the audience.

8--The gong sounds; tableau.

9--Scene change lights and music.

7a

The Sewer Pipe: WONG asleep. In his dream, he tells the GODS his fears. The GODS seem tired from all their travels. They stop for a moment and look over their shoulders at the water seller. 1
2

WONG: Illustrious ones. I've been having a bad dream. Our beloved Shen Te was in great distress in the rushes down by the river—the spot where the bodies of suicides are washed up. She kept staggering and holding her head down as if she was carrying something and it was dragging her down into the mud. When I called out to her, she said she had to take your Book of Rules to the other side, and not get it wet, or the ink would all come off. You had talked to her about the virtues, you know, the time she gave you shelter in Setzuan. 3
4
5
6

THIRD GOD: Well, but what do you suggest, my dear Wong? 7

WONG: Maybe a little relaxation of the rules, Benevolent One, in view of the bad times.

THIRD GOD: As for instance?

WONG: Well, um, good will, for instance, might do instead of love? 8

THIRD GOD: I'm afraid that would create new problems.

WONG: Or, instead of justice, good sportsmanship? 9

THIRD GOD: That would only mean more work.

1--Wong is pacing.

2--The shadows of the gods appear. The first god takes a folding chair, opens it, and sits; he is stage right. The second god stands with his book of rules in his right hand and his rope in his left hand. The third god enters through the curtain. The gong sounds.

3--Wong addresses the third god.

4--Wong addresses the shadow of the first god: he crosses right.

5--Wong addresses the shadow of the second god: he crosses left.

6--Wong addresses the third god.

7--The third god kneels center: [he is trying to have a private conversation with Wong.]

8--The second god strikes his book of rules with his rope as a reply to Wong's question. The third god turns toward the first god who is shaking his head.

9--The second god strikes his book again. The third god turns toward the first god who has risen and is waving his arms in a "no" reply.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

WONG: Instead of honor, outward propriety?	1
THIRD GOD: Still more work! No, no! The rules will have to stand, my dear Wong!	2
	3
<i>Wearily shaking their heads, all three journey on.</i>	4

1--The second god pounds his book of rules again. The first god is putting his thumb down.

2--The third god exits: [he does not know what he can do.]

3--The gong sounds.

4--Scene change lights and music.

8

Shui Ta's tobacco factory in Shu Fu's cabins. Huddled together behind bars, several families, mostly women and children. Among these people the SISTER-IN-LAW, the GRANDFATHER, the CARPENTER, and his THREE CHILDREN. Enter MRS. YANG followed by YANG SUN.

1

2

MRS. YANG (*to the audience*): There's something I just have to tell you: strength and wisdom are wonderful things. The strong and wise Mr. Shui Ta has transformed my son from a dissipated good-for-nothing into a model citizen. As you may have heard, Mr. Shui Ta opened a small tobacco factory near the cattle runs. It flourished. Three months ago—I shall never forget it—I asked for an appointment, and Mr. Shui Ta agreed to see us—me and my son. I can see him now as he came through the door to meet us. . . .

3

4

Enter SHUI TA from a door.

SHUI TA: What can I do for you, Mrs. Yang?

MRS. YANG: This morning the police came to the house. We find you've brought an action for breach of promise of marriage. In the name of Shen Te. You also claim that Sun came by two hundred silver dollars by improper means.

5

SHUI TA: That is correct.

MRS. YANG: Mr. Shui Ta, the money's all gone. When the Peking job didn't materialize, he ran through it all in

1--Tableau: Yang Sun is standing right of the counter; he is wearing a mask. The unemployed man is sitting at the counter; his head is bowed. The laborers of Setzuan, excluding Wong and Mrs. Shin, are working in the factory. The children are also working.

2--Mrs. Yang enters right and crosses down center to address the audience.

3--Mrs. Yang gestures toward Yang Sun. Yang Sun bows.

4--The gong sounds: tableau breaks. Yang Sun takes off the mask and gives it to the unemployed man. The unemployed man wears it up on his head, not covering his face. Yang Sun crosses to the right of center. Shui Ta enters left through the arch; he crosses to Mrs. Yang.

5--[Mrs. Yang has brought her son to see Shui Ta.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

three days. I know he's a good-for-nothing. He sold my furniture. He was moving to Peking without me. Miss Shen Te thought highly of him at one time.

SHUI TA: What do *you* say, Mr. Yang Sun? 1

YANG SUN: The money's gone.

SHUI TA (*to MRS. YANG*): Mrs. Yang, in consideration of my cousin's incomprehensible weakness for your son, I am prepared to give him another chance. He can have a job—here. The two hundred silver dollars will be taken out of his wages. 2 3

YANG SUN: So it's the factory or jail? 4

SHUI TA: Take your choice.

YANG SUN: May I speak with Shen Te?

SHUI TA: You may not.

Pause.

YANG SUN (*sullenly*): Show me where to go. 5

MRS. YANG: Mr. Shui Ta, you are kindness itself: the gods will reward you! (*To YANG SUN:*) And honest work will make a man of you, my boy. (*YANG SUN follows SHUI TA into the factory. MRS. YANG comes down again to the footlights.*) Actually, honest work didn't agree with him—at first. And he got no opportunity to distinguish himself till—in the third week—when the wages were being paid . . . 6 7

SHUI TA *has a bag of money. Standing next to his foreman—the former UNEMPLOYED MAN—he counts out the wages. It is YANG SUN's turn.* 8

1--Shui Ta crosses to Yang Sun who is standing right of center; Mrs. Yang counters left.

2--[Shen Te still loves Yang Sun but Shui Ta will make him work for forgiveness.]

3--Shui Ta does not speak directly to Yang Sun.

4--Mrs. Yang motions for her son to accept the job.

5--Shui Ta crosses up left; Yang Sun follows.

6--Mrs. Yang crosses down left to address the audience.

7--The unemployed man sits behind the counter with a pay roll book. Shui Ta stands to his right. The workers form a line to the unemployed man's left.

8--Mrs. Yang crosses left when the upstage action begins.

Bertolt Brecht

- UNEMPLOYED MAN (*reading*): Carpenter, six silver dollars. 1
 Yang Sun, six silver dollars. 2
- YANG SUN (*quietly*): Excuse me, sir. I don't think it can
 be more than five. May I see? (*He takes the foreman's* 3
list.) It says six working days. But that's a mistake, 4
 sir. I took a day off for court business. And I won't
 take what I haven't earned, however miserable the
 pay is!
- UNEMPLOYED MAN: Yang Sun. Five silver dollars. (*To*
 SHUI TA:) A rare case, Mr. Shui Ta!
- SHUI TA: How is it the book says six when it should say
 five?
- UNEMPLOYED MAN: I must've made a mistake, Mr. Shui
 Ta. (*With a look at YANG SUN.*) It won't happen
 again.
- SHUI TA (*taking YANG SUN aside*): You don't hold back, 5
 do you? You give your all to the firm. You're even
 honest. Do the foreman's mistakes always favor the
 workers?
- YANG SUN: He does have . . . friends.
- SHUI TA: Thank you. May I offer you any little recom-
 pense?
- YANG SUN: Give me a trial period of one week, and I'll
 prove my intelligence is worth more to you than my
 strength.
- MRS. YANG (*still down at the footlights*): Fighting words, 6
 fighting words! That evening, I said to Sun: "If you're 7
 a flyer, then fly, my falcon! Rise in the world!" And 8

1--The unemployed man pays the carpenter. The carpenter crosses up center.

