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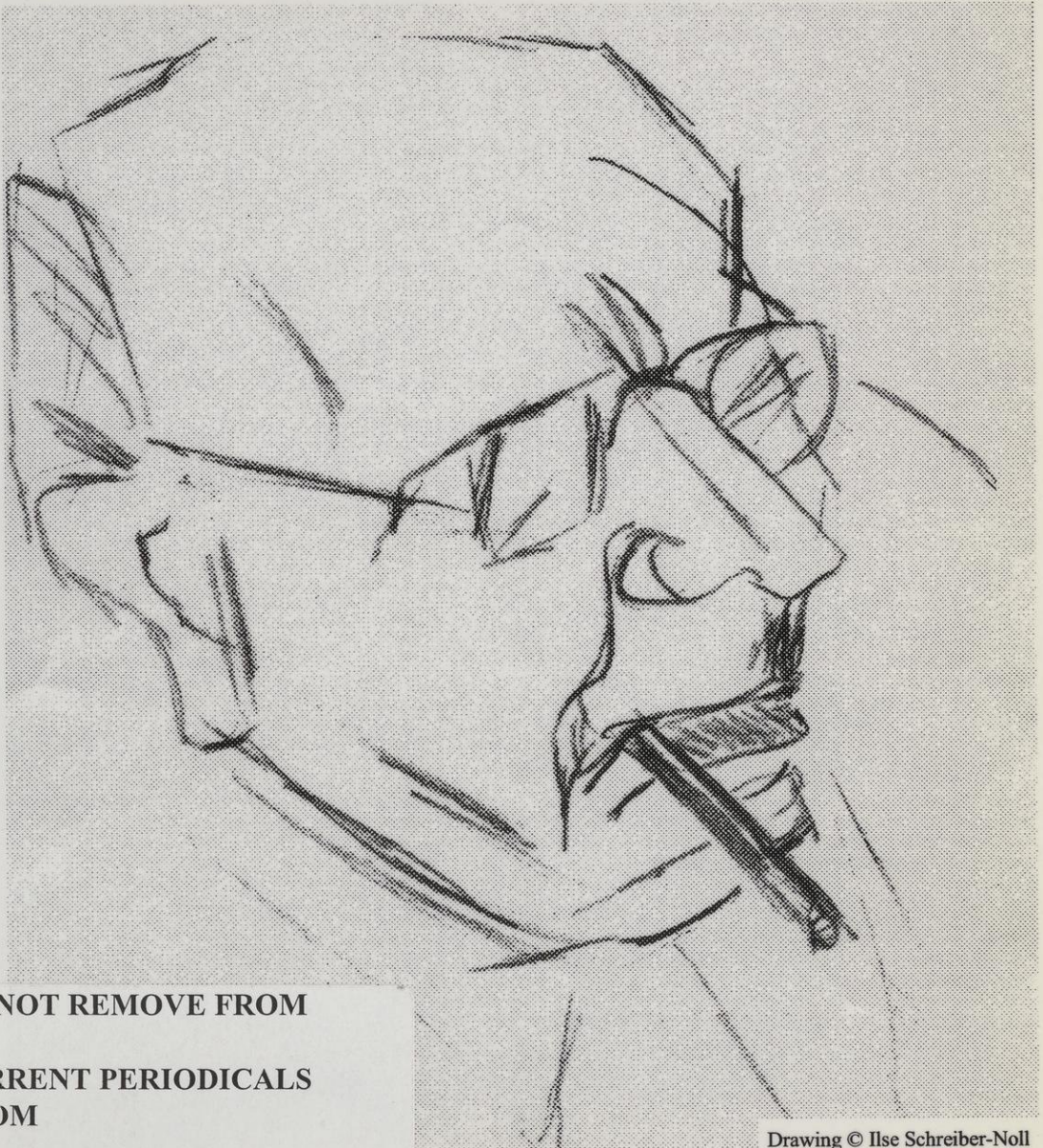
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COMMUNICATIONS

from the International Brecht Society



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Hanns Eisler

Volume 31

June 2002

INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY COMMUNICATIONS

Volume 31

June 2002

Editor:

GUDRUN TABBERT-JONES

Department of Modern Languages

Santa Clara University

Santa Clara, CA 95053

Tel. (408) 867-2970

Fax. (408) 741-0532

Email gtabbertjones@scu.edu

Associate Editor:

BRITTA KALLIN

School of Modern Languages

Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta, GA 30332-0375

Tel. (404) 385-0196

Fax. (404) 894-0955

Email brittakallin@hotmail.com

or: britta.kallin@modlangs.gatech.edu

Technical Assistant, Production & Composition

C. Roy Jones Email royjones@aol.com

All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor. *Communications* welcomes manuscripts relating to all facets of Brecht's work. Manuscripts should conform to the *MLA Style Manual* and should not exceed 7,500 words. You are encouraged to include with your manuscript the text in Word Perfect or Microsoft Word on IBM formatted 3½ diskettes or CD.

The Editor wishes to thank Professor Carl Weber, Drama Department, Stanford University, for his continued support.

See the inside back cover for information on subscriptions and membership. Membership in the IBS includes subscriptions to both *Communications* and *The Brecht Yearbook*. The Managing Editor of *The Brecht Yearbook* is Stephan Brockmann, Associate Professor of German, Department of Modern Languages, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

IBS-Communications is a member of The Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ).

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IBS Officers:

Alexander Stephan, President

Dept. of Germanic Languages & Literatures, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43215, USA

Erdmut Wizisla, Vice President

Bertolt Brecht Archiv, Chausseestraße 125, 10115 Berlin, Germany

David Robinson, Secretary/Treasurer

Dept. of Literature and Philosophy, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA 30640, USA

Gudrun Tabbert-Jones, Editor, *Communications*

Dept. of Modern Languages, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053, USA

For International Brecht Society news, information, and to exchange ideas, visit our Home Page
<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/german/brecht/>

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Communications* has a special section on Martin Esslin who died February 21, 2002, in London. Essays by Carl Weber, John Sanford and John Calder are dedicated to his memory.

The majority of performance reviews written specifically for *Communications* focus on Brecht or Brechtian productions at theatres affiliated with colleges or universities in the US. Also included in this section are two previously published reviews of productions in France and Germany.

Five articles are revised papers presented at two IBS panels at the Twentieth-Century Literature Conference in Louisville, Kentucky (see page 18). The first three articles explore "Brecht and Performance." Dan Friedman discusses Brecht's influence on modern playwrights, David Callaghan, Brecht's effect on *Living Theatre*, and David Robb, what the political song movement in the GDR owes to Brecht. The articles by Stephen T. Benner's on the *Fatzer* project and Philipp Loeser's essay "Brecht on Juijitsu" were presented as papers in the second section: "Brecht, Politics and Transcultural Memory." Gerd Gemünden read a version of his article "Brecht and Peter Lorre" at the 2001 Annual Conference of the Modern Language Association in New Orleans.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this edition of *Communications*, most notably Britta Kallin, Marc Silberman and, last but not least, Helgrid Streidt who prepared the bibliography for our readers. Special thanks also to Ilse Schreiber-Noll. The sketch on the front cover is from the cover of the booklet *Eisler and the Poets* produced collaboratively by Eric Bentley and Ilse Schreiber-Knoll.

It is not too early to begin thinking about the 2003 elections for the IBS officers. Nominations will be accepted in Spring and the election ballots will go out in early Summer. The next *Communications* will include a list of the nominees. Please, contact any of the current IBS officers if you are interested in becoming involved in the Society's leadership; their names and addresses are listed on page 98 of the current issue.

If you have checked the IBS website recently, you might have noticed that several past issues of *Communications* are now available electronically as Adobe Acrobat "pdf" files. Because of the regular and steep increases in postage rates, the question of electronic publication has arisen and at the past two IBS business meetings. One of the most important issues facing any journal that considers a shift to electronic publishing is whether scholars will still submit articles without paper-print copy. If you have a strong opinion about this, please let us know, especially those of you who have published already in *Communications*. The *Brecht Yearbook* has no plans at this point to shift to electronic publication.

Gudrun Tabbert-Jones, Santa Clara University

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Siegfried Mews introduced the new members of the IBS team in his last "President's Report." It is now our pleasant task to thank the outgoing President, Vice President (Michael Morley) and Managing Editor of the *Brecht Yearbook* (Maarten van Dijk) for the time, energy and guidance they have devoted over many years to the successful working of the International Brecht Society. All of us, members of IBS and friends of Brecht alike, are grateful for the superb jobs they have done. This includes, in the case of Siegfried Mews, among many other things, organizing two major international Brecht symposia in Augsburg and San Diego (with John Rouse, Marc Silberman and Florian Vaßen), coordinating activities during the Brecht Centennial and steering IBS through turbulent waters when BB and his writings became the center of a sizeable public controversy. Michael Morley, Vice President since 1998, helped to expand the visibility of IBS beyond North America and Europe and is remembered by many for his witty, ironic and self/critical presentations at IBS functions. Special thanks go to Maarten van Dijk who began his involvement with the *Brecht Yearbook* with volume 20 and has managed the affairs of the IBS flagship, in the end under difficult personal circumstances, until volume 26. As a theater person, he added during those years a strong emphasis on performance, enriched the graphic element of the *Yearbook* and attracted contributions in the areas of music and theater.

It will be, no doubt, an extremely difficult act to follow the work of the outgoing IBS team. Among the matters that will come up in the near future for the new group of officials are the preparations for the 11th IBS Symposium, *mahagonny.com*, which is scheduled to take place in Berlin, Germany, from June 26 to 29, 2003. Klaus Siebenhaar, Marc Silberman, Florian Vaßen, and the new IBS Vice President Erdmut Wizisla, together with a local organizing committee, prepared a Call for Papers and with the help of others are looking for sources of funding (suggestions are much welcomed). The event will commemorate "75 Years of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*", is designed to attract scholars from various disciplines, and will include participation of professional organizations such as the Kurt Weill Gesellschaft, and the Ernst Bloch Gesellschaft. Deadline for the submission of abstracts is July 1, 2002.

Stephen Brockmann, the new Managing Editor of the *Yearbook*, is busy putting together the next issue of our main publication (for more information see his statement below). Yet another task involves the everlasting struggle to expand the visibility and membership of IBS. Gudrun Tabbert-Jones, who continues as editor of *Communications* (as does David W. Robinson as Secretary/Treasurer), has designed a handsome flyer advertising IBS to potential new members and donors. Please take copies of this flyer (available on <http://polyglot.Iss.wisc.edu/German> or through Gudrun) along to conferences and pass them on to colleagues and students wherever possible. In February 2002, I organized on a short notice two Brecht panels for the 20th Century Literature Conference at the University of Louisville. Papers from these panels are published in the current issue of *Communications*. The organizers of the 56th Kentucky Foreign Language Conference have agreed to include an IBS panel in their program (see the call for papers below and on my web site). In addition to continuing our relation with the MLA, for 2003 I will explore with the German Studies Association the possibility of establishing regular sessions at future GSA meetings in the hope of bringing together historians, political scientists, Germanisten and others interested in Brecht. In this context, please let me know if you plan to attend the 2002 GSA

meeting in San Diego where we could get together for an informal IBS evening. And, of course, everybody is invited to contact me about other professional meetings in the U.S. and elsewhere where we could increase the visibility of both Brecht and IBS.

Please do not forget to share your reviews of books on Brecht, information about performances of his plays and other events related to Brecht with Gudrun Tabbert-Jones for inclusion in *Communications*. The old and new IBS officers are anxious to get your suggestions about how to continuously improve the membership, the activities and the intellectual life of our organization.

Alexander Stephan
President, IBS

EDITOR'S REPORT, *BRECHT YEARBOOK*

Volume 27 of the Brecht Yearbook is entitled *Where Extremes Meet: Rereading Brecht and Beckett*, and is based on a symposium held in Dublin in the spring of 2001. It contains a wealth of material on the Brecht-Beckett connection, including articles by Antony Tatlow, Herbert Blau, and Sue-Ellen Case, among others. Volume 27 was sent out to members of the International Brecht Society in the summer of 2002. Volume 28 of the Yearbook, to be published in 2003, is an open issue, and the editorial board welcomes submissions on a wide range of topics, from Brecht scholarship specifically to scholarship on issues in which that Brecht himself was interested in, especially the politics of theater and literature. Submissions may be in either English or German and should include a brief abstract. The editorial board particularly encourages articles with an international or global perspective. Volume 29 of the Yearbook, to be published in 2004, will be devoted to the *Mahagonny* conference that the International Brecht Society is sponsoring in Berlin during the summer of 2003.

Stephen Brockmann

TREASURER'S REPORT for 2001

Summer of 2001 saw the introduction of a new database system to handle IBS membership information, library subscriptions, and special orders. The most tangible result is that I no longer need to hire an assistant to handle IBS correspondence. The database can now be viewed directly by IBS officers and others via the Web, yet it preserves a high degree of security. (Credit card users can rest assured that we do not store credit card numbers in our Web database or on any computer. Only the paper records of these transactions are preserved -- stored under lock and key - - because of Georgia state auditing requirements.) By means of the new database, ordering procedures for the *Brecht Yearbook* have been better coordinated with our Madison and Chicago

distributors, speeding processing time. Another new capability is easy access to e-mail addresses. As the membership will have noticed by now, the IBS has begun sending announcements quickly and cheaply via e-mail. We will keep these mailings to a minimum, and your address will be removed from the list on request. If you have not been receiving these announcements, please send me your email address (dwrob@gasou.edu).

David Robinson, Secretary/Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORT

DOLLAR CHECKING¹

Opening Balance:	\$ 1,106.64
Receipts:	\$ 8,793.96
Disbursements:	\$ 3,495.55
Closing Balance:	\$ 6,405.05

DOLLAR SAVINGS

Opening Balance:	\$ 16,335.93
Receipts:	\$ 4,376.90
Disbursements:	\$ 2,000.00
Closing Balance:	\$ 18,712.83

DM/EUR SAVINGS²

Opening Balance:	DM 969,28 (EUR 495,58)
Closing Balance:	EUR 1 012,69

TOTAL ASSETS ON 31 DECEMBER 2001:

US \$ 25,117.88
EUR 1.012,69

NOTES:

1. These figures are skewed upward by late December payments for the *Yearbook* and *Communications*, totaling about \$5,000.00. We had a good year but not that good! These disbursements will be reflected in the 2002 report.
2. I have simplified the DM/EUR account information this year because of the rather tedious complexity added by the conversion from the Deutsche Mark to the Euro. Nineteen members paid their 2001 dues through the Deutsche Bank account.

MINUTES--IBS BUSINESS MEETING AT THE MLA, NEW ORLEANS

Dec. 29, 2001

PRESENT: Siegfried Mews [and Marilyn], Vera Stegmann, Astrid Klocke, Gerd Gemünden, Jonathan Skolnick, David Robinson, Dorothee Ostmeier, Marc Silberman (presiding), Helen Fehervary, Carol Anne Costabile-Heming, Tom Kuhn, Stephen Brockmann

1. MEETING called to order at 5:10 pm

2. REPORTS: David Robinson reported that the IBS treasury has ca. \$20,430 after having paid for the printing costs of the *Yearbook* (vol. 26) and *Communications* (2001).

This includes about \$730 in the checking account, \$18,000 in the savings account, \$1000 in the credit card holding account, and €1000 in the German account.

Membership remains constant. With the new SQL database, it is now possible to send collective emails to almost all individual members about Society business.

3. FUTURE IBS SESSIONS: The following conference sessions were decided by consensus: Modern Language Association 2002 (New York): a) Laughing with Brecht? Humor, Satire, and "Witz" in Brecht's Texts (Astrid Klocke, aklocke@humnet.ucla.edu).

b) Brecht and Bentley (Vera Stegmann, vss2@lehhigh.edu). Vera will check whether Bentley is interested and whether he has suggestions for "staging" the session; if Bentley does not wish to cooperate, Vera will organize a session on: Brecht and New York. Silberman will contact the MLA by Jan. 4 with the session calls. c) Siegfried Mews will contact Alexander Stephan about an IBS session at the German Studies Association Conference 2002 (San Diego) on the completed Brecht edition and the *Brecht Handbuch*.

d) for the Modern Language Association 2003 Silberman will contact Robert Cohen and Britta Kallin about a session on "Brecht and Theory in the 1930s" as well as Astrid Oesmann and Volker Kaiser about a session on "Semiology and [Brecht's] Theater."

e) Alexander Stephan should contact Ted Fiedler at U of Kentucky about a Brecht session at the Kentucky Foreign Language conference in April 2003.

4. YEARBOOK: Stephan Brockmann has enough material already for vol. 27 and is aiming at a June 2002 publication date; Sigfried Hoefert has withdrawn from the editorial board, and Brockmann is hoping to find an editor from Germany who will join the board (suggestions welcome).

5. COMMUNICATIONS: There was a consensus that a) past issues (not the current issue) of *Communications* should be posted as .pdf files to the IBS website, and b) that institutional subscribers should receive a CD with all available digitalized *Communications* issues (at no extra cost). The *Communications* editor should renew the membership to the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ).

6. PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT: Tom Kuhn reported on the difficulties and plans of the English-language Brecht edition at Methuen.

7. IBS SYMPOSIUM MAHAGONNY.com: Silberman reported on the 11th Symposium plans. David Robinson can distribute by email an announcement to all individual members. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Minutes by Marc Silberman

Zum Titelbild:

Hanns Eisler (1908-1962) gehört zu den bedeutendsten Komponisten des 20. Jahrhunderts. Große Teile seines Schaffens verstehen sich in bewußtem Bezug auf Funktionen und auf andere Künste als "angewandte Musik." Wohl sein wichtigster Partner war Bertolt Brecht, mit dem er bis zu dessen Tod zusammenarbeitete.

Wichtige Lebensdaten

- 1898** als Sohn des Wiener Philosophen Rudolf Eisler geboren
- 1919/23** Privatunterricht bei Arnold Schönberg,
- 1930** Beginn der Zusammenarbeit mit Brecht (Lehrstück *Die Maßnahme* op.20.
- 1931** Filmmusik *Kuhle Wampe* (Slatan Dudow), *Solidaritätslied* (Brecht), Balladen und Chansons für Ernst Busch
- 1932** Bühnenmusik zu *Die Mutter* (Gorki/Brecht)
- 1933** Beginn des Exils (Wien, London, Dänemark)
- 1935** Bühnenmusik zu *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* (Brecht), *Einheitsfrontlied* (Brecht)

- 1938** Übersiedlung in die USA, Professur an der New School for Social Research, NY
- 1942** Umzug nach Los Angeles, Zusammenarbeit mit Brecht (*Hollywood-Elegien*) und Adorno (*Film-Musik-Projekt* der Rockefeller Foundation); Filmmusik zu *Hangmen also die* (Fritz Lang)
- 1947** Bühnenmusik zu *Galileo* (Brecht); Verhöre in Los Angeles und Washington vor dem Ausschuß zur Untersuchung unamerikanischer Tätigkeit (MacCarthy)
- 1948** Ausweisung aus den USA, Rückkehr nach Europa
- 1949** Übersiedlung nach Berlin
- 1950** Mitglied der Deutschen Akademie der Künste
- 1956** Bühnenmusik zu *Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Brecht)
- 1957** *Die Teppichweber von Kujan-Bulak* (Brecht), *Linker Marsch* (Majakowski)
- 1962** Hanns Eisler stirbt in Berlin

Weitere Informationen: *Hanns Eisler-Archiv* in der Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste

Internationale Hanns Eisler Gesellschaft (IHEG)
<<http://www.hanns-eisler.com/Eisler.htm>>

IN BRIEF

DERECHOS DE BRECHT

Sara Joffré

Desde 1961, yo he estudiado el teatro de Bertolt Brecht. Soy ciudadana de Lima, Perú, ese lugar que él menciona en su poema titulado "A un obrero que lee" donde dice "En que casas de la dorada Lima...". Desde 1971 he celebrado la fecha de su nacimiento con diferentes eventos: seminarios, charlas, exhibiciones y fiestas.

En 1962 se realizó por primera vez en el Perú una puesta en escena con una pieza de Brecht: *Terror y Miserias del Tercer Reich*, a cargo del grupo de teatro Hebraica. Y, desde entonces, hasta 1988, se puede apreciar que siempre por lo menos se realizaban una o dos presentaciones de las obras de Brecht.

En todo lugar donde se anuncia Brecht aquí, tiene muchos seguidores. Pero a partir de 1989, se ha observado una gran ausencia y sólo en 1998, con ocasión del Centenario y en 2000 se hizo una gran puesta de *Galileo Galilei*, con el auspicio de la Universidad Católica.

A mi entender, más que por razones políticas o porque haya "pasado de moda" el interés por su trabajo teatral, tenemos (pues nos han advertido) no poder pagar los derechos que demandan los encargados de vigilar la herencia brechtiana.

En Buenos Aires, Argentina, encontramos a un señor (buscando en Internet) que nos dijo que era el representante en América Latina, y que aunque hiciéramos una función gratuita en un asilo con fines benéficos, el mínimo a pagar por derechos no era el habitual 10% sobre el total de las entradas, como se acostumbra sino que era 1000 dólares por función.

Escribimos también a diversos lados y hasta ahora no tenemos una respuesta concreta. Por tal motivo solicitamos a quienes reciben este Boletín que nos ayuden para tener una información exacta y veraz de cuales son las reglas para poder poner en escena una obra de Brecht.

Aquí no hay protección de ninguna clase por parte del Estado ni política cultural estatal para el teatro, sin embargo hay un buen nivel de trabajo teatral independiente, que trabaja constantemente y con respaldo del público. Pero económicamente se

trabaja con cantidades heroicas.

Es por esto que este pequeño artículo, que no tiene carácter académico ni científico, se dirige a la comunidad brechtiana para pedir ayuda para develar el misterio de los derechos de Brecht.

Queremos acceder a quienes nos puedan orientar valientemente al respecto. Esperamos la ayuda de todos. Agradecemos anticipadamente a toda *La buena gente de este mundo*.

Responder a: sarajoffre@yahoo.es

MUESTRA, la revista de los autores peruanos de teatro, ha sacado 6 números hasta la fecha tienes el tuyo? Avisame dónde te lo mando (c/u 3 pequeños soles)

DER RUHM DES APFELS

Detlef Friedrich

Ruth Berlau würde im Jahre 2006 hundert. Um ihre Verwertbarkeit im kalendarischen Kunst- und Verlagsschaffen geht es, wenn das dänische Stück *Alle wissen alles*, das jetzt im Berlau-Archiv gefunden wurde, dem Brecht-Erbe zugeschlagen werden soll, und dabei kalkuliert gefragt wird "Ein unbekannter Brecht?"

Das Stück ist nicht unbekannt, es ist nur unbedeutend. Es befindet sich in deutscher Fassung im Brecht-Archiv, das von Berlau mitbegründet wurde. Sabine Kebir, eine "Brechtfrauenbuchautorin" (Elisabeth Hauptmann, Helene Weigel) schreibt jetzt an einem Buch über Ruth Berlau. Im Berlau-Archiv der Akademie (im Vergleich zum durchnummerierten Brecht-Archiv muss man es sich wie bei Hempels unterm Sofa vorstellen) fand sie den verschollen geglaubten dänischen Originaltext von Berlaus Stück *Alle ved alt*. Kebir verglich den Fund mit der deutschsprachigen Fassung und kann beweisen, dass Brechts handschriftliche Nachbesserungen in die dänische Fassung eingearbeitet sind, dass also Berlau "nur"

Aufschreiberin und Übersetzerin war. Kebir belegt, was keiner bestreitet. Es handelt sich um eine Liebesgeschichte.

Die Dänin Berlau ist erinnerlich aus Ost-Berliner Theatertagen als eine sehr ungraue Erscheinung im Stadt- und Theaterbild um die Friedrichstraße, wo der gesamte Brechtanhang wohnte. Im Berliner Ensemble hatte die Brechtgeliebte fotografiert und dokumentiert, Brecht pflegte bei ihr in der Charitéstraße 3 Mittag zu essen. Die Berlau arbeitete an dem Buch *Theaterarbeit* mit, das Credo des BE: Die Gesellschaft als veränderbar, Konflikte als gesellschaftliche Konflikte darzustellen.

Nach Brechts Beisetzung im wummresistenten Zinksarg 1956 auf dem Dorotheenstädtischen Friedhof erhielt die Berlau von Helene Weigel einerseits Schweigegeld, andererseits Hausverbot, weil sie Mitspracherechte beanspruchte, schwer kalkulierbar war, zu deutlich ihre Meinung nicht bei sich behalten wollte. Ruth Berlau war eine empfindsame, zarte Frau, die robust wirkte. Schlecht gelaunte HO-Verkäufer sprach sie mit "Meine Engel-Puppe" an, und schüchterte sie bei widerborstigem Bedienverhalten mit der Drohung ein "Ich habe Kontakte zur Regierung". Ihren Biografen Hans Bunge enterbte sie fünfmal und setzte ihn fünfmal spontan wieder ein. "Ärzte, mit denen sie oft zu tun hatte, waren nach der Behandlung selbst für das Krankenhaus reif" (Bunge).

Ruth Berlau sprach ein spezielles Dänischdeutsch, in einem Brief an Marlies und Günter Linke, jüngeren Freunden, schrieb sie: "Ruth erwarte nähnlich beste dänische Freundin DADA in Pflingsten -- Besprechung wegen Gastzimmer: Keile-hols-stückschen, damit DADA nicht seekrank wird von das schaukelnene Tisch !!! Was macht man mit das häsliche heizapparat?" Sie hatte Charme, war aber nicht immer nett. Den lernbegierigen Fotoreporter Linke, der sie gelegentlich begleitete, nannte sie montags "My Darling" und mittwochs "Du Nazischwein". Als Ausländerin fühlte sie sich an deutsche Nachkriegsmittelungsbeschränkungen nicht gebunden.

Ruth Berlau muss sich am Ende ihres Lebens sehr einsam gefragt haben, ob sie nicht doch bloß

Brechts Apfel war. Sie rauchte im Bett, trank Wein, und ist am Schwelbrand in der Krankenstube der Charité erstickt. Das war 1974. Im Nachwort zu ihrer Tonband-Autobiografie *Brechts Lai-Tu* verwendet 1987 Hans Bunge die Formulierung, der 15. Januar sei "als ihr Sterbetag bestimmt worden". Er vermutete wohl Selbstmord, weil für diesen 15. Januar die sozialistische Obrigkeit der antifaschistischen Kämpferin ein Zimmerchen im VdN-Altersheim zugewiesen hatte. Ruth Berlau hätte einen hinreißenden Anteil in einem denkbar erfolgreichen Dichterfamilienmehrteiler der ARD *Die Brechts* verdient. Der Harem könnte reüssieren. Brechts Theatertod, jeder Gattin aber ein "Bildschirmereignis".

1926 war Ruth Berlau, zwanzigjährig, von Kopenhagen nach Paris mit dem Fahrrad gefahren "um sich einen Lippenstift zu kaufen", 1935 nach Moskau geradelt, um Kommunistin zu werden. Aus dem spanischen Bürgerkrieg schrieb sie Reportagen. Ihre literarischen Versuche handelten von der Liebe zur Sowjetunion. In Kopenhagen war sie königliche Schauspielerin und verheiratete Salonkommunistin, als Brecht in ihr Leben trat. Sie kaufte ein Haus auf dem Lande, in dem ihr der berühmte Stückeschreiber in ganzheitlicher Zuwendung Nachhilfelehrgang im Fach Szenisches Schreiben erteilte, wobei binnen acht Tagen das unpolitische Stück, die witzige Klamotte *Alle wissen alles* entstand, die von den fröhlichen Taten eines dänischen Meisterdiebs inspiriert ist, einem Charmeur des Verbrechens, der nach seinen Coups der Polizei wie den Morgenblättern stets detaillierte Berichte seiner Taten zuschickte. Im Stadtgespräch wie im Stück wird er "das Bohrende X" genannt, weil er die Tresore lautlos aufbohren konnte und entkam. Das Stück, in *Theater der Zeit* (2/2002) auszugsweise gedruckt, ähnelt im Tenor den Olsenbande-Filmen. Aber einige dialektische Sentenzen fallen doch ganz auf Brecht zurück, an seiner eigentlichen Autorschaft, seiner geistigen Dominanz kann kein Zweifel sein. Aber warum es Brecht zuschreiben, wo er es doch nie sein Eigen nannte? Brecht wollte vieles sein, aber eines bestimmt nicht: ein unpolitischer Dramatiker. Deshalb hat er das szenisch aufgezeichnete Liebesabenteuer als sein geistiges Eigentum nicht deklariert, folglich ist es in der *Großen Berliner und*

Frankfurter Ausgabe nicht enthalten. Ruth Berlau beanspruchte es. Es ist ihr Stück, weil sie es nahm. Sie liebte Brecht. Er hat in seinem Tagebuch die Geburt des gemeinsamen, früh gestorbenen Kindes in New York nur als "Ruths Operation" vermerkt.

In dänischer Übertragung ist *Alle ved alt* als Spielfassung schon 1938 gedruckt worden. Es enthält ein Nachwort von Brecht, das es in Deutsch unter seinem Namen in der großen Brechtausgabe gibt, aber bei Berlau Dänisch nur mit "En gammel Dramatiker" (Ein alter Dramatiker) unterzeichnet ist. Peter Palitzsch überlegte einmal, das Stück zu inszenieren; es ist nie gespielt worden.

An der offiziellen Autorenschaft von Ruth Berlau wird nur gerührt, weil die Rekonstruktion des Dichterliebeslebens auch unter Brechtforschern, in Sonderheit unter Brechtforscherinnen, an Detailgenauigkeit in dem Maße zunimmt, wie die Zahl der Aufführungen seiner Stücke in Berlin, dem letzten Wirkungsort im Bett und im Regiestuhl abnimmt. Es ist die bekannte umgekehrt proportionale Erbeaneignung: Das Dichterleben wird beschrieben, die Kunst nicht mehr gebraucht.

Frau Kebir legt in den Mitteilungen ihrer Forschungsergebnisse im Heft *Theater der Zeit* und kürzlich im Brechtzentrum unangemessen Wert darauf, dass Berlau nicht die Autorin gewesen sei. "Nicht nur durch die recht komplizierte Dramaturgie und das für Brecht typische Bestreben, Katharsis und Aufklärung von der Bühne ins Publikum zu verlegen, ist *Alle wissen alles* nun nicht länger als Stück der im Schreiben von Dramen völlig unerfahrenen Ruth Berlau zu sehen, an dem Brecht lediglich etwas mitarbeitete. Es handelt sich vielmehr um ein Stück Brechts, zu dem Berlau beigetragen hat."

Ist umgekehrt das Brecht-Gedicht "Schwächen / Du hattest keine / Ich hatte eine: / Ich liebte." nicht eher Berlau als Brecht zuzuschreiben? Es findet sich in einem Brief Ruth Berlaus an Brecht. Wie wichtig ist die Frage, wem die Worte eingefallen sind? Berlau hat ihre Briefe an Brecht oft mit "Deine Kreatur" unterschrieben, und Brecht hat ihr (als seine Figur Lai-Tu) klargemacht: "Deine Güte wird festgestellt und gewürdigt, indem sie in Anspruch genommen wird. So erwirbt der Apfel seinen Ruhm, in dem er gegessen wird."

Zitat Ruth Berlau: "Wir blieben acht Tage und schrieben das Stück *Alle wissen alles*. Wir haben

uns dabei fast totgelacht. Merkwürdigerweise scheint das Stück sonst niemanden zu amüsieren."

Ähnliche Artikel im Archiv

Bitte besuchen Sie unsere neue Homepage:

<<http://www.uni-karlsruhe.de/brecht>>

Dr. Joachim Lucchesi

Universität Karlsruhe (TH)

Arbeitsstelle Bertolt Brecht (ABB) am Institut für Literaturwissenschaft

Kronenstr. 30

D-76133 Karlsruhe

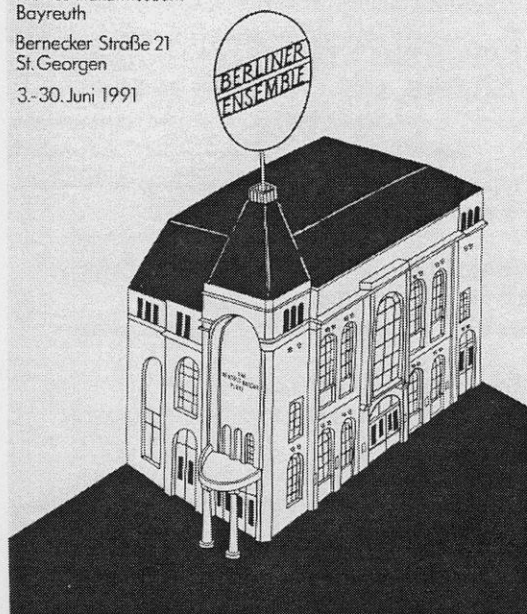
Tel.: 0721/608-26 44 Fax: 0721/608-80 82

PLAKATE K. H. DRESCHER

Kleines Plakatmuseum
Bayreuth

Bernecker Straße 21
St. Georgen

3.-30. Juni 1991



K. H. Drescher (1991)

UPCOMING EVENTS

IBS SESSIONS AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

(Dec 27-29, 2002)

The IBS will sponsor two sessions at the Modern Language Association conference, in New York.

Session 1:

ERIC BENTLEY; TRANSLATOR, DRAMATIST, POET

Presider: **Vera Stegmann**, Lehigh University

Vera Stegmann interviews Eric Bentley about his work on/with Brecht

Session 2:

LAUGHING WITH BRECHT: HUMOR, SATIRE, AND "WITZ" IN BRECHT'S TEXTS

Presider: **Astrid Klocke**, Northern Arizona University

"Brechtian laughter? The Philosophy of Laughter and the Limits of Dialectical Theater"

Speaker: **Norman Roessler**, Temple University

"Brecht and the Comedy of Violence"

Speaker: **Peter Arnds**, Kansas State University

"The Socially-Comic 'Puntilla Song'"

Speaker: **Peter W. Ferran**, Rochester Institute of Technology

Respondent: **Gudrun Tabbert-Jones**, Santa Clara University

56TH KENTUCKY FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONFERENCE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON

(April 24-26, 2003)

The International Brecht Society will organize a special panel devoted to

BERTOLT BRECHT

a broad range of topics dealing with Brecht's life, works and reception will be considered (please watch on the web for the conference theme). Papers can be in English or German and should be no longer than 20 minutes.

Please send proposals (topic, abstract) together with a brief CV to the address below by Monday, October 21, 2002

Alexander Stephan
Professor of German
President, IBS

Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures
314 Cunz Hall
1841 Millikin Road
Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210-1229
Tel. 614-292-6985
Fax: 614-292-8510

Mershon Center for the Study of International
Security and Public Policy
1501 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201-2602
Tel. 614-247-6068
Fax: 614-292-24-2407

KURT WEILL CALENDAR 2002-2003

Urbana (April 11-22): *Threepenny Opera*, University of Illinois.

Poughkeepsie (April 11-14): *Seven Deadly Sins*, Vassar College.

Rochester (April 13): National Finals. Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers. Eastman School of Music.

London (April 15-30): *Happy End*. Thirsty Dog Theatre (Daniel Ghossain, artistic director). Central Space Theatre.

St. Gallen (April 24-May 1): *Happy End*. Theatre St. Gallen (Geoffrey Abbot, conductor)

Montpellier (April 25-28): *Der Jasager*. Opéra Berlioz (Vladimir Kojoukharov, conductor; Giuseppe Frigeni, director). Conservatoire National de Région de Montpellier.

Helsinki (April 30 - January 5, 2003): *Happy End*. The Provoo Theatre.

United Kingdom (May 1-31): *Threepenny Opera*. The Opera Group. Touring production.

St. Louis (May 4-5): *Lindbergflug*. Midwest Chorale. Mississippi Historical Society.

Bronxville (May 9-11): *Threepenny Opera*. Sarah Lawrence College.

Tokyo (May 11-14): *Die sieben Todsünden*, excerpts from *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, *Happy End*, *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Pina Bausch Tanztheater Wuppertal, Tokyo City Philharmonic Orchestra (Yan Michael Holstmann, conductor) Saitama Arts Theatre.

Stratford (May - November, 2002): *Threepenny Opera*. Stratford Festival (Don Horsburgh, musical director; Stephen Quimette, director). Avon Theatre.

Seattle (May 30-June 8): *Seven Deadly Sins*. Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Dinslaken (June 9): *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Landestheater, Burghofbühne.

Barcelona (July 15): *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Serveie de L'Espectacle FOCUS. Touring production.

Tel-Aviv (July 15): *The Threepenny Opera*. Gesher Theatre.

Pittsburg (September 13-October 6): *Threepenny Opera*. Pittsburg Playhouse Repertory Company.

Porto (November 30): *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Teatro Nacional Sao Joao.

Augsburg (December 4-February 20, 2003): *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Theater Augsburg (Geoffrey W. Abbott, conductor).

Leipzig (January 10-11, 2003): *Die sieben Todsünden*. Gewandhausorchester (John Mauceri, conductor; Meret Becker, voice). Gewandhaus, Grosser Saal.

