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# COMMUNICATIONS

from the International Brecht Society

Der Ausbruch aus der Barbarei  
des Kapitalismus kann selber noch  
barbarische Züge aufweisen.  
1953

Eine der schlimmen Folgen des Stalinismus  
ist die Verkümmern der Dialektik.  
1953

Ich habe meine Meinungen nicht,  
weil ich hier bin,  
sondern ich bin hier,  
weil ich meine Meinungen habe.  
1951

Es ist nicht die Aufgabe der marxistisch-  
leninistischen Partei, die Produktion  
von Gedichten zu organisieren  
wie eine Geflügelfarm,  
sonst gleichen eben die Gedichte sich  
wie ein Ei dem andern.  
1952

Die Liquidierung des Stalinismus  
kann nur durch die gigantische  
Mobilisierung der Weisheit der Massen  
durch die Partei gelingen.  
1953

Wir müssen das Produzieren  
zum eigentlichen Lebensinhalt machen  
und es so gestalten, es mit so viel  
Freiheit und Freiheiten ausstatten,  
daß es an sich verlockend ist.  
1953

*Das Alte sagt:  
So wie ich bin  
Bin ich seit je.  
Das Neue sagt:  
Bist du nicht gut,  
Dann geh.*

*Wer noch lebt,  
Sage nicht:  
Niemals!  
Das Sichere  
Ist nicht sicher.  
So wie es ist,  
Bleibt es  
Nicht.*

INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY  
COMMUNICATIONS

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Number 2

Editor: Michael Gilbert  
Department of German & Russian  
Wake Forest University  
P.O. Box 7353 Reynolda Station  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27109 USA

Telephone: (919) 759-5362/5359  
FAX (WFU): (919) 759-9831

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

It has happened before that, without any special effort on the part of the editor, a common thread of some sort emerges among the material received for an issue of Communications. This time that common thread appears to be either a look to the future or concern about the future; in either case, it is clear that the future vis-a-vis Brecht production, Brecht studies, and the Brecht Society is very much on people's minds. Not least of all, the enormous political changes of the past year in Europe and elsewhere have contributed to this contemplation of the future and its possibilities, the theme I chose in composing the cover for this issue. The poem is inscribed on a column which stands next to the statue of Brecht situated in front of the Berliner Ensemble. Brecht was one who thought endlessly about the future and the possibility/need for change.

Organizationally, there are clearly things to look forward to. This issue contains the formal announcement (call for papers) for the 8th International Symposium of the IBS at which we will continue to rethink (the other) Brecht. It is also time for the next officers' election, and this issue contains some thoughts on the future by presidential candidate Michael Morley. The election ballot is to be returned to Ward Lewis as soon as possible and no later than January 15, 1991. Other positive developments pertinent to the future include the possibility of working together on some level with the newly-constituted Europäische Brecht-Gesellschaft; indications of strong interest in the work of the IBS among members of the ATHE (this issue will be sent out to over 50 ATHE members who have expressed such an interest); and the continued appearance of the Yearbook (editor Marc Silberman is currently at work on Volume 16).

However, there is one problem which I regret to have to bring to the attention of the membership: as of this writing, we have not found a new editor for Communications (hence the blank space on your ballot). The search continues, and your nominations/suggestions are urgently requested. As noted by Antony Tatlow in his report, the discontinuation of Communications would be a loss to the IBS. Personally, I look at this journal as a healthy alternative/antidote to mainstream academic journalism; there is (or at least should be) a peculiarly Brechtian quality to the way in which it seeks to connect the academic enterprise with the larger context within which we deal with "Brecht." This issue is a quintessential example of that; it contains a variety of contributions from playwrights and poets as well as producers and scholars. The title for this journal, after all, was not chosen accidentally; it is designed to facilitate communication within but also beyond academic boundaries. One of my frustrations as editor is that das Akademische has often threatened to assert its grip on this publication; one of my consolations is that it hasn't succeeded in doing so.

This is my last stand as Communications editor, and it time to express my gratitude to the officers and members of the IBS who have supported my work these past four years. In the end I feel particularly indebted to Marc Silberman for his advice and encouragement. I am also grateful to Wake Forest University (in particular Dean Thomas Mullen and former Provost Edwin Wilson) for underwriting the costs of producing Volume 19 of Communications. Finally, I would like to thank my student aide Catherine A. Turner for many hours of patient and competent assistance, and Teresa B. Grogan, Director of Printing Services, Wake Forest University, for a job consistently well done.

--Michael Gilbert

## LETTERS, INQUIRIES, STATEMENTS

Dear Editor,

On June 10th, I and Dan Keyser, a friend and theatre colleague from Macalester College [St. Paul, Minnesota], visited East Berlin to see a performance at the Berliner Ensemble. After the play was done I accosted the prompter hoping to find someone who could speak English who would be willing to chat with us about what we had seen. She referred me to a young Israeli in the departing audience.

After a brief talk about the theatre piece, he wanted to turn to a far more serious topic: the rapid and volatile explosion of ethnic hate which was reemerging in Berlin, both West and East, as the barriers between the two Germanies were coming down. He spoke of skinheads in East Berlin beating up the homeless and setting fire to abandoned buildings in which such folk sought shelter. "These actions are not rational," he declared, "but grow out of hate long bottled up by a refusal to recognize Germany's dark past. The East just dated everything from the war's end as if it were no past prior to that event and declared all the bad Germans responsible for Nazi criminality were from the Western zone." His feelings about the West, where he was doing graduate work, were equally negative. He assured us that ugly events, which were occurring with frequency on either side of the disappearing wall, were not being reported in the U.S.

"On May 9," he informed us, "the graves of Bertolt Brecht and his wife, Helene Weigel, here in East Berlin, were vandalized with spray paint. On the brick wall behind the graves JUDEN RAUS has been sprayed in big white letters. On Brecht's headstone has been painted SAU JUD. If you don't believe me, go see."

My colleague and I knew of these graves and already had plans to visit them. The young Israeli gave us directions and we set out in a windy, cold rain. First we found Brecht's house, now a museum but closed this Sunday. In the window was posted a letter, dated 12 May 1990, which confirmed exactly what the young Israeli had told us. We proceeded down a narrow courtyard alongside the Brecht home until we came to the small cemetery. There we saw the desecrated graves of Brecht and Weigel just as the young Israeli had described them. Ironically, the foot of the graveplot was graced by a fading gift with a red Soviet banner saying "Minister of Kultur Nicolai N. Gubenko."

If this is news you have already received via other sources I apologize for taking your time. If it has not come to your attention I hope it will be a useful piece of information of which all lovers of Brecht and his plays might wish to be aware. It reminds us as humans and artists of how easily old irrational hatreds can be regenerated.

Tom Evans  
 Director of Theatre  
 Hanover College  
 Hanover, IN 47243 USA



## Events in Eastern Europe Could Revitalize Leftist Scholarship

**L**IKE MANY OTHER LEFTIST ACADEMICS, I am frequently asked these days: "How are you coping with the dethroning of Marxism and the demise of communism in Eastern Europe?" I am not alone in responding: "It's the end of a nightmare, not the death of a dream."

I do not believe that recent events in Eastern Europe will reverse the impressive growth that has taken place since the late 1960's in the number of leftist faculty members in universities and in the outpouring of scholarship critical of American capitalism.

True, the slogans echoing in Eastern Europe do not come from the *Communist Manifesto*, but they are not from *The Wealth of Nations*, either: they sound more like the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" and Tom Paine's "Common Sense." Pictures of the crowds in Prague and Moscow do not recall St. Petersburg in 1917; they remind me of Berkeley in 1964 or Paris in 1968.

It is paradoxical that while the right is celebrating the end of "the evil empire," the left is doing more or less the same, throwing in the end of the cold war as further reason to party. The morning after may be a headache for the right, however, for it will have to do without the specters of "godless Marxism" and Stalinism that it has long invoked to impugn the morality, loyalty, and even the democratic commitments of socialists in the United States. The left, too, will have to do some new thinking, but the challenge could well leave it a stronger force in U.S. universities.

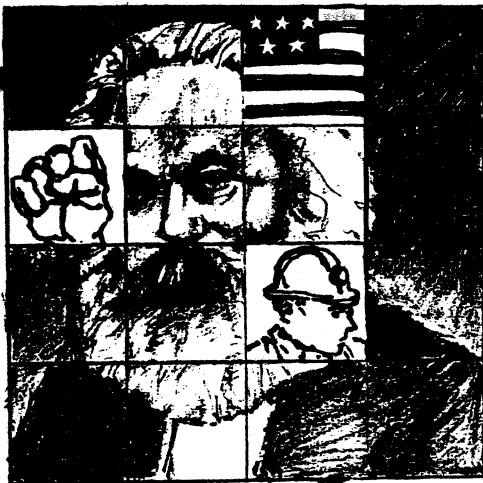
It would be a mistake to overrate the impact of the events in the communist world on the position of leftist scholars in the United States. Most of our scholarship has followed Marx in focusing on capitalism, rather than on socialism. And U.S. capitalism has continued to live down to Marxian expectations: During the last decade the gap between rich and poor has widened, wages have failed to keep up with inflation, and the looming environmental crisis and growth of financial speculation have underscored the irrationality of an economy based almost exclusively on the lure of the dollar. Further, growth in economic productivity has slowed to a crawl, and the moneyed have wielded political influence ever more openly.

There is another reason why the turmoil in Eastern Europe may raise fewer problems for U.S. Marxists than now might appear likely: Eastern Europe is not on the road to anything like the free-enterprise capitalism of the United States. True, its economies are showing a new openness to foreign investment and a growing reliance on markets, rather than on bureaucratic planning. But these hardly amount to capitalism. (During the 1920's the Soviet Union under Lenin also attracted a significant amount of foreign investment and adopted market-based reforms.)

Nor does Eastern Europe want to import Reaganomics. According to a poll reported in the *New York Times* late last year, 47 per cent of Czechoslovaks wanted their economy to remain state controlled, while 43 per cent favored a mixed economy; only 3 per cent chose capitalism as their model. Equally striking was a poll in the Soviet Union that found that while dissatisfaction with the economy ran high, most people favored a return to centralized controls rather than the "free market."

The people of Eastern Europe are in the streets because they want democracy and an end to economic stagnation. The United States, with its alienated electorate and lagging economic performance, is an unlikely prototype for this project; the social democracies of Europe—Sweden, Norway, and Austria—are more plausible models.

Lastly, events in the communist world do not under-



cut the left in the United States because that world did not provide many models for our projects. The academic left in the United States has its roots in the 1960's civil-rights, anti-war, and feminist movements. We never cared too much about labels. In our research and teaching, many of us have used concepts derived from Marx's writings—for example, that society is divided into classes and that knowledge and ideology are deeply influenced by social conditions and economic interests. Some of us call ourselves "Marxists," others "socialists," and still others refuse either term. To varying degrees, however, we share common criticisms of capitalist society and favor a truly democratic government, one that pays attention to the needs of ordinary people rather than to the demands of concentrated wealth. Similarly, we advocate some form of a more democratic economy, one that provides for a just distribution of economic reward, as well as for democratic management of the workplace, democratic control over investment, and an end to the inequities of racial and sexual discrimination.

**N**EITHER PUBLIC OWNERSHIP nor the end of the market was ever the *objective* of U.S. socialists. They were a possible *means* to the end of fairness and democracy. We called ourselves the new left in part to dramatize the fact that public ownership of capital and centralized planning were not our panaceas.

If our critics have labeled us advocates of centralized bureaucracy, they simply haven't been listening or reading. Leftist scholarship in history has illuminated the radical democratic tradition in America that stretches from Tom Paine to agrarian populism; in economics it has frequently promoted a decentralized economic democracy; in political science it has attacked the state in capitalist society as hostile to popular participation and democratic accountability.

But however unjustified, the charge that we are bureaucratic centralists has sometimes been made to stick. There are two reasons for this, both of which should prompt some serious new thinking on the part of the left.

First, the left has rarely made explicit exactly what it means by a democratic society. True, we have not been in a position to do much about achieving one in any case, but our silence on the question has permitted by default the equation of socialism with public ownership and centralized planning. Second, we have rarely criti-

cized Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union with anything like the energy with which we have attacked capitalism—partly because, in the chilly ideological climate running from McCarthyism to Reaganism, we have not been disposed to join in the red-bashing, and there has seemed little room for an independent critique. I have been told to "go back to Russia" more times than I can remember, often in response to economic proposals that would be labeled conservative in Sweden or even Canada.

Events in Eastern Europe may well force our hand: The popular movements there will be facing precisely the practical problems of constructing a democratic socialist society that we have thus far skirted. They will no doubt pursue diverse national trajectories—each one a potential gold mine for leftist research. Partly for this reason, scholars on the left in this country are looking at the nuts and bolts of building a democratic socialist society—exploring once again the relationship between the pursuit of self-interest and the goal of economic justice, and analyzing the connections between markets, workplace democracy, and planning. Unlike the analogous debate that raged during the Great Depression, this one takes place with a full appreciation not only of the shortcomings of capitalism, but of centralized planning as well.

**T**HE DEMISE of official Marxism is no less welcome than the departure of bureaucratic socialism. The Marx who is being buried in Eastern Europe today is the prophet of a simplistic economic determinism, not the author who teaches that the struggles of ordinary people matter in history; that work in a capitalist society tends to be not only underpaid, but also fragmented and meaningless; and that by treating people like commodities, capitalism degrades humanity and obstructs human development. Marx also teaches a lesson resonating in Eastern Europe: Oppression breeds its own opposition by forging solidarity among the oppressed, and as a result, history is punctuated by epoch-making upheavals.

Can we, however, so comfortably dissociate ourselves from the parts of Marxism we find so objectionable? Answering that question will require us to rethink the Marxian tradition. Until now, a climate that made Marxism synonymous with terrorism has not encouraged the left to develop an independent critique of Marx's contributions, and of the tradition that followed him. We so often find that it takes all the time and energy we have to establish the fact that Marx is a major thinker with whom our students ought to be acquainted. Given the partial or downright misleading formulations by Marx on such critical topics as gender, the environment, and individual choice, for example, there is plenty of room for reformulating and second thoughts. This long-overdue reconsideration is under way—witness the titles of two new major journals, "Rethinking Marxism" and "Capitalism, Socialism, Nature."

The bureaucratic centralism and official Marxism of Eastern Europe have long been an albatross around the necks of the left in U.S. universities; it is a pleasure to be rid of them. After the party, we will face the challenges posed by the transformation of Eastern Europe in an intellectual climate more open than any that has existed in my lifetime.

Samuel Bowles is professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and staff economist at the Center for Popular Economics. He is author, with Herbert Gintis, of *Democracy and Capitalism* (Basic Books, 1986).

Dear Editor,

I don't think the new Europe adversely affects Brecht's plays. In a curious way, it's rather like an unveiling. The plays are made new. Cathedrals do not lose their value for me because I am not a Christian: on the contrary, they become more mine and less God's. In the same way, Brecht's plays become more the people's, and less the Party's. He might not have approved of this statement, but he would have to accept the situation. The plays are pleas for the rational understanding of human behavior. They are also, often, non-sacramental, non-ritualistic tragedies concerning human suffering and loss. But they are also still programmatic--they show the way the use of reason must effect change. I think Brecht's analysis of the human psyche is sometimes at fault. It both expects too much of the Enlightenment and concedes too much to the reactionaries. This means that his concept of acting--while it is a great advance on Stanislavsky's--needs to be redeveloped: but his plays will allow for this.

September 23, 1990

Edward Bond, Cambridge, GB

#### TUISMUS HEUTE

Der Kommunismus ist nicht nur in der Wirklichkeit, sondern auch im Traum zu Ende. Die derzeitige Krise mancher Künstler und Intellektueller diesseits der Elbe besteht nicht in der Beseitigung der DDR, sondern darin, daß sie eine Bewegung mit angestoßen haben, der sie nicht zu folgen vermögen, es sei denn um den Preis der Utopie, die für sie stärker als für andere Schichten der Gesellschaft die Voraussetzung des Überlebens im Stasi-Staat war. Die Kunst, sich selber in die Tasche zu lügen, hat wohl jeder hier in allem Tun mehr oder weniger zu trainieren gehabt. Doch wer sich auch noch berufsmäßig mit den Hoffnungen auf eine andere, bessere Welt beschäftigt, unterlag dabei besonderen Versuchungen, die Wirklichkeit zu verdrängen. Das marxistisch-leninistische Instrumentarium zwingt nachgerade dazu, die Unstimmigkeiten der Existenz zugunsten der reinen Lehre in sich hineinzufressen und die vernünftige und menschenwürdige Bewegungsrichtung der Gesellschaft in den Geist zu verlegen. Zu den Spielregeln des Systems gehörte auch, daß der Wechsel von Drangsal und Privilegien zur Selbstüberschätzung der Betroffenen führte. Immerhin schien das nichtgenutzte Denken von den Herrschenden gebraucht zu werden. So konnten sie gerade noch jubeln, als die lästige Peitsche ausgedient hatte, aber schon bald begannen sie, das Zuckerbrot zu vermissen. "Nicht hoffnungslos und nicht hoffnungsfroh" wird für viele seit dem 9. November die Selbstseelsorge ganz offen zum Identitätsproblem, das mit ihnen nur wenige zu teilen scheinen. Monika Maron legt den Finger auf die alte Wunde: "Jetzt, da die dünne Decke der Notgemeinschaft zerrissen ist, zeigt sich der tiefe Abgrund zwischen dem Volk und den Intellektuellen" (Spiegel, 12. 2.). Daß das Volk all die Jahre den von ihnen visionierten Gesellschaftsentwurf eher als "großangelegtes Tierexperiment an lebendigen Menschen" (Wolf Biermann, Die Zeit, 2.3.), das nun beendet ist, erlebt hat, muß ihnen nachgerade das Elend ihrer Selbstbefriedigung bewußt machen. Das Volk, das mit Verkrüppelungen und Langzeitschäden zwar, aber im Kern widerstanden hat, ist heute fündiger als sie, die noch immer bei ihren "fünf Prozent Wahrheit" (Stephan Heym, Neues Deutschland, 3.3.) verharren, die ihnen einst alle Autorität gab.

Das Volk prüft mit Recht jetzt jede Formulierung über die Wirklichkeit, "welche die Wahrheit nicht mehr und die Lüge noch nicht erkennen läßt" (Brecht) und ist empfindlich für mögliche Winkelzüge "für unser Land" und im Verfassungsentwurf mit 40 Jahren Verspätung.

