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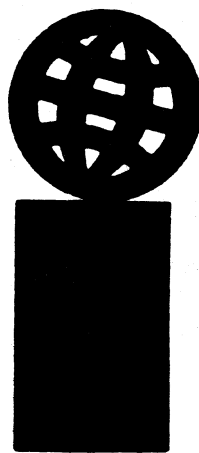
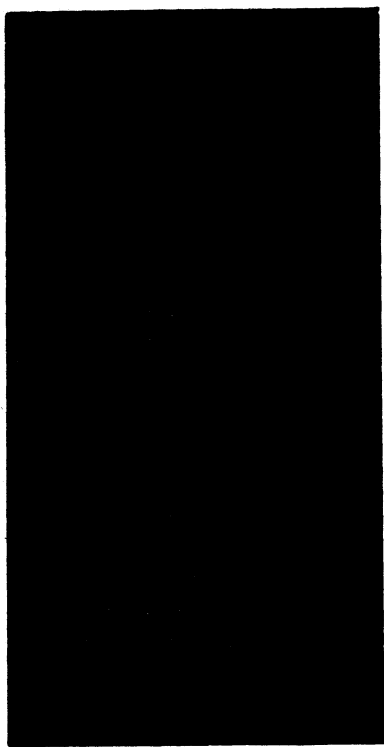
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COMMUNICATIONS

FROM THE

INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY



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from the INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

Volume XII

April 1983

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**"Unordnung ist, wenn nichts am rechten Platz ist;
Ordnung ist, wenn am rechten Platz nichts ist."**

Bertolt Brecht
Flüchtlingsgespräche

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editor's note

With this issue I take over the responsibilities of editor from Laureen Nussbaum. I want to thank Laureen for preparing the transition so well, and I hope that I will be a worthy successor to her. Several changes already have been or soon will be implemented in the editorial organization and in the format of the bulletin. In particular, I want to draw attention to the following:

--I am fortunate that Gary Chancellor has agreed to lend a hand as associate editor of the bulletin. This new position will help to ensure that production and distribution of each issue will go smoothly and in a timely fashion.

--The bulletin will become bi-annual, rather than tri-annual, with this issue, but each issue will also contain significantly more material. Mailing, printing costs and the need for efficiency make this change necessary until such time as the IBS can afford more frequent publication.

--Each year both issues will contain (contributions permitting) lengthier essays, articles, reports and commentaries. Regular features such as announcements, reports on work-in-progress, the forum and bibliography will always find a place in the bulletin.

--The April issue will also contain reports on the MLA Brecht sessions and related conference activities.

--The November issue will emphasize in particular announcements pertinent to the IBS's activities: President's report, Treasurer's report, directory and a regular update on current Brecht bibliography.

--Another new feature of the bulletin is the establishment of a network of "foreign correspondents". This group of members will work actively together to keep the membership informed on a regular basis about Brecht publications and productions around the world. I am grateful to the following members who have already agreed to serve in this capacity:

Arnold Blumer (South Africa)
 Alexander von Borman (Netherlands)
 Sekhar Chatterjee (India)
 Lamice El-Amari (North Africa)
 Rolf J. Goebel (USA)

Heinz-Uwe Haus (German Democratic Republic)
 Adrian Hsia (Canada)
 Hartmut Krug (Federal Republic of Germany)
 Petros Markaris (Greece)
 Li Jian-Ming (People's Republic of China)
 Michael Morley (Australia and New Zealand)
 Vera Stegmann (USA)
 Roman Szydłowski (Poland)
 Michiko Tanigawa (Japan)

This issue commemorates the eighty-fifth anniversary of Bertolt Brecht's birth with two essays: Reinhold Grimm's "Brecht Today" and Antony Tatlow's "Before and Behind the Pleasure Principle". In addition, I am fortunate to be able to include several pieces from less well-known areas of Brecht activity around the globe: Yolanda Broyles presents the Chicano theater director Luis Valdez in an interview; Petros Markaris looks back on the ambiguous history of Greek interest in Brecht; and Heinz-Uwe Haus reports on his work in Cyprus. I hope the readers share my enthusiasm about these timely and provocative contributions and will respond with their own echoes, commentary, violent reactions, etc.

I want to take this opportunity to invite all readers of the bulletin, whether IBS members or not, to contribute something to the pages of Communications. Especially welcome would be shorter essays, articles and reports on topics relevant to Brecht studies (up to 3000 words). Moreover, all members are encouraged to report on Brecht activities: books, articles, translations, productions, films, records, etc. Finally, I will be happy to include any notices of current or projected work dealing partially or entirely with Brecht and any solicitations for help or advice.

The language of publication in Communications is English; contributions should be in English, if at all possible, but in exceptional cases the editors will be able to arrange for translation.

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BEFORE AND BEHIND THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE:
BRECHT, NIETZSCHE AND THE DYNAMICS OF PERCEPTION

Antony Tatlow*

Confucius, he say: "Get wise." He also say: "Keep your head down." That is the scholar's posture: a good nose and a bent back. A splendid portrait of Confucius hangs on the wall of Brecht's library; not in perpetual Adoration of the Magus, nor primarily, as Tretjakov suggested, because he was interested in Confucianism as a science of attitude but mainly, I suspect, as a warning.

In the unfinished play Life of Confucius, for which he left such fascinating notes and excerpts, Brecht was portraying Confucius as a man who found it politic to accommodate with power. Power is dangerous but power is sexy, and you have to take your pleasure where you can find it.

There were other wise men from "China" in Brecht's head and they tell us something about his alleged weakness for the power-starved Nietzsche. This matter is more complex than recent studies suggest. I wish to show that what has been attributed to a hitherto largely unacknowledged yet persistent Nietzschean strain in Brecht's thought can be more productively related to Chinese philosophy. "Chinese" does not stand here for ethnic dialectics nor for the sort of fatalist vitalism that characterised the early Brecht but for something more complex and more topical. Neither are these distinctions and their implications merely atmospheric; they are substantial and, I suspect, inalienable from a liberating and creative social practice developing out of the matrix of Marx's thought.

My other, closely related, topic deals with attempts to perceive or to forge a link between Brecht and Artaud, though more with the notion of a Brechtian Theatre of Cruelty and how this can be linked to theatrical practice in other ages and other lands than with the usefulness of Artaud's as a political theatre. I therefore question some commonplace assumptions about the understanding of Brecht's dramaturgy and its applicability.

*Address to the Sixth Symposium of the IBS, Portland, Oregon, May 1982.

So I want to look at the topic of our Symposium--Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Learning--across the categories it suggests to an orthodox Brechtian, if there are any still around. But fashion exercises power and my arguments are a form of return to older positions. Not being original takes some doing, as Brecht said about Zhuangzi.

Of course it should be Theatre for Pleasure and Theatre for Learning but that perhaps is still looking ahead, depending on where you stand, and when Brecht started out there did not seem any point of contact between them. His term for what he disliked in the mindless bourgeois and boulevard theatre was "culinary". That word, however, produced endless misunderstandings. Of course it had its purpose as shock therapy. But Brecht himself later deplored some of its consequences, when he criticized a German tendency toward the "incorporeal" and the "unvisual". He spent a great deal of energy extricating himself from an ascetic impasse.

Directors and actors in other cultural traditions--in China for example--avoided Brecht for years, and still do though it is improving, because they cannot conceive of a useful political theatre that is not entertaining and continue to believe Brecht supposed they should. The inconsistencies in the theory of the didactic play--for example, that alienation effects can only be produced after long study but that the didactic plays supposedly make them readily available to non-specialists--especially when purveyed as reverent archaeology or, even worse, with a shrill insistence which can still pass for scholarship--it finds its publisher--only increase the scepticism of those who do not share these puritan traditions.

But if the Pleasure Principle had first to be postponed, or divorced from self-indulgent culinary theatre, Brecht retrieved it later and this, though not he, created another set of problems. Or rather it recreated the old problems on another level. If the aim of Brecht's socialist art was to embody contradictions and to activate the imagination through the aesthetic sense, his successors practised compulsive reiterations which the Freudians, if there are any left, would explain as the neurotic consequence of an unresolved clash between the pleasure principle and the reality principle or, in the starker world of the late Freud, as a self-propelled impulse beyond the pleasure principle toward entropic self-destruction, and institutionalisation, as a factor in what Bathrick has called the "Dialectics of Legitimation", can naturally be a form of

self-destruction. Art's purpose was to help master reality, but preposited "reality" sometimes fights back. And then Brecht becomes a manageable allegorist.

The tensions in Brecht's late aesthetic between claw and grace--finely juxtaposed in the poem On a Chinese tea root lion--are not easily sustained in the face of so pressing a reality principle, but when they are lost the whole enterprise collapses. Instead of working with this productive tension as an inventive method, the models were treated as magic formulae and a degree of degeneration was inevitable.

One consequence is now called a "philosophical people's theatre", without claws, another is Heiner Müller's transition to socialist surrealism, which has no grace and therefore scarcely any audience. But his attempt to formulate problems, to find a language for the silent unconscious is important. Here it is interesting to remember that Artaud split from the surrealists when they moved to the left. Another consequence, now fashionable in West Germany, has been to dismiss Brecht completely, though I notice he was still the most performed author there last year.

Partly in answer to these shifts and divisions several critics have launched an attempt to change the original object, to strip away the official Brechtian mask and reveal Nietzsche hiding behind it: either as sublated reintensification--in non-Hegelian terms, Brecht was strong enough to swallow Nietzsche--or as a radical relocation--Nietzsche really swallowed Brecht. This association of Brecht with Nietzsche significantly alters the critical ground. The Chinese perspective re-situates it. To follow this, we must first evaluate other matters.

Yet another type of answer envisages the development of an internationally valid realist theatre. I even noticed a critic in the Frankfurter allgemeine Zeitung, who recently dismissed Brecht's usefulness in Germany, conceding that he might have some relevance "far abroad, in Copenhagen or Peking". But such a theatre can be neither thematically restrictive nor stylistically prescriptive, and its realism can only connote a social goal. Just compare India and the United States. India has popular and sophisticated traditional dramatic forms and a rampant political theatre that scarcely ever reaches the masses. They have charming problems, such as bonded labour for life, which their popular theatre helps them forget for a while.

The United States, which you know far better than I do, has a rampant entertainment industry which in the early Hollywood years developed sophisticated comic styles, and there are also charming social problems you know all about, while corporate salaries rise to 2.4 million dollars--the current record, I believe. The social problems of these two countries are obviously interconnected and in both cases one artistic solution may lie in developing popular styles, but otherwise everything is different.

The suspect pleasure principle raises, however, a fundamental theoretical question about the pragmatics of Brecht's theatre in relation to escapist art. The standard Brechtian position seems straightforward. Is there not, after all, evidently escapist theatre and literature and are not Brecht's proposals supposed to change the rules and conventions, to block off the exits into fantasy and cheap release, by alienating apparent normality and hence problematising "reality's" supposedly given structure? His techniques are designed to enable us to perceive the magnitude of the problem, to see the events behind the events, to uncover the governing forces disguised by ideology. There have been fierce arguments about how this is best achieved and, as we know, even those who think within a Marxist frame take positions that depend on mutually exclusive pre-suppositions. A mechanical transcript reflection theory, for example, or its idealising romantic revolutionary counterpart, both of which, as imitations of imitations, are related to epistemic Platonism, seem hardly assimilable to Brecht's dialectical theatre.

I do not want to pursue questions on this level or to hammer the reflection theory yet again or any more variations of what Durkheim called primitive classification--Stalin's rejection of the quantum theory is a funny modern example of nature patterned on social thought, for he could not countenance petit-bourgeois particles uncontrollably changing their natures, and let's try to forget about Brecht and Lysenko--but to ask whether Brecht's dialectical theatre takes adequate account of the nature of psycho-dynamics and the social unconscious or ought to be widened further to include them, if it itself wants to escape escapism.

Brecht made two assumptions about what he called Aristotelian theatre: firstly, that feeling for or with the characters, due to the dramaturgical conventions and the actors' skill, led to identification and acceptance of their limitations and ultimate helplessness, and secondly, that this process resulted in social stabilisation. He

assumed that the "dramatic" theatre absorbed through empathy the capacity for subsequent action and he hoped the epic form of the theatre would release it. His own theatre amounts to countless experimentations with this problem. Brecht's achievement was to focus attention on the very powerful identificatory impulse but he may have underestimated its nature. If you could not succeed in or be certain of changing the audience, or when the audience could not care less about your theories but simply enjoyed the show--The Threepenny Opera--the alternative was to forget about it and concentrate on the actors. This still happens. I noticed how Helen Fehervary's account of Sue-ellen Case's 1978 production of Müller's Cement in Berkeley implied that while the audience walked out or went to sleep, i.e. were unable to deal with the play, the actors were perhaps changed by it. Likewise, John Willett gave us an interesting account during the Hong Kong Brecht Seminar in March 1981 of how the actors responded to the preparations of his and Wal Cherry's production of Fear and Misery in the Third Reich in Philadelphia.

Probably based on Bechtere's social reflexology and profiting from Asja Lacis's success in rehabilitating delinquent children in Russia, Brecht's didactic plays were intended not just to inhibit the audience from empathising with but to enable the participants to be the characters, though always within a dramaturgy that was supposed to prevent total identification. Under certain conditions such experiments produced strong emotional consequences and this will not surprise anyone who is familiar with the abstracting methods of the Noh theatre.

So one solution was not to separate further but to identify more, though for Brecht this involved the participant's simultaneous distanciation. Here the historical evidence seems equivocal. There is a path, though Brecht would never have taken it, from such experiments to Artaud who may well have known about Brecht's innovations or even seen some of them. He was in Berlin and played Filch in the French version of Papst's Threepenny Opera film. There is also a path to both of them from a whole theatrical tradition I have called "Stage Fright".

However, most people are in the audience, so let us bracket actors and actor-participants and also the question whether Brecht thought the epic theatre was merely a stage of the bourgeois theatre which would eventually give place to universal participation in the Great Pedagogics of the Future as some critics apparently believe. When the emotions blocked thought or Piscator's political theatre led

to over-excitation, theatre remained theatre. Empirical evidence is, unfortunately or not, practically non-existent. But Brecht's cool style, the whole crafted dramaturgy together with his disturbing plots was intended to give the audience something worth thinking about and designed to enable them to do so.

A late poem, apparently written in 1956, seems to encapsulate the consequent problem:

Und dachte immer: die allereinfachsten Worte
 Müssen genügen. Wenn ich sage, was ist
 Muss jedem das Herz zerfleischt sein.
 Dass du untergehst, wenn du dich nicht wehrst
 Das wirst du doch einsehen.

(Werkausgabe, Bd. 10, S. 1030)

And I always thought: the very simplest words
 Must be enough. When I say what things are like
 Everyone's heart must be torn to shreds.
 That you'll go down if you don't stand up for yourself
 Surely you see that.

(Poems 1913-1956, ed. Willett, p. 452).

Like so much of Brecht, this poem is still topical--as solution and as problem. In any event, its gesture indicates an ambiguity, just as the act of writing it turns statement into question: why were those words not sufficient? Perhaps another late poem, inexplicably absent from the English edition, provides part of an answer:

Dauerten wir unendlich
 So wandelte sich alles
 Da wir aber endlich sind
 Bleibt vieles beim Alten.

(Bd. 10, S. 1031)

If we lasted forever
 Everything would change
 But since we don't
 Many things stay the same.

'Many things stay the same': how does a Brechtian theatre deal with this problem?

Brecht maybe, but maybe not all the time, thought he was dealing with the old gap between knowledge and action, the focus of any practical social philosophy, whether ancient Chinese or modern Marxist. And his later writings are full of sometimes substantial and sometimes depressingly repetitive argument conducted along this borderline, to which that poem also testifies. The aim is always to enable "interventionary thought" through appeals to reason: "Surely you see that." Leaving political questions aside, I merely wish to ask how the theatre is supposed to encourage such interventionary thought, which means of course not direct intervention but that the theatre must stimulate thought and the desire to intervene. This is usually seen as a consequence of observing what Brecht called "practicable representations". But what if there is something wrong with your rational model, with the way knowledge is processed, or what if you had doubts about an efficacious connection between rational knowledge and action, and we have seen that the poet had his doubts?

If there was something seriously wrong, or the plays used or were interpreted in accordance with a defective model, then they could become, whether or not they wanted to, part of a repressive mechanism. Distorting truth means repressing truth and that means, doesn't it, helping to oppress people. I think I do not share what I take to be Günter Kunert's position, namely that literature has "substitution function", which I imagine can be extended to theatre, that if it gives the reader something, it also takes something away, something which the reader no longer needs to do for him--or herself. But perhaps it depends on how you envisage the operation of this mechanism. As surrogate action literature inhibits intervention. Symbolic action, however, has explanatory power but can also turn into surrogate action if it fails to reveal the truths we do not wish to acknowledge. People welcome such surrogates, and the theatre as surrogate, because they have internalised repression, and surrogates do not interfere with this process, they do not threaten our identity and we therefore embrace them.

But when our identity is threatened, there is no question of substitution function or surrogate action, because all hell breaks loose. Just think of the response to Ibsen's naturalist play Ghosts. His play looks innocuous enough now but it produced hysteria because it thematised taboos, because it challenged repression and helped to start the painful process of de-repression. If all hell does not break loose every now and again, it is a sure sign that something is wrong. All this sounds, I know, like a preface to a recipe for de Sadean perpetual

insurrection or Artaud's self-obliteration or Arrabalian panic, but this does not necessarily follow.

Identity is relational though we repress this fact, substantialising ourselves. Where consciousness has become false consciousness and since language, in Marx's phrase, is "practical consciousness", the consequence is practical false consciousness and we have to liberate ourselves from this prison-house, not the prison-house of language, but of language as practical false consciousness, and this entails relational thinking, understanding the mechanisms whereby we repress identity threats, and it naturally depends on a view of the process of historical change. All art extends perception by extending the language that enables perception. Brecht's art must be able to intervene as perception changes, on a changing perceptual level, or it is irrevocably dated. I believe that it can but that we do not want it to, and that is why we welcome the classic surrogate.