2--The unemployed man pays Yang Sun: [the unemployed man is easy on the workers; he often gives them breaks.]

3--Yang Sun looks at the books.

4--The laborers cross to see what is happening.

5--Shui Ta crosses down right; he motions for Yang Sun to follow.

6--Mrs. Yang crosses down center to address the audience. Yang Sun crosses to the unemployed man and takes the mask. Yang Sun puts on the mask: [this is done very ceremoniously.]

7--Shui Ta exits right.

8--Mrs. Yang crosses right.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

he got to be foreman. Yes, in Mr. Shui Ta's tobacco factory, he worked real miracles.

1

We see YANG SUN with his legs apart standing behind the workers who are handing along a basket of raw tobacco above their heads.

2

3

YANG SUN: Faster! Faster! You, there, d'you think you can just stand around, now you're not foreman any more? It'll be your job to lead us in song. Sing!

4

UNEMPLOYED MAN *starts singing. The others join in the refrain.*

5

SONG OF THE EIGHTH ELEPHANT

Chang had seven elephants—all much the same—

But then there was Little Brother

The seven, they were wild, Little Brother, he was tame

And to guard them Chang chose Little Brother

Run faster!

Mr. Chang has a forest park

Which must be cleared before tonight

And already it's growing dark!

6

When the seven elephants cleared that forest park

Mr. Chang rode high on Little Brother

While the seven toiled and milled till dark

On his big behind sat Little Brother

Dig faster!

Mr. Chang has a forest park

Which must be cleared before tonight

And already it's growing dark!

7

And the seven elephants worked many an hour

Till none of them could work another

Old Chang, he looked sour, on the seven he did glower

But gave a pound of rice to Little Brother

8

1--Mrs. Yang crosses right when the upstage action begins.

2--The workers form a line parallel to the proscenium;
they pass sacks of tobacco down the line.

3--Yang Sun paces the stage, demanding that the laborers
work faster.

4--Yang Sun crosses to the unemployed man who is still
standing by the counter.

5--The unemployed man crosses down center. Yang Sun
stands right of the counter.

6--All the workers sing the chorus part.

7--The unemployed man crosses right.

8--The unemployed man crosses left.

Bertolt Brecht

What was that?
 Mr. Chang has a forest park
 Which must be cleared before tonight
 And already it's growing dark!

And the seven elephants hadn't any tusks 1
 The one that had the tusks was Little Brother
 Seven are no match for one, if the one has a gun!
 How old Chang did laugh at Little Brother! 2
 Keep on digging! 3
 Mr. Chang has a forest park
 Which must be cleared before tonight 4
 And already it's growing dark! 5

Smoking a cigar, SHUI TA strolls by. YANG SUN, laughing, has joined in the refrain of the third stanza and speeded up the tempo of the last stanza by clapping his hands. 6

MRS. YANG: And that's why I say: strength and wisdom 7
 are wonderful things. It took the strong and wise Mr.
 Shui Ta to bring out the best in Yang Sun. A real
 superior man is like a bell. If you ring it, it rings, and
 if you don't, it don't, as the saying is. 8

1--The unemployed man crosses center.

2--Yang Sun starts clapping; he picks up the tempo which the unemployed man and the chorus must follow.

3--Shui Ta enters right and crosses directly in front of the assembly line of workers; he exits left.
The chorus follows Shui Ta across the stage, singing at him.

4--[The song is an omen of revolt.]

5--The unemployed man shouts the last line of the song at the audience; he immediately turns upstage and stares at Yang Sun.

6--The gong sounds: tableau.

7--Mrs. Yang crosses down center to address the audience.

8--Scene change lights and music.

9

Shen Te's shop, now an office with club chairs and fine carpets. It is raining. SHUI TA, now fat, is just dismissing the OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN. MRS. SHIN, in obviously new clothes, looks on, smirking.

1

SHUI TA: No! I can NOT tell you when we expect her back.

2

OLD WOMAN: The two hundred silver dollars came today. In an envelope. There was no letter, but it must be from Shen Te. We want to write and thank her. May we have her address?

3

SHUI TA: I'm afraid I haven't got it.

OLD MAN (*pulling OLD WOMAN's sleeve*): Let's be going.

OLD WOMAN: She's got to come back some time!

4

They move off, uncertainly, worried. SHUI TA bows.

MRS. SHIN: They lost the carpet shop because they couldn't pay their taxes. The money arrived too late.

5

SHUI TA: They could have come to me.

6

MRS. SHIN: People don't like coming to you.

7

SHUI TA (*sits suddenly, one hand to his head*): I'm dizzy.

8

MRS. SHIN: After all, you *are* in your seventh month. But old Mrs. Shin will be there in your hour of trial! (*She cackles feebly.*)

9

1--Tableau: Shui Ta is sitting behind the desk; he is very fat. The old couple is standing center. Mrs. Shin is sitting on the upstage bench unit. The workers are in the factory areas upstage left and right.

2--The gong sounds: tableau breaks; the rain is heard.

3--The old woman crosses to the desk.

4--The old man has to encourage the old woman to leave:
[the old woman is for the first time aggressive in her behavior. From now on, all the laborers are more aggressive in their behavior: the proletariat is beginning to emerge.]

5--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shui Ta.

6--Shui Ta rises: [he has difficulty standing.]

7--Shui Ta crosses left and sits.

8--Shen Te uses her own voice.

9--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shui Ta.

Bertolt Brecht

SHUI TA (*in a stifled voice*): Can I count on that?

MRS. SHIN: We all have our price, and mine won't be too high for the great Mr. Shui Ta! (*She opens SHUI TA's collar.*) 1

SHUI TA: It's for the child's sake. All of this. 2

MRS. SHIN: "All for the child," of course. 3

SHUI TA: I'm so fat. People must notice.

MRS. SHIN: Oh no, they think it's 'cause you're rich.

SHUI TA (*more feelingly*): What will happen to the child?

MRS. SHIN: You ask that nine times a day. Why, it'll have the best that money can buy! 4

SHUI TA: He must never see Shui Ta.

MRS. SHIN: Oh, no. Always Shen Te.

SHUI TA: What about the neighbors? There are rumors, aren't there?