Amsterdam (March 15, 2003): *Die sieben Todsünden*. Radio Kamerorkeet. (Peter Eötvös, conductor; Anja Silja, voice)

For a more information visit:
<<http://www.kwf.org>>

11th Symposium of the International Brecht Society

26-29 June 2003

Humboldt University, Berlin

Mahagonny.com

75 Years of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*

Between 1927 and 1929 Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill collaborated on the *Songspiel Mahagonny* and the opera *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. At that time: city of misery and of capitalist fascination under the sign of America; today: city of global economic systems and transnational information flow; in between: city of catastrophes – menacing, destructive, seductive. The International Brecht Society (IBS) invites scholars, artists, theater practitioners, and other interested individuals to an international and interdisciplinary symposium in the city of Berlin to commemorate 75 years of *Mahagonny* in 2003. With Brecht's text and Weill's music as points of departure, the symposium will provide a collective forum to consider the insights and knowledge that *Mahagonny* offers us today: textually, artistically, historically, theoretically, and figuratively.

Already during the Weimar Republic the city of Berlin was a lively nexus of interconnected intellectuals. *Mahagonny* was particularly important not only for the collaboration between Brecht and Weill but also for Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin. In the same spirit, the IBS is proposing this symposium in cooperation with the German Kurt Weill Society, the Ernst Bloch Society, and the International Walter Benjamin Society. The organizational committee, consisting of Alexander Honold (Humboldt University, Berlin), Klaus Siebenhaar (Hanns Eisler Musical Academy, Berlin), Marc Silberman (University of Wisconsin, Madison), and Florian Vaßen (University of Hannover), invites suggestions for papers and working sessions in the following four areas:

I. Net-city Mahagonny

"Mahagonny / That means the net city / It will be like a net / Cast out to snare edible birds" (Scene 1).

Net-city Mahagonny catches people who are "plucked" and consumed – as the "city of pleasure" (Scene 10) it snares them with promises of bliss, with the ecstasy of consumption, with electronic media and telecommunications, with traffic systems and roadway networks.

"Mahagonny" is also a city of networks, a system of branching connections to circuits that link the structures of distribution; it is especially a complexly interwoven system of information and communication, of commodities and finances. The city of Mahagonny is, finally, a web of proliferating signs, growing anarchically, intertwined in a labyrinth of intricate forms and meanings. Urbanity and money have always been closely connected, but is Mahagonny, "the golden city" (Scene 3), still the site of capitalist production? Or has it become the center of commodity consumption, the space of information and traffic flow, symbol of the transitory and the virtual? As this net-city dissolves into polyphony and simultaneity, decentering and incoherence, does it not lose firm outlines, becoming placeless and, thereby, local and global at once?

II. Passageways in the City of Mahagonny

Walter Benjamin's Parisian arcades or passageways (*The Arcades Project*) are aesthetic counter-worlds, the thought-image of a technically and synthetically constructed world that promises new forms of life. These passages are also expressive forms of thinking and dreams, perceptual spaces of history and society that can connect the historical power of imagination with the utopian horizon of expectation. What does it mean for the flaneur to stroll through the city of Mahagonny, through Brecht's city of dreams and mirrors where the "laws of human happiness" (Scene 11) are proclaimed. Passageways are also crossings – transit routes and border entries which the modern nomads use for their constant movements from place to place. What relationship do these mobile people develop with the things they always leave behind them? At the founding of "the paradise city Mahagonny" the Widow Begbick is not (yet) thinking about de-industrialization, brain drain, and folkloric gentrification, but today's architects are doing just that. Passageways are the spatialized past. Who is building them? For whom? Where do they lead?

III. Parvenupolis Mahagonny

Net-city Mahagonny ensnares with promises of profane pleasures as they have become experiential reality since the nineteenth century in the culture industry's entertainment paradises. Fun, amusement, leisure-time activity – Mahagonny corresponds and plays with the “day dreams” of the 1920s, especially as they were described and examined by Siegfried Kracauer in his essays (“Cult of Distraction”). “Mahagonny” is, then, model and metaphor for the modern “asylums of homeless intellectuals”; it is the place that satisfies the eternal dreams of the upwardly mobile and anticipates a destructive principle of entertainment. Moreover, in *Mahagonny* Brecht “materializes” once again the grand idealistic and dreaded visions of the “American city,” from “Spree-Chicago” (Mark Twain) to “Parvenupolis” (Walther Rathenau). To what extent do the Frankfurt School's later concept of the culture industry as well as recurring references to the earthly paradises between Potsdamer Platz and Las Vegas belong to the context of our contemporary observations? Or is “Mahagonny” also the site of catastrophes, a center of aggression turned inward and outward where the city and death meet? A hurricane threatens the total destruction of Brecht's Mahagonny; the men are condemned to die in the net-city for “there is no greater criminal than a man without money” (Scene 18); and in the end Mahagonny sinks into chaos (Scene 20).

IV. Hollow Mahagonny

Ernst Bloch spoke of 1920s Berlin with analytical distanciation as a “hollow place”: a functional entity with which the social power of imagination cannot keep pace. A hollow place is not only a sign of alienated and anonymous relations but also the stand-in for all sorts of promises of pleasure. Utopia, the non-place where human happiness occurs, must be such a hollow place. The “golden city,” Mahagonny, is surrounded by desert; it is not nourished by mineral resources but by illusions. How and by what projections is the promise of pleasure produced? Has the hollow place “Mahagonny” disappeared with the widely proclaimed end of utopias, or has it expanded globally? In the fun society, whose features

“Mahagonny” anticipates, hollow places can assume the function of heterotopias (Foucault). Yet despite excessive consumption, when anything goes, the conviction endures: “Something is missing.” Beyond the political considerations, there are also aesthetic and theatrical issues: What about Brecht's techniques of questioning, reversing, and re-functioning the hollowed-out places? Is “Mahagonny” the site of deconstruction (*avant la lettre*)? What does “anti-culinary” art and the aesthetic avant-garde mean today? What has become of Brecht's “thaeter” and Weill's “misuc”?

Presenters will be notified in the early Fall about the committee's selection of abstracts and the 30 planned panels, which will be scheduled in the main building of the Humboldt University in Berlin (Unter den Linden 6). It is expected that all Symposium participants will become members of the International Brecht Society, if they are not already.

Conference languages are English and German. Selected symposium contributions are expected to be published in *The Brecht Yearbook* (volume 29, 2004). Cooperative arrangements are being planned with the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Arts, Literaturforum in the Brecht House, Brecht-Weigel Memorial, and Bertolt-Brecht-Archive.

The Hanns Eisler Musikhochschule will present a new production of *Mahagonny*; a double program of Brecht songs and “city” texts has been arranged; and two new Brecht productions at the major Berlin theaters (Berliner Ensemble, Deutsches Theater) are scheduled. Details about these and other aspects of the cultural program will be posted at the IBS website:

<http://polyglot.Iss.wisc.edu/german/brecht>. The IBS hopes to attract financing and sponsors to partially subsidize participants' travel or lodging.

Information about conference registration, hotel accommodations, and tickets for cultural events will be sent to all presenters beginning in February 2003.

If you have any questions, contact:

Marc Silberman
German Department
818 Van Hise Hall
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706
fax: (001) 608 / 262 7949
mdsilber@facstaff.wisc.edu

or in German:

Florian Vaßen
Seminar für deutsche Literatur
Universität Hannover
Königsworther Platz 1b
30167 Hannover
fax: (0049) 511 / 762 4060
vassen@mbox.sds.uni-hannover.de

CONFERENCE REPORTS

IBS SESSIONS AT THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE CONFERENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

February 2002

Panel #1

BRECHT AND PERFORMANCE

Chair: **Alexander Stephan**, Ohio State University

"Dialectical Method in the Work of Brecht and Its Role in the Postmodernizing of the Theatre"

Speaker: **Dan Friedman**, Castillo Theatre, New York

"Brecht's Influence on the Plays of the Living Theatre During the 1990s"

Speaker: **David Callaghan**, University of Montevallo

"The Creative Appropriation of the Erbe of Brecht in GDR Political Song"

Speaker: **David Robb**, Queen's University, Belfast

Panel #2

BRECHT, POLITICS AND TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY

"Male Collectives at a Dead End: *Der Untergang des Egoisten Fatzer*"

Speaker: **Stephen T. Benner**, Edinboro University

"Brecht's *Maßnahme* in Natoland. Zu Soeren Voimas Lehrstück *Das Kontingenz*"

Speaker: **Alexander Stephan**, Ohio State University

"Brecht on Jujitsu: Shared Histories, Intercultural Issues and Global Cultures"

Speaker: **Philipp Loeser**, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies

SMITHONIAN FOLKWAY RECORDINGS

ERIC BENTLEY ON BRECHT

With music by Weill, Eisler, Dessau
FH 5434

BRECHT BEFORE THE UNAMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

A recording of the actual encounter in 1947 of BB with the notorious HUAC
FD 5531

SONGS OF HANNS EISLER

28 songs, mostly by Brecht, sung by EB
FH 5433

THE EXCEPTION AND THE RULE

The original cast album, off Broadway, of the Brecht play, music by Wolpe, Joseph Chaikin as Coolie
FL 9849

THE ELEPHANT CALF

The original album, off Broadway, of the BB play, music by Arnold Black plus a set of Bentley-Black cabaret songs
FL 9831

About the Bentley Albums:

- ◆ They include the original cast albums of 3 Brecht plays
- ◆ The first Brecht/Eisler album made in America
- ◆ The actual recording of Brecht's appearance before the Un-American Activities Committee in 1947

Playwright, critic, translator, Bentley is featured by Folkways as a Brecht performer of the first importance. On hearing his Eisler album, Lotte Lenya wrote him: "It's quite wonderful to hear all those songs, and you do them so well that I am afraid you might become a close competition to me."

Eric Bentley recordings are now distributed as CD's by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
Folkway@aol.com

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY'S 2002 SPRING BENEFIT (May 13, 2002)

A TRIBUTE TO ERIC BENTLEY

Honorary Chair: Uta Hagen

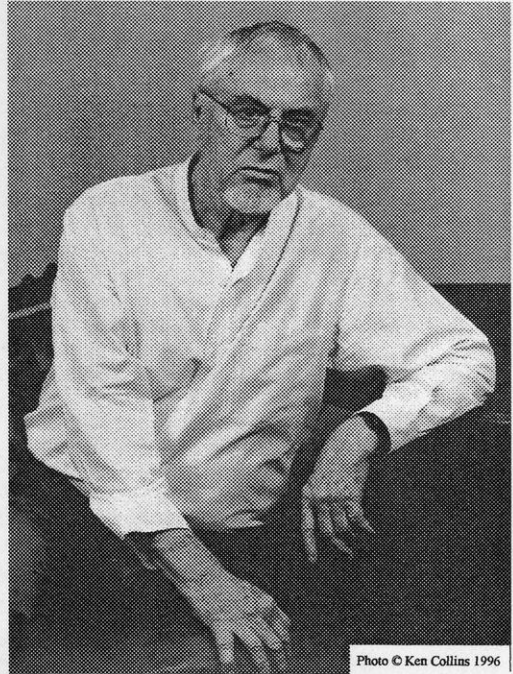
Program for the Evening:

Songs, Poems, and Writings in Celebration of Eric Bentley

"The Bentley Version" — **Isaiah Sheffer** with **Ellen Mandel** on Piano

Mortimer's Monologue from Brecht's *Edward II*,
English Version by Eric Bentley — **Harris Berlinsky**

"On a Clear Day" from Lerner and Lane's *On a Clear Day*
Christine Andreas with **Marty Silvestri** on Piano



ERIC BENTLEY

Final Speech from *Lord Alfred's Lover*, by Eric Bentley — **David Fuller**

"The Camp Follower's Song" from Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children*
English version by Eric Bentley — **Amy Fitts** with **Ellen Mandel** on Piano

Speech from Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*,
English Version by Eric Bentley — **Uta Hagen**

"Lulu Moritat" by Eric Bentley — **Eric Bentley**

PRESENTATION TO ERIC BENTLEY:

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Classic Theatre

SPECIAL SECTION

REMEMBERING MARTIN ESSLIN

Carl Weber

The first time I heard the name MARTIN ESSLIN was in 1960. A dramaturg at the Berliner Ensemble, where I worked as a resident director and actor, remarked disparagingly on a new book on Brecht that was, so he said, mainly an attack -- a cold war attack -- on Brecht's commitment to Socialism. I didn't have a chance to read the book until a year later. And I was surprised that it was nothing like that but rather a well reasoned, if not uncritical, assessment of Brecht's achievement. Martin had not been given access to the papers in the Brecht Archive, many of them not even sorted and catalogued at the time. And much of the criticism of his book tried to prove that he was ignoring facts -- facts that he had no way of knowing at the time he wrote the book. I was appalled about the unfairness of those attacks.



In 1961 I happened to be in West Germany, directing a production of Brecht's *Trumpets and Drums*, when the GDR closed its borders. I decided

to stay in the West. Two years later I was invited to Stanford to direct the first English language production of Brecht's *The Tutor*, during a summer session of the Drama Department which was devoted to Brecht and Beckett. That summer I finally met Martin who had been invited to lecture on both of the playwrights whose work he had been so close to, as a producer at BBC radio and as a critic writing about them. One of the first topics Martin asked me about was why his book had been so maliciously attacked by East German critics. He couldn't understand that his honest effort to assess Brecht's work without the blatant Anti-Communist bias so fashionable in the West at the time, had been so greatly misunderstood. I tried to explain but this rather increased his disappointment -- he hadn't expected that critics would let themselves be blinkered to such an extent by their ideological position. That summer he generously supported my work on the Brecht play in his seminars, many of his students were members of the cast. And so we became friends. We met over the years on many occasions, be it in London during my visits or be it in the US where we participated in conferences and appeared on panels together.

When I came again to Stanford, in the Spring of 1984, to discuss a possible appointment, Martin had been a professor here for 7 years. He encouraged me to come, and not the least due to his encouragement, I did. After that we shared the work with our PhD students and also team-taught courses on Brecht.

I never have met a colleague who was so supportive of the work I or our students did on productions, while at the same time he voiced well-considered critical observations and incisive insights on play and author. In the eighties, he also served as the dramaturg of San Francisco's Magic Theatre, and urged me to direct one of their productions, Richard Nelson's *Between East and West*, which I did. Martin's work at the Magic, and its important task to discover and present new playwrights, was indicative of his deep commitment to theater as a living and developing art and not merely an object of critical analysis and evaluation, as much as he contributed to such analysis with his groundbreaking books. It was always astounding to witness Martin's insatiable

ble appetite for live performance, which made him see as many of our students' productions as he could muster, even if it required lengthy trips to performance spaces far away from campus. His enthusiasm for the theater, be it done by students who were just beginning to flex their creative muscle or by the most accomplished artists in the field, seemed to be inexhaustible, though he was never uncritical nor did he forgive shoddy or dishonest work, be it done by students or by professionals of established reputation.

When in 1989 Martin had to retire -- such was still the law at the time -- it was a tremendous loss to our department. I am not talking here about his world-wide reputation as a producer of seminal programs at the BBC and author of important critical works. I am talking about his baffling erudition and his encompassing knowledge of the theater in practice and theory. I am thinking of his generosity when sharing his knowledge with colleagues and students, his impact on whatever we were doing at the department during those years. All of this made him invaluable to our department's mission. After retirement, Martin returned many times to teach short term courses and give keynote lectures. The last time we met and talked about the plans and books he was working on, was in 1999 when the department celebrated Brecht's centenary -- in his 101st year, of course. Martin came to speak about the history of the creation of *The Threepenny Opera*, the occasion being our staging of the play; the first production ever that presented the complete score, as composed by Kurt Weill and re-constructed by Prof. Stephen Hinton of our Music Department.

This was the last time I saw Martin. I had planned to visit him in London this spring -- too late, as it turned out. I can't express how much I regret that I wasn't here last summer when Martin came to speak on Ionesco and the Theater of the Absurd -- a topic so close to his heart and central to his career. The term coined by him by now has been included, in the vocabulary of the performing arts. It will -- among many other achievements -- secure Martin's permanent place in the history of 20th century criticism and theater.

This was an address on occasion of a Memorial for Martin Esslin at the Drama Department of Stanford University

MARTIN ESSLIN, DRAMA PROFESSOR AND THEATER CRITIC

John Sanford

Martin Esslin, a professor emeritus of drama who raised the profile of modern European theater in Britain and the United States through his writing and work as a BBC producer, died Feb. 24 in London after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. He was 83.

"Martin was encyclopedic in his knowledge of theater and intellectual history," said Rush Rehm, an associate professor of drama and classics who brought Esslin back to campus for several days last summer.

"There were hardly any theatrical writers of the '50s, '60s and '70s who were not more or less a friend of Martin's," said drama Professor Carl Weber, who first met Esslin in 1963.

An internationally renowned critic and scholar, Esslin probably is best recognized in the United States for his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*, which coined the phrase that came to define the work of such playwrights as Eugène Ionesco and Samuel Beckett. Working for BBC Radio, Esslin also produced many of their works for the airwaves, as well as the work of other major dramatists. He also had a powerful influence on then up-and-coming playwrights Tom Stoppard and Harold Pinter, whose work he championed early in their careers.

Born Julius Pereszlenyi on June 6, 1918, in Budapest at the sunset of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Esslin attended the University of Vienna, where he studied philosophy and English. He then studied theatrical direction at Vienna's famed Reinhardt Seminar of Dramatic Art. His studies were cut short, however, by the Nazi occupation of Austria. He fled to Brussels and, a year later, to England.

Shortly after arriving he found work with the BBC Monitoring Service, soon assuming the post of program assistant and producer for the German Service in London. During this time he was naturalized as a British citizen and changed his name to Martin Julius Esslin. In 1947, he married Renate Gerstenberg.

After the war, Esslin worked as a scriptwriter and producer for the broadcasting corporation's European Service, for which he covered the Nurem-

berg Trials and Berlin blockade. In 1955 he was promoted to assistant head of European productions.

But Esslin made his most significant contributions to the BBC in the early 1960s, as assistant head and then head of radio drama. He quickly set about bringing to life his vision of a "national theater of the air," and the three BBC networks of the time produced hundreds of plays, many by European writers whose works, translated into English by Esslin or under his direction, were made accessible to British audiences for the first time.

Meanwhile, he wrote his first book, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (1959), which examined the man as poet, dramatist and communist ideologue. But it was his next book, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961), that assured his place in the pantheon of theater critics. (The book recently went into its eighth edition.)

Among his other noted books are *The Anatomy of Drama* (1965), *The Peopled Wound: The Work of Harold Pinter* (1970), *Artaud* (1976) and *The Age of Television* (1981). He also was a prolific writer of essays, articles and reviews, some of which have been published as collections.

But what is most remarkable about his voluminous output was its accessibility to the average reader. "He wasn't into jargon," Rehm explained.

William Edelman, an associate professor of design and theater history, agreed: "He wrote well and in a very fluid way," Edelman said.

Esslin had the same kind ability in presenting the unusual work of the absurdist playwrights. "He could popularize the more esoteric and make it understandably real," Edelman said.

Esslin retired from the BBC in 1977 after 38 years of service and joined the Stanford faculty as a professor of drama that same year. Through 1989 he was on campus two quarters of every academic year. Former students say his teaching was inspired.

"He was very open and helpful to students," said Ron Davies, the Drama Department administrator who earned his doctorate in drama here in 1986. "His big class at Stanford was Drama 2, which was held in the Little Theater, now Pigott Theater. It was a 10 a.m. class, and he would just tell the story of drama, without any notes or prepared texts. He would just launch in. He had a wonderful way of retelling the plot of a play, distilling the action and

what was interesting or unusual about it."

Esslin also taught and advised students in German studies and comparative literature. Those who knew him tend to comment on his erudition in the first few minutes of the conversation, but the depth and breadth of his knowledge never translated into aloofness.

"He was an incredibly friendly person and always ready and willing to help," Weber said. "He was very open to all kinds of arguments -- never narrow in his opinions and views of people. He was constantly evolving."

Edelman recalled that Esslin had "one of those minds that remembered everything."

"You had a personal contact with the past through Martin," he continued. "He was this incredible repository of information."

Esslin also remained a bundle of energy. When he came to Stanford in July to talk at a Continuing Studies symposium titled "Fool's Gold -- Ionesco and the Theater of the Absurd," he hit the ground running, according to Rehm. "He arrives, gets a night's rest, then teaches, like, a three-hour class with me, then goes to the theater, then goes to the seminar -- I could barely keep up with him," Rehm said. "We'll never see the likes of him again."

Esslin is survived by his wife and a daughter, Monica Esslin of London, England. A celebration of Esslin's life took place on March 15, 2002, in Pigott Theater, Stanford University.

Stanford Report, March 1, 2002

MARTIN ESSLIN ILLUMINATING WRITER AND RADIO DRAMA PRODUCER

John Calder

Martin Esslin, who has died aged 83, was a scholar and a man of action, whose wide knowledge of European literature and culture served him well during his two main careers: as a BBC producer and as a professor of drama in the United States.

His long-term importance, however, must lie principally in his analytical writing on the theatre. In an age of increasing specialisation, he had a refreshing breadth of vision, while his penetrating mind could quickly comprehend when something new and important was happening in the arts. He could explain the complex in a straightforward and lucid manner, and his judgments were invaluable. His book *The Theatre of the Absurd* was the most influential theatrical text of the 1960s.

Esslin was of Hungarian origin, born and educated in Vienna, and influenced by Max Reinhardt's famous 1928 seminar in Vienna on dramatic art, where the great actor and director passed on his knowledge and techniques. He left Vienna for Britain because of the *Anschluss*, and got a job at the BBC, where, by 1940, he had become a producer and scriptwriter.

He worked for the European Service from 1941 to 1955, broadcasting during and after the war to Germany, and eventually became head of the European production department. His knowledge of European theatre led to the translation of many works into English, and, where the BBC had led the way, many theatre productions followed, often using the same versions that Esslin had made or commissioned.

For a large circle of European intellectual refugees from Nazism in London, the BBC became the principal means of support. Esslin knew virtually everyone in that group, and, in his quiet and efficient way, gave work and opportunities to many of them.

In 1951, he collaborated with Berthold Goldschmidt, who, in the 1920s, had been a rising German composer, on an opera, in English, based on Shelley's *The Cenci*. The work was planned for the Festival of Britain, although it was not staged until a German production in 1994.

In 1961, Esslin became assistant head of radio drama under Barbara Bray, and, when she moved to Paris in 1963, he replaced her, retaining that post until 1977, when he moved for part of each year to the US.

During his time at the BBC, Esslin produced a stream of articles, essays and books, which earned him a reputation as one of the best literary journalists and critics. He advised Arts Council panels and repertory and experimental theatres, helped writers to obtain bursaries and performances, and produced a number of volumes on leading figures of the day, including the influential *Brecht, a Choice of Evils* (1959), which coincided with the rising interest in that seminal figure.

The book that was to change his life was *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1962). The title became the catch-phrase that delineated one of the new streams of theatrical writing that emerged in the early 1950s, the other being the British "angry" drama. The eclectic Esslin was interested in both, but it is for making sense of the absurdists that he is remembered.

"Absurdist drama" covered a wide range of plays, from Beckett to Arthur Adamov, from Pinter and John Arden to Ionesco. The last, perhaps, most deserved the portmanteau term "absurd", but Esslin used it to cover a whole range of 20th-century drama, from Genet and Arrabal to Buzzati, Frisch, Grass, Albee, Gelber and Kopit.

The book rapidly became a text book in universities, and led to lecture invitations, especially on the lucrative American circuit. Jewish by origin but in no way religious, Esslin liked to relate how the chairwoman of a Catholic society to whom he talked in a small American town told him, "You're just the kind of man we need in the church."

Esslin's writings and lectures led to his appointment as professor of theatre at Florida State University (1969-76), after which a special chair was created for him at Stanford, where he became professor of drama (1977-88). He never really retired on returning to Britain, continuing to take an active part in the theatre as writer, translator, reviewer and adviser.

Among his other books, between 1965 and 1988, are *Pinter, the Playwright*, *An Anatomy of Drama*, *Artaud, Mediations – Essays on Brecht*,

Beckett and the Media; The Age of Television, and The Field of Drama. There were also the less well-known, but equally interesting, *The Genius of the German Theatre* (1968) and *The War Theatre of Europe* (1970). The writers he translated include Ödön von Horváth, Wedekind and Wolfgang Bauer.

In 1947, Esslin married Renate Gerstenberg, who collaborated with him on many translations and, indeed, was entirely responsible for some that appeared under his (well-known) name - for the sake of better sales.

A genial, friendly and self-confident intellectual, he was generous with his time and knowledge, an excellent conversationalist and a popular member of the Garrick Club. Like many eastern Europeans, he was politically on the intellectual right, but never allowed his anti-socialist views, which did him no harm at American universities, to cloud his judgment very far.

Among various honors and distinctions he received were the title of professor from the Austrian government, and the OBE in 1972. Martin Julius Esslin (Pereszlenyi), writer, academic and radio drama producer, born June 8, 1918; died February 24, 2002.

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian Newspapers Limited, February 27, 2002

ZEITGENOSSENSENDUNGEN MARTIN ESSLIN

Klaus Trappmann

Der große Beckett- und Brecht Kenner und berühmte Dramaturg, Martin Esslin, war trotz seines deutschen Namens ein gebürtiger Ungar, ehemaliger österreichischer Bürger und fast 60 Jahre lang Engländer. Auf der Flucht vor den Nazis, Esslin stammt aus einer evangelischen Familie mit jüdischen Wurzeln, geriet der damals knapp zwanzigjährige Reinhardt-Schüler aus Wien in eine Kleinkunsttruppe in Brüssel, die für Emigranten und Flüchtlinge spielte. Über Umwege gelangte er nach England und wurde mit einer Gruppe von Flüchtlingen von einer Familie aus dem Bekanntenkreis Virginia Woolfes aufgenommen.

Esslin gelang es, beim BBC unterzukommen, wo er in zwanzig Jahren vom Redakteur für Anti-Hitler Propaganda schließlich zum Leiter der Radio Drama Abteilung aufstieg.

Seine Arbeit führte ihn mit Samuel Beckett zusammen. Eine enge Arbeitsgemeinschaft und Freundschaft entstand. Esslin über den zurückhaltenden Schriftsteller: "Er war scheu und schüchtern. Er war der liebste und netteste Gentleman, den man sich vorstellen kann." Esslin, dessen Bücher über Brecht und Beckett, sowie zahlreiche erfolgreiche Hörspielproduktionen Aufsehen erregten, arbeitete mit vielen außergewöhnlichen Regisseuren und wurde als großer Kenner, Macher und Kritiker des Theaters anerkannt.

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ESSLIN ÜBER BRECHT IM EXIL

Die Riesenstädte New York und Chicago spielen eine immer wiederkehrende Rolle in Brechts frühen Stücken und Gedichten; er berauschte sich an den Namen exotischer Orte in der neuen Welt. Wie anders sah Brecht diese Welt, als er, nach 1933 im Exil, wiederholt nach London kam, um recht erfolglos, Arbeit zu suchen, 1935 in New York und schließlich 1941, als er, Emigrant auf lange Sicht, in Hollywood landete.

Previously published online:

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PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

NEAPOLITAN MEDEA: EURIPIDES MEETS HEINER MÜLLER

Vera Stegmann

The "International Movement for Interdisciplinary Study of Estrangement" (IMISE) is an independent organization of scholars in the humanities and social sciences that studies estrangement in literature, theater, philosophy, architecture, music, history, or politics. Among the many artists and scientists that the society mentions among its "Ancestor's Legacy," Brecht figures prominently. Ignazio Corsaro, the editor of IMISE's journal *Lo Straniero*, organizes regular conferences, at least once a year. As a professional engineer whose literary passion consists in writing theatrical plays and who is related to the great Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello, Ignazio Corsaro himself already embodies the concept of estrangement.

One of the highlights of the 2001 IMISE conference was a performance of fragments from two plays on the Medea myth in the Anglican Church in Naples where our conference took place. The two plays chosen were Euripides' *Medea* and Heiner Müller's *Medeamaterial*, and in this juxtaposition they presented a contrast between an ancient and a modern play, covering a span of more than 2400 years, from Euripides' classic of 431 B.C. to Müller's reinterpretation of 1982 A.D. A further element of "alienation" – the overarching theme of the conference – consisted in the fact that the performance took place in a church, a spiritual locus in the service of secular enlightenment and entertainment.

Under the direction of Heinz-Uwe Haus, the fragments were performed by John Pasha and Peter Zazzali, Shakespearean actors who both graduated from the University of Delaware's Professional Theater Training Program (PTTP). John Pasha is a

founding company member of the American Shakespeare Theater Company and has acted at many Shakespeare festivals around the U.S.; Peter Zazzali has performed at George St. Playhouse, North Shore Music Theatre, Portland Stage Co., the New Jersey, Fort Worth, and Utah Shakespearean Festivals, among others, and has worked as director and acting teacher at academic institutions throughout the United States. The presence and performance of two experienced actors at a conference with an otherwise largely academic focus challenged scholars, particularly theater scholars, to question their theories or measure them up to the realities of the theater world.

A day before the performance, we had removed the first row of church benches to create a small stage space in the church. The performance, then, opened with excerpts from Euripides' classical play. Euripides' story begins after essential elements of the Medea myth have already occurred: Princess Medea had helped Jason, leader of the Argonauts, to obtain the Golden Fleece from her father, King Aietes of Colchis, and then followed Jason as his wife. Euripides' play is set later in Corinth, when Jason abandons Medea for the daughter of King Creon of Corinth, upon which Medea murders Creon, his daughter, and her own two sons by Jason. The fragment chosen for Naples contained the conversation between Medea and Jason, at the end of which she gives her children the poisoned dress for Jason's new wife and the gifts that produce the catastrophe. Peter Zazzali acted Medea, and John Pasha played Jason. Both actors were dressed in plain white clothes, and only minimal costumes pointed to their identity: Jason (Pasha) wore a white wig, Medea (Zazzali) a long flaming red wig; both added masks to their headdress. Medea's monologues dominated the scene, and Zazzali performed the agonies of this betrayed goddess and woman with great sensitivity. Jason, true to his persona, remained cool and aloof.

The concept underlying this performance – which was the result of a summer workshop in Cyprus – is the idea of "acted speech." "The poetry is the action." Speech and movement form a necessary unity; it is a poetic and a narrated theater. This also explains the emphasis on fragments: In a classical myth like that of Medea, the audience is

already familiar with the plot, and can thus concentrate all the more on the process, the unfolding of the drama, or on a critical evaluation of the characters. This concept of "acted speech" or spoken action -- narrated theater -- has its roots also in Brecht's epic theater. Heinz-Uwe Haus, the director, thus chose as a juxtaposition to Euripides a play by Heiner Müller, one of the major postwar German playwrights who carried Brecht's tradition into the late 20th century.

Müller's 1982 play *Despoiled Shore* (*Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts* (*Verkommenes Ufer Medeamaterial Landschaft mit Argonauten*)) consists of three separate sections, almost like three individual fragments. The middle part, *Medeamaterial*, contains the dialog between Jason and Medea and formed the basis for Pasha's and Zazzali's performance. Possibly in order to let the audience see a different perspective -- and thus to alienate the text -- the two actors now reversed roles: Zazzali played Jason, and Pasha acted Medea. Müller's language, especially in Medea's monologues which once again dominate the scene, is intensely passionate, and Pasha rendered her suffering with great conviction. In one climactic moment, the actor's bodies became the text: When Medea cries out the humiliation that she feels at Jason's betrayal and compares herself to a bitch having loved a dog, Pasha/Medea took a brush of red paint and painted the words "dog" and "bitch" in red/blood on Zazzali/Jason's naked torso. This was emotionally an extremely gripping moment and also turned the actor's body into a script -- a very specific interpretation of the idea of "acted speech" or "poetry in action." This self-referential element, the relationship between the actor's body and the play's text is already grounded within Müller's writing: "It's on her body that I write my play" -- Müller's Medea states in reference to her murder of Jason's new lover, and later she concludes, "my play is a farce."

Through frequent repetitions -- for example of the phrase "You still owe me a brother Jason" that Pasha pronounced with rhythmic and growing intensity -- and primeval images ("The ashes of your kisses on my lips / Between my teeth the sand of our years"), Müller's language expresses Medea's agony powerfully. More than in Euripides' text, Müller sees her suffering, possibly from a feminist

perspective, as that of a woman: "slave," "tool," "bitch," "whore," "milkcow," "footstool" -- these are some of the self-deprecating terms in which she describes herself; and Jason, who at first only called her "woman" finally addresses her as "Medea" after she committed her revenge and her dreadful deed. One other term also suggests a political dimension in Müller's play: Multiple times, Medea refers to herself as the "barbarian;" and in modern terms, Medea's plight may be viewed as that of the developing world who is facing first world colonizers like Jason who is looking to marry Creon's Corinthian daughter. Although Euripides also characterized Medea as an exiled woman who understood "that we in exile from our country must be short of friends," this political interpretation is much more pronounced in Müller's play. Müller himself once suggested that we might see his Medea as a Turkish woman living in Germany.

But our audience was in Naples, not far from the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum -- an ideal location that invites to reflect upon the interplay of the ancients and the moderns. In our times, such a passion-driven myth as the story of Medea may be best represented by more rational or stylized acting techniques such as Brecht's gestic and epic approach or Suzuki's presentational or demonstrative style, emphasizing different "viewpoints." John Pasha and Peter Zazzali, each both as Jason and as Medea, performed their roles masterfully.

Lehigh University

MOTHER COURAGE IN CHICAGO

Sara Freeman

From the moment Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company announced that *Mother Courage and Her Children* (in David Hare's 1995 adaptation) would open their 2001-2002 season, it provoked some bafflement in the theatre community. Why would Steppenwolf, a company best known for the impassioned, emotional immediacy of its ensemble acting, famous for its simple and raw productions of plays by the likes of Lanford Wilson and Sam Shepherd, choose Brecht's grand, probing exile masterpiece? If ever there was a contrast of theatre of pure feeling, Chicago's designated "actor's theatre," and theatre of intellect and analysis, this might be it. The contradictions might be more than even Brecht could productively bear.

Yet, perhaps the choice wasn't as strange as it first seemed. Steppenwolf has transformed from the upstart blood and spit theatre of quirky American realism it was in the 1970s. Winner of two Tony Awards (one for regional theatre and one for the 1990 Broadway transfer of *The Grapes of Wrath*), Steppenwolf has become a world class company where the epic and the domestic sit side by side. The company revives Shepherd and Mamet and encourages new realistic writing, but has also been staging large-scale literary adaptations (of Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* or Dickens' *David Copperfield*, for instance) and historical and intellectual dramas like Stephen Jeffrey's *The Libertine* and *Don De Lillo's Valparaiso*. *Mother Courage* was Steppenwolf's first production of a play by Brecht. Perhaps the choice to tackle the script came from the urge to daringly re-explore classics of dramatic literature that caused Steppenwolf to take on *Antigone* in 1993 and *Hedda Gabler* in 2001.

But in the end, it was a bad choice. Steppenwolf's realization of Brecht's epic mustered no critical power and destroyed the crucial sense of political efficacy that defines Brecht's work. The few efforts to distance the audience or provide theatre that cuts through the pieties of capital and sentiment were neutralized by misplaced catharsis and the woeful miscasting of Lois Smith (a devotee of method acting trained at the Actor's Studio) as *Mother Courage*. Accompanied by folksy original music composed by

Texas musicians T Bone Burnett and Darrell Leonard, Steppenwolf's *Mother Courage and Her Children* became an agonizingly slow "tragedy" of the downtrodden that didn't refute the inevitability of war, but rather confirmed it.

Director Eric Simonson's program note literally advances the tragic view of *Mother Courage* ("In the same way that *King Lear* is a tragedy of the nobility, *Mother Courage* is a tragedy of those who have no voice in the world."). But the staging and especially the music also embodied a "tragic" view of the play at every turn. The war and its officials tromped across the stage as forces to which *Mother Courage* humbly bowed: Lois Smith in fact played Anna Fierling stooped half to the ground at all times. Each loss of her sons was a blow to her heart. The pinnacle of sentimental-tragical mise-en-scene came after *Mother Courage* refuses to abandon Kattrin to join Cookie at his inn. Kattrin and *Mother Courage* strapped themselves to the wagon and trudged around the stage in a bleak shaft of light while a single, mournful singer voiced a nostalgic tune and lingered poignantly over the repeated lyrics "and home is where the heart is."

What follows next in the plot, when Kattrin rescues the peasant baby from the burning house and gets herself killed while drumming on the rooftop to alert the sleeping town of impending invasion, now read as pure sentiment. Kattrin, as played by the sweetly vulnerable Sally Murphy, would do anything for a home - home is where the heart is - but since she will never have her own home, she sacrifices herself for others. Murphy's realistic performance made this a passage of high catharsis for the audience. The production asked us to weep for Kattrin, to pity her and fear her mother. Instead of the taut outrage that should accompany these events, there was resignation and luxurious sadness.