Im Streit um die deutsche Einheit und den utopischen Gehalt der Zwei-staatlichkeit gibt es nur ein Regulativ: die Würde und die Hoffnung der Menschen, die auf den St. Nimmerleinstag vertagt war, und die für die meisten zum ersten Male zu ihrem Recht kommen können, wenn ein für allemal das Rad der Geschichte sich wieder dreht. Der linksutopische Horizont hat für sie zu lange schon zur Unkunst der Verschleierung kultur- und meschenfeindlicher Interessen gedient. Auch die Beschwörung einer angeblichen Solidargemeinschaft, die ihr Erbe zu bewahren habe, ist bei näherem Hinsehen nur die Summe der Unverlässungen und "Diktaturschäden" (Helga Schubert). Das Absterben öffentlicher Kommunikation und die Einübung der Teilung von öffentlichem und privatem Verhalten hat mehr Entfremdung und Vereinzeln als Solidarität in der Not hervorgerufen.

Es sollte nicht schon wenige Monate nach dem Beginn der Revolution vergessen werden, daß seit Errichtung der DDR Kunst und Kultur Objekt einer Kulturpolitik waren, die Partei- und Staatssicherheitszwecken diene. Was an demokratischen Werten, humanistischen Haltungen und schöpferischen Leistungen geschaffen wurde, entstand trotz dieses menschenverachtenden Systems. Die Hinterlassenschaft, die in die Vereinigung der staatlich geteilten deutschen Kultur einzubringen ist, ist vor allem jene Wirklichkeitssicht, die im Widerspruch zu den oktroyierten Verhältnissen der Kulturbürokratie abgetrotzt wurde. Für die heute "Orientierungslosen" ist offenbar: Die einheitliche deutsche Kulturturnation hat während der letzten 40 Jahre nicht nur nicht fortbestanden, sondern ist während dieser Zeit wesentliches Element des kritischen Wertesystems geworden. Die daraus gewonnene Widerstandskraft gegen die im SED-Regime allumfassende Angst ist jetzt vor allem gefragt, der Angst vor der Zukunft und vor der Freiheit zu begegnen. Kunst und Kultur waren, sind und bleiben (über-)lebenswichtig, wenn sie sich mit dem Leben verbinden. "Leben heißt für den Menschen: die Prozesse organisieren, denen er unterworfen ist" (Brecht).

18./19. März 1990

Heinz-Uwe Haus, Berlin/DDR

## DEUTSCHE EINHEIT UND EUROPA

Angesichts des ungleichen Entwicklungsstadiums der nationalen Selbstbestimmung und der Integration in Europa gilt es, sich auf gemeinsame Werte und Interessen zu besinnen. In Europa entstand die Menschenrechtsidee, hier wurden die Leitbilder von Toleranz, Freiheit und Volkssouveränität entwickelt. Die KSZE-Schlußakte über die "Achtung der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten, einschließlich der Gedanken-, Gewissens-, Religions- und Überzeugungsfreiheit" hat daran ebenso angeknüpft wie das jahrzehntelange Ringen im Westen um eine politische Union, die die Existenz und Verteidigung dieser Traditionen sichern sollte, und heute eine unverbrüchliche Friedens- und Werteordnung auf dem ganzen Kontinent zum Ziel hat.

## 2 Communications

Wir treten deshalb für ein Europa ein, das vom Atlantik bis zum Ural in allen seinen Staaten diese demokratischen Traditionen und Normen zur verbindlichen Richtschnur seines Handelns macht--nach innen wie auch nach außen.

Der untrennbare Zusammenhang zwischen dem Ende des kalten Krieges und dem Zusammenbruch der kommunistischen Regime verlangt einen zügigen Abbau des politischen und wirtschaftlichen Gefälles zwischen Ost und West. Entsprechende intereuropäische Förder- und Kontrollmechanismen sind unabdingbar. Sie müssen frei von den Kategorien des "Blockdenkens" sein (das auch militärisch nach dem Zerfall des politischen Gehalts des Warschauer Pakts hinfällig ist).

Der Erfolg des Einigungsprozesses wird davon abhängen, wie es gelingt, die Demokratisierungsprozesse in den vormals kommunistischen Staaten durch aktive ideelle, politische und materielle Solidarität aus den andern Ländern zur Entfaltung zu bringen, damit auch jene gestaltend an der gemeinsamen gesamteuropäischen Zukunft teilnehmen können. Je enger umgehend das Netz der Verbindungen untereinander geknüpft wird und unumkehrbare Fakten schafft, um so geringer ist die Gefahr der Stagnation des Prozesses und um so größer wird die Chance für gemeinschaftliche Lösungen der grenzüberschreitenden Probleme auf den verschiedensten Ebenen zwischen EG, Efta, Europarat und den nunmehr sich befreienden europäischen Staaten.

Es war und ist die Fortexistenz der gemeinsamen europäischen und freiheitlichen Identität, die der revolutionären Umwälzung im Osten Sinn und Form gibt und die alten wie neuen Demokratien heraus aus der Sackgasse der verhängnisvollen Nachkriegsentwicklung in ein wieder ungeteiltes Europa in Freiheit und Frieden führt.

Die Herrschaft imperialer Unterdrückung eines Teils Europas hat die Rechte und die Würde der Menschen, gesellschaftliche, kulturelle, wirtschaftliche Strukturen und Traditionen sowie die natürliche Umwelt ignoriert und zerstört. Trotz des einhelligen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Zusammenbruchs der Regime vom Schwarzen Meer bis zur Ostsee sind die aktuellen und die Langzeitschäden von derartigem Ausmaß, daß ihre Überwindung nur als gesamteuropäische Aufgabe lösbar ist.

Wesentlicher Faktor bei der Forcierung einer intereuropäischen Politik ist die zügige staatliche Vereinigung Deutschlands, weil sie synchron zur sich herausbildenden neuen Sicherheitspartnerschaft in Europa das praktische System an Bindungen, das einer konterrevolutionären Destabilisierung in den befreiten Staaten wirksam entgegenwirkt, herbeiführt.

Wer jetzt in der DDR territoriale egoistische innen- und wirtschaftspolitische Gesichtspunkte bei den Verhandlungen mit der Bundesregierung in den Vordergrund rückt oder mit separatistischen Vorbehalten den Beitritt nach §23 verhindern will, hat wenig aus der Geschichte gelernt, schürt irrealen Ängste und Utopien gleichermaßen und behindert objektiv den europäischen Befreiungs- und Einigungsprozeß.

22. April 1990

Heinz-Uwe Haus, Berlin/DDR

Liebe Freunde und Freundinnen!

Die Idee, eine EUROPÄISCHE BRECHT-GESELLSCHAFT zu gründen, findet breite Zustimmung. Wir haben sie deshalb als Verein registrieren lassen. Wir haben künftig, nach Anerkennung der Gemeinnützigkeit die Möglichkeit, Gelder aus dem Etat des Magistrates, später des Bundessinnenministeriums, des Dachverbandes Literarischer Gesellschaften (ALG), der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) und des Berliner Senats zu beantragen.

Wir möchten einen Sammelpunkt für alle Aktivitäten auf den Gebieten Wissenschaft, Bildung, Politik, Lyrik, Theater und anderer Künste, die mit Brecht zusammenhängen oder in Auseinandersetzung mit ihm entstanden sind, schaffen und das Brecht-Zentrum als ein literarisches Zentrum erhalten und fördern.

Unsere Gesellschaft arbeitet mit der bereits bestehenden INTERNATIONALEN BRECHT-GESELLSCHAFT (IBS) zusammen, die in Amerika ihren Sitz hat und sich vor allem auf die wissenschaftliche Arbeit konzentriert. Die EUROPÄISCHE BRECHT-GESELLSCHAFT strebt eine vielfältigere Kommunikation an. Es ist an eine lebendige, praktische Auseinandersetzung mit aktuellen Problemen dieser Welt gedacht, an Diskussionen über Kunst und Wissenschaft, Kommunikation über Arbeiten, die sich politisch engagieren, eingreifend wirken wollen oder/und experimentellen Charakter tragen.

Im September werden wir ein Treffen aller, die diese Initiative unterstützen, im Brecht-Zentrum, in der Chausseestraße 125, durchführen. Auf diesem Treffen werden wir über das Statut, den Vorstand, die Geschäftsführung, die Höhe des Jahresbeitrages und Publikationsmöglichkeiten beraten. Gedacht ist an ein Jahrbuch ähnlich dem "Protokollband" und ein Mitteilungsblatt.

Bitte teilen Sie uns mit, ob Sie der EUROPÄISCHEN BRECHT-GESELLSCHAFT beitreten möchten. Im Namen der Initiative,

Dr. Inge Gellert  
Chausseestraße 125  
1040 Berlin

[Editor's note: The proposed "European Brecht Society" has now expressed an interest in affiliating itself with the IBS as its "European Section." Both organizations are currently exploring the constitutional & logistical issues involved.]

8th Symposium of the International Brecht Society  
Augsburg, Germany  
December 8-13, 1991

# THE OTHER BRECHT



## Call for Papers

8th Symposium of the International Brecht Society  
Augsburg, Germany  
December 8-13, 1991

# THE OTHER BRECHT

The 1991 IBS Symposium will propose new readings of Brecht beyond the dogmas of traditional Brecht scholarship and criticism. It wishes to include approaches such as discourse analysis, semiology, psychoanalysis, feminism, and deconstruction.

The dominant philological paradigm appears to be exhausted. At the same time, recent developments in theatre and theory have passed by the embalmed "Brecht-Erbe" far and wide. To re-read Brecht now seems inevitable, if we are not to continue reading the same story everywhere in Brecht's texts. "Wanted: the other in the repetition of the same" (Heiner Müller) - Brechtian jouissance, the surreal, the obscene, death, violence, the discontinuities in Brecht's works, as well as the paradoxes and pulsions constituting their ambiguous truths. Against the fetish of the signature, the myth of fixed identities and stable meanings, against dichotomous thinking and genre boundaries, then, partial as well as tangential readings of the "other" Brecht are sought, revealing new and different links and confrontations with other discourses, stories, and histories.

Sessions and workshops will include:

- 1) Textual problems
- 2) Performance theory
- 3) Gender issues
- 4) Brecht and the discourse of theory

Please submit 1-2 page abstracts by March 15, 1991, to both:

Prof. Hans-Thies Lehmann  
Professur für Theaterwissenschaft  
Bettinastr. 64  
Universität Frankfurt  
D-6000 Frankfurt/M. 1  
Germany

Prof. Renate Voris  
Department of German  
108 Cocke Hall  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
USA

## Call for Papers

8. Tagung der Internationale Brecht Gesellschaft  
 Augsburg  
 8.-13. Dezember 1991

# DER ANDERE BRECHT

Jenseits (und in Kritik) dogmatisierender Forschungstraditionen sollen neue Lektüren Brecht in diskursanalytischer, semiologischer, psychoanalytischer, feministischer oder dekonstruktivistischer Perspektive reflektieren.

Das herrschende philologische Paradigma scheint erschöpft. Zugleich ist die neuere Theaterentwicklung weit am mumifizierten Brecht-Erbe vorbeigegangen. Allein Re-Lektüre (Roland Barthes) kann verhindern, daß in Brechts Texten immer nur die gleiche story verstanden wird. "Gesucht: das andere in der Wiederholung des Gleichen" (Heiner Müller): die andere Lust am Text Brechts, das Surreale, das Böse, der Tod, die Text-Brüche. Nicht zuletzt die Paradoxa und Verwerfungen in Brechts zweifelhaften Wahrheiten. Unverführt durch den Fetisch der Signatur, den Mythos von der Sinneinheit der Texte sollen partielle, auch tangentiale Lektüren diesen anderen Brecht zu lesen geben: neue Verknüpfungen und Konfrontationen mit anderen Diskursen, Geschichten, Ästhetiken, Materialien wären vorzuschlagen, Genre Grenzen und ausgetretene Verbindungen zu mißachten.

Voraussichtliche Arbeitskreise:

- 1) Textprobleme
- 2) performance-Theorie
- 3) Männlich/Weiblich
- 4) Brecht und Theoriediskurse

Abstracts (1-2 Seiten) bitte bis zum 15. März 1991 an:

Prof. Dr. Hans-Thies Lehmann  
 Professur für Theaterwissenschaft  
 Bettinastr. 64  
 Universität Frankfurt  
 D-6000 Frankfurt/M. 1

Prof. Dr. Renate Voris  
 Department of German  
 108 Coker Hall  
 University of Virginia  
 Charlottesville, VA 22903 USA

EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

Augsburg, West Germany, December 9-14, 1991

Provisional Program

Sonntag, 8.12.

Anreisetag/"warm-up" in der "Lechklausur" (ehem. "Gablens Taverne")

Montag, 9.12.

- 9.00 Kongreßhalle, Mozartsaal--Eröffnung des 8. Symposiums der IBS
- 10.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion
- 15.00 Goldener Saal des Rathauses--Empfang durch die Stadt Augsburg
- 17.00 Goldener Saal--Eröffnungsvortrag
- 20.00 Stadttheater Augsburg--Gastspiel

Dienstag, 10.12.

- 9.00 "Auf den Spuren des jungen Brecht"--Führungen durch Mitarbeiter des Verkehrsvereins in dt. und engl. Sprache
- "Frankreich im Werk Bertolt Brechts"--Führungen durch die Ausstellung des Bertolt-Brecht-Archivs (im Rathaus)
- "Die Brecht-Sammlungen der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek"--Führungen durch die Ausstellung durch Dr. Helmut Gier
- 14.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion
- 20.00 Stadttheater--Brecht-Inszenierung der Städtischen Bühnen

Mittwoch, 11.12.

- 9.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion (Aspekt "Danach"--Brecht auf dem Theater unsres Zeitalters)
- 11.30 Kongreßhalle, Mozartsaal--Theaterleute, Wissenschaftler und Publikum diskutieren über die Aufführung vom Vorabend
- 15.00 Mozartsaal--Workshop, "Brecht auf dem Theater, heute"
- 19.00 Neue Universität (Bustransfer)--Empfang durch die Universität
- 21.00 Nacht-Song-Programm in der Neuen Universität

Donnerstag, 12.12.

- 9.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion
- 15.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion
- 20.00 Komödienhaus Augsburg--Aufführung

Freitag, 13.12.

- 9.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion
- 15.00 " " " " "
- 20.00 Kleinkunst--Songs, Rezitationen von Brecht-Texten

Samstag, 14.12.

- 9.00 Kongreßhalle, Fuggerzimmer--Vorträge, Statements, Diskussion
- 11.00 Resümée
- 13.30 Abfahrt an der Kongreßhalle--"Auf den Spuren Brechts in München" mit Wolfgang Höper (Staatstheater Stuttgart) und Bernd Mahl (Tübingen) (u.a. mit Besuch des Valentin-Museums)
- 19.00 Empfang durch die Stadt München
- 20.00 Besuch einer Brecht-Aufführung in den Münchener Kammerspielen danach Rückfahrt nach Augsburg

President's Report/Antony Tatlow

The opportunities for the International Brecht Society have never seemed better. There have always been problems and we have some now. But we are living in extraordinary times and we must make use of what they offer us.

Since I am stepping down as President, a post I have held for eight years, I would like to give an assessment of our situation, of what may have gone wrong for our Society and of what has perhaps also gone right, of where we now stand. The point of doing this is not to reminisce but to try to sense what lies ahead and how we might prepare for it.

When I took over as President in 1982, I felt that the Society needed to internationalise its activities. It had been founded on the (North) American continent and it is hardly surprising that the Society first explored the opportunities within that geocultural territory. I was attracted by the energy of the activities, the Symposia were not dull, they drew in critics, scholars and writers who had something to say, people like Reinhold Grimm or John Willett, and more occasional participants like Heiner Müller, still loyally sweating under the anxiety of influence but who impressed me by his stubborn determination not to be put upon, or the energetic Richard Schechner (though I never did understand his triple dialectic).

But our Society seemed hampered by the restrictions that were the reason for its initial impact and success. And now I step into controversy. Societies rejuvenate themselves through their critics and I hope this will happen as I hand over to my successor. It seemed to me that the Society had achieved as much as was likely to prove possible solely within the North American context.

The sphere of our Society's influence was the academy. It had been founded as a rallying point within the MLA, where it still holds regular and obviously useful meetings although there are problems with attendance numbers and the MLA regulations, and with the understandable claim to serve as more than just another learned society affiliated to that vast organisation.

Its purpose had to be to question the criteria by which literary societies circumscribe themselves, to galvanise the academy, to reach into society, to encourage change as it examined the role of the arts in the contemporary world. Some of this worked, but not really in the way that people had hoped. And so the Society mirrored the frustrations of the intellectuals of the left, such as were left, in North America. At the same time as I heard, constantly, these self-criticisms of political ineffectuality, the fact that it made exactly zilch impact upon general public cultural life, I was struck by how effective it proved on the level of local culture and indeed, as I still am, by the effectiveness of these particular and local resisting affiliations though always within a vigorously manipulated political and social whole.

The parody of this whole problem was the attention paid to us at the Symposium in Portland, Oregon where we were vigorously lobbied as we entered

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our sessions, but only by Chairman Bob Avakian's little band of True Believers, then impressing upon us the untroubled purity of Jiang Qing's Cultural Revolution to the horrified surprise of the one participant from China. Doubtless under this burden, confronted by a grotesque distorting mirror-image of themselves, the officers--I had been Vice-President since 1979--seemed at times to retreat into that trade-unionist, at worst cliquedist, perception of the Society's function, a familiar paranoia of the isolated. And indeed an ex-President subsequently told me the Brecht Society was "finished."

But it does not seem to have done too badly after all. Of course the Society only exists in as far as it provides a forum for discussion. We have had two modes: symposia and smaller seminars, and then our publications.

Because I wanted to widen the horizons, I immediately started trying to get up our Seventh International Symposium in Beijing. This involved long discussions and several visits. I negotiated with the official Chinese Dramatists Association and we got down to the details of hotel discounts. When I left, they told me it was 99% certain. But the missing 1% carried the day, in the form of the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution. At least we had been given a name. The people I was dealing with were mortified but could, of course, do nothing.

This disaster turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I licked my wounds in Hong Kong and determined to think the unthinkable and try to do it there. "Unthinkable" because of the money problem, whereas the meeting in China would have had official support. Begging letters to all known foundations produced nothing at all. I even wrote to Bertold Beitz of the Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung who sent a courteous personal reply, regretting etc. I had early on decided there could be several fall-back positions but unless I announced something, nothing would ever happen. So with the indirect and it seemed at the time rather guarded encouragement from some friends in Hong Kong, I took a leap of faith and set to work.