MRS. SHIN: As long as Mr. Shu Fu doesn't find out, there's nothing to worry about. Drink this. 5

Enter YANG SUN in a smart business suit, and carrying a businessman's briefcase. SHUI TA is more or less in MRS. SHIN's arms. 6

YANG SUN (*surprised*): I guess I'm in the way.

SHUI TA (*ignoring this, rises with an effort*): Till tomorrow, Mrs. Shin. 7

1--Mrs. Shin pours a glass of water for Shen Te.

2--[Shen Te justifies her behavior as Shui Ta.]

3--[Mrs. Shin does not help ease her conscience.]

4--Mrs. Shin opens Shui Ta's collar.

5--Mrs. Shin gives Shen Te the water.

6--Yang Sun enters and stands at the door.

7--Shui Ta rises.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- MRS. SHIN *leaves with a smile, putting her new gloves on.* 1
- 2
- YANG SUN: Gloves now! She couldn't be fleecing you? And since when did *you* have a private life? (*Taking a paper from the briefcase.*) You haven't been at your desk lately, and things are getting out of hand. The police want to close us down. They say that at the most they can only permit twice the lawful number of workers. 3
- SHUI TA (*evasively*): The cabins are quite good enough. 4
- YANG SUN: For the workers maybe, not for the tobacco. They're too damp. We must take over some of Mrs. Mi Tzu's buildings. 5
- SHUI TA: Her price is double what I can pay.
- YANG SUN: Not unconditionally. If she has me to stroke her knees she'll come down.
- SHUI TA: I'll never agree to that.
- YANG SUN: What's wrong? Is it the rain? You get so irritable whenever it rains. 6
- SHUI TA: Never! I will never . . . 7
- YANG SUN: Mrs. Mi Tzu'll be here in five minutes. *You* fix it. And Shu Fu will be with her. . . . What's all that noise? 8
- 9
- During the above dialogue, WONG is heard off-stage, calling: "The good Shen Te, where is she? Which of you has seen Shen Te, good people? Where is Shen Te?" A knock. Enter WONG.* 10

1--Mrs. Shin crosses to the bench and gets her purse; she puts on her gloves and smiles at Yang Sun.

2--Mrs. Shin exits.

3--Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta with a file of papers.

4--Shui Ta crosses down left.

5--Yang Sun throws the file of papers on the floor at Shui Ta's feet; he crosses to Shui Ta.

6--Yang Sun picks up the file of papers; he crosses to the desk and puts the file back in his briefcase.

7--Wong's voice is heard off stage; he enters up right and crosses to the up right factory area; he crosses to the up left factory area.

8--Yang Sun crosses to the door.

9--Wong crosses to the door; he knocks.

10--Yang Sun opens the door and Wong enters.

Bertolt Brecht

- WONG: Mr. Shui Ta, I've come to ask when Miss Shen Te will be back, it's six months now. . . . There are rumors. People say something's happened to her. 1
- SHUI TA: I'm busy. Come back next week. 2
- WONG (*excited*): In the morning there was always rice on her doorstep—for the needy. It's been there again lately! 3
4
- SHUI TA: And what do people conclude from this?
- WONG: That Shen Te is still in Setzuan! She's been . . . (*He breaks off.*) 5
- SHUI TA: She's been what? Mr. Wong, if you're Shen Te's friend, talk a little less about her, that's my advice to you.
- WONG: I don't want your advice! Before she disappeared, Miss Shen Te told me something very important—she's pregnant! 6
- YANG SUN: What? What was that? 7
- SHUI TA (*quickly*): The man is lying. 8
- WONG: A good woman isn't so easily forgotten, Mr. Shui Ta. 9
- He leaves. SHUI TA goes quickly into the back room.* 10
- YANG SUN (*to the audience*): Shen Te pregnant? So that's why. Her cousin sent her away, so I wouldn't get wind of it. I have a son, a Yang appears on the scene, and what happens? Mother and child vanish into thin air! That scoundrel, that unspeakable . . . (*The sound of* 11

- 1--Wong crosses center. Yang Sun crosses up left; he watches the action.
- 2--Shui Ta crosses to the desk and sits.
- 3--Wong crosses to Shui Ta.
- 4--[Shen Te is feeling guilty; she is beginning to do things which are against the better judgement of Shui Ta.]
- 5--[Wong is more aggressive: he is less fearful of Shui Ta and the law.]
- 6--[Wong must break his promise to Shen Te.]
- 7--Yang Sun crosses to Wong.
- 8--Shui Ta rises.
- 9--Wong exits. Shui Ta crosses to the back room.
- 10--The end of the first beat: Yang Sun crosses down center to address the audience; he takes off his mask: [establish that the news of the child brings out Yang Sun's human side; he is truly concerned.]
- 11--Shen Te is heard sobbing in the back room.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- sobbing is heard from the back room.*) What was that? Someone sobbing? Who was it? Mr. Shui Ta the Tobacco King doesn't weep his heart out. And where does the rice come from that's on the doorstep in the morning? (*SHUI TA returns. He goes to the door and looks out into the rain.*) Where is she? 1
- SHUI TA: Sh! It's nine o'clock. But the rain's so heavy, you can't hear a thing. 2
- YANG SUN: What do you want to hear? 3
- SHUI TA: The mail plane. 4
- YANG SUN: What?!
- SHUI TA: I've been told *you* wanted to fly at one time. Is that all forgotten? 5
- YANG SUN: Flying mail is night work. I prefer the daytime. And the firm is very dear to me—after all it belongs to my ex-fiancée, even if she's not around. And she's not, is she? 6
- SHUI TA: What do you mean by that? 7
- YANG SUN: Oh, well, let's say I haven't altogether—lost interest. 8
- SHUI TA: My cousin might like to know that. 9
- YANG SUN: I might not be indifferent—if I found she was being kept under lock and key. 10
- SHUI TA: By whom? 11
- YANG SUN: By you.

- 1--Yang Sun crosses center but the crying stops.
- 2--Yang Sun crosses down center.
- 3--[Yang Sun is beginning to plot.]
- 4--Yang Sun puts on the mask: [this is done very ceremoniously.]
- 5--Shui Ta enters and crosses to the door.
- 6--The rain has gotten louder.
- 7--Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta; he stands to Shui Ta's left.
- 8--Shui Ta does not address Yang Sun directly; he looks out into the rain.
- 9--Shui Ta turns and addresses Yang Sun directly.
- 10--Yang Sun crosses to the desk.
- 11--Yang Sun sits at the desk.

Bertolt Brecht

SHUI TA: What could you do about it?

YANG SUN: I could submit for discussion—my position in the firm. 1

SHUI TA: You are now my manager. In return for a more . . . appropriate position, you might agree to drop the inquiry into your ex-fiancée's whereabouts? 2

YANG SUN: I might.