There were a few signal performances that reflected a more Brechtian embodiment of the events and ideas of the play. Nicholas Rudallas the Chaplain and Robert Breuler as the Cook, two familiar Chicago actors, had the shared groove of an old-time vaudeville act. Their confident inclusion of the audience in on the great joke of this war was a delight to watch. Most notably, Ian Brennan as Eilif perfectly captured what I consider to be the paradox of Brechtian acting: the need to both attract and re-

pel the audience with wit and emotion, to "present" a character like a razor blade that cuts away the fat of our thoughts. When Brennan was on stage, I knew there were some of the ensemble who knew that we were not supposed to pity these characters, or weep for them, we were supposed to judge them and so judge ourselves. In terms of design, the set, by Allen Moyer, provided a spare, clean locale for exactly this type of demanding work. Moyer's photographic backdrop of desolated countryside and denuded trees would have been the perfect foil for the furious and driving energy that a Steppenwolf's production of *Mother Courage* should have unleashed, if all the performances had been equal to Brennan's.

In his program note, Simonson quotes Kurt Vonnegut Jr. talking about writing an "anti-war" book and being told he should write an "anti-glacier" book instead. Simonson sees *Mother Courage* as an anti-war play. But if his directing is any indication, Simonson himself believes in the inevitability of war and approached this work with the utterly anti-Brechtian idea that *Mother Courage*, who is herself the cause of the cycle she suffers under, is incapable of change. He writes: "the Mother Courages of the world never have control -- they merely react. And this is their undoing. *Mother Courage* doesn't plan and she doesn't learn. Time forges ahead; she remains the same." Our need to consider the "inevitability" of war, of its cycles -- and its profits -- is more current than ever. The events of September 11 provided a thrill of connection with the ideas Brecht demands we consider in *Mother Courage*. Steppenwolf's production opened on September 13. But Steppenwolf did not stage an "anti-glacier" play. They staged the glacier.

Wesleyan, Illinois

BRECHT, BOBOS, & LA

Ralph Leck

Rick Mitchell's *Brecht in LA* opened in a humble NoHo (North Hollywood) art house. The drama explores the interpersonal politics of the communist play-

wright and his struggles to make a living in the Babylon of commercial art, 1940s Hollywood. At one point in the drama, Fritz Lang (played by Jon Peterson) clarifies for Brecht the prerequisites for acquiring work. The U.S. is at war in Europe and the Pacific, and consequently, commercial success is most assured via the genre of the war film. Unlike Germany's great émigré film director, however, Brecht is unwilling to accommodate to the jingoistic demands of the day. Instead of nationalistic art and affirmative culture, he proselytized on behalf of Epic Theatre. The dramatic epic he had in mind was existential and historical. Theatre should examine commercial capitalism and its cultural complexities as a prolegomena to the audience's civic transformation. This revolutionary goal set Brecht on a collision course with Hollywood and McCarthyite America. Appropriately, then, the denouement of the play is Brecht's appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Shortly thereafter, he left the United States and eventually moved to Berlin, East Germany, where he remained a theatre director until his death in 1956.

Not surprisingly, Brecht had difficulty finding work in Hollywood. By the early 40s, the popular and critical acclaim of his *Three Penny Opera*, which opened in Berlin in 1923, must have seemed like the incarnation of a previous lifetime. Nonetheless, he pushed forward with many projects. One project, his collaboration with Charles Laughton on a stage production of *Galileo*, is the balloon frame around which *Brecht in LA* is constructed. *Galileo* is about the power and inclination of irrationality (conservative Christianity) to suppress the institutionalization of reason. In this play within the play, the tension between religion and reason overlaps with another thematic dyad: the avaricious demands of commercial culture, symbolized by Hollywood, and the politics of economic equality, symbolized by Brecht. At the most abstract level, this play within the play is a vehicle for reflexivity. Mitchell implicitly poses a Brechtian question: isn't Brecht's predicament our own? Indeed, commercial banter about Hollywood's need to respond affirmatively to our current war in Afghanistan is everywhere, and Mitchell deftly explores this contemporary demand by dramatizing Brecht's resistance to what Horkheimer called "affirmative culture." In opposition

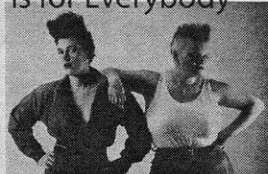
to the hegemony of affirmative aesthetic politics, then, Mitchell offers a politics of art that aspires for poignancy without being preachy or platitudinous. The balance is perfect.

Mr. Mitchell, who also directs the play, has assembled some powerful actors. Frankly, I wasn't sure what to expect. Only days before opening night, the play was not listed on the recorded phone message of the Bitter Truth Theatre. Subsequently, it was reported that the playwright might be playing the lead role because the former lead had accepted immediate paid employment in Hollywood. True to the themes of the play, commerce invaded the realm of art. Brecht, played by Brent Blair, must have had little time to prepare for his role, but this did not negatively affect his performance. Indeed, his performance was remarkable. Brecht, the engaged artist, emerges as neither a saint nor a revolutionary buffoon. Blair's depiction, true to the script, avoids

left-wing ancestor worship and right-wing demonization. Brecht emerges fully human.

Three performances — by actors who had the luxury of weeks of preparation — were riveting. First, Laughton is played brilliantly by Edmund Shaff.

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Hegel once remarked that Napoleon was history on horseback. Shaff's performance left me feeling as though I'd encountered an equally powerful, but different, embodiment of historical spirit, namely, the spirit of Hollywood on stage. Laughton, like Hollywood, is driven by the demands of art and mammon. We often find him coaxing Brecht to invigorate *Gallileo* with commercially viable motifs, but he also is drawn to the civic insights of Brecht's dramas. Small touches, such as the way he rubbed his male lover's back with conviction and compassion, distinguished Shaff's performance. Most powerful was his use of intonation. His ascending and discriminating speech always seemed to be on the edge of theatrical decorum. It was loud, over-the-top, and

thoroughly convincing.

Second, Mary Beth O'Donovan — appearing in white dime-store tennis shoes, a humble black skirt to the ankles, and a gray petite sweater — played Brecht's lover and artistic collaborator, Ruth Berlau. Berlau was a cosmopolitan European woman who had the humility and demeanor of a Mecklenberg peasant, or, at least, that's the way O'Donovan portrayed her. Berlau encapsulates the predicament of BoBo (bourgeois bohemian) culture. The cultural leaders of the European Left espoused the politics of the working class but were rarely from humble economic origins. Most, like Benjamin, Bloch, and Lukacs, possessed an upper bourgeois pedigree. In Berlau, we meet someone with reverses of cultural capital, a counter-cultural disposition, but limited economic means. At first sight, she appears to be exploited by Brecht. She wants a traditional life together, but Brecht still lives with his wife and children who never appear on stage. Instead of a traditional life with Brecht, she receives entreaties to translate and transcribe his work. In essence, Berlau performed the intellectual equivalent of reproductive labor for Brecht. This model of collaboration is something akin to textile enterprises that market "their" product using a company logo but without reference to the female proletariat that produced it. Although the play does not mention other examples, Brecht had a history of this type of collaboration. Elizabeth Hauptman translated John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* for Brecht but received no credit for having facilitated *Threepenny Opera*.

This leitmotif is important but dangerous. One can easily forget that Brecht rejected entirely individualist conceptions of creativity. Art is a collective and historical product that is not created ex nihilo by the artistic genius. There is a danger, then, that dramatic concentration on authorship, interpersonal peccadilloes, and character flaws will lead to a dismissal of Brecht's civic and artistic legacy. The writing and acting combine to avoid this pitfall. We find that Ruth is hardly an innocent victim. She willingly left a marriage in Europe to live near Brecht in LA. If disproportionately Ruth is presented as a demure woman unjustly denied Brecht's compassion, she also emerges as a strong woman who is responsible for her liaison with Brecht and complicit in its ongoing emotional consequences.

Third, Catherine McGoochan played the role of Charles Laughton's wife, Elsa Lanchester, and her performance too was redolent with dramatic epiphanies. Her class role was that of the upper bourgeois matron. During the play, the seven principle actors were always on stage. No one contributed as much to the play while seated silently than did Ms. McGoochan. She sat on her cheap metal chair as though on an aristocratic throne but with the humility and concentration of the Buddha. Her performance, like Shaff's, always seemed on the brink of credulity. In her role, she was too smart, too composed, and too replete, and, yet, somehow she avoided caricature. Her most amazing accomplishment was her combination of action and inaction. In her latter role, she was something like a Taoist master; she miraculously projected the spiritual earnestness of Brechtian drama through the mindful act of sitting. She, more than any other actor, achieved Brecht's intention that Epic Theatre be presented as if the actors were hidden behind Kabuki masks. Elsa is the archetype of bourgeois vacuity, and McGoochan embodies her as though the role was cut to fit at a Beverly Hills boutique.

Some aspects of the play came off less well. Brecht's Cuban lawn boy, Angel, is a dramatic foil reminding the audience that Marxist intellectuals require the labor of the working class. The actor, Del Toro, played Angel without the requisite conviction of his dynamic historical role. Angel is the working-class critic who alternatively schools and scolds the left-wing artist. His insightful criticisms of Brecht's Marxism enable this exchange to be more than a cute spanking of a BoBo Marxist. Angel is a craft socialist à la William Morris. Brecht, conversely, professes an industrial vision of the socialist future that is incompatible with the preservation of craft production. Perhaps due to the impassivity of Toro's performance, this rift within socialism unfortunately did not attain the dramatic clarity that the author intended.

There is another critique of Brecht's Leninist Marxism that is inchoate in *Brecht in LA*. Leninist Marxism assumes that women will be emancipated by their participation in public work. Consequently, unlike utopian socialists, Marxists historically have tended to exclude the reproductive labor of the domestic sphere from the theoretical and political do-

main of "work." And, because it was untheorized, reproductive labor was never democratized in communist countries. Women in communist countries found themselves working a second shift after returning home from their public occupations. There is a parallel in the play. True to Marxist form, the child-care and multiple domestic duties performed by Brecht's wife are displaced from this drama. Brecht's wife never appears on this dramatic stage of history.

The playwright chose to stage *Brecht in LA* — like the wonderful film adaptation of *Uncle Vanya* — as a reading. In its present stripped-down form, it is an uncut gem whose brilliance will not be enhanced by additional polishing or a more fashionable setting. The fine script, superb acting, and engaging themes combine to make this a must see production.

Endnote

Ralph Leck is a cultural/intellectual historian who lived in East Berlin prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall and in West Berlin after German unification. He was a frequent visitor to Brecht's Berliner Ensemble. *Brecht in LA* was performed at the Bitter Truth Theater in North Hollywood. It was part of the Edge of the World Theater Festival sponsored by Theater LA.

National University, San Bernado

LEARNING GERMAN IN THE SPOT-LIGHT; BERTOLT BRECHT'S THE THREEPENNY OPERA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Hildegard Regele and Nigel Cottier

Introduction by Dorothee Ostmeier

In the evenings of Fall 2001 the hallways of the University of Oregon's Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures resounded with the echoes of giggling and whispering whores and beggars, of the undergraduate students of German 425 (Play Performance), who experimented with their acting

skills for the production of *The Threepenny Opera* in early December. As a newcomer to the scene I was amazed at how the serious and eager students of my literature/culture class turned into joking, laughing and energetically debating figures of Brecht's stage. How did the directors of the play tickle the students' creativity? This interview between Nigel Cottier, ABD, and our doctoral student and acting-director of the play, Hildegard Regele, offers insight into the organizational, didactic, creative and theoretical challenges of such a teaching project.

Cottier: Market Day in Soho: Beggars are begging, thieves thieving, whores whoring, and policemen eating donuts out of a *Dunkin' Donuts* box. Why did you decide to use this particular anachronism as a prop in the prologue of Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*?

Regele: I was especially proud of the student who came up with the idea of using a *Dunkin' Donuts* box as a prop (she was by the way one of our policemen), because it proved that she was able to put her knowledge of Brechtian theater to practical use. In America today the thought of a *Dunkin' Donuts* box immediately conjures up the image of the policeman on the beat -- an association which, when employed for theatrical purposes, accomplishes two things. On the one hand, the prop reminds the audience that our policemen are types rather than individuals; on the other hand, it serves as a bridge to connect the stage proceedings to present-day American life.

Cottier: Before we get into the nuts and bolts of the theater production, let me ask for how long you have been involved in the organization and presentation of student plays at the UO?

Regele: Last year I was part of the production of Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker*, though on a much smaller scale than this year. I contributed wherever I could -- mainly through diction coaching and stage managing -- but most importantly, I carefully observed Professor Karla Schultz and her assistant Penelope Heinigk, who were in charge of the production. The spirit of the class captured me to such an extent that I returned the following year to assist Karla in the direction of Brecht's *The Threepenny*

Opera, the performance of which, by the way, marked the nineteenth season of the UO's theatrical tradition.

Cottier: What problems were you faced with when, in mid-quarter, you took over the directorship of the play?

Regele: It felt like stepping into the footprints of a giant. You have to understand that Karla, with her charisma and experience, is the heart and soul of our theater productions¹. The students love and respect her tremendously. When she had to leave because of a family emergency, we were faced with two choices: either cancel the course or continue with a change in leadership. With shaking knees, I agreed to take over, a decision which the students unanimously supported, even though they were, of course, very disappointed. In organizing the course, Karla had restructured the original text (from three acts to eight scenes), adapting the length and number of characters to meet our needs. We had already practiced many of the scenes under her direction. Thus, I had been supplied with the pieces that now had to be put together. Besides that, I found myself continuously confronted with decisions that had to be made on the spot. Despite her absence, Karla was still very much part of the production, and I could not have done my job without our nightly phone conversations, when she inspired and encouraged me. There were, of course, times during the transition period, when the students were still getting used to me, that they questioned my authority. I had to struggle with students who failed to carry out their responsibilities. But, for the most part, the students did a great job, and in the end it all came together perfectly. I also received a lot of invaluable support from various people of the Germanics Department -- professors, secretaries, and graduate students, above all Helmut Plant, a retired professor, who generously donated his time, expertise and reassuring presence to the project.

Cottier: You mention authority issues. However, does not the very notion of *authority* conflict with Brecht's concept of collaboration and democracy in theater work, as outlined in *Kleines Organon für das Theater* (1948)?

Die "Fabel" wird ausgelegt, hervorgebracht und ausgestellt vom Theater in seiner Gänge, von den Schauspielern, Bühnenbildnern, Maskenmachern, Kostümschneidern, Musikern und Choreographen. Sie alle vereinigen ihre Künste zu dem gemeinsamen Unternehmen, wobei sie ihre Selbständigkeit freilich nicht aufgeben. (Werke 23: 94)

Regele: This would definitely hold true for a Brechtian theater company, but the "hybrid" nature of our production calls for certain compromises. After all, as participants in a university language course, we can never fully extricate ourselves from the hierarchical structure governing it. However, in contrast to what takes place in a regular class setting, where the student takes responsibility only for his or her own work, in a theater course such as ours the students' failure to carry out their individual responsibilities affects the whole group. Personally, I am a firm believer in the collaborative democratic approach to performance teaching, but in face of impending chaos I realized that a strict chain of command had to be upheld, that is to say, there were times when I had to "crack the whip." In fact, a number of the cast members asked me to intervene in the case of students who were prone to be delinquent in carrying out their duties. During one of our discussions on the issue of authority Karla alerted me to the necessity for the director to constantly evaluate her performance, so that I was careful to assert my authority solely for the purpose of fostering collaboration, never in order to undermine the students' creativity or enthusiasm. As a collaborative network of talent, inspiration, and hard work, our theater production functions much like a living entity; it gains its vitality through the guided input of everyone concerned. While, Karla and I placed a great deal of emphasis on helping the students develop their languages skills and knowledge of epic theater, we never lost sight of what from a Brechtian standpoint lies at the core of the *Bildungsprozess*, namely the synergistic effect which comes from working together on a common project such as this. The task of the director is to facilitate this process through organization and leadership.

Cottier: Could you tell us how, pedagogically

speaking, the theater class compares to a traditional language class as far as the acquisition of language skills is concerned?

Regele: In my opinion, one cannot underestimate the pedagogic and therapeutic benefits specific to foreign language theater. Many of our students feel that the class has supplied them with a vast repertoire of German phrases and idiomatic expressions -- language patterns which they learned by memorizing their own lines and listening to those of their fellow actors. In addition, several faculty members of the Germanics Department, who know our actors from their courses, expressed surprise when they saw how animated, self-possessed, and proficient some of their students had become. These were often the same students who in traditional courses had been wallflowers, who in their struggle with the language had hardly ever volunteered to speak. In preparation for the play, the actors receive one-on-one diction and acting coaching from a native speaker of German, which in the case of major roles may take up to two hours per week—a practice which really pays off. The students' speaking ability and self-confidence increased tremendously.

Cottier: You mentioned that Karla had organized the course. Could you tell us more about the structure of the course?

Regele: In order to stage a play within ten weeks, one trimester, a very tight organization is necessary. The class meets twice a week for two and a half hours in a regular classroom setting, leading up to the last week when we meet every day from 6 to 10:30 p.m. in the Pocket Theater on campus. The auditioning process and the casting are conducted during the first week, so that by the second week we are ready to start rehearsing on a scene-by-scene basis. Besides rehearsing, the students also have to read and are presented with background information, and they are encouraged to participate in class discussions dealing with the text. In addition, the students are not only required to learn their roles but also to be part of a work group: scenery, props, costumes and make-up, or publicity. The work groups meet outside of class and are under the supervision of a work group manager. Those students who have

been assigned minor roles may be held responsible for additional tasks, for example, stage managing or operating the lighting equipment.

Cottier: Were the students required to read any theoretical texts for this course?

Regele: Besides reading the Suhrkamp edition of Brecht's *Die Dreigroschenoper* and the script, the students were expected to familiarize themselves with Marsh Cassady's *The Theatre and You*, a practical guide to theater work for laymen, and Dieter Wöhrle's *Bertolt Brecht: Die Dreigroschenoper* (published in the Diesterweg series *Grundlagen und Gedanken*), a booklet providing historical background information and interpretative approaches. For our classroom discussions Karla provided the students with excerpts from Brecht's theater theory (e.g. *Kleines Organon für das Theater*), the latter of which furnished them with a solid theoretical foundation for our purposes, even though it was written twenty years after *The Threepenny Opera*. Karla paid special attention to the contrast between dramatic and epic theater, as outlined in *Anmerkungen zur Oper "Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny"* (Werke 24: 78-9).

Cottier: What kinds of students take the theater course? Is it designed only for undergraduate students?

Regele: The majority of our students are undergraduates from a wide variety of backgrounds. They are responsible for the acting. But we also have some graduate students involved. For *The Threepenny Opera* three graduate students joined us: an M.A. and two doctoral students. The former (Doris Pfaffinger), our work group manager, is a student of German, while our two musicians (Tom Regele and Mitsutoshi Inaba) are pursuing their Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Music History. It was a collaborative effort which brought together people from many different disciplines, academic levels, and backgrounds - all of which matches very well with Brecht's idea of theater work, as you cited before: "Sie alle vereinigen ihre Künste zu dem gemeinsamen Unternehmen" (Werke 23: 94).

Cottier: Why did you choose Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* for this year's production?

Regele: As a Brecht and Adorno scholar, Karla established a theatrical tradition in our department through the selection of plays that are socially critical and aim at raising the cultural awareness of both the students and the audience. Past performances were Brecht's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Wedekind's *Frühlingserwachen*, Goethe's *Urfaust*, and Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker*. Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* continues this tradition.

Cottier: Could you explain how *The Threepenny Opera*'s relevance applies to the contemporary American audience?

Regele: In our classroom discussions, the actors' interpretations of their roles revolved around Brecht's fundamental socio-political critique which can be summed up as *Geld regiert die Welt* (Money makes the world go round). The students recognized this statement to be just as true of the U.S. in the new millennium as it was in Germany in the twenties.

Cottier: What devices did you employ to convey the play's relevance to the contemporary American audience?

Regele: We deliberately used contemporary costumes rather than period costumes. This decision was partially borne out of necessity, since period costumes are harder to find or to make, and are more expensive. More importantly, however, the class wanted to adapt the play to the present. For the backdrop our scene designers painted skyscrapers on large cardboard sheets, and the students decided to name our street signs after those which we have here on campus. Another example is our policemen's *Dunkin' Donuts* box. Little details such as these help students and audience relate the play to the present.

Cottier: Historically, it has not been uncommon to come across performances of *The Threepenny Opera*, in which the focus on entertainment occurs to the neglect of its biting social criticism. I am specifi-

cally thinking of Brecht's protest against the *Dreigroschenfilm* which lead to a lawsuit in 1930. Did you encounter similar tendencies in your production of the play?

Regele: Yes, we did. The discrepancy between entertainment and education came to the fore a number of times, once, for example, when the student in charge of designing our flyers, posters, and programs really did not like the logo Karla had suggested, namely, the image of a working class man pointing with a stick at a sail that says *Die 3 Groschenoper*, which served as a logo for the 1930s film. In an effort to appeal to the public's voyeurism, the student preferred a picture of a flashy whore. After long discussions in which we stressed the importance to foreground the play's critical implications, the student got very frustrated and still insisted on the whore. At this point Karla shared a very important piece of wisdom with me: "The students are always in the front seat. Don't attempt to push your ideas onto them unless it's absolutely necessary. Don't spoil their fun! Don't destroy their enthusiasm!" Hence, it was agreed that the student should be given full responsibility for designing the logo, with no further questions asked. However, after consulting her fellow cast members, the student approached me a few days later, admitting that her idea for a logo was maybe not the best choice after all.

Cottier: Yet, Brecht was by no means opposed to entertainment and humor ("[Das Theater] benötigt keinen andern Ausweis als den Spaß, diesen freilich unbedingt," [Werke 23: 67]), and, according to Brechtian theater theory, entertainment and social criticism are not mutually exclusive categories. How did you attempt to balance these two elements in your production of the play?

Regele: A decisive moment in the struggle for a balance between entertainment and social criticism occurred when Mr. Peachum sang *Das Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens* (*Song of the Futility of All Human Endeavor*) during a rehearsal. Suddenly, our beggars in the background started to devise their own choreographies to the song. They popped up and down performing subtle can-can movements with their legs, and quickly inspired our policemen and whores to chime in. Soon

this developed into a perfectly synchronized dance, that is to say, one which the beggars executed with a sad-sack touch of pathos, the policemen with austerity, the whores with risqué gyrations. They were very proud of their improvisations, and they asked me afterwards what I thought of their efforts. I hesitated, wondering whether this was another situation, in which light entertainment would gain the upper hand over social criticism. On the other hand, the contrast between the song's content and its direct, in-your-mouth diction and carnivalesque melody generates a sense of alienation that intensifies its critical potential. At this point I realized that the actors had turned the director into their student. Besides being very funny, their improvisations resulted in an intensification of the alienation effect: a contribution to the production process that taught me an important lesson in Brechtian dramaturgy. During a subsequent discussion we examined the dialectic of social criticism and humor, after which we unanimously agreed to incorporate the new choreographies into our script.

Cottier: In watching the play, I was wondering why the two "whores" carried the banners on which the song titles and scene summaries were written. Couldn't you have dropped the banners down from the rafters of the theater, or would it not perhaps have been more Brechtian to have the director appear on stage and read the captions aloud, thus destroying the illusion that what the audience sees is reality rather than a performance?

Regele: In class, we actually discussed the possibility of having Karla and me present the banners. However, in a lay performance such as ours, in which the students have little or no experience, it is crucial that the director stand back and not involve herself in the stage proceedings, lest she lose sight of the bigger picture. The two whores had relatively small roles. Thus, the goal was to get them out on stage more often. For scenes, in which our two whores were not involved, they were given the opportunity to present the signs. In our class discussions students suggested that our whores and gangsters take on the role of the press when making announcements. One student commented that: "Whores sell their bodies, and journalists are in dan-

ger of selling their soul for a good story." Another student detected a connection between gangsters and the advertising strategies of corporations, both of which try to strip people of their money. Our whores totally exaggerated their roles as purveyors of sex in an effort to mock such advertising practices. However, even though we made frequent reference to *Kleines Organon für das Theater und Über den Beruf des Schauspielers* (Werke 21: 388-9), but many of the student-actors found it difficult to overcome the tendency to identify with their roles and hence lose the necessary critical distance.

Cottier: You are referring to the Aristotelian mimetic approach to acting, which finds its reflection in Stanislavski's system and stands in sharp contrast to Brecht's acting method. Whereas Stanislavski calls for the actors to completely immerse themselves in the character roles they play (an invocation to self-absorption which has the reciprocal effect of engendering the same "trance-like" identification between the audience and the actors), Brecht demands that both actors and their audience maintain a critical (alienated) distance from the stage proceedings (Werke 25: 580-1). In *Kleines Organon für das Theater* Brecht introduces a variety of acting and staging techniques in order to create this distance. What steps did you take to implement Brecht's alienation technique and what kinds of problems did you encounter in the process?

Regele: Because we are dealing with actors and singers, many of whom have little or no prior theater experience, they first of all have to be shown how to act. Initially, the students tended to imitate the characters whose roles they enact, and it is only later that some of them are able to gain the critical distance necessary to overcome this "natural" inclination. In an effort to make Brecht's acting method more accessible to the students, we constantly reminded the students to enact the behavior of types of people rather than individual personalities. "You cannot overdo anything," she would say, "just act as much over the top as you can." This approach was also reflected in the costumes and make-up. Every group of actors was identified through a unifying trait on their costumes, for example, the gangsters' rank within their hierarchy was designated by varying

shades of pink, with Mac, the gangster kingpin, wearing a red shirt. The whores wore loud, colorful boas, and they wore make-up which was deliberately designed to produce a distorted and grotesque effect — part of our strategy to destroy the illusion of reality. In the absence of a real harpsichord the students simply wrote "Cembalo" on a large sheet of cardboard — much to the delight of the audience which roared with laughter when two of the gangsters struggled to carry it onto the stage.

In many respects Brecht's plays are perfectly suited for our theater class at the UO. The fact, for example, that our stage is not technically equipped for multiple scene changes turned out, if anything, to be an advantage to us, since we did not want to hide our scene changes anyway. We used special lighting effects during scene changes, and our actors, under the guidance of two student stage managers, would be responsible for clearing and setting the stage for every new scene.

Although we were generally able to convey Brecht's alienation effect to the audience, a fascinating counterexample occurred during the course of the last performance, when the parents of one of our "whores" became very upset about their daughter's sexually-charged appearance. Even though the parents knew ahead of time that their daughter would play the role of a prostitute (to which they initially raised no objections), the realization that she was performing "too well" turned their smiles to stone. Ironically, these parents' expressions embodied the very same ideological standpoint which Brecht had set himself the task of satirizing, namely, the bourgeoisie's hypocritical sense of moral superiority over the lower classes (as captured in the quotation "ein Räuber sei kein Bürger" and "ein Bürger sei kein Räuber" [Werke 24: 60]). For all the student's efforts to exaggerate her impersonation of a prostitute, her parents were unable to fully separate their daughter from the prostitute she impersonated — a blurring of identities that left them with the eerie, uncanny impression that their daughter was potentially a prostitute in the making. In their failure to draw the Brechtian conclusion that the image of their "prostitute" daughter mirrors their own "true" identity as members of the middle class, the student's parents remained unaffected by Brecht's alienation effect. The same, however, cannot be said

for the daughter, whose insight into the origin, cause, and nature of her parents' occlusion evidenced the hidden (though potentially explosive) power of Brecht's alienation effect.

Cottier: Could you tell me more about some of the practical problems you encountered in the production of *The Threepenny Opera*?

Regele: Compared to last year's play production of Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker*, a play without music and one in which there were only a very limited number of actors on stage, with all the action taking place in a single room, *The Threepenny Opera* was infinitely more challenging. There were up to sixteen actors on the stage at any one time, all of whose movements had to be coordinated. In addition we had eight scenes with nine different scenery set-ups. Given the number of props, we had to rehearse the scene changes over and over again, so that each student would perform her/his task with clockwork-like precision. The first nine weeks we practiced in a regular classroom, one in which much improvisation was necessary, because we were not able to use the props and equipment that we would later have available in the theater. When we moved into the theater in week ten, it was utter chaos: A dividing wall fell over, knocking down part of our scenery; the clothes-racks, which we used for Peachum's business and to improvise the jail, came apart on stage, and so did all of us. The actors did not know how to utilize the entire stage, but rather confined their performances to a corner in the back of the stage. Our first rehearsal in the theater went terribly. But by then the pressure was on, and we had to get our "act" together for the first dress rehearsal two days later (for which we already had an audience scheduled). So we all worked like maniacs. Another practical problem we encountered (an obstacle which, by the way, proved to be a most valuable learning experience) had to do with our limited financial resources, which called for us to improvise wherever possible. Besides hunting down props and costumes in second-hand stores, we had to stitch together many of the stage items ourselves -- all of which demanded a high measure of creativity and improvisation on the part of everybody involved. We also encountered problems with the lighting, when our lighting technician bailed only days before the performances. Fortunately three of

the actors were able to take turns replacing him.

Cottier: Your musicians were outstanding. How did you come to the decision to use a guitar and a recorder? Isn't that a rather strange combination?

Regele: We did not really decide on these instruments. Actually, we had envisioned a piano and a saxophone. Finally, the only musicians who were prepared to commit themselves were my husband, Tom Regele (who played the guitar) and Mitsutoshi Inaba (who played the recorder). Hence our decision was borne of necessity. But to our great delight, it turned out to be a perfect combination for our purposes. The two of them performed marvelously, and many people from the audience commented on how unconventional, yet outstanding, the blending of the two instruments was.

Tom and Mitsutoshi were not just musicians in the conventional sense, but real-live Brechtian performers who at times became part of the action. Besides playing the guitar, Tom was, for example, involved in a scene (the prologue) in which he left his seat, stepped onto the stage with his guitar, and mingled with the cast, while singing the *Moritat von Mackie Messer*. The musicians were seated in the front on the side of the stage, in between the audience and the action. When they were not playing, they acted as interested and benevolent observers.

Cottier: Subsequent to the premiere of the *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928, Brecht produced his *Lehrstücke*, the first of which, *Die Maßnahme*, opened in 1930. *The Threepenny Opera* was written during a creative period of intense experimentation with theater theory and acting, and the *Lehrstücke* may be regarded as the culmination or radicalization of this period: the actors experiment with themselves; they take turns in playing roles in the absence of an audience (Werke 24: 96-101). Do you see a possibility to implement aspects of this approach in your theater productions?

Regele: This is a fascinating idea, since both our theater productions and the *Lehrstücke* focus on the pedagogic effect of acting on the players. However, within our setting Brecht's *Lehrstück*-approach would not be practicable: The prospect of performing in front of an audience serves as a major incen-

tive throughout the preparations. Secondly, our students are struggling with the language; thus memorizing all the parts would be impossible given our time constraints. However, experimentation is a vital component of our production: during every rehearsal and even during the final performances, I detected new personal props and cloth items, indicating that the students were in a continuous process of contemplating their roles outside of class, reminiscent of Brecht's anecdote *Ein alter Hut* (Werke 24: 71-3), which describes his observation of an actor's effort to find the perfect hat which completely embodies his role's biography and personality traits. Analogously, our students experimented with movements and intonations, altering them and observing the effects of these alterations both in private and within the stage dynamics. On our first performance night, one of the whores started to caress our guitar player with her boa -- a new gesture which we had "invented" the previous day during rehearsal. What we had not anticipated was that this interaction would make our musician miss his cue. It was only through the recorder player's intervention, who (much to the delight of the audience) gave his colleague a rather forceful tap to the ribs while yelling "Spiel!", that the distracted musician was able to resume playing. This "play with the play" which developed spontaneously exemplifies the living dynamic of our production. Unfortunately, the theater season was at its end, which kept us from incorporating this moment of improvisation into our repertoire.

Cottier: What did you find most rewarding in being the director of this year's theater class?

Regele: What made the experience especially rewarding for me were the nightly phone conversations with Karla, the support and reassurance of the department, and the respect I gained from the students -- all those helping hands joining together and contributing to a single remarkable end result. In conclusion, I would like to share an episode, which encapsulates what this theater production has meant to me. The incident took place on the night of our first public performance, and started forty-five minutes before the opening of the show, at a time when my anxiety was at its peak. The cast was all making final preparations before going on stage, when we

realized that our "Inspector Brown" was missing. Several students tried to find her. They called at her home, at the hospital and the police station -- all without success. Finally, two of the students drove to her house. In the meantime, I went into the dressing room (determined that "the show must go on," no matter what), where one of the students did my hair and made me up, while another dressed me, and a third student went over the script with me. Although the "real" Officer Brown showed up ten minutes before the opening (she had fallen asleep and had not heard the phone ring), I will never forget the look of surprise on the students' faces when, standing in front of them, fully made-up and ready to go on stage, I knew that I had finally gained their respect. After I had taken my make-up and costume off, I got to indulge in the most joyful moment of the production. They were great on stage, all of them! And I remembered another piece of wisdom which Karla had shared with me previously and which I had not believed at the time. "When you see them on stage you will have tears in your eyes for how beautiful and perfect they are." Now I know that it's all true. I just wish Karla had been there to see them, too.

Endnote

1 We are looking forward to the publication of an article on pedagogy and theater at the UO using the 1999 production of Goethe's *Urfaust* as an illustration of Karla's teaching methods: Karla Schultz and Penelope Heinigk. "Urfaust: Magic on Stage" in *Body and Language. Intercultural Learning through Drama*, ed. Gerd Bräuer (Atlanta: Greenwood Academic Publishers, 2002).

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University of Oregon

DIE HEILIGE JOHANNA IN OHIO

St. Joan of the Stockyards im Thurber Theatre der
Ohio State University.

Alexander Stephan

„Brecht und die USA“ ist eine Geschichte ohne happy end. Stücke von Brecht kommen fast immer nur an College-Bühnen oder in Kleintheatern zur Aufführung — heute, wie in den vierziger Jahren, als der Meister selbst im Lande war. Regisseure kämpfen mit dem Mut der Verzweiflung um einen Zugang zum epischen Theater; Schauspieler können sich nicht für die von Brecht geforderte Spielweise erwärmen.

Aber auch Amerika hat es, andersherum, nicht leicht mit dem Stückeschreiber aus Deutschland. Jeder, der es hören wollte, erfuhr von ihm, dass der in Chicago und New York praktizierte Kapitalismus seine Sache nicht war. Religion und „charities“ galten ihm als Opium fürs Volk. Und wenn Brecht seinen als Arturo Ui verkleideten Hitler in Chicago schalten und walten lässt, war damit sicher kein Lob für die amerikanische Demokratie verbunden.

Lesley Ferris, seit kurzem Leiterin des Department of Theater an der Ohio State University, stellt sich sorglos diesen und anderen Problemen, als sie am Thurber Theatre der Universität Brechts *St. Joan of the Stockyards* herausbringt — und ist deshalb auf ganzer Linie erfolgreich. Mutig lässt sie ihre jungen Studenten-SchauspielerInnen den gesamten, etwas zu großen Theaterraum bespielen, zieht die Bühne weit in den Zuschauerraum hinein und projiziert nach Art von Piscator Bilder, Videos und Schattenrisse auf eine Leinwand, die die gesamte Hinterbühne abdeckt. Musikalische Einlagen von Weill und Eisler werden von einer kleinen Orchestertruppe im Proszenium begleitet. Zeitungsverkäufer mischen sich unter das Publikum und verbreiten marktschreierisch die letzten Börsennachrichten. Und Joan (Regina Rockensies), Pierpont Mauler (Kekoa Kaluhiokalani), Slift (Angeles Romero) und die anderen treten mal von vorn, mal von den Seiten oder auch durch die für Besucher vorgesehenen Eingänge auf.