Take a practical and topical example, because it shows us how attitudes can change. We fear nuclear war, we fear radioactivity and we fear death. We repress these fears, so the nuclear arms industry goes ahead unimpeded. Warning about this, we encounter the illogical assertion that it is absolutely necessary for defense, since this enables people to forget about everything again and thus protects the necessary repression. To argue that this gigantic industrialisation of war preparations, which has reached unimaginably fantastic proportions, comes about through the manipulation of self-interest groups, the classic socio-political analysis, which is true, does not take account of the collective repression that enables them to succeed. The method of analysis is rational but it is based on uncovering an irrational process. What can do this most effectively? It is probably only when the fear of the consequences of continuing repression becomes greater than the fear of de-repression that there is any real chance of success, but this whole phenomenon has to be brought to the level of consciousness.

Let us therefore consider very briefly some historical examples of what I have called Stage Fright. The Jacobean reaction to what has been described as state terror produced as a response "stage fright" on the boards of the theatre. The drama has always played with the borderline between pretense and reality and often made use of its uncertainty to disturb the audience. The consequent sense of alarm is never completely dispelled, not even in the apparently impervious world of Shakespeare's comedies. Let us take a quick look at how this shock

of recognition operates in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Theseus, the real king of the play, the King of Athens, pushes Bottom, as Carneval King, and Titania, his future wife Hippolyta's counterpart, into bumbling comedy, thus maintaining his control over them all, just as he does over the pairs of lovers that fled Athens for the wood. This therefore suggests that the whole play shows the appropriation of the imagination by the controlling instance of the ruling primary world. And this in turn surely explains the otherwise extraordinary severity in the change of tone between these juxtaposed passages right at the end of the play:

Theseus:	Sweet friends to bed. A fortnight hold we this solemnity In nightly revels and new jollity. (Exuent)
Puck:	Now the hungry lion roars And the wolf howls the moon; Whilst the heavy plowman snores, All with weary tasks foredone. Now the wasted brands do glow, Whilst the screech owl screeching loud, Puts the wretch that lies in woe In remembrance of a shroud.

This uncomely fright at the comedy's end relativises the dream. Puck returns us to reality as the play recedes and shocks us into recognising its artifice; he aligns himself with real, troubled and unappropriated nature, if only in the space of an epilogue.

That example remains on the level of language, so to speak. But Ladurie has given us a classic account of a different quality of confusion between pretense and reality during the Carneval at Romans in 1580, fifteen years before Shakespeare's play was written, when the symbolic artifice results in a massacre and order can only be restored by literally, not symbolically, slaughtering the participants. If you release the suppressed potential of the social unconscious under unpropitious circumstances, as the artisans did in Romans, you may get a very real fright, a final fright, instead of a symbolic satisfaction. There are countless though less drastic examples from other cultures. The Japanese Noh theatre developed a whole dramaturgy to exorcise the social unconscious and thereby assure the loyalty of the samurai class to which that theatre was eventually restricted. Brecht's adaptations of Noh plays generated reactions that overstepped the bounds of his

intentions because they activated powerful emotions whose energy derived from their repression.

We normally dissociate Brecht from language and thought of this kind. But a sufficiently wide realist theatre must focus on reality and not on styles of thought for that, Brecht rightly said, is formalism. Only a moment's reflection reminds us that Brecht's theatre, and here I exclude his earlier plays, did of course extend beyond the narrower rationalism so often and still so widely associated with his work, that his theatre does have a much greater expressive potential than it is often accorded. Were this not so, he would indeed be that gifted but irrevocably dated dramatist--though major poet--which many would prefer. I do not suggest that Brecht's theories were misguided, for he needed to counteract lethargy and contemporary hysteria with reasoned argument, but we need to look at his practice again, both textual and theatrical, to see how it can be vivified.

Because people do not usually help one another, in the Badener Lehrstück a giant puppet, a technique Artaud suggests, has its arms and legs sawn off. At the first performance a critic in the audience fainted. Huge photographs of dead bodies were displayed and when the audience protested, Brecht ordered them shown again and included this second demonstration in the text of the play. Nor is such practice restricted to the earlier periods of Brecht's work. In Antigone, produced after his return to Europe, Kreon's violence was objectified in a macabre masked dance and the acting area marked by a ring of horses' skulls on poles. Brecht said this horror must be shown with lightness and thus indicates the separation of his purpose from Artaud's. But if you diminish the horror, this lightness has no justification, it can become vacuous style, aesthetic platitude. In 1927 Brecht wrote: "As far as the purity of art is concerned, it has nothing to do with the cleanliness of its material and, as with women, there are many degrees of innocence, it is not something you lose but rather something you gain. A good play needs many abysses...and an astonishing amount of unreasonableness, and it must be alive before it can be anything else." (Bd. 15, S. 120). Two years later, when asked to differentiate between the conventional theatrical evocation of mood and his own intentions, Brecht described them as follows: "Spiritual. Ceremonial. Ritual. Actor and audience should not come closer to each other, they should move further away from each other. Everyone should move further away from himself. Otherwise we are deprived of the shock and horror that is necessary for understanding." (Bd. 15, S. 188).

Of course we place these comments in the context of that period but their significance extends beyond mere philology. They mark the distinction from Artaud whilst pointing to something both have in common. Brecht's proposals remind me of something like the controlled externalising methods of Kabuki which show the horror, infect the audience, if you will, but always preserve the gap between audience and actor that Artaud wished to eliminate. It is this separation that is crucial. Otherwise, like Artaud, you may go mad. These techniques of separation force us to see a multi-levelled complexity but they must surely be affective, even visceral theatrical events, otherwise we are deprived of the shock and horror necessary for understanding. Let us take some examples from Brecht's later theatre.

When Mother Courage throws back her head in that piercing silent scream, three levels of horror are externalised, and that is analogous to the techniques of the Noh theatre: the pain at the death of her son, the pain of her own complicity in that death, and the pain over the cause of that complicity. The horror is compounded by our knowledge of its contingency, though she cannot escape it. For her, the scream comes out of the social unconscious and she represses its memory; she does not or cannot change.

The Good Person of Szechuan, a relatively unpopular play today because it has been so consistently sentimentalised, was written not out of lazy confidence, but with the force of contradiction which Brecht commanded and out of something much closer to despair. Like a demon in the Noh theatre, Shui Ta possesses Shen Te, and a performance which shows anything less allegorises disaster. Shen Te has to become a much more frightened person than I have ever seen, or her plea for friendliness, her evocation of potential goodness, makes no sense. It comes from the social unconscious because her time denies its realisation. We can probably all recall productions that have turned these scenes into embarrassing platitude, simply because they have not appreciated the wider dynamics of the play. Grimm sees Shen Te as a successor to the virtuous virgin who refuses to be "sacrificed" to save the city in Brecht's juvenile play The Bible, taking her name to mean "Godly Virtue". Unless it is meant ironically, this too sets about neutralising the contradictions that force Shen Te to "prostitute" herself and that is why I find "Divine Efficacy" a more satisfactory equivalent for the Chinese name, because it is clearer, satirically sharper, and makes the political category "friendliness" far more poignant.

Isn't it fascinating how people are offended by appeals to friendliness, how Brecht has touched a raw nerve which they try to protect with vitriolic comment in order to repress its real challenge? Why is it, in this context, that the Caucasian Chalk Circle is always seen just as an allegory of economic interests, let alone in the quasi-literal political terms elaborated by Betty Weber, instead of as a play based on the psycho-dynamics of human needs, which is a very political matter indeed especially when they are unrealised? And that is the point of the relationship between Simon and Grusche which is not embarrassingly and coyly asexual, as many think, but an affectionate projection out of a deep and frustrated human need. Neither is there anything that troubles me about Azdak's appeal to Mother Grusinia. Emotional projection is a powerful and revealing phenomenon and Brecht's achievement is to ground it in a social context and that is to make the emotions truly productive, something which Artaud's theories do not envisage or accomplish since he leaves them to their own devices, come what may. To recognise this is to accept implications for Brecht's dramaturgy.

This brings us back to the crucial question about the causes of horror, and to an evaluation of the links between Artaud, Nietzsche, Freud and Brecht. I do not want to enter into a long polemic, though there is perhaps need for systematic study of the assertions which would carefully separate the positions of various critics. Instead, I wish to conflate them here because they are joined in argument, even when and often precisely when they insist on certain distinctions. Grimm has published repeatedly on this topic though it is sometimes difficult to pin him down because he masks his judgments with an ironical rhetoric, perhaps a form of unconscious protection. Oddly enough, these critics do not latch onto that aspect of Artaud most amenable to a Brechtian theatre but rather onto the maximum difference and tension between their methods. The proposals in the Second Manifesto of the Theatre of Cruelty for the Conquest of Mexico were a project attacking what Artaud called 'the structure of things' in which he included colonialism and the belief in racial superiority, and which envisaged the masses rising against their fate. For Artaud it is, though only a sketch, surprisingly concrete.

The fact that Thomas Mann sometimes reads like a gloss on Nietzsche, for whom life was justified as an aesthetic phenomenon, the Nazis attempted appropriation of him, and the fact that at least for the early Nietzsche of the Birth of Tragedy the Dionysiac and Socratic theatre culminated in Richard Wagner--all this seemed grounds enough

for discounting any serious accommodation between Brecht and Nietzsche beyond certain vitalist aspects in the early work. But there exists, at least, evidence that Brecht was also using Nietzsche later on. The crucial question is how, and here there is room for serious disagreement.

One striking factor in these presentations is the status of the evidence, another is the use of circular arguments. Various characters in the plays are equated with what is considered Brecht's position which of course then establishes the need and justification for such characters. Poems are taken as literal autobiographical statement revealing hidden proclivities. Selective quotation then creates a fictional author to fit the pre-determined portrait and these quotations function as missing links. Of course literary works in some way embody the mind of an author and establishing the relationships within their cultural context is important--in spite of Derrida and Co.--but these are more intricate, and hence useful, than what is asserted by this group of critics.

A variation of this practice, used in particular by Grimm, is more subtle but also questionable. It assumes that Brecht, in using Nietzsche and on some few occasions Freud, somehow transforms the body of their thought by a process called "dialektisieren", that when Brecht uses an image or phrase of Freud's, Freudianism is dialecticised. This can cover any kind of relationship from denial to appropriation and is a particularly inexact critical term. But Grimm does assume, at least most of the time, that Brecht, in using his nefarious sources, knowingly adapts them; other critics from Esslin to Lehmann and Lethen believe that Brecht used Nietzsche on Nietzschean terms which in reality accorded with his own deeper and concealed needs.

The cry of heresy comes from a frightened mind but I think we have to situate, and relativise, this whole matter, though here I can only sketch a context. Bathrick and Breines have reminded us of the extent of interest on the political left in the Nietzschean protest as an alternative, a counterweight to, a way of dropping out of the rigorously administered structure of Marxist theory. Furthermore, Nietzsche's interest in language and perception, his whole style obviously attracted all kinds of artists and thinkers. But let us get down to specifics.

To sharpen my point, I want to ask whether it is more useful to think of Brecht as a dialecticised Dionysus, pace Grimm, or as The

Doubter. Does his work also point to tragic ecstasy and self-forgetfulness, or is it better understood in terms of self-discovery and relational perception?

In these studies published either recently or during the last few years, though some have been reprinted from the sixties, the old argument from compensation surfaces again. We are told that the early drifting Nietzschean Brecht discovered his identity among the lowly and down-trodden. The rootless moralist transvalued, for Marxism amounts to inverted theology. In reality, Grusche embodies the kernel of Christianity. Here the whole critical thrust is reductive. Brecht really represents something he is supposed to have escaped from. It is Esslin's old argument. They do not say, for example, that there is in Christianity a kernel of something else, and there is absolutely no attempt to go beyond traditional theology when searching for productive common ground. Nietzsche functions here as an escape route from a simplified, thoroughly rationalised, even dogmatised Brecht, from Brecht as talismanic abacus, the same counters clacking back and forth within the unchanging frame. Hence Nietzsche points to the way out of the whole Hegelian system, with or without its Marxist development, and we encounter a series of oppositions: body - mind, life - thought, experience - system, flow - triadic movement, anti-dialectical - dialectical.

Therefore Nietzsche stands for anti-system, for a particular kind of asystematic experiential thinking, a denial of the efficacy of all logical system, and a refusal of power. Nietzsche himself likened the Hegelian fetishisation of the power of history to a 'mechanical-chinese' kowtow before every power, so the Nietzschean strain in Brecht is seen as a warning of continuing fetishisation, of the dialectics of the enlightenment, though argued from a pre- or transrational asocial subjectivity. A clear, and comical, example of this fundamentally Nietzschean strain can be seen, we are told by Lehmann and Lethen, when Brecht in the Badener Lehrstück repeatedly uses the formula "Gebt sie auf" (Give it up). A proper dialectician would have said: "Hebt sie auf" (Sublate it).

But the argument becomes more sophisticated when Grimm focusses on Brecht's acknowledgement that contradictions are irreconcilable in terms of individual lives, and that there is in Brecht a recognition of the incompatibility between realising Communism and what Grimm, quoting from a poem, calls his "Lust an den Widersprüchen solch' blutigen Lebens" (pleasure from the contradictions of such a bloody life) (Bd.

9, S. 519). For the poet the problem is thought insoluble. Linear Marxism is seen to merge with medieval or Nietzschean circularity, the wheel of Fortune or eternal recurrence. The Song of the Moldau serves as another illustration of the fusion of process and circularity. The progress of humanity is achieved through countless individual tragedies, according to Lukács. For Grimm, Nietzsche uses the phrase "Fluss des Geschehens" (flux of events, stream of happening) in a way that is completely equivalent to Brecht's employment of the term: indifferent, essentially Heraclitean flow. Part of this argument concerns the way process is imagined and I return to it. What is left is, in effect, the Yeatsian problem of choosing between perfection of the life and of the work. Before the demands of such harsh perfection Brecht hesitates, like the Nietzschean Yeats and ultimately for the same reason, always according to this not fully developed argument. So the final implication for Brecht is: misplaced pity must be exorcised, reality becomes for the artist ultimately an aesthetic phenomenon. Horseman pass by! Grass's satire would therefore be justly targeted.

What about the direct textual evidence that Brecht made use of Nietzsche? The image in the refrain of the Lied vom Rauch, based on the early Gesang aus der Opiumhöhle--neither poem is in the English edition of the poems though the Lied vom Rauch occurs in The Good Person of Szechuan--stems from Nietzsche's poem Vereinsamt:

Nun stehst du bleich
Zur Winter-Wanderschaft verflucht,
Dem Rauche gleich,
Der stets nach kälteren Himmeln sucht.

This fits of course into the world of Brecht's early poetry. Though Brecht's language re-contextualises it, there is a Nietzschean strain here. But Grimm also finds other parallels later. He sees a useful connection between Nietzsche's Gay Science and the "fröhliche Kritik" of the Messingkauf Dialogues. And here things, in my view, start to come apart again for this is really only a verbal echo. Brecht was undoubtedly interested in Nietzsche's aphoristic style--he was interested in anybody's aphoristic style--but these critics are after more substantial matters. Nor is it just a question of the usefulness of Nietzsche's attack on stable traditional values as psychologically necessary fictions ripe for destruction, but of the Nietzschean consequences of such destruction: the need, also shared by Yeats, for staying 'gay'.

Heraclitus is thought to have refuted, though for him change itself was what was changeless, and simply take him in the commonly accepted sense of undifferentiated, ceaseless temporal flux. Images of process and flux abound in Brecht's work. Does Heraclitus explain them consistently? I think not. We need other explanations; as I have devoted a long study to this topic, I can only suggest some of them here. The incriminating phrase in The Doubter is:

Seid ihr wirklich im Fluss des Geschehens? Einverstanden mit
 Allem was wird?

(Bd. 9, S. 588)

Are you truly in the stream of happening? Do you accept
 All that develops?

(Poems, p. 271)

From the manuscript we can see that Brecht added this passage as an afterthought. It is taken to connote inevitable, even value-free chaos for which we must steel ourselves or, for Grimm, dialectical more than dionysiac flux, where the pejorative connotations of flux and struggle remain undiminished.

The topic of the whole poem, however, is practice and our sceptical relationship to it. There are, in fact, good reasons why this poem was provoked by the Chinese figure and the allusions to practicality were inalienable from Brecht's position as well. They point, silently, to the problem of acquiescence Brecht experienced on occasion as a personal dilemma but they also point beyond it, just as the poem itself focusses on contradiction, argument, doubt, thought and not on their cessation. The Chinese associations in Brecht's work occur most frequently in a specific context; evoking other possibilities, they signal dissent from contemporary Western orthodoxy. And so it is here too; hence it is all the more significant that Grimm's dialecticised Dionysus has, in reality, left Nietzsche way behind, though this has not been recognised, and connotes nobody so clearly as--Stalin. To read these lines, let alone the whole poem, as perhaps regretful but nevertheless definite acceptance of the inevitable and to see this as a function of the author's personal position is, in reality, to call Brecht a Stalinist. And in spite of Brecht's occasional, and largely tactical, equivocation that cannot be seriously sustained. Neither can the commitment of the Doubter be represented as saddened acquiescence in ungovernable or inevitable destructive flux; this is a figment of presupposition and selective

quotation. The poem is not a Catechism, the questions are not rhetorical, the answers are not pre-established. Brecht's Chinese associations contradict Heraclitus and any presumed Nietzschean elaboration and they consistently refute Stalinist pseudo-scientific determinism.