From the beginning my idea was to get the best Chinese and Japanese artists to come and I had been working to this end for several years. Basically this meant establishing links and a position of trust. Money, though finally vital to any enterprise, was less important and would anyway have got me nowhere without the personal contacts. So I went to Beijing and Shanghai and Tokyo and was most impressed by the quality of what I saw. But in Hong Kong I was close to the point of no return in December 1984, when a definitive announcement simply had to be made, and I still had not got a cent on the table. My friends, whose earlier talk must have been a way of testing the seriousness of my intentions, stopped smiling as they reached for their checkbooks, or rather their promisory notes. We were in business.

The practical generosity really astonished me. The Hong Kong Arts Centre got seriously involved, supporting the Haiyuza Theatre from Tokyo. But I will spare my readers the hair-raising, heart-stopping narratives of what nearly went wrong, because in the end nearly nothing at all went wrong. Everybody came. The only real, and as it turned out minor disappointment, was the cancellation by the English National Theatre which suddenly raised its financial demands by 100% and we said, no thank you. But as the theatres said yes, the money to bring them simply appeared and, for example, the U.S.

\$45,000 needed to pay for one production, the Caucasian Chalk Circle from Beijing, arrived, indirectly, from the Macau gambling casinos.

That was December 1986. From 8-13th December 1991, we will hold our Eighth International Symposium in Augsburg, Germany. Though I began to negotiate with the city of Augsburg in September 1988, it now, more than ever, seems a particularly good time to meet there. The city has been as generous in donating facilities as was Hong Kong. The detailed arrangements for the academic programme are now in the hands of Prof. Hans-Thies Lehmann of Frankfurt University and the event promises to be as stimulating as our meeting in 1986.

Now for the publishing side of our activities. In 1982 Marc Silberman started to edit Communications and quickly turned it from a loose-leaf information sheet newsletter into a useful academic publication. Though not all of what it has carried could be envisaged in an academic journal such as our Yearbook, nor was it ever intended that it should be, a good number of the articles would not have been out of place there. In addition to this new function as a "journal," Communications of course also served as a useful conduit of information about matters of specific interest to our members. Since we have encountered problems with the Yearbook, our Communications in fact held the Society together during this difficult period.

When Silberman stood down, Michael Gilbert took over and has proved a competent successor. One complaint reached me indirectly, namely that Communications was not refereed, but I felt that it struck a right balance between "scholarship" and the opportunity for less formal forms of information and that the advantages of quick decisions for a bi-annual publication outweighed the need to secure "outside" academic approval of its content. In any event, some of the material has proved outstandingly interesting. Now that Gilbert is stepping down, we need a successor. It is not proving easy to find one and unless we do, the future of Communications must be less secure than that of the Yearbook. That is a reversal of fortune.

For the major problem we have faced in the last few years, and which I believe is now solved, has been securing the Yearbook. It has had an unusual publishing history, having passed through three publishing houses. The Yearbook, with Marc Silberman as Managing Editor, is now produced and published by the Society and distributed by the University of Wisconsin Press. Under these new conditions and circumstances, its future should be secure. We are now making up for lost time.

The risks and opportunities in Germany are obvious to us all. notate, the publication of the Brecht Centre in Berlin, now carries information about our publications. In the past they largely pretended we did not exist. The status of the Centre and the nature of its activities are under discussion. There has been talk of a European organisation for Brecht Studies and that such a body should be affiliated to our International Brecht Society, but as yet no specific proposals have emerged. However, it is clear that there is now scope for much better cooperation than before. The position of the Brecht Archives, which was part of the Academy, is different from that of the Centre. We know that their plans for expansion have been turned down and that the envisaged 100-volume Brecht edition will not appear. In my

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view, the Brecht Archives deserves a much support as we can give it and I hope this will be a topic for discussion when we meet in Augsburg.

As for the future of our Society--I think it will be around for some time, provided we can use the opportunities. The most important thing is to offer a forum for truly international discussion. I believe there is a danger of a new German "parochiality," an inward turn that will encourage a tendency to ignore what lies beyond the cultural borders. Our Society should continue to insist on wider horizons and think in terms of global perspectives. The fact that the currently produced Brecht edition, edited from both "East" and "West" has often ignored the store of information in the Manheim & Willett Methuen edition is sadly symptomatic of a tendency to forget what appears in languages other than German. Some editors are worse than others in this respect, but the whole edition will be affected by this disregard. German criticism of Brecht also constantly needs situating by people with international and truly critical perspectives.

I wish the new President and the Steering Committee success in their rewarding work.

Financial Report  
International Brecht Society  
July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1990

membership dues	\$5,204.07
interest on savings	189.56
total revenue	\$5,393.63
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program services ( <u>Yearbook, Communications</u> )	\$5,984.87
management and general (postage)	245.10
total expenses	\$6,229.97
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deficit for the year	836.34
net assets at beginning of year	5,260.03
net assets at end of year	\$4,423.69

The IBS has been granted tax exempt status by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and the above statement reflects the financial years as otherwise would have had to be reported. In the year 1985-86 assets totaled \$1,691.35. The difference indicates the health of the Society and the degree to which the membership responds to a scholarly yearbook. There are presently 68 institutional and 113 private members.

Ward B. Lewis, Secr./Treas.

## Vice-President's Report/John Rouse

The major news comes from Berlin, where I am fortunate to be living until August. Change is sweeping through all institutions in the DDR, including the Brecht Center and the Brecht Archives. Months will pass before we know the results of these changes, but we have become involved in some developments at the Brecht Center. The Center is likely to face major budget cuts, and its survival plan involves an image change. This in turn had led it suddenly to seek close cooperation with the IBS. Marc Silberman and I discovered this when we met with Center staff in March; I have since participated in several more meetings on these issues. The immediate changes are quite positive: The forthcoming issue of notate will carry a piece by me describing the IBS--including membership information, of course. notate will also carry the tables of contents from the Yearbook Vol. 14 and Communications 19/1; and both publications are now on sale in the Center's bookstore. With luck, this will become a regular feature--one to which Communications will respond by continuing to print information on notate.

Beyond such cooperation, the Center plans to found a European Brecht Society [see "Letters"] which it hopes to affiliate in some way with us as an umbrella international society. We need to consider exactly how we want this to work. And if: Several people have suggested we should increase our own European presence instead by expanding the staff of officers to include a Vice-President for Europe. And this may be a valuable step to take anyway, regardless of what happens with the Center.

In the meantime, the Brecht-Archives is also facing budget and space problems, but we might also hope that it will become more accessible to all legitimate researchers than it has sometimes been in the past. We might also try to work directly towards this. In short, the IBS is faced with some changes and opportunities of its own. This may be a very good time for us; certainly it's an interesting one. I can only hope these developments will encourage all members to refresh their interest in the IBS; we need active members more than ever! And we need NEW members--so go after your colleagues yet once again!

More directly: I need panel and paper suggestions for the 1991 MLA conventions and for the 1991 ATHE convention the following August in Seattle. I also urge you all to start thinking about our own Symposium in 1991. It should be particularly exciting, not only because of the topics proposed, but also because of the range of issues the membership needs to discuss, such as the notion of a V.P. for Europe. And by then we should have a better idea of what's happening with the Center.

## 1990 IBS OFFICERS' ELECTION

### Presidential Candidate's Statement/Michael Morley

Clearly the events in Eastern Europe over the last year must have some impact on the way the Society sees its future role as well as on responses to Brecht's work in general. And while no one in this Society would, I hope, share the view of the same ill-informed English commentator who some years



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back declared that "his political vision ... remains ... canonical (with an aging influential band" and who now is urging that all of Brecht's works be buried in a time capsule so that they cannot be staged for the next millennium, there can be little doubt that new approaches to an understanding of his written work and to staging all his plays must now take place.

I would see the incoming President's role as involving a continuation of Antony Tatlow's pushing back the boundaries in order to involve practitioners and critics to a greater degree than in the past. There is little doubt that Antony's own interests in the links between Brecht and Oriental culture led to the critical and practical insights offered by the last symposium. I would hope that my particular bias, which inclines toward an insistence on the links between practice and theory--reverse order is not accidental--and a belief that one of the truest observations Brecht ever made was "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," would reinforce past developments and point the way to some new ones.

Such statements as these can start to sound dangerously like downmarket versions of a political platform speech or lead to cultural and aesthetic equivalents of a Five-year Productivity Plan. All I would add is that the Society needs to present a profile which is closer to the reality of the organization and its members: lively, non-authoritarian, and prepared to respond to new approaches in critical debates and in methods of production. It will also be crucial to establish a close (closer?) relationship with both the Brecht-Archiv and the editors of Notate. What form this would take must necessarily be dependent upon discussion and a perception of common goals.

Always we should be aware of adopting a narrow Germanistik-oriented approach to the Brecht legacy. Far more appropriate is one which John Willett spelt out some years back and which still stands as one of the clearest statements of what makes Brecht's work important and of what this Society should always keep in mind:

"... his overriding assumption that literature, world events, the theatre, domestic objectives, human behaviour and even the landscape all hang together ... his sense that his own function was to work and work in order to show how they did so, thus helping us all to understand the world in which we live."

Combine this with a commitment to what Brecht referred to as "die kritische Haltung" (neatly summarised by Brecht in practical and practicable terms as follows: "Nach der Kritik, die mich grossartig findet und zum Beweise möglichst viele Gründe anführt, habe ich am liebsten die Kritik, die mir meine Fehler nachweist und ebenfalls möglichst viele Gründe anführt") and I should like to think the Society has a clear and helpful programme for the future. And perhaps as a motto we might well take the following epigram:

Sorgfältig prüf ich  
Meinen Plan: er ist  
Groß genug, er ist  
Unverwirklichbar.

# MLA CHICAGO

1990 MLA CONVENTION  
Chicago, Illinois, December 27-30  
Chicago Marriott Hotel, N. Michigan Avenue

## IBS-SPONSORED SESSIONS:

### #175. Die große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m., Purdue-Wisconsin, Marriott

Presiding: Siegfried Mews, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

- 1) "Organizing Poetry: Brecht and his Editors," Christiane Bohnert, Washington University
- 2) "Anmerkungen zu Leben des Galilei," Herbert Knust, University of Illinois, Urbana
- 3) "Betrachtungen eines Unbeteiligten," Reinhold Grimm, University of California, Riverside

### #690. Brecht and the Media

1:45-3:00 p.m., Minnesota, Marriott

Presiding: Marc Silberman, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

- 1) "Realism against Illusion: The Ceremonial Divestiture of Power in Brecht's and Caviani's Galileo," G. Marrone-Puglia, Princeton U.
- 2) "Brecht, Melodrama, and Fassbinder," Roswitha Mueller, Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- 3) "Radio Fatzler: Brecht, Müller, and Broadcasting the 'Asocial,'" Loren Kruger, University of Chicago

Respondent: Bruce Murray, Univ. of Illinois, Chicago

### Other Brecht-related presentations:

### #309. Words versus Music? (Program arranged by the Lyrica Society)

7:15-8:30 p.m., Erie, Marriott

Presiding: William E. Grim, Ohio University

"Brecht: Text and Misuk Reconsidered," Michael Gilbert, Wake Forest University

Brecht Seminar in Singapore, December 1989

Antony Tatlow

I attended a Seminar, Introducing the Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, in December 1989 at the Goethe Institute, Singapore, organized by the Practice Theatre Ensemble and supported by the Singapore Federation of Chinese Drama Groups.

The moving spirit behind this event was Kuo Paskun, a playwright and theatre director who really introduced Brecht to Singapore with a production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle in 1987, but had obviously felt it was time to try again. Born in China, he has lived for many years in Singapore, has spent four years at the National Institute of Dramatic Arts in Sydney, and slightly more than four years as the involuntary guest of the Singapore government, as the result of a political disagreement. His integrity has won him recognition and respect, and he is now able to offer a focus for creativity in a political community which sometimes presses its inhabitants hard to conform with official ideologies.

Let me say straightaway that this Seminar was a very interesting affair. Lasting for two full days, the first day's proceedings were conducted in English and the second day's in Chinese. In Singapore, the interest in Brecht, or perhaps I should say the curiosity about the potential impulse from his work, comes from the Chinese language community. The English newspapers ignored the event but there was discerning coverage in the Chinese press. This might give the impression that the Seminar consisted of two cultural halves, separated from and impenetrable to each other. But this was not the case at all.

The difference from Hong Kong in respect of language demarcation lies in the degree of English competence among Chinese speakers so that though the cultural orientation is primarily Chinese, there are also remarkable cultural skills in English. Compared with Hong Kong, people are more truly culturally bilingual. Access to Brecht comes through the English versions of his work and not, as in China, "directly" from the German. Another "anomaly" is that in spite of Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew's rigorous political policies, there exists a degree of cultural exchange with the People's Republic of China: So this Seminar was attended by excellently qualified participants from China: from the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing and from the Shanghai Academy of Drama. The main speaker from China was Huang Zuolin, who was responsible for introducing Brecht to China and has played a major role in encouraging performance of his work and who spoke to the Seminar about his own work on both days in both languages.

The four main speakers on the first day presented an unusual cross-section of possible and, in global terms, perhaps representative readings of Brecht's work. Their individual positions were markedly disparate.

The most experienced and distinguished speaker, the irrepressibly active and witty Huang Zuolin, studied theatre in Cambridge under Granville

Barker in the 1920s, after abandoning a course in Economics which he attended in Birmingham to please his father. He returned to China and was later caught up in that country's unparalleled turbulence. Responsible for an extraordinary production in 1959 of Mother Courage in Shanghai--his family nicknamed him "Father Courage"--which was preceded by a famous six hour lecture on Brecht's theatre, he was denounced by one of the Gang of Four, Yao Wenyuan, during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution for propagating the thoughts of a petit-bourgeois foreign playwright and sequestered for ten years with other colleagues. You cannot raise the topic with him. To expect him to talk about his experiences in those years would be to ask him to waste his time. I have met many of his generation and have known what happened to them, the pianist whose fingers were broken, the scholar whose irreplaceable collection of records of Western music was smashed by the Red Guards, the frail and indomitable novelist Ba Jin, made to kneel on broken glass, who cried out to his public tormentors: "No matter what you do to me, it will not change the truth." Their dignity is inviolable.

Huang Zuolin co-directed the production of Life of Galileo in 1979 in Beijing which served as a catalyst for the whole class of intellectuals who needed to come to terms with their experiences during the previous ten years. The accounts of the effect of this production--perhaps one of the most efficacious productions of a play by Brecht in terms of its cultural impact and which still holds the record for the number of performances of a Western play in China--make a mockery of the reductive readings of this play by critics in Germany who dismiss it as embarrassing "Schulfunk," a term Joachim Fest used talking to me and also favoured by the reconstructed Marcel Reich-Ranicki, though Fest immediately denied any knowledge of this consanguinity. In China, this play reached deep into the sensitivities of a whole generation which Brecht did not have in mind when he crafted it.

Many critics in Europe explain the success of this response in terms of the backwardness of the benighted Third World for whom Brecht's plays are now perhaps still just the right thing, having lost all efficacy in a more progressive Europe. It is tempting to call this intellectual racism. Those who hold such views would probably be mortified by this charge, because they are subjectively well-meaning and yet their accounts of Asian cultural activities are at best condescending and paternalistic, often precisely because they profess to admire them so much. And it is not a coincidence that they have jaundiced and often straightforwardly scornful views of Brecht's theatre.

But back to Huang Zuolin. He was also behind two other significant productions in China, though did not direct either: The Caucasian Chalk Circle, which the China Youth Arts Theatre performed during our Seventh International Symposium in December 1986 in Hong Kong. This production did not meet with universal acclaim, and Carl Weber gives a sympathetically critical account in the Brecht Yearbook XIV. Other Western critics felt more able to judge it directly in terms of the expectations of European theatre, seeing Russian-influenced colouration or simply the merely entertaining culinary theatre. My own impression was that the production had suffered from too much polishing, that it had been glamourised in comparison with what I first saw in Beijing in 1985. That was an exciting experience for we could literally see the artists liberating themselves with the help of Brecht's play, and seeking out the comic styles from traditional acting that could be

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developed with the help of this extraordinary text. They spoke to us about their sense of discovery and I have seldom seen so clearly how people were being changed by their work in theatre. The comic scenes were the funnier for being better controlled than in the later performances. Chen Yong, the director, allowed too easy a sense of comedy to take hold, whereas it has earlier been checked and deepened by a greater degree of alarm. These changes were perhaps due to two factors: the noticeable relaxation in Chinese cultural life (it was 1986) and, maybe more importantly, the fact that theatres were becoming entirely dependent on box-office receipts and in competition with television entertainment. But the production, as Elinor Shaffer noticed in her review in *Comparative Criticism* (ed. E. Shaffer, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 10, 1987), was hugely entertaining, also to the wider Hong Kong audience; and where Brecht is virtually or completely unknown, you are not going to win friends and influence people by playing according to another culture's idea of orthodoxy.

The other production with which Huang Zuolin was closely associated, which I wish to describe in order to account for the talk he gave in Singapore, was the highly innovative version of Macbeth done in the style of Kunju Chinese Opera. This is a more lyrical performance style than the better known Beijing opera and also much older since it developed in the city of Suzhou at exactly the time Shakespeare was writing his plays. The play was taken to the Edinburgh Festival in 1988 where it secured a reception given to only the most interesting productions. I saw it elsewhere and can understand why it had such strong reviews and also got ten minutes solid applause at its last Festival performance.

Huang Zuolin described for us the direction of his own work, why he had been interested in Brecht and where he saw a need for innovative methods, a way of evolving new performance styles as a result of not merely juxtaposing Western and East Asian plays but of fusing them, subjecting one set of cultural conventions to the scrutiny of procedures developed for another culture. By such methods, the plot of Macbeth is transformed into Kunju Opera and the effect on the performers is to re-examine the criteria to which they have grown accustomed. Likewise, the extraordinary Sichuan opera style performance three years ago of The Good Person of Szechwan produced a remarkable reaction among critics in China because of its radical methods. People said it was quite simply a new stage in the development of Chinese theatre. Though now somewhat in abeyance, these were important developments and they will bear fruit.