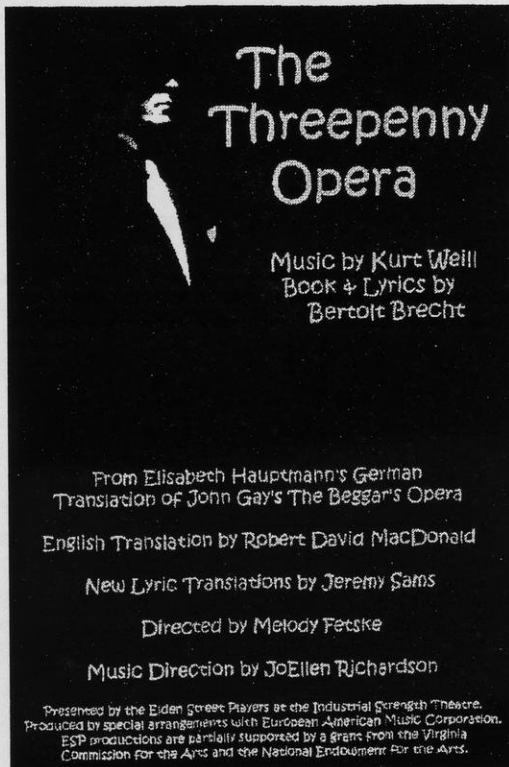
So weit schon fast zu viel klassischer Brecht in einer Aufführung, bei der die Erfahrung der Leiterin sich perfekt ergänzt mit der fast ausnahmslos talentierten Schauspielgruppe. Doch die *St. Joan* von Ohio ist nicht nur wegen der gelungenen Dramaturgie, dem kreativen Bühnenbild und der schauspielerischen Leistungen der Darsteller sehenswert. Viel mehr zählt in unseren politisch einformigen Tagen, dass Lesley Ferris und ihre Truppe den etwas zähen Text von Brecht mit viel Mut auf den politischen Stand der Zeit bringen. Unübersehbar, wenn auch nicht physisch anwesend, stehen da hinter den „Schwarzen Strohhütten“ immer auch die Funktionäre von hochangesehenen Wohltätigkeitsorganisationen wie dem United Way. *St. Joan* verteilt Handzettel im Publikum, die „Be Watchful... A Call for Action“ überschrieben sind und das Wort Gottes vermischen mit Informationen über die Gehälter der CEOs großer Firmen, die Prozesse gegen Microsoft und die Tabakindustrie und die Symbiose von Ölfirmen und dem Benzinverbrauch von SUVs: „But, the children of the LORD know better than to question God's will by working to bridge the ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor in this country.“ Und schließlich kulminiert der Abend nach der ironischen Grablegung der Heiligen Johanna mit einem kurzen, aber furiosen Video, in dem George W. Bush II., Skandale an der Wall Street und Enron in harten Schnitten nebeneinandergestellt werden — als Hintergrund für ein lauthals von den Schauspielern vorgetragenes Lied mit dem Refrain „Hosanna Rockefeller.“

Doch, dreimal wehe, egal wie viel Mühe sich Lesley Ferris und ihre Mannschaft vom Thurber Theatre auch geben — Columbus, Ohio, bleibt doch fest im Mittleren Westen der USA verankert. „Didactic“ bleibe die Produktion, so der lokale Theaterkritiker Michael Grossberg im *Columbus Dispatch* vom 30. Mai 2002, ganz ohne „emotional resonance,“ „passionate idealism“ und Gefühl. Der von Brecht modernisierten Geschichte von Jeanne d'Arc fehlt „any hint of realism or historical accuracy.“ Und trotz der häufigen Musikeinlagen von Weill und Eisler „the play never becomes a full-

fledged musical."

Armes Ohio? *St. Joan* lief zwischen dem 22. Mai und 1. Juni an sieben Abenden vor halbvollem Haus; Grossbergs schnell hingeschriebener und schlecht informierter Verriss erschien nur einmal und hat doch ein Publikum erreicht, das um ein Vielfaches größer gewesen ist. Aber Brecht, dem Theaterpraktiker, wäre das sicher egal gewesen. Er hätte sich unter den begabten und engagierten Schauspielern wohl gefühlt, wenn er denn auf dem Weg aus dem Theaterhimmel nach Ohio unter den wachsamen Augen von FBI und Einwanderungsbehörde als subversiver Ausländer an den Sicherheitskontrollen vorbeigekommen wäre.

Ohio State University



The Threepenny Opera at the Industrial Strength Theatre
Herndon, Va, Jan 25 – Feb. 16, 2001

MUTTER COURAGE IN PARIS UND IN HANNOVER

Bernd Sucher

Vor beinahe einem halben Jahrhundert, 1955, fragte Roland Barthes in einem Aufsatz: "Was können wir mit Brecht noch anfangen, wir Franzosen von heute?" Die Frage lässt sich von Deutschland aus nicht für die Franzosen beantworten. Aber sie sollte gestellt werden auch hier: Muss *Mutter Courage*, sechzig Jahre nach ihrem ersten Auftritt, am 19. April 1941 in Zürich — als Therese Giehse das Lied von der "Großen Kapitulation" sang —, wirklich weiter durch die Staats- und Stadttheater ziehen, um zu zeigen, dass Kinder, geopfert in einem Krieg, den Kapitalisten nicht anderes bedeuten als Verlust an Kapital? (Das war Barthes Antwort.) Hat sich's nicht längst ausgekart? Zwei Aufführungen helfen, eine Antwort zu finden. Zuerst präsentierte Christian Schiaretti im Pariser Theatre de la Colline eine Version, dann Christian Pade am Schauspiel Hannover die seine. Die Abende könnten verschiedener nicht sein. Doch führen sie beide zu derselben Antwort.

Schiaretti hat sich von seinem Bühnenbildner Renaud de Fontainieu in den Riesensaal nur einen Bretterboden bauen lassen; darauf der Planwagen der *Courage* und ein paar kleine holzgeschnitzte Bäume und Häuser, dahinter eine Leinwand, auf die Wolkenprojektionen geworfen werden. Sonst nichts. Er verlässt sich auf Paul Dessaus Musik in der Originalversion, gespielt vom Ensemble de l'Atelier de Tour Goings neben der Bühne — und auf seine Schauspieler. Schiaretti gibt im Programmheft unumwunden zu, dass er sich an die *Courage* nicht getraut hatte ohne eine Schauspielerin, die es mit Helene Weigel aufnehmen kann.

Er hat Nada Strancar. Deutsche Zuschauer kennen sie vor allem aus Chereau- und Bondy-Inszenierungen; den Franzosen gilt sie schon heute, obwohl vielleicht gerade fünfzig Jahre alt, als eine actrice sacrée. Nada Strancar bedient klug das Volkstheater. Resolut, dreist und ein bisschen hysterisch zeichnet sie die Kriegsgewinnlerin. Zärtlich und verstört entdeckt sie die Kriegsverliererin, wenn sie um ihre Kinder trauert. Sie spielt eine Heroine, und zugleich gelingt es ihr zuweilen, eher blässlich, hinter der Stärke, der unmenschlichen Attitüde der

Frau deren Schmerz zu offenbaren. Zuweilen, wenn die Courage den dämlichen Feldprediger verspottet oder den Koch anmacht, ist die Strancar auch komisch. Dann belegt sie mit dem Regisseur und ihren Kollegen den kargen Witz in diesem Stück, schlappen Schalk und Schelm.

Schiaretti spielt Brechts *Chronik aus dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg* realistisch. Belässt alles in der vom Autor anvisierten Zeit des 17. Jahrhunderts; begreift das Werk als das, was es ist: nicht Lehrstück, nicht Parabel, sondern ein Drama, das an einem historischen Thema deutlich zu machen sucht, wie sehr das Leben in jedweder Gesellschaft von der Gesellschaft bestimmt wird — und deshalb veränderbar sein muss. Brecht bietet keine Lösungsmöglichkeiten. Er zeigt, was ist: den "Widerspruch, der einen Menschen vernichtete, ein Widerspruch, der gelöst werden könnte, aber nur von der Gesellschaft selbst." Und bittet die Zuschauer, sich Gedanken zu machen.

Der Regisseur verzichtet nicht auf die von Brecht empfohlenen dramaturgischen Techniken. Es gibt Verfremdung. Also muss die Brecht-Gardine her, und die Songs gibt's auch. Brecht und Dessau — ungekürzt, vom Blatt. Die Lieder werden in deutscher Sprache vorgetragen. Dass ist die harte Form der Verfremdung. Die Franzosen verstehen also nichts. Sie müssen sich indes nicht grämen, Deutsche verstehen auch nichts. Dommage. Schade.

Die Pariser Aufführung ist im Brechtschen Sinn gewiss mustergültig. Ein Model — für gestern, heute, morgen. Zeitlos — aus der Zeit gefallen. Und sie schleppt sich deshalb, fürchterlich fad, über viele lange Stunden. Und niemand will wirklich wissen, wie es endet, weil jeder es weiß! Auch Kattrin, Mutter Courages stumme Tochter, wird gewiss noch sterben; nach Eilif und Schweizerkas. Die "Hyäne der Schlachtfelder" wird ihr Liebstes verlieren und trotzdem den Krieg feiern, der Geschäft ist, und den Frieden hassen, in dem sie verarmt. Die fragile schöne Lucie Boscher, die Kattrin, besteigt am Ende ein Miniaturhaus und trommelt die Menschen in dem Dorf wach, das bedroht wird von Feinden. Das aufsässige Kind wird erschossen. Doch sie fällt nicht vom Dach. Erhobenen Hauptes steigt sie herab und läuft — wie ein Störtebeker — zu einem großen Holzkreuz; dort bricht sie tot zusammen.

Die Soldaten beobachten erschreckt, was geschieht. Mit dieser letzten Szene verweist Schiaretti — wie schon mehrfach zuvor — dass es um einen Glaubenskrieg geht, baut eine einsturzgefährdete Gedankenbrücke zu den Kriegen unserer Zeit. Die Pariser Aufführung ist museal, weil sie altmodisch sein will!

Die Hannoveraner geben sich cool und ganz modern — und sind so antiquiert, dass es ein Graus ist. Christian Pade macht das Stück nicht kaputt, erzählt nicht, dass mit diesem Text unsere Wirklichkeit nicht mehr beschrieben, schon gar nicht analysiert werden kann. Er hat Einfälle nur. Davon nicht eben viele, dafür schlichte. Mutter Courage, die der Regisseur Marion Breckwoldt anvertraut hat, einer noch jungen Schauspielerin, sieht aus wie Hella von Sinnen und ist von diesen. Völlig neben der Kappe. Anna Fierling — so der bürgerliche Name der Courage — holt sich als ein blondes Urviech, gut gelaunt noch das Akkordeon quetschend, wenn andere längst Trübsal blasen würden, durch den Abend: nix zu sagen, aber das laut. Ein Dirndl über der Hose — also so richtig trashig —, tapst die Frau über die leere Plastikbahnen-Bühne, auf die es regnet; wohl aus einer klitzekleinen Wolke, die niemanden nass macht. Die Courage trägt schicke Nikes und bietet Auslaufmodelle an. Schuhwerk, das Tillys Mannen nicht mehr mögen. Wollen auch Nikes oder Adidas. Eine Kapitalistenschlampe, spezialisiert auf Armeebestände — Fleisch, Schnaps, Zigaretten, Feuerzeuge — und Sprache.

Auf Brechts Worte, auf Dessaus Weisen hat die Schauspieltruppe so gar keinen Bock. Sie wollen so richtig auf den Putz hauen. Nato, Balkankrieg, Afghanistan, Israel. Deshalb wurde Dessau arrangiert. Deshalb spicken Pade und die Seinen die Vorlage mit dem Sprachmüll unserer Tage. Soldaten beschimpfen die Fierling-Familie als "asoziales Pack". Einmal steht "die Volksarmee vor der Stadt", ein andermal wird vor der Nato gewarnt. Dass sie in höchster Not nur Scheiße schreien, versteht sich. Dass der Wagen ein Metallanhänger ist, wie ihn die Würstchenverkäufer auf den Wochenmärkten besitzen, überrascht auch nicht weiter. Und dass vor lauter gedanklicher Würstigkeit der Grund für die offensichtlich immer noch tödlichen Auseinandersetzungen der nicht weiter benannten Gegner, nicht mehr benannt und erkannt werden kann, ge-

hört auch zu diesem Spaß! Natürlich fressen alle aus Dosen und, klar doch: Ein Soldat, der sich langweilt, kümmert sich um seine Filzläuse — intensiv. Die Aufführung ist so miefig und so alt, dass Schiaretis Interpretation geradezu aufregend wirkt. Das Pariser Theater-Museum lebt noch, steht allerdings kurz vor dem Abriss; die Hannoveraner Theater-Reanimieranstalt ist ein Leichenschauhaus, poppig dekoriert.

Muss *Mutter Courage* wirklich weiter herumgeistern auf Bühnen? Hans-Georg Gadamer schrieb in seinem 1964 erschienenen Aufsatz "Ästhetik und Hermeneutik", dass zu fragen ist, "ob nicht die besondere Gegenwärtigkeit des Kunstwerkes eben darin besteht, für immer neue Integrationen grenzenlos offen zu stehen. Mag der Schöpfer eines Werkes jeweils das Publikum seiner Zeit meinen, das eigentliche Sein seines Werkes ist das, was es zu sagen vermag, und das reicht über jede geschichtliche Beschränktheit grundsätzlich hinaus. In diesem Sinn ist das Kunstwerk von zeitloser Gegenwart." Brechts *Mutter Courage* und alle anderen seiner Theatertexte, die wir den Lehrstücken oder den realistischen Dramen zuzuordnen uns angewöhnt haben, sie erweisen sich heute eben nicht als Kunstwerke, die über ihre geschichtliche Beschränktheit hinausweisen. Sie sind — im Gegensatz zum *Baal* — nicht zeitlos gegenwärtig; und sie benötigen nicht, sie verweigern gar jedwede "hermeneutische Fantasie", den Sinn für das Fragwürdige und das, was es verlangt, wie Gadamer formuliert. Es gibt nichts mehr zu verstehen, was nicht schon verstanden worden ist.

Also höchste Zeit für das Theater, will es nicht allein zum Mitarbeiter der Schulen taugen, sich von Brechts allzu gut gemeinten und allzu schlicht gedachten Stücken zu verabschieden. Was wäre der Verlust, überließe man sie der Literaturwissenschaft? *Mutter Courage* sollte endlich allein den Germanisten anempfohlen werden. Sie haben allergrößte Freude am Exhumieren, Einordnen, Archivieren. *Mutter Courage* — ausgekart. Requiem in pace Anna Fierling.

Süddeutsche Zeitung, Mittwoch, 27.3.2002

B.B. IN L.A. ATLANTA

Britta Kallin

Everyone knows that L.A. stands for Los Angeles. However, B.B. for Bertolt Brecht is not that common. The title *B.B. in L.A.* was chosen by a group of artists for their show about Brecht's stay in California. The small audience turnout may be attributed to the vague title or to the scant advertisement in local papers. Only a Goethe-Institut listserve reminded the eager Brecht lovers to attend this show at the Seven Stages Theater in Little Five Points, where the alternative scene in Atlanta meets. Between June 27th and June 29th, a group called Great Small Works staged two shows each evening.

The group consists of six theater artists based in New York, many of whom are closely linked to the Bread and Puppet Theater of Vermont. Unlike other puppet theaters that present puppets on strings, this toy theater presents cut-outs that are glued to cardboard and put on a mini-stage by the artists. In the play brochure, the group states that they "draw on folk, avant-garde and popular theater traditions to address contemporary issues."

The evening consisted of three short vignettes: In the first show, A Short Entertaining History of Toy Theater, the actors trace Toy Theater and its development in Germany, Great Britain, France, and later the US. In the second short show, Toy Theater of Terror As Usual, Episode 11, the political angle of the artists became obvious in their political satire using a George W. Bush cut-out encircled by cut-outs of weapons and soldiers marching. Suddenly, Muslim, Christian and Jewish toy puppets are asked why they cannot live together in peace. Soon after that the toys—and the voices of the artists—criticized recent events within the US corporate world, using an Enron toy cut-out that served as a ridiculed representative for the corporate world.

In the third and last segment, the half-hour long show *B.B. in L.A.*, they presented Brecht as a little puppet, about four inches tall without strings, clad in a brown leather jacket and pants with a leather cap and a cigar in his mouth. Almost invisible hands made this puppet walk through Hollywood to music composed by Kurt Weill. Brecht's comments on palm trees, beaches and big villas mixed with Marxist observations are read from his journals

and from Charles Lyons's Brecht in America. The second part of the Brecht episode focused on the director Brecht who staged several of his plays in the US. In an exaggerated patronizing manner, the Brecht puppet lectured the actors about alienation effect, *gestus* and distance to the characters. The puppet sat on a tall wooden director's chair that seemed to resemble a throne. In the last scene, an actor, dressed up as Brecht, stood on a stepladder and listened to tape recordings of the HUAC hearings. After the curtain is drawn, several audience members communicated their previous unawareness about Brecht's clash with the McCarthy regime and his life in the US.

Even though *B.B. in L.A.* premiered in New York in 1998, it seems to be very topical. In light of recent events after 9/11 and an increase in security concerns, the play draws on current fears as mirror images of the McCarthy era with its threat to civil liberties. The echoing of Brecht's hearings leaves us with a strange sense of insecurity and a heightened interest in his life.

Georgia Institute of Technology

A ALBA-LA ROMAINE, CHACUN POUR SOI CHEZ LES PETITS- BOURGEOIS

Jean-Louis Perrier

Un village médiéval éclairé la nuit comme un décor de Peter Pabst pour Pina Bausch. En contrebas, dans les prés, un demi-cercle de pierres antiques, dégringole en gradins sur un canal assoupi. A l'arrière plan, lépaisse forêt ardéchoise, et dans l'air, le sifflement des crapauds. Piloté depuis trois ans par la Comédie de Valence, le Festival d'Alba-la-Romaine alterne théâtre et danse. Cette année, *La Noce chez les petits-bourgeois* est venue d'Hérison dans le camoin des Fédérés conduit par Olivier Perrier, précédant *La Princess de Clèves*, mise en scène et interprétée par Marcel Bozonnet (du 23 au

26 juillet); et *Allegoria Stanza*, chorégraphiée par Abou Lagraa (les 29 et 30).

Le salon salle à manger des petits-bourgeois, est ouvert comme une boîte. Déco expressionniste, Allemagne années 1920, colorée à la main. L'oblique est celle d'un monde de travers, impossible à redresser. Fort de ses deux tiers de siècle, le petit bourgeois n'en a pas moins son éternel, un gars qui veut payer de sa personne, s'élever à la force du poignet en refusant les miettes de l'héritage, et en piétinant le mieux possible son voisin. Brecht fait jouer et tourner le poignet dans tous les sens. Pas un mot, pas un objet qui ne soit à double usage. Le placard qui ne veut pas s'ouvrir cache le polichinelle de la mariée. Il suffit d'un rien pour que l'obscénité se répande à loisir.

Les petits bourgeois ne pensent qu'à ça. Le sexe est le témoin du mépris qu'ils se portent. Il les enchaîne au mariage (ou le cocufiage) à leur égoïste condition. Dans un grand moment de révolte, le naturel reprend le dessus et ils s'engeulent en polonais, danois, allemand, anglais, arabe et même français. Chez eux, pas de langue commune, chacun parle pour soi. Chez Brecht prémarxiste, la langue est le premier de tous les meubles, elle trahit son faitmain, un art tout de façade prêt à voler en éclats au premier coup de Trafalgar. Et les jeunes cononniers d'élite réunis par Olivier Perrier ne se lassent pas de faire sauter les ressorts de la comédie avec ceux des plafonds, des placards et des lits. L'été sera chaud.

Le Monde, July 20, 2002

BRECHT POETRY BASH

Britta Kallin

On February 23, 2002, the Goethe-Institut (GI) in conjunction with language departments of four universities in the Atlanta area (Emory, Georgia State, Georgia Tech and U of Georgia) celebrated Brecht's poetic oeuvre in the auditorium of the GI in Atlanta. It was an evening of celebration by faculty and students from local high schools, Agnes Scott College, the above-mentioned colleges and community residents. A similar Brecht Poetry Bash at the GI in Boston last November had already proven to be a success. The honorary guests of the evening were Holger Teschke, a dramaturg who has worked at the Berliner Ensemble and who is Artist-in-Residence at Notre Dame during the spring semester, and Günter König from the German Information Center in New York. Teschke, dressed like Brecht in the 30s played BB with a lot of empathy and König was the MC of the evening; both of them improvised in a very professional manner throughout the evening. Members of the audience were encouraged to write their name and the title of a favorite or memorized Brecht poem on a piece of paper that was collected by some helpful hands. The MC then chose the poems at random and called the selected volunteers to come up and recite the poem in their shaking hands. At times the selected individuals recited the piece from memory.

The recitations displayed a level of enthusiasm that would surprise and excite any viewer in our world of TV and 'technotainment.' So many wanted to read from Brecht's works that there was unfortunately not enough time (the evening lasted more than three hours) to hear everyone who had prepared a piece. Most of the works were recited in German, some in English, and one in Croatian translation. The students in particular did an amazing job. One presentation stands out because it was a first-year student who had memorized and recited the poem "Was an dir Berg war." The student read the piece without pathos but with just the right understanding for Brecht's passionate poetry.

Martin Kagel (UGA) and his students recited a piece on boxing, Erdmann Wanieck (Emory) accompanied a student to the event who recited "Vergnügungen," Robin Huff and John Austin

(Georgia State) performed the Mäckie Messer Moritat with elaborate paintings they had made, Phil McKnight and myself (Georgia Tech) accompanied more than 20 students from the German Club and our classes. Several of them were called on to read something they had chosen to perform and had practiced with us. Among the recited poems were "Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters," "Lob des Lernens," "Bücherverbrennung," and "Die Zuhälterballade" which reminded all of us in the audience that Brecht's insight into issues of his day still offer an important perspective 70 years later. Besides poems, the evening included Brecht's taped interview at the HUAC and songs. Teschke and König gave the evening a relaxed atmosphere and an air of street performance. The organizers succeeded in bringing German poetry a little closer to students who are learning German in American schools. Bravo!

Georgia Institute of Technology

berliner ensemble — vorschau

DIE MUTTER

Leben der Revolutionärin Pelagea Wlassowa aus Twer

Musik: Hanns Eisler

Mit: Carmen-Maja Antoni

Inszenierung: Claus Peymann

Bühne: Karl-Ernst Hermann

Kostüme: Angelika Rieck

Musikalische Leitung: Roland Klutting

Dramaturgie: Frederik Zeugke

Premiere: 15. Januar 2003

ARTICLES



Brecht, Radierung von Rudolf Schlichter, 1927

PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERA- TURE CONFERENCE IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Introduction by Alexander Stephan

The following articles were first presented in February 2002 at two IBS panels at the Twentieth-Century Literature Conference of the University of Louisville, Kentucky. These panels were organized at a short notice to increase the visibility of IBS at regional conferences. Responses to the call for papers were so large that IBS participation in the Louisville conference had to be increased from one to two sessions. In fact, additional papers on Brecht were presented at other panels of the conference. Dan Friedman, David Callaghan and David Robb spoke in a meeting on "Brecht and Performance" chaired by Alexander Stephan. The papers by Stephen T. Benner and Philipp Loeser were read in a panel on "Brecht, Politics and Transcultural Memory" chaired by Theodore F. Rippey from Bowling Green State University. A presentation by Alexander Stephan on Soeren Voima's play *Das Kontingent*, which is based on Brecht's *Maßnahme*, has been published together with an interview with Soeren Voima in *Brecht Yearbook* 26.

DIALECTICAL METHOD IN THE WORK OF BRECHT AND ITS ROLE IN THE POSTMODERNIZING OF THE THEATER

Dan Friedman

Bertolt Brecht, as a politically engaged theatre artist, has most often been approached as an orthodox Marxist, an ideologue, and a modernist – and he is, indeed, all of these. However, 46 years after his death and 13 years after the collapse of the communist movement of which he was a part, it is becoming clear that it is neither his Marxist ideology nor, what is essentially the same thing, his modernism, that is Brecht's lasting legacy to the theatre. At the turn of the 21st century, Brecht's influence on world theatre is greater than ever. This influence, however, is not to be found primarily in the content of his scripts or even in the impact of his dramaturgical or directorial techniques per se. What has generally been overlooked (or denied) by theatre historians and critics is that Brecht's most lasting influence in the theatre has proven to be not his Marxist ideology, but his Marxist methodology – dialectics.

Dialectics, the practice of method and transformative logic first consciously introduced to the theatre by Brecht, has increasingly come to characterize the contemporary avant-garde. Much of what has come to be called postmodernist theatre – with its "death of character," non-linear, fragmented plot, and relational approaches to the activity of theatre creation – is fundamentally dialectical. It is not that contemporary theatre and performance artists such as Anne Bogart, Caryl Churchill, Richard Foreman, Heiner Müller and Fred Newman are simply imitating or applying Brecht; they are, rather, expanding and deepening, that is, developing, his methodology. In so doing, the emerging postmodern and "political" theatre is best understood, I hope to demonstrate, not in terms of content, but as a methodology of performance and a performance of method.

Dialectics has come to mean many things to many people. I therefore want to start by making clear what I mean by dialectics, so that we share, at least for this dialogue, a common foundation for

what is, after all, an unusual investigation of a methodological practice in the creation of theatre.

Dialectics has ancient roots in the dialogic method, the method of philosophical exploration in the form of dialogue utilized by Socrates and other early Greek philosophers. Early on in Western intellectual tradition it became associated with the notion that the search for truth is a social activity involving the clash (and interdependence) of varying viewpoints. As opposed to the metaphysical tradition which identifies truth with a stable, unchanging essence, dialectics identifies truth, to the extent that it recognizes the concept of truth at all, with unceasing change and transformation.

In modern times, Hegel developed dialectics, using it to build a general theory of history in which human moral and spiritual development is seen as emerging from the struggle between opposites. Marx applied Hegel's method, while abandoning his mentor's separation of spirit from human activity, to his study of economics and social development. For Marx, particularly in his early writings, *The 1848 Manuscripts* and *The German Ideology* (Marx, 1967; Marx and Engels, 1974), dialectics is process. It is a human activity and, at the same time, a means of studying human activity. Marx's frequent collaborator, Friedrich Engels, in an attempt to make dialectics compatible with 19th century science, abstracted the study of process and formularized it. For Engels, in influential books such as *Anti-Dühring* and *The Dialectics of Nature*, dialectics was reduced to a struggle between opposites that eventually synthesized into a new unity. Dialectics as a methodology for understanding human life in which human beings are approached as a unity of being and becoming was de-emphasized, and the open-endedness of the dialectic method in which every change transforms the totality was lost to orthodox Marxism. (Engels, 1939, 1972)

It was this stunted version of dialectics that Brecht was introduced to when he became a Marxist in the late 1920s. Nonetheless, there were elements of dialectics preserved in Marxism that survived modernist deformations and the bloody and corrupting political battles of the 20th century and which Brecht can be credited with first introducing into theatre practice and theory.

Through the work of Hegel and Marx, dialectics

emerged in the 19th century as an alternative and challenge to traditional Aristotelian logic. Key to this alternative methodology is the concept of contradiction. According to traditional logic, contradiction is impossible. A thing can not be itself and something else at the same time. Dialectics, however, holds that everything is itself and not itself at the same time, that is, everything is and is becoming. Nothing is static or self-contained. Everything is connected and nothing is finished, closed, concluded. Nothing, to use a theatrical term, is resolved.

Opposition to resolution is one of the key aesthetic concepts that Brecht introduced to the theatre. As he wrote in his *Appendices to the Short Organum*, "The bourgeois theatre's performances always aim at smoothing over contradictions, at creating false harmony... Conditions are reported as if they could not be otherwise; characters as individuals, incapable by definition of being divided... If there is any development it is always steady, never by jerks; the developments always take place within a definite framework which cannot be broken through." His theatre, on the other hand, should, Brecht wrote, "make dialectics into a source of enjoyment. The unexpectedness of logically progressive or zigzag development, the instability of every circumstance, the joke of contradiction... all these are ways of enjoying the liveliness of men, things and processes, and they heighten both our capacity for life and our pleasure in it." (Brecht 1977, 277)

As Brecht implies in his negative reference to "characters as individuals," dialectics rejects the notion of distinct, individualized things. If everything is and at the same time is becoming, then there are no self-sustaining, static, unchanging "things"; there is only motion. Thingness is an illusion or, perhaps more to the point, a convenience for grasping a process at a particular point in its ongoing development. This rejection of thingness, i.e., of distinct, unchanging particulars, has begun to have a profound impact on the approach to character in the contemporary postmodern theatre.

Brecht, in plays such as *Man Is Man*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, and a number of his *Lehrstücke*, began to challenge the sanctity of the self-contained, individuated character, a challenge that has been taken up with far more radical effect in

the plays of Churchill, Foreman, Müller and Newman. In some of Churchill's plays and in many of Newman's, characters regularly change age, race, sex and historical location in ways that challenge long held assumptions about what a character and an individual are. (Friedman 1998, xxxv) In Heiner Müller's later work, the theatrical pieces that he referred to as synthetic fragments, the abandonment of individuated character is so radical that he often doesn't even indicate which character speaks what lines. As Robert Wilson put it in a 1987 discussion with Newman and myself, "What interests me about Heiner's plays is that there is so much freedom...He doesn't dictate so much how the work is to be done. Sometimes you don't even know who is to speak the lines – a man, a woman, an old person, a young person – whether it's a setting on the moon or in New York or wherever." (Wilson 1987, 114)

Referring to the characters in Foreman's plays, Marc Robinson has said, "Nothing ever coalesces in their world. Just as they settle, grow familiar with one another, and understand what is at stake, the action stops short – only to start over in a different place. The chronic disruptions make it difficult even to recognize Foreman's characters as characters. They reinvent themselves with every sentence, acquiring new virtues and vices, discarding their original beliefs before they (or we) have examined them adequately. They sever relationships with one another and welcome distraction. Sometimes, they even change their names. The entire play seems to shed a skin – and then another skin, and still one more." (Robinson 1995, i)

As this discussion of character implies, the dialectical notion of change is qualitatively different from the notion of change in traditional logic, and traditional theatre. Traditional logic can not account for the kind of character transformations and transmutations noted in the plays of the postmodern playwrights. In fact, traditional logic can not account for qualitative change at all. The relationship between particulars can be changed; A leads to B leads to C. A discovered love letter leads to fit of jealousy which leads to a crime of passion, and so on. But A remains A. B remains B. C remains C. It is a mechanical model in which situations change but the "things" themselves, and the totality they constitute, remain what they are. Whatever has shaken up the

world on stage is resolved, that is, brought back to what it is.

In contrast, the dialectical method approaches change as transformative. Change is inherent in the process of life, in the contradictoriness of what we, in everyday speech, call "things." Each thing is and is becoming, is what it is and is what it is not, and that contradiction, that tension, that energy, according to the dialectic method, is what drives the process forward. Change is not a realignment of what is, it is the transformation of what is into something qualitatively different. Since particulars don't exist, it is not particulars that are changed. What can, and does, change are totalities. Since everything is connected and interrelated, changing anything involves changing everything.

We can see these different notions of change reflected in the two different approaches to dramatic structure that now dominate in contemporary theatre. While the traditional plays in the Western tradition – from – to August Wilson – are structured causally, Brecht and those who have built on the method he introduced to the theatre have experimented with an array of non-causal dramatic structures.

With his "epic" narrative form, Brecht attempted to create a structure more coherent with the dialectic method. In his well-known chart contrasting what he called "dramatic" theatre with his "epic" theatre, Brecht put it this way: in dramatic theatre, "the human being is taken for granted/he is unalterable/eyes on the finish/one scene makes another/growth/linear development/evolutionary determinism/man as a fixed point." In epic theatre, on the other hand, "the human being is the object of inquiry/he is alterable and able to alter/eyes on the course/each scene for itself/montage/in curves/jumps/man as process." (Brecht 1977, 37)

Many of the postmodern playwrights have gone further. Churchill in *Cloud 9* (1979), for example, using roughly the same set of characters (while changing the age, sex and race of some of them) sets up her two acts as two distinct narratives separated by 100 years. The two acts, in essence, have a conversation with each other, in the process of which they comment upon and transform each other. Newman in *Mr. Hirsch Died Yesterday* (1986) tells the same story three times with three different takes on the play's action, characters and issues, approximat-

ing for the stage what cubism did for the plastic arts – the viewing of the action from various angles simultaneously. Many other of Newman's, and virtually all of Foreman's, plays do away with narrative altogether. Newman has argued that narrative itself is a conservative imposition on the dialectical unfolding of human activity, and prefers to call his plays "performed conversations." (Newman and Holzman 1999) Foreman put it this way, "I'm continually concerned with taking whatever statement is there, 'Rhonda, you look beautiful tonight' and adding a 'Yes, But' ... staging possible alternative to whatever's said." (Foreman 1997, 28)

Paula Vogel, many of whose plays, including her Pulitzer Prize winner, *How I Learned to Drive*, (1998) build on Brecht's pioneering work in dramatic structure, writes in this regard: "The postmodern playwright follows Bertolt Brecht's dictum literally: we as playwrights are separating the elements [within the text]... We expose the contradictions that we are aware of in the play as we write it (and rely on the process of production to further find and critique the contradictions we are blind to), we layer the work with multiple meanings, we defamiliarize closure." (Vogel 1995, 95)

Here we go beyond the strictly literary embodiment of dialectics within the script to the arena of theatrical production. According to the dialectical method, any process develops through its internal contradictions. Brecht, therefore, did not want to create, as traditional aesthetics dictates, the illusion of a harmonious unity. On the contrary, he wanted to draw attention to the tensions between the elements of production. For example, a love song was to be sung to a harsh melody; lighting changes were to be made obvious so that their reality as technology could challenge the sentimental illusions that lighting technology can create, and so on. (Brecht 1997, 84-90, 104-106, 230-232)

The artistic goal of the traditional theatre is the creation of a unified artistic statement in which the various elements – acting, setting, costumes, lights, etc. – are flawlessly interwoven with each other and with the content of the script. It is based on the assumptions of traditional logic, which rejects contradiction and sees the world as essentially static – a thing (including a theatrical production) is what it is and nothing else. The contemporary postmodern

theatre, building on Brecht, seeks, in Vogel's words, to "expose contradiction," not only in the script but in the production itself. Virtually all of the directors of the contemporary avant-garde, despite considerable stylistic variation, work to separate the particular elements of the production from each other and from the script in such a way that each element is commenting on, even conflicting with, the other elements. As Robert Wilson put it in a recent public dialogue with Fred Newman at John Jay College of the City University of New York: "Language is just one of the layers that are put together to create theatre... You (the director) make choices about how you put them together." (Wilson, 2002)

The aesthetics of this dialectical separation of the elements of production have been most developed, at least in terms of theory, by Anne Bogart and her followers. Rejecting the unifying assumptions of Stanislavsky and his progeny, Bogart, instead of seeking a closed system, has developed a method for dialogue among the various elements of the theatre. Rejecting the centrality of either script or character, Bogart has identified a number of what she calls "viewpoints" that are active in any theatrical production and has approached the activity of directing as the coordination of an interplay, or dialectic, between these viewpoints. Initially she identified six viewpoints, now there are nine. No doubt there will be more, since deconstruction is a potentially endless process. Bogart's nine viewpoints are: spatial relationship, shape, kinesthetic response of one actor to another, repetition, gesture, architecture, tempo, duration and topography. We have neither the time nor need to discuss the specifics of these viewpoints here. What is important for our discussion, I believe, is that Bogart has developed a dialectical directing method that has added considerable sophistication to Brecht's initial move to separate the elements of production.

Tina Landau, a Bogart protégée and collaborator, discusses the viewpoints this way: "The movement has been separated from the text so that each is informed by and related to the other without it being the same as the other. There is a tension between what is seen and what is heard, and now the spoken text allows us to see the physical text more clearly and the physical text allows us to hear the spoken text more clearly. The various 'tracks' of a theatre

piece can be separated, played in counterpoint, or synced up to create different expressions of harmony and discord, balance and disorientation." (Landau 1995)

The work of establishing a dialogue between the various elements of production has, not surprisingly, created conditions conducive to dialogue between the various theatre artists. Virtually all contemporary avant-garde theatre (with the notable exception of Foreman's Ontological Hysteric Theatre) work in such a way as to encourage dialogue between the creators, a fact that is rooted, I would argue, in their understanding of the dialectic method introduced to the theatre by Brecht. Fred Newman often uses the word "conversation" to describe not only the relationship between production elements, but also to characterize the very process of creating the show. Newman maintains that the primary work of the director is to foster an environment in which the performers and designers can have a conversation, through theatrical means, with each other and the script. Exposing that conversation to the audience is far more interesting to him than presenting them with a unified artistic product. Along similar lines, Bogart has said, "Americans are plagued with the disease of agreement. In the theatre, we often presume that collaboration means agreement. I believe too much agreement creates productions with no vitality, no dialectic, no truth...without resistance there is no fire." (Vogel 1995, 11) Thus dialectics is beginning to impact not only on the nature of the product, but also on the process by which the product is created.

Performance itself is one of the processes (and products) being impacted on by dialectics. Perhaps the most significant dialogue introduced by Brecht and developed by the contemporary postmodern theatre artists is the dialogue between the actor and the character, the recognition of what Heiner Müller calls "the space between I and I." (Müller 1990, 48) When Brecht instructed the actor to never hide the fact that she or he was acting, he made explicit something that is obvious to anyone who has acted, namely that the actor and the character on stage are not the same -- and are. The actor in a play is performing who she or he is not and, at the same time, remains her or himself. For Stanislavsky, successful acting is the minimizing of this gap. For Brecht and

the postmodernists, perhaps the most interesting thing about theatre is its ability to play with and develop off of this gap, this dialectical tension.

The awareness of the conflict/unity between actor and character, is an expression of Brecht's "making strange (alienation) effect." For what is the making strange effect but a means of drawing the audience's (and artists') attention to the fact that what they are experiencing is both what it appears to be and what it is not? The familiar, given the biases of our culture, is static and disconnected; it must be made strange (alienated), Brecht maintained, in order to be seen as process. All of Brecht's dramaturgy, and much of the working assumptions of the contemporary avant-garde, I would argue, stem from this dialectical premise.

To this point I have worked to find the connections between the dialectic method that Brecht brought to the theatre and the practice of the contemporary avant-garde. However, it would be misleading to leave it at that. In recent years dialectics has begun to emerge from the stifling embrace of orthodox communism. What we have begun to see is the transformation of dialectics from an alternative *logic* universalized into an explanation of the world into an open-ended *activity* engaging and changing the world.