SHUI TA: What position *would* be more appropriate?

YANG SUN: The one at the top.

SHUI TA: My own? (*Silence.*) And if I preferred to throw you out on your neck?

YANG SUN: I'd come back on my feet. With suitable escort. 3

SHUI TA: The police? 4

YANG SUN: The police.

SHUI TA: And when the police found no one?

YANG SUN: I might ask them not to overlook the back room. (*Ending the pretense.*) In short, Mr. Shui Ta, my interest in this young woman has not been officially terminated. I should like to see more of her. (*Into SHUI TA's face:*) Besides, she's pregnant and needs a friend. (*He moves to the door.*) I shall talk about it with the water seller. 5
6
7

Exit. SHUI TA is rigid for a moment, then he quickly goes into the back room. He returns with Shen Te's belongings: underwear, etc. He takes a long look at 8

1--Yang Sun puts his feet on the desk.

2--Shui Ta crosses to Yang Sun.

3--Yang Sun stands.

4--Shui Ta crosses center, away from Yang Sun.

5--Yang Sun crosses to Shui Ta.

6--Yang Sun crosses to the door.

7--Yang Sun exits.

8--Shui Ta exits into the back room; he returns with
Shen Te's belongings.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

the shawl of the previous scene. He then wraps the things in a bundle, which, upon hearing a noise, he hides under the table. Enter MRS. MI TZU and MR. SHU FU. They put away their umbrellas and galoshes.

1
2
3

MRS. MI TZU: I thought your manager was here, Mr. Shui Ta. He combines charm with business in a way that can only be to the advantage of all of us.

SHU FU: You sent for us, Mr. Shui Ta?

4

SHUI TA: The factory is in trouble.

SHU FU: It always is.

SHUI TA: The police are threatening to close us down unless I can show that the extension of our facilities is imminent.

5

SHU FU: Shui Ta, I'm sick and tired of your constantly expanding projects. I place cabins at your cousin's disposal; you make a factory of them. I hand your cousin a check; you present it. Your cousin disappears; you find the cabins too small and start talking of yet more—

SHUI TA: Mr. Shu Fu, I'm authorized to inform you that Miss Shen Te's return is now imminent.

6

SHU FU: Imminent? It's becoming his favorite word.

MRS. MI TZU: Yes, what does it mean?

7

SHUI TA: Mrs. Mi Tzu, I can pay you exactly half what you asked for your buildings. Are you ready to inform the police that I am taking them over?

MRS. MI TZU: Certainly, if I can take over your manager.

1--Shui Ta hears Shu Fu and Mi Tzu. He stuffs the belongings under the small table in between the two stage left chairs.

2--Shui Ta crosses to the desk.

3--Shu Fu and Mi Tzu enter; Mi Tzu closes her umbrella.

4--Shu Fu and Mi Tzu cross to the chairs. Shu Fu holds Mi Tzu's chair for her while she sits. Shu Fu sits.

5--Shui Ta crosses to Mi Tzu; he speaks to Shu Fu.

6--Shui Ta crosses behind Mi Tzu and Shu Fu.

7--[This is a matter of concern for Mi Tzu.]

Bertolt Brecht

SHU FU: What?

MRS. MI TZU: He's so efficient.

1

SHUI TA: I'm afraid I need Mr. Yang Sun.

MRS. MI TZU: So do I.

SHUI TA: He will call on you tomorrow.

SHU FU: So much the better. With Shen Te likely to turn up at any moment, the presence of that young man is hardly in good taste.

2

SHUI TA: So we have reached a settlement. In what was once the good Shen Te's little shop we are laying the foundations for the great Mr. Shui Ta's twelve magnificent super tobacco markets. You will bear in mind that though they call me the Tobacco King of Setzuan, it is my cousin's interests that have been served . . .

3

VOICES (*off*): The police, the police! Going to the tobacco shop! Something must have happened!

5

6

Enter YANG SUN, WONG *and the* POLICEMAN.

7

POLICEMAN: Quiet there, quiet, quiet! (*They quiet down.*) I'm sorry, Mr. Shui Ta, but there's a report that you've been depriving Miss Shen Te of her freedom. Not that I believe all I hear, but the whole city's in an uproar.

8

9

SHUI TA: That's a lie.

POLICEMAN: Mr. Yang Sun has testified that he heard someone sobbing in the back room.

1--Shu Fu laughs at this.

2--Mi Tzu laughs at this.

3--Shui Ta crosses to the desk.

4--[Shui Ta is at the height of his personal power.]

5--The policeman, Wong, and Yang Sun enter up right;
they cross left, walking past the up right factory
area; the factory laborers follow them as they
cross down center toward the office.

6--[A mob has formed.]

7--The policeman, Wong, and Yang Sun enter the office:
the end of the second beat.

8--Shui Ta crosses down right.

9--The policeman crosses to Shui Ta. Wong stays up center.
Yang Sun crosses to Mi Tzu.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHU FU: Mrs. Mi Tzu and myself will testify that no one here has been sobbing.

MRS. MI TZU: We have been quietly smoking our cigars.

POLICEMAN: Mr. Shui Ta, I'm afraid I shall have to take
a look at that room. (*He does so. The room is empty.*) No one there, of course, sir. 1
2

YANG SUN: But I heard sobbing. What's that? (*He finds the clothes.*) 3
4

WONG: Those are Shen Te's things. (*To crowd:*) Shen Te's clothes are here! 5

VOICES (*off, in sequence*):

—Shen Te's clothes! 6
—They've been found under the table!
—Body of murdered girl still missing!
—Tobacco King suspected!

POLICEMAN: Mr. Shui Ta, unless you can tell us where the girl is, I'll have to ask you to come along. 7
8

SHUI TA: I do not know.

POLICEMAN: I can't say how sorry I am, Mr. Shui Ta. (*He shows him the door.*) 9

SHUI TA: Everything will be cleared up in no time. There are still judges in Setzuan. 10

YANG SUN: I heard sobbing! 11
12
13

1--The policeman crosses to the back room.

2--The policeman crosses down left.

3--Yang Sun crosses to the back room, turns downstage,
and sees the cloths under the table.

4--Yang Sun picks up the cloths; he throws them at the
policeman.

5--Wong crosses to the door and tells the mob.

6--The mob goes into an uproar.

7--The policeman crosses to Shui Ta.

8--The mob starts chanting "Kill Shui Ta!"

9--The policeman crosses with Shui Ta to the door.

10--Shui Ta turns in the door. Shui Ta and Shu Fu bow to
one another.

11--Spoken to Shu Fu.

12--The gong sounds: tableau--the people of Setzuan enter
the tableau.

13--Scene change lights and music.

9a

Wong's den. For the last time, the GODS appear to the water seller in his dream. They have changed and show signs of a long journey, extreme fatigue, and plenty of mishaps. The FIRST no longer has a hat; the THIRD has lost a leg; all three are barefoot.