These events are significant within Chinese culture but they have also something useful to show those who live "outside" the Chinese cultural world. I believe this is true in two senses. Firstly, because of the general interest in developing new expressive and signifying codes for theatre, the whole movement towards interculturalism in theatre, which is an expression of the desire to escape from exhausted paradigms, and here there is an enormously rich repository of gestural forms in Chinese theatre which becomes more accessible as a result of these interfiliating experiments. Secondly, because these Chinese developments really do have something to tell us about Brecht's "own" theatre unless, that is, we are fixated by reductive readings.

Huang Zuolin is a theatre director and to appreciate his position and what it stands for in contemporary China, to understand what he is searching for, we need to know what he had to escape from. The problems he faced are, if I can express it like this, wider than any particular solutions he favours, but these solutions certainly extend beyond the particularities of his position. This position is determined by the cultural politics of China, by the fact that Western theatre was introduced to China in the form of Naturalism, but that much of what later passed for Naturalism in theatre--it is not "realist" in Brecht's sense--was a version of socialist realism and also strongly influenced by the externalising habits of the traditional theatre but without their sophisticated aesthetic codes. The "naturalist" Western-influenced spoken theatre was given the task of embodying ideologically appropriate themes, while the traditional opera remained unconnected with contemporary life or was banned when, in a very traditional fashion, it reached right into contemporary politics. The dilemma for creative directors and writers is apparent. On the one hand, spoken theatre may ultimately really only implement, not question what policy decides are appropriate topics and styles, and on the other hand, the richly stimulating repertoire of traditional forms is out of bounds for contemporary affairs.

And this is where Brecht comes in. For many years Huang Zuolin has played with various terms, not satisfied with any, to point towards what he seeks. All of them must be seen in that context, the need to slip away from the prescriptive perceptual grid by dislocating expectations, freeing the imagination and at the same time stimulating that sense of expressive and conceptual possibilities that lie dormant in the repressed traditional aesthetic forms. Speaking with Arthur Miller in 1980, he called it "intrinsic-ism." Later he changed it to "essentialism." Now he prefers "ideographics" which he contrasts with what he calls "photographics." The point of it all, and this is my interpretation, is not simply to get through to a hidden inner life, the private world of personal emotions, an essentialised subjectivity, but to show that culturally constructed subjectivity in order to obviate the minimalist instrumentalisation to which a pseudo-pragmatic ideology reduces it. In his talk, Huang Zuolin quoted Gorelik the stage designer who once spoke so perceptively of Brecht's New York production of The Mother: "There is an outer eye that observes, and there is an inner eye that sees."

The idea that Brecht's plays could in any way assist this search for the perspectives of the inner eye or reveal anything about the stubborn uncertainties of subjectivity apparently seems absurd to a generation of German critics and theatre directors now in their forties and confident of their views. In Singapore they were represented by Markwart Müller-Elmau of the Ulm Theatre who had been invited to direct a production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle. He essentially reiterated Peter von Becker's arguments at the 1986 Hong Kong Symposium that Brecht's plays were perhaps--he was not yet certain--suited to countries of the Third World on account of their fairy-tale simplifications of reality but for the same reason they could no longer really be taken seriously in Europe. This director is fixated by the father-figure Brecht and still visibly trembling under the anxiety of influence. He could not talk about Brecht without mental perspiration, believing his was an "ideological puppet-theatre" which put "simplicity on stage" and whose "typified characters" particularly appealed to Asian actors and direc-

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tors because "what they expect first of all are clear unambiguous statements that do not require reading between the lines".

I found Müller-Elmau personable but his opinions appalling. They represent exactly that narrow-band, reductive reading of Brecht. The final act of Brecht's plays, what he calls, following Karasek, their Finalität, is supposed to take place outside the theatre. This means that the plays in the theatre are incomplete and "not supposed to reach their goal within themselves." In Brecht's plays, "the action on stage is meant to serve a political purpose which lies beyond the stage, i.e., to change the perception and attitude of the audience, leading to eventual social changes and the redress of grievances." Because of this, the only possible judgement on Brecht's plays must be based on agreement with the political aims it is supposed their author once envisaged. In other words, we are back to presumed authorial intention and trapped in the very time-warp he wishes to escape. Denying the efficacy of his work, these critics and directors are still pathologically fixated by Brecht. They are trapped in what they take for his readings. Added gratuitous insult to critical injury, he then crushes the complexity of the Third World with an unthinking cliché about an intrinsic need for simplicities. To me this represents that parochiality or perhaps cultural self-centeredness which Brecht so vigorously resisted.

Dr. Krishen Jit of the History Department in the University of Malaya presented an informative documentary account: "Brecht in Southeast Asia," by which he meant Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. Nothing about Vietnam. But his information on Indonesia was the first account I have heard and perhaps we can persuade him to let us publish his paper in Communications. His observations and critical evaluations were always interesting.

Given the disparity of these positions--my own paper follows this short account--there were lively discussions, ably shaped by Kuo Paokun. He concluded that theatre people in Singapore needed such argument and vigorous disagreements to focus the issues of cultural life.

[Editor's note: see "Articles" for the text of Prof. Tatlow's presentation.]

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Jornada Bertolt Brecht:  
"Bertolt Brecht y el Teatro en el Siglo X X"

FECHA: 7 y 8 de Abril 1990  
LUGAR: Centro de Convenciones Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada  
HORA: 02:30 - 04:30 p.m.  
MODERADOR: Carlos José Reyes

PRIMERA SESION:

PRESENTACION DE LA JORNADA POR EL MODERADOR CARLOS JOSE REYES

PONENCIAS DE:

- Jochen Ziller, Director del Berliner Ensemble;  
TEMA: "Brecht, El Berliner y el Teatro del Siglo X X"
- Adolf Sapiro, Director del Teatro Satiricon de Moscú  
TEMA: "Brecht y Los Jóvenes"
- Enrique Buenaventura, Director del Teatro Experimental de Cali  
TEMA: "Brecht y el Nuevo Teatro Columbiano" [see "Articles" for the text of this paper]
- Cipe Lincowski, Primera Actriz Argentina  
TEMA: "Madre Coraje y el Poema Epico"

DIALOGOS Y DISCUSIONES SOBRE LAS PONENCIAS

SEGUNDA SESION:

PONENCIAS DE:

- Juan Antonio Hormigón, Presidente de la Asociación de Directores de España  
TEMA: "Teatro Epico y Esperpento"
- Santiago García, Director del Teatro La Candelaria de Bogotá  
TEMA: "Evolución de las Técnicas Brechtianas en la dirección Teatral"
- Gilberto Martínez, Director del Teatro el Tinglado de Medellín  
TEMA: "La Búsqueda de un Teatro Dialéctico"
- Jaime Barbini, Director y actor colombiano  
TEMA: "La Duda pedagógica en Bertolt Brecht"
- Eduardo Gómez, Professor universitario, ensayista y crítico teatral  
TEMA: "La reflexión teórica frente a la Praxis Artística en la obra de Bertolt Brecht"

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Actors Theatre of Louisville "Classics in Context" Festival:  
WEIMAR AND YOUTH: DILEMMAS ONSTAGE AND IN SOCIETY  
October 1991, Louisville, Kentucky USA

Tentative Program Highlights:

- PLAYS: Girls in Uniform by Christa Winsloe; Pains of Youth by Ferdinand Bruckner; Ithaka by Gottfried Benn
- LECTURES: "The New Playwrights of Germany" by John Willett; "Directors of Weimar Theatre" by Heinz-Uwe Haus; "Weimar and Youth" by Peter Loewenberg
- COLLOQUIA: "Brecht in the East/Brecht in the West" with Carl Weber, Michael Feingold, Marion Kagerer, and Holger Teschke  
"Theatre and Politics in the Weimar Republic" with Lynn Sobieski, Peter Jelavich, and John Rouse

For more information, contact Mr. Michael Dixon, Literary Manager, Actors Theatre of Louisville, 316 W. Main Street, Louisville, KY 40202-4218 USA



"Brecht's Position in World Theatre"  
(Paper presented at Brecht Seminar, Singapore, December 1989)

Antony Tatlow, University of Hong Kong

I have been asked to speak on this topic. I assume we want to talk about something that is changing. To talk about it at all, we will have to decide what we mean by "world theatre," and what we mean by "Brecht," what that name stands for and what we want to do with it.

I want to take the phrase "world theatre" seriously and therefore as an unknown category, something that has to be approached in anthropological terms, whereby cultures visualize, re-present and perform the symbolic systems by which they live. Reading such performances is then only possible as a form of anthropological questioning; it can only make sense of the visible surface if it constantly re-examines what underlies and structures appearances. Appearance is always mysterious, and especially when it seems most representational. "It takes an unusual mind," A.N. Whitehead once observed, "to make an analysis of the obvious." Brecht had such a mind. But some of the fundamental differences between cultures are gradually collapsing, for they are no longer independent of each other. Therefore the symbolic systems and the aesthetic forms that embody them are deeply affected by the encounters between cultures. We need a new kind of anthropology to deal with this, one that perceives the points of contact rather than focusing on what are presumed to be the differences.

So before we can locate Brecht's position in relation to world theatre, we have to uncover the pre-suppositions that construct both terms. We have to realize that, in talking about an entity called "Brecht," we are talking about an interpretive construct, about an authorial metaphor, about a mask. To speak with Roland Barthes, we are always talking about the text we have derived from the work. This text constantly tends to displace and to replace that work. Therefore the text must be decontextualized, especially in periods of rapid change, and if the work cannot be re-contextualized, then it is time to turn to something else.

But before I look at how Brecht is still consistently constructed as fixed and predictable text, let me say something about his place in world theatre in a more conventional sense.

Leaving aside all questions of interpretation and just looking at the dramaturgical and philological evidence in forensic and quantitative terms, the conclusion is inescapable: Brecht is unique.

There were dramatists who wrote more plays: Lope de Vega, for example, who also bedded with more women, and I mean that as a statistical fact, not a moral or athletic claim. There were dramatists who more consistently wrote better plays: Shakespeare, for example who, like Brecht, was a practical man of the theatre, incorporating, if it suited him, his sources verbatim into the scripts of his plays. There were dramatists, like Molière, whose lives were more dominated by the business of theatre.

But there is nobody quite like Brecht, never mind his other creative activities, in respect of the range and scope of formal experimentation which he introduced to theatre. That may sound rather abstract, but it has plenty of very specific consequences: upon the way we think about theatre, upon our expectations, and of course upon countless dramatists and directors all over the world. You could fill a lecture with a list of these effects. I'm not going to. The reason why he was able to make such an impact on the theatre was because he disliked so much what passed for theatre when he began to take notice. He looked anywhere else for ways of changing it: from the Augsburg fairgrounds to Beijing opera.

Anyway, formal experimentation is the surest sign that something is really changing, a much better indication than anything on the level of "content" in the linguistic code. Many modern Western dramatists developed innovative forms. We think of Strindberg, Pirandello, Beckett, not so much of Ibsen, in spite of his variety of dramatic styles. But they tended to explore the new possibilities, whereas Brecht kept devising different ones.

You may want me to explain what I mean, since Brecht is invariably associated with one unvarying method. This is a fundamental misunderstanding and I will discuss it later. His innovations came about as a result of the extraordinary combination of personal abilities and cultural opportunities. Let me just sketch out a few of these capacities, before turning to the controversial questions.

First of all, he was a great poet and continuously inventing new ways of speaking and finding surprising things to say. Secondly, he was an extraordinary performer, if we are to trust the descriptions of those who saw him: not merely unusually good but utterly different. A "better actor than the actors," said Rudolf Frank of his interventions during the rehearsals for the 1925 path-breaking production of The Life of Edward II of England, in which he directed the most celebrated actors of his day. According to the dramatist Carl Zuckmayer, he was able to "shake you to the core of your being." "The man," said another dramatist, Marieluise Fleisser, "is pure dynamite." He was also, unquestionably, a great director, totally unconventional, creating havoc among the professionals, always looking for ways of changing perception, for new ways of seeing, meticulously, even obsessively careful about getting it right but never fixated by detailed preconceptions. In the Berliner Ensemble somebody objected that he wasn't employing alienation effects. "I'm not directing an alienation effect," growled Brecht in reply, "I'm directing a play."

Finally, he wrote a number of powerful plays. Nearly everyone approaches them through the innovative dramatic theories he developed and these have been the cause of endless and continuing misunderstandings. But when the alignments are right, the plays have produced unusual responses. Take George Steiner, for example, who is not necessarily predisposed towards Brecht. To find a play to measure up to Mother Courage, he wrote, you must go back to the Greeks.

Brecht disliked the theatre of his day: not so much the plays themselves as the social institution and the way it internalized and reproduced socially authorized values in the interpretations of those plays. He crafted his own plays to attack those values and destroy the forms which embodied

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them. No wonder he made enemies. You know that he took suggestions for changing thought and reorganizing performance from all over the place and that is why, in turn, his plays have been performed virtually everywhere, that is to say in vastly different social and cultural circumstances. I want to look at some current presuppositions about these interrelationships.

But before getting to detailed discriminations, let's recall what has been happening in the world. I am referring to the gradual belief, developed over several years, in the need for paradigm changes and to the recent political changes in Eastern Europe. Those who have followed the first will not be surprised by the second, except for the rapidity with which they have occurred.

The "Brecht" who is affixed to an exhausted paradigm is as dead as a dodo. For some people that is the end of the matter. They could not be more wrong. They have equated his work with the meanings in terms of which it was once socially authorized, they have confused the work with its interpretations with the texts that have been read out of it. This happened, in part, because Brecht was institutionalized and because his legal heirs and their bailiffs, the Suhrkamp publishing house, had the power to impose and sustain this instrumentalisation by physically preventing any non-canonical reading of his texts in the theatre. The ban was imperfect, of course, but worked well enough within the German and English-speaking world, within Europe that is, and it forbade any kind of experimentation with the great experimenter. These are well-known facts and what interests me is the internalization by others of their claim to control a one-dimensional reading. Let me set against this copyright kiss-of-death one interesting and contemporary counter-voice, that of Ute Lemper, a 25-year-old singer and performer who is being compared, alas, with Marlene Dietrich. The Wall is crumbling, she said at the end of November, and "I guess there will be a big Brecht revolution now--new kinds of interpretation--in East Germany ... they have been treating Brecht as a status symbol ... they were much too dogmatic. I think that will change now" (International Herald Tribune, 21.11.89).

Let's listen to another voice which seemed to argue that Brecht's plays needed to be freed from these absurd restrictions so that they might speak again. This narrative will also lead us to question what we mean by "world theatre" and what we mean by "Brecht."

Three years ago we held an interesting Symposium in Hong Kong. We were able to present an unusual range of productions of plays by Brecht. In this respect it was certainly unique. There were performances by student activists and by world-class actors and they came in seven different languages. For the sake of my statistics Cantonese and Putonghua are different languages. The English National Theatre wanted to, and would have, come but their administrators asked for twice as much money at the last moment. We did not really miss them. One performer used English, everything else came from Asian cultures.

Some Western critics showed they had made the journey for the sake of the shopping. One comment I heard during the interval of the Haiyuza Theatre's The Good Person of Sichuan makes the point clearly enough: "This could be shown in Europe." Others were, of course, deeply impressed, indeed at times riveted by what they saw. But what I want to tell you about is the

considered response to the Symposium by a professional German drama critic and writer who would certainly consider himself an expert on the topics that concern us. Writing in the February 1987 number of the German theatre magazine Theater heute, Peter von Becker argued that Brecht could now really only be played in Asia.

What had he seen? The subtitle of his article--"The liberated Brecht: You can see him in Asia"--seemed to welcome the lack of the restrictions to which I have already referred. Perhaps it implied that this freedom to experiment and the remarkable opportunities of the elaborately stylized visual codes of Asian theatre might have involved a radical interpretive move which would have enabled us all to reposition the plays and rethink the issues, to get through to something contentious in the work that had been buried by lethargy. But the teasing title above it--"Where fairy tales come true again"--implied a different and altogether simpler message. Taken together, they merely constituted a more sophisticated form of condescension than my earlier, rather bluff example, but one that now cut both ways: towards East Asian theatre and towards Brecht. Finally, von Becker was arguing, the fairy tale world of Brecht's plays comes alive again because they still, and only, have explanatory force in Asian societies. There the social issues are stark and clear-cut. That is why Brecht's plays are suited to them.

The structure of Philippine society is essentially feudal, if we look behind the parademocratic facade. So, finally, The Caucasian Chalk Circle finds its audience. What could be clearer than taking, as they did in Mindanao, the child of the governess from among the kids in the circle around them as they were performing. Soldiers in the audience were holding machine-guns. The drunken landlord in Puntila and the immediacy of his interventions fits perfectly into Bengali society, but he is now a fairy tale figure in Germany and therefore out of date.

Let's formulate a conclusion for this whole argument by saying that for people who read and think like this, Brecht no longer has a role in World Theatre, but he does have one to play in Third World Theatre.

I want to leave out the political arguments about the relationship between the First and Third World and move straight to the interconnected aesthetic and epistemological questions, by which I mean to the question of how meaning is constructed in the theatre. What makes Brecht so stimulating a dramatist is the remarkable potential in his work for developing such intercommunications.

Von Becker's reading is doubly reductive. The East Asian aesthetic and its choreography of externalizing gesture is turned into what is from the Western perspective a perhaps interestingly defamiliarising but essentially folkloristic embroidery around the structure of the play's established narrative plot. The simplifications of Brecht's plots come alive again, according to this reading, because they are suited to those simpler societies and are also given a new lease on life by the delights of the style.

Let me now look at the reductions this type of reading performs on Brecht's plays and on the innovative methods he had begun to develop. Then we can consider how those methods he had begun might contain impulses for, even as they evolved out of suggestions received from world theatre.

These reductions take place on four levels which are interconnected: on the level of dramaturgy, psychology, epistemology and politics. The simplified reading of the dramaturgy produces a reductive simplification of the structures of psychology and both are caused by an inadequate epistemology and a woefully blinkered and repressive politics. I want to show how the reductive readings of these levels interact before offering answers to counteract them and open up the issues again.

If you have followed the arguments about Brecht's theories and his theatre over the last ten or fifteen years, you will recognize what is afoot. I don't want to follow the stages of those arguments, but simply to abstract their essential positions and conclusions. A basic assumption is that Brecht's theatre, far from constituting a model that might be adequate to the complexities of experience and hence worthy of a place in world theatre, in fact is a composition of simplifications. The ultimate simplification, on which it finally rests, is the Marxist model of socio-economic processes. Brecht's dramaturgy and plots simplify this further by reducing them to memorable representations of moments of choice. But the characters who face these choices are accorded little or no personal or individual space. In this view, they are primarily or even wholly political subjects. Their individuality is irrelevant. A man is a man. These plays are held to demonstrate without remainder the dimensions of a pre-determined political space. So when the politics fall apart, so do the plays.