This development has grown out of ending the unhappy marriage between dialectics and science, and it is to postmodern thinkers in a number of fields that we owe this historic break-up. It has taken the philosophical work of the postmodernists to challenge the hitherto unquestioned modernist assumptions about the relationship of science and human life. The adaptation of dialectics to the modern scientific method was perhaps unavoidable given the hold that science and technology had on Western culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. The scientific method stamped all modernist thought and culture, including Marxism. The collapse of communism and the postmodernist challenges to modernist thought have allowed for the reemergence of dialectics and its dynamic application to a wide range of human cultural activities -- including the theatre. (Newman 1999)

What this has looked like in the theatre is an understanding of performance as not only an art, but also a developmental activity. (Newman and

Holzman, 1997) The anthropologist and performance studies pioneer Victor Turner and those influenced by him, including Brian Sutton-Smith, Colin Turnbull and Richard Schechner, have identified performance as an activity which can initiate individual and social change. Turner called this characteristic of performance "liminal" (from *limen*, meaning threshold in Latin). Liminal activity is activity which passes through (or beyond) the threshold of traditional or conventional behavior. This embrace of the dialectic/transformative power of performance among the postmodernists in the theatre is growing. (Turner 1982; Sutton-Smith 1972; Turnbull 1990; Schechner 1985)

Fred Newman, who was a community organizer long before he was a theatre artist, is probably the most radical of the postmodern dialecticians. He approaches dialectics as a method of studying activity, and performance as the activity of human development. (Holzman, 1999) He has led the development of performance activity in a wide range of everyday life activities -- including therapy, politics, and youth organizing -- and, in turn has brought what has been learned from those everyday performances back into the theatre. (Friedman, 2001)

While Newman is probably the most explicitly political of the postmodern theatre practitioners, virtually all approach performance as a potentially transformative activity. As Bogart writes, "It was immediately clear to me that the experience of theatre was not about understanding the meaning of the play or the significance of the staging. We were invited into a unique world, an arena that changed everything previously defined." (Bogart 1995) In this way the postmodern avant-garde has gone beyond Brecht's modernist, rationalist version of the dialectic. They make no distinction between cause and effect in the theatre; for the postmodern theatre artist the activity of performance and the impact it has on those who participate in and experience it are part of the same process. To borrow a phrase from the writings of Newman and his collaborator Lois Holzman, theatre is both a tool *and* a result at the same time. (Newman and Holzman 1993) Brecht's understanding of the theatre as a tool for a result -- in the case of the Epic Theatre, as a tool for rational reflection, has little credence in the contemporary avant-garde, for which performance is not an instru-

mentalized tool for any result. It is a transformative activity in its own right.

Obviously, this is the beginning of a much larger discussion. I have made mention of the work of only a handful of postmodern theatre artists and barely scratched the surface of Brecht's contributions to the theatre. No doubt I have also oversimplified the complexities of both dialectics and theatre. My intention is simply to begin a dialogue on the relationship of the two.

Is the postmodern theatre evolving into the rational/ideological/political theatre that Brecht envisioned in the early part of the 20th century? Hardly. Is it moving in a direction that involves productive engagement with the dominant culture and ideology? Definitely. Would Brecht, the rascally revolutionary, be pleased? I would like to think so.

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Castillo Theatre, New York

BRECHT'S INFLUENCE ON THE LIVING THEATRE DURING THE 1990'S

David Callaghan

Founded by Julian Beck and Judith Malina in 1947, The Living Theatre's early productions rebelled against the commercialism of Broadway and sought to explore plays containing a more heightened, poetic sensibility as part of the early Off-Broadway movement. Exposure to the theories of Antonin Artaud in the 1950s eventually led them to a shift away from literary based text and language, in an effort to create a kinetic form of theatre that could alter conventional notions of actor-spectator relationship.

During the 1960s, The Living Theatre staged a series of collectively created, often improvisational works that received a good deal of public attention during a 1968-69 US tour. At the end of the 1960s era, they split into smaller cells and traveled to Brazil, India, and Rome to further explore the role of theatre in society through work in hospitals, prisons, and on the streets. Returning to the US in 1984, the company eventually established a resident theatre on E. 3rd Street in Manhattan by 1989 after regrouping from Beck's untimely death from cancer in 1985. This led to a series of productions created by Malina and company member Hanon Reznikov, who became the new co-artistic director of the company. Reznikov wrote or adapted most of these plays, and the historic troupe is still promoting its anarchic vision of world peace through touring productions in America and Europe.

I myself worked with them as an assistant director on their 1991 play *The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*, which Reznikov adapted from the writings of the young George Washington, and attended most of their NYC productions during the 1990s. Overall, this body of work seemed to reflect yet another stylistic shift within the company's mostly consistent political mission by returning to an emphasis on a more text-driven, Brechtian dominated current. My essay, then, will focus on the above-mentioned *Rules of Civility* in this regard within a larger context of Bertolt Brecht's influence on their work to the pres-

ent day.

Interestingly, *The Living*, as they are called in Europe, is perhaps still best known for their high-profile efforts to implement the often ambiguous theories of Artaud. Despite such perceptions, however, they have been equally influenced by the theory and practice of Brecht, with Malina herself studying with Brecht's collaborator Erwin Piscator at the New School in NYC during the 1940s (Malina, 15-17). Indeed, the early years of *The Living's* work saw productions of several plays by Brecht such as *He Who Says Yes and He Who Says No*, and even their highly visceral and improvisational "collective creations" in the 1960s included a well-received version of Brecht's adaptation of *Antigone* (Reznikov, *Program Notes*).

I have always been interested in the tension created by their efforts to fuse Artaud's desire to achieve a visceral audience response that could hit people "in their bellies as well as their minds" (Malina; quoted in Goldfarb, 17), but in service of a more Brechtian, influenced political agenda. In the 1983 documentary about their work, *Signals Through the Flames*, Malina described this seemingly contradictory impulse as follows:

What we did in *Antigone* very specifically was to unify what clearly needed a compliment. ... the Brechtian theatre is an intellectual theatre, primarily it deals with a moment of perception and reflection and a change in attitude ... and the Artaudian theatre is primarily a visceral experience, an experience that we must have with our whole body, the nervous system is very highly in play... Matching these two elements -- this physical element (...our actual sweating reality of what we're feeling and going through) and the intellectual element -- seems to me to create an entire person. The human being is composed of spiritual matter. (*Signals*).

How then did *Rules of Civility* attempt to put this notion into practice? The play's thesis engaged a dialectic of sorts around Washington's 110 "rules." Originating in 1595, they were taught to him by a tutor and became the basis for a number of precepts that guided our first President's career. In addition, Reznikov argued that the rules created a value system that implicitly supported social and political

inequality on the basis of class, gender, race, and nationality. Or, as one ensemble member chanted in the play's opening sequence, "the tools ... are the conquest of power through the management of perception." A few lines later, this premise was laid out in no uncertain terms when another ensemble voice proclaimed, "The Living Theatre has a strategy. An anarchist strategy to uncover the Mystery of the Rules" (Reznikov, 1).

The play's structure was comprised of seven episodic scenes where the text of Washington's rules was decoded to determine their implication and consequence for our contemporary institutional structures (and by extension, our personal and collective lives). The company's efforts to act out and embody "the rules" were consistently juxtaposed against aural and visual frames that offered a contradictory viewpoint to Washington's rigid prescriptions.

At the initial read-through of the play, Reznikov expressed a desire to expose "the rules" as a false veneer of civility that had been imposed over individual discourse and national/foreign policy in America, in place of a deeper, more truthful code of ethics, morality or justice. Washington -- and the country whose persona he represents in the play -- claims to be altruistic, but is in fact pursuing a self-interested perspective and set of policies. Thus, the play attempts to show a process whereby America sculpted its image and national agenda in our country's infancy, which was then extended internally through Westward expansion and externally through various examples of overseas empire-building or economic imperialism. In *Rules*, this construction is embodied in the form of an "older George Washington" (Tom Walker) who quite literally instructs a younger, boyish version of himself (played by Malina and Beck's daughter, Isha Manna). Thus, from the get-go, the play follows Brecht's model of an epic theatre not tied to space or time that could look critically at a social conflict; posit "solutions to problems"; and prod the spectator out of a hypnotized, complacent, state (Willett, 170-171). By analyzing the worldview inherent in the literal language of our presidential icon, George Washington, the play forces the viewer to re-think his/her pre-conditioned responses to the abstract notion of "George Washington" and take a stand on the historic specificity of his politics and their long-term impact on current

political affairs and human relations.¹ Thus, Brecht's notion of historicification as an effective critical distancing device was quite relevant to the play's own agenda.

In addition, the larger ensemble fluidly moved between representing the viewpoint of The Living Theatre company itself while also embodying two distinct social classes as the scenes unfold: the "empowered," containing Washington and the white males of the company, and the "excluded," composed of the female cast members and people of color. While some individuation of voices occurred throughout the production, actors were discouraged from delivering lines from the perspective of a "character," and the voice or point-of-view of the collective "Living Theatre" was continually inserted into the discourse. To illustrate, the first scene closes with the following exchange: a "voice from the ensemble" comments that "Washington adopted the rules of Civility as a strategy for a successful career. They made him 'the father of his country.' He published copies and gave them to his family. They pointed the way to a kind of mission." Washington "the man" then speaks as follows: "if the conduct of Americans, while promoting their own happiness, should influence the feelings of other nations, and thereby render a service to mankind, the Americans will receive a double pleasure." After he said "nation," the larger ensemble froze and turned to the audience in a lengthy, stylized count, which led to their assuming grotesque, mask-like smiles that served as an ironic counterpoint to "Washington the man's" double-edged message (that is, simultaneously self-absorbed and altruistic). At the height of this dumb-show, a voice of "the ensemble" offered a final warning in response to Washington, and the viewers: "be careful to keep your promise" (Reznikov, 3). This was all in keeping with Brecht's notion of the actor standing outside the character as in Chinese Opera, thus destroying the audience's "illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place" (Brecht, 92). Such distancing effects were also achieved through a periodic breaking of the "fourth wall" via direct interaction with the audience and the "excluded" group's eventual movement into the physical space filled by the audience.

Design elements and staging reinforced this

critical, Brechtian distance towards Washington's "rules," but also functioned separately in order to contribute to a critical viewing of our socio-political foundations. The set consisted mostly of a bare, raked, platform with side wings, and was somewhat suggestive of an 18th century proscenium stage. The play drew attention, however, to the artifice of this scenically created "fourth wall" by establishing early, direct contact with the audience and then literally "breaking" through the physical borders. On a more visceral level of signification, the design did suggest a symbolism of sorts by creating a frame around the world order on stage that represents the shackles of Washington's rules, which the excluded caste eventually breaks through.

The production also utilized an original score that often provided an ironic counterpoint to the images and text occurring on stage. For example, "the Vermin Song" speaks to several rules about the need for personal grooming, such as "don't kill vermin, ticks, or fleas, in the sight of others. And if you see any filth or thick spittle, but your foot on it dextrously" (Reznikov, 4). Sung to a bright, sprightly, almost child-like tune, the cast eventually descended into choking and beating each other as they espoused these dictums for maintaining a proper social appearance. In the last scene, the "empowered" group forms a string ensemble (each actor really played an instrument), blithely playing away while the "Othered" group urges the audience to "break the rules" and reinvent the world order to create new "rules of civility" that would promote equality and world peace. Indeed, in his program notes, Reznikov commented on the fact that "throughout his life, Washington regarded the *Rules* as a valid and comprehensive code of conduct. He made them his own and later in life had copies made for his family. Clearly, this was a man [who] would construct his career carefully and by the book. Today, Washington's focus on the composition of his public image places him squarely among the media-wise politicians of the era" (*Rules of Civility*, program notes). The highly choreographed production frequently drew upon music and movement to create images and moods that would contradict and critique the "image" created by the literal text of Washington's rules.

This larger aural and imagistic meta-text

speaks to Brecht's notion of *gestus*, where the actor's "gesture would consciously indicate his inner feeling, as if the actor were visibly observing his own movements. Direct address to the audience would be complete, unlike the traditional hasty aside" (Styan, 142-43). This occurred throughout the production, with notable examples including the above mentioned grotesque smile; the "empowered" and the "excluded" dancing the "double faced tango" for rule 25, which was "don't appear to be glad at your enemy's misfortune" (followed by a stage direction of "the limbs of the excluded begin to explode"); or the "empowered" doffing and donning imaginary wigs to show the ludicrousness of several rules dictating the relationship between "persons of low and high degree." The most striking *gestus*-driven section involved a series of biomechanical etudes, where each actor, though sound and movement only, was supposed to communicate the following extended "message" to the audience: 1) I want to communicate something important to you; 2) I have an idea; 3) How we can behave on a higher level that transcends the rules; 4) please respond (Reznikov).

That section, and others, also reflected the Artaudian impulses of the company, as we hoped to hit the spectator viscerally through the direct presence of the actor in the theatrical space. Other choreographed sections, as with the "excluded" group's primal dance rejecting the twin symbols of colonial power (pineapple and pine cone), or the mood produced by the ensembles' kinetic, ritualistic, movements in tandem with Patrick Grant's often haunting music, created an emotional response that transcended cognitive or intellectual thought. While at times undeniably striking, the company's desire to reconcile such a Brechtian/Artaudian duality in *Rules of Civility* also seemed to pull the production in contradictory directions. After the first read-through of the script, the main criticism from the company spoke to a lack of encouragement of the audience to "break the rules" or see the potential of an alternative social model. In addition, as a result of the various Brechtian frames in the production, Reznikov and the ensemble also hoped to portray the "rule makers" as victims of their own efforts to create a power structure that would promote their self-interest in the larger culture. Thus, Washington's final rule, "work at keeping alive in your heart that

little spark of celestial fire called conscience," would hopefully resonate with an irony that extended beyond mere political or intellectual criticism when later echoed by the Living Theatre ensemble (Reznikov, 17).

The reworking of the play's conclusion addressed the potential complexity of this conflict most directly and in a manner more akin to the blunt polemics of their well-known work in the 1960s. The play's final section, then, was deliberately intended to create a searing, Artaudian-like impact on the audience. The Gulf War had broken out during our rehearsals, and consequently both Reznikov and the ensemble hoped to find some way to incorporate a pacifist-based criticism of America's military involvement into the production. The play's ending was thus re-written for the ensemble to don camouflage cloth as they moved into the audience to confront the atavistic image of the elder (Tom Walker) and younger (Isha Beck) "George Washington" on stage. Singing a refrain of "no more war" that built to a dramatic climax, the actors tore the "Desert Storm"-like material in collective protest as the "two Washingtons" cowered in fear on stage. Afterwards, the audience was invited to partake in a silent, candlelight vigil held outside the theatre in protest of the war. Although this reflective post-production event took place beyond the formal boundaries of the performance site, it was, in my opinion, more successful in bringing the cast and lingering audience members together to consider the play's premise in relation to current world affairs (*The Rules of Civility*, 1991; and unpublished manuscript).

In assessing the production's overall impact, I would agree with the observation of *Village Voice* critic Brian Parks that, "despite forays off the stage to directly confront audience members, the piece works best when kept at an ironic, and sometimes hilarious, distance" (Parks).

Reznikov himself acknowledged the thematic and dual stylistic challenges of engaging Washington's rules as follows:

It became apparent that the theatrical operation would be a double one. We would be, for all our criticism of the man and his rules, the conveyers of the message both here and abroad. In this respect, we are part of the American culture that is marketed domestically and in-

ternationally. At the same time, we are inevitably The Living Theatre, putting our own anarcho-pacifist slant across to our audiences, as eager to press our ideas upon them as was Washington.... So we have developed a play in which we speak out of one side of our faces as the patriarchal tradition and out of the other as subversives. The irony inherent in [our] presentation of Washington's text (all 100 rules are spoken...) seemed at first a limitation, but in the process of creating the play we discovered that this irony was in fact the dramatic tool by which we accomplish our purpose. It is by the repeated juxtaposition of complex scenic situations to the reductionist text that we seek to lay bare the contradictions unleashed by the application of an inflexible formula like the rules to the complexities of the real world." (Reznikov, Program Notes)

Indeed, their next major production, the 1993 *Anarchia*, delved even further into using a Brechtian irony or critical distance as a major tool. Adapted from the 1890s essay by Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, the episodic play was full of self-reflexive humor, as when one actor joked that Malina "speaks with the weight of history — it's also a burden to her." The play involved a group of Living Theatre actors preparing for their new work, *Anarchia*. As they debated the validity of assuming fictitious roles to examine Malatesta's views on anarchy, the action cut to the offices of *Flash* magazine in NYC, where the editors of the once vital, politically active magazine are considering whether or not to pursue a more commercial direction. The company cleverly used this construct to mirror and analyze its own past and declining popularity in recent years (and how their conclusions might impact on the future direction of The Living Theatre). This willingness to examine what Reznikov called their own "political baggage" (warts and all), in the hopes of "inspiring the audience to do the same in its own terms" (Program notes, *Anarchia*, 1993), further reflected a subtle shift in their perception of the nature of audience involvement.

Indeed, the most successful section of the play reflected this desire to posit change through example and dialogue as opposed to didacticism or crude political rhetoric. It involved each of the performers

addressing the spectators directly to explain why they had committed their lives to anarchist principles, and climaxed with the still charismatic Judith Malina taking center stage. She confessed to the audience how the company has often struggled with its exploration of anarchist-pacifist principles over the years, including attempts (often messy) at non-hierarchical collective collaboration and communal living. Malina ended by politely asking the onlookers to discover the meaning of anarchy for themselves, and thanking them for attending the performance (*Anarchia*). When recalling images of a wild-eyed Malina shouting slogans at angry-looking conservative spectators during the 1960s, such work indicated that times had indeed changed for The Living Theatre. In response to their work of the 1980s, Arthur Sanier observed the following: "to concentrate on the aesthetic, to concentrate on the form is to demand what Brecht always demanded and what the Living Theatre rarely pays serious heed to. It has never entertained (recall Brecht's dictum on entertaining) through the subtleties of performance; its brilliance has not usually been measured in the way it shapes a work" (Sanier, 55). In contrast to their earlier, more didactic productions, the welcome humor and structured form of aspects of *Rules of Civility* and *Anarchia* reflected a distinctive Brechtian influence on their work in the 1990s.

More recently, The Living Theatre is now in residence at the Centro Living Europa near Milan, Italy. Recent productions include an ongoing piece called *Not in My Name*, which protests capital punishment and is continually presented on days where executions were scheduled in the US. Another major current project, *Capital Changes*, explores the impact of the emergence of Western capitalism between 1400 and 1800, and draws upon their tradition of working within, as they put it, "the political theatre of Piscator and Brecht." As their current mission statement proclaims, they employ these, and other techniques, "to call into question who we are in the social environment of the theater, to undo the knots that lead to social misery ... to move from the theater to the street and from the street to the theater" ("Mission Statement," Living Theatre website, February 2002). Like Brecht, then, they remain optimistic and continue to believe in the power and possibility of theatre to make the world a better

place. As Brecht himself once wrote in *Galileo*: "the old days are over... For the last hundred years humanity has seemed to be waiting for something. The cities are stuffy; so are men's heads. Superstition and the plague. But now we can say: nothing has to remain the way it is. For everything is in motion, my friend" (quoted in Willet; 213-214).

University of Montevallo

Notes

1. Susan Jeffords evaluates a similar kind of construction in her book *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*. In that study, she draws a parallel between the re-emergence of a post-Vietnam "hard body" national American identity and the image of Ronald Reagan as our president (and how this relationship was reflected in various films of the 1980s). Thus, "Ronald Reagan" represented a site of "national fantasy" or "became one of the ways through which many Americans felt a connection to their national identity" (Jeffords, 12).

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THE CREATIVE APPROPRIATION OF THE ERBE OF BERTOLT BRECHT IN THE GDR POLITICAL SONG

David Robb

The legacy of Bertolt Brecht pervaded the political song movement in the GDR from beginning to end of the republic's history. Two distinct approaches to this legacy emerged. On one hand the *Kampflieder* of Brecht and Hanns Eisler were nurtured in the schools and featured regularly in the repertoires of the workers' and army choirs and later in the *FDJ-Singgruppen* of the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹ In the official public arena songs such as "Solidaritätslied" and "Lied der Einheitsfront" became synonymous with convention and conformity. New songs were viewed by the authorities with suspicion. The official role of the political song was defined as follows: "Die neuen Lieder werden für die Politik von Partei und Regierung geschaffen. Sie sind nicht mehr Kampfmittel einer unterdrückten Klasse gegen eine Klasse von Ausbeutern, sondern Ausdruck der gemeinsamen Interessen aller Werktätigen."² Stripped of its revolutionary attributes the official political song degenerated into a propaganda tool of the state, singing clubs such as *Der Oktoberklub* functioning as "politische Instrumente des Jugendverbandes."³ Other singers nonetheless took a more critical view of their political song inheritance. For example, in Wolf Biermann's "Herr Brecht" from 1961, Brecht's revolutionary legacy has been reduced to the stuffy routine of the work carried out in his archive. The roguish ghost of Brecht mocks this fact in the style of François Villon: "Und er lachte sich eins/ Daß er denen so viel Arbeit/ gemacht hatte/ (langweilig solche Arbeit)/ Und er lächelte unverschämte/ bescheiden/ und war zufriedene."⁴ Biermann's provocative appropriation of the *Erbe* contributed to his ban in 1965. He himself claimed: "Ich sprach im anmaßenden Ton des rechtmäßigen politischen Erben. Und das war auch der Grund, warum ich in meinen Liedern nicht in Sklavensprache sprach [...] Die Folgen blieben nicht aus."⁵

Biermann's example reflected a dialectic in critical literature and political song in the GDR: the government's endeavors to force the dominant culture (which entailed a celebration of the German

literary⁶ and revolutionary *Erbe*⁷ to which the GDR state laid claim) on artists and the general population were matched by the latter's creative acquisition of this. In more dissident *Liedermacher* circles Brecht and Eisler's modernistic techniques of montage and "Verfremdung" were appropriated for critical purposes. This approach did not occur without friction. It was precisely the more formalistic aspects of Brecht and Eisler which had fallen foul of the GDR authorities in the 1950s for diverging from the tenets of Socialist Realism as defined by Georg Lukacs. Walter Ullbricht had denounced Brecht's *Urfaust* production of 1952 and Eisler's opera libretto *Johann Faustus* of 1953. Emmerich writes: "Die SED ließ nicht zu, daß Goethe 'formalistisch verunstaltet wird, daß man die großen Ideen in Goethes *Faust* zu einer Karikatur macht, wie [...] zum Beispiel in dem sogenannten *Faust* von Eisler und in [Brecht's] Inszenierung des *Urfaust*.'" ⁸ From the mid-1960s, however, modernist techniques increasingly and controversially found their way into the GDR mainstream literature. In the political song scene Brechtian defamiliarization and Eislerian montage was appropriated by Wolf Biermann in his performances and compositions. Exaggerated gestures and mimicry (reminiscent of Epic Theatre) underlined or created an ironic tension with the content of his lyrics. In "Ballade vom Mann, der eigenhändig beide Füße abhackt" ⁹, Biermann's parody of the self-defeating policies of the Party, syllables are spat out, vowels are grotesquely elongated in a caricature of conventional singing performance. This all contributed to the message of mockery that characterized Biermann's *Spottlieder*. Indeed Biermann's approach to music had much of the stamp of his former musical mentor at the Berliner Ensemble, Hanns Eisler. The latter had maintained that music should express the dialectics of the class struggle. This could be seen, for example, in Eisler's composition for Tucholsky's "Lied der Wohltätigkeit" ¹⁰ where a light-hearted cabaret chanson style is juxtaposed with the marching rhythm to parody the sham of the capitalists' good intentions towards the workers. In Brecht and Eisler's "Solidaritätslied" ¹¹ ecclesiastical modal elements (and their associations with collectivity) were used to promote class consciousness while popular jazz inflexes maximized communication and simultaneously kept the audience alert

by breaking up the rigidity of the march. ¹² In the 1960s Biermann adopted this dialectical approach to support the critical content of his new texts. In "Acht Argumente(n) für die Beibehaltung des Namens Stalinallee" ¹³ the carousel music conjures up the atmosphere of a "Volksfest bei Straßeneinweihung" ¹⁴ which caricatures the gay abandon with which the Party will rename streets in order to manipulate history. Music frequently promotes dialogic interplay between textual levels. In "Der Hugenottenfriedhof" the strolling rhythm accompanies the singer's walk past the gravestones of famous socialist dignitaries (e.g. Brecht, Eisler, Heartfield). The change from major to minor key underlines the shift from anecdotal narrative to melancholy observation where Biermann laments the passing of the revolutionary verve associated with these icons of the socialist *Erbe*: "Wie nah sind uns manche Toten, doch/ Wie tot sind uns manche, die leben." ¹⁵

But if Biermann had exploited Brechtian motifs to underscore his message that socialism had to be reformed, the clampdown in the arts following his expatriation in 1976 discouraged any such explicitness. Nonetheless, a new experimental trend in song performance emerged known as *Liedertheater*, which used formal techniques to attempt to circumvent the negative effects of censorship. With its combination of song, scenes, masked role-play, backdrops and stage objects it derived very much from Brechtian theater and Erwin Piscator's proletarian revues. *Liedertheater* exploded the frontiers of political song performance in the GDR and paralleled the young Prenzlauer Berg poets' metaphorical "breaking out" from the rigidified structures they had been born into. ¹⁶ Leading pioneers of *Liedertheater* included the group "Schicht," who in 1975 had developed out of the Songgruppe TU Dresden, and Gerhard Gundermann's "Brigade Feuerstein," who in 1978 emerged out of the "Singeclub Hoyerswerda." Above all, the group Karls Enkel, led by the young poets Hans-Eckardt Wenzel and Steffen Mensching will form the focus of this discussion. A vital aspect of Karls Enkel was their critical approach towards the GDR literary and proletarian *Erbe*. Official cultural policy had revered writers from Goethe through Marx up to Brecht to such an extent that Heiner Müller had spoken of "einer Diktatur der Toten über die Lebenden." ¹⁷ Karls Enkel sought to revive a

meaningful relationship to these so-called "dead poets." With their Brecht- and Eisler-influenced montage technique, they presented a defamiliarizing view of work of writers such as Erich Mühsam, Johannes R. Becher, Goethe and even Karl Marx himself.¹⁸ *Die komische Tragödie des 18. Brumaire nach Karl Marx*¹⁹ from 1983 presented a Brechtian combination of the clownesque and social-philosophical analysis. With their skull-like death-masks, the cast portrayed the defeated Parisian proletariat of 1848. Via a Brechtian montage technique, whereby Marx quotations from *Brumaire* are set to music and juxtaposed with present-day texts of Wenzel and Mensching, the time levels of 1848 and 1983 converge. The workers can therefore be seen as "the revolutionary dead" of history. Against this background of failed revolutions, Marx's utopian predictions appear highly ironic. A worker reflects wistfully: "Was bleibt, sind Tote, Daten, ein paar Lieder, / Ein schöner Traum, ein nicht erfüllter Zweck."²⁰

The focus of the production is Marx's observation: "Hegel bemerkt irgendwo, daß alle großen weltgeschichtlichen Tatsachen und Personen sich sozusagen zweimal ereignen. Er hat vergessen, hinzufügen: das eine Mal als Tragödie, das andere Mal als Farce."²¹ Karls Enkel deduce mischievously that history repeats itself because the social conditions prevent people realizing their better selves and that this is *still* the case in the GDR. In its allusions to corruption Dramaturg Heiner Maaß later described this production as "eine *Dreigroschenoper* für die DDR [...] der härteste Hammer, den wir gemacht haben."²² To underline this point, Karls Enkel make use of musical and textual motifs from *Die Dreigroschenoper*. The song "Des Menschen Himmelreich," for example, recalls how Louis Bonaparte bought off the army with garlic sausage and cigars. Played to a decadent tango accompaniment, this celebrates the ease with which people allow themselves to be corrupted: "Der Mensch ist viel zu leicht gemacht/Und viel zu schnell zu kaufen[...]"²³ This is a reference to the Brecht lines "Denn für dieses Leben ist der Mensch nicht schlecht genug" from "Das Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens."²⁴ Wenzel and Mensching's subsequent lines "Der Mensch ist innerst Demokrat" and "Der Mensch ist innerst gut" echo the sentiments of the

line: "der Mensch ist schlecht./ Wir wären gut – anstatt so roh/ Doch die Verhältnisse sind nicht so."²⁵ The connection to *Die Dreigroschenoper* is emphasized when the music flows into the Kurt Weill melody of "Salomon Song." The montage technique allows the audience to see the ironic relevance to the GDR present – Louis Bonaparte being certainly not the last leader to buy off the proletariat with petit-bourgeois comforts. The striking parallels with Brecht, both in term of form and content, stop with the production's comical denouement. Although the GDR is implied to be an historical farce, the production stops short of calling for change. The group's sponsors – *Der Kulturbund der DDR* who had commissioned the production for the centenary of Marx's death – would never have allowed it.²⁶ The conclusion of Karls Enkels *18th Brumaire* is that man basically wants to be good, but the burden of history prevents this: "Das ist ein altes Stück, mein Kind, / Der Stoff ist bekannt, aber neu sind die Stars, / Das eine Mal als Tragödie, Das andere Mal als Farce."²⁷

Another Brechtian influence on critical *Liedermacher* of the GDR was the Villonesque gesture with its roots in the profanities of carnival. Inspired by the Brecht of *Hauspostille*, Wolf Biermann adopted the role-play of the anarchic 15th century poet François Villon for his lyrical confrontations with authority. By invoking Villon, Brecht and Biermann were linking into the carnivalesque tradition as described by Mikhail Bakhtin, where the self-renewing aspect of the lower body motif contains an anti-authoritarian moment.²⁸ This can be seen in both Brecht and Biermann's at times cursory language, the references to the body²⁹ and the physical pleasures of eating, drinking and sex. After Biermann's expatriation in 1976 the plebeian-poetic line of tradition embodied by Villon, Heine and Brecht was continued in the GDR by the group Karls Enkel and found particular expression in their carnivalesque masked song-theatre. In the *Hammer=Rehwi* of 1982 the poem "Égalité" degrades the lofty world of leading politicians down to the level of what Bakhtin terms "the lower bodily stratum": "Sie hocken auf den Toiletten/ Über den Knien wie du, die Hosen/ Heruntergelassen, ohnmächtige Machtvolle Körper [...] / Ohne Auftrag, in der Einsamkeit/ Der Kacheln der Zelle, allein mit ihren/ Realpolitischen

Därmen."³⁰ The prudish associations of the rococo musical accompaniment underscore the parody.

In Karls Enkel *Liedertheater* a profane and artificial stage world was constructed reminiscent of Brecht's Epic Theatre. In particular Wenzel and Mensching's embracing of the timeless *chronotope*³¹ of the clown's world was a development which could be seen in relation to formalistic trends of the time. In the GDR from the late-1960s onwards history was no longer viewed in the traditional Marxist sense "as a rationally transparent, dynamic, and linear process, which would ultimately lead to the communist goal."³² Rather there was the acute sense amongst writers of being "out of step", of a "gap in time."³³ This idea of a break with cultural tradition was expressed by an adoption of modernist, anti-realist literary techniques such as, in the case of Wolf, the art of interior monologue and montage of multiple time levels. For the younger writers, those "born into"³⁴ the historical standstill, the contradiction of this hiatus was even more keenly experienced. In the poetry of Mensching, Wenzel, Uwe Kolbe, Jörg Kowalski and others this resulted in a "subjective acquisition"³⁵ of history. Displaying a refined Brechtian "Ästhetik der Brüche,"³⁶ Karls Enkel's *Liedertheater* constituted a theatrical transposition of this montage-based subjective acquisition of history. The *chronotope* of the clown's world, where time and space have no logical contours, is an extension of this.³⁷ Traditionally, the grotesque carnivalesque imagery associated with clowns underlined an otherworldliness – the Harlequin had the ability to temporarily knock society off course, out of its groove or "consecrated furrows,"³⁸ as Mikhail Bakhtin would say. This can also be seen in the carnival perception of time. Carnival of the Middle Ages celebrated the cyclical nature of life, recurring events such as seasons, births and deaths etc. on days in which social hierarchies were suspended and time was temporarily frozen in its tracks. With the dawning of the age of Enlightenment time became seen as a linear continuum. The relative timelessness of the clown's grotesque world, with its roots in pre-modern folk culture, would clash with the logical structures and hierarchical constraints of the new society.³⁹ By the twentieth century, however, writers such as Benjamin were reacting against this concept of time. In *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* he states history

can no longer be seen as an empty, homogenous continuity of time but rather, that history, particularly in periods of revolution, reacts explosively with the present creating what he terms a "Jetztzeit" in which time stands still.⁴⁰ For Benjamin: "Die [neuen] Kalender zählen die Zeit also nicht wie Uhren."⁴¹ From this standpoint we can see the significance of Brecht's appropriation of the "time-space negation"⁴² from traditional popular theatre such as the absurd slapstick, the improbable disguises, the mime and the grotesque masks. Indeed Benjamin himself documents how Brecht credited a clown, his then close friend Karl Valentin, with giving him the original idea of epic "Verfremdung." In the rehearsals for *Edward II* a comment of Valentin's inspired the artificial portrayal of the soldiers whereby their fear was accentuated by the chalking of their faces.⁴³

Wenzel and Mensching, as the clowns Weh and Meh, are very much part of the Brecht and Valentin tradition of twentieth century clowning in Germany. Brecht's "freie Verfügbarkeit von Raum und Zeit"⁴⁴ in the context of clowns is reminiscent of Bakhtin's theory of the carnival chronotope. Literally meaning "time-space,"⁴⁵ the chronotope is a concept which reflects a temporal and spatial perspective of a work of art. In contrast to the static world outlook of the Middle Ages, the carnival chronotope was spatially universal, temporally reflective of the "inconclusive present."⁴⁶ Wenzel and Mensching's carnivalesque antics – the ambiguous hybrids and absurd dialogues – are the embodiment of such spatial and temporal transgression.⁴⁷ As their director Heiner Maaß writes, "der Clown [verrückt] sich ins Zeitlose."⁴⁸ This is evident in their *Wende* production *Altes aus der Dä Dä eR* where Weh and Meh glide from scene to scene with a perfect awareness of their "chronotope." The GDR reality is reflected in a grotesque light and thereby relativized, made to appear as an ambivalent part of a greater universe. No longer songs and revue sketches, this now constitutes theater; the theme is the comical and sad disintegration of the GDR or rather an alienated, grotesque reflection of this called the "Dä Dä eR." What Bakhtin terms the "kleine Zeit" of everyday reality is abandoned for the "große Zeit" of carnivalesque clowns' tradition. Bakhtin writes:

Nur dank der Volkskultur gewinnt die Gegen-

wart Anschluß an die "große Zeit". Sie verleiht den karnevalisierten Bildern von Kollektiven Tiefe und Zusammenhang [...] ein in die "kleine Zeit" gehöriges Phänomen kann rein negativ, nur verhaßt sein; in der "großen Zeit" ist es hingegen ambivalent und als eine des Seins teilhaftige Erscheinung immer willkommen.⁴⁹

In *Altes aus der Dä Dä eR*, renamed *Letztes aus der Da Da eR* after the fall of the Wall, the scenes and songs reflect the historical turning point. With a mixture of rage, grief, relief and anticipation, the clowns and their audience lay the GDR finally to rest in a chorus of laughter. Weh and Meh constantly manipulate the perspective of the audience. They can do this since clowns have by virtue of their mask, once again in the words of Bakhtin, a "metaphorical significance [...] one cannot take them literally [...] they are not what they seem [...] their being coincides with their role, and outside this role they simply do not exist."⁵⁰ Weh and Meh can reflect any standpoint they choose whether it be that of the humbled leadership, the betrayed "Altkommunist," the Stasi or Party members who have changed colors overnight,⁵¹ the disappointed left-wing intellectuals or the reemerging nationalist lynch-mobs.⁵² The audience, seeing their own reflection in the parodied characters, are drawn into the unfolding comedy and tragedy of the GDR.