The Chinese, primarily Taoist, connotations of flux stand in a different context. Brecht used them because he recognised this. We are not dealing with systematic application, yet beyond 'local' Brecht-philology lie wider questions. It is understandable, but no less unfortunate, that some critics, especially in an often rather provincial Germany, dismiss these connections because they naturally reject the ridiculous clichés--Brecht equals Confucius, for example--and are not used to looking much beyond the boundaries of their own culture. But the world is changing and this is something we must now all learn to do. I also began by instinctively rejecting the Chinese associations in Brecht as marginal, folkloristic, atmospheric and so forth, but studying them, I changed my mind. They point beyond Brecht's resistance to Stalinism to other and related matters of substance. Brecht's "Chinese" thinking is not an escape from Marxism, but the reverse; it is an escape from a degenerate imperialist epistemology.

In saying as much, I do not imply that we find easy recipes, especially for advanced industrial societies, in contemporary China, since its problems are great and recent history at best problematic and at worst traumatic. But there are traditions of thinking articulated with particular clarity in China that must seem astonishingly apposite today when understood and applied at a "higher" level adequate to the changed social conditions. The Taoist flux originally connoted not transrealist magic or "Nietzschean" refusal but oppositional social cohesion and cooperative resistance to social hierarchisation; though originating within a particular feudal context, the image is not bound by it. In his later work Brecht employed this image in terms analogous to such oppositional cooperativism. The other meaning of "flux of events" is equally un-Heraclitean and un-Nietzschean and demonstrated by Shui Ta's name, for it means flood, great water, natural disaster, and the social connotations in the play are unarguable.

Those modern masters, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud are linked in some of these studies in so far as they are thought to contribute to the destruction of the subject. The denial of the subject, however, is ultimate egoism. In Chinese relational thinking there never was a

"subject" to destroy in the first place, since it is constituted through its relations. That is why man can be the measure of all things in Chinese thought, because he is himself relational; therefore any metaphysical, transrealist, hence determinist and reflectable, substantiality is conspicuously absent. The analogies with the thought in particular of the early Marx are striking and have yet to be adequately described.

Nietzsche represented a necessary and inevitable collapse of an unsustainable Western metaphysic and its related perceptual practices. But Nietzsche absolutized the rejection and that was another categorical error, no less objectionable. His fear of Utopia and of the limits of science is a typically Western absolutist transvaluation of a metaphysic. Here the connections with Marx are tenuous. Relational thinking which has to be realised in political terms, but that is another matter, relocates the whole debate. Philosophical Taoism is itself completely compatible with scientific thinking and it probably offers a path to the only possible philosophy of technology because it thinks in relational and universal, not narrowly functional categories. We could call it a kind of materialist mysticism and that, as Needham and Capra have shown, can be a thoroughly scientific attitude. Indeed, "mysticism" can be a revolutionary force, especially when a pseudo-rational system claims the right of theoretical and physical dominance; it then becomes an expression of the social unconscious.

Brecht's "Dionysus" was not Nietzsche's transvalued and pitifully self-tortured Christ, nor the Stalinist Will to Power of determinist certainty, but the "Chinese" God of Happiness. One of those aphoristic anecdotes in Brecht's Me-ti is entitled Weise am Weisen ist die Haltung (The wise man's wisdom is his attitude/posture). The posture of Dionysus is not especially relaxed. Indeed, Nietzsche might have reflected, but such speculation lay quite outside his interests, that Dionysiac joy was first celebrated by raving female Maenads, and the reason why they were so mad was because they had no vote. There is absolutely no sense in Nietzsche of the social context of Dionysiac religion.

The fact that Brecht probably did not know what I am going to tell you now is neither here nor there compared with the appropriateness of the juxtaposition. He kept the scroll of the Doubter in his bedroom, the only picture in the room. It portrays a man gathered in contemplation, an official and general, a busy

administrator with insufficient time to distinguish clearly between good and evil. Beside the portrait is a Buddhist poem which explores the compatibility between mind and universe and so, of course within its own frame of reference, suggests the inevitable ambiguity of practice. For Stalinism, however, practice was theoretically unambiguous, since determinist "science" unchallengeably predicted the truth. The poem is set straight against this "Hegelian" or reflectionist legacy. A philosophy of practice necessarily denies inevitability and consequent administrative certainty.

We should not be confused by the provocative Buddhist context. Forget about Schopenhauer. Buddhist dialectics deny the substantiality of absolutes. That is what "maya" means and not, as is so often thought, that the world itself is illusory; it has nothing to do with aestheticised collapse. The pragmatic and synthetic Chinese mind, and we can of course begin to drop that geographical adjective, is not so troubled by categorical clashes for the final test is a philosophy of practice. Opposite the title page of his Lutheran Bible, Brecht pasted a picture of a relaxed and smiling Buddha.

Behind Brecht's pleasure principle lies not hysterical frenzy or Heraclitean indifference or Nietzsche's despairing transvaluation or Stalinist stoicism, but the Doubter's rational watchfulness, and if horror is a precondition for understanding, it is perhaps provoked by the disproportion between our pandemonium and the Chinese thinker's calm concentration.

I suspect that such thinking has universal application and that it is wholly compatible with and probably essential for a socialism that wants to achieve success, and vice versa of course. After all, does not the whole Marxian enterprise rest on an essentialist potentiality, on a projection which might be described as "Forwards to Nature", to the realisation of human nature and of man's relationship with nature, which Marx called "the inorganic body of man's subjectivity"? Forward is the only direction left though it is, as we all well know, a long hard road.

References

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BRECHT TODAY

Reinhold Grimm*

Poetry is good for everybody and for all situations. Why not apply it then to the poets, too? For example, thus:

Von den Grossen dieser Erde
Melden uns die Heldenlieder:
Steigend auf so wie Gestirne
Gehn sie wie Gestirne nieder.

To observe this, we are told, is comforting, "and one ought to know it."

The lines I quoted were written by Bertolt Brecht. Needless to say, they don't speak about poets and their shifting reputations, but rather about those "great ones" who used to be sung by the poets. Still, they also apply to the poets themselves. In that case, however, these observations are comforting only because a poet's prestige, after having sunk, can rise again--though surely not with that necessity of nature which characterizes the perfectly circular system governing Brecht's Ballade vom Wasserrad (Ballad of the Waterwheel). The eclipse of a poet may be, but is not necessarily, the final one that Brecht would like to claim for his "heroes".

You notice that I consider Brecht, among other things, a classic. Yet don't we all do that? The very fact that we are gathered here, willing to raise and face the question, "Brecht Today"--for it is a question, a doubtful, skeptical one--seems to me the best proof of Brecht's classical stature. Such questions (think of "Goethe Today" or even "Dante Today") can only be directed towards classics. Of course, there are those famous words by Max Frisch which have almost become a dead cliché by now: his words about the classic Brecht's "smashing lack of impact." And by insisting on the classical, I am indeed provoking

*Introduction to a bilingual panel discussion on "Brecht oggi/Brecht heute", held at the Goethe Institute in Turin, Italy, May 1982.

them again. But I do so deliberately; for today more than ever, in our haste to confirm Brecht's (real or alleged) lack of impact, we tend to forget the real and undeniable Brechtian classicism Frisch had in mind. In my humble opinion, if we speak of the former, the latter should at least be mentioned.

Let me offer you two examples of Brecht's literary rank on both the national and international levels. First of all, not only did he change German theater--as testified to most clearly by Peter Weiss, on the one hand, and, on the other, by Heiner Müller, despite his nagging criticisms--but he also changed the consciousness of a whole generation. As one of its most intelligent representatives recently put it: "Concerning the development of political and aesthetic consciousness among the 'New Left,' Brecht has exerted a lasting influence on it." I would even say that his was the decisive influence. In any case, the student movement in Germany can hardly be imagined without him. But there is more yet: Brecht also introduced a new tone into the German language and its literature. This, I hold, is the truly classical dimension of his achievement. After Brecht, German sounds different, richer; since he began to write and to speak, it is possible to speak and write German in a way more diverse as well as more precise. (Which is evinced most impressively, perhaps, by the development of German poetry during the recent decades, from Hans Magnus Enzensberger to Thomas Brasch.) I am quite prepared to elevate Brecht into the pantheon of the greatest creators and innovators in the German language, i.e. to put him on an equal footing with Luther and Goethe, Heine and Nietzsche. Compared to Brecht, even a worthy like Thomas Mann was merely something of an ingenious administrator for an important legacy, a brilliant 'master of the glass bead game,' if you will...

Second, Brecht is also a classic in the supranational sense of such literary greats. The way he combined playwriting and practical work in the theater, drama and the stage--an achievement that, before him, was almost unknown in Germany--allows us, indeed forces us, to place him on one and the same level with the classical Greek dramatists, with Shakespeare, with Molière. (At most, Goethe's intermittent activities at the Weimar Court Theater or, in popular theater, the work of the two Viennese playwrights, Raimund and Nestroy, can be likened to Brecht's accomplishment, however remotely.) Where else, especially in the twentieth century, do we find a figure of similar dimensions? For we must not forget that, on top of all this, Brecht was an unusually versatile and innovative theoretician of drama

and the stage. Neither the Russian, Konstantin Stanislavsky--the exclusive director and trainer of actors--nor the Frenchman, Antonin Artaud--the visionary and reveler in theatrical ecstasies--nor even the two Irish dramatists, Shaw and Beckett, can measure themselves against Brecht. (Only the great Swede, August Strindberg, can perhaps be said to approach him in terms of an uomo universale of the theater.) Small wonder, then, that a man like Brecht's friend and collaborator, Harry Buckwitz, should admire and praise these manifold qualities. But also an artist like Koreya Senda--one of the leading directors in Japan, a country from whose tradition Brecht had himself learnt alot--confessed quite frankly: "For me, Brecht is the author who will occupy me as long as I am creatively active."

So much, in brief, on "Brecht Yesterday and Tomorrow," if I may modify our topic a little. As for our actual theme, "Brecht Today", I would like to raise a few problems which strike me as important and, in one way or another, as 'questionable'. There are many points at which to begin, but one thing must be made clear from the outset: this question, our question about Brecht and his work and their impact today, cannot be posed or answered abstractly, in a vacuum. In the case of Brecht, who distinguishes himself in this respect from most of his contemporaries, any such question immediately entails a host of other questions. If, therefore, someone asks me about Brecht's present exchange rate on the literary market, I would retort without hesitation: "Fine and dandy; but where?" To be sure, it is a matter of Brecht and his works. But under what historical and political, social and economic conditions? What countries, states, even continents are we speaking of? The answers to these questions are anything but unisonous. In fact, they are as widely divergent as are the positions of, say, a snobby young star among the West German proponents of "Regietheater," who recklessly aims at dismantling any and every classic, and a theater director in the People's Republic of China, who perhaps has just returned from exile (if he was lucky) and now ventures, after twenty years of repression and silence, to reintroduce Brecht to the Peking stage. The same holds true, of course, for dramatists and directors, actors and spectators in West Africa or South America, India or Turkey as they try to respond to our apparently simple question.

But let us turn to the area of Brecht's native tongue, the German-speaking countries. For the past ten years or so, a so-called "Brecht fatigue" has been raging there, especially in the Federal Republic, but also in the German Democratic Republic, as well as in

Switzerland and Austria. Whether this insidious illness, as has been claimed, broke out only in 1978, during the International Brecht Congress in Frankfurt, is not at all clear; I for one am rather doubtful. As to the current situation, however, I fear it is all the more unequivocal. Once again, two examples will suffice. Not too long ago, in 1981, the Deutschlandfunk broadcast a survey under the title, "Brecht--Nothing Left But the Hatchet? What Directors Think Today about Brecht and His Stageability." (This title alone left little doubt for the Brecht weary.) Yet, as early as 1979, a fundamental and pretentiously--but no less unambiguously--titled essay had appeared in the Literaturmagazin of the Rowohlt publishing house, "Bertolt Brecht--A Toppled Giant" [this time without a question mark and with the addition:] "On the Aesthetic Emancipation from a Classic." It was written by Michael Schneider, brother of the author of the well-known and symptomatic novella, Lenz. Taken together, the two texts form a relatively faithful picture, representative not only of West Germany, but of the situation beyond her borders as well. The picture, as might be expected, is dull and dreary. Theater people like Jürgen Flimm, Ernst Wendt, and Peter Stein wallow in accusing Brecht--and here his late plays are the major targets--of a language that has become "stale and exhausted" (this of all things!) and of an insufficient "sensuality", which is said to have been "tacked on" at best. In addition, Brecht is reproached for lacking a convenient "unconscious" that could be "ferreted out"--and, worse yet, there is too much lucidity and simplicity in him, instead of wilful riddles and obscureness! Hence, Stein declares with lovely candor that he would prefer "to tackle Brecht with a hatchet" and "smash him up for myself," confessing all the same, if only against his will, that precisely with Brecht, and with his late plays in particular, this approach doesn't work. Brecht's plays steadfastly resist and oppose such fashionable mutilation and reduction, whether by Stein or by his colleagues. Should that, after all, be the reason for the "Brecht fatigue", the Brecht exasperation, among these latter-day avant-garde (or would-be avant-garde) directors? We are told that, conversely, the early works are much more manageable; even a 'learning play' like Die Massnahme (The Measures Taken) proves to be attractive, and even to a director brandishing a hatchet, like Stein. But here, all of a sudden, the Steins, Flimms, and Wendts meet with a very different kind of resistance--and, moreover, from a direction one would least of all suspect. Namely, the production ban on Die Massnahme has been strictly upheld by Brecht's heirs until today, and is further supported by Brecht's publisher, Suhrkamp. They employ whatever legal means they have at their disposal. Not a trace remains of the generous Brechtian

"laxity in matters of intellectual property rights" (the latter being, needless to say, a typically bourgeois invention). Thus it can hardly come as a surprise if even Stein and the likes of him complain, at one and the same time, about "manipulation and censorship" and a "production monopoly" on the part of the Berliner Ensemble.

I could add other examples. One of them would be the deplorable fact that, in 1981, Suhrkamp ceased publication of its own Brecht-Jahrbuch, and without explanation to boot. Yet, why should I enumerate what I indeed must reject so vehemently? And this rejection, naturally, also includes most of Schneider's comments--although, to be sure, they operate on a significantly higher level than the iconoclastic directors' griping. I'll spare both you and myself the details. In one point, however, I do find myself in agreement with Schneider. This is the Augsburg playwright's astonishing ecological blindness, his "unbroken optimism" concerning man's "progress" in controlling nature. "Like a Christian believes in his resurrection," Schneider argues, "so Brecht believed in the possibilities of absolute mastery over human life and in the total rational understanding of the world by means of materialist science. He believed that science would finally make the planet inhabitable. But we are experiencing exactly the opposite effect today. It is through ever-increasing technical perfectibility that natural resources are being exploited in the service of profit and uncontrollable economic growth, while the planet becomes less and less inhabitable, and mankind is being pushed toward the edge of an ecological catastrophe the consequences of which cannot be foreseen. Today, we have come to recognize the capitalist as well as Leninist fetishization of the productive forces (something that might have been justifiable in the context of an industrially backward Russia) as one of the major causes of those irreversible disruptions of ecological balance with which the highly industrialized Western nations--and, increasingly, the Eastern nations, too--must pay for their progress." In sum: "To use Brecht without criticizing him is a betrayal," as Heiner Müller, the most important post-Brechtian dramatist in the German language, declared several years ago. He was certainly right in that respect. Unfortunately, Müller himself used no discrimination at all when he decreed--continuing his thought, as it were--at a theater congress held in Stresa in 1981: "It is no longer possible to grasp reality by thinking" (words, incidentally, that stem from none other than Gottfried Benn).

Much could be added, I repeat. For instance, one could deliver extensive reports about Brecht's reception in the Third World and about

the "sensational impact" of a Chinese production of Leben des Galilei, documented on almost a hundred pages of Volume 10 of the defunct Brecht-Jahrbuch; or I could tell about my own experiences with Brecht's works in Turkey, where they enjoy an enormous immediacy, merging with an indigenous tradition of epic theater of which even Brecht himself was unaware. [This report is in fact available now, together with two similar ones on Brecht in Nigeria and in Thailand; cf. Monatshefte, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Spring 1983).] Or--I'll arbitrarily list a few more topics--we could devote ourselves, for a change, to Brecht's prose and, especially, his poetry and their respective meanings, rather than fixing our gaze, as usual, on his dramatic works and theatrical theory. At the same time, however, one could, indeed must, point out that it is precisely the playwright Brecht who reveals himself as the most frequently staged and performed German dramatist in the German-speaking countries, all the criticism, gripes, and alleged "fatigue" notwithstanding. Brecht has still--and among young people in particular--a large following with more than just culinary tastes. On the other hand, one might also point to the somewhat contrary development of Brecht's reception in the United States. For there, apart from a trivialized version of The Three Penny Opera, he is not only unpopular but virtually unknown among the broad public, whereas both the academic ranks and leading members of the theatrical avantgarde (e.g., Eric Bentley and Richard Schechner) have advocated him early on and continuously. It scarcely can be regarded as a coincidence that in the United States a new Brecht Yearbook, replacing the old one, has been founded, which will publish articles in English, German, and French. Its first volume will feature the not exceedingly original but, nonetheless, central theme, "Brecht and Socialism", while the second volume will concern what many consider to be much more important: namely, "Brecht and Women". Admittedly, it is difficult nowadays to avoid asking the Marxist poet that basic and point-blank question which in German is called a "Gretchenfrage": "Mr. Brecht, where did you stand on the women's issue?" (Or, more closely corresponding to the Goethean source: "Bertolt, wie hieltest du's mit dem Weib?") "Were you, perchance, a male chauvinist?"