This reading of Brecht's dramaturgy as a mechanical extension of a discredited politics also assumes an essentially clarified, one-dimensional aesthetics of acting. These may make some interesting demands on the actor's craft but on their own level merely represent another facet of the same problem. The actor and actress stand separate from and outside the character, explaining to the audience by means of an unambiguous technique all that needs to be known about that character. They can do this because they act as agents of a higher truth. They are demonstrators in the social laboratory. We are on the edge of social engineering in the theatre of the scientific age. For a while, in the 1930s, Brecht used a rhetoric of this kind but backed out of it fairly smartly when he began to understand what other people were doing with it, insisting he did not mean scientific theatre, that is positivism in the theatre, but theatre for the scientific age.

This position has to be situated. Brecht adopted it for good reasons, needing to counteract an emotionalist, sentimental and damagingly irrational theatre and a superficial reading of the classics in terms of an unchanging essentialist humanism which depoliticised those plays. To put it very simply, the argument ran like this: man is good, therefore Hitler must be good. He then abandoned or modified that position for equally good reasons, but my point here is that it has in fact been widely revived as a means of equating the whole of his theatre with its simplifications.

And this leads through to the current widespread supposition that Brecht's plays do not address the problematic of subjectivity, that they contain no divisions within themselves, that the characters and plots are one-dimensional, in other words that they cannot be re-read. According to such views, Brecht's remarkable, rational, anti-Aristotelian, epic theatre paid for its valuable and innovative clarity by sacrificing all depth. In

the Third World, however, subjectivity is a luxury, and so of course they can and must play Brecht, and the Goethe Institute should do all it can to help.

If you find this something of a caricature, I assure you it is what people in influential positions actually think. Of course they know that Brecht somehow responded, for example, to East Asian theatre, but they assume he misunderstood it, simply taking suggestions which he developed for his own very different ends: that absolute rational clarity of demonstrable social gesture.

I want to argue now that Brecht's position in a developing world theatre depends upon the forms which he evolved as a consequence of his encounter with East Asian theatre. He was not interested in East Asian theatrical practice because it might help him simplify his plots or representations of human character; he was interested in it because here, and as he once said only here, could he find suggestions that enabled sufficiently complex representations (Gesammelte Werke, 1967, Vol. 15, 202ff.). He admired it on account of the complexity and multidimensionality of its aesthetic language and because his own theatrical ideas were complex and multi-dimensional.

This brings us to the question of representing the psychological. It is a widely held belief that Brecht was not interested in the psychology of his characters. Let me stay with this authorial metaphor, Brecht, as a way of referring to the strategies and possible readings of his plays. After all, he said himself that he was not interested in psychology. With that warning in mind, and given the enormous authority Brecht held because of the force and originality of his writing and his continuous search for theoretical underpinnings, people have always thought that you have above all to watch what his characters do, or what is done to them, and not so much what they think or feel. Emotions are secondary, if not irrelevant.

It is true that in one sense Brecht consistently underplayed the role of the emotions in his theatre, since he was reacting against earlier and popular emotionalist styles, both naturalist and expressionist or idealist as well as the whole emotional hard-sell of the theatre. He also reacted strongly against the calculated irrationalism and emotional appeals of the National Socialists. But when one looks dispassionately at all the evidence, the effect of marginalising, or, rather, let's say: decentering the emotions in Brecht's theatre is not that they become less important, but rather that their force is immeasurably increased.

And this comes about not just because of the power of his writing, because of the linguistic code or the logic of his plots, but also, and perhaps largely, because of the theatrical means he employed to embody them, because, therefore, of the dramaturgic and visual or proxemic codes, because of the distribution of voices and the structural interrelationship of the codes which are not independent of each other. Brecht spoke in 1930 of a need for a "separation of the elements," meaning the various theatrical codes, and Einstein, in 1928, of the importance of a "monism of ensemble." Though apparently moving in different directions, they meant the same interplay or equality of opportunity for the codes, and both programmatic statements resulted from encounters with Japanese acting.

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But what do we mean when we speak of the emotions, their provocation or concealment, their representation? Brecht's rejection of psychology needs situating, for it was only a refusal of ego-psychology, not a refusal of the Unconscious. In fact, I cannot think of another modern dramatist who has more consistently or with greater inventiveness found so many ways of making visible the force of the Unconscious in the lives of his characters, and I would include Strindberg in this comparison. This is a distinguishing mark of Brecht's theatre.

Ego-psychology assumes that the trauma of the individual psyche can be cured by adjusting it to the social and experimental pressures and realities from which it has suffered. This cure takes the form of a correction of an imbalance. This can be done within the theoretical frame of a Freudian Oedipal triangulation, which you can either take literally or as a metaphor for problematic but necessary socialization, or it can be seen as the correction of an excessive expectation or demand upon one's surroundings. The cure is always the disappearance of the desire or demand. And it is of course riven with the problem of defining the normal and the abnormal. If society is mad, then deviation is a form of sanity. These are familiar topics.

It is easy to see how this assumption of normalization operates well within a naturalist aesthetic, even where the audience sympathizes with the resisting character. The frame of normality remains unquestioned. But Brecht's turning away from naturalist and ego-psychology, and his determination to inhibit simple audience empathy with the character whilst avoiding all the hard questions, this apparent de-psychologisation of the subject, does not have the effect of de-problematising that subject. This is what so many people now believe, but the reverse is true. In fact, de-psychologisation re-problematises the subject, since it creates the conditions within which, and only within which, it is possible to formulate an adequate theory of subjectivity and to make it plain upon the stage. When this is accomplished, the audience is not confirmed in its knowledge and possession of a certain truth, but must confront the problematic nature of its own identity. And that is the source of the energy in Brechtian theatre, no matter what fashions in interpretation may have told us.

That is the strand that runs through the whole of his work. In order to get at and uncover the emotions, you must first destroy an emotionalizing style. This assumption is consistently misunderstood, and by some of the most familiar critics. Brecht's plays do not simply represent the emotions, but constitute an enquiry into their psychology.

Let's take an example. In The Threepenny Opera, as Esslin points out, music functions differently from the way it does within a musical. There the overflow of emotion simply has to burst into song, the music underscores the feelings of the character and so there is this seamless transition. In Brecht's plays, the music tends to undercut "the feelings" and in technical terms it is made to stand out. The differences are all stressed, not the similarities. But of course this device does not destroy, as Esslin says, "the illusion of reality." Or, if it does then that is only the first step, where "reality" is the easy surface assumption about the provenance of those emotions. The next and essential step, the reason why this is all taking place, is to deepen our understanding of the complexity of reality. Like

Buddhist drama, Brecht is showing the "reality of illusion." The Threepenny Opera is a Buddhist musical.

The relation between the words and the music, between the different codes, opens up these other dimensions, just as the actors sing in and out of character. The "Pirate Jenny Song," in which she dreams of taking over the town and executing the men, uncovers the force of her unconscious emotions but also why she needs these fantasies. The actress does not "identify" with the character but shows the whole of the character, what is hidden from herself. There is a crucial difference between "quoting" to explain, the narrow-band behavioural lesson, and distancing by means of several codes in order to uncover what is otherwise hidden and show its force. A vital shift in perspective takes place, from easy indulgence to the more difficult possibility of beginning to understand.

Brecht developed a so-called "gestural" style where everything had to be justified. That is why he needed ten months to rehearse The Caucasian Chalk Circle. And that is why he was interested in East Asian techniques, not in order to imitate the style or copy the gestures but to emulate the discipline and energy. He disliked intensely the gestural inconsequentiality of much European theatre. If you slow things down, if you dare to slow things down, you must pay attention to every single detail.

In 1929, when he was beginning to develop presentational styles, Brecht was asked what acting should be like. He replied:

"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 which is pre-condition for understanding." (17.2.29)

It sounds more like Artaud, doesn't it? Sometimes that shock is envisaged in cognitive terms, at other times it is quite visceral. But it always requires vivid externalization of what is otherwise buried and repressed. What is he doing twenty years later? Collecting horses' heads from the slaughterhouse, boiling them in the kitchen and setting the skulls up on poles around the stage for his first production after returning from Europe, Antigone.

Let me take just one more example from his late work of cognitive shock provoked by the representation of horror and of the effects this can create. It has got a connection with Singapore. When Mother Courage hears the shots that kill her son Swiss Cheese, she threw back her head in one long silent scream. Brecht had a photograph, taken here, of a Chinese woman lamenting the death of her child during a Japanese attack and Helene Weigel transferred her gesture to the stage in the famous Berlin production. For several seconds the action of the play comes to a complete halt. It is a moment of arrestation, the equivalent of an externalizing gesture in Asian theatre. We need time to appreciate the complexity of the gesture, to realize that we are simultaneously being shown the pain and horror over her own complicity in that death and in addition the pain and horror at the necessity, the social causes of that complicity.



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At this moment of understanding we are both inside and outside the character. What therefore happens is not so much that the character is essentialised, so that we are enabled to identify with her, sharing her burden, as that the interrelationship is revealed, objectified, between the structuration of the character and our own construction of it. This will not weaken but can only compound the horror which we feel.

At such moments we realize that our very self, our subjectivity, our personality is both inside and outside us, that where we think to govern ourselves, we are the expression of forces beyond our individual control. We realize that we are simultaneously self and not-self, the object of structuration which we have not calculated and which we do not even see until it is perhaps too late. Some such experience lies behind the most powerful effects in theatre and Brecht's plays are full of them.

The point is to outwit the defense mechanism in the spectator who is anxious to deny that anything is wrong. The simplification of Brecht's dramaturgy is of course one long repressive reading. Brecht therefore did not exclude fear and pity--the Aristotelian criteria he is supposed to have rejected--but rather included the opportunity for understanding their function and origin. For example, he expressly said the spectator should feel pity for Mother Courage (9.794). And if you are not literally or metaphorically moved to tears by the play, you probably need to see your psychoanalyst. With the figure of Kattrin in the scene where she is shot on the roof, Brecht wanted to "outwit convention" and reach "a different stratum of fear" (Schriften zum Theater, Vol. 6, 124), one which the audience otherwise represses. It was a question of breaking through what he called the ritualisation of despair ("Zeremoniencharakter der Verzweiflung") in the response of the peasant woman, so as to get at the fear lodged in a different stratum of the psyche.

Let me give a kind of summary of all of this: distancing brings things closer, separating enables things to come together, non-impersonation uncovers hidden layers of personality, control intensifies the emotions, coolness engenders heat, slowing things down actually speeds them up.

What do those four reductions now look like: the political, epistemological, dramaturgical and psychological? Let's take them in reverse order.

The psychological reduction takes no account of the means employed throughout Brecht's theatre for revealing the force of the unconscious. I have given very few examples but they can be found everywhere and are the reason for the innovative aesthetic methods.

The dramaturgical reduction takes little account of the way Brecht crafted his dramas by breaking out of the constrictions imposed by straightforward representationalism. The techniques used to distribute voices in, for example, The Caucasian Chalk Circle or The Good Person of Sichuan enable an extraordinary intensity of inference and make nonsense of the reductive binary dramaturgy to which these plays are so often sacrificed: The nice or nasty real person hidden behind the nasty or nice exterior. In reality, and like Shen Te and Shui Ta, they are riven with each other's possibilities. The director and actors have to find the style that will show these abrasive complexities, but first you have to see the point. As for Brecht himself,

well, he wasn't advocating any sort of fixed dramaturgy. He was always looking to the ones "that are still to be invented" (16.695).

The epistemological reduction is also based upon a simple binary model: behind the bourgeois dissemblance lies a positive Marxist assertion. Of course such opinions lead through to practical Stalinism. But they are excruciatingly naive and quite unsustainable if we look at all the evidence. Here, as so often, the problem lies in literal readings which abstract texts out of the circumstances under which they were written. Polemic has to be precise and there isn't time. But Brecht's Marxism was undogmatic and open-ended. It was subject to refutation. Me-ti, the persona based on the Chinese philosopher, "was against constructing models of the world that were too complete" (12.463). This sense of open-endedness was what connected him with important aspects of Chinese thought, with the Taoist or Zen refusal to entertain definitive categories. It is also what links such thinking with modern Western theories of process. Brecht's epistemological and aesthetic ideas are completely congruent with such developments. They anticipate them. The evidence is overwhelming.

As for the political reduction, here, too he formulated the politically unthinkable:

"My plays and theories are applicable in bourgeois and capitalist societies, in socialist, communist and classless societies and in all subsequent social formations."

(Quoted by Reinhold Grimm in "Der katholische Einstein: Brechts Dramen- und Theatertheorie," Brechts Dramen: Neue Interpretationen, ed. Walter Hinderer, Stuttgart 1984, 30. I also heard it from Werner Hecht.)

He was not going to be pinned down, because reality can't be pinned down. I attended a conference in February 1988 in Berlin. An academic was protesting about a criticism of his paper: "Of course I can say reality is a danger." Gerd Irrlitz, Professor of Philosophy at the Humboldt University, jumped up: "Reality is not just a danger, it's the main danger."

From East Asian externalizing art Brecht received many suggestions for distancing events and for devising means to exhibit their transient intensity. But he was not looking into any traditional, stable past, but for forms that would encompass a new interrelational anthropology, adequate to the contemporary complexities in the social construction of character. What Brecht offered were not recipes, but innovative methods of enquiry. What needs to be emulated is his attitude toward innovation and his concern with the interrelationships between phenomena. And I suspect that "world theatre" is not pre-given but something that must be continuously re-invented.

CARRIERS OF KNOWLEDGE:  
Brecht and the Poets of the 21st Century

Lane Jennings, Columbia, Maryland

[Prologue]

Once I thought: in distant times to come  
When the houses I lived in have fallen down  
And the ships that carried me have rusted  
My name will still be mentioned  
Among others.

...

But today  
I can live with the fact that I  
Will be forgotten.  
When there's plenty of bread, why ask  
About the baker?  
Why praise snows that have melted away  
When new blizzards are looming?  
Who cares  
About the past, when they have  
A future?

Why should my name  
Be mentioned?

--Bertolt Brecht

"Warum soll mein Name genannt werden?"  
(GW 9, 561-562), translation by L.J.

## I. "Why Should My Name Be Mentioned?"

Bertolt Brecht was a poet before he became a playwright, and he continued writing poems from early adolescence until his death at the age of 58. Critics, scholars, and the German reading public all acknowledge him as one of the finest poets in the language. But here in America his poems remain little known.

For too long America has treated Brecht less as a writer than as a cause. His literary reputation here even now rests far more on the comments of learned critics than on the untutored reactions of readers and theatre-goers.

In the case of the poems, this situation has been made worse by simple ignorance. Except for H.R. Hays' 1947 selection of fifty (mostly political) poems, and Eric Bentley's translation of the Hauspostille in 1966, very few Brecht poems were available in English until twenty years after the poet's death.

Then, in 1976, Methuen published a hefty, 628-page anthology edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. (1) Containing nearly five-hundred translated poems, with extensive notes, plus selections from Brecht's own theoretical writings on poetry, this work is an admirable source of Brecht lore and a boon to any non-German-speaking literary scholar. But are scholars the only American audience for Brecht's poetry?

Potentially, a much broader public exists here among the millions who read poems for pleasure, attend poetry readings, and write poems themselves. To reach these millions however, Brecht's poems must be presented in new ways, including new non-scholarly translations and adaptations that specifically address different segments of America's fragmented literary marketplace.

This paper sets out to explain why Brecht's poems--and his example as a poet--are especially valuable today, and to suggest how readers and writers in 21st century America could benefit from easier access to Brecht's poetry.

## II. Three Enlightened Ones: Brecht, Graves, and Ginsberg

In the version of this paper delivered at the Modern Language Association Convention in December 1985, I compared Brecht the poet with two writers better known in the English-speaking world: American Allen Ginsberg and Englishman Robert Graves.

All three were "outsiders" who rejected the current literary Establishments in their countries. Yet ultimately, all three lived to enjoy the critical acclaim and public honors only such Establishments can bestow. Each has been widely anthologized, and seen large volumes of his "collected poems" published by a major press. Each has been the subject of numerous articles, interviews, dissertations, learned papers, books, reminiscences and bibliographies. Archives to collect their manuscripts and pursue research into the minutiae of their lives and works have been established for Ginsberg at Columbia University, for Graves at the University of Southern Illinois, and for Brecht by the East Berlin Academy of the Arts.

In short, all three are now acknowledged as "major" writers. Consequently, all stand in imminent danger of being venerated instead of read by future generations. As Graves once put it: (2)

"... the punishment is fixed:  
To be found fully ancestral,  
To be cast in bronze for a city square,  
To dribble green in times of rain  
and stain the pedestal ..."

These are all fine poets, who deserve a better fate. But I felt in 1985 (and still feel) that it is Brecht for whom canonization constitutes the greatest tragedy.

Graves looked continually to the past, scorning whatever of contemporary culture failed to meet his tests for truth and beauty. Ginsberg appears

wholly committed to the present, enshrining spontaneity as the highest art. (3) Brecht alone kept one eye always on the future. It would be sad indeed if "die Nachgeborenen"--those common readers of a brighter day, whom he counted on to justify his work--should never know him.

### III. The Carrier of Knowledge--Brecht as a Role Model

Brecht's poems, and his life, offer valuable--if somewhat unorthodox--lessons for future writers. Here are five:

1. Build on the past
2. Be memorable
3. Be heard
4. Keep writing
5. Choose yourself a future

#### LESSON 1: BUILD ON THE PAST Tradition in Its Place

First as a rebellious adolescent, and later as a convinced Marxist, Brecht enjoyed standing bourgeois culture on its head. He wrote savage parodies of Christian hymns and sentimental songs, and he delighted in exposing unwarranted assumptions in the thinking of "great minds" from every age. But these attacks could never have been mounted (much less have achieved their aim) if Brecht had not possessed a fair knowledge of his chosen targets.

The fact that so much of Brecht's exposure to ancient and foreign literatures came at second or third hand, through sometimes unreliable German and English translations, matters little from the standpoint of a practicing poet. Scholars may rightly point out how Brecht missed or confused certain information in his sources. But his aim was not to reproduce, but to recreate--to go beyond his sources to question their logic and explore their relevance to contemporary personal and social concerns.

To reject the classics out of hand is as foolish as never to escape their shadow. A better course is to study past works without losing the courage to criticize them, or the confidence to set up new standards of one's own. By his example, Brecht teaches future poets to use tradition as a toolbox, not as a blueprint.