Karls Enkel used masks for the first time in the *Hammer=Rehwü* in 1982. Here they were latching on to a tradition going back to *commedia dell'arte* which Brecht had also exploited to great length. Rudolf Münz writes how the donning of masks in the Venetian carnival amounted to "die Ent-Larvung der Maskenhaftigkeit des Lebens durch Masken!"⁵³ In *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, to name but one example from Brecht, Shen Te's masked transformation into Shui Ta can be seen as a response to the disguises and intrigues of capitalism. In a similar way the masked characters of the *Hammer=Rehwü* reflected the "Maskenhaftigkeit des Lebens" in the early 1980s, where, as Wenzel remembered, "'Kriegsgeräte' hießen 'Friedenswaffen', der Beschluß, Raketen zu stationieren hieß nicht 'Stationierungsbeschluß' sondern 'Doppelbeschluß' [und] der Pazifismus bekam die Maske des 'Klassengegners/ Kriegsgegners'."⁵⁴ In

this way the *Hammer=Rehwü* depicts a temporary upside-down world, reflecting the idea of disguise and deception. Stage objects such as bicycle wheels, life-rings and clarinets are played with in ways contrary to their common use. This recalls the carnivalesque tradition where, according to Bakhtin, objects are "turned inside out, utilized in the wrong way [...]" Household objects are turned into arms, kitchen utensils and dishes become musical instruments.⁵⁵ In the *Hammer=Rehwü* Wenzel's clarinet, for example, functions as a rifle or a telescope. Mensching cleans a pistol with the cleaning pipe of a recorder. This is a precursor of the Wenzel and Mensching's duo production *Neues aus der Da Da eR*⁵⁶ of the same year in which a music stand (again reminiscent of a Valentin scene "Die verhexten Notenständer"⁵⁷) becomes a model railway engine which will take Wenzel to the West on his 65th birthday. Here the techniques of disguise and deception support a parody of travel taboos in the GDR. The various legs and arms of the music stand are denoted as parts of the engine to which the clowns attach conspiratorial significance: Playing on the power of association heightened by the atmosphere of taboo Weh and Meh increasingly draw the audience into a game of nonsense which ends in the clowns' farcical entanglement with the music stand.

In the *Hammer=Rehwü* the upside-down world is further reflected in the main characters who are all caricatures of GDR social roles: "Der Diktator", "Der General", "Der Mitläufer" and "Der Clown."⁵⁸ These all undergo transformations and are ultimately unmasked to reveal their human vulnerability. In short, the masks of the *Hammer=Rehwü*, like the *commedia dell'arte*,⁵⁹ celebrate a joyful relativity against the backdrop of rigid social straight-jacketing and conformity.⁶⁰ While there are certain similarities to Brecht's clown scenes of *Mann ist Mann* and *Das Badener Lehrstück* (see below) there is a difference in the ambivalent conclusion and the lack of a political solution. There is merely a carnivalesque undermining of anything claiming permanence. This is conveyed in the Mensching lines "Ich bin das Meer/ ich werde euch überdauern,"⁶¹ or in the image of the man-made Berlin Wall which is contrasted with Berlin's eternal River Spree: "Nicht aus Stahl und Pappmache/ Nein aus Wasser ist die Spree."⁶² But nobody is directly attacked; if there is a moral it

is merely that everyone is in the same boat and must sink or swim together: "O wir tragen unser Schicksal mit Geduld/ An der ganzen Scheiße sind wir selber Schuld!"⁶³ Such ambivalent laughter is reminiscent of the carnival which according to Bakhtin celebrates "the wholeness of the world's comic aspect" as opposed to setting itself up in judgment over an other.⁶⁴ This is emphasized when, in an ironic inversion of a Brechtian epilogue, the cast declare to the audience that there will be no moral:

Ihr aber, die ihr nutzlos rungesessen/ Mit euren fiesen Füßen, dicken Bäuchen, Schiefgegrinsten Fressen./ Was sagt ihr nun? / Was nehmt ihr mit ins Heim? / [...] Mein Freund, ich will nicht sagen, du bist böse/ Doch etwas dümmlich hockst du hier/ Nervös, auf deinem Stuhl, Weil die Moral, es ist fatal./ Nicht mitgeliefert wird in diesem Fall.⁶⁵

Such ambivalence was criticized by political dissidents of the time. It did, however, reflect more realistically Karl's Enkel's political stance at the time, given their participation in the structures they were comically sending up.⁶⁶ In retrospect, nonetheless, their message of transience and relativity (in view of the *Wende* of 1989) was more anticipatorily subversive than some dissidents gave them credit for.

In Karl's Enkel's clowns motifs we see further influence from, but also differences to clownesque aspects of Brecht. *Mann ist Mann*, for example, contains many carnivalesque elements: the comic transformation, and objects (such as the artificial elephant) which are clearly not what they are said to be. But Galy Gay's transformation into Jeriah Jip is not a festive identity change (as in the *Hammer-Rehwitz*), but rather a comical analysis of the loss of an identity and the social conditions which cause this.⁶⁷ Begun around 1920 when Brecht was writing one-act farces "under the impact of the great Munich clown Karl Valentin,"⁶⁸ it models the concept of how maskedness and disguise can be used to exert power over an other. When Gay is persuaded of the authenticity of an artificial elephant which he attempts to sell,⁶⁹ this anticipates the loss of his own true self. The deception reflects an upside-down world, where identity is relative, and man, effectively reduced to a commodity, equals nothing. Similarly Begbick's song: "Beharre nicht auf der Welle/ die sich an deinem Fuß bricht, solange er/ Im

Wasser steht, werden sich/ Neue Wellen an ihm brechen"⁷⁰ depicts a nihilistic relativity, rather than the exuberant celebration of metamorphosis that characterizes carnival.

In the *Badener Lehrstück* Brecht took the clownesque analysis of *Mann ist Mann* further to support the didactic implication that the world should be changed. The surreal "Clownsnummer" functions as an artificial abstraction of a real issue -- in this case, of people's inability to help one another in society as it stands. The scene portrays the vicious circle whereby an individual needs help because of the social power relationships. These, in turn, only further his exploitation. The clown Herr Schmitt's belief that he can preserve his individuality is a delusion since he has already given himself up to the power structure of society; the violent dismemberment of his body -- the sawing off of his feet and the sawing of his head in two⁷¹ -- by the other clowns Einser and Zweier (who pretend to be helping him) is an expression of this. Through this grotesque abstraction Brecht points to his conclusion that the only solution is to change society.⁷²

This limb-severing motif was used for satirical purposes in the GDR. Biermann used it in his parody of the SED, "Ballade vom Mann, der eigenhändig beide Füße abhackt." Wenzel and Menschling exploited it in their "Scheißszene"⁷³ from *Neues aus der Da Da eR* which mirrors the vicious circle portrayed in the *Badener Lehrstück*. Here, the clowns Weh and Meh are overwhelmed by the GDR blues. Meh cures Weh's misery by hammering a giant nail through his head. Weh proceeds to wrap Meh up completely in cotton padding so that he may no longer perceive the causes of his affliction. The clowns' futile solutions to the problem are a comical abstraction of a no-way-out situation in the GDR. People are politically impotent in face of an unchanging hierarchy, but simultaneously -- through subservience and inner retreat -- also a passive contributor to the problem. Like Herr Schmitt and the characters of Karl Valentin, the suffering of Weh and Meh is comical and ludicrous because, as Lee Baxandall writes of the *Badener Lehrstück*, it is "endured without comprehension of its causes."⁷⁴ But there is no offered solution, and here we see the main difference to Brecht: *Neues aus der Da Da eR* is clown's theatre as opposed to a didactic play.

While the tension between the individual and the collective is exposed, the laughter resolves this tension. The audience are not invited, as with Brecht, to change society's structure, merely to laugh at the ridiculousness of it.⁷⁵

If Herr Schmitt or Galy Gay are clowns in the tradition of the stupid August who learn nothing from their defeats, other clown figures of Brecht reveal different characteristics. Schweyk, for example, feigns stupidity of the fool to outwit authority. This is a dialogic device, according to Bakhtin, whereby the lies and hypocrisies of society can be uncovered.⁷⁶ Schweyk is dismissed from the army for being an idiot,⁷⁷ he talks himself out of arrest,⁷⁸ his idiocy gives him the *Narrenfreiheit* to mention taboo subjects such as the "Kazetts" in front of the SS.⁷⁹ But his nonsensical riddle-like speeches frequently have a sting in their tail. For example, he concludes his at first seemingly harmless comments on Hitler's grand construction plans with the line: "Unbegreifliches, was sich ein Schenie so ausdenkt, wenns nix zu tun hat."⁸⁰ Wenzel and Mensching productions reflect variations on this motif of stupidity. In the "Paßfoto-Szene", Weh is the fool who cannot understand the logic of a bureaucracy which prevents him from obtaining a passport photograph. Meh, the photographer, continually asks Weh: "Waren Sie schon da?", a veiled reference to the Stasi. To this Weh replies: "Ich war noch nicht bei Ihnen. Ich möchte doch ein Paßfoto."⁸¹ In this way they parody taboos surrounding travel restrictions to the West. In *Spanier aller Länder* from 1985, in which Wenzel and Mensching play the characters of Don Quixote and Sancho Pansa, the latter's stupidity acts as a foil for the former's lofty idealism. As Bakhtin observes: "Stupidity (incomprehension) in the novel [...] interacts dialogically with an intelligence (a lofty pseudo intelligence) with which it polemicalizes and whose mask it tears away. [...] Such is the source of a multitude of different novelistic [...] dialogic oppositions [as in] Don Quixote."⁸² Via such dialogues Karls Enkel critically address the theme of utopia (as embodied by the spirit of the International Brigade) and its waning significance in the 1980s. In the opening clowns' scene of *Spanier aller Länder* Quixote displays typical recklessness in mistaking a flock of sheep for his arch-enemy Ali-fanfaron. Pansa foresees the on-coming disaster, but

is admonished by Quixote for his stupidity and fear: "Trägst Du also so große Bangigkeit, so abseitige dich und laß mich allein, denn allein bin ich hinreichend, der Partei den Sieg zu verschaffen, zu welcher ich mich schlage."⁸³ This hybridic use of the word "Partei" (in a GDR context) anticipates the farcical result of Quixote's unconsidered action. Quixote is thrashed and literally brought back down to earth as Pansa comments: "Elend ist die Welt, und sie will, wie ihr, wohl nie klüger werden." On this abstract level Karls Enkel reassess the *Erbe* of the Spanish Civil War in the GDR.

The Quixote/Pansa configuration is a clownesque duality from a tradition of popular festive forms which Brecht was also well acquainted with. They are "a typical comic pair based on contrasts: fat and thin, old and young, tall and short."⁸⁴ Such pairs reflect the two-world condition of the carnival. They are mutually dependent on each other, often their characteristics are reversed or become a reflection of another, as for example in the pairings of King Lear and the Fool, or Chaplin and the Kid. Brecht appropriated this tradition with dual master and servant configurations such as Puntilla and Matti. With regard to *Schweyk im zweiten Weltkrieg* Jan Knopf comments on the relationship between the petit bourgeois class represented by Schweyk's friend, the carnivalesque, ever-hungry Baloun, and Hitler: "Hitler und Baloun sind keine Gegensätze, sondern Entsprechungen."⁸⁵ Similarly the small man Schweyk is brought together with the "great" man Hitler, a meeting which is anticipated by an earlier comment of Schweyk's: „Der Hitler läßt sich nicht durch jeden beliebigen Trottel ersetzen."⁸⁶ Hitler is thus reduced to a clown, like Schweyk, wandering lost in the Russian winter. But as Richard Sheppard writes, Brecht had to "de-carnivalise Schweyk to make him credible as a proletarian hero and moral political mouthpiece."⁸⁷ The clownesque mutual dependency is dispensed with to give Schweyk the possibility of refusing Hitler allegiance and assassinating him – this expressing Brecht's continuing hope of resistance from within the German ranks in 1943.⁸⁸

After German unification, bereft of an utopian perspective (the hope that socialism could be re-formed) and now absorbed into the capitalist West, Wenzel & Mensching's clowns aesthetic shifted

more towards the direct political comment of Brecht's "Clownsnummer." In 1992 they staged the Rimbaud-inspired *Aufenthalt in der Hölle*.⁸⁹ In the "Aktentaschen-Szene" the clowns enact a bitter master-servant conflict in which Meh is commanded by Weh to open a brief case *which does not exist*. This is an abstraction of the servile situation in which many east Germans found themselves in the early 1990s when they were absorbed into the West German economic system. As soon as Meh submits himself to Weh's psychological power game, he is condemned to lose, because Weh determines the rules. Weh entangles Meh in his power game to ensure that Meh surrenders the non-existent briefcase, its contents and ultimately his own life. Step for step Meh gambles all of his cards, convinced that he is reaching a compromise with his adversary. The image of Meh's dependence is reinforced by the choreographed physical interaction which seems subservient to a mathematical logic. Here, as in Brecht, there is no comical resolution. Meh surrenders the imaginary brief case, submits to Weh's power and loses everything.⁹⁰

In conclusion, by applying Brechtian form to their political song performances Karls Enkel pioneered the art of *Liedertheater* in the GDR. In doing this they were able to parody the society which claimed Brecht as its cultural inheritance. Although their clowning stopped short of drawing explicit political conclusions, it provided a temporary upside-down world of laughter and mockery, which revealed the masked nature of public life and created a dialogue with the dogmas of the dominant culture.

Endnotes

1. For a summary of the beginnings of the *Singebewegung* see Lutz Kirchenwitz, *Folk, Chanson und Liedermacher in der DDR. Chroniken, Kritiken, Kaisergeburtstagssänger* (Berlin: Dietz, 1993), 16-33.
2. Inge Lammel, *Das Arbeiterlied* (Leipzig: 1970), 82. Quoted in Kirchenwitz, 86.
3. Günther Jahn, 6. Tagung des ZK der SED (Berlin, 1972), 55. Quoted in Kirchenwitz, 50. As David Bathrick states, the public arena tended to be viewed as "ein Forum für Bewusstseinsbildung und nicht für die öffentliche Auseinandersetzung." David Bathrick, "Kultur und Öffentlichkeit in der DDR." In *Literatur der DDR in den siebziger Jahren*, ed. P.U. Hohendahl and P. Herminghouse

- (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 57.
4. Wolf Biermann, "Herr Brecht." In *Alle Lieder* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1991), 49.
5. Wolf Biermann, "Nur wer sich ändert, bleibt sich treu." In *Die Zeit*, 24.8.90, 44. Quoted in Kirchenwitz, 24.
6. See Wolfgang Emmerich, *Kleine Literatur der DDR-Geschichte. Erweiterte Neuausgabe* (Leipzig: Kiepenheuer, 1997), 84-86 and 122.
7. See Karen Leeder, "'Traumhafter Ausflug': The Dimensions of History." In *Breaking Boundaries. A New Generation of Poets in the GDR* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 108-143.
8. Walter Ulbricht, quoted in Emmerich, 123.
9. Wolf Biermann, "Ballade vom Mann, der eigenhändig beide Füße abhackt." On *Es geht sein sozialistischer Gang* LP, (CBS 1977).
10. See Ernst Busch, "Lied der Wohltätigkeit." On *Ernst Busch singt Tucholsky/Eisler. Merkt ihr nicht*, CD (Barbarossa, 1997).
11. See Ernst Busch, "Das Solidaritätslied." On *Der rote Orpheus*, CD (Barbarossa, 1996).
12. Albert Betz, *Hanns Eisler Political Musician*, transl. by Bill Hopkins (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 80.
13. Wolf Biermann, "Acht Argumente(n) für die Beibehaltung des Namens Stinallee." On *Warte nicht auf bess're Zeiten*, LP (CBS, 1973).
14. Georg-Friedrich Kühn, "Kutsche und Kutscher. Die Musik des Wolf Biermann." In *Wolf Biermann*, ed Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Edition Text und Kritik, 1980), 124.
15. Biermann, "Der Hugenottenfriedhof." On *Warte nicht auf bess're Zeiten*, CD (Zweiteausendeins, 1996).
16. Leeder, 4. Here Leeder relates to Uwe Kolbe's term "Die Hineingeborenen."
17. Heiner Müller, "Das Böse ist die Zukunft." In *Jenseits der Nation* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1991), 75. Quoted in Leeder, 122.
18. See David Robb, *Zwei Clowns im Lande des verlorenen Lachens. Das Liedertheater Wenzel & Mensching* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1998), 31-50.
19. Karls Enkel, *Die komische Tragödie des 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte oder Ohrfeigen sind schlimmer als Dolchstöße*, unpublished manuscript and video recording (Berlin: Akademie der Künste der DDR, 1983).
20. *Die komische Tragödie* (unpaginated).
21. Ibid. From Karl Marx, *Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1974), 15.
22. Personal interview with Heiner Maaß (24.3.94).
23. *Die komische Tragödie*.
24. Bertolt Brecht, *Die Dreigroschenoper*. In *Die Stücke von Bertolt Brecht in einem Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 195.
25. Ibid, 181.
26. See Robb, *Zwei Clowns*, 88-92.
27. *Die komische Tragödie*.
28. See Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Grotesque Image of the

- Body." In *Rabelais and his World* (Indiana: Bloomington, 1984), 303-367.
29. Brecht had used this motif in *Baal* and in early poems such as "Vom François Villon." In this he wrote: "Drum lud er ein, daß man am Arsch ihn leckte/ Wenn er beim Fressen war und es ihm schmeckte." In *Gesammelte Werke Band 8*, 38-39. In Biermann's "Ballade auf den Dichter François Villon" profane language clashes with the piousness of officialdom: "Die Eitelkeit der höchsten Herrn/Konnt meilenweit er riechen/ Verewigt hat er manchen Arsch/ In den er mußte kriechen." In *Alle Lieder*, 121.
30. Karls Enkel, Wacholder, Beckert & Schulz: *Die Hammer=Rehwü*, unpublished document and video (Berlin: Lied-Zentrum der Akademie der Künste der DDR, 1982). *Égalité* published in Steffen Mensching: *Erinnerung an eine Milchglasscheibe. Gedichte* (Halle/Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1984) 12.
31. See Bakhtin: *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas, 1981), 84.
32. Leeder, 108.
33. Marilyn Sibley Fries (ed.), *Responses to Christa Wolf. Critical Essays* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1989), 47.
34. I am using Uwe Kolbe's term "Die Hineingeborenen." qtd. in Leeder, 4.
35. Ibid, 115.
36. Karin Hirdina, "Präzision ohne Pingelichkeit. Wenzel und Mensching im Gespräch mit Karin Hirdina," *Temperamente* 4/1984, 38.
37. See Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84.
38. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 89.
39. Margot Berthold writes about the political problems which the grotesque Hanswurst figure encountered during the 18th century which resulted in him being banned in Leipzig in 1737. "Alterloses Theater: Commedia dell'arte. Gestern und Heute." In *Gaukler, Clowns und Komödianten. Tragikomödie im Film. Von Chaplin bis Fellini* (Gerolzhofen: Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft und Medienerziehung, 1988), 23.
40. See Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, transl. by Anna Bostock (London: NLB, 1973). Introduction by Stanley Mitchell, xvii-xviii.
41. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften Band I. 2. ed.* Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt/ M: Suhrkamp, 1974), 701-702.
42. See Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 411.
43. Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, 115.
44. Helmut Jendrieck, *Bertolt Brecht. Drama der Veränderung* (Düsseldorf, 1969), 212-213.
45. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 425.
46. Ibid, 26.
47. See David Robb, Wenzel & Mensching: "A Carnavalesque Clowns' Act Spanning the GDR and United Germany." In *German Studies Review*, 1, 2000, 53-68.
48. Heiner Maaß, "Das Irwitzige im Vermächtnis der Clowns." In Wenzel and Mensching: *Allerletzt aus der Dä Dä eR/Hundekomödie*, ed. Andrea Doberenz (Halle/Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1991), 155.
49. Bakhtin, "Rabelais und Gogol." In *Ästhetik des Wortes*, ed. Rainer Gröbel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 347-348.
50. Ibid, 159.
51. See *Allerletzt aus der Dä Dä eR*, 30-32.
52. See *ibid*, 53-54.
53. Rudolf Münz, *Das ,andere' Theater. Studien über eine deutschsprachiges teatro dell'arte der Lessingszeit* (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1979), 87.
54. Hans-Eckardt Wenzel, "Die Unschärfe alter Aufnahmen." In: *Hammer=Rehwü 82 dokumentation* (Potsdam: Brandenburgische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1993), unpaginated.
55. Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 411.
56. Wenzel and Mensching, *Neues aus der Dä Dä eR*. Unpublished video, (Berlin: Lied-Zentrum der Akademie der Künste der DDR, 1983).
57. Karl Valentin, "Die verhexten Notenständer." In *Alles von Karl Valentin* (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1978), 525-534.
58. This was an ironic variation of Piscator's proletarian revues of the 1920s, where the leading characters were often The Capitalist, The Worker and the Policeman.
59. See Münz, 148.
60. See Robb, *Zwei Clowns*, 51-70.
61. *Hammer=Rehwü*.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 12.
65. *Hammer=Rehwü*.
66. See Robb, *Zwei Clowns*, 156-165.
67. Joel Schlechter writes, "Brecht entertains the public with cabaret-like routines at the same time as his fragmented plot uncovers conditions which lead to military recruitment, war and the destruction of civilian life." "Brecht's Clowns: Man is Man and after," in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature* ed. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994),
68. Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht Collected Plays II*, ed. John Willet and Ralph Manheim (London: Methuen, 1998), viii.
69. Ibid, 40.
70. Bertolt Brecht, *Mann ist Mann*, in *Die Stücke von Bertolt Brecht in einem Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 148.
71. Bertolt Brecht, *Das Badener Lehrstück*. In *Die Stücke von Bertolt Brecht in einem Band*, 238-240.
72. See Jan Knopf, *Das Brecht-Handbuch* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980), 75-81.
73. Wenzel & Mensching, *Neues aus der Dä Dä eR*.
74. Lee Baxandall, "Bertolt Brecht's J.B." In *Brecht Sourcebook*, ed. Carol Martin and Henry Bial (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 87.
75. This laughter again relates to what Bakhtin terms "the wholeness of the world's comic aspect."
76. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 162.
77. Brecht, *Schweyk*, 767.
78. Ibid, 768.
79. Ibid, 770.

80. Ibid, 766.
81. *Neues aus der Dä Dä eR.*
82. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 403
83. Karls Enkel, *Spanier aller Länder*. Unpublished manuscript and video (Berlin: Das Liedzentrum der Akademie der Künste der DDR, 1985), unpaginated.
84. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 201.
85. Jan Knopf, *Brecht Handbuch Theater* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980), 248
86. Brecht, *Schweyk*. In *Die Stücke von Bertolt Brecht in einem Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 765.
87. Richard Sheppard, "Upstairs-Downstairs - Some Reflections on German Literature in the light of Bakhtin's theory of Carnival." In *New Ways in Germanistik*, ed Richard Sheppard (Providence, Oxford and Munich: Berg, 1990), 308.
88. See Knopf, 249.
89. Wenzel and Mensching, *Aufenthalt in der Hölle*. Unpublished manuscript in Wenzel's archive. Unpublished video in Mensching's archive, 1992.
90. Ibid.

Queen's University, Belfast

MALE COLLECTIVES AT A DEAD END: DER UNTERGANG DES EGOISTEN FATZER

Stephen T. Benner

In the fragments of a piece he entitled *Der Untergang des Egoisten Fatzter*, Bertolt Brecht portrays the dissolution of a male collective. This piece returns to the military themes which occupied Brecht in *Mann ist Mann*, where the lone individual Galy Gay is subsumed into a pre-existing collective structure. Here, the zealous Fatzter uses his charisma to convince three other soldiers at the end of World War I to desert the German army and return back to Germany to agitate for a revolution which would end the slaughter on the battlefields. But this revolution was ultimately doomed to failure. Fatzter is unable to keep his leadership effective because his egoism distracts him from meeting the basic survival needs of the collective. Büsching, Kaumann and Koch contribute to its failure because they have become dependent on Fatzter's charisma instead of developing their own individual roles within the collective (Streisand 315). The revolution is also doomed because it lacks a clear political agenda beyond the creation of anarchy with the overthrow of the current regime. Fatzter reflects Brecht's continuing attempts to define the limits of the individual within a collective. As in his earlier piece *Mann ist Mann*, this material reflects a continued ambivalence about the role of the collective for Brecht, who was confronted with both the negative examples of the Freikorps and the National Socialists and what he had hoped to be the positive example of the socialist collective. Fatzter stands at the center of much revolutionary potential, in which a new role for the individual can be created within the context of a renewed vision of social cohesion. But, in the end, Fatzter is unable to organize his revolutionary zeal and create a cohesive, pragmatic plan which would lead to success.

Brecht wrote over 400 manuscript and type-script pages between 1926 and 1930 in five phases as identified by the editors of *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*. Brecht experimented with dramatic techniques throughout the phases, ranging from a more traditional *Schaustück* to what was to become the *Lehrstück*. Work on Fatzter was inter-

rupted with work on *Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Mahagonny* and the first two *Lehrstücke* (*Der Flug des Lindberghs* and *Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis*). The fifth phase designated in the latest edition were two scenes and a poem Brecht published in the *Versuche* in 1930. After this publication, work stopped on the project and it remained a fragment at Brecht's death. The *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe* marks the first time much of this material has appeared in print.

Fatzer takes place at the end of World War I, where the characters have lost all sense of connection to time and space, a situation which makes their own thoughts and observations unreliable:

Mich lähmt das Morgen und
Dies unverbindliche Heut! So sitzend
Zwischen noch nicht und schon nicht mehr
Glaub ich nicht, was ich denk! [...]
Mir scheint, ich bin vorläufig [...] (10, 440)¹

The morning and this noncommittal today
make me lame! Thus sitting
between the not yet and no more,
I don't believe what I think! [...]
I seem to me to be temporary [...]

This abiding sense of being ephemeral haunts *Fatzer* and his actions throughout the fragment. The folly of belief in immutable human nature is criticized:

Immer
Denkt der Mensch, er steht
In der Welt unveränderlich. Die Luft kann
Einmal voll Feuer sein, den Boden
Hat er gesehen, wie er wankte. Er stand
Ohne Änderung der nämliche und neben sich
War er gewohnt, zu sehn
Den Menschen ganz unverändert. Falsch
Boden blieb Boden bald
Luft blieb Luft, aber der Mensch
Schrumpfte hinweg vor Furcht und dehnte
Sich vor Torheit aus. (10, 399)

Always
man thinks he's
immutable in the world. The air can
be at once full of fire, he's seen
how the ground sways. It stands
without change, the same, and next to himself
he was used to seeing

man totally unchanged. False
ground stayed ground for the time being,
air remained air, but man
shrank away with fear and extended
himself with foolishness.

It is this fundamental realization that human nature is unstable and unreliable that allows *Fatzer* to question the authority of received identities and power structures, which leads to a revolutionary zeal for experimentation and rebellion for its own sake. *Fatzer*, however, is unable to create an ideological structure to support the revolutionary goals he wishes to promote.

In *Fatzer*, the collective cannot survive the transition from spontaneous rebellion, catalyzed by *Fatzer*, to planned revolution. *Fatzer's* egoism repeatedly distracts him from fulfilling his leadership function for the others. But this egoism also leads to *Fatzer* being the only character who makes any outreach to the world external to the collective. Indeed, *Fatzer's* fellow soldiers Büsching, Kaumann and Koch are at the beginning so attracted by *Fatzer's* charisma that they abdicate any responsibility:

Das ist das Gute an dem *Fatzer*, daß er
So viel Appetit hat, daß es
Für uns mitlangt. Und daß er ein solcher Egoist ist
Daß es für uns noch mitlangt. (10, 465)

That's the good thing about *Fatzer*, that he
has so much appetite, that it
suffices for us too. And that he is such an egoist
suffices for us even more.

This personality cult which the three soldiers have created around *Fatzer* represents one of the weaknesses of both conservative and radical revolution. The three soldiers have ceded authority and power to the leader of the collective in order to gain favor and recognition from the leader. Out of fear for their own survival, Büsching, Koch and Kaumann remain hidden and do not make contact with the wider world which might allow them to spread their revolutionary message. They are so hesitant and deliberate that their revolution goes nowhere. They are not drawn into this group by a strong ideology, but rather by the strong personality of *Fatzer*. This collective's lack of larger purpose will result in its

eventual demise, as Brecht wrote in an early sketch from the first phase: "Sie haben nichts gelernt als ihre Solidarität, diese ist es, die sie vernichtet" ("They have learned nothing more than their solidarity; this is what destroys them.") (10, 388). In this collective there is a complex web of multiple homosocial relationships among the soldiers, which extend even to homoeroticism (Streisand 317).

Brecht wrote several versions of the scene in which the men decide to desert the army. In all of the versions, the desertion is considered to be a taking control of one's own destiny in the face of the ruthless randomness of the soldiers' fates on the battlefield. In the first phase, this scene demonstrates this random fatalism by showing the group of soldiers throwing stones like dice to predict their fates. Since all four men have rolled black, indicating that they will not escape the war alive, Fatzer proposes that they deny the established order of things and take control of their own destiny:

Ich mache
Keinen Krieg mehr, sondern ich gehe
Jetzt heim gradewegs, ich scheiße
Auf die Ordnung der Welt. Ich bin
Verloren (10, 394)

I'm not making
war any more, rather I'm going
home straight away, I shit
on the order of the world. I am
lost.

Since Fatzer is already lost, he has nothing more to lose by risking everything and deserting. The others' reaction to this proposal varies from version to version, ranging from immediate enthusiasm to a reluctance marked by a fear of authority. But Fatzer retorts that the authoritarian structures which had created the war and brought these men into it no longer hold any power. In the resulting vacuum of power, Fatzer seizes the leadership role and turns this desertion into a life-affirming act by which the men escape the inevitable annihilation on the battlefield. Indeed, abandoning the battle is an act of reclaiming the humanity which the war has stripped from the soldiers.

The life-affirming qualities of the desertion are reinforced with imagery which characterize it as a rebirth. Before the men agree to Fatzer's plan to

desert, they make the protest of unborn children unwilling to leave the womb, even though they recognize that the womb is no longer able to protect them:

Alles läuft gegen uns, arbeitet und
Hält nicht an.
Unsere Mutter ist ein Tank und
Kann uns nicht schützen (10, 453)

Everything's against us, keeps on working
and doesn't stop.

Our mother's a tank and
cannot protect us.

In a song from the third phase, this rebirth is seen as a liberation from the constraints of a society decomposing at its core:

Dieser Tank hat uns das zweitemal geboren
Eurer Geräte konnten wir uns nicht bedienen
Vererbte verseuchte Geschlechter
Und euer Stolz über weitere Maschinen
Ist uns nachts vor dem Einschlafen noch ein
Gelächter! (10, 450)

This tank has given us a second birth,
we couldn't use your weapons,
you degenerate and plagued races,
and your pride over more machines
has become our source of laughter before going
sleep!

This shared rebirth through desertion from the tank makes the soldiers a metaphorical new family of brothers coming from the same womb, the tank on the battlefield. The homosocial bonds which the men shared as members of the military are strengthened by their desertion and are made essential for their common survival.

The soldiers' radical act of separating themselves from the military comes under the condemnation of the Chorus in later phases, as Brecht worked on transforming the material into a *Lehrstück*:

Richtig, da ihr aber
Weggegangen seid von der Masse und also
Falsch gehandelt habt, ist euer
Untergang voraussehbar (10, 478)

Correct, but because you, however,
went away from the mass, thus
acting wrongly, your
decline is foreseeable.

By deserting, the men were blinded by Fatzer's over-riding egoism into abandoning their fellow soldiers and thus failing in their chance to turn the negative "Krieg der Völker" ("War of Nations") into "Bürgerkrieg" ("Civil War"), which would have led to the end of all wars (10, 478). The decision to desert is labeled in one scene as "Der Sündenfall" ("the fall from grace") (10, 475), which theologically is both the unfortunate turning against authority and the beginning of a new phase of history which would eventually lead to redemption. In this same sketch, first the Chorus rejoices because "die Zeit des Kriegs / Der Unkenntnis" ("the time of the war of unknowledge") is over (10, 475). But, after it becomes clear that Fatzer is only leading the group to ruin, the Chorus declares that the men are no longer human because they have removed themselves from their "natural" place in history. The differentiation of this group of four soldiers and their separation from the great unknowing mass of soldiers leads to the inevitable failure of their mission. As Brecht writes in one of his sketches:

Ihre Odyssee beginnt mit ihrem durch den Individualisten Fatzer gegebenen Irrtum, sie könnten, einzeln, den Krieg abbrechen. Hierdurch, wo sie, um zu leben, sich von der Masse scheiden, verlieren sie ihr Leben von vornherein. Sie kommen nie mehr zur Masse zurück. (10, 468)

Their odyssey begins with their error brought on by the individualist Fatzer that they could unilaterally stop the war. By cutting themselves off from the mass in order to live, they lose their life from the outset. They will never return to the mass.

In the Chorus' view, the abandonment of the military was a lost opportunity to create revolutionary zeal among their disenchanting fellow soldiers and counter to the best interests of the larger collective of the masses.

Once the soldiers return to Germany and commence their underground existence in civilian society, they come under the protection of Kaumann's wife, Therese², which is necessary for their immediate survival as well as the potential success of their revolution. The homosocial collective is unable to survive on its own; it depends on a woman for its

continued existence, but it is her very presence which causes the most discord among the group. As Brecht wrote: "Die vier erkennen, daß jeder Streit um das Weib ihnen das Dach überm Kopf wegziehen muß" ("The four recognize that every argument about the woman would remove the roof over their heads.") (10, 436). The introduction of a woman changes the dynamics of the homosocial relations of the group, but also offers them an exemplary model of the dissatisfaction and frustration experienced by the women who have remained at home while their men were at war.

When Fatzer makes one of his first reconnaissance tours of the city of Mülheim, he observes first hand the frustration and stagnation which the war has brought to the people of the city. He sees in this frustration a revolutionary potential, but, Fatzer's charisma is a shallow surface covering an inability to catalyze true change.

Dabei will ich
Mich umsehn, wie's meinem Freund
Dem Krieg geht.
In was für Kleidern geht das Volk? Das Volk
geht
In schlechten Kleidern, seh ich.
Ihr bißchen Schafwolle und Flachs haben sie
Schon aufgestapelt hinter Bajonetten,
verteilend
Faden für Faden. Dieser Krieg geht
In schlechtem Schuhwerk; da geht er
Also nicht lang. Auch glaub ich schon zu sehen:
Arm ist ärmer und reich reicher jetzt und
Zwischendrin ist nichts: das ist auch gut.
Kinder, die bei der Geburt nichts wiegen und
Blasse Mäuler haben und
Nicht mehr schwerer werden. Das ist gut.
Gut auch, daß da bald Winter wird, das
Zehrt am Krieg, wenn das Volk friert. (10, 500)

I want to
look around and see how it's going for my
friend,
the war.
What kind of clothes are the people wearing?
The people
are wearing bad clothes, I see.

They've already stacked their little bits of wool and linen behind bayonets, dividing each thread. This war walks about in bad shoes; he can't keep on going for long. Also, I believe I'm seeing that the poor are poorer and the rich are now richer and there's nothing in between: that's good, too. Children, who weigh nothing at birth and have blue mouths and can't get heavier. That's good. It's also good that winter's coming soon, people freezing tears away at war.

Fatzer observes that the conditions are right for a revolution, but he lacks the complex ideological apparatus to incite the desired rebellion among the women. The women, who are standing in line for a promised ration of flour, are more concerned with the practical necessities of life and not that the time is "good" for a revolution. As the women say to Fatzer after he suggests they break down the door of the bakery: "Das ist auch einer, der's mit dem Maul macht / So einen wie dich sollt man totschießen!" ("There's another one who spouts off with his mouth; they ought to shoot people like him!") (10, 502). The women's disinterest in ideological niceties leaves them little use for the charismatic leadership of a Fatzer. This is a moment of crisis which should have provided the perfect opportunity for Fatzer's revolutionary rhetoric. As Judith Wilke writes:

Daß alles weitergeht, wird nicht als Fortschritt oder als bloßes Prinzip des Lebens gedeutet, sondern als Zeichen von Stillstand und Stagnation [...] Darauf zielen auch Fatzers Reden, mit denen er die Frauen hinter der Front provoziert, ihre eigene Funktionalisierung wahrzunehmen und auszusprechen. (92, 94)

That everything keeps on going is not seen as progress or as the bare life principle, but rather as a sign of standing still and stagnation. [...] Fatzer's speeches which he provokes the women behind the front are aimed at getting them to perceive and express their own functionalization.

But the women are all too aware of their functionalization and they have heard enough of empty rhetoric. They want the war to end, of course, but they know that the war and its outcome are in the hands of men who are benefiting from their misery.

In this initial walk through town, Fatzer failed to recognize the true locus of revolutionary potential in the women of Mülheim. Their frustration with the inability to acquire the goods necessary for basic survival extends also to a more personal frustration and discord due to the absence of their husbands. The expectations and rewards associated with marriage have broken down for these women, as their husbands, their means of economic and emotional support, have left them behind to scrape together whatever existence they can. The breakdown of the moral responsibility of the men to provide for their families has resulted in the women learning to cope with the exigencies of their own struggle for survival. This end to strict morality has allowed for a new honesty among the women about their needs. The crisis situation has led the women of Mülheim to dismiss the romantic notions of love and demand satisfaction of their natural libidinal desires.

Was eine Frau ist, die
Braucht
Nicht nur Schleimsuppe und
Das da und mit der Liebe
Das ist für die Großkopfen, aber
In der Nacht braucht sie einen
Der ihr's tut, das sagten sogar
Die Doktors! (10, 406)

Whatever a woman might be, she needs not only slime soup and that there with the love — that's for those with big heads, but in the night she needs someone who'll do it to her, even the doctors say so!