But enough now! I shall, echoing Büchner rather than Brecht, conclude quickly and simply, and with a personal confession that may sound stridently orthodox although, in truth, it already proves to be heretical again. When the English critic Raymond Williams--a man who ought to know better--writes in all seriousness that the poet and playwright Brecht has become a "cultural monument", and that we hence should consider whether it might not be preferable "to blow him up",

there are two responses. First, Goethe and Dante, Cervantes and Shakespeare are, doubtless, all the more such "cultural monuments". Are we to blow them up, too, for the same reason? Second, as for "blowing up", that is surely neither a very new nor a very bold idea. Let me remind you of the hatchet, wielded so 'bravely' (and utterly safely) by Peter Stein as well as lesser representatives of our "New Subjectivity" or, as someone recently termed it, "New Arrogance". I also recall that years ago Jean Genet, in his oh-so-courageous and facile way, maintained that what Brecht had produced--in contrast, say, to August Strindberg--"was simply nonsense," and therefore not only superfluous but even dangerous, and had to be destroyed or abandoned with disdain.

No--today, the Brecht iconoclasts are the ancients among the moderns. What would be really progressive is not to destroy Brecht but to construct him anew.*

*This abridged version was prepared by Marc Silberman, and translated by him and the author.

BRECHT: THE INTELLECTUAL TRAMP
AN INTERVIEW WITH LUIS VALDEZ

Yolanda Julia Broyles

Introduction:

In writings on the Chicano theater movement of the past two decades, references to the German playwright Bertolt Brecht are not infrequent. These references range from application of the term "Brechtian", in what appears to be a loosely descriptive way, to the characterization of some Chicano plays as "decidedly epic in the Brechtian sense".¹ Brecht's prominent position in theater history has made him understandably a favorite point of reference among critics, especially in any discussion of socially committed theater. Yet in spite of Brecht's inordinate impact on theater history, seemingly "obvious" similarities or affinities with Brecht need not necessarily be "Brechtian", i.e. derived from Brecht. Determining influences or even affinities between two in many ways unrelated cultural phenomena is at best problematic and at worst highly distorting. And although establishing precursors may appear a necessary part of writing theater history, the actual influence ascribed to a precursor such as Brecht must be established through means other than conjecture based on appearances. Wherever possible, consultation or field research among living "sources" can serve to inform us concerning supposed influences. The following interview with Luis Valdez was conducted in an effort to assess more accurately the role of Brecht within Chicano theater. It is a two-pronged exploration: on the one hand, it represents a contribution to the study of international Brecht reception; on the other hand, it is a step toward the reconstruction of Chicano theater history.

¹Such is Barclay Goldsmith's characterization of La victima (by Teatro de la Esperanza) in his article "Brecht and Chicano Theater", Modern Chicano Writers, ed. Joseph Sommers and Tomas Ybarra-Frausto (Englewood Cliff, N.J.), 1979, p. 173 (pp. 167-175). The influence of Brecht in La victima, for example, is not corroborated by former Teatro de la Esperanza director Jorge Huerta. (In an unpublished interview with Huerta, December 28, 1982.)

Among dozens of Chicano theater groups that emerged since the sixties throughout the southwestern and midwestern United States, none has achieved the national and international prominence of El Teatro Campesino. Founded by Luis Valdez as a farmworker theater during the United Farmworkers' Union grape strike of 1965, El Teatro Campesino repeatedly toured the United States and Europe. In the early years, the theater group collectively developed the agitational acto genre;² later it added the mito, a theater genre based on the Native American (Mayan and Aztec) spiritual heritage; a third genre developed by the collective was the corrido, based on the Mexican popular folk ballad tradition. In recent years Luis Valdez has turned increasingly to individual playwrighting in addition to directing. In 1978 his piece Zoot Suit played in Hollywood for a record-breaking nine months to capacity audiences. The play subsequently went to Broadway and then became the film Zoot Suit (1981), directed by Luis Valdez.

The following is the abridged version of an interview held on January 10, 1983, in San Juan Bautista, California. Clearly, Luis Valdez' relationship with Brecht is not necessarily representative of the Chicano theater movement as a whole. Different Chicano theater groups have appropriated Brecht in various ways and degrees; some not at all. Limitations of space do not presently allow for a comprehensive consideration of the subject. A more discursive and inclusive treatment of the intersections between Brecht and Chicano theater will be undertaken in a future publication.

²The acto is defined in the following manner: "ACTOS: Inspire the audience to social action. Illuminate specific points about social problems. Satirize the opposition. Show or hint at a solution. Express what people are feeling...Actos are not written; they are created collectively, through improvisation." Actos. Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino (San Juan Bautista, California, 1971), p. 6.

Question:

I would like to focus on your relationship with Bertolt Brecht; on the influences--if any--of Brecht upon your thinking and upon your work and upon that of El Teatro Campesino. To begin with I would like to know: How and when did you first hear of Brecht or become familiar with his work?

Valdez:

I must have become aware of Brecht around 1961. I used to work in the library at San Jose State University; I was what they call a stacker. That means I put books back in the stacks, as well as processed those books that were coming in, the new books. So we, the stackers, had access to any new books that happened to arrive at the library. One of these was a book on Brecht. It must have been by Eric Bentley. I found it interesting; I knew Bentley's work; I did not know Brecht's work. And so I borrowed that book. I was the first person to borrow it and it didn't make it into the stacks. I read that book, consumed it, because there was a lot in that particular book that I could relate to. I had already written a small play that was in certain ways Brechtian, without my even knowing that such a thing existed. It had just emerged from my own necessities, my own vision.

Question:

Which play is that?

Valdez:

It's a play called The Theft, my first play. It's no longer around. I don't even have a copy of it. I found that play echoed in what I was reading about Brecht, about his efforts to do political theater. I also found that the German culture had a certain kind of cultural grittiness that seemed very familiar to me. It seemed like a culture with a very vivid taste, and feel, and sound, and emotion; an earthiness, if you will. And I liked it. I could identify with it. I could identify with Brecht's poetry. It seemed to me that it was poetry with guts, it had feeling. I immediately sympathized with his feelings about World War I and the pacifism, and of course his anti-Nazi stance. Ideologically there was a real connection. Immediately after that I began to look up his plays and found that there were a few in the library. I was captivated by his approach. I found that there was a lot there that was right in line with the way I was thinking.

Question:

Had you made a comparable ideological connection with any other writer prior to your encounter with Brecht? Had you developed your ideological position through your readings?

Valdez:

My ideological position was based mainly on experience--to some extent--but I was a philosophy minor in college, and almost made philosophy my major, as a matter of fact, because I was attracted to the world of ideas. I had not yet completely discovered the world of pre-Colombian philosophy; so I was still pretty much reacting against Europe. I did the Greeks, all of the thinkers of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, Hegel, Kant. It seemed to me that Brecht wasn't about Marxism in itself, that he was coming from another place, that it wasn't just straight Marxist philosophy that he was espousing. It seemed to me that I could feel Brecht the man behind his works, a real human--what I would call rasquachi*--presence behind it. He'd show up at a place unshaven, you know, and smoke cigars. I was already smoking cigars, by the way...I found no need to shave my head and wear horn-rimmed glasses. But I did like the rebel in Brecht. I identified with the rebel. It seemed to me that he as an individual was very theatrical himself--and deliberately so, it seemed to me. So I understood that. But his political convictions were...well, I don't know how much Brecht's political convictions directly stem from Marx. I suspect that the roots of his true political convictions go all the way back to his birth, the conditions of his birth. He speaks of it in some of his poetry, speaks about coming out of the Black Forest and into the city. His artistic vision is his vision of the city of the modern metropolis as the industrial center. I identified with that in the sense that I had come from the San Joaquin Valley and had come to the metropolis of San Jose. In my own way I could identify with the idea of "taking on" a city, of trying to broach the gaps that exist in a city; they are different from the gaps that exist outside, in the rural area. So I identified with that journey of his.

*Rasquachi: Mexican descriptive term rich in connotations. The term can be used to demonstrate affection or disaffection, depending on the perspective of the speaker. Here, the term stands for expressive qualities highly regarded within El Teatro Campesino: earthy, unpretentious, resourceful, etc. (Y.J.B.)

And I identified with the anti-clericalness. The Theft was anti-clerical or somewhat anti-clerical. It questioned certain things. It's kind of dated because it is basically a very young man's play. But it did deal with certain fundamental questions about the nature of God and man and Christ and so many different things. And I felt that this kind of questioning, this kind of satirical defiance was also present in Brecht; moreso than in any other writer that I could read or come into contact with at the time. Miller and Tennessee Williams and the rest of the playwrights that were "in" at the time, American playwrights, seemed rather mild, seemed rather gringo in their own way, bland. And although I appreciated them and I read them, it was nothing that grabbed me by the center of my being. There were a couple of others in the classical boat that used to touch me in a similar way: Moliere, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare--within very special limits--and then some of the Greek and Roman playwrights, Plautus. I love the rasquachi-ness in Plautus as well. He's the only playwright I ever knew that spoke about fleas. I had experienced fleas in my home growing up in the labor camps. Fleas were a matter of constant discussion. And so to see them dramatized was hilarious; it seemed very funny to me and it made Plautus very real to me, so I identified with that. And so forth going all the way back to Aristophanes. But a modern playwright, someone that I could really connect with, one that was speaking in terms of today, in terms of my today, I had not discovered until I ran into Brecht.

Question:

Did you continue to read Brecht thereafter and to intensify your understanding of him? Or was it something that you encountered in 1961 and then left behind? Did you consciously apply Brecht with El Teatro Campesino, when you were doing the actos, for instance? Or is the relationship to Brecht such that you see parallels between you, but have never tried to apply his dramatic theories?

Valdez:

I do think Brecht was a conscious influence on my work, from that time. And I began to study his works. I was never tempted in the early years to adapt one of his works to the Chicano reality, although I know other groups have; The Mother, for example. I've tried to find a way to do Mother Courage in an adaptation. It's there; I can do that. We did do The Exception and the Rule here in San Juan Bautista, in a workshop about ten years ago. And that led to some interesting imagery: the use of a rope, for example, which eventually made it into La carpa de los Rasquachis. But in my work with the San Francisco Mime

Troupe I'd already seen them working on Brecht there. Ron Davis had already "claimed" Brecht; that was going to be his area. He was going to do Brecht. He even looks like Brecht now, you know. He's gone all the way to cultivating a Brecht-like look. He really imitates Brecht. So, I didn't feel that that was necessary and imperative. But the principles on which Brecht had based his artistic career were very familiar to me. It was perhaps conscious imitation, yet unconscious, doing the same thing.

The very conditions that Teatro Campesino was born out of really enforced the use of the white sheet. We had no opportunity to get up on stage, you know, and to be any more elaborate than a 15-minute acto would allow. The purpose of doing teatro was very immediate and very political. And that automatically leads you to a category called Brecht. Although we evolved--in our own earthiness--characters that emerged from Cantinflas and the whole comic Mexican tradition of the carpa, the tent. So that's why I said early on that the Teatro is really a combination of Cantinflas* and Brecht.

Although there was another influence; it's perhaps analogous to Brecht's working relationship with George Grosz, the satirist, the cartoonist. I went through a period when I was studying the Mexican muralists, the cartoonish murals of "los tres grandes": Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros. That was around 1963, 1964, before the Teatro Campesino. It set me to thinking about the possibilities of representing that on stage. I thought: these images are so vibrant that one could almost put them on stage as is, as political theater. They even had some of the corridos written out--which has led to the corridos in the work of the Teatro. That's drawing direct inspiration from the visual element and utilizing that visual element in the very first stages of the work with El Teatro Campesino, where the power of the theater was based more on the image than on the word. And that, to some extent, is also Brechtian but only in the sense that Brecht had a relationship with George Grosz and some of his work. A lot of people don't understand that, but a lot of Brecht's images are in fact gross. And they are meant to be gross. In order to really do Brecht you have to get gross. I have seen enough college and university productions of

*Mario Moreno "Cantinflas": Mexican popular comedian of stage and screen; Cantinflas emerged in the thirties and his popularity remained undiminished in the forties and fifties. (Y.J.B.)

Brecht, never to want to see one again; because they water him down so quickly and he becomes so middle-class that it does not interest me to see Brecht in the United States. It isn't well done here. It's just more of the same gringo blandness.

Question:

The culture of agricultural workers or laborers included--and to some extent still includes--people like Cantinflas, Tin Tan*, or "las variedades", "carpas", going to see these performances. You probably experienced that during your days in the labor camps. I ask this in the context of an interview on Brecht because often times Chicano theatrical elements are labeled "Brechtian" when in fact they are most probably "Cantinflesco". Brecht and Cantinflas appear to have something in common. What do you think?

Valdez:

There was always a "sting"--let me say a possible sting--about entertainment or comedians or singers that would come and perform for the crowd at farm labor camps. And even the movie houses that showed films to the farm labor crowds had the same kind of sting. What I mean by that is the sting of reality. And those movie houses were called "cines piojos" which means the "flea movies", because people went there and they had fleas. So although movies are supposed to be a place of escape and romance, these "cines de piojo" never were. The reality was too strong to leave behind. And so you had to put up with the kids running up and down the aisles, the noise. And you either just settled into it and accepted it and went with it, or you couldn't enjoy it. And if that's the only entertainment that you had, you were forced to enjoy it, you see? Then what Cantinflas was doing up there on the screen was a direct reflection of that audience. They identified with him. They reveled with him because he was dealing very directly in his humor--especially in his early movies--he was identifying with the low man on the totem pole, he was the victim of fate, and yet trying to survive in his own way, using his wits; outwitting the rich, outwitting the powerful, doing a double-talk that everybody knew was nonsense but it was imitative of education, it was imitative of being powerful. And so he became a very popular hero, and a magical hero to watch. There

*Tin Tan: Mexican comedian in the tradition of Cantinflas. He rose to popularity in the forties. (Y.J.B.)

is some of that character, of the Cantinflas character, of the harlequin character in Brecht's work, here and there. Some of them are sometimes women. Mother Courage is a female Cantinflas, in her own way; if she is portrayed in a certain way, you can get that tragic-comic quality about her. Certainly some of the central figures in Brecht's anti-military plays, such as Man is Man, are Cantinflas types.

I guess the closest way for American audiences to see that is in English music hall Chaplinesque terms. For me as a Chicano I saw that in Cantinflas terms. These characters were people from the working classes, from the "lower" classes that were being manipulated from above; and they were struggling to get out of that manipulation. And so that rawness that was in Cantinflas, the fact that he could take a pair of ragged pants and turn them into a clown's costume, his guaraches, his little hat--just like Chaplin or any of the great comics that have done that--that was inherent in Brecht: the triumph of the tramp, because Brecht was an intellectual tramp.

Question:

Did you see in comics such as Cantinflas or Chaplin a variety of what is in Brechtian terms called Verfremdungseffekt (alienation effect)? There is often a "doubleness" in what they are doing or saying, an act within an act. Cantinflas always demonstrates to us that he is acting. Have you ever consciously dealt with the Verfremdungseffekt in your dramatic work? If so, do you feel you derived it from Cantinflas, or Brecht, or from neither or from both?

Valdez:

I think Brecht derived the alienation effect from the ancient roots of the theater. To the extent that I am drawing from my own ancient roots, it is there too. And I certainly recognized it consciously in the work of Brecht, and appreciated it. I'm a very strong advocate of the alienation effect. I believe in it. It's there, consciously or unconsciously, in all of my work. Everything from the very first pieces that we did, on the picket lines--in which we knew that there was no opportunity to pull an illusion over the workers' eyes because we were out in the fields--everything we were doing had another purpose. It was meant to create a different train of thought in the observer. It was meant to force that observer to turn around and look at himself exactly where he was; or to look around at that reality, to break the mode of that reality, if even for a

half-hour or an hour, however long we were on that picket line before the scabs were moved into the fields. But what we were doing was so unusual that it turned workers around. It took them to the point where they thought we were crazy or they were crazy or that the whole thing was crazy and so it needed some thinking. It forced them to think. There is that side of theater: The madness of the theater when it is poured into the right container in reality can shatter the container, it can change the reality.

With the Teatro, in the early days, we used to go to a labor camp, for instance, and not be allowed to perform in the grounds because the grower was just not going to let any organizer go in. But there is an area about twelve feet wide between any county road and private property. That area is public property and that is where all the picketing took place, in that twelve-foot strip. And that's where the early Teatro Cmapesino performances took place. We would drive up to the perimeter of a labor camp and set up our truck, with our loudspeakers and banners. And then when it got dark enough the people would come out of their shacks in the labor camp, they would come right up to the edge of the land, of the property, and see the show. It was not illegal; the growers did not own the air, you know. But it is interesting that the workers did wait until it was dark because they were afraid to be recognized. And yet we'd get a crowd of 200 to 300 people out there. That always created an automatic alienation effect, if you will; just that division between our being on public property and their being on private property, divided by darkness, and divided by the political urgency of the moment: that they came to see and hear what we had to perform, but they had not yet made up their minds. And the reality always forced them to think about what they were seeing. And it required a sense of commitment. And that is what the alienation effect asks really of an audience: to put forth some kind of commitment. 'Don't just sit there and be entertained. Change, consciously.' And so all through our work that became a rather important element: to remind the audience that they were not watching just a play, but that they were in fact watching something more, a piece of movement or some other meaningful experience.

That is a through-line all the way up to Zoot Suit (1981) the film. It stops, within the film, and reminds the audience that they are watching a play, and then goes on again. That I found to be very necessary in the structure of the play itself, and yet that is the very element that troubled some people. Because they would rather get into a film and not be bothered until it is over and they can come out

again. They don't want to be made to think quite so directly. They'd much rather feel, go with the illusions, the escape.

Question:

Were you thinking in Brechtian terms when you were working with such elements in Zoot Suit?