#### LESSON 2: BE MEMORABLE Write to Be Thought About--Not Wondered At

Many of Brecht's poems contain references that require some "decoding" to be fully appreciated in their original context by readers today. But few if any are totally "private" in their focus, and none, to my knowledge, is willfully obscure. Even his dreamlike "Visionen" [see note on this cycle in the Brecht Poems/Willetts-Manheim, 510-511] are truly "things to SEE"--open allegories, not private labyrinths built of fragments gleaned from far and wide like T.S. Eliot's "Wasteland" or Ezra Pound's "Cantos."

Brecht's lesson for aspiring poets here is: write poems that draw readers by what they clearly DO contain--not merely leave them guessing what MIGHT be concealed there. We may be intrigued for a time by words and images we don't understand. But whatever remains indecipherable eventually grows boring. Brecht gives his poems a better chance to be remembered by making them accessible--or "user-friendly," if you prefer.

While he uses clear words, Brecht maintains excitement in his poems by creating tension between the expected and the surprising. And much of this excitement survives translation, because its basis is conceptual, not linguistic. Constructing beautifully modulated sequences of syllables is another way to create appealing verse--a way favored by poets like Dylan Thomas, or, to take a German example, Stefan George. Brecht uses such sensuous-sounding lines sparingly; but when he does, their beauty is often made all the more powerful and haunting by an ironic or even a shocking contrast within or around them.

For example, "Erinnerung an die Marie A.," perhaps Brecht's most romantic poem, is built upon the incongruous notion of a true love whose name the poet can't recall. Or take the duet "Die Liebenden" from the opera Mahagonny. This charming evocation of loving birds in flight, made still more lyrical by its suggestion of the wind-driven lovers Paolo and Francesca from Dante's Inferno, is sung by a whore and her customer in a bordello.

Brecht's lesson: the mix of beauty and roughness is more memorable (and makes a stronger poem) than the merely beautiful or the wholly distasteful. Clearly, Brecht understood (as Stephen Sondheim does today) the theatrical truth that mixtures of opposites reflect real life experience, and so convey emotion more convincingly than word-smithing alone could ever do.

### LESSON 3: BE HEARD

#### Write for the Ear: and Reach the Mind

Whether or not he always read his lines aloud as he wrote them, Brecht invariably wrote for the ear, not the eye. There are no shaped poems or typographical designs among the roughly 1,700 poems and fragments in his collected works. (4) His lines and stanzas break where a speaker would naturally pause, or else break to emphasize a word or suggest a relationship--never merely to make an attractive display on the page. In this, too, Brecht sets a fine example for poets to follow.

The medium of print is really a compromise at best--a way to make speech visible over distances of space and time. But it is the speech, not its visibility, that matters more. For a poem is a construction built of words, not pure shape (as in graphic art) or pure sound (as in music). Speech that has no voice--no distinctive melody or rhythm--is easily forgotten. And this can be a weakness. Printed pages can be lost or destroyed. But one line or an entire epic can lie safe in memory for years, and be smuggled easily across guarded borders.

Though he could use "rhymed verse in irregular rhythms" masterfully, Brecht never ceased to develop his skills at writing in regular meter and strict rhyme--particularly for songs. He wrote simple melodies to accompany many of his early poems, and throughout his life he always preferred to work

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closely with composers, and not merely leave his words in their hands. His concern in this regard should remind future poets that poetry's origins lie in song, not in painting or sculpture. As long as the object of word-art is to communicate, to be understood and remembered, then learning to work with music--or, better still, to make music accent a text rather than submerge it--should remain a valued part of poet lore.

Already in the early 20th century, when Brecht began to write, and still more as we approach the 21st, writing to be heard implies finding ways to amplify the solo voice--to collaborate with specialists in many areas, and to work with new technologies.

Whether or not the cycle of "Städtebewohner" poems was ever actually intended for release on phonographic records, as Brecht once claimed (5), the idea itself shows that, as early as the 1920s, the poet was intrigued by the possibilities of audio publishing. He did apparently make wax recordings of some of the "Deutsche Satiren" in 1937 for clandestine radio broadcast into Nazi Germany. (6)

Brecht also had a career-long interest in writing for the cinema. (7) All this at least suggests that he was prepared--even eager--to employ the new technologies of his time to achieve his aims as a writer. And this is sound advice for future poets. Technophobia, i.e., a disdain for any medium but print on paper or solo recitation before a live audience, must automatically condemn a poet to isolation and obscurity as the world increasingly seeks its information--and its art--from electronic sources. (8)

Brecht probably never heard the word "computer." Yet it is not hard to believe that his poems will "translate" brilliantly into electronic presentation formats. Just as staging and vocal emphasis can create "alienation effects" in performance, the computer can create a variety of typographical "V-effekte" (e.g., contrasting colors, shimmering or blinking words, moving lines or phrases on the screen, adding a voice-over, graphics, sound effects etc.) that concentrate a reader's focus on (or suggest alternatives to) a printed text.

### LESSON 4: KEEP WRITING

#### Survive to Write: and Write to Survive

It has never been easy to earn a living as a writer, and comparative poverty is still a badge of honor among many poets today. Government grants, prize competitions, and a few subsidized journals and publishing houses offer money for poems, but hardly enough to be called a living wage. Consequently, poets support themselves by other means.

Teaching and literary criticism are preferred occupations for poets today, but there are others. Indeed, it can be argued that some of today's best poets are not called "poets" at all, but writers of advertising copy, greeting cards, and song lyrics. (9)

Critics still routinely sneer at such "genre" writing; but to deny that the works created are poems at all only perpetuates an unnatural separation between art and trade that is difficult to justify. Certainly Brecht rejected such distinctions, and was prepared to learn from word art wherever he

found it--including advertisements, political slogans, and popular songs. (10)

Future poets should realize that to be memorable and become a part of daily life is a truer test of fine writing than favorable reviews. Just as it takes skill to write a sonnet, it takes skill to write a persuasive ad copy or an enduring pop song lyric.

Critics who confuse the patron's motives with those of the artist are missing an important point. A paid job or an act of public service can also be a creative achievement. Thus, a poet can protest injustice, earn a modest living, and still extol the beauty of trees in spring. Brecht did it!

Brecht wrote poems for love and from conviction all his life. But he was never above taking on a project that might make some money, when he could do so safely. Whatever future biographers may add to modify our picture of Brecht's personality and motivations, the legend of his triumphal return to Berlin with a Swiss bank account, Austrian citizenship, an East German playhouse, a West German publisher, and microfilm copies of his manuscripts safely housed in France and the USA, eloquently admonishes poets of the future to protect themselves against political, artistic, or economic pressures from any source.

A different threat to survival comes from a poet's inner enemies--doubt, depression, and illness. The list of suicides among prominent modern American poets is shockingly high. (11) But Brecht, even in the darkest times, when he was near despair, a hunted man, his political reputation and even his language isolating him in country after country, never lost the will to live and to keep on writing poems--many of them poems about his near despair.

Such "self-indulgence" may seem out of character for Brecht. But I believe that the writing of poems not primarily intended for publication had a therapeutic value for him throughout his life. It is worth noting that of the approximately 1,700 poems and fragments in the Suhrkamp Gesammelte Werke and Supplementbände, only 170 were collected by Brecht for publication during his lifetime, and 20 of these were songs from plays. (12)

Many of the poems and fragments extracted from notebooks and diaries after Brecht's death are written in a manner that suggests he was setting down on paper questions he could not comfortably answer alone in the silence of his mind. His occasional ventures into pornography, for instance, may have helped him deal with a subject he was not shy of but could not easily reconcile in public with political duty and practical theories. (13)

I will not pursue this point further, except to suggest that for poets of the future, as today, internal ambiguities and conflicts can provide self-therapy as well as source material. Brecht's dark times were probably no darker than those of poets who went under. But his willingness to write privately of things he felt unjustified in making public may have helped him survive.



### LESSON 5: CHOOSE YOURSELF A FUTURE And Work to Improve It

Lastly, Brecht developed a personal vision of the future as he wanted it to be. One need not share his particular future view to recognize that having a goal beyond simply "becoming famous" can help motivate a writer and identify an audience.

Brecht's evolving view of the future, as reflected in his poems, would make a good topic for an article all by itself. It is intriguing, for instance, that "Der Nachgeborene," a poem Brecht recalled as one of his earliest (14), expresses utter pessimism:

Ich gestehe es: ich  
Habe keine Hoffnung  
Die Blinden reden von einem Ausweg. Ich  
Sehe.

Wenn die Irrtümer verbraucht sind  
Sitzt als letzter Gesellschafter  
Uns das Nichts gegenüber.

(GW 8, 99)

"Vom Armen B.B." in Brecht's Hauspostille collection already offers a trace of hope:

Wir wissen, daß wir Vorläufige sind  
Und nach uns wird kommen: nichts Nennenswertes.  
(GW 8, 262)

After us will come "nothing worth mentioning," perhaps, but still something!

As he gradually found in Marxism some reasonable basis for believing that a humane society might emerge even from the jungle of the cities, Brecht threw himself fervently into the work of bringing that future closer. Usefulness in that cause became a standard by which he judged his own work and that of others.

Later, even in the darkest times of flight and exile, Brecht clung fervently to his faith in the future. Again and again he proclaimed that this could not be the end--for himself, for his work, or for the values he believed in. For example, in stanza five of the poem "1940" (GW 9, 818), he urges his young son not to forgo learning mathematics, French, and history. There will come a time, he implies, when these things will matter again.

And compare the two testamentary poems "An die Nachgeborenen" (GW 9, 722) and "Adresse des sterbenden Dichters an die Jugend" (GW 10, 940). Both are apologies, but the latter is a complete self-condemnation by a poet who ignored the future (15), while the former merely asks that generations to come show compassion for the weaknesses of one who did his best, despite great obstacles, to help make possible a better world.

From where we stand today, in a world of fresh hopes and old hatreds, in a nation struggling with the accumulated problems of our past successes, in a political climate where group tolerance and individual sensitivity are both on the rise, where affluence and health are widespread but unjustly apportioned and never secure, and at the moment in cultural history when technologies developed for war and business are emerging to transform the arts, Brecht's example, as a poet with his face turned toward the future, seems an excellent one to guide us into the new century. (16)

#### IV. "Will There Be Singing?:" Prospects for Poetry Tomorrow

But do poets really have a future?

In 1982, and again in 1989, the World Future Society (a non-profit association that acts as a clearinghouse for information on trends and ideas about social change) held panel discussions at its General Assembly on possible futures for poetry and literature. Both these panels concluded that good writing is threatened--as usual--by the overwhelming mediocrity of public taste, but that literature in general, and poetry in particular, is far from dead. (17)

Certainly poems which are clearly labeled as such are not conspicuous in American life today. Since the 1950s, poetry as a regular feature has gradually disappeared from daily newspapers and national magazines, and the number of new poetry titles published by the large commercial houses is low. (18)

But, at least in part, these changes reflect a fragmenting rather than a shrinking of the literate public. No longer does one writer speak for America--nor even for the members of an entire generation. Instead, there are many parallel Americas (Black, Chicano, feminist, gay, etc., etc.) many of them only vaguely aware of each other's literary tastes and heros. (19)

Overall, the audience for poetry in America has actually grown. Much of this growth has come through live readings and poetry recordings (20); today's poetry market contains not only "readers" but "listeners" as well. (21)

As the 21st century approaches, video recording and computers appear likely to transform poetry still more. At present, poetry videos are expensive to produce, and, some believe, merely shackle the abstract inside-the-mind experience of words by tying them to specific visual images. (22) This danger does exist. But it should decrease as poetry viewers gain experience and begin to develop different expectations.

Concert goers and record buyers accept that music exists to be interpreted in multiple performances. There need never be just one "correct" interpretation of a piece of music, not even that of the composer. In the same way, one viewing or staging of a play does not mean that the audience or the production team has exhausted all its potential.

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Video recording will preserve and disseminate the work of performance poets and others whose words gain intensity from gestures and facial expressions. But creative video editing can do even more. Using multiple camera angles, overlapping images, time lapse, slow motion and other special effects, video will enable poets to present the same words in a variety of ways.

Computers, too, have enormous potential for tomorrow's word-artists. But who will make use of these new tools? And what will they sing about? Will tomorrow's poets come from academia or from the streets?

### V. From the Hut of the Banished--An Appeal

Let us hope that both campus and the ghetto contribute--that the word-art of the 21st century comes from the best minds and hearts of a generation of street-wise scholars. For perhaps the greatest danger facing poetry today is the impending loss of its roots as diverse regional, national, and linguistic heritages vanish beneath a wave of cultural globalization.

It is not enough to mourn the decline of interest in the classics, or the neglect of literatures from times and places outside the mainstream of today's trans-national industrial culture. Poets, and other writers, need to become "salvage archaeologists" of letters--preserving from their own and other cultures works they have encountered and admired. Brecht himself took this approach, quickly translating and adapting any foreign work that caught his interest. (23)

Cultural artifacts are always vulnerable to misinterpretation and distortion. One culture's sacred hymn becomes another's myth as editors, censors, translators, and imitators use existing works of word-art as raw material: rough-hewn blocks to be fitted, with more or less smoothing and shaping, into new constructions.

Brecht acknowledged this fact of literary life in his own work, freely "adapting" from old sources, and not disinclined to work with rough or questionable translations even when these might be several levels removed from the originals. Indeed, he observed that attempts to translate poetry more often fail by seeking to reproduce too much of their original than too little. (24)

There is no denying that carefully crafted renderings by master linguists are essential for literary scholars, historians, scientists, and others to whom accuracy, not impact, is paramount. But for non-specialist readers--and particularly other writers--a free adaptation or "re-creation" is often far more useful--and far more likely to be read--than a conservative "correct" translation replete with elaborate footnotes and commentary.

Acknowledged classics, from Homer and The Bible to Goethe and Moliere, are translated or adapted again and again for each new generation of readers. Some renderings depart from the original, others attempt to be strictly faithful. But no one of them is right for every reader. Indeed, the curiosity sparked by comparing two different translations will often lead readers

back to the original text. And now that Brecht has joined that august company of great poets and teachers he visited in dream so long ago, should he not be accorded equal treatment?

Whatever the legal rights or financial expectations of those who hold the copyright to Brecht's poems today, I urge them to permit free use of any published poem or fragment for translation or adaptation into English by anyone who asks. And I would further urge that all resulting works--suitably identified as "adapted from" or "suggested by" a Brecht original--should be judged solely on the basis of how well they address the needs and interests of whatever market a particular magazine or publisher is trying to serve.

Many educators and concerned citizens are working hard to increase foreign language literacy among Americans. But instead of constantly belaboring the true but discouraging message that "no translation is ever really good enough," more progress might be made by admitting the equally true point that "any translation at all is better than ignorance."

Brecht's boyhood friend Hans Otto Münsterer recalls the excitement of first discovering poets like Verlaine, Baudelaire, Walt Whitman, and Li Po, among a host of other literary delicacies from every corner of the globe, in Otto Hauser's series of cheap paperback editions collectively entitled Aus fremden Gärten. What did it matter that these translations were riddled with errors "ziemlich ungenau?" They were readable, and they were available, and they were devoured! "The scholars may condemn them," Münsterer concludes, "but we adored them." (25)

The incompetent or biased translator might be compared to a pot-hunter who ransacks an ancient burial site in search of treasure. But even as we rightly deplore the ruthless plundering of the past, let us also consider how often looted artifacts placed on public display have inspired later archaeologists to launch their own more careful expeditions.

However flawed the work may be of translators who interpret rashly and embellish wildly as they go, they still bring before the public works that might otherwise remain unknown in any form. Moreover, literary pot-hunters do NOT destroy the sites they loot. The original poem lies safe in its linguistic and cultural context to be found again and restored by an abler hand.

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Bertolt Brecht is dead. But must his works die with him? His Nachgeborenen are here. The future time he hoped for--when man could be a friend to man, attend to love without indifference, and admire without guilt the beauty of a blossoming tree--seems much closer today than it did in 1956. But even if we are wrong to predict an early end to East-West tensions, a return to romance between the sexes, or a reawakening of awe in man's relationship with nature, surely the time HAS come to move Brecht's poems out of the library and into the sunlight.

It is up to those who know and care about Brecht's work to lift the heavy hand of scholarship before it crushes out the flame he kindled, and to gently loosen the grip of copyright so that his poems can fairly hope to

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reach young people NOT in college: city dwellers, poor people, exiles and outcasts--the men and women he respected most.

To address such people in America today, and in the future, Brecht's words must be retranslated into the accents, the slang, the music of oppressed minorities and defiant children. They must also be repackaged, and perhaps transformed, by technologies unimagined in their author's lifetime.

But it is precisely BY changing that great works survive. (26) And Brecht knew this. He himself was a survivor!

## Notes

1. Bertolt Brecht, Poems 1913-1956, ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (New York: Methuen, 1976); hereafter cited as BB: Poems-W/M.
2. Robert Graves, "To Evoke Posterity," in New Collected Poems (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 68. A parallel poem, "To Bring the Dead to Life" (Ibid., 67), warns literary scholars of their likely fate: "Blow on a dead man's embers/And live flame will start/[...] ..but reckon/That the grave which housed him/May not be empty now:/You in his spotted garments/Shall yourself lie wrapped." Graves saw himself, of course, as doubly-doomed, being both a poet and a scholar.
3. Allen Ginsberg, "'First Thought, Best Thought,'" in Rick Fields, ed., Loka: A Journal of the Naropa Institute (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 89-95 [transcript of his talk to a poetry class at the Institute, 29 July 1974].
4. Except where noted, all poem texts are taken from Bertolt Brecht, Gesammelte Werke Bände 8-10, Gedichte 1-3, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967); hereafter cited as GW 8 etc., or Bertolt Brecht, Gesammelte Werke Supplementbände III-IV, Gedichte aus dem Nachlass 1-2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982); hereafter cited as GWS III, etc.
5. See note to A Reader for Those Who Live in Cities in BB Poems-W/M, 495. Of related interest as evidence of Brecht's eagerness to embrace--and transform--the new communications media of his time, see his notes on Der Ozeanflug (alias Der Flug der Lindbergs) written for radio broadcast in 1929, in the reprinted Versuche 1-12, Heft 1-4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1959), 23.
6. See note on Brecht's "German Satires" in BB Poems-W/M, 567-568.
7. Though by no means complete, the two volumes of Brecht's Texte für Filme (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969) contain material from as early as 1921 and as late as the mid-1950s. Of particular interest to today's young writers might be the several film scripts (printed in English with facing translation) written "for money" during Brecht's Hollywood days. "Groß ist nicht alles was ein grosser Mann tut..." but Brecht shows that a dedicated poet can escape, even from the Hell of Los Angeles.