Only those with big heads and big ideas have any use for the antiquated rhetoric of romantic love; the current crisis situation demands a more pragmatic solution. Half-hearted protests of bourgeois propriety such as when Mrs. Kaumann declares "Ich habe einen Mann, das steht an der / Tür mit dem Namen" ("I have a husband — it says so on the door with his name") (10, 406) do nothing to change the

current situation. In each successive phase of Brecht's writing, Mrs. Kaumann's demand for overall personal satisfaction is strengthened. Through the crisis experience of the war, Mrs. Kaumann has lost the last remnants of the moral code which kept her faithful to her husband during the war and she now demands her rights as a woman:

Wo sind sie?
Drei Jahre
Sind zu viele Jahre!
Warum kommt er nicht
Und legt sich auf mich drauf?
Heute hab ich beschlossen, mein Fleisch
Zu befriedigen.
Meine Blöße
Ist schon verdorrt, sicher
Meine Zeit ist schon aus!
Die Kühe und die Hündinnen
Werden befriedigt, wenn ihre Zeit ist
Und ich verlange, daß ich auch
Befriedigt werde!
Daß ich nicht immer an mein
Schoß denke, der leer ist
Sondern lebe wie ihr! (10, 484-5)

Where are they?
Three years
are too many years!
Why doesn't he come
and lay himself on me?
Today I've decided
to satisfy my flesh.
My modesty
is already wilted away, certainly
my time is already past!
Cows and bitches
are satisfied when it's their time
and I demand that I too
be satisfied!
So that I won't always have to think
of my empty womb,
but live like you!

The war has changed Mrs. Kaumann and her view of marriage. After their arrival, the omnipresence of the homosocial collective to which her husband now belongs is preventing her from receiving the sexual satisfaction that she demands as her right.

[...] wollt ihr
Euch nicht die Luft anschauen
Mitunter oder ihr geht hinaus
Auf den Abtritt, daß ich den meinen
Allein treff, ich sag's jedem:
Er soll mir an die Beine
Langen, es dauert ein paar
Minuten, ihr entschuldigt's so lang
Drauf hab ich Anspruch. (10, 418)

[...] If you don't
want to look at the sky
or go out to the john, so that I can
meet with my guy alone, then I'll say it to all
of you:
He should come to my legs,
it'll only last a couple of
minutes, you'll excuse it for that long;
it's my right.

But the experience of war has changed her husband as well. The homosocial comradery as well as the homoerotic attraction to Fatzer as leader has turned Kaumann away from any consideration of heterosexual sex:

Ihr könnt herinnenbleiben
Wenn ich Gras freß, das merk
Dir, hab ich keine Lust
Mit einem Weib! Und
Dabei bleibt's. (10, 419)

You can stay in here
when I eat grass, take note,
I have no desire
for a woman! And
that's the way's it's going to stay.

Kaumann's abnegation of his responsibility as sexual partner to his wife produces the conditions for the conflicts which pose a number of dangers for the group, because Mrs. Kaumann's continued cooperation is necessary for the survival and success of the collective hiding out in her home.

All four of the men recognize that her need for satisfaction must be appeased or they risk ejection from their hiding place. Acting as a "paternalistic, top-down apparatus of functionaries" (Kruger 235), the men vote by majority rule to take control of Mrs. Kaumann's sexuality only to set it free again: "Sie beschließen, das Weib sei frei, aber keiner von ihnen

dürfe etwas mit ihr machen. Wichtiger sei die Einigkeit, da diese lebensnotwendig [...] ("They decide that the woman is free, but none of them could do anything with her. More important is the unity, because this is necessary for life [...]") (10, 435). Instead of meeting her demand for true liberation, Mrs. Kaumann has once again been reduced to her utilitarian value to maintain social cohesion among the members of the collective. At the same time, the group attempts to create an explanation for denying Mrs. Kaumann sexual satisfaction from within the collective, by appealing to her sense of reason:

Denn durch die Umständ
Wurd uns dein Dach mehr als dein Bett.
[...] Und drum
Können wir auch nicht
Dem Weib ans Fleisch greifen und erhoffen
Daß es uns das Brot bäckt, sondern müssen
Anrufen deine Vernunft, ob stark, ob schwach.
(10, 435)

Because of the circumstances,
your roof became more important to us than
your bed.
[...] And therefore
we can't

grab the woman's flesh and still hope
that she'll bake our bread, but rather we must
appeal to your reason, whether strong or weak.

The men do not want to complicate their sycophantic relationship with Mrs. Kaumann as well as their own cohesion by introducing sexual politics and jealousies. This attempt to shape Mrs. Kaumann's revolutionary consciousness to meet the needs of the male-dominated collective remains unsuccessful.

The crisis of the war years and her husband's refusal to fulfill his sexual obligations have led Mrs. Kaumann to demand her sexual satisfaction. But when Fatzer offers the chance to engage in "Liebe als physiologisches Bedürfnis" ("love as a physiological need") (10, 524), she reacts negatively and wants to return to a romantic evaluation of sexuality. Mrs. Kaumann wants to assign significance to the sexual act, but this return to an older value system is impossible given the changed circumstances of her life:

Dann frage [Fatzer] sie, ob sie an Gott glaube?

Oder ihn wenigstens fürchte? – Nicht mehr. – Warum dann fürchte sie, daß einer, ohne sich Zeit zu nehmen, seine Hosen auszuziehen, sich auf sie werfe, wisse, daß sie naß ist? – Weil's viel bedeutet. – Es bedeute nichts. (10, 471-72)

Then Fatzer asked her if she believed in God? Or at least feared him? – No longer. – Why then does she fear that a guy who throws himself on her without taking the time to take off his pants knows that she is wet? – Because it means a lot. – It means nothing.

When Mrs. Kaumann is confronted with the harsh realities of a natural sexuality unlimited by the moral codes associated with romantic love and commitment, her attempt to give significance to an event is rebuffed by Fatzer's egoism. The act of copulation when stripped of its romantic and social context loses its ability to signify the marital relationship and becomes a mere release of sexual tension. Fatzer convinces Mrs. Kaumann to have sex with him for both egoistical reasons (his own desire for sexual satisfaction) and for the good of the collective (who need her continued cooperation), but this becomes Fatzer's "erste Abweichung" ("first deviation") (10, 470), which eventually leads to his demise. Fatzer fails to turn Mrs. Kaumann's high degree of frustration into revolutionary zeal, just as he has failed to incite rebellion in every cause he encounters. The revolutionary promises made by the charismatic leader on the battlefield come to naught because Fatzer is, in his egoistic way, unable to look beyond his own dissatisfaction and create situations which would take advantage of others' discord.

As the revolutionary potential fades away, the other members of the collective become more and more reactionary. Fatzer's sexual act with Mrs. Kaumann and his inability to procure the protein necessary for their survival lead to increasing charges of egoism from the others, who are losing faith in their leader's ability to create the conditions for the long-expected revolution. Büsching, Kaumann and Koch had handed over control of their own fate to the charismatic Fatzer, whom they had hoped would bring them out of this situation:

Daß er ichtüchtig ist, das ist
Gut! Er hat ein großes Ich, das reicht

Für uns vier aus und für uns vier
Ist er ichtsüchtig! Der
Kann uns helfen! (10, 442)

That he's egotistical is good!
He has a large enough ego
for all four of us and for all four of us
he's egotistical! He
can help us!

With each successive "deviation," however, the other members of the collective begin to assert the necessity of meeting their own needs before Fatzer takes any small freedom they might grant him: "Fatzer müsse bekommen, was Fatzer brauche, aber Fatzer müsse hergeben, was sie brauchten" ("Fatzer must get what Fatzer needs, but Fatzer must give up what they needed.") (10, 434). The fascination and attraction to Fatzer which led the three soldiers to join Fatzer's revolutionary collective have disappeared – the disciples now want to control the leader. But, Fatzer's egoism is too strong to allow the others to mold him into the kind of leader that they desire. He refuses to be objectified and proposes with irony that he be divided into the "useful part" and the "leftovers."

Ich bin gegen eure mechanische Art
Denn der Mensch ist kein Hebel.
Auch habe ich starke Unlust, einzig zu tun
Von vielen Taten die, welche mir nützlich. [...]
Behaltet von allem, was an mir ist
Nur das euch Nützliche.
Der Rest ist Fatzer. (10, 495)

I am against your mechanical ways
because man is no lever.
Also, I have a strong lack of desire to do alone
of the many deeds those which are useful to
me. [...]
Of all that constitutes me, keep
only that which is useful to you.
The rest is Fatzer.

The collective which had coalesced around the dynamic leadership of Fatzer cannot now take Fatzer apart and use only those bits which they find useful. Fatzer's egoism prevents him from guaranteeing that his own interests will never collide with those of the collective. Fatzer's inability to provide for the needs of the collective has aroused a strong resentment of

the situation, especially from Koch:
Was hat es genützt? Jetzt
Laufen wir wie Ratten in dieser
Höhle herum, die keinen Proviant
Haben. (10, 416)

What was the point? Now
we're running around like rats in this
hole with no provisions.

As Heiner Müller wrote of Koch: "Seine Reaktion auf das asoziale Verhalten Fatzers läßt ihn so radikal werden, daß er den Boden der Tatsachen verläßt und reine Ideologie fabriziert. Er baut ein ungeheures ideologisches Gebäude auf, hetzt die Gruppe in einen Amoklauf" ("His reaction to Fatzer's asocial behavior causes him to become so radical that he leaves the factual foundation behind and fabricates pure ideology. He builds a monstrous ideological structure and harasses the group into running amok.") (*Gesammelte Irrtümer* 51-52). But in the end, as Koch becomes more and more strident, Fatzer and the others are unable to reach a compromise. When Fatzer presents himself to the group with the proposal that they abandon Mühlheim and leave together for a better future elsewhere, he is confronted with a final demand for conformity:

Fatzer, mußt du dich ändern
Jetzt in dieser Stund auf
Dieser Stell und einmal tun
Was wir sagen, und zwar nur:
Weil wir mehr sind, nämlich
Zwei oder drei. (10, 447)

Fatzer, you must change yourself
now in this hour in
this place and do for once
what we say and only what we say:
because we're more, that is
two or three.

In the end, Koch, Kaumann and Büsching are so unable to disentangle themselves from their dissatisfaction with Fatzer's failed leadership, that they demand Fatzer surrender to their wishes, even if it means the end of them all. The collective, then, fails because its leader is unable to sacrifice his own egoism and because the other members are unable to sacrifice the level of investment they have placed in his leadership. Although relieving Fatzer of his

leadership role may have led to their continued survival as a group, Büsching, Kaumann and Koch lack the pragmatic program and the skills necessary to continue the revolution. As Brecht noted: "Sie gehen daran zugrund, daß sie Solidarität anwenden auf einen, der sie nicht hat. Für sie ist es selbstverständlich: nur alle zusammen heraus oder keiner" ("They fail because they apply solidarity against someone who doesn't have any. For them it is natural: only all out together or none.") (10, 468-69).

Fatzer is about revolution gone awry. Revolutionary zeal without adequate grounding in ideology matched with an over-dependence on charismatic leadership will lead to nowhere. Such a revolution can remain only an utopian vision so long as it lacks a fundamental, pragmatic grounding. The negative contemporary examples of revolutionary movements driven by male collectives, such as the National Socialists in Germany and the Stalinists in the Soviet Union may have been a primary reason behind Brecht's abandonment of the *Fatzer* project. Revolutions which fail to move beyond the initial enthusiastic spontaneity catalyzed by charismatic leaders rarely succeed. True revolution must have deeper foundations in a broader context than a small leadership collective in order to succeed. Heiner Müller saw this material as "das Beste, was in diesem Jahrhundert geschrieben worden ist für die Bühne und das Beste von Brecht" ("the best thing that's been written in this century for the stage and Brecht's best" (*Gesammelte Irrtümer* 2, 28) because it represented for him a critique of the cynical utopianism of post-revolutionary regimes. But as Brecht wrote, "Das Schwimmen gegen den Strom ist Torheit, aber es gehört Weisheit dazu, die Richtung des Stromes zu erkennen" ("Swimming against the stream is foolish, but there is a certain wisdom in recognizing the direction of the stream.") (10, 528), but sometimes following the leader means hitting a dead end.

Footnotes

1. All quotations from Brecht are from the *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*. The translations are mine.
2. Brecht repeatedly changed the names of the three soldiers in successive drafts, even if there was no particular change in the character himself. In order to simplify matters, I will refer to Kaumann's wife as Mrs. Kaumann, as that is the name she most often is given in the drafts ("die Kaumann").

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Edinboro University

BRECHT ON JUJITSU; SHARED HISTORIES, INTERCULTURAL ISSUES AND GLOBAL CULTURES

Philipp Loeser

Brecht's consistent interest in foreign cultures is a quality rarely matched by other German writers of the 20th century. His repeated wrestlings with American reality come to mind, or his plays set in India (*Mann ist Mann*; *Kalkutta*, 4. Mai, written in collaboration with Lion Feuchtwanger). But most of all, he had a close eye on East Asian, particularly on Chinese politics and culture. The young Brecht was exposed to the China fashions of his time, the old Brecht hoped that communism might fare better in China than it had under Stalin in the USSR. In between, numerous important plays, poems and prose texts from *Chinesische Gedichte* to *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* to the *Me-Ti* novel had been more or less loosely based on Chinese and Japanese material. All this considered, one might expect to find Brecht extensively discussed in frameworks of intercultural hermeneutics, transfer studies, or postcolonial studies. While indeed a significant number of studies on his reception of Asian theatre, lyrics and philosophy,¹ or on the reception of his works abroad have been written,² the dominant sentiment among scholars in the field is reluctance. Brecht's approach is generally perceived to be characterized by blatant appropriations of foreign traditions. Asian scenery often seems to be instrumentalized in order to achieve an alienation effect, and Chinese philosophy or Japanese drama may lend themselves easily to the construction of *Lehrstücke*, but on the whole, Asian culture and learning are never focal points in their own right. Rather than certain attitudes today expected of the transculturally conscious author of fiction – irony, self-criticism, acceptance of cultural hybridization rank among them –,³ Brecht often advances clear-cut interpretations of social orders, and indeed sometimes seems to leave the cultural dimension of Asian societies altogether out of consideration. The analyses he suggests or puts forward attest to a human condition under the auspices of modern capitalism and are largely indifferent towards cultural specificities. In his essay "Bemerkungen über die chinesische Schauspielkunst," Brecht even

makes it a point to acknowledge, yet evade cultural specificities: "Unsere Theaterleute müssen das technische Interesse dem ethnographischen voranstellen."⁴

Brecht still deserves a place in discussions on cultural change in a globalized world. The late Brecht could be put forward as eager to point out how contemporaneous cosmopolitanism should be based on the acknowledgement of national particularities.⁵ With some justification, an 'other' Brecht may be claimed beyond rigid political ideas, with whom "[...] die Ideen untergehen können, aber das Versuchsfeld aus Worten ein Kraftfeld bleibt, das neue Ideen hervorruft," as Hans-Thies Lehmann once put it.⁶ What concerns me most, though, is a field of tensions and transfers sometimes between China and Germany, sometimes between Asia and the West, in which Brecht is not so much of interest as a mediator. Rather than introducing anything new to the public, his work as well as its reception in Asia highlight the potentials and systematic problems with the shared history of the two regions. Certain cultural practices become accessible across cultural boundaries, and it remains largely to be seen what patterns of assimilation, acculturation, or transculturation evolve in the individual case and in instances of repeated history sharing. Brecht may well be seen as part of a chain of cross-cultural exchanges centered around film, theater and acting methods, spanning the time from Shanghai's movie industry of the 1920s to Brecht's adaptation of the Chinese opera tradition to Asian receptions of Brecht's work and modern western theater in general to the West's appreciation of kung-fu movies and the successes of contemporary Asian art cinema. Towards Jujitsu: In a journal entry from 1924, Brecht showed interest in getting acquainted with jujitsu techniques.⁷ He obviously never came to practice the martial art himself, yet its concept or what he conceived its concept to be stuck with him for a while. Jujitsu is mentioned in the 1927 version of the play *Im Dickicht der Städte*, and it is the starting point for an extended theoretical reflection in 1928.⁸ Even though the motif did not prevail in Brecht's later writings, Brecht's use of jujitsu is likely to be more than an isolated instance. As an integral part of the transition from an interest in sports and the body in the 1920s to Asian philosophy

and literature from the late 1920s onwards, the motif anticipated what Brecht would come to like about the Chinese opera, namely highly coded body movements challenging and refining the analytical capacities of both actors and spectators.

Just as in the case of the Chinese opera, Brecht would furthermore skip cultural content. An interest in the social dimensions of human interaction as well as a focus on technical as opposed to ethnographic matters dominated. This seems to be in line with the general spread of Asian martial arts across the globe as a set of skills cross-culturally available. But it should not be forgotten that certain capacities for generating and conveying cultural meaning are clearly neglected: Training is a demanding process structuring everyday life to a significant degree, and different fighting systems are almost always closely linked to specific communities, or to spiritual experience. Fighting systems are therefore clearly constitutive of individual life styles, embracing specific codes, and value systems. When such cultural significance is disregarded, the challenge of shared history does not translate into the challenge of intercultural negotiation. The question remains whether Brecht's neglect of the cultural element is in any way commendable, even innovative, or whether it enters the annals of literary history as a folly, rendering Brecht vulnerable to the trapfalls of omnipresent Orientalist discourses.

In order to find out and put Brecht's approach into proper perspective, I will focus on an interpretation of Brecht's reflection from 1928 entitled "Jiu Jitsu (= die leichte, die fröhliche Kunst)." First, I look at intrinsic characterizations of jujitsu in Brecht's text. How is the simile (the equation mark, *Gleichheitszeichen*, strongly points in the direction of a simile, *Gleichnis*) constructed? Then I look at how the transition of martial arts to the West -- as an instance of shared history -- is entangled in processes of cultural transformation. On the historical level, this is about the homogenization of a diversity of different fighting styles and about the creation of a highly regulated competition sport. On a systematic level, I investigate how jujitsu's notions of the body, its semiotics and its memorizing power compare to western conceptualizations of the body.

In the note from 1928 entitled "Jiu Jitsu (= die leichte, die fröhliche Kunst)," Brecht reflects on

qualities of William Shakespeare's use of language. Shakespeare's modes of expression, it is argued, are limited in that they draw heavily upon ordinary language throughout Shakespeare's entire career. This is considered to be a problem especially for the writer. In order not to grow bored or not to burn out, so it seems to Brecht, Shakespeare has to give priority to a "scheme": "Wenn jemand dreißig Stücke lang sich immerfort desselben Ausdrucks bedient und jeweils immer dieselben Quellen der Volkssprache benutzt, dann kann ihn nur eine Schema davor gerettet haben, daß ihm nicht seine eigene Zunge zum Hals heraushing."⁹ At this point, the notion of a scheme is far from clear. But the following example outlines what is at stake: In *Coriolanus*, the hero's mother gives a weak speech when she needs to persuade her son not to fight against his own hometown Rome and her people (eventually he will not fight, only to be killed by Rome's enemies, then his allies). In Brecht's view, Shakespeare consciously refrained from writing a more eloquent and persuasive speech for the mother, even though no clear indications as to particular reasons for this act or for a counteracting scheme are given at this point. "[E]ines solchen Mannes Interesse verteilt sich von vornherein richtig" is the only commentary in this respect.

On another occasion, Brecht himself would give a more elaborate interpretation of the plain and ineffective "aria of the mother," as he called it:

Der große Shakespeare hat aus viel geringeren Erwägungen heraus das Niveau gesenkt, als er die Rede der Mutter Coriolans, mit der sie dem gegen die Vaterstadt ziehenden Sohn gegenübertritt, absichtlich kraftlos gestaltet -- er wollte, daß Coriolan nicht durch wirkliche Gründe oder durch eine tiefe Bewegung von seinem Plan abgehalten werden sollte, sondern durch eine gewisse Trägheit, mit der er sich einer alten Gewohnheit hingab.¹⁰

This scheme of giving away rhetorical effect and stressing the power of Coriolan's inertia over intellectual sophistication is elaborated on immediately afterwards with reference to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. In Antonius's famous funeral speech for dead Caesar, the presented facts dominate over the argument: "[...] der Redner läßt sich so durch die Tatsachen selber besiegen; er verleiht ihnen eine größere Beredsamkeit als 'sich selber'".¹¹

Brecht's notion of a scheme thus implies favoring effectiveness over an argument's artfulness. It purports that one should use the simplest way, regardless of immediate effects on one's reputation as a master of language. The *tertium comparationis* to Asian martial arts in general and to jujitsu in particular is clear: Tradition supplies a set of elaborate techniques that need to be studied and applied. Part of the rationale lies in assuming an inferior position to take the opponent by surprise.

After his brief discussion of Shakespeare's use of language, Brecht inserts a subheading "Zurück zur Kunst," (back to art)¹² to dwell on the second part of his original equation, "die leichte, die fröhliche Kunst." In a discussion of the notion of serenity ("Heiterkeit"), it becomes clear that Brecht tries to link the Asian martial art to Greek ideals. The true artist's virtues are passion, clarity and rational deliberation ("denken"). To make up for modern shortcomings with respect to Greek and classicist ideals, Brecht differentiates between art as an idea and its execution. Art's material or a modern play may well be tainted and lack clarity or display irrational elements, yet still display serenity. His only example again comes from Shakespeare, but German classicism is clearly implicated. Brecht addresses the famous playwright throughout as "Wilhelm," and his comments on *Hamlet* make the intertextual reference to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* inescapable, where the stage production of *Hamlet* is a central plot element.¹³ Brecht finds his idea of "Heiterkeit" in art epitomized by a scene in which Hamlet watches Fortinbras's army pass by only to swallow just in time:

die Idee, daß Kampf keinen Sinn haben müsse, um höchst blutig zu werden [...] Es ist ein wahrhaft großer Moment in der Geschichte des germanischen Dramas und ein höchst grausamer. Und es ist außerdem das, was wir unter Heiterkeit zu verstehen die Ehre haben.¹⁴

Again, some intended parallels to jujitsu are obvious. Clarity, simplicity and passion do not rule out human tragedy, fighting and physical harm. Simplicity is a property even of complex structures and may only be perceived and experienced by the trained, analytical mind. Finally, it takes deliberation and great technical skills to bring down superior opponents.

Jujitsu's Historical Development: Jujitsu, literally the soft or elastic technique, is, as all martial arts, strongly indebted to a long-standing tradition of technical learning that originated in India, then moved on to China and Japan. Jujitsu's specialty lies in a strong, but not exclusive, focus on self-defense as the privileged form of fighting technique. Rather than the opponent's defeat, the development and growth of the combatant's own powers, his self-control, concentration, and swift reactions lie at its core. Its principles derive from a close scrutiny of the human physiology.¹⁵ Jujitsu mirrors the entire field of the martial arts, in that it does not form one coherent system. Bruce Tegner, an American authority in the field, writes:

There are dozens of authentic jujitsu styles. If minor stylistic variations are included, there are hundreds of different forms of jujitsu. All jujitsu styles utilize weaponless fighting skills, in various combinations, and some employ stick, staff, and cutting weapons. The element common to all of the jujitsus is the combination of techniques, rather than the use of specialized technique. The combinations, made in different ways by different teachers, are constantly undergoing modification.¹⁶

For many practitioners, the field of martial arts forms a whole, and the ultimate goal is to become so skilled as to integrate elements of different fighting techniques into one fighting style.¹⁷ Interestingly, jujitsu misses much of the spiritual dimension usually associated with the martial arts. Tegner notes that at least "some jujitsu teachers claim that spiritual benefits arise," but the general sentiment in modern times towards jujitsu is perhaps more adequately summarized as follows by a master of martial arts (the notion of *do* refers to Lao-Tsu's teachings concerning the "right way"):

In the field of martial arts the *do* that you are eager to know appears to have recently superseded the term *jutsu*, which means technique. *Jutsu* as a guiding principle had been found no longer appropriate to the dignity and true meaning of martial arts. Practiced in a turbulent society, a society full of deceit, unfairness, aggression, and the like, *jutsu*, instead of providing stability, had contributed to the overthrow of long-accepted ethical and moral val-

ues, and had led people to live hectic and confused lives. [...] No matter what your martial arts discipline, emphasize the *do*, for *jutsu* is simply a means, not an end.¹⁸

Europeans developed an interest in Asian fighting techniques after their military apparatuses had made contact with them during the Boxer-riot in China (1894-1901) and the Russian-Japanese war (1904/05). Soon, Asian masters were invited to show their techniques, and it did not take long until the first jujitsu schools for the police were established. In 1900, a Japanese founded the first jujitsu school in London, in 1906 Erich Rahn started the first jujitsu school in Berlin. Jujitsu's public reputation grew constantly. In 1922, the Sportpalast in Berlin saw the first German Jujitsu Championships. The following year saw the first Frankfurt city championship meeting, and in 1925, jujitsu was introduced to the curriculum of the "Hochschule für Leibesübungen in Berlin." In the same year, a journal *Jiu-Jitsu* was introduced to the German market, and in its subtitle, the journal *Illustrierter Kampfsport* ranked jujitsu among several then very popular forms of physical education: *Organ für gesunde und schönheitliche Körperausbildung durch Athletik, Turnen, Jiu-Jitsu, Freiluft-Gymnastik*.

Despite the general craze for the spiritual dimension of things Indian or Chinese in the first decades of the 20th century, jujitsu does not seem to have been closely related to China fashions and longings for India. Quite on the contrary, jujitsu was conceptualized as a closed set of techniques, and its integration into the western sports canon turned it into a normative, highly regulated, closed system of throws, blows and kicks. Ultimately, judo became more popular than jujitsu, and after World War II, both judo and jujitsu lost ground to other Asian martial arts such as kung fu and taekwondo. It took as late as until the 1960s that prominent sportsmen (foremost Bruce Lee) vehemently reinforced the spiritual dimension of the martial arts.

Conceptualizations of the Body: The manuscript *Im Dickicht*, an early version of *Im Dickicht der Städte* dating from 1923, already depicts what Brecht would later describe as "Der Kampf zweier Männer in der Riesenstadt Chicago." Shlink, the rich Malaysian owner of a timber trade, takes on George Garga, shop assistant at a commercial library. There is no

apparent objective to their fighting, but in the process they manage to ruin the timber trade, Garga's family, and eventually themselves. As to the fighting techniques involved, the Shlink of *Im Dickicht* heavily borrows from Alfred Döblin's novel *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun* (1915). Passive resistance is his method of choice. He withdraws, lets Garga take over his power, speculating his opponent might ruin himself in due time. In the play's second version, published in 1927, Shlink's fighting technique appears in a slightly different light: Brecht adds a reference to jujitsu, heavily resembling his later notes on Shakespeare's jujitsu style.¹⁹ Garga has just taken over Shlink's trade and appears to be very satisfied with his new riches and power. In one of the many difficult turns of the play, he smugly remarks: GARGA: Es ist eine Masse Holz da, und einige Pfund Fleisch sind jetzt auch auf der Auktion! Und Jiu-Jitsu heißt die leichte, die fröhliche Kunst, nicht?

SHLINK: geht beunruhigt auf ihn zu: Machen Sie es sich aber auch nicht zu leicht?

Garga assumes Shlink's position to the point of mimicing his fighting style. And the fighting style itself is stripped of its religious and philosophical roots (wu wei) and instead linked to technique and physical education.

Maybe this is "too simple," as Shlink suspects. Obviously, the precise implications of this particular focus on the human body are very important. Brecht's early fascination with sports often leads him to focus on boxing, one of those "große[n] mythische [n] Vergnügungen der Riesenstädte von jenseits des großen Teiches."²⁰ Boxing as epitome of a "Kampfeslust im Spätkapitalismus"²¹ is largely instinct driven and relies on the brute force of the body as an other to human reason.²² In a similar fashion, human body and soul are juxtaposed entities in a world of mechanization trying to integrate the human body into mechanized production processes. Brecht himself addressed this as "Mechanisierung."²³ An important threshold is crossed when individuals are at one with their body movements. Dance, but also the highly aestheticized symbolic acts of the Chinese opera focus on the subject and its aesthetic experience. The conscious theatricalization of the body involved may exhibit humaneness, but it does not have an immediate impact on human affairs. Craftsman-

ship, on the other hand, is neither alienated nor aestheticized. But it is again not oriented towards human interaction. Its focus is on the object. Jujitsu finally is an art form oriented towards the other fighter, that is another subject, while body and spirit need to be in harmony. Still missing is a semiotics. The activity as a whole may display a certain social *gestus*: to turn the opponent's strength against him, but the individual body movement is not symbolic, and performing a martial art is no signifying effort. Instead, any martial art's individual tricks attempt to grasp and exhibit basic mechanic properties of animal movements or of the human physiology. Acculturation, Transculturation, Orientalism?:

Even in Brecht's time, jujitsu as an element of histories shared between East and West was charged with complex if implicit cultural meaning. Brecht chose to reduce this cultural significance by using the rhetorical figure of simile. The *tertium comparationis* between Western art and Eastern fighting technique was clearly delineated. Each was depicted as a set of socially relevant tricks of an aesthetic or physical nature, handed down by tradition and available only to the studious and artful master of the trade. But a reading of Brecht's text does not have to stop there. Cultural specificity is easily reinserted, and this done, the rhetorical structure strongly suggests a metaphorical mapping of western art and jujitsu. Any attempt to understand western art metaphorically as jujitsu or jujitsu metaphorically as western art leads to dialectical negotiations of the meaning of the two poles.

A number of mismatches stand out awaiting such negotiations. To name some of the more important: The Western artist's media are the book and language, the martial artist uses his body and physical movements. Western art engages in signification, whereas martial arts mainly render physiology and laws of mechanics explicit. Aesthetic experiences of the western writer tend to drift apart from the everyday functioning of the body (drugs, magical moments), whereas controlled body movements are an integral part of aesthetic experience for the martial artist. Western art of the 20th century operates under the condition of modernity. This is only to a lesser degree true for Asian martial arts. Under the circumstances, western art exhibits a much stronger inclination to stress homogeneity, purposiveness,

and efficiency as positive values. Even Brecht instrumentalizes art as a means to social ends in scenarios of progress, while the *do*, the path, is ideally and historically still the dominant goal in eastern sports, and technical sophistication of mere secondary importance.

Brecht leaves all these discrepancies out of the picture. In the following, I want to pinpoint the status of this maneuver in scenarios of intercultural communications. First, Brecht does not engage in an effort at intercultural understanding. He is not intent on examining cultural codings. Instead, he adopts cultural practices as techniques. This does not mean he erases culture specific contents; Brecht places cultural particularities in parentheses. Secondly, it is not an effort at acculturation, neither in the strong sense of an assimilation of another culture nor in the weaker sense of a merging of two distinct cultures. Brecht may highlight shared political and social problems, but never contests the legitimacy of cultural difference and distinct national cultures.

Thirdly, transculturation as a mechanism comes to mind. The notion can be traced back to Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*²⁴ and beyond. It usually refers to "the process through which oppressed, colonized, or peripheral cultures transform imposed metropolitan or dominant cultural practices and elements,"²⁵ but easily surpasses the scope of marginalized cultures when its field of operation is seen as "a transient intercultural space" with "special interstitial qualities, [...] rootedness in contested or destabilized territorial zones, and [...] links to patterns of misrepresentation and misinterpretation."²⁶ Representing and remodelling foreign practices and other cultural elements on one's own terms, but with an impact on the silenced, misrepresented other may be an inevitable part of Brecht's activities as a writer.²⁷ But again, the degree of interference is strictly limited by the decision to leave many cultural differences aside. Brecht is not interested in domesticating or subverting Asian cultural traits, nor have his texts a history of doing so.

Finally, Brecht's "Jiu-Jitsu" note is not yet another instance of orientalist discourse. As always, Brecht carefully avoids cultural or racial stereotypes. He is aware of the power structures and discriminations inherent to imperialism. More specifically, the historical time lag commonly attributed to eastern

cultures in orientalist discourse is transformed into a sense of futurity. Modern alienation of nature and consciousness, body and spirit may be remedied not by harking back to the premodern, but by embracing a transformation of the modern. Technique -- Asian technique! -- leads humankind forward to an original oneness with nature. Human reason is applied to the human body, and as it grasps and emphasizes the latter's intrinsic properties, a new mode of harmony between human consciousness and human nature becomes imaginable. Brecht himself later added variations to this line of reasoning, in 1928 still closely linked to jujitsu, e.g. in an essay on Georg Lukács:

Es handelt sich nicht um den Abbau der Technik, sondern um ihren Ausbau. Der Mensch wird nicht wieder Mensch, indem er aus der Masse herausgeht, sondern indem er hineingeht in die Masse. Die Masse wirft ihre Entmenschtheit ab, damit wird der Mensch wieder Mensch (nicht einer wie früher).²⁸

Global Cultures: How, then, should Brecht's contribution to intercultural affairs be understood? Brecht acknowledges shared histories, shared techniques, and shared social problems. Cultural contexts, on the other hand, may differ substantially. The notion of the simile points to a common denominator in the formulation of values and goals, designed to steer clear of cultural misrepresentation. In terms of intercultural contact scenarios, such a common denominator no doubt corresponds foremost to the need of establishing a cross-cultural basis for communication. Any such normative approach, either negotiative or imaginative as in Brecht's case, is almost inevitably flawed in that it displays aspects of assimilation, transculturation, and Orientalism.²⁹ But it should not be reduced to a misguided desire for order, as it reflects quite pragmatically on a general human tendency to link independent cultural realms to relatively stable realms of technological, economic, or political interaction. After the messiness of hybridizing first encounters in transient transcultural spaces,³⁰ chances are that *imagined communities* on a global scale begin to appear, marked by shared values, shared symbolic codes and even shared assessments of notorious fields of dispute. Like national cultures and their subcultures, each of a plurality of global cultures could be viewed as a

relatively stable, yet constantly changing entity. Relatively well-defined, more or less refined Asian-Western, Chinese-German, Beijing-Berlin, or Japanese-American cultural spaces or global cultures no doubt exist after significant periods of shared history. The fact does not reflect on the transformative power intercultural encounters may have for any national culture or subculture. But it is no doubt of interest to find out about the shape of a given global culture at a specific point in history. Brecht may attempt to do just that, and even if Brecht's insights remain speculative, his method of inquiry is intriguing, and many of his findings -- shared characteristics of western art and Asian martial arts -- are well worth considering.

No doubt many of Brecht's *Lehrstücke* could be read with a 'global culture'-tertium in mind. Even as early as 1923/1927, the revisions of *Kalkutta*, 4. Mai and *Im Dickicht der Städte* included many significant changes pertaining to nationalities and cultural traits, thus displaying an ongoing negotiation of a field of communication and interaction accessible across cultures. It is only by placing Brecht's work in the context of a larger exchange of technology and techniques between East and West, though, that a cultural analysis could possibly penetrate the heart of the matter. One significant aspect of shared histories between East and West concerns the field of film and theater, and, as I stated earlier, Brecht was an important part of this exchange both in terms of reception and production. To look at a select chain of instances -- Shanghai's movie industry, Brecht's adaptation of the Chinese opera, the Asian receptions of Brecht's work and modern western theater, and western fascination with kung-fu movies and the successes of contemporary Asian art cinema -- would no doubt facilitate our learning process with respect to specific global cultures, their values, contestations and arrangements and with respect to the makeup of the groups actually participating in them. Many interpretations and reception studies could be put to use in such an endeavor, and Brecht's work and its reception might form a central axis spanning from the 1920s to the present.