1
2
3

WONG: Illustrious ones, at last you're here. Shen Te's been gone for months and today her cousin's been arrested. They think he murdered her to get the shop. But I had a dream and in this dream Shen Te said her cousin was keeping her prisoner. You must find her for us, illustrious ones!

FIRST GOD: We've found very few good people anywhere, and even they didn't keep it up. Shen Te is still the only one that stayed good.

SECOND GOD: If she *has* stayed good.

WONG: Certainly she has. But she's vanished.

FIRST GOD: That's the last straw. All is lost!

4

SECOND GOD: A little moderation, dear colleague!

FIRST GOD (*plaintively*): What's the good of moderation now? If she can't be found, we'll have to resign! The world is a terrible place! Nothing but misery, vulgarity, and waste! Even the countryside isn't what it used to be. The trees are getting their heads chopped off by telephone wires, and there's such a

5
6

1--Wong stands down center.

2--The sound of an angry mob is heard; the gods enter running: their robes have been shredded and their hats torn to pieces. The third god is on crutches; his left leg is in a cast. The gong sounds.

3--The gods cross down center; they unfold a large map of China and hold it in front of them: [the gods are panicking.]

4--The first god balls up the map and throws it on the ground in disgust.

5--The first god crosses right.

6--Wong crosses right.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

noise from all the gunfire, and I can't stand those heavy clouds of smoke, and—

1

THIRD GOD: The place is absolutely unlivable! Good intentions bring people to the brink of the abyss, and good deeds push them over the edge. I'm afraid our book of rules is destined for the scrap heap—

SECOND GOD: It's people! They're a worthless lot!

THIRD GOD: The world is too cold!

2

SECOND GOD: It's people! They're too weak!

3

FIRST GOD: Dignity, dear colleagues, dignity! Never despair! As for this world, didn't we agree that we only have to find one human being who can stand the place? Well, we found her. True, we lost her again. We must find her again, that's all! And at once!

4

They disappear.

5

6

7

1--The first god collapses to his knees.

2--The third god hits the second god on the foot with his crutch.

3--The second god kicks the crutch out from under the third god; the third god falls. The two gods go after one another with feet and crutch.

4--The first god crosses to the second and third gods.

5--The gods exit running.

6--The gong sounds.

7--Scene change lights and music.

10

Courtroom. Groups: SHU FU and MRS. MI TZU; YANG SUN and MRS. YANG; WONG, the CARPENTER, the GRAND-FATHER, the NIECE, the OLD MAN, the OLD WOMAN; MRS. SHIN, the POLICEMAN; the UNEMPLOYED MAN, the SISTER-IN-LAW. 1

OLD MAN: So much power isn't good for one man. 2

UNEMPLOYED MAN: And he's going to open twelve super tobacco markets! 3

WIFE: One of the judges is a friend of Mr. Shu Fu's.

SISTER-IN-LAW: Another one accepted a present from Mr. Shui Ta only last night. A great fat goose.

OLD WOMAN (*to* WONG): And Shen Te is nowhere to be found.

WONG: Only the gods will ever know the truth. 4

POLICEMAN: Order in the court! My lords the judges! 5

Enter the THREE GODS in judges' robes. We overhear their conversation as they pass along the footlights to their bench.

THIRD GOD: We'll never get away with it, our certificates were so badly forged. 6

SECOND GOD: My predecessor's "sudden indigestion" will certainly cause comment.

- 1--Tableau: Shu Fu and Mi Tzu are sitting down right. The policeman is standing left of the judges' bench. The old couple and the grandfather are sitting on the front row of the bleachers; Wong is sitting to their left. The carpenter and his three children are sitting on the second row of the bleachers; the sister-in-law and the wife are sitting to their left. The unemployed man, the old whore, the niece, the brother, the boy, and the husband are entering the courtroom from the up left door. Mrs. Yang, Mrs. Shin, and Yang Sun are standing against the up left wall.
- 2--The gong sounds: tableau breaks.
- 3--[The laborers are in a constant state of agitation.]
- 4--Spoken to the audience.
- 5--The gods enter up center through the city gates; they cross down center. All three gods have masks that they hold in front of their faces.
- 6--The gods do this dialogue from center.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

FIRST GOD: But he *had* just eaten a whole goose.

UNEMPLOYED MAN: Look at that! *New judges.*

WONG: New judges. And what good ones!

The THIRD GOD hears this, and turns to smile at WONG. The GODS sit. The FIRST GOD beats on the bench with his gavel. The POLICEMAN brings in SHUI TA who walks with lordly steps. He is whistled at.

POLICEMAN (to SHUI TA): Be prepared for a surprise. The judges have been changed.

SHUI TA turns quickly round, looks at them, and staggers.

NIECE: What's the matter now?

WIFE: The great Tobacco King nearly fainted.

HUSBAND: Yes, as soon as he saw the new judges.

WONG: Does *he* know who they are?

SHUI TA picks himself up, and the proceedings open.

FIRST GOD: Defendant Shui Ta, you are accused of doing away with your cousin Shen Te in order to take possession of her business. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

SHUI TA: Not guilty, my lord.

FIRST GOD (*thumbing through the documents of the case*): The first witness is the policeman. I shall ask him to tell us something of the respective reputations of Miss Shen Te and Mr. Shui Ta.

1--The unemployed man stands by the bleachers.

2--Spoken to the audience.

3--The gods cross to the judges' bench.

4--The policeman crosses up center; he exits through the arch; he returns with Shui Ta.

5--The policeman and Shui Ta cross to judges' bench. Shui Ta grabs onto the bench for support.

6--Spoken to the audience.

7--The policeman sits Shui Ta in the chair in front of the judges' bench.

8--[The gods are obviously inept at courtroom procedure: they fumble through the papers.]

Bertolt Brecht

POLICEMAN: Miss Shen Te was a young lady who aimed
to please, my lord. She liked to live and let live, as
the saying goes. Mr. Shui Ta, on the other hand, is a
man of principle. Though the generosity of Miss Shen
Te forced him at times to abandon half measures, un-
like the girl he was always on the side of the law, my
lord. One time, he even unmasked a gang of thieves
to whom his too trustful cousin had given shelter. The
evidence, in short, my lord, proves that Mr. Shui Ta
was *incapable* of the crime of which he stands accused! 1

FIRST GOD: I see. And are there others who could testify
along, shall we say, the same lines? 2

SHU FU *rises*. 3

POLICEMAN (*whispering to GODS*): Mr. Shu Fu—a very
important person. 4

FIRST GOD (*inviting him to speak*): Mr. Shu Fu!

SHU FU: Mr. Shui Ta is a businessman, my lord. Need I
say more? 5

FIRST GOD: Yes.