Valdez:

Well, I no longer think in Brechtian terms. I think in my own terms. In order to talk about how I arrive at my present work you'd have to talk about a whole different element: a conscious and unconscious use of myth, and a conscious and unconscious use of elements people would call religious. And there is very little in Brecht that I would consider religious. Although some people say that his effort is to demystify and to clarify, some of the best Brecht that I am aware of mystifies me; it doesn't demystify me, it intrigues me. It's those kinds of things that are almost beyond the conscious reach. Maybe those are the very elements that attracted me to Brecht to begin with. He seems to have a raw primal power for me, that you cannot distill down into a simple intellectual conversation. Brecht is GUTSY. His work has alot of guts, mucha tripa...And that's what I like; he has power. And those are the same elements that are fed in my work from a number of different sources.

Question:

You mention that Brecht is not particularly compatible with the religious component of your work. Are there, in fact any compatibilities between indigenismo (Native American world view), as you apply it in your work, and Brecht?

Valdez:

Well, let me take it from a different approach here. One of the other elements that attracted me to Brecht was the fact that he was not working from the same Freudian psychological base that so many twentieth century playwrights have worked from and have assumed to be the most elemental level of reality. Brecht was working from a sub-conscious level almost. And that perhaps is the source of some of the primal power that I talk about, in terms of his images and his struggles and situations.

It also involves a broader perception of man than Freudian terms allow for. So much of modern drama is based on a Freudian vision of the human being. But there is another approach that world drama has

occasionally reflected, that for all intents and purposes in terms of modern language might be called Jungian. It's the Jungian approach to reality which is more mythical. It plumbs the depths of the sub-consciousness. You're not dealing with anything that is on the surface, necessarily conscious. You're dealing with archetypes. And a character like Mother Courage, again, is more archetype than type or psychological type, for sure. You start questioning what Mother Courage's psychological problems are and you're going to end up with a rather shallow interpretation of that play. What Brecht is referring to is something else. It's a social reality. So how do you symbolize social reality in terms of characters? How do you symbolize on the stage those truths that are bigger than a single individual, that involve masses of people? It's a legitimate approach. Now I speak of Jungian and archetypal characters because they are more often than not much larger than an individual life. They are bigger than life, in that sense. And so, in that sense, Brecht is more Jungian than Freudian. Even though he might not agree with this description or the use of these terms, for whatever reasons. But certainly in terms of the social truth that he was referring to, in terms of the scientific laws at work behind the actions of human beings there is another vision there which is not the limited, narrow, boring Freudian perception of man. If there is any force that has driven us to spiritual and intellectual and perhaps even political bankruptcy, it is this Freudian vision of mankind, as it is daily presented to the human race in the form of literature and films and television. I think they do a tremendous disservice to our own self-vision in the world. And it is time that new forces in the arts were able to penetrate to other levels, so that we can get on with life and progress.

Question:

In your earlier work--with the core group members of El Teatro Campesino--did the actors actually become familiar with Brecht?

Valdez:

Only those who had received a college or university education in theater. There were only a couple of those in the group. But I wouldn't say that they were necessarily impassioned by Brecht. I think they were more in love with the idea of just doing theater, or maybe just Chicano theater--for other reasons, for cultural reasons. But Brecht as a through-line has not really existed in the group itself. I suppose I'm the through-line for Brecht in the Teatro Campesino. Other teatro groups have a certain attachment to Brecht. And then

there are groups that are Brechtian for many reasons, but without knowing why.

The uses of theater by political beings has always been very interesting, because of the alienation effect, because of the need to touch certain realities. When we started out to do the Teatro Campesino--and this may be Brechtian--just portraying the growers in a certain way on the stage was enough to release all of the people that were watching; to release them from the bondage of a certain kind of reality. People would turn around and laugh at it. This is very simple and yet very powerful theater. And I always saw it as lancing boils. It was going around and just sticking a little pin in a putrified boil so that the pus could run. And that's what an acto was. An acto was a little pin with which we went around lancing all these boils upon the body politic of the farmworker. It was a very special kind of theater. That's part of the power in Brecht. And of anyone who has ever worked on that level, which is very real.



End story 'Kasia and the...'. J. Buchat Montez

THE IMPASSE OF BLIND LOVE

Petros Markaris

Anybody who consults Greek bibliographies about Brecht will immediately realize that their orderly classifications can be revealing. First of all, one is struck by the fact that in Greek there are three bibliographies of Brecht's published works and of all critical and biographical articles about him. The first bibliography was compiled by Alekos Sakkas and was published in the review Tetradio (No. 6, November 1974); the second, by Nikiforos Papandreou, was annexed to the translation of Bernard Dort's Lecture de Brecht (published by Kedros, 1975); and the third and more complete was compiled by Labros Mygdalis and published as a separate book by Diagonios (No. 30 of their catalogue). This is an interesting fact in itself because bibliography as a scholarly tool does not flourish in Greece, and bibliographies about prominent Greek writers are notably missing.

This bibliographical plethora confirms in a very sensational manner the love and interest with which Brecht's work has been received in Greece. A more careful and detailed study, however, will lead us to appreciate to the full extent how haphazard and unmethodical our approach to Brecht is. It is an approach characterized by subjective taste or, more often, by the political and ideological usefulness and topicality of Brecht's plays rather than by an effort to explore, analyze and understand his work as a whole.

Let's start from the beginning. According to Labros Mygdalis's bibliography, Brecht's name was mentioned for the first time in a Greek publication in 1931. The entry is as follows:

THOMAS WALTER: History of German Literature. Translated by G. Serouios. Athens. Elefteroudakis (1931). 280 pp. Brecht is mentioned on p. 256 (Labros Mygdalis, *ibid.*, p. 44)

We note that Brecht's name is mentioned very early in Greek literature, at the time when he was abandoning the "didactic" plays and finishing Saint Joan of the Stockyards and The Mother and had started formulating what was to become the Epic Theatre. Let's now look at the second entry in chronological order:

(Anonymous): New trends in the theatre. Epic vs. Classic. The Revolution of Bertold (sic) Brecht. In the newspaper To Vima 2/4/1955 (Labros Mygdalis, *ibid.*, p. 44)

Twenty-five years intervene between the two entries. During that time Brecht's name was not even mentioned in Greece. It was logical therefore for the anonymous journalist of To Vima to consider Brecht as a "new trend in the theatre"--in 1955--at a time when Brecht's dramatic theories had found a practical application and had been justified in the Berliner Ensemble's productions. In the same year, 1955, Brecht's name was mentioned twice more, both times in newspapers. The next year, however, the entries increased to fifteen. Also in 1956, a play by Brecht was translated into Greek for the first time (The Caucasian Chalk Circle, translated by Asteris Stagos, Epitheorissi Technis, Vol. 4), together with some poems and excerpts from his essays. Nine entries for 1956 were newspaper articles. But in 1957, the entries fell back to eight, despite the fact that a play by Brecht was produced for the first time in the Greek theatre (The Caucasian Chalk Circle, translated by Odysseus Elytis, Art Theatre of Karolos Koun).

The numerous entries for 1956 are easily explained: it is the year of Brecht's death. It is interesting to note from Labros Mygdalis's bibliography that the first mention of Brecht's name was on 4/5/1956 in an article of the newspaper To Vima entitled "Brecht is Ill". All the other entries were from August onwards, i.e. after Brecht's death. It is also interesting that journalists found it difficult to spell Brecht's name correctly: twice it was spelled Bertold (instead of Bertolt) and once Verthold.

It is apparent that Brecht became known in Greece after his death, an event that the world press had covered extensively and which, as a result, prompted Greek journalists and theatre people to inquire into the work of an author who had such a world-wide reputation. However, the total absence of any mention of Brecht's name in the left-wing press during those twenty-five years is particularly surprising. It was only in 1955 that the left-wing newspaper Avghi published an article about Brecht by C. Stamatiou. So, it was the Greek left that first of all ignored Brecht, although it had a "legitimate interest" to know and propound his work.

In my opinion, the fact that Greece discovered Brecht after his death is one of the main causes of the confusion and distorted interpretations that surround his work. For during his lifetime, while

he experimented and formulated his principles and while he proved some of his ideas by the practical application of his method to the stage, Greek theatre people were completely unaware of the process. There was no opportunity to study it or even to become acquainted with it. On the other hand, after his death the reverse process took place: his theatrical practice was solidified into dogma, his method of production became the irrevocable law, and experimentation was sacrificed for the perpetuation of the "Model". Greece did not know Brecht as the man who "offered solutions" but as the high priest of a theatrical cult. The emphasis was not on the concepts of "change" and "changeability" (Veränderung und Veränderbarkeit) as Brecht himself wanted, but on an unchangeable set of rules and formulas.

In the decade 1956-1966, Brecht became known in Greece. The Greek approach, however, was characterized by a curious fact. In Greece, Brecht was not studied as a whole, that is, as a political author and Marxist dialectician who gave a new aesthetic and social context to the theatre, but rather the "political" aspect of his work was differentiated from the "artistic"--the "great author and poet" on the one hand and the "communist writer" on the other--a clear-cut division which was imposed by the political struggles of the time.

It was a decade of intense political strife when the Greek left, defeated in the Civil War, tried very hard to assume its place in Greek politics. It was natural, therefore, that on the cultural level all communist writers were in a way "mobilized" against the supremacy of right-wing established intellectuals. It was the case of Sholokhov, Ehrenburg, Aragon, Eluard, to mention only a few examples. It was the case of Brecht from the moment that the Greek left discovered him. But with a novelist or a poet, the unity of the writer with his work is not disrupted because there are no communication problems in the direct relationship between writer and reader. The problems with Brecht started from the need for a new theatrical practice based on Marxist dialectics. The political struggles had no correlative on the level of theatrical experimentation and innovation. It was an aspect of Brecht's work which remained virtually unexplored. The Brecht issue of Epitheorissi Technis (the principal art review of the left), in 1961, was the only exception and an important one because it was an attempt to give a comprehensive analysis of Brecht's work.

While the "communist writer" was preponderant in the Greek left, the Greek theatre regarded Brecht as a conventional "great playwright". That was Karolos Koun's standpoint when in 1957 he produced the

Caucasian Chalk Circle, the first play by Brecht to be staged in Greece. The Art Theatre of Karolos Koun had an immense influence on the development of modern Greek theatre through its steadfast and conscientious effort to acquaint Greek audiences with every important contemporary playwright. Karolos Koun's evaluation, however, (or Minos Volanakis's when he directed The Good Woman of Szechuan in the State Theatre of Northern Greece in 1965) was completely different from the viewpoint of the commercial theatre where Brecht was considered either as a box-office success or as a means of providing parts for leading actors and actresses.

The next decade (1967-1977) is marked by the seven-year dictatorship (1967-1974). During the dictatorship Brecht truly invaded Greek letters. Let's consult Labros Mygdalis's bibliography again: there are 507 entries of which 169 refer to the period 1956-1966, while 338, the exact double, refer to 1967-1977. There were twenty-eight productions of plays by Brecht: nine in the first decade and nineteen in the second.

1967-1977 was characterized by the prolific activities of translators and publishers long before the theatre started producing Brecht's plays in great numbers. The reason was that censorship was much stricter for the theatre than for books. The quantitative increase, however, did not lead to a better understanding and appreciation of Brecht's work in Greece. On the contrary, it accentuated the lack of method and the already existing confusion. Some examples: in the period 1956-1976, twenty-nine editions of plays by Brecht were published in Greek. Among them there were three different translations of Caucasian Chalk Circle and Mother Courage, and two different translations of Galileo, The Exception and the Rule, Fear and Misery of the Third Reich, Puntila, and The Good Woman of Szechuan. Moreover, the three translations of Mother Courage and the two translations of Galileo, The Good Woman of Szechuan, Puntila and Fear and Misery were all published in the decade 1967-1977, most of them even in the same year (1970). On the contrary, plays like Baal, In the Jungle of the Cities, Three Penny Opera and Mahagonny have never been published in Greek, although they constitute an important stage in Brecht's writing and are indispensable for a correct understanding of his development.

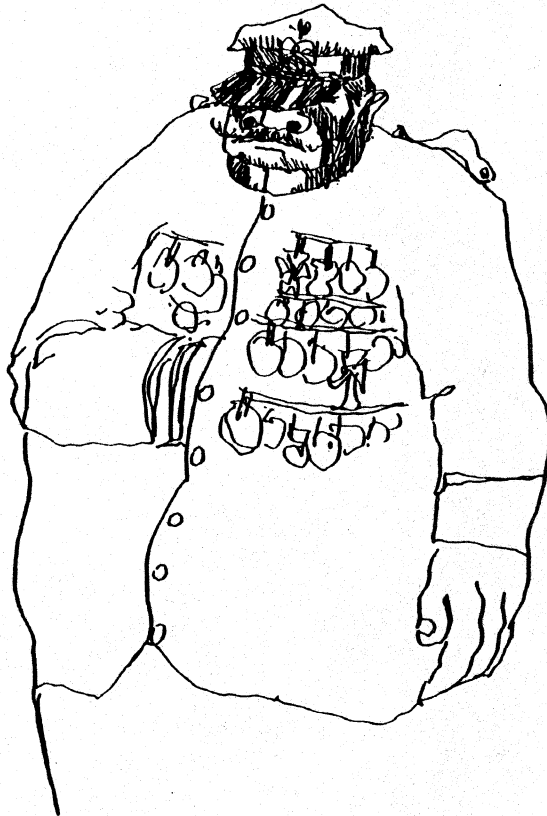
The situation is much worse with Brecht's theoretical writings on the theatre. First of all we note the same fact as with his plays: The Short Organum for the Theatre is Brecht's only essay which exists

in full in Greek, and it has been published in three different translations. For the first time some fragments were translated in 1958. Two translations were published in full in 1961 and in 1970. Apart from the Short Organum, no other collection of Brecht's essays on the theatre exists in Greek, so that anyone who wants to study the theoretical work of Brecht on theatre is obliged to consult twenty-nine different publications, most of them reviews. Still, one is not able to form a comprehensive idea, as Brecht's more important essays (e.g. Messingkauf Dialogues) have never been translated. Two collections of Brecht's essays on art have been published in Greek: "Writings on Cinema" (published by Contemporary Cinema in 1972) and a book entitled Brecht Interprets Brecht (the title is given by the Greek publisher, not by Brecht or his German publishers) which includes all the prologues, articles and notes that Brecht wrote for his plays. On the other hand, a book that Brecht himself prepared as an epitome of his method, Schriften zum Theater, has never been translated, though it would be useful to professionals in the theatre. Moreover, Greek actors cannot grasp the Brechtian technique, as hardly any of his essays on acting have been translated.

Though his essays on theatre are few and difficult to find, his articles on politics and Marxism have been collected and published in more than one book. Infinitely better known in Greece are Brecht's views on politics and on Marxist theory, independent from his aesthetics and his theatrical method. The early division of Brecht's personality into the "political writer", and the "artist", instead of being bridged over the years, was perpetuated due to the special political conditions in Greece. If we recollect that the editions of Brecht's works were doubled during the dictatorship, we can understand that political usefulness and exploitation were of primary importance and were the motives in approaching Brecht. I don't in the least mean that Brecht's plays should not have been produced or published under conditions that favoured the ideological and political aspects of his work. On the contrary, it was both necessary and appropriate to do so. But there is a contradiction in the use of a writer simply as a political activist, disregarding his aesthetic principles, and reducing his Marxist perception of social and aesthetic phenomena to political pamphleteering. While the concept of "artistic purity" undermines the work by isolating it from its Marxist foundation and the writer's political commitment as well as from the theatrical theory on which it is based, the use of a writer exclusively as a political weapon not only distorts his work by not seeing it in its complexity, it also degrades it to the level of a substitute for active politics.

Finally, we should note the almost complete absence of a Greek contribution to Brecht studies. Under the general title "Articles, Essays, Information", there are 317 entries in Labros Mygdalis's bibliography: original essays by Greek theatre people constitute no more than ten, and the rest are notes on Greek productions, reviews and newspaper articles. The random editions of his works and the lack of methodical approach have led Brecht criticism to an impasse in Greece, and it is very difficult to see how a way out can be found.

Translated by Sophia Anastassiades



BRECHT IN CYPRUS

Heinz-Uwe Haus*

Carl Weber--one of Brecht's collaborators in the fifties at the Berliner Ensemble--said in a lecture a few years ago: "In order to understand Brecht the playwright, one ought to know Brecht as a man of practical theatre--as a director. Brecht's influence on the theatre of his time stems mainly from the productions he created at the Berliner Ensemble. Though Brecht had worked for the theatre nearly all his life, as a critic first, then as a playwright and director, it was not until 1949 that he found a permanent place for his experiments, a company, and later a building, which he could form into the ideal instrument for his ideas, a theatre which was a laboratory, a place for investigation, analysis, and construction of models."

I am sure you will understand the logic of my talk to you this morning: as a stage director from the German Democratic Republic, I would like to speak to you about the rules-of-thumb in Brechtian staging methods as I understand them and as I have found them useful in my own stagings over the past fifteen years.

The psychic and intellectual stress to which GDR theatre people concerned with Brecht are exposed today is alarming: there are questions on how to cope with the "model", on how to determine the function of a municipal theatre as well as its operation, of the place and function of the playwright. All of these questions can and do overtax the individual director. About Brecht's works, some claim that there is "intimidation through his greatness", while others say it is but "trade union literature" which has nothing more to tell us. All of these issues deal with the Brecht of over twenty years ago, although ironically Brecht himself saw the theatre as an image and part of concrete reality, and he also made a great effort at shifting the discipline of theatre from the speculative to the firm boards of the

*A longer version of this paper was heard at the International Theatre Institute Seminar "Brechts Werk und Methode zur Entdeckung und Förderung kultureller und nationaler Identität" (Werder/Potsdam, 1982).

stage. And let us not forget that he had a deep aversion to premature systematization and unripe theory. He wanted his mode of work (which entailed the conscious collection of all experience) to be regarded as what Manfred Wekwerth called the "continuum of the dialectical kind". Seeing Brecht's work in a "dialectical continuum" can only mean measuring the change of Brecht's ideas on the theatre in terms of changing reality itself. This is also consistent with Brechtian ideas on evolutionary socialization, that is, to follow social elements that have the built-in feature of process and change. Finally, let us not forget the purpose of the Brechtian method in theatre work which is to produce and use ideas and feelings which contribute to social change.