8. See: Allan B. Lefcowitz, "A Future Without Poetry," World Future Society Bulletin, 17, 3, (May-June 1983), 12-14, who compares traditional poetry writing with the shaping of flint arrowheads--both, he concludes, are anti-quarian arts today.
9. See: Lane Jennings, "Word Art for People: Toward a Future of User-Friendly Poetry and Interactive Fiction," Communication Quarterly 32 (1984), 113-119, who argues that the traditional social functions of poems: as magic (offerings of prayer and praise); as wisdom (records of history, myth, and ideas); and delight (words that amuse and comfort) are still being performed, though many of the works produced are no longer labeled as poems.
10. Bertolt Brecht, "Wo ich gelernt habe" (15-20) and "Über reimlose Lyrik mit unregelmässigen Rhythmen" (77-88) in Über Lyrik, ed. Elisabeth Hauptmann and Rosemarie Hill (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1964), hereafter cited as Über Lyrik. See especially 16-17 and 82-84.
11. The list of suicides among modern American poets includes Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, John Berryman, and Anne Sexton.
12. See "Introduction" to BB Poems-W/M, x.
13. See for example, the so-called Augsburger Sonnetten (GW 8, 311-313 and GWS III, 193-199), as well as several later erotic sonnets (GWS IV, 280 and 401).
14. A note in Brecht's hand, written in the 1950s on the original typescript of this poem, identifies it as "eines der ältesten Gedichte aus der Frühzeit." See: Anmerkungen, GW 10, 5.
15. See the note to this poem ("The Dying Poet's Address to Young People") in BB Poems-W/M, 556.
16. "Unfortunately, most contemporary poets spend too little time considering their situations and responsibilities in the world...." Robert McDowell, "Poetry and Audience," Poets and Writers Magazine, 16, 5 (Sept-Oct, 1988), 23-24.
17. The second of these panels was recorded as: Lane Jennings, et al., Word Art Tomorrow: Poetry and Fiction in a Changing Future, at the World Future Society's 6th General Assembly, 1 July 1989, in Washington D.C. Produced by Chesapeake A/V Communications, Inc., 6330 Howard Lane, Elkridge, MD 21227.
18. See: Robert McDowell, "Poetry and Audience" (note 16 above), 22-23, on the problems of publishing and marketing poetry books. His solution: a re-birth of narrative verse.
19. Richard Kostelanetz comments in "Is there a Poetry Mafia?," Coda, 8, 4 April/May, 1981, 10: "Sure, there are literary mobs, as well as poetry mobs that are still active ... Each develops around a minority ideology which may be geographic, ethnic, religious, racial, academic ... They're small cheese though--none of them can make anyone nationally famous anymore."

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20. On the rise of poetry readings in the U.S., see: Daryln Brewer, "Poetry Readings: Why Go to Them, Why Give Them?" Coda, 11, 2 (November/December 1983), 1, 8-11.
21. Ann Becker of the Watershed Foundation reports that their Poet's Audio Center currently stocks over 500 audiotape poetry recordings from 25 US and foreign producers (as of August 1990). None, however, by Brecht! For specifics, contact the Watershed Foundation, 6925 Willow Street NW, #201, Washington, DC 20012-2023.
22. Andrew Mossin, "Poetry Videos: 'A Global Cafe of Sorts,'" Coda, 12, 5 (June/July 1985), 1, 8-13.
23. See note in GWS IV, Anmerkungen, 34.
24. Bertolt Brecht, "Die Übersetzbarkeit von Gedichten" in Über Lyrik, 106.
25. Hans Otto Münsterer, Bert Brecht: Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1917-22 (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1963), 49-50.
26. Bertolt Brecht, "Über die Bauart langdauernder Werke" (GW 8, 387-390), translated by Frank Jones as "About the Way to Construct Enduring Works" in BB Poems-W/M, 193-196. This poem contains a wealth of thoughtful advice for tomorrow's poets.

[Editor's note: Mr. Jennings is an author, poet, and head writer for SAI Productions, Annapolis, Maryland.]





Brecht y el Nuevo Teatro Colombiano

Enrique Buenaventura

Parece que mi tema hubiera debido ser: "Brecht y el Teatro Latinoamericano," pero la verdad es que no conozco a fondo y menos asun de manera completa este proceso. Tengo datos sueltos, en algunos casos documentos, en otros recuerdos de debates y conversaciones, pero nada de eso me parece suficiente. Mis gustos y mis posibilidades no se inclinian, tampoco, del lado de la historia. Es por ello que he pedido permiso a los organizadores del evento para referirme a la experinca nuestra con la obra de Brecht. (Como T.E.C. y como nuevo teatro) y a la profunda influencia en mi trabajo teatral y en mis reflexiones sobre ese trabajo, ejercida por Bertolt Brecht.

Creo que eso me permite una aproximación al gran dramaturgo Alemán exenta, en lo posible, de rectoría, testimonial, directa y nada erudita.

Creo por otra parte que, de alguna manera, este enfoque sirve más al tema que me propusieron porque los que escuchen o lean estas notas van a poder comprar su relación con Brecht con la que expongo aquí en la forma más sincera y objetiva posible.

Recuerdo que, hacia fines del año 56, más o menos, llegó a Cali una compañía mexicana dirigida por una atriz española que tenía el corte de las vigorosas estrellas, de las grandes divas, a cuyo servicio se ponía el resto del elenco. Hizo un montaje de "Fuenteovejuna," en cual los alumnos de la escuela hicieron de extras y fué necesario conseguir media docena de caballos. "Todo tiene que ser de verdad," decía, pero en el vago recuerdo que tengo sólo veo gente disfrazada y oigo un texto recitado con acento español que los mexicanos declamaban con dificultad. En la reunión que hicimos con esta buena señora confesamos que tratábamos de formar actores con el método de Stanislavsky. ¡Nada de Stanislavsky! gritó ella golpeando la mesa. ¡Tablosky!, la formación en las tablas y atenerse a las dotes, al talento nato. La verdad es que en ese tiempo trabajamos entre Stanislavsky y Tablosky porque la mayoría de los aspirantes jamás había tenido relación con el teatro y los que pretendíamos orientarlos no eramos Stanislavskyanos muy rigurosos. Tantas eran mis dudas sobre el positivismo y el naturalismo que están en la base del metodo de Stanislavsky, que en Octubre de 1.958 publico en la revista "Mito," un artículo titulado "De Stanislavsky a Brecht" y en el mismo número aparece una traduccion de "La Excepción y la regla," "Las cinco dificultades para decir la verdad," y algunos poemas. Brecht había muerto dos anon antes.

"Mito" cumplió así su misión fecunda y desgraciadamente breve de comunicarnos con el mundo contemporáneo, de conflictuarnos y de revelar lo que estaba ocurriendo en nuestro medio. Cinco meses antes habia dado a conocer "El coronel no tiene quien le escriba," de García Márquez, que constituía una ruptura con el naturalismo, el romanticismo y el costumbrismo, introduciendo, en la mejor literatura contemporánea, un tema lleno de elementos vernáculos, regionales y típicos.

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En 1.960 nos presentábamos nosotros en París con "A la Diestra de Dios Padre," mucho menos audaz en cuanto a la ruptura con el costumbrismo, pero de todas maneras, una forma muy abierta, libre y universal de llevar al escenario una imaginería popular recogida de la tradición oral; ya en ese montaje se podían ver nuestra formación naturalista y nuestras débiles búsquedas brechtianas. Una contradicción que en el mencionado artículo sólo se había expuesto y que en la práctica no iba a resolverse fácilmente.

Otros grupos, además de hacerlo con Brecht, experimentaban con Ionesco, Beckett, Adamov y Arrabal. El naturalismo parecía haber desaparecido, la ilusión teatral parecía haber sido barrida del escenario, pero fué muy poco a poco cómo, a través de Brecht, fuimos enfrentando ciertas nociones básicas como esta de la ilusión teatral. Al principio creímos que Brecht negaba de una vez por todas esta ilusión, semejante conclusión era, por supuesto, otra ilusión. Ilusión hay siempre puesto que se nos representa algo, pero no debemos tratar de ocultar la convención de la representación, el hecho de representar. No debemos ocultar las fuentes de luz (y yo recordaba a mi maestro Kosovsky, discípulo de Stanislavsky que, ya viejo, se refugió en Brasil y me enseñó cómo la luz debía entrar por la ventana imitando la del sol o la de la luna y lograr una atmósfera, crear un estado de ánimo), la ilusión existe siempre puesto que existe la ficción. Pero la ilusión debe contar con una serie de elementos que la rompen y aún la ficción, como decía Brecht y como plantea hoy Kantor, debe romperse para dejar ver al actor, sin que lo oculte y menos lo reemplace totalmente el personaje. Allí, en el escenario, hay gente que se enfrenta al público a través de una estructura compuesta de varios textos que ellos han construido, pero no tratan de engañarnos con su construcción y deben aprender a producir un placer y al mismo tiempo un choque, un sacudimiento, con este juego de construcción y destrucción de la magia, con esta manera de armar la ficción y dejar ver, a través de ella, los diferentes rostros, las contradictorias formas de la vida, esa multitud de realidades que sólo por costumbre, por rutina y por simplificación llamamos "la realidad." Otra noción compleja que fuimos entendiendo poco a través de las enseñanzas de Brecht, fué la de sentimiento y la de emoción.

Al principio creímos, como muchos, que Brecht estaba contra todo sentimiento y contra toda emoción, tanto en lo que se refiere a las relaciones entre actor y personaje como a las que se relacionan con el espectador. Esto era lo que se predicaba con frases tales como: nada de identificación y efecto de distanciamiento. Tardamos en ver el quíño de ojo de Brecht detrás de todo esto, su humor negro y su espíritu de contradicción. Hay sentimiento y hay emoción y hasta identificación si se la necesita, pero nuestro objetivo no puede ser, fundamentalmente, transmitir la emoción o hacer que el espectador crea en nuestros sentimientos, y hasta los comparta. No se necesita el arte para esto, es algo que hacemos en la vida con mejor o peor suerte, según nuestras dotes histrionicas. Hay teatros, incluso, como el No japones, en los cuales la expresión directa de un sentimiento por parte del actor no solo es un engaño sino una torpeza y un menosprecio de la inteligencia y de la sensibilidad del espectador. Brecht, sin embargo, al mismo tiempo que se sitúa en las formas de comunicación tradicional entre escena y público de su momento, dá los elementos que permiten cuestionarlas y romperlas.

Para él, aunque convención y complicidad tengan la misma raíz, deben separarse. Las convenciones naturalistas (que, por otra parte, pretendían no ser convenciones) no muestran la transformación de las relaciones humanas sino que, por el contrario, la ocultan. Los sentimientos y las emociones son efectos de realidad que deben desentranar esas nuevas relaciones, que deben profundizar en la complejidad del conflicto o destacar la densidad de una situación. En otras palabras, mi objetivo no es demostrar que imito bien la vida sino que utilizo elementos de esa imitación para hacer preguntas desestabilizadoras y sorprendentes sobre conflictos que vivimos, para mostrar las contradicciones de unas situaciones que solemos aceptar como normales. Y aquí aparece otro término difícil de tratar: el concepto de imitación.

Brecht no sólo no se opone a la imitación sino que la recomienda tanto como la observación y destaca la relación entre una y la otra o que plantea es la utilización de la imitación y su minuciosa selección y esto no sólo en cuanto a los personajes sino, también, en cuanto a los objetos y en cuanto a los materiales que entran en escena. Recordemos el bello poema en el cual describe el cuidado con el cual la Weigel selecciona los elementos que usa en los más diversos personajes. A veces es necesario el más minucioso realismo en los elementos escenográficos, pero ¿en cuales? o ¿en cual parte de ellos?. No se trata de reproducir un ambiente sino de destacar una relación. Puede ser absolutamente necesario que sea real, de cobre, de hierro, de madera, el elemento con el cual me relaciono, pero ese solo elemento puede bastar para la relación misma, para su verosimilitud convencional y concreta. En cuanto a la luz Brecht le pide, en primer lugar, que ilumine y produzca contrastes como en los grandes pintores del pasado y del presente y no se dedique a crear efectos o atmósferas, le exige su condición de lenguaje y le niega su rol de elemento decorativo. Otro tanto se plantea con la música. No es un elemento ambientador, no es un apoyo, es un lenguaje o un personaje y una forma del juego que transforma la situación, rompe el conflicto o le da otro carácter, narra, destuye la continuidad o cambia radicalmente la actitud. Brecht no solo restituye a la música y a la canción roles que le pertenecían en tradiciones más o menos olvidadas, sino que les confiere, de manera especial, ese poder de transformar la escena, esa capacidad sorprendente de cambiar de modo insólito la relación con el espectador.

Todos estos descubrimientos sobre la interrelación de lenguajes, sobre las relaciones actor-personaje, sobre el actor como representante del espectador en el proceso de trabajo de mesa y en la puesta en escena, sobre la inclusión de la crítica en el proceso productivo, y sobre la necesidad de que la otra crítica, la que se ejerce desde afuera, tenga en cuenta ese proceso, la importancia que dió a la improvisación y a su relación con la vida como forma de ver aquello que la cotidianidad no deja ver, será luego estudiado por especialistas y nuestros trabajos sobre Kinesis y proxemia, sobre dramaturgia del actor, nuestras búsquedas metodológicas, vienen de esas enseñanzas de Brecht.

También aprendimos en Brecht que el teatro no es literatura o, dicho de una manera mejor, que la pieza escrita no es teatro, que el teatro es una relación entre actores y espectadores y que reúne varios lenguajes sin que los mismos pierdan sus características, sin tratar de llegar a esa totalidad wagneriana que él tanto atacó. No pretendía Brecht presentar todo esto como algo nuevo, pues insistía en citar su experiencia con Mei-Lang-Fang, su con-

ocimiento del NO japonés, del teatro medieval religioso y de feria y sus relaciones con Karl Valentin, con la tradición del cabaret o el ejemplo del cine mudo y, sobre todo, el fenómeno Chaplin.

Esto sería desarrollado luego por Roland Barthes, por Anne Übersfelde, por Eco, por Rossi Landi y, en el campo psicoanalítico, por Mannoni. Ha sido practicado por grupos de nuestro teatro y esas prácticas han producido reflexiones y búsquedas teóricas conocidas y comentadas en otros países. Brecht nos enseñó a trabajar en equipo en todos los campos de la producción teatral pero nos enseñó, también, el carácter individual del trabajo artístico y la importancia de los desacuerdos. A partir de estas propuestas y situándonos en el contexto en el que nos movíamos, desarrollamos la creación colectiva que no tiene para nada una relación directa con Bertolt Brecht, pero utiliza muchas de sus nociones, como la de fábula, y de sus procedimientos como la individualidad de las escenas sin perder los elementos de elace, de organicidad general. Ya nos referimos a la deuda que con él tenemos respecto a la improvisación y a la utilización de la analogía. Evidentemente, las diferentes maneras de abordar la creación colectiva que se desarrollan aquí y que aquí se debaten, toman sus propios caminos pero las raíces, las fuentes, los inicios están, sobre todo, en la influencia Brechtiana.

Brecht nos enseñó mucho más: el teatro no solamente es espectáculo, el teatro es un acontecimiento que hace parte de los acontecimientos sociales, políticos, económicos y culturales de nuestro tiempo. Nos enseñó la des-sacralización del teatro y nos planteó el conflicto entre el discurso estético y los otros discursos de la vida. Un problema que tiene que ver con las formas, con los temas, que cuestiona constantemente la noción de artísticidad y las relaciones de estas prácticas con el público, de manera especial, la práctica teatral.

Muchas veces se apoyaron en Brecht quienes descartaban el problema reemplazado el discurso artístico por otros discursos. Brecht vivió ese dilema hasta sus últimas consecuencias y nos enseñó a vivir ese enfrentamiento, y a entender la relación con el público como una relación polémica, sin descidir nunca el carácter de diversión compleja que debe mantener el teatro. Los defensores de un discurso artístico que sólo se ocupa de temas pretendidamente esenciales y eternos y los que no se arriesgan en el terreno del escenario sino con obras cuyo éxito está de alguna manera garantizado a aquellos que sólo ven en el escenario un lugar de exhibición sin plantearse el aquí y ahora como el verdadero drama del drama, han limpiado a Brecht de esas contradicciones, lo han santificado y lo han llevado al altar de los clásicos inofensivos. No se dan cuenta de que Brecht es Brecht y los clásicos son los clásicos justamente porque no aceptaron la retórica de sus épocas en torno a la artísticidad, porque re-inventaron el discurso artístico, porque introdujeron la mayoría de las veces temas vulgares, escabrosos, inneditos o, en términos generales, considerados no artísticos.

Otra cosa que aprendimos de Brecht fué el irrespeto a la propiedad intelectual, y artística. Refundiciones, transformaciones, apropiación de textos, argumentos o ideas. Toda la cultura del mundo le pertenecía, desde Confucio hasta el panadero de la esquina. En eso sí se parecía a los clásicos, a Shakespeare, a Lope, a Molière, pero hay que admitir que hoy esa libertad se vé en una encrucijada pues, si por un lado los semiólogos como

la Kristeva sostienen que todo texto verbal o no viene de otros textos y Foucault que todo enunciado es continuación de otro, la policía de las sociedades de autores, se hace más precavida a medida que la llamada originalidad se vuelve más banal y lucrativa.

En el terreno de la escritura del texto verbal, el, con Claudel, con Lorca, con Valle Inclán y otros pocos, rompió los moldes de "La pieza bien hecha," los límites entre lo dramático y lo narrativo, las fronteras entre lo cómico, lo trágico o lo dramático, así como lo periodístico y lo literario, lo inventado y lo pretendidamente real. A ellos y especialmente a Brecht se debió la reconquista del coro, la irrupción de la poesía y de las canciones, de los relatos directos a público o de las reflexiones del mismo corte, en fin, la liquidación de las últimas barreras que el naturalismo había construido como un laberinto entre géneros y formas, entre los mismos personajes y los personajes y el público. Creo que muchos montajes del Nuevo Teatro no hubieran sido posibles sin emprender la aventura de llevar a la escena a Brecht, sin debatir esos montajes, sin apropiarnos de sus conceptos de manera, digamos, salvaje, es decir, desde nuestra precaria y fragmentaria tradición. Creo que el estudio de sus escritos fué y sigue siendo fundamental en esta etapa en que el mundo ya no es el de él, en este momento de insolita y asombrosa transición. No olvidemos, sin embargo, que amó lo insólito y enalteció el asombro y que, paradójico como siempre, habló a menudo de un optimismo desesperado.

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Dr. Faustus in Mahagonny: Marlowe and Brecht

Bob Robinson, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Lotte Lenya recalls that the Leipzig opening of [Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt] Mahagonny in March 1930 (with music by her husband Kurt Weill and the book by Bertolt Brecht) "set off what has been called the worst theater riot in history." Among the more violent critics in the press and in the streets were the National Socialists, who in the title rightly recognized a then current allusion to the color of their shirts: brown. They and others were unable to close the show which did, however have to play with the house lights up and audience ringed with police in order to discourage mayhem. The work first reached Berlin in December of 1931.

The circumstances of the first productions have led many to seek the essence of the opera in the political conditions of the Weimar Republic, for example, in the opposition of the National Socialists, the Marxists and/or others. The fact that the music was not Wagner and that the composer was Jewish would in themselves have been enough to account for the objections of the National Socialists. And anything like a close reading of the play makes a Marxist endorsement of it unlikely; according to Lenya, the work has never been produced in a theatre of a Marxist country. The essence must be sought elsewhere.

One possible influence is Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus which was first presented around 1588. Although I have not found any direct evidence that Brecht knew this work, there are a number of indications in Brecht's writing that either he or someone else in his circle did. Early in his career, while still in Munich, Brecht did translate and stage Marlowe's Edward II which means that he at least knew and appreciated Marlowe as an author. Although this one translation and production in itself is not a strong link, knowledge of it suggests knowledge of the much better known Dr. Faustus.

The story which underlies Mahagonny is in essence the creation of an earthly paradise, a story to which Marlowe's Dr. Faustus gave its modern form. This earthly paradise differs from the utopia named after Thomas Moore's (1478-1535) book in that the means on which it depends are not organization within the human condition, but the transformation of the human condition; that is, the means are not political, but magical. Dr. Faustus makes this clear in Act 1, Scene 1. He has been successful as a theologian, a logician, a physician and a lawyer; nevertheless, speaking specifically of his successful medical career, but also generally, he says:

Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.  
Couldst thou make men to live eternally  
Or, being dead, raise them to life again,  
Then this profession were to be esteemed. (23-25)

Faustus does not want to be a man (i.e., human being); his ambition goes further, perhaps not to the godlike abilities he describes, but beyond

anything we in society understand as art or science. Goethe's Faust is instructive by comparison here. He says: "Auch habe ich weder Gut noch Geld, / Noch Ehr und Herrlichkeit der Welt." (1, 1, 375-77) He then adds that no dog would want to live as he does. The two points in contrast with Marlowe's Faustus here are Faust's overall lack of success in life and the worldliness of his goals. Goethe's Faust is in many ways a man of the Enlightenment: his ultimate goal is "Die Menschen zu bessern und zu bekehren" (373), an undertaking to which Marlowe's Faustus gives no thought at all. This essential difference between the two figures is important because one might reasonably ask why, if someone cites the Faust story as an influence on Mahagonny, it is the English Faustus and not the German Faust. This question bears on what post-1588 and post-1918 Weimar had in common that the two did not share with the Weimar of circa 1800. But first the distribution of roles in the works must be examined.

In Marlowe, the central characters are Faustus, Mephistophilis, Helen of Troy and God; in Goethe, Faust, Mephistopheles, Gretchen (considering only the first part) and God; in Brecht, Jim, the widow Begbick, Jenny and the hurricane. Overlooking the textual uncertainties of Marlowe's work, where he and Goethe have Faustus/Faust, Brecht has Jim. Where Marlowe has Helen of Troy, Goethe has Gretchen, and Brecht has Jenny. And where both Marlowe and Goethe have God, Brecht has the typhoon or hurricane. The two Fausts and Jim instigate the transformation; the two Mephistopheles and the widow Begbick provide the opportunity against the background of the two Gods and the hurricane.

The first thing that Faustus requests from Mephistophilis other than information about hell is a wife, "for I am wanton and lascivious and cannot live without a wife." (2, 1, 140) Since marriage is a sacrament, Mephistophilis cannot provide this and offers a devil, which Faustus rejects. Yet, when at the end of the play he is in agony and seeks "to glut the longing of [his] heart's desire," he accepts Helen, whom Mephistophilis has just conjured up. (5, 1, 90) There follows the enchanting "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?" in which Faustus implores "Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss." Helen, of course, cannot save him; she could not save herself. "Exeunt Devils with Faustus," as the stage directions have it. But the point is the centrality of sexuality. Goethe's Gretchen fits the domestic economy scale of his work: she is a sewing maid. It is precisely her innocence (read: lack of sexuality) that attracts Faust. Her end as an unwed mother who kills her baby is anything but erotic and has been the occasion of some question, notably on the part of Nietzsche, about the status of the play as a tragedy. But that is not at issue here. The sexuality between Jim and Jenny is overwhelming, although she is a prostitute; according to Brecht, "Geld macht sinnlich."

Having noted the correspondence of three of the four roles, we can defer the question of the fourth, God and the typhoon or hurricane, to consider what in the work of Marlowe appears in the work of Brecht. First and foremost it is the statement that Faustus and Jim make about the nature of their undertaking. It was noted above how Faustus openly declares that he does not want to be a human being. In scene 8, Jim, disillusioned with the city of Mahagonny, threatens to "eat his hat," that is, do something desperate. His friends Jacob, Bill and Joe tell him that if he does not calm down, "Wir schlagen dich einfach nieder, ach Jimmy, bis du wieder ein Mensch

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bist." To this threat Jim answers: "Jungens, ich will doch gar kein Mensch sein."

This renunciation appears at the very beginning of Dr. Faustus (1, 1, 9):

Affords this art [Aristotle's Analytics] no greater [than to dispute well]?  
Then read no more; thou has attained the end.  
A greater subject [magic] fitteth Faustus' wit:  
Bid [being and not being] fairwel.  
... a sound magician is a demigod:  
Here tire ... my brains to gain a deity!

The explicit opposition to Aristotle's analytics and metaphysics is a prominent feature of both Marlowe's and Brecht's milieu. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who wrote the Novum Organum, an out-and-out rejection of Aristotle's Organon, was only three years younger than Marlowe and both went to Cambridge, although to different colleges, and were involved in the court life of the day. The title of the first half of Bacon's work is Instauration Magna (1620) ["the great installing"], which Bacon says "is not an opinion to be held, but a work to be done," the realization of the kingdom of man.

Brecht wrote his own organon (= tool, or in this case a set of logical requirements for scientific demonstration): das kleine Organon, which appeared in 1948 and closely followed the aphoristic style of Bacon. But this work only made clear that the polemic Brecht and others carried on was more than a difference of opinion about the way to write plays. It was much more a metaphysical--or, as Faustus' phrase about bidding farewell to "being and not being" suggests--an ontological question.

The locus classicus for the articulation of struggle between the dramatic and the new "epic" form of theater--the ontological struggle which underlies it--is the set of notes which Brecht appended to the first printing of Mahagonny (1931) in which one reads: "Folgendes Schema zeigt einige Gewichtsverschiebungen vom dramatischen zum epischen Theater." There follows a list of some nineteen pairs showing the difference between the old dramatic and the new epic theater, for example: handelnd--erzählend; verbraucht seine Aktivität--weckt seine Aktivität; der Mensch als bekannt vorausgesetzt--der Mensch als Gegenstand der Untersuchung; der unveränderliche Mensch--der veränderliche und verändernde Mensch, etc.

The epistemological and ontological assumptions of the program are clear. And Brecht was not alone in wanting to clear away the rubble of the logic of the Wilhelminian Bürgertum, which fancied itself Aristotelian; being became the preoccupation of many, including and notably Heidegger. But the same destruction of the old values, here again represented by Aristotle's logic and metaphysics, had taken place long before in Elizabethan England under the pressure of religious and social change as well as the victory against the Armada, which settled once and for all the question of which set of assumptions was to be triumphant. Two of the representatives of this overthrow were Marlowe and Bacon. Brecht obviously felt an elective affinity with both of them.



A more direct textual indication of an influence of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus on Brecht's Mahagonny is that immediately after organizing the Berlin production, Brecht and Weill collaborated (for the last time) on a ballet, Die Sieben Todsünden der Kleinbürger, which seems to correspond to 2. 2. 110 of Dr. Faustus. Scene 2 begins:

When I behold the heavens then I repent  
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,  
Because thou hast deprived me of those joys. (1-5)

To which Mephistophilis answers, "Twas thine own seeking, Faustus, thank thyself." He then goes on to put the matter in a Mephistophilian perspective: "[Heaven] was made for man; then he's more excellent." Faust seems to be at the point of repenting, but he does not regret the power that necromancy gives him to call up the shade of the blind poet Homer and the legendary musician Amphion. There seems to be a curious opposition here between the splendor of the divine, the heavens, and the splendor of the human, Homer's song about Alexander [Paris] and his love of Helen. The human carries the day and Faustus resolves that he will not repent. A discussion of the structure of the world with Mephistophilis comes to an abrupt halt when Faustus asks, "Tell me, who made the world?" (68), a question which leads Faustus to call on Christ to save him. This brings on an appearance of Lucifer and Beelzebub--part of Faustus' pact was not to call on Christ--who bring Faustus to vow "... never to look to heaven,/ Never to name God or pray to him." (97-99)

Beelzebub tells Faustus that they are come from hell to "show him a pastime"--the seven deadly sins "in their own proper shapes and likeness". Faustus then says something very telling:

That night will be as pleasant to me as Paradise was to  
Adam the first day of his creation. (107)

To which Lucifer answers:

Talk not of Paradise or Creation, but mark the show ...

The reference by Faustus to Paradise, Adam and Creation could be interpreted, on the one hand, as a faux pas, which it certainly was, given what had gone before; but on the other hand it is certainly an unintentional confession by Faustus that he seeks to go back to an existence before the Fall, before mankind had the knowledge of good and evil and knew death. In such an existence, the seven deadly sins are simply a "pastime," a show to be marked. At the end of the show, Faustus expresses the wish to harrow hell, to go and come back safely, which only Jesus Christ is said to have done, a wish that shows his delusion.

What Brecht does in the ballet Die Sieben Todsünden der Kleinbürger is different in detail, but similar in effect. There are two main characters, Anna I and II, who are sisters and the negative and positive of one another. Anna I is the prim bourgeoisie who functions well within the restrictions of avoiding the seven deadly sins. Her sister, Anna II, practices the theoretical sins interpreted as practical virtues, e.g., gluttony (she doesn't like to starve herself), lust (she falls in love), etc. That Brecht detests

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Spießbürgertum and the restrictions imposed on the instincts by its money economy is self-evident. Mahagonny is a case in point.

When the opera opens, Leokadia Begbick, Dreieinigkeits Moses and Fatty der Prokurist are somewhere in a desolate region of that fantasy United States of 1930s Germany spun out of gangster movies, Karl May (the German Fennimore Cooper), Charlie Chaplin, and jazz lyrics. Begbick is a madam, Trinity Moses is a goon and bouncer--he also shows up in a number of other roles--and Fatty is a pimp (the normal meaning of Prokurist is private agent in business, but the street meaning is procurer). They have heard that gold has been discovered somewhere up on the coast, but their legal problems make it impossible for them to go there. Begbick enunciates an eternal economic principle: "Ihr bekommt leichter das Geld von Männern als von Flüssen!" She suggests founding a city there in isolation, a city which is to be called Mahagonny, that is, die Netzestadt, "city of nets."

Sie soll sein wie ein Netz,  
Das für die eßbaren Vögel gestellt wird.  
Überall gibt es Mühe und Arbeit,  
Aber hier gibt es Spaß.  
Denn es ist die Wollust der Männer,  
Nicht zu leiden und alles zu dürfen.

The picture of this Paradiesstadt, as it is called in Scene 3, is not much different from the one Faustus sees in the "pastime." There is to be gin and whisky, girls and boys, the no-day work week, no quarreling, and prize fights every third day. Besides being protected from all lack of these necessities, a lack which we are to see as a man-made evil, Mahagonny is also safe from what the insurance policies call "acts of God": an unforeseen or inevitable occurrence, such as a tornado, typhoon or hurricane caused by nature and not by man.

Und die großen Taifune kommen nicht bis hierher.

The bar, the center of this city, is set up and named "Die hier-darfst-du-Schenke," the "here-you-may-bar." Then follows the warrant for the foundation:

Aber dieses ganze Mahagonny  
Ist nur, weil alles so schlecht ist  
Weil es keine Ruhe herrscht  
Und keine Eintracht  
Und weil es nichts gibt  
Woran man sich halten kann.

The "something to hold on to" theme runs throughout the work, for the Mahagonnians find out, as did Faustus, that, far from there being nothing to hold on to, there is too much either to which we hold on or which has a hold on us.

In Scene 2 the idyll begins: "Fern vom Getriebe der Welt--die großen Züge kommen nicht vorbei--liegt die Goldstadt Mahagonny." The people Brecht called sharks ("Haifische") in the Dreigroschenoper move in. They are, specifically, Jenny and six girls. They are followed in Scene 3 by the men:

"Die Nachricht von der Gründung einer Paradiesstadt erreicht die großen Städte." But apparently it reaches only the men, for the only female residents of Mahagonny are prostitutes. Brecht gives a chilling description of the state of the soul of the men or at least of their psychology:

Unter ihnen [unseren Städten] sind Gassen,  
 In ihnen ist nichts, über ihnen ist Rauch.  
 Wir sind noch drin, wir haben nichts genossen [pun?],  
 Wir vergehen rasch, und langsam vergehen sie auch.  
 Darum auf nach Mahagonny!  
 Dort wurde gestern erst nach euch gefragt.

Brecht's greatest talent is his ability to put the deepest metaphysical and ontological problems in the simplest, most direct language. The men, apparently only the men, feel themselves not to be between heaven and hell in the cities, but between the smoke and the sewers. There is nothing in them, either the cities or the men, and the only difference between them is the rate at which they are perishing. The cities stunt the selves of men who see their being only in pleasure or perhaps a sharing, a community--if we attend to the second meaning of genossen--which has become sewer and smoke. They want to enjoy/share being, and so to resolve the ontological question they go to Mahagonny. There is a city which offers them everything, even community: people are already asking about them.

When the four friends Jim, Jacob, Bill and Joe arrive, we understand why they will not do as heroes of socialist labor. They are clearly working men and well-paid working men with money, but they are mostly interested in "Pferd- und Weiberfleisch ..." Bill states his attitude toward civilization, i. e., life in the city in a pun: "Die Zi-zi-zi-zivilis, die wird uns dort geheilt." Given that the friends have been in the North lumberjacking for the past seven years, civilization seems to mean little to them other than not being able to do what they want to do.

The point here is not to moralize, but to recognize where the greatness of the work lies; and that the greatness is not in that it presents a criticism of any particular state in a political sense, but that it presents a criticism of the human condition in the ontological sense. Mahagonny is the great epic of anarchism, and no matter how one feels about anarchism, it would be pusillanimous not to recognize the magnanimity and the humanity which move the work. One senses the same concern in Marlowe's Dr. Faustus.

In Scenes 5 and 6, Begbick/Mephistophilis brings Jim/Faustus together with Jenny/Helen. Scene 6, for all its simplicity and vulgarity, manifests a sensuality between Jim and Jenny which is equal to that of Marlowe's lines:

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.  
 Her lips suck forth my soul--see where it flies!  
 Come, Helen, give me my soul again.  
 Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips  
 And all is dross that is not Helen.

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Scene 7 introduces what might be called the Faustian crisis: the men have begun to leave Mahagonny because they are not satisfied. A couple of bars and brothels along with a whole lot of quiet turn out to be not quite enough for a full life, even if you can catch a fish and sit and smoke in front of the house. Begbick intones a Mephistophelean lament:

Ich weiß nicht, was ich machen soll! Alle wollen etwas haben  
von mir, und ich habe nichts mehr. Was soll ich ihnen geben,  
daß sie hierbleiben und mich leben lassen?

She finds herself in the position of Mephistophilis who had to summon Lucifer to come up with the show of the seven deadly sins to hold Faustus in thrall. Begbick then makes what might be called a declaration of disillusion rather than a declaration of love:

Auch ich bin einmal an einer Mauer gestanden  
Mit einem Mann  
Und wir haben Worte getauscht  
Und von der Liebe gesprochen.  
Aber das Geld ist hin  
Und mit ihm auch die Sinnlichkeit.  
(Willy, et al. :) Geld macht sinnlich!

These lines recall Mephistophilis' answer to Faustus' question, "How comes it then that thou art out of hell?" (1, 3, 79)

Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it:  
Thinks thou that I who saw the face of God  
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven  
Am not tormented with a ten thousand hells  
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

The poena damni, the punishment of the loss of love, divine or human, seems to be well known by the facilitators of the earthly paradise of both Faustus and Jim. Both Faustus and Jim seek through the dark arts a self- and all-consuming love: Faustus through the necromancy by which he submits time to his will and has Helen; Jim through the alchemy by which he turns gold to sensuality and has Jenny.

The problem becomes acute in Scene 8. Whereas the foregoing scene had begun with the speaker declaring "Alle großen Unternehmungen haben ihre Krisen," this scene begins with the declaration "Alle wahrhaft Suchenden werden enttäuscht." It turns out that the original plan for Mahagonny did leave room for signs that said "Hier ist verboten." The crisis sets in as Jim becomes aware that the Paradiesstadt has all the amenities, "aber etwas fehlt." It is at this point that Jim realizes "ich will doch gar kein Mensch sein." Jim puts the matter clearly at the end of Scene 9:

Ach, mit eurem ganzen Mahagonny  
 Wird nie ein Mensch glücklich werden,  
 Weil zuviel Ruhe herrscht  
 Und zuviel Eintracht  
 Und weil's zuviel gibt,  
 Woran man sich halten kann. [my emphasis]

This realization becomes acute when during a hurricane/typhoon (Brecht uses the words interchangeably) "ein einfacher Holzfäller namens Jimmy Mahagonny [fand] die Gesetze der menschlichen Glückseligkeit."

Siehst du, so ist die Welt:  
 Ruhe und Eintracht, das gibt es nicht  
 Aber Hurrikane, die gibt es