SHU FU: Very well, I will. He is Vice President of the
Council of Commerce and is about to be elected a
Justice of the Peace. (*He returns to his seat.*) 6

MRS. MI TZU *rises*. 7

WONG: Elected! *He* gave him the job! 8

With a gesture the FIRST GOD asks who MRS. MI TZU is. 9

POLICEMAN: Another very important person. Mrs. Mi Tzu. 10

- 1--The policeman crosses to the witness stand.
- 2--The crowd goes into an uproar; the first god uses his gavel to silence the crowd.
- 3--The policeman crosses to the judges' bench.
- 4--Shu Fu stands and crosses to the witness stand.
- 5--Shu Fu prepares to leave: [Shu Fu is shocked by having to say more.]
- 6--[These are all lies.]
- 7--The crowd goes into a uproar; the first god uses his gavel to silence the crowd.
- 8--Shu Fu crosses back to his seat.
- 9--Mi Tzu stands and crosses to the witness stand.
- 10--Wong stands and shouts this across the room.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

MRS. MI TZU: My lord, as Chairman of the Committee on Social Work, I wish to call attention to just a couple of eloquent facts: Mr. Shui Ta not only has erected a model factory with model housing in our city, he is a regular contributor to our home for the disabled. (*She returns to her seat.*)

1

2

POLICEMAN (*whispering*): And she's a great friend of the judge that ate the goose!

FIRST GOD (*to the POLICEMAN*): Oh, thank you. What next? (*To the Court, genially:*) Oh, yes. We should find out if any of the evidence is less favorable to the defendant.

WONG, *the* CARPENTER, *the* OLD MAN, *the* OLD WOMAN, *the* UNEMPLOYED MAN, *the* SISTER-IN-LAW, and *the* NIECE come forward.

3

POLICEMAN (*whispering*): Just the riffraff, my lord.

FIRST GOD (*addressing the "riffraff"*). Well, um, riffraff—do you know anything of the defendant, Mr. Shui Ta?

WONG: Too much, my lord.

UNEMPLOYED MAN: What don't we know, my lord.

CARPENTER: He ruined us.

4

SISTER-IN-LAW: He's a cheat.

NIECE: Liar.

WIFE: Thief.

BOY: Blackmailer.

1--The crowd hisses at Mi Tzu.

2--The crowd goes into an uproar; the first god silences the crowd with his gavel: [each uproar is louder than the previous.]

3--Wong, the carpenter, the old man, the old woman, the unemployed man, the brother, the boy, and the niece cross to the witness stand; Wong enters the witness stand.

4--[All these lines happen quickly.]

Bertolt Brecht

BROTHER: Murderer.

FIRST GOD: Thank you. We should now let the defendant
state his point of view. 1

SHUI TA: I only came on the scene when Shen Te was in
danger of losing what I had understood was a gift
from the gods. Because I did the filthy jobs which
someone had to do, they hate me. My activities were
restricted to the minimum, my lord. 2

SISTER-IN-LAW: He had us arrested!

SHUI TA: Certainly. You stole from the bakery!

SISTER-IN-LAW: Such concern for the bakery! You didn't
want the shop for yourself, I suppose!

SHUI TA: I didn't want the shop overrun with parasites.

SISTER-IN-LAW: We had nowhere else to go.

SHUI TA: There were too many of you.

WONG: What about this old couple: Were *they* parasites? 3

OLD MAN: We lost our shop because of you!

OLD WOMAN: And we gave your cousin money!

SHUI TA: My cousin's fiancé was a flyer. The money had
to go to *him*.

WONG: Did you care whether he flew or not? Did you
care whether she married him or not? You wanted
her to marry someone else! (*He points at SHU FU.*) 4
5

1--The first god strikes his gavel; the crowd returns to the bleachers.

2--Shui Ta crosses to the witness stand.

3--Wong stands.

4--Wong crosses right, passing in front of the witness stand.

5--Wong points at Shu Fu.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

SHUI TA: The flyer unexpectedly turned out to be a scoundrel.

YANG SUN (*jumping up*): Which was the reason you made him your manager? 1

SHUI TA: Later on he improved.

WONG: And when he improved, you sold him to her? (*He points out MRS. MI TZU.*)

SHUI TA: She wouldn't let me have her premises unless she had him to stroke her knees!

MRS. MI TZU: What? The man's a pathological liar. (*To him:*) Don't mention my property to me as long as you live! Murderer! (*She rustles off, in high dudgeon.*) 2 3

YANG SUN (*pushing in*): My lord, I wish to speak for the defendant. 4

SISTER-IN-LAW: Naturally. He's your employer.

UNEMPLOYED MAN: And the worst slave driver in the country.

MRS. YANG: That's a lie! My lord, Mr. Shui Ta is a great man. He . . .

YANG SUN: He's this and he's that, but he is not a murderer, my lord. Just fifteen minutes before his arrest I heard Shen Te's voice in his own back room.

FIRST GOD: Oh? Tell us more!

YANG SUN: I heard sobbing, my lord!

1--Yang Sun steps forward.

2--Mi Tzu stands and crosses to Shui Ta; she exits
up center.

3--Wong stays standing up left of Shu Fu.

4--Yang Sun crosses to the judges' bench.

Bertolt Brecht

FIRST GOD: But lots of women sob, we've been finding.

YANG SUN: Could I fail to recognize her voice?

SHU FU: No, you made her sob so often yourself, young man!

YANG SUN: Yes. But I also made her happy. Till he (*pointing at SHUI TA*) decided to sell her to you!

1

SHUI TA: Because you didn't love her.

WONG: Oh, no: it was for the money, my lord!

SHUI TA: And what was the money for, my lord? For the poor! And for Shen Te so she could go on being good!

WONG: For the poor? That he sent to his sweatshops? And why didn't you let Shen Te be good when you signed the big check?

2

3

SHUI TA: For the child's sake, my lord.

CARPENTER: What about *my* children? What did he do about them?

SHUI TA *is silent.*

WONG: The shop was to be a fountain of goodness. That was the gods' idea. You came and spoiled it!

4

SHUI TA: If I hadn't, it would have run dry!

MRS. SHIN: There's a lot in that, my lord.

WONG: What have you done with the good Shen Te, bad

1--Yang Sun crosses to Shu Fu.

2--Wong crosses to Shui Ta.

3--Yang Sun crosses up left.

4--[Wong takes over: his role as the leader of the
proletarian class becomes evident.]

The Good Woman of Setzuan

man? She was good, my lords, she was, I swear it!
(He raises his hand in an oath.)

1

THIRD GOD: What's happened to your hand, water seller?

WONG *(pointing to SHUI TA)*: It's all his fault, my lord,
she was going to send me to a doctor—*(To SHUI TA:)*
 You were her worst enemy!

2

SHUI TA: I was her only friend!

WONG: Where is she then? Tell us where your good friend
 is!