One of the specific and basic ways by which Brecht intended to integrate historical fictions into plays on stage has to do with "die Fabel", the story, and how it functions dramatically. Briefly stated, in Brecht and for us directors in the GDR today, there is a concentration on the "story" as that medium through which the social contradictions implicit in the theme are revealed in a sensually perceptible form, and the effort to develop such groupings and attitudes of characters on the stage which demonstrate the dialectic of social struggle.

The ensemble work--between directors, actors, technical staff, etc.--this work and the productive connection between the theatre and the theatre-going public, becomes for Brecht and his kind of theatre the starting point for theoretically and practically breaking new ground. For someone who has really learned with or from Brecht, continuous collaboration--among director, dramaturge, designer, composer and the actors, from the working out of the acting version to the last performance--is a self-evident artistic productive force. And the connection between developing a new art of spectatorship and perfecting the art of acting is also a basic principle of theatre work, at least for us in the GDR.

I believe it would be a most 'un-Brechtian' attitude not to adopt a critical attitude with regard to Brecht himself. In my own stagings in the GDR and abroad, I have tried to reconsider, to rethink certain Brechtian ideas and refocus certain perspectives... Consequently it would have to be proven that Brecht's theatre (which is rationally produced) is in a position to show totalities. The working method (which proceeds rationally) must be in a position to imagine seeming irrationalities and the unreason produced in the contemporary world... Therefore, we are of the opinion that the most effective way of

studying stage production methods in Brecht is by examining closely the production materials he left behind. In this manner it is possible to elicit the reasons for the decisions Brecht made in staging his own plays. The author Brecht can not be separated from Brecht the producer: Epic theatre is unmistakably realized only in production. From this it follows that we "preserve" the historically conditioned play and spectator habits with the model. But this is where the problem lies, because in my opinion the core of Brecht's method is the living dialectic between spectators and production. Yet how do we find present-day gesture and stage composition materials in the aesthetic images of yesterday?... Let me tell you about some of my experiences from my work at the National Theatre of Cyprus, where, since 1975, I directed several Brecht plays and one Shakespeare play.

For my production of the Caucasian Chalk Circle in Cyprus, I examined and reconstructed the genesis of the old Brecht staging, the reasons for all his decisions, and then proceeded to build my own stage conception. I had no intention of doing everything in a different manner. On the contrary, many details of my own production, such as groupings, are identical with those of the Brechtian model production.

We know what Brecht wanted to achieve with his method: to make conflicts and contradictions between people optically, acoustically, and theatrically perceptible. The functional change which Brecht claimed for his theatre amounted to socially activating the audience. The "use value" (Gebrauchswert) which I applied in Cyprus, for example, derived from transposing the action at the very beginning of the play from the Caucasian past to the Cypriot future, after a settlement of the consequences of the Turkish invasion. In this way, a clear, concrete, contemporary context was established for the conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This was helpful for a clear understanding of the Brecht parable to the audiences in the National Theatre in Cyprus... In summary, then, the aim and object of all of our theatre work is to make the story lucid, always to find the most topical reading of the plays and to communicate from the stage. For this ways must be found which best correspond to the intention of each production and which are those most easily 'accessible' to the ensemble of actors as well as to the audience. The suggestions, the guiding images supplied to us by the model, facilitate our work by helping us find better solutions, new solutions for each place and each time, adaptable ones to current, concrete situations.

Six months after my production of Brecht's Mother Courage in Weimar I staged this play at the National Theatre of Cyprus. When comparing the two productions, it is surprising that the performances are different, in external appearance as well as in the gestures. While the critique in Nicosia stresses the "national and popular character" of the setting, in Weimar the combination of "artistic languages from different national and traditional forms becomes a means of aesthetic challenge".

The performance in Nicosia is simpler, more naive and concentrates fully on the plot--at first glance it is also closer to the model. The Weimar concept is more concerned with the relationship between form and content. Three levels create a means for "translating" the play metaphorically and thereby reducing the rational, logical appeal in favour of the affect of associative emotional fields in the spectators' subconscious...The impoverished decor of the Nicosia stage was also in sharp contrast to the Weimar presentation, which through its strong visual appeal revealed a modified picture of the play. For Mother Courage's legendary carriage a common, blue-painted, two-wheeled cart was used, of the type used by farmers in the central plains of Cyprus. This represents a sentimental and emotional Cypriot perspective.

Also the two actors playing Mother Courage are extremely different as far as their natural attributes and interpretation are concerned. Christa Lehmann from Weimar is older, somewhat stout and tends to love creature comforts. She uses her body to stress her enjoyment. Despina Bebedeli from Nicosia is young, graceful but tough, full of energy and ideas. She plays the tradeswoman with a girlish charm and also shows her readiness to fight for survival. The Weimar performance was successful because it showed qualities of petty-bourgeois attitudes which are specific to the GDR. The characterizations by the actors in Nicosia correspond to everyday Cypriot life. The preacher is a soft, bearded and orthodox person. Eilif strongly reminds us of a EOKA-member living in the mountains. Yvette seems to be from Regina Street; the Swedish general behaved like some Greek Junta officers when they were in command of the Cypriot National Guard.

What these two performances have in common is that they refer to processes corresponding to present social conditions in the respective countries. As a consequence they were informed by different aims and they cannot be compared systematically. The Weimar setting was

intended to generate awareness of the relationship between the "war on stage" and opportunism in a society not directly confronted with the consequences of war but in which wrong social behaviour wastes energy. It would not have been possible to provoke an ideological impact by reconstructing an anti-war play. The performance in Nicosia--shown during a military occupation--concentrates on making clear to the audience that the Thirty Years' War was not of a religious character and stresses that some people with a particular interest decided over the heads of the poor...

There were also devices used to bring the foreign play closer to the experience of the audience. For example the music of George Kotsonis is very evocative of and popular in Cyprus. On the other hand, so-called Brechtian means of alienation were used, i.e. a half-sized curtain, visible spotlights, scene titles, projections. Projected pictures from the 1975 war as the background to the songs represented an element of local experience which held a certain shock value. Here we recognize a tendency to make the general concept of war more topical, which was also Brecht's aim... Brecht's play is highly topical for Cypress. It could have been written especially for Cyprus. Some aspects open the way for many people to try to answer important questions about life. The message of the play has an immediate effect on the formation of a political opinion about the country's future...

We know what Brecht intended with the application of his means. He wanted to make visible on the stage, visually and acoustically, the contradictions and conflicts in human life. And those are concrete. That means they are different in Cyprus and in the GDR. Someone who does not constantly try to learn about such processes and appearances of reality and does not produce them in a lively and passionate fashion will hardly be able to implement Brecht's theatre. Brecht is not a rationalist, as some people claim. Brecht showed insecurity in a precise form in order to demonstrate internal tensions within society. This he achieved by using means which create insecurity. From experience we know that, when insecurity becomes a "style", it becomes comfortable... Brecht said in a broadcast in 1952: "We want to describe real life on stage in such a way that the audience becomes capable of taking control of this life."

THE DAWN OF BRECHT AT THE PACIFIC:
ROSES AND VOLCANOES

Lamice el-Amari

Beautiful Portland, as it is commonly called, has the red rose as its symbol and Mount St. Helen as another landmark of its beauty. Since the eruption of the Mount (May 1980), the rose and the volcano have stood as equal symbols of its fame. But which of the two expresses the spirit of the International Brecht Symposium held there? The rose or the volcano? This review is an attempt towards the answer.

The Sixth Symposium, it must be mentioned, was bedevilled by many delays and consequent changes of venue and theme. The Organisation Committee and its mastermind Laureen Nussbaum (Portland State University) adroitly masterminded a plan which brought this difficult project to a blessed conclusion. First, to overcome the main hurdle, lack of funds, they gained non-academic cultural bodies as sponsors, with the result that the Symposium came as "the culmination of a month of city-wide cultural events". Second, to cut costs, regional acting groups were invited, and their presence also at the meetings created a productive counter-balance to an otherwise academic event. The choice of the motto tripled their success. "Theatre for Pleasure OR Theatre for Learning" proved to be at the heart of theatre experimentation in America today. The fervent arguments and ensuing tension turned the Symposium into a melting pot, which thus became a mile-stone in the history of the IBS.

Viewing the event in the above metaphor, it was like a flower show where the cultivated, very sophisticated rose stood side by side with the very rough, natural one--just as beautiful, and claiming just as much right to be honoured as the super-rose. The papers of scholars displayed roses in full bloom, nurtured by personal love and understanding of Brecht. Amateur and professional theatre performances and literary readings displayed other types of flowers and buds; some more delicately nursed than others. The show was well-spaced so that you could not help seeing all that was offered (the papers in the conference hall, the plays in the theatre building). But what of the volcano in this idyllic setting? The discussions?

The small format and setting of the meeting were conducive to this. People were together all the time, so, for better or for worse, points and arguments could be accentuated, leading to the final eruption. The structure of participation (experts and artists) was, as already mentioned, another contributing factor towards this end. Therefore, the two symbols were equally expressive of its spirit.

The Symposium was housed at Reed College. The beautiful campus provided an atmosphere suitable for the realization of both aspects of the motto (pleasure and learning). But what was the provision for these in the program? In four days (May 28-31, 1982) there were seven papers, two panel discussions, eight literary presentations, a film show and five plays given in varied forms and levels of artistic presentation. The two aspects, then, were catered to equally. However, in the theoretical part, only one paper dealt directly with the theme: namely Antony Tatlow's "Before and Behind the Pleasure Principle" (University of Hong Kong). The fact that this basic contribution was read not in the conference hall, but in the theatre building just before the evening performance, with people swarming up the screechy wooden structure of the auditorium and literally drowning his voice in their hustle, underlines the two poles between which the Symposium was fruitfully suspended. These two, not always exclusive, were: the serene 'pleasure' of scientific discourse by the experts, balanced, at times out-weighted, by the boisterous 'didactic' approach of practising artists.

The experts communicated individual understanding of Brecht and his work and debated polemics known in Brechtian circles elsewhere. The 'Brecht-is-dead' view, for example, received a slap in the face from Tatlow, whose opening address as President ("IBS Funeral Parlor Game") was a shrewd lampoon against this subject (entertainingly presented by R.G. Davis, San Francisco, and Rose Leopold, Portland). Klaus Völker (Schiller Theater, West Berlin) surveyed the history of this polemic in West Germany ("Brecht in Performance")--i.e. the boycott, irrelevance, rejection of plays and the acceptance of the method, shifting to the public's present interest in Brecht while the producers avoid him. John Fuegi (University of Maryland), analysing the causes of this in "Brecht the Director", called for a fresh approach: "Half a century of critical dust was poured over his plays. A new era of criticism should give precedence to production over theory." He described the present training of drama students as "old-fashioned and pre-video age". The new approach to Brecht should begin, he said, "by studying the model-books, tapes of BB's rehearsal

work, notes by those who worked with him on the play, together with the script and the theory of that period--taken as ONE unit". James Lyon (University of California) in "Letters on Theatre" referred to the "Babylonian confusion around Brecht's theory for a new theatre", citing BB's disputes even with his close friends. On his influence in America, he said, his work on Galileo affected modern American drama, though in the USA the theory is more appealing than the plays, concluding: "But Brecht is too big to get round him." Answering Klaus Völker, he said: "If Brecht is 'dead' in West Germany, he is alive here in America. The young director here DOES Brecht. Perhaps the political atmosphere in this country has something to do with this." (The attitude of the youth in the Symposium confirms his point.) John Rouse (Tulane University, New Orleans) investigated the possibility and necessity of adapting Brecht. Speaking on "Adapting the Adaptor", he explained how Brecht worked on plays from other periods: "Like him, we must treat such plays as social documentaries." On the necessity of changing BB, he said: "My students come from the middle class of an advanced industrial country. They are different from the audience for whom he wrote his plays. Our method MUST be different from his. But we must not forget that his theatre cannot be devoid of the commitment he himself had made to critical materialism." This reminder about Brecht's commitment is very relevant to American theatre people. It was at the core of the disputes in the Symposium. However, the idea of "a different audience" gets no support from the present marked interest in the Lehrstücke, precisely among young artists.

To Richard Meyer (TV station KERA, Dallas, Texas--producer of Ocean Flight, the artistic jewel of the Symposium), not the 'death' but the birth of Brecht was the problem. "Brecht was born before his time...Had he been born twenty-five years later, he would have become an excellent television writer. His didactic plays (i.e. The Exception and the Rule) would make a wonderful marriage with television." What Meyer said about his own endeavour to produce Ocean Flight sums up the difficulties facing artists in America. "If you choose to show something outside the commercial, conventional norms, you are in trouble--financially. No one prevents you...but no one supports you." Speaking about his ordeal, trapped for twenty-two years between the Brecht and Weill heirs and the many versions of the play, he articulated with marked geniality the other recurring theme in the meeting: copyrights and access to material. Jules Aaron (California Institute of the Arts) in "On Directing Mahagonny" explained that copyrights were in fact inhibiting the production of Brecht in the USA.

He received jovial applause when he said: "Brecht was free to help himself to other people's work, why don't we do the same with him!"

A far cry from this, in a double sense, was the contribution of Arnold Blumer (University of Stellenbosch, Capetown, South Africa). In "Brecht as Cultural Mediator" he stated that "access to Brecht IS possible as an academic subject in German. Students from other faculties come to our department to read Brecht and Marx in the original. But access to the Black culture in my country is impossible because of Apartheid. I had to come to America to read about a production of Brecht by the Black theatre in my country." (He had read this in the book of the German scholar Ernst Schumacher.) Michael Morley (Flinders University, South Australia), unperturbed by the copyright polemics, held the interest of the Symposium in "New Tunes for Old--Brecht and Weill", when he analysed the language of music in four unpublished songs. (This is also true of Klaus Völker's reading of unpublished poems "Ein Rest zu tun".)

With Carl Weber (New York University) we move from the concerns of the theorists to the worries of practising artists. In "The Dramaturge as Director" he gave many valuable and practical hints as to how BB actually worked in rehearsals, especially concerning the much confused though sought after V-Effekt (alienation effect). Explaining the function and importance of a dramaturge, he complained that the present financial squeeze prevents American theatre managements from employing two persons (i.e. like the partnership of Wekwerth and Tenschert at the Berliner Ensemble). As to the artists who are interested in Brecht in America today, the Symposium has shown that Brecht is no longer 'tied to the university'. For besides the academic, there was a specifically youngish approach to him by local groups, mostly workers. They came from as far away as San Francisco, 'wearing Brechtian buds in their hair' (i.e. The Mime Group, The Red Flag). So how do these Brechtian fans approach their subject? Free from prejudice and inhibitions, they helped themselves to Brecht as they would shop in their giant supermarkets. Chopping off whole chapters, they put bits of plays on a raised platform, calling it "Bertolt Brecht: Work in Process" and pushed it around to local communities who may never have heard of Brecht (Portland Labor Players II).

To these artists, neither perfection nor copyrights was the issue. The means at hand shaped the results: to cut costs, the decor is sketchy; to avoid copyrights, Dessau's music is replaced by another...etc. What matters to them is to make a point in social

terms. Here the title of a recital by two free-lance artists, Ina Wittich (German) and DeVina Barajas (Chicana), both of San Francisco, expresses the mood of these groups. They called their program "Change the World; It Needs It". As dedicated artists they explained, "We chose Brecht because his social comment is the most significant of this century." Their recital offered a happy combination of bite and beauty: pleasure and learning.

But the balance was not so happy in the performances of other groups. Lewis and Clark College's entertaining production of The Three Penny Opera was lavishly but sentimentally mounted as a show-piece and a prestige gag for their Department of Theatre. The Good Woman of Szechuan was interesting for the professional New Rose Theatre (Portland) because of its stress on "the necessity of change", but equally for "the comedy and duality of love in Shen Te". However, in spite of some excellent moments, the comic outwitted the social in the production. But the City of Portland Firehouse Theatre Group wanted none of this. Its spartan, overtly political production of--what else--The Mother was fully 'didactic'. And this precisely was contentious. Rather than the authenticity, motive or originality of the other groups, it was their reliance on didacticism (LEARNING the word of the motto) which germinated tension in the camp of the scholars. The two valuable slide projections with comments on The Caucasian Chalk Circle set in Latin America (William Tate, Theatre Arts Department, Portland State University), and "Karl Valentine's Relationship to Brecht and to Political Theatre Today" (Sue-Ellen Case, University of Washington) were unfortunate victims of this bias. Likewise, the excellent production of Ocean Flight received silent praise. Herr Schmidt of "The Clown Scene", chopped off and changed beyond recognition by one group, passed without comment, in spite of the advance notice that this was meant "as the most appropriate depiction of budget cuts all over America". The audience-address parody on Hamlet, in a Messingkauf simulation (Portland Labor Players II) was easily accepted: "To be or not to be--that is NOT the question. To do and what to do IS the question." Yet a production which did observe the text and used simple forms was met with a storm. It was the above mentioned Mother by Ann MacGregor and the Firehouse Theatre group which set the house on fire, specifically their rendering of "In Praise of Communism". The spark was a theoretical objection by Michael Morley to the audience-address delivery of the song. "Omitting the music," he argued, "was not Brechtian because it changed the function of the poem and reduced it to propaganda." The charged atmosphere went up in flame when the objections soon became political.

"This is communist party propaganda...you should not do this..." some pitched into the young director. More than words, it was the tone in which these were uttered that revealed the anger. Brecht was in the midst of the political struggle. An early intermission prevented the assembly from running wild.