American Institute for Contemporary German Studies

Endnotes

1. Among others Renata Berg-Pan, *Bertolt Brecht und China*, Bonn 1979; Longpei Lü, *Brecht in China und die Tradition der Peking-Oper*, Bielefeld 1982 (Diss.); Shaswati Mazumdar, *Feuchtwanger/Brecht: Der Umgang mit der indischen Kolonialgeschichte. Eine Studie zur Konstruktion des Anderen*, Würzburg 1998; Antony Tatlow, *The Mask of Evil: Brecht's Response to the Poetry, Theatre and Thought of China and Japan. A Comparative and Critical Evaluation*, FfM 1977; Han-Soon Yim, *Bertolt Brecht und sein Verhältnis zur chinesischen Philosophie*, Bonn 1984; Alain Patrice Nganang, "Umwege zur Interkulturalität: Brechts 'Afrika,'" in: *Welfengarten* 8, 1998, 115-131.
2. C.F. Michael Bodden, "Brecht in Asia: New Agendas, National Traditions, and Critical Consciousness," in: Siegfried Mews, ed., *A Bertolt Brecht Reference Companion*, Westport, Conn., London 1997, 379-397; Janelle G. Reinelt, *After Brecht: British Epic Theater*, Ann Arbor 1994; Kathrin Sartingen, *Über Brecht hinaus: Produktive Theaterrezeption in Brasilien am Beispiel von Bertolt Brecht*, Berlin 1994.
3. See Bryan S. Turner, "Outline of a Theory of Orientalism," in: Bryan S. Turner, ed., *Readings in Orientalism*, vol. 1, London 2000, 1-31.
4. "Bemerkungen über die chinesische Schauspielkunst," in: *Frankfurter und Berliner Ausgabe*, vol. XXII, *Schriften* 2, 151-155, here: 154 (first printed in 1935).
5. "Kosmopolitismus (2)," in: XXIII, *Schriften* 3, 384f. The note dates from 1956; part of it reads: "1. Die wahrhaft internationalen Werke sind die nationalen Werke. 2. Die wahrhaft nationalen Werke nehmen internationale Tendenzen und Neuerungen in sich auf." (384f.)
6. Hans-Thies Lehmann, "Schlaglichter auf den anderen Brecht," in: *Brecht-Jahrbuch* 17, 1992, 1-13, here: 2.
7. In a journal entry from 1924, Brecht lists a number of activities and sports he would like to familiarize himself with. Last on a list of fourteen is "Jiu-Jitsu." (XXVI, *Journal* 1, 279).
8. I, *Dramen* 1, 452, and XXI, *Schriften* 1, 241ff.
9. XXI, *Schriften* 1, 242.
10. "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit," vol. XXII, *Schriften* 2, 74-89, here: 83. The essay was written in 1934, printed in 1935.
11. Ibid.
12. XXI, *Schriften* 1, 695.
13. The "Lehrbrief" is of course a central passage for the discussion of art and ideals of the classic period.
14. Ibid., 243.
15. On characteristic features of jujitsu and particularly on its history in Germany and Austria see Werner Lind, ed., *Lexikon der Kampfkünste. Von Aikido bis Zen*, Berlin 1999, and the websites of the German and Austrian Jujitsu Associations: <http://www.djjb.de/html/geschichte.html>; <http://home.pages.at/jjvoe/geschichte.htm>. The most detailed account on the Internet is to be found at http://members.chello.at/momo3/was_ist.htm (as of March 5, 2002). -- According to Lind 1999, Japanese physicians are supposed to have studied human physiology to arrive at particular throwing and kicking techniques.
16. Bruce Tegner, "Jujitsu," *The Encyclopaedia Americana*, International Edition, Banbury, Connecticut 1998.
17. "Perhaps you asked, 'which system mimics the other?' And I must again respond, 'There is but one art: the art of fighting. And since there is but one art, the more one becomes near-perfect in one system, the more one's techniques appear to emulate the techniques at a very high level in another system.'" (Tri Thong Dang, *Toward the Unknown. Martial Artist, What Shall you Become?* Rutland, Vermont, Tokyo 1997, 84).
18. Dang 1997, 108f.
19. If the dates provided by the *Frankfurter und Berliner Ausgabe* are correct, the 1920s would be punctuated by three occurrences of jujitsu in 1924, 1926 (when Brecht revised *Im Dickicht der Städte* for publication in 1927), and 1928. Considering the close resemblance of the jujitsu passages of the notes and of *Im Dickicht der Städte*, however ("Jiu Jitsu (= die leichte, die fröhliche Kunst)"; "Und Jiu-Jitsu heißt die leichte, die fröhliche Kunst, nicht?"), it just might be that the typescript of "Jiu Jitsu" is older than the *Frankfurter und Berliner Ausgabe* states. But the issue of the precise dates is of no consequence for my argument.
20. "Bei Durchsicht meiner ersten Stücke," XXIII, *Schriften* 3, 239-245, here: 242, written in 1953.
21. Ibid., 243.
22. On the subversive, irrational side of the body in Brecht's writings see Richard Block, "Baal Dancing: The Unsettling Position of Baal in Brecht's Theater of the New," in: *German Quarterly* 68 (2), 1995, 117-130.
23. "Die Essays von Georg Lukács," XXII, *Schriften* 2, 456f., here: 456, written in 1938.
24. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, New York 1992.
25. Phyllis Peres, *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone African Narrative*, Gainesville 1997, 10.
26. David Tomas, *Transcultural Space and Transcultural Beings*, Boulder, Colorado 1996, 1.
27. The political function of the mechanism is often highlighted. Transculturation is generally viewed as a domesticating and hegemonic act on the part of dominant cultures. In the case of minority cultures, it is perceived to have the liberating potential of subversive political intervention.
28. See footnote 23, here: 457.
29. This is a risky business, where misguided judgements immediately impact the line of reasoning. For instance, Brecht's later theorizing about the alienation effect in Chinese theater strongly underrates the degree of participation on the part of the broader population in China. Brecht does not see that the Chinese opera is in fact a 'Volkstheater,' while modern western theater is only intellectually accessible to a select few. See Tatlow 516-518, Berg-Pan 166.
30. This formulation only lightly parodies some of the terminological action in cultural and postcolonial studies, the argumentative stances of which may be well taken.

GESTUS AT WARNERS: PETER LORRE AND BERT BRECHT

Gerd Gemünden

"The exile is the messenger of misfortune."

Bertolt Brecht

In his poem "The Swamp" [Der Sumpf] from 1942, Bertolt Brecht describes the slow drowning of a friend, devoured by the morass of a leech-infected swamp. As part of Brecht's "Hollywood Elegies," the poem is one of many in which Brecht vents a thinly disguised indictment of the inhuman practices of the US film industry in Los Angeles:

Manchen der Freunde sah ich, und den
Geliebtesten
Hilflos versinken im Sumpfe, an dem ich
Täglich vorbeigeh.

Und es geschah nicht an einem
Einzigem Vormittag. Viele
Wochen nahm es oft; dies machte es
Schrecklicher.
Und das Gedenken an die gemeinsamen
Langen Gespräche über den Sumpf, der
So viele schon birgt.

Hilflos nun sah ich ihn zurückgelehnt
Bedeckt von den Blutegelein.
In dem schimmernden
Sanft bewegten Schlamm.
Auf dem Versinkenden
Antlitz das gräßliche
Wonnige Lächeln.

Since the only surviving German copy of the poem was found among the papers of the late actor Peter Lorre, it is commonly assumed that it must have been written specifically for Lorre as Brecht's comment on the actors' career in Hollywood, where Lorre had worked since his arrival in 1935. Like Lorre, Brecht himself had come to Los Angeles to find employment in Hollywood, unsuccessfully as it turned out. Brecht had known Lorre since the 1930s, casting him in the role of Galy Gay in his own production of *Mann ist Mann* in 1931. Defending the actor against attacks in the Berlin press he lauded Lorre's "new art of acting" as exemplary for an actor who not only enacts but also confronts the

character he plays. In Hollywood, however, Brecht frequently criticized his friend for what he perceived as a sell-out to the studios, even though the poem laments, rather than indicts, the fallibility of the actor in exile.

"The Swamp" articulates not only Brecht's problematic relationship with Lorre but also raises more fundamental question about Brechtianism in exile cinema. It is the purpose of this paper to use Lorre's performances in the Hollywood film studios to argue for a politically more complex and productive encounter with the US film industry than Brecht's own assessment of the ill-fated collaboration on *Hangmen Also Die* has provided (as I've shown elsewhere).

Like so many film actors in Weimar Germany, Lorre was trained on the stage, first in the Viennese theater troupe of Jacob Moreno, and then by many renown directors in Berlin, including Brecht. In his first film role in *M* (1931), Lorre employs a Brechtian notions of *Gestus* in his role as Hans Beckert, showing the character as the intersection of social forces and over-determined subjectivity. Lorre's acting style, his uncanny physiognomy, and his soft, guttural voice shape the film to such a degree that one may indeed wonder whose imprint shapes the film the most. Is *M* not, as Anton Kaes has suggested, "as much a Peter Lorre film as it is a Fritz Lang film?" While in the US, Lorre's acting style was forced into complicity with Hollywood's preference for naturalism -- a fate alluded to in Brecht's poem -- and yet, as I will argue below, his American performances continue to entail elements of Brechtian distanciation that allow them to be read as allegories about the exilic circumstances under which they were produced.

The deterritorialized dimension of Lorre's performances is to a certain degree prefigured in his biography. Although I do not want to read Lorre's life as a chain of events determined by causes and effects, it is important to rehearse some facts in order to see how biography can become part of the intertextual construct that makes up the star. Born to parents who belonged to a German-speaking Jewish minority, Lorre was interested in the theater from early on, acting on various stages in Breslau, Zürich and Vienna before coming to Berlin in 1929 when Brecht invited him to play the role of Fabian

in his production of Marieluise Fleißer's *Pioniere in Ingolstadt*. Performances in *Dantons Tod*, *Frühlings Erwachen*, and *Die Quadratur des Kreises* followed. 1931 proved to be the year of Lorre's breakthrough. Playing Galy Gay in Brecht's own production of *Mann ist Mann* at night, Lorre would stand in front of the cameras of Fritz Lang during the day in the role of the child murderer Hans Beckert in the director's first sound feature, *M*. The success of the film turned Lorre into an international film star; after *M* he appeared in eight more German films, often in smaller comical roles. In 1933, Lorre emigrated via the much-traveled route first to Vienna, then Paris, then London, before reaching the US through a contract with Columbia Pictures.

Known in the United States primarily for his performances as the child murderer in *M* and as the anarchist in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), Lorre was typecast from the beginning of his US career as a menacing and enigmatic presence. Following the motto, 'Play it again, Peter!', Lorre's Hollywood roles can be read as an extended quotation, re-writing, and mimicking of that of the paedophile and killer Hans Beckert. If the roles he was first offered did not depict him as a pervert or serial killer, then at least as a sexual threat or outsider -- and invariably as a foreigner (even if it is often not clear from which foreign country he hailed). Consider his many roles during the 1930s and 1940s which include a mad French surgeon (*Mad Love*); an intellectual Russian criminal (*Crime and Punishment*); a Mexican-British specialist for murder (*Secret Agent*); an Hungarian immigrant turned criminal (*The Face Behind the Mask*); a smart Japanese detective who is a master of disguise (the *Mr. Moto* series); an unidentifiable, dandy-like adventurer, possibly Egyptian (*The Maltese Falcon*); a Chinese ship captain (*They Met in Bombay*); a dubious black marketer, possibly Italian or Spanish (*Casablanca*); several spies or secret agents of Japanese, Russian, and English provenance (*Invisible Agent*, *Background to Danger*, and *Lancer Spy* respectively); a German Gestapo officer (*The Cross of Lorraine*); a French pickpocket (*I Was an Adventuress*); a patriotic French prisoner (*Passage to Marseilles*); a Dutch writer (*The Mask of Dimitrios*); a terrified agent for Franco-Spain (*Confidential Agent*); a dubious English gambler

(*Three Strangers*); an equally dubious Italo-American night club owner (*Black Angel*); an Italo-American body guard and mobster (*The Chase*); a sly Moroccan police inspector (*Casbah*); an English book illustrator (*The Verdict*); and a drunk South African philosopher (*Rope of Sand*). Only in very few of his 79 films did he play a character whose nationality is identifiably American, and there is only one film in which he played a German who is not a Nazi (*Hotel Berlin*).

What do these performances tell us about the popularity of German exile actors in Hollywood? On the most obvious level, they indicate that the transition from one national cinema to another was very difficult. Unlike for directors, cameramen, set designers, producers, or even writers, an actor's foreign accent remained an insurmountable obstacle. In a system of production that circumscribed the range of actors in rather narrow terms -- sometimes even if they were stars -- the accent (and in Lorre's case also the looks) greatly reduced versatility, except when it could be employed to fill the studio's need for exoticism. However, if compared to other famous compatriots who largely failed to continue in the US their successful German (stage) careers such as Fritz Kortner, Albert Bassermann, Oskar Homolka or Elisabeth Bergner, Lorre did quite well. Just as Conrad Veidt filled a niche in playing Gestapo officers, secret agents and spies, and Paul Henreid performed successful variations of the continental lover, so Lorre too was able to cultivate a certain persona with his portrayals of the soft-spoken, infantile foreigners of dubious origin whose threat was always associated with hints of sexual perversion or homosexuality. Lorre was able to have top-billing only at the beginning of his US career -- in *Mad Love* and *Crime and Punishment* which were specifically intended as Lorre vehicles, and even in the early noir *Stranger on the Third Floor*, where he has significantly less screen-time than the other male protagonist. Surprisingly, the films in which he had a supporting role form a more coherent body of work. Especially the films in which he is paired with Bogart and Sidney Greenstreet approximate a mini-genre; they follow a similar set of institutional imperatives, they share certain generic conventions and thematic concerns, and most importantly they raise similar audience expectations by virtue of the same cast.

Casting decisions and the creation of a system of stars and supporting characters clearly shapes the meaning of genre film beyond narrative and syntax, which traditionally have been considered central in genre theory. This effect can be seen not only within individual Lorre films but also in other films with foreign stars that emphasize horror and the uncanny. Thus the vehicles for Bela Lugosi, a celebrated Max Reinhardt *Hamlet* whose Dracula roles drove him into drug addiction, and for Boris Karloff, one of the few actors who accepted his synonymy with horror as being natural and useful, provide a contrast and a supplement to the films of Lorre, highlighting their significance through similarity and difference. If one extends this comparison even further to include other films featuring foreign stars -- such as Marlene Dietrich, Carmen Miranda, or Charles Boyer -- the significance of the star system for genre films becomes even more apparent. Even though Lorre never achieved the fame of any performers, the way in which he was billed and cast in his films serves very similar functions.

Yet the particularity of the exile actor Peter Lorre is that in many of his performances he manages to comment on his historical, social, and political predicament despite or beyond the narrative motivation of his characters. While I would not go so far as to call these instances a 'stepping-outside of the role,' they do provide a rupture in the complete immersion in the role on which Hollywood studio acting is premised. Employing the notion of *gestus* of his friend and mentor Bertolt Brecht, Lorre uses bodily posture, accent, and facial expression to exemplify social relationships. While his portrayals of foreigners do follow Hollywood strategies of rendering the other exotic and bizarre, they also show national and cultural identity as a site of multiple competing, often antagonistic impulses and forces, and the complex process of adapting -- or not adapting -- to another culture. Thus, Lorre's performances are not so much about mimicking as about mimicry -- not a simple imitation of a dominant acting style but a blurred copy that always retains the traces of forced assimilation while at the same time mocking the coerciveness of acculturation.

To be sure, such an allegorical reading lies at least partially in the eye of the beholder. The more subtle references to fluid identities and nomadic

subjectivity that underlie, for example, Lorre's Joel Cairo in *The Maltese Falcon* or his Zalenkoff in *Background to Danger* -- two films which contain virtually identical scenes of Lorre being roughed up by the hero only to be deprived of various passports or identity papers -- may have escaped contemporary audiences engrossed in the narrative of the film. But there are other moments which foreground self-shaped identities and aspirations to assimilate that are hard to miss. In *Beat the Devil*, Humphrey Bogart (as American Billy Dannreuther) answers Lorre's (O'Hara) knock on the door with the words: "What's our wide-eye Irish leprechaun doing outside my door?" To which Lorre replies: "Why do you always make jokes about my name? In Chile, the name of O'Hara is a tip-top name. Many Germans in Chile happen to become called O'Hara." And in *My Favorite Brunette*, Lorre plays a knife-throwing killer who fools the police by pretending to be a gardener. They apologize for the inconvenience they may have caused him: "Sorry we bothered you. You're not a bad guy for a foreigner." To which Lorre replies: "But I'm going to be a citizen. I'm studying for my examination. By the way -- could you gentlemen tell me who was the 8th president of the United States?" The police leave without reply, indicating that the citizens know as little about their country's history as the aspiring immigrant, but also suggesting that they and the population in general is largely ignorant about processes of naturalization.

The film in which Lorre came closest to playing his own life, and which thus most obviously suggests an allegorical reading, is *The Face Behind the Mask* (Robert Florey, 1943). Here Lorre is the Hungarian watchmaker Janos Szabo who immigrates to New York City. When a hotel fire burns his face and Szabo can no longer find work because of his disfigurement, he joins a gang of mobsters, wearing a mask fashioned after his passport photo. When he leaves the criminals to marry a blind woman, they suspect him of treachery and plant a bomb in his car. The bomb kills the woman, and this second blow of fate demands a reprisal. Szabo takes revenge by misdirecting the gang's airplane, landing it in the desert where everybody, including himself, will die. The tale of the upbeat immigrant who finds out that life is less forgiving abroad than at home is a familiar one for

many first -- and second -- generation Americans. The tale of the face that instills fear, and the desire and impossibility to attain a new face, is one that particularly resembles Lorre's fate. Szabo's mask reduces his expressivity to his eyes and voice -- Lorre's trademarks -- and turns every utterance into a ventriloquism. What is more, the mask has Lorre's features. When Szabo looks into the mirror to check his new face -- in yet another quotation of this pivotal scene from *M* -- he sees the face of someone else, recalling the scene from *M* and *Stranger on the Third Floor* where the face in the mirror does not seem to be one's own. The trajectory from hope to hopelessness, so typical for narratives about coming to America, is articulated in this film primarily as the futile refutation of physiognomy. Resigned to his fate, Szabo, the mobster, pursues a career where looks don't matter just as Lorre chose to become an actor because it allowed him to turn a deformation into an advantage.

Lorre's performance of foreigners and of foreignness is closely related to the ambiguity of ethnicity that lies at the very origins of Hollywood itself. Migration and exile are not only processes that led many Europeans to Hollywood but were also constitutive of the American film industry in the first place. We will remember that the studio moguls Carl Laemmle, Samuel Goldwyn, Adolf Zukor, William Fox, Louis B. Mayer, Joseph and Nicholas Schenk, Lewis Selznick, and Jack and Harry Warner were first -- or second generation Jewish immigrants who strove hard to assimilate to the United States. The "invention of Hollywood", as Neal Gabler has called it, is premised on the repression and disavowal of one's national and cultural origins. This camouflaging is the counterpart to the ostentatious portrayals of otherness that Lorre and other emigrants (many of them Jews themselves) had to play; what this dichotomy suggests is that the notion of a center, i.e., that which is not foreign, rests firmly on projections of different kinds of otherness.

Following this kind of reasoning it is only logical that among the many, many versions of otherness and outsidership which Lorre had to portray, the one absent form of ethnic stereotyping is that of the Jew. In order not to draw attention to Hollywood's own ethnic origins, the studios' unwritten rule was to downplay Jewish identity, a pol-

icy that was kept even as news of the Holocaust increasingly reached the United States. (One of the most striking comments of the 1940s on the disavowal of Jewishness is certainly Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*.) While some of Lorre's German comic roles such as the reporter Johnny in *F.P.1 Does Not Answer* [F.P.1 antwortet nicht] (Karl Hartl, 1932) contained stereotypes that a contemporary audiences associated specifically with Jews, none of his American roles allowed such allusions. On the contrary, screenplays based on novels or plays that contained references to a Jewish background had to be purged. In *The Constant Nymph* (1943), for example, Lorre plays the wealthy Fritz Bercovy, a romantic role that had been stripped of the Jewish background of Jacob Birnbaum, the character of Margaret Kennedy's mildly anti-semitic novel and play on which the script was based.

And yet the many portrayals of outsiders in an industry created by outsiders bent on being insiders suggest to be read as allegories of one's own repressed ethnicity. This, at least, is how writer Curt Siodmak, himself a German-Jewish refugee from Hitler, comments on the figure of the wolfman which he created: "The Wolfman is about fate. I was born as a Jew, in Dresden in 1902. Did I chose this? (...) I didn't have a choice. That's our fate, and The Wolfman is about the good and the evil in human beings. He cannot escape his fate. I couldn't escape my fate either. Does that make us monsters?"

It was left to the Nazis to conflate Lorre's performance of the serial killer *M* with what they perceived as the degenerateness of the entire Jewish race. In *The Eternal Jew* (Fritz Hippler, 1940), the most notorious of Nazi anti-Semitic films, a clip from Lorre in *M* is commented on as: "The Jew Lorre in the role of a child murderer. Following the saying, 'It's the victim's fault and not the murderer's', this film tries to twist a normal sense of justice by soliciting compassion for the criminal, thus glossing over the crime and excusing it." For the Nazis, actors like Lorre, Kurt Gerron, Rosa Valetti, or Curt Bois embodied a grotesque deformation of humanity that was considered representative of the Jewish race in general. When these actors appeared on stage or screen, they no longer played a theatrical role but their own lives, allow-

ing, so the Nazis thought, the audience a rare glimpse into the undisguised Jewish soul.

Peter Lorre's Hollywood roles could be described with much of the same vocabulary the Nazis used to deride Jewish artists -- "wurzellos," "widernatürlich," "grotesk," "pervers," "pathologisch," (uprooted, unnatural, grotesque, perverse, pathologic) -- but they served a different ideological purpose. While these characteristics still had strong negative connotations, they were never associated with things Jewish but instead with foreignness in general -- if the Jewish moguls wanted to be American, Lorre's oddity affirmed their assimilation. Lorre's performances point to the profound ambiguity with which Hollywood has typified the roles of foreigners; questioning the film industry's strategies of 'othering,' they offer a forceful critique of Hollywood's disavowal of its own founders' cultural and ethnic origins.

It is interesting to note that Brecht, who taught Lorre much about acting, never read his Hollywood performances allegorically, considering him a victim that remained helpless in the face of the all-devouring moloch. But let us, in closing, take another look at "The Swamp." The last lines about the "ghastly blissful smile" are a reference to the trademark of the many villains Lorre played, read here by Brecht as the actor's last grimace before the swamp will cover him. The meaning of the poem remains ambiguous: Is Brecht implying that Hollywood forces Lorre to smile even as it kills him, thus playing his role unto death? Or are we to understand that Lorre remains blissfully ignorant of the forces that are bringing about his demise? No matter which reading we privilege -- whether it is the outsider's perspective who finds everything ghastly, or the insider's perspective who seems content because he is unaware -- both of them cast Lorre as the helpless victim devoured by forces much larger than himself. Yet are there no alternatives to Brecht's deeply pessimistic reading of Lorre's ghastly blissful smile? Is it not this expression of Lorre that captures best not only the paradox of his roles but also the fundamental contradiction and incongruity that mark the actor in exile? On one level, the soft-voiced killer's perpetual smirk personifies a seemingly benign peril that harks back to the childishness of the child murderer M while at the same time creatively extending

the repertoire of Hollywood character roles. But on another level, the ghastly smile also offers an allegorical comment on the proverbial 'grin and bear it!' in the drama of coerced assimilation. Brecht knew full well that the paradox of Peter Lorre's life and career was that he had to play the outsider in order to become an insider. We can only blame Brecht's hostility to the culture industry for blinding him to realize that Lorre's achievement was his talent to make these processes visible, playing the character in the drama while also drawing attention to the drama of his own acculturation.

Dartmouth College

ERNST SCHUMACHER UND BENNO BESSON IM GESPRÄCH

Ernst Schumacher

Nach dem Gastspiel des Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne mit *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* im Berliner Ensemble (13. bis 16. Juni, 2002) führten der Regisseur Benno Besson (Jahrgang 1922) und der Theaterkritiker Ernst Schumacher (Jahrgang 1921) ein Gespräch über Brecht heute.

Schumacher: 1978 hast du den *Kaukasischen Kreidekreis* auf dem Festival von Avignon mit dem Vorspiel inszeniert, in dem zwei sowjetische Kolchosen um die Nutzung eines Tales streiten. Warum hast du das Vorspiel jetzt weggelassen?

Besson: Als ich das Stück das erste Mal gemacht habe, waren die Sozialisten noch vorhanden, es gab Staaten, in denen der Versuch gemacht wurde, den Sozialismus aus einer Utopie in Wirklichkeit zu verwandeln. Damals ging es darum, zu zeigen, dass man sich mittels des Theaters zu ihnen in Beziehung setzt. Wenn ich das heute noch so machte, spräche ich mit der Luft. Ich will aber nicht in die Luft sprechen. Ich spiele das Stück für Zuschauer, die im liberalen Kapitalismus unter den Bedingun-

gen der amerikanisierten Modernisation leben. Die heutige Bedeutung ergibt sich aus der Sicht auf die Hauptfigur, auf die Magd Grusche Vachnadze, die sich um das liegen gelassene Kind Michel der davongelaufenen Gouverneursfrau Natella Abaschwili kümmert. Brecht hat viele große Frauenfiguren geschaffen, aber diese Grusche ist die einzige, die nicht im Dienste eines männlichen Projekts steht, nicht im Dienst einer Mission handelt, die nicht von Männern diktiert ist. Grusche bewahrt einen Erben, dem Herrschaft zukommt, vor seinem patriarchalen Werdegang, sie erzieht ihn nach ihrem weiblichen Instinkt und ihrer Lebenstendenz. Das ist das Wesentliche für mich heute.

Schumacher: Deswegen trägst du die Moral des Stückes gar nicht vor? Bei Brecht heißt es: "Dass gehören soll, was da ist, denen die für es gut sind?"

Besson: Der Klassenkampf trägt sich heute auf andere Weise zu, als ihn Brecht reflektierte. Der Frauenkampf oder Geschlechterkampf ist wesentlich geworden. Das Sich-Fügen der Frauen unter das Patriarchat ist nicht mehr selbstverständlich, sondern das Patriarchat wird in Frage gestellt, gleichgültig, ob es sich um feudales Patriarchat, um kaufmännisches Patriarchat oder proletarisches Patriarchat handelt. Dieser Gesichtspunkt bestimmt den politischen Rahmen, um den es mir bei der Neuinszenierung des *Kaukasischen Kreidekreises* ging. Ich will offen sagen, dass ich mit Brechts Epilog-Versen prinzipiell nicht mehr einverstanden bin.

Schumacher: Weshalb?

Besson: "die Kinder den Mütterlichen" – damit die Mütter zu Hause bleiben und die Kinder füttern? Komm, das ist lächerlich. Wenn der Brecht ein unverbesserlicher Patriarch war, so wie Marx oder Freud, ist das seine Sache. Oder: "das Tal den Bewässerern, damit es Frucht bringt" – sag das mal den Palästinensern, denen das Jordanwasser durch die israelischen Plantagen im Wortsinn abgegraben wird! Heute machen viele die Erde nutzbar auf eine Weise, die beschissen ist. Da habe ich meine Geschichte vom *Kaukasischen Kreidekreis* lieber mit den Versen geschlossen, dass das Volk Grusiniens noch lange der Zeit des verlumpten Richters Azdak

"als einer kurzen/ Goldenen Zeit beinahe der Gerechtigkeit" gedenkt.

Schumacher: Beim Gastspiel im BE konnte man den Eindruck haben, dass ein Teil des Publikums sich der DDR als einer Zeit von ein bisschen mehr Gerechtigkeit erinnerte, sich jedenfalls eine gerechtere Gesellschaft vorstellen kann als die jetzige. Der gewaltige, mit stehenden Ovationen für dich wie für das Ensemble verbundene Beifall ließ darauf schließen. Wer wie ich Brechts eigene Inszenierung des *Kreidekreises* im Berliner Ensemble im Oktober 1954 gesehen hat, kann in deiner Stilistik dieses "Urbild" aufgehoben, auch weiterentwickelt sehen, wie du es bereits bei deiner Inszenierung von *Sezuan* in der Volksbühne in den siebziger Jahren machtest. Er kann deine Fähigkeit bewundern, Elemente der Commedia dell'arte neu anzuwenden. Für jüngere Zuschauer muss die jetzige Inszenierung wie die Offenbarung des legendären "Brecht-Theaters" erschienen sein. Aber bei aller Bewunderung kann ich mich nicht des Gefühls erwehren, dass sich bei dir das "epische Theater," das Brecht in seiner letzten Zeit lieber "dialektisches Theater" genannt sehen wollte, in ein "kulinarisches Theater" verwandelt, bei dem der Inhalt in der Form verschwindet.

Besson: Also, wenn die Art und Weise, wie wir den *Kreidekreis* zeigen, "kulinarisch" ist, dann ist das ganz im Sinne Brechts, nämlich die Zuschauer nicht zu langweilen. Antikulinarisch hieße doch bloß, die Zuschauer zu langweilen und zu verärgern. Die Hauptsache für Brecht war doch, dass eine Sache Spaß macht. Brecht hat mir immer wieder gesagt, wenn wir nicht lustiger sind als die Operette *Der Graf von Luxemburg*, dann können wir uns begraben lassen.

Schumacher: Der bayerische Ministerpräsidenten Edmund Stoiber hatte in seiner Rede zum 100. Geburtstag Brechts in Augsburg die Erwartung ausgesprochen: "Das Scheitern des real existierenden Sozialismus und die Überwindung des Ost-West-Gegensatzes lässt uns hoffen, dass allmählich der Blick frei wird für eine offenere Würdigung von Brechts Werk." Das bedeutet doch, dass Brechts Werk aus dem weltanschaulichen Zusammenhang

herausgelöst werden soll. Machst du da mit?

Besson: Dass der Brecht ein reiner Dichter sein soll, der schöne Stücke und schöne Gedichte schrieb, bis er leider politisierte, das kennt man doch schon lange. Ästhetisierung als Mittel, um eine Sache wegzutun von der realen Entwicklung der Gesellschaft, war immer die Tendenz von Reaktionären, nicht von mir. Im Fall Brecht hängt das auch damit zusammen, dass versucht wird, die Spuren der DDR zu verwischen.

Schumacher: Durch die Rückverwandlung des Sozialismus aus geschichtlicher Realität in eine Utopie, die Stoiber auf einen "reinen" Brecht hoffen lässt, hat sich tatsächlich der "ideale Adressat," den der sozialistische Brecht vor Augen hatte, nämlich der Anhänger, der Verfechter, der Vorkämpfer von sozialen Bewegungen, gleichsam in die geschichtliche Luft aufgelöst. Es gibt keine Arbeiterbewegung mehr, die mehr im Auge hätte als Besitzstandswahrung derjenigen, die noch in Arbeit sind. Andererseits werden mit jedem Tag der Nachkriegsgeschichte die gesellschaftlichen Widersprüche, die Stoiber als Ost-West-Konflikt verschwunden sah, nicht nur reproduziert, sondern sie werden verschärft hervorgebracht. Brechts Stücke erweisen sich nach wie vor als hoch aktuelle Abbildungen, als Widerspiegelungen des real existierenden Kapitalismus. Als "reale Adressaten" verbleiben unter den Bedingungen des Kapitalismus so recht eigentlich nur zahlungskräftige Klein- und Großbürger, die in ihrer Mehrheit mit Sozialismus in irgendeiner konkreten Form nichts am Hut haben, aber immerhin noch kunstempfänglich sind und den Konsum von Abendunterhaltung noch mit der Bereitwilligkeit verbinden, dabei auch etwas denken zu wollen.

Besson: Wenn Brecht noch von einem "eingreifenden Denken" sprach, so dürfte es sich bei den realen Zuschauern von heute wohl eher um "aufgreifendes Denken" handeln. Was Brecht-Aufführungen unter den postsozialistischen Verhältnissen bewirken können, ist die "Maulwurfs"-Funktion auszuüben: gesellschaftliches Bewusstsein aufzuwühlen. Für Brecht-Aufführungen außerhalb sozialistischer Länder hat das übrigens immer gegolten. Wenn etwas von Brechts Praxis, die viel

wichtiger ist als das, was er theoretisch in wechselnden Auffassungen geäußert hat, abzuleiten ist, dann dies: dass Theater Wirklichkeit ins Spiel bringt und aufs Spiel setzt. Und was da auf der Bühne passiert, ist dazu da, dass es die Zuschauer zum Mitspielen verleitet. Der Zuschauer ist selbst ein wesentlicher Akteur im Theaterspiel. Ihn dazu zu machen, sind die Stücke Brechts glänzend geeignet, wenn sie richtig gelesen werden. Wenn man anfängt, bei Brecht zu theoretisieren, um die Darstellung zu stützen, glaube mir, geht man fehl.

Man muss konkret sehen, was in seinen Stücken steht. So wie Sophokles, Shakespeare, Molière hatte Brecht eine Vision der Welt, und was seine großen Figuren betrifft, so haben sie in Bezug auf die wesentlichen Züge der menschlichen Entwicklung beinahe einen Münchhausen-Charakter, indem sie sich am eigenen Schopf aus der Geschichte heraus- oder auch in sie hineinziehen. Die Stücke müssen auf die neuen Umstände hin neu gelesen und interpretiert werden.

Schumacher: In welchen Regisseuren siehst du denn noch Brecht-Regisseure?

Besson: Keine Ahnung. Weiß ich nicht. Ich kenne nicht alle.

Schumacher: Wie ist denn zum Beispiel die Situation in Frankreich? Ist Roger Planchon noch aktiv?

Besson: Keine Ahnung. Die Brecht-Aneignung in Frankreich wurde doch durch das Gastspiel des Berliner Ensembles mit der *Courage* (1954) ausgelöst. Die Zuschauer wirkten wie geblendet, weil die Aufführung immer noch etwas von der enormen kulturellen Explosion vermittelte, die in Deutschland in den 20er-Jahren passiert war und die es in Frankreich überhaupt nicht gab. Das wurde schleunigst wieder weggeschoben dadurch, dass man Brecht auf die paar theoretischen Abhandlungen reduzierte, die er da verfasst hatte und die er sehr bedauerte. Regisseure, die sich für Brecht interessieren, kenne ich keine besonderen. Brecht hat ja auch immer gesagt, man ist nie schlechter vertreten als durch seine Freunde.

Schumacher: Hast du mitbekommen, dass hier in Berlin Wiederbelebungsversuche unternommen werden? In der Schaubühne hat Tom Kühnel seine Inszenierung der *Heiligen Johanna* gezeigt. Überraschend kündigte Claus Peymann an, im BE *Die Mutter* zu inszenieren. Vorausgegangen war die Ankündigung, dass Peter Zadek im DT die *Mutter Courage* machen will.

Umso besser. Da wird man sehen, was sie mit Brecht anfangen können. Auf alle Fälle finde ich gut, dass es nach der Jahrtausendwende mit Brecht weitergeht. Die Art, wie wir mit unserem Brecht-Gastspiel im Berliner Ensemble empfangen wurden, war nicht gerade nach der höflichen Art Brechts. Es gab keine Plakate, auf dem Transparent am Haus stand nur: Gastspiel, sonst nichts, nicht von wo und von wem, und als besonders aufmunternd konnte ich auch nicht empfinden, dass ich vom Verwaltungsdirektor mit der Bemerkung empfangen wurde, dass das Gastspiel zu 63 Prozent vorverkauft sei, wo sie es mit ihrem Programm gewohnt seien, 90 Prozent zu machen. So wurde ich empfangen hier. So recht kann ich mir den Zweck nicht vorstellen, was Peymann mit der *Mutter* wohl anfangen könnte. Es ist, wie es ist. Es sind nun einmal die, die am Zuge sind, nachdem der Sozialismus in diesem Land gescheitert ist.

Benno Besson

1922 am 4. November wird Benno Besson in Yverdon in der französischen Schweiz geboren.

1942 geht er nach Lyon, später nach Zürich, studiert Romanistik u. Anglistik.

1949 Bertolt Brecht lädt Besson nach Ostberlin ein, wo das Berliner Ensemble gegründet wurde

1954 Das Theater am Schiffbauerdamm wird mit Bessons *Don Juan*-Inszenierung eröffnet
1962-68 Engagement am Deutschen Theater, zuletzt als Chefregisseur

1962 Besson inszeniert Peter Hacks *Der Frieden*

1969-77 künstlerischer Leiter und später Intendant der Volksbühne, unter Besson wird zum ersten Mal Heiner Müller in der DDR aufgeführt

1982-89 Direktor des Genfer Theaters "La Comédie"

1992 erstmalig wieder in Berlin mit *Hase Hase* am Schillertheater

Heute lebt Benno Besson wieder in der französischen Schweiz und arbeitet in ganz Europa.

Bessons Inszenierung *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* gastierte im Juni am BE.

Berliner Zeitung, July 4, 2002



BERLIN

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Edited by Tom Kuhn and Karen Leeder

With a Foreword by David Constantine

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Helgrid Streidt
Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv
Chausseestraße 125
10115 Berlin
Tel.: 030 / 2830570-0
Fax: 030 / 2830570-33

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GERMANY
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P.O. Box 8023
Georgia Southern University
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FAX: (912) 681-0653
email: dwrob@gasou.edu

Editor, Communications: Gudrun Tabbert-Jones
Modern Languages
Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA 95053
Tel. 408/554-4123
FAX 408/741-0532
email: gtabbertjones@scu.edu

Managing Editor, The Brecht Yearbook:
Stephen Brockmann
Department of Modern Languages
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Baker Hall 160
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Tel.: 412-268-8055
FAX: 412-268-1328
email: smb+@andrew.cmu.edu

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Vera Stegmann
Department of Modern Foreign Languages
Maginnes Hall 9
LeHigh University
Bethlehem, PA 18015
Tel: 610/758-5026
Vss2@lehigh.edu

Antony Tatlow
Graduate Centre for Arts Research
University of Dublin
Trinity College
Room 3158, Arts Building
Dublin 2
IRELAND
email: atatlow@tcd.ie

Carl Weber
Drama Department
Stanford University
Palo Alto, CA 94305-5010
Tel. 415/723-2593
FAX 415/723-0843
email: cweber@leland.stanford.edu

IBS representative to the ATHE
(Association of Theatre in Higher Education):
Ralf Remshardt
Department of Theatre and Dance
PO Box 115900
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-5900
Tel: 352/392-2038
FAX 352/392-5114
email: dralf@ufl.edu

IBS representative in Europe
Arbeitsstelle Bertolt Brecht (ABB)
Joachim Lucchesi
Kronenstr.30
D-76133 Karlsruhe
GERMANY
Tel./Fax: 0721/38 74 49
email: Joachim.Lucchesi@geist-soz.uni-karlsruhe.de