*The excitement of this exchange has run through the
 whole crowd.*

3

ALL: Yes, where is she? Where is Shen Te? *(Etc.)*

SHUI TA: Shen Te . . . had to go.

WONG: Where? Where to?

SHUI TA: I cannot tell you! I cannot tell you!

ALL: Why? Why did she have to go away? *(Etc.)*

WONG *(into the din with the first words, but talking on
 beyond the others)*: Why not, why not? Why did she
 have to go away?

SHUI TA *(shouting)*: Because you'd all have torn her to
 shreds, that's why! My lords, I have a request. Clear
 the court! When only the judges remain, I will make
 a confession.

4

ALL *(except WONG, who is silent, struck by the new turn
 of events)*: So he's guilty? He's confessing! *(Etc.)*

5

1--Wong crosses to the judges' bench.

2--Wong crosses to Shui Ta.

3--The crowd goes into an uproar.

4--Shui Ta's voice silences the crowd.

5--The crowd goes into an uproar again; Wong takes a few steps back.

Bertolt Brecht

FIRST GOD (*using the gavel*): Clear the court!

POLICEMAN: Clear the court!

WONG: Mr. Shui Ta has met his match this time.

MRS. SHIN (*with a gesture toward the judges*): You're
in for a little surprise.

The court is cleared. Silence.

SHUI TA: Illustrious ones!

*The GODS look at each other, not quite believing their
ears.*

SHUI TA: Yes, I recognize you!

SECOND GOD (*taking matters in hand, sternly*): What have
you done with our good woman of Setzuan?

SHUI TA: I have a terrible confession to make: I am she!
(*He takes off his mask, and tears away his clothes.*
SHEN TE stands there.)

SECOND GOD: Shen Te!

SHEN TE: Shen Te, yes. Shui Ta and Shen Te. Both.

Your injunction
To be good and yet to live
Was a thunderbolt:
It has torn me in two
I can't tell how it was
But to be good to others
And myself at the same time
I could not do it

1--The first god pounds the gavel.

2--The crowd begins to exit.

3--Wong crosses down center to address the audience.

4--Mrs. Shin crosses to Shui Ta.

5--Shu Fu exits; on his way out, he drops a bag of money
on the judges' bench.

6--Shui Ta crosses down left.

7--Shen Te takes the mask of Shui Ta off.

8--The gods' masks come down.

9--Shen Te delivers this part of the monologue down left;
she does not face the gods. The gods stay at their
bench.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

- Your world is not an easy one, illustrious ones! 1
 When we extend our hand to a beggar, he tears it off
 for us
 When we help the lost, we are lost ourselves
 And so 2
 Since not to eat is to die
 Who can long refuse to be bad?
 As I lay prostrate beneath the weight of good
 intentions
 Ruin stared me in the face
 It was when I was unjust that I ate good meat
 And hobnobbed with the mighty
 Why? 3
 Why are bad deeds rewarded?
 Good ones punished?
 I enjoyed giving
 I truly wished to be the Angel of the Slums
 But washed by a foster mother in the water of the
 gutter
 I developed a sharp eye
 The time came when pity was a thorn in my side
 And, later, when kind words turned to ashes in my
 mouth
 And anger took over
 I became a wolf
 Find me guilty, then, illustrious ones,
 But know: 4
 All that I have done I did
 To help my neighbor 5
 To love my lover
 And to keep my little one from want
 For your great, godly deeds, I was too poor, too small.
- Pause.*
- FIRST GOD (*shocked*): Don't go on making yourself miser- 6
 able, Shen Te! We're overjoyed to have found you!

1--Shen Te turns towards the gods.

2--Shen Te crosses center.

3--Shen Te crosses down left.

4--Shen Te turns towards the gods.

5--[The three stages of the play's action.]

6--The first god crosses to Shen Te. The other two gods
come down off the judges' bench but do not cross.

Bertolt Brecht

SHEN TE: I'm telling you I'm the bad man who committed
all those crimes!

FIRST GOD (*using—or failing to use—his ear trumpet*):
The good woman who did all those good deeds?

SHEN TE: Yes, but the bad man too!

FIRST GOD (*as if something had dawned*): Unfortunate
coincidences! Heartless neighbors! 1

THIRD GOD (*shouting in his ear*): But how is she to
continue? 2

FIRST GOD: Continue? Well, she's a strong, healthy girl . . .

SECOND GOD: You didn't hear what she said! 3

FIRST GOD: I heard every word! She is confused, that's all!
(*He begins to bluster.*) And what about this book
of rules—we can't renounce our rules, can we? (*More
quietly.*) Should the world be changed? How? By
whom? The world should *not* be changed! (*At a
sign from him, the lights turn pink, and music plays.*) * 4

And now the hour of parting is at hand. 5

Dost thou behold, Shen Te, yon fleecy cloud?

It is our chariot. At a sign from me

'Twill come and take us back from whence we came 6

Above the azure vault and silver stars. . . . 7

SHEN TE: No! Don't go, illustrious ones!

* The rest of this scene has been adapted for the many
American theatres that do not have "fly-space" to lower things
from ropes. The translation in the first Minnesota edition,
following the German exactly, is reprinted here on pages
142-144.—E. B.

1--The first god crosses center.

2--The third god crosses to the first god.

3--The second god crosses to the first god.

4--Music starts.

5--The four upstage units move off stage approximately
ten feet: the god machine is lowered from the flies.

6--The gods cross up center.

7--Shen Te crosses to the gods.

The Good Woman of Setzuan

FIRST GOD:

Our cloud has landed now in yonder field 1
From which it will transport us back to heaven.
Farewell, Shen Te, let not thy courage fail thee. . . .

Exeunt GODS.

SHEN TE: What about the old couple? They've lost their 2
shop! What about the water seller and his hand? And 3
I've got to defend myself against the barber, because
I don't love him! And against Sun, because I do
love him! How? How?

*SHEN TE's eyes follow the GODS as they are imagined
to step into a cloud which rises and moves forward
over the orchestra and up beyond the balcony.*

FIRST GOD (*from on high*): We have faith in you, Shen Te!

SHEN TE: There'll be a child. And he'll have to be fed. I 4
can't stay here. Where shall I go? 5

FIRST GOD: Continue to be good, good woman of Setzuan!

SHEN TE: I need my bad cousin! 6

FIRST GOD: But not very often!

SHEN TE: Once a week at least!

FIRST GOD: Once a month will be quite enough! 7

SHEN TE (*shrieking*): No, no! Help! 8

But the cloud continues to recede as the GODS sing.

1--The gods climb aboard their aeroplane.

2--Shen Te crosses center, away from the gods; she does this speech to the judges' bench and the bleachers.

3--The god machine rises.

4--The crowd enters; they carry sticks. Shen Te crosses down center; she hides her face.