An important lesson must be drawn here. The Mother (often ill-judged as overtly political, simplistic in form, and thematically out-of-date for the industrialized world) has NOT lost its bite. Scholars who tend to write off the Lehrstücke generally, in theme and form, as being stale bread in the advanced world, though still (!) hotcakes in the Third World, must now face the challenge of the Sixth Symposium. The Lehrstücke ranked high in the program, and The Mother was the most performed play. It was given in two versions and featured in a special selection by Gitta Sacha Honegger (New York) and Richard Reineccius (Julian Theatre, San Francisco). It was also THE play to split an audience of Brechtians in the most advanced industrial country: the USA. It was pleasurable watching these young people grapple with the play and in consequence rock the foundation of these assumptions. But the paradox of this lesson is that, in spite of justified complaints about funds, copyrights, etc., the more sparing a production was in its staging or the more direct in its approach, the more evocative were its implications in social terms. This is another proof that Brecht CAN bite with very little, in fact with only the sheer power of the words (the straight forward reading of BB's Mothers in Progress--Honegger and Reineccius). Therefore, rather than the means, it depends on the end you have in mind. This also explains the stress on the role of youth in the Symposium. The division was not simply grey hair versus blue jeans. Indeed, one senior scholar jogged between sessions and attended in that outfit--beating the young in the game! No, it was a matter of attitude. Those who wanted Brecht to help them in the "most difficult art of human togetherness" said: "Our art is rooted in our reality. Besides, what is wrong with propaganda?" Those who were trying to put across their concept of the "real" Brecht said: "Ah, but this play (The Mother) was not simply propaganda, it is a work of art."

Between the two positions there is room for much mending. Some mending did come from Lee Baxandall (Wisconsin) who, in the final round of discussions after the eruption "Staging Brecht in the USA", stressed the fact that experimental groups with a social purpose cannot hope to achieve their goal without linking themselves to wider social groupings working towards similar objectives. R.G. Davis (dramaturge and

director), who as a practising artist lashed at the theoreticians and as a theoretician scared the life out of young directors, warned: "Don't do Brecht unless you can do him well!" Well said, but with 'theories' abounding, what is the measure of the "well done"? The Symposium left this point open. There was a lack of clarity about other issues. The concept of 'historicisation', the V-Effekt, and the women figures in the plays. These seem to give present American directors the greatest headache, after finances.

Sue-Ellen Case articulated the very American label stuck on Brecht: "a male chauvinist". "The women in Brecht plays are given the traditional role of the female as a sex object (i.e. Galileo's daughter). This is rejected by our female audience, because they cannot identify (sic!) with such a character" she explained. One of the sessions sponsored by the IBS at the 1982 Modern Language Association Convention concentrated on "Women in Brecht's Plays". The women's lib scholars, I am told, planned a complete onslaught. Can the other members--male or female--prove him innocent? We must wait and see. But irrespective of the result, this is a sign that Brecht has struck roots in the American cultural scene.

To conclude: this sketchy review of the polemics shows that the Symposium was successful in many respects. But its singular success, in my view, was to show that those theories maintaining the Lehrstucke are out of date are themselves out of date. In this, its success goes beyond America. As a small gathering, the Sixth Symposium was big in the contribution it made to Brechtian research internationally. It underlined the relevance of the Lehrstucke to the advanced world--a theme worthy of many future symposia, east and west. The Brechtian buds have--in the lava remaining from the eruption at the Sixth Symposium--a fertile soil in which to unfold into full bloom. And Brecht, freed from stigmas stuck on him even by apologetic critics, will rise high with the Pacific sun to smile at a new generation of theatre people who are trying to use his alternative theatre to "entertain the public of the New World in the pleasure of changing it as they think fit". In short, it was exciting to be present at the dawn of a new discovery of Brecht in America.

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There were two sessions sponsored by the IBS at the 1982 Conference of the Modern Language Association in Los Angeles, both of them well attended. The following abstracts were provided by the speakers.

BRECHT AND WOMEN

Renate Voris: "Inszenierte Ehrlichkeit: Bertolt Brechts 'Weibergeschichten'"

Exegesis of Brecht's Diaries 1920-1922 motivates a theoretical concern (the question of mimesis in the diaristic mode of discourse) and an anthropological concern (the question of the genealogy of Brecht's fictional women). Women who appear in Brecht's works can be categorized neatly into The Mother or The Child, The Virgin or The Whore, but never as Woman or "subjects in their own right" (Sara Lennox). The diaries reveal a similar categorization, with a difference: the female figure is "split" into representing both The Mother and The Child (Paula Banholzer), The Virgin and The Whore (Marianne Zoff). The origin of the "split" is explained by anatomy, with sexual imagery dominating the discourse of the "I" about 'his' women. It is projected into the text from two positions: from above (discourse of authority/father) and from below (discourse of submission/son); never "in between" (discourse of equality). For the female, her "split", is postulated as the source of eternal weakness (moral, psychological, intellectual) and evil (sexuality), which men can conquer. The imperative of the structure of these (supposedly) private diaries states that anatomy is destiny for women; men however have a choice. They can submit to the fate of Galgei or they can realize their strength ("strong" as the privileged adjective in the speech of the diarist) by re-cognizing potency, knowledge, reason as the center of things. Suffering in Brecht's diaries is sublimated into performance. He stylizes himself into a Faustian figure and stages in that his genealogy: the "Repressive Hypothesis" of the bourgeois age and its obsession with categorization, definition, regulation (Foucault, History of Sexuality). The strategy is to educate: pedagogy as the discourse of power. Thus, women in Brecht's diaries are represented as "split" figures by virtue of their femaleness; women in Brecht's works are represented as "stick" figures by virtue of their maleness. (in German)

Sieglinde Lug: "Brecht's Ambivalence About Clichés Towards Women"

The paper investigates Brecht's literary treatment of cliché images of women. As a Marxist who believes in the historical nature of human systems and myths, he--consciously or not--did not let the image of the "Eternal Woman" stand without challenge. In contrast to Goethe in his Iphigenie, where woman represents pure goodness and is the redeemer of man, Brecht in Der gute Mensch von Sezuan introduces that mythical image into an unexpected and questionable context, thereby deflating it. Moreover, by splitting one person into stereotypical masculine and feminine aspects and showing that polarity as destructive and deceitful rather than natural and constructive, Brecht makes suspect the cliché of the necessity and healing quality of polar contrasts in men and women. Thus, in answer to Brecht's final questions of the drama, one can say that the dilemma arises to a great extent from the kind of human being depicted. A much more viable person would be one who could balance and integrate the qualities of Shen Te and Shui Ta. In effect, the problem arises not only from economic circumstances but also from the historically created myths about human nature, in particular masculine-feminine polarity.

Brecht seems--especially in his later works--to feel just as mistrustful of conventional assumptions about women as of ideal abstract concepts in general. Thus, a healthy demystification of the "feminine mystique" takes place.

Renate Fischetti: "A Feminist Reading of Brecht's 'Pirate Jenny'"

The song of Pirate Jenny has long been considered a powerful text of Brechtian utopianism, yet a feminist reading reveals several structures which contradict that: 1) a rhetorical device in the face of oppression, 2) an expression of repressed anger, 3) an expression of helplessness vis-à-vis the oppressors, 4) sexual repression (escape into apocalyptic fantasies). While Brecht intended a negative inscription of Victorian bourgeois values, his text does reveal two of the myths on which that very culture was built: the myth of virility, and the myth of the whore. Through varying degrees of parody, both myths are questioned but never negated. By contrast, a feminist text would expose sexual stereotypes and related myths as false. The not so striking conclusion is that Brecht's analysis of capitalism as the underlying evil of Victorian bourgeois society (the major theme of the Three Penny Opera) is limited since it is caught in

the trappings of the patriarchal code system. An economic analysis does not suffice. Instead, it is the very nature of sex roles that is to blame, with capitalism as one of the perverse manifestations of extreme repression imposed by the later stages of patriarchy. The fact that Brecht built his text on patriarchal myths explains why the Three Penny Opera), in particular the "Song of the Pirate Jenny", has been perceived as escapist entertainment rather than enlightening satire.

Carol Poore: Summary of the discussion

The main question raised in the brief discussion following presentation of the three papers was why women Germanists are expending so much energy studying Brecht and whether this is paradoxical or contradictory considering the various critiques of Brecht which they all develop. The panelists replied in several ways: 1) Since Brecht sometimes depicts women in non-stereotypical ways, we might hope to show that he is a "secret feminist" on some level. However, perhaps these depictions are also stereotypical in a more fundamental sense. 2) How can anyone be interested in twentieth century German literature and not be interested in Brecht? Male Germanists are not accused of being "fascinated" with Brecht! 3) It is important for us to investigate the relationship of Brecht's women figures to patriarchal myths rather than just to capitalist economic structures.

BRECHT AND SOCIALISM

John Fuegi: "Lehrstück or Leerstück: Brecht's Die Massnahme"

It seems central to a 'with-the-grain' reading of Brecht's Die Massnahme that we take seriously and positively Moscow-directed interventions in foreign revolutionary movements. The play presents three agitators who go to "China" (Mukden or Manchuria to be exact) to try to establish an agitational base for revolution there. The Moscow orientation of the group of agitators is then confirmed as they return to Moscow for an appraisal of the effectiveness of their conduct in "China". Moscow then confirms the correctness of the behavior of the returned agitators. Thus the play seems to clearly endorse such Moscow interventions as the way to forward the revolution in China/Mukden.

Viewed from a perspective of some¹ fifty years later, almost everything about the Moscow/China relationship as described in the play

Yolanda Broyles: Summary of the discussion

Fuegi's presentation was followed by considerable discussion. Some disagreed that the "standard reading" described by Fuegi is in fact "standard". Various other participants questioned the notion of taking the play as a realistic document. China--it was pointed out--could be read as just another foreign setting, a model situation or mythical context chosen by Brecht in order to demonstrate something. Discussants emphasized that the play makes its own points regardless of any correlation with historical facts. One participant, however, felt that to consider the historical context outside of the play inessential is to contradict Brecht's insistence on the importance of historical context.

In the discussion following Pike's paper it was pointed out that Pike in no way attempted to explain Brecht's perspective on the Soviet Union and hence omitted the broader historical context which makes Brecht's position historically understandable. The Soviet Union was seen as the heroic force against Hitler's fascism and as the leader in the world revolutionary process. Another discussant then claimed that Brecht was not really concerned with historical reality at all, but rather was an intellectual whose body of writings was his main concern and point of reference. Still another participant indicated that Brecht's writings are indeed themselves a part of historical reality, not separate from it, and that Brecht was very interested in influencing that reality through theater.

seems extraordinarily naive. It is now generally thought that Moscow's interventions in Chinese affairs in the late twenties (the time of Brecht's play) were often guided not by China's real needs but by reflexes of political infighting in the Communist Party of the USSR. Moscow-directed policy often led directly to the decimation of the Chinese Communist Party. Those returning to Moscow from China after trying to carry out these inappropriate orders were usually put on trial for carrying out these policies.

Is it possible that Brecht, who had continued through 1936 to try to put the play on with Lee Strasberg in New York, knew enough about China and Moscow by 1956 that the 1930/31 play did not square with the historical reality of Mao's non-Moscow-oriented and highly successful revolutionary efforts in China? Is this perhaps the real reason for his not allowing the play to be done in 1956 rather than the stated and patently wrong reason: "Die Massnahme ist nicht für Zuschauer geschrieben worden" (Brecht letter of 21/4/1956). The play was originally written for spectators, as we know. More importantly perhaps in 1956, unless both the performers of the play and the spectators at the performance were wishing to read "against the grain" of the text, a production would have made little historical sense.

David Pike: "Brecht and the Soviet Union"

By the late thirties Brecht's attitude toward Soviet cultural policy had lapsed into a state of despair. Though he realized that something was glaringly wrong, the unembellished fact that Soviet literature had been Stalinized escaped Brecht. Because he missed the point of Stalinism, the havoc it was bound to wreak on literature and art took him by surprise. The situation in the Soviet Union had been building to a climax since the early thirties, but Brecht failed to read the warning signs and was caught off guard by the impact of Stalinism upon all facets of Soviet art as well as by the natural consequences for the reception of his own work in the USSR. Brecht treated the Soviet Union like a puzzle. During the Hitler years he managed to put parts of it together perfectly, but forced other pieces into places where they did not belong. Brecht then thought that the emerging image represented an unvarnished and authentic rendering of Soviet reality, whereas the picture was actually badly disjointed. As a result, he misinterpreted some basic verities about daily life in the Soviet Union.

*The International Brecht Society
is calling for papers on*

BRECHT AND WOMEN

*for the 1983 MLA convention (New York,
December 27-30), and for possible
publication in the Brecht Yearbook.*

Please send abstracts by May 15 to:

Patty Lee Parmalee
2680 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10025

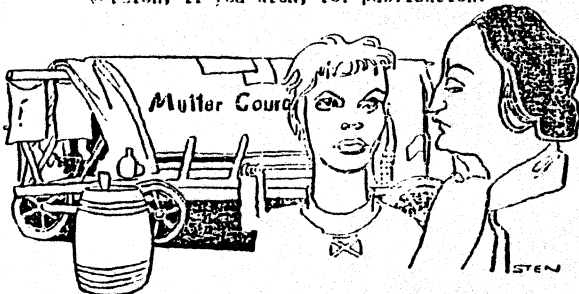
and to:

Janelle Reinelt
7640 Greenhaven Drive
Sacramento, CA 95831

Deadline for final copy is September 1.

Please note that anyone wishing to read a paper at the MLA Convention must be a member of the MLA by April 1.

The topic Brecht and Women is a continuation of the discussion at the 1982 MLA convention, and will also be the subject of a special issue of the Brecht Yearbook. This year, we are particularly (but not exclusively) interested in a special focus on the mother figure in Brecht's work. Preferred language is English. Graduate students, actors, directors, and political activists are encouraged to participate. It would be wise to write a short version for oral delivery (10 to 20 minutes), and a longer version, if you wish, for publication.



notate

Informations- und Mitteilungsblatt des Brecht-Zentrums der DDR ●
 Direktor: Werner Hecht ● Erscheint sechsmal jährlich ●
 16 Seiten, zweifarbig mit Fotos und Illustrationen, geheftet

Nr. 1/83: Umfrage unter Regisseuren, Dramaturgen, Wissenschaftlern und Kritikern: Brauchen Sie heute Brecht? ● Bilanz fünf Jahre Brecht-Zentrum ● Rezension und Gespräch zur DDR-Erstaufführung der Oper "Baal" nach Brecht von Friedrich Cerha (Österreich) ● Zur Brecht-Rezeption in Ungarn/ Interview mit dem Regisseur und Schauspieler Tamas Major ● Jahrestagung des Arbeitskreises Brecht-Forschung der DDR ● "notate"-Studie Nr. 6: Wie tief sind acht Schuh? - Zum "Kapital"-Studium von Bertolt Brecht ● Rezension zu den ersten zehn Bänden der "Brecht-Studien" ● Strittmatter über Brecht ● Glossen

Erscheint Februar

Nr. 2/83: Brecht-Tage 1983 "Brechts Verhältnis zum Marxismus" - Berichte und Auszüge aus Vorträgen, u.a. zu den Themen: "Brecht und die Marxistische Arbeiterschule (MASCH)", "Brechts Lenin-Studium", "Korsch, Brecht und die Negation der Philosophie", "Die Sowjetunion im Werk Brechts" (Arbeitstitel), "Brechts Dialektik-Konzept in Me-ti", "Zur Strukturierung der Lyrik im weltanschaulichen Denken Brechts in den 30er Jahren", "Brecht und der Frieden", "Brecht und der 17. Juni", "Brecht und die Stadt" ● Fortsetzung der Umfrage "Brauchen Sie heute Brecht?" ● Rezension zu James K. Lyon "Bertolt Brecht in Amerika" ● Schauspielerporträt ● Glossen

Erscheint März

Nr. 3/83: Weltmeinungen zum Thema: "Brecht und der Frieden" (vor dem XX. Weltkongreß des I TI in Berlin) ● Zur Bücherverbrennung am 10. Mai 1933: Brecht und Oskar Maria Graf ● Brechts Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik in der DDR ● "notate"-Studie Nr. 7: Der Briefwechsel der Weigel - Aus dem Helene-Weigel-Archiv der Akademie der Künste ● Neue Inszenierungen von "Tage der Commune" in Potsdam und Berlin ● Schauspielerporträt ● Glossen

Erscheint Mai

Die Ausgaben 4 - 6/83 sind den Themen "Der Lyriker Brecht" (Studie zu den Karl-Kraus-Gedichten), "Brecht und Gegenwartsdramatik" (Studie zu Brecht und Schatrow) und "Brechts Vorschläge zur Lebenskunst" (Studie zum "Büsching"-Projekt) gewidmet.

notate

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notate

notate, the official publication of the Brecht-Zentrum in Berlin, appears six times a year in the German Democratic Republic. Communications will present a summary of the most recent issues on a regular basis, provided by notate editor Karl-Claus Hahn.

Nr. 4/1982

Topic: Brecht in the Third World

This issue presents reports and dialogs from a Brecht seminar of the International Theater Institute (ITI Center) in the GDR which took place in Werder (Potsdam) and Berlin from May 3-13, 1982. Various participants from the Third World address the theme "Brecht's Work and Method for the Discovery and Advancement of Cultural and National Identity" in the pages of notate: Prof. Ghassan H. Maleh (Syria), Mohammed Nabil el-Haffar (Syria), Yilmaz Onay (Turkey), Prof. Humberto Orsini (Venezuela) and Weni Gamboa (Philippines).