5--[Add the following lines:

Wong: Show respect! The gods have appeared
among us! Three of the highest gods
have come to Setzuan to find a good
person. They had found one already,
but...

First God: No "but"! Here she is!

All: Shen Te!

6--The crowd surrounds Shen Te.

7--Feng crosses to Shen Te and touches her shoulder.

8--The gong sounds: tableau.

Bertolt Brecht

VALEDICTORY HYMN

What rapture, oh, it is to know
 A good thing when you see it
 And having seen a good thing, oh,
 What rapture 'tis to flee it

1

Be good, sweet maid of Setzuan
 Let Shui Ta be clever
 Departing, we forget the man
 Remember your endeavor

Because through all the length of days
 Her goodness faileth never
 Sing hallelujah! Make Shen Te's
 Good name live on forever!

2

SHEN TE: Help!

3

4

1--The gods sing using microphones. They are amplified by a loud speaker attached to the plane.

2--The lights fade except for a special on Shen Te and Feng.

3--Spoken to the audience.

4--Blackout.

EPILOGUE

You're thinking, aren't you, that this is no right
 Conclusion to the play you've seen tonight? *
 After a tale, exotic, fabulous,
 A nasty ending was slipped up on us.
 We feel deflated too. We too are nettled
 To see the curtain down and nothing settled.
 How could a better ending be arranged?
 Could one change people? Can the world be changed?
 Would new gods do the trick? Will atheism?
 Moral rearmament? Materialism?
 It is for you to find a way, my friends,
 To help good men arrive at happy ends.
 You write the happy ending to the play!
 There must, there must, there's got to be a way! †

* *At afternoon performances:*

We quite agree, our play this afternoon
 Collapsed upon us like a pricked balloon.

† When I first received the German manuscript of *Good Woman* from Brecht in 1945 it had no Epilogue. He wrote it a little later, influenced by misunderstandings of the ending in the press on the occasion of the Viennese première of the play. I believe that the Epilogue has sometimes been spoken by the actress playing Shen Te, but the actor playing Wong might be a shrewder choice, since the audience has already accepted him as a kind of chorus. On the other hand, it is not *Wong* who should deliver the Epilogue: whichever actor delivers it should drop the character he has been playing.—E. B.

1--The epilogue was incorporated into the curtain call:
the lights come up, the cast members form a line
with Shen Te and Wong in the center. Wong comes
forward to address the audience.

2--[The next two lines were cut.]

3--[The next two lines were cut.]

4--The cast exits in the light.

Appendix III: Photographs



Photograph 1--Prologue: The GODS Leave. p. 25.



Photograph 2--Scene 1: "So this is where you're hiding out!" p. 31.



Photograph 3--Scene 3: "This isn't much of an entertainment." p. 57.



Photograph 4--Scene 5: "And remember: I'm doing this because I have a soft spot in my heart for young lovers!" p. 79.



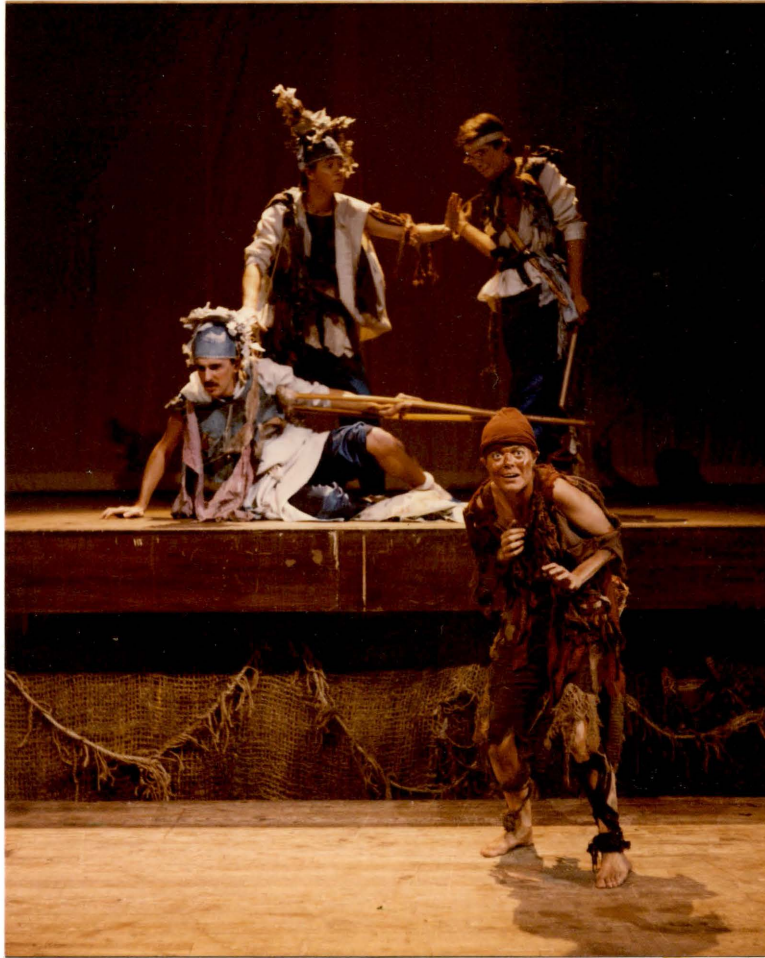
Photograph 5--Scene 5a: "Now, on the way to my wedding,
I waver between fear and joy."
p. 89.



Photograph 6--Scene 8: "And already it's growing dark!" p. 116.



Photograph 7--Scene 9: "We have been quietly smoking our cigars." p. 125.



Photograph 8--Scene 9a: "Dignity, dear colleagues, dignity! Never despair!" p. 127.

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THE PROLETARIAN PERSPECTIVE:
THE STUDY OF A PRODUCTION OF
BERTOLT BRECHT'S
THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN

by

Robert Michael Oliver

(Abstract)

Bertolt Brecht, a major playwright speaking for the consciousness of the oppressed in twentieth-century theatre, can still be a revolutionizing force for a contemporary bourgeois audience. Some may believe that Marx's theoretical writings are so firmly rooted in the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century that their importance to Brecht is minimal at most. The author believes that the revolution which Brecht's theatre demands has not yet occurred. Man is still enslaved by social, political, and economic forces greater than himself.

In this thesis, the author demonstrates the enduring power of Brecht's vision by reference to a production of THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN done at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia in December 1981. In the introductory Chapter, the author outlines and discusses the theoretical writings he used in preparation for an analysis of the play. Those writings include the works of Karl Marx and Carl Jung.

In Chapter Two, the author analyzes the script. In Chapter Three, he discusses the actual work done on the production: design conferences, the physical production, music, and specific rehearsal techniques. In the concluding Chapter, the author evaluates the choices made during the production in light of their effectiveness during the actual performances.