The lead article by Prof. Maleh from the Theater Institute in Damascus introduces the essential thread of the seminar: "We in the Third World should carry on where, so to speak, Brecht's work ended...We should develop Brecht further by involving our own national experiences...I don't think we would risk deviating from Brecht's work by doing so." El-Haffar, Brecht translator and acting chief editor of the journal Theater Life in Damascus, reviews some more or less successful attempts at performing Brecht in Syria (Chalk Circle, 1979 in Homs, Puntila, 1981 in Damascus, The Mother, 1982 in Damascus, The Exception and the Rule, 1982 in Damascus). His conclusion: "It is not possible to 'Arabicize' Brecht simply by using appropriate costumes and folklore. However if we come to understand his method and apply it creatively, we stand to gain much from Brecht for developing our own national theater."

Director and author Yilmaz Onay describes his experiences with Brecht during times of social and political upheaval in Turkey. As he points out, Brecht has great influence and impact there in spite of the fact that translations are lacking. "Bertolt Brecht is far from becoming a classic author in my country. On the contrary his works are given a lot of attention in these times of cultural, ideological and political struggle."

In an interview Prof. Humberto Orsini, President of the ITI Third World Committee, comments on the importance of Brecht for national cultures: "As I see it, Brecht's theory and method are valid and useful for all countries." According to Orsini they cannot be separated from social theory, and therefore they can help in a socio-economic analysis of social structures in the respective countries--a prerequisite for a realistic theater.

Weni Gamboa, one of the leaders of the Ensemble of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) which in June 1982, celebrated its fifteenth anniversary, describes in a conversation Brecht's role in the development of their theater group, a development which was strongly influenced by Prof. Fritz Bennewitz (GDR). "I would like to describe Brecht's influence on our association as follows: Most of all he inspired us to reevaluate our views of history, to study it and to draw plays from it. He also helped us understand our national problems and thus inspired us to find a particular national form for the PETA."

In addition to the presentations of the Brecht Seminar, there are interviews with Prof. Ernst Schumacher (GDR) about aspects of Brecht's reception in Vietnam, and with Prof. Tatsuji Iwabuchi (Japan) about the history of a Days of the Commune performance in his country. Furthermore, the issue contains a first publication of Brecht's story "Aus dem Zirkusleben", annotated by Dr. Detlev Ignasiak, as well as four thus far unpublished poems from the supplementary volume to the edition of Bertolt Brecht's Gedichte: "Die Mutter" (1919), "Sonett No. 14", "Von der inneren Leere" (ca. 1926), "Der Sumpf" (1943, up until now known only in an English version), "Lehrer, lerne! Lehre, Lernender!" (ca. 1954). This volume was edited by Herta Ramthun (GDR) for Suhrkamp Verlag (Frankfurt/M., 1982).

No. 5/1982

Topic: Brecht, Eisler and Music

This issue, dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of Hanns Eisler's death, presents an essay by a leading GDR Eisler specialist, Prof. Günter Mayer. He discusses new editions of Eisler's works in the Werkausgabe, the stage set for the recent world premiere at the Berliner Ensemble of a reenactment of the Eisler hearing at the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1947 in Washington, D.C. (also in the issue a review by the Eisler biographer Dr. Jürgen Scherbera, GDR), and the GDR premiere of Eisler's Johann Faustus at the

Berliner Ensemble. The production of Faustus is also at the center of a discussion between Berlin critic Dieter Krebs, Prof. Manfred Wekwerth and his co-director Prof. Joachim Tenschert. Wekwerth describes the concept of the production as follows: "You cannot encompass this Johann Faustus with a formula like 'The German Humanist as Renegade', as Ernst Fischer tried to do. He is also more than just the 'dark brother' of Goethe's Faust. Eisler's hero is a split personality--like Brecht's Galileo or Volker Braun's Gau Dsu (in Grosser Frieden) or Gorki's Bulytchev. Eisler projects a warning image of a genius who, at one point in his life, shies away from the decision for revolution because he fears its consequences. He subsequently escapes into a world of make believe and ends up in the realm of black magic...Eisler cautions against 'the mirage of the third way'." Obviously Eisler was influenced by his experiences during the emigration years and the fifties, when he witnessed the desertion of many intellectuals who had given their verbal support to revolution but in the end pursued false illusions. Prof. Werner Mittenzwei's epilogue to the text, appearing in 1983 in the "dialog" series of Henschel Verlag (Berlin/GDR), discusses the genesis of Johann Faustus and is preprinted in this issue of notate.

Other contributions in this issue include the work in progress of Dr. Joachim Lucchesi (GDR) and Ronald K. Shull (USA), a catalog listing all musical compositions by and about Brecht; the new music by Mario Peters (GDR) for the premiere of Brecht's Baal in Erfurt; a review of Eisler's reception in the concert halls of the GDR; and a history of new Eisler recordings by the VEB Deutsche Schallplatten. The composer Serge Hovey (Pacific Palisades, USA)--Eisler's student in 1946/47 and collaborator in the production of Galileo with Charles Laughton in Hollywood in 1947--shares his memories about Hanns Eisler in exile in the USA. In an exclusive interview for notate the soprano Roswitha Trexler from Leipzig discusses her work with Eisler's songs. In regard to her appearances in the USA and in Western European countries, she says among other things: "The problems Eisler and Brecht address still meet with interest in places where they are still issues. When I gave a guest performance in the USA, I was surprised that the 'Song About the Stimulating Effect of Money', a song criticizing the money fetish, caused a reaction and laughter in the audience...However Eisler's work left few if any traces in the USA."

Nr. 6/1982

Topic: Brecht and Peace

Because of current interest, this issue presents several essays, reports, a chronicle and a number of quotations which give us a general idea of Brecht's commitment to maintaining peace against the threat of nuclear armaments. The thirtieth anniversary of Brecht's appeal to the Viennese "Peoples' Congress for Peace" is the event which prompted this review of Brecht's basic attitudes toward the problem of war and peace. In this connection, general proposals for more intense research on the topic "Brecht and Peace" in the GDR are suggested.

"Don't Forget! The Dollar Thinks Hard!" is the title of a lecture given by chemist Dr. Werner Haberditzl in Berlin, which dealt with Brecht's peace efforts during the Cold War. He focusses on Brecht's arguments with the CIA agents Melvin Laskie and Ernest J. Solter who had tried to involve East German writers in an anti-communist "Congress for the Freedom of Culture" in 1954. On a related topic, "The FBI as Brecht's Biographer", this notate issue presents a summary of a lecture given by Dr. James Lyon (San Diego) in Berlin/GDR, in which he elaborates in great detail on the research published in his recent book Bertolt Brecht in the USA. Other articles concerned with Brecht's reception in the USA report on the Brecht Symposium of the IBS in Portland by Dr. Lamice el-Amari (Algeria) and on two Brecht productions in New York and Philadelphia (Heinz-Uwe Haus).

Finally, there are several reviews in notate 6/1982: on Manfred Wojcik's study, The Influence of English on the Language of Bertolt Brecht (published in the Brecht-Zentrum series "Brecht-Studien"); on the Johann Faustus production at the Berliner Ensemble; the Piccolo Teatro Milano guest performances of the Good Woman of Szechuan and Servant of Two Masters produced by Strehler in Berlin; and on a controversial performance of Saint Joan of the Stockyards in Tokyo, reported by Prof. Koreya Senda--a Brecht pioneer in Japan and the eighty-second honorary doctor of the Humboldt University in Berlin.

letters to the editor

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Silberman,

verzeihen Sie, dass ich mit einer derart ungebührlichen Verspätung auf Ihren Brief antworte. Dafür gibt es mehrere Gründe. Nicht zuletzt den, dass ich ja niemals Mitarbeiter Brechts war, sondern nur so etwas wie ein "Fellow traveller" des Dichters; ich habe ihn hin und wieder besucht, zuerst in Berlin-Weissensee, dann in der Chausseestrasse, und unser Verhältnis bestand in der Hauptsache darin, miteinander über Gott und die Welt zu sprechen. Er hat sich hin und wieder meine Arbeiten angesehen, die seinen (partiell) mit der Bitte um Kritik gezeigt--im Grunde jedoch bestand sein Interesse, wie ich glaube, darin, etwas aus und von einer Welt zu hören, die ihm damals nach seiner Rückkehr schon unerreichbar geworden war. Da er, wie gesagt, manchmal seine Arbeiten vorführte, präsentierte er auch eines Abends die Kriegsfibel, von der ich meinte, man müsse sie schnell veröffentlichen; ich habe dann den Verlag dafür gewinnen können, habe die englischen Bildunterschriften übersetzt und im Anhang die historischen Erläuterungen geschrieben. Über meine Begegnungen mit dem "armen B.B." werde ich gewiss irgendwann in meinem Leben noch einmal schreiben...

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



Günter Kunert

Dear Marc Silberman,

...I wonder if essays and articles are the right thing for Communications. The Yearbook, yes. But Communications seems to me the place for informal comment, argument, news items and instant responses to the questions of the day. I'd have thought, for instance, that you'd get a much more interesting view of the alleged diminishing interest in BB, if that's the issue you wish to take up, by the old method of writing to a number of people and posing the question in a way that will stimulate them. I know on the one hand that I'd rather read the conflicting views of half a dozen (or more) people whose

opinions I value than a long think-piece by someone who wants to get into print; while, on the other, a lot of us are Brechtian enough to enjoy contradicting other people's remarks better than gratuitously volunteering our own...

I see the role of the journal, or whatever you like to call it (and maybe it should be a journal such as one might keep oneself, for recording information, notes and ideas), as (i) the provision of information with fairly minimal comment but the widest possible coverage and (ii) the development of a forum for discussion, disagreement and serious criticism. But both these functions depend above all on editorial initiative; you have, all the time, to think what is going to need dealing with, and then bully and provoke people into saying something or going out and getting the news. If you just wait for the stuff to come, in you will come to rely on the tedious, the ambitious and the people with something they want to recommend. The reason why Arthur Crook at the Times Literary Supplement was a good editor and why I could never have been one is that he put the paper's interests above everything else, and couldn't understand if a contributor said "yes, but I can't write that article for you while I've got an overdue book to finish," because he just didn't see that the man's own work mattered. So he was very persuasive...

Yours sincerely,

John Willett

John Willett

reports

Herbert Knust (University of Illinois): Beobachtungen zum Galileo: Stoff und Quellen (to be finished during 1983)

INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

symposium

Seventh International Symposium of the IBS

Plans to hold the Seventh International Symposium of the IBS in China from December 10-19, 1984, are now well advanced. I have just returned from Beijing (Peking) and have been encouraged to make a preliminary announcement. This will be not only a unique occasion for the IBS but also the first event of its kind in China.

Our host will be the Chinese Dramatists Association (Zhongguo xijujia xiehui), the official organisation representing theatre interests. The plan is to meet first in Beijing for 5 days and then for 4 days in Shanghai. The Association plans to arrange two major Brecht productions: The Caucasian Chalk Circle in Beijing and probably Mahagonny in Shanghai. There will also be performances every evening of both modern and traditional Chinese theatre. It is also hoped that the Tanzforum KÜln will be able to participate with a choreographed version of Brecht's Chinese poems. The Association is very interested in the event and will ensure that there is adequate opportunity to meet Chinese dramatists, directors, performers and critics. Arrangements are also being made for sightseeing.

Although our hosts are unable to provide any kind of travel assistance, they are able to offer us a favourable inclusive rate to cover accomodation, all meals, intra-city transport and entertainment. They will also provide free of charge all facilities for the Symposium, including interpreting. At the moment it looks as if this inclusive rate will come to 90 RMB per day, which is approximately US \$47, plus the cost of the flight from Beijing to Shanghai, US \$105, totaling US \$575. The cheapest way to reach Beijing from Europe or the USA is probably via Hong Kong. It is presently possible to find return coach fares for ca. US\$1200 from Los Angeles or London, for example.

Though members may wish to communicate on other topics, we propose two main themes for the Symposium: 1) Brechtian aesthetics today; 2) Brecht and the Third World. Within these guidelines we will certainly be discussing the problems of contemporary Chinese theatre, and clearly the topic "Brecht and China" will also be relevant, provided it is

taken in the widest sense. A number of experts from various fields and countries have indicated their desire to attend; some are not yet IBS members. However, our hosts are anxious that the number of delegates from outside China should not go much beyond 30, due to the accommodation problem.

A second notice with more detailed information about the cost and the format of the programme will be sent out in about ten weeks time. This preliminary notice is intended to enable those interested to start the process of seeking necessary funding. The limitation in numbers should enable us to consider longer papers or presentations than the conventional 20 to 30 minute format, and this in turn should make for more interesting discussion periods. Those wishing to participate should contact me at this address:

Professor Antony Tatlow
Dept. of English and Comparative Literature
University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

ibs directory

IBS Resource Directory

If you are interested in having your name included in a forthcoming IBS directory listing the expertise of individual members, please fill out the form on page . Such a directory could potentially become one of the greatest services the IBS can provide to scholars and theater people. Don't be shy about admitting your research expertise or your experience in practical matters (copyright, performance rights, etc.)!

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Gerhard Seidel, director of the Brecht Archive in Berlin/GDR, may be in the USA in winter/spring 1984 on a lecture tour. Anyone interested in having him speak should contact: James K. Lyon, Department of Literature, D-007, University of California-San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093.

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Available from the IBS Secretary-Treasurer (see inside front cover) are the following books:

- Material Brecht: Kontradiktionen 1968-1976, a photo-documentary prepared for the Fourth International Brecht Symposium (1976) in Austin, Texas; price US \$2.00 for IBS members;
- back volumes of the Brecht-Jahrbuch (especially Volume X, 1979).

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The Brecht-Zentrum in Berlin/GDR makes available a Brecht exhibit: "Change the world, for it needs change". It consists of approximately 70 mounted panels (1m x 2m) with texts in English, Spanish, or French. For more information contact the Secretary-Treasurer of the IBS or Dr. Werner Hecht, Brecht-Zentrum der DDR, 1040 Berlin, Chausseestrasse 125, German Democratic Republic.

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Attention Brecht Scholars in the United States!

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) makes available grants for individuals and groups working on concordances, editions of foreign language materials, and translations. In the last category, support is

provided for annotated, scholarly translations of modern works that "contribute to an understanding of the history, intellectual achievement, or contemporary social development of other cultures and serve as tools for further disciplinary or comparative research." The NEH funded over fifty translation projects in 1982, of which seven were German texts, including writings by Nietzsche, Novalis, correspondence between Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg, and memoirs of German workers around the turn of the century. Deadlines vary according to project, but for example, the next translation project deadline is July 1, 1983, for research beginning April 1, 1984. For further information, contact:

The National Endowment for the Humanities
 Division of Research Programs
 Washington, D.C. 20506

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According to the latest information, Volume XI of the Brecht Yearbook is in print (with Wayne State University Press) and will appear shortly. Those IBS members who have paid their dues for 1981-1982 will receive their volume automatically. Those who have not will be notified. Should you have already paid and still receive a notification card, please ignore it! Those members who have already paid for 1982-1983: thanks a million. You are ahead of the game, and you will continue to receive Communications and the next Yearbook (Volume XII) automatically when it appears. The contents of Volume XI--Beyond Brecht/Uber Brecht hinaus--include: John Willett: "Brecht for the Media, 1981;" Erwin Leiser: "Truth Is Concrete: A Filmmaker's Remarks on Brecht and Film;" Joel Schechter: "Beyond Brecht. New Authors, New Audience;" Vittorio Felaco: "New Teeth for an Old Shark;" Rustom Bharucha: "Beyond Brecht. Political Theatre in Calcutta;" Kasimierz Braun on Stanislavski, Grotowski and Brecht; Luigi Squarzina: "Brecht and Breughel. Mannerism and the Avant-garde;" David Pike: "Brecht and Stalin's Russia. The Victim as Apologist (1931-1945);" Patty Lee Parmalee: "Brecht's Americanism and His Politics;" James K. Lyon: "The FBI as Literary Historian. The File of Bertolt Brecht."

Future Yearbooks are planned on the following topics: Brecht and Women (Volume XII), Brecht and Socialism (Volume XIII, deadline for submissions is January 1, 1984).

This book contains unique information about Bertolt Brecht and East Asian theatre. It focuses in particular on China and offers first and detailed accounts of important Brecht productions from those directly involved. Hence it grants remarkable insight into the problems of modern Chinese theatre and its relationship to Western theatre and into possible future developments. The book also throws light on Brecht's work and suggests ways of 're-producing' Brecht in the West.

It consists of papers presented at a Hong Kong conference by distinguished Western critics (John Willett, Klaus Völker) and prominent practitioners of the theatre in China — directors (Huang Zuolin, Chen Yong), stage designers, translators and scholars. There are also accounts of Brecht productions in Japan and India, which form a stimulating contrast with the Chinese experience.

With a wealth of practical examples, the book enables us to appreciate how theatre develops within different social structures. Presenting examples of cultural affinity and cultural disjunction, it also makes a useful contribution to intercultural study.

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BRECHT AND EAST ASIAN THEATRE

*The Proceedings of a Conference
on Brecht in East Asian Theatre
Hong Kong, 16-20 March 1981*

Edited by
ANTONY TATLOW
and
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Please list my name and address in the forthcoming IBS Resource Directory.

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German Democratic Republic

John Fuegi
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PLEASE REMEMBER IBS DUES!

This new issue of Communications is part of an attempt to make IBS publications more interesting, to increase readership and hence stimulate interest in activities of the Society. Our desire to draw members from a wider background and a greater range of countries is meeting with some success.

Up until now Communications has been sent to everyone on the mailing list. Presumably this list at one time coincided with the number of paid-up members, but this is no longer the case. Yet a more stimulating Communications also means greater expense.

Though the first one or two numbers in this new format can probably be regarded as promotional, we feel that the publication should afterwards go only to those who have actually paid their subscriptions. Hopefully this should then enable us, among other advantages, to offer in the future reduced membership fees to those who really need, want and cannot now afford it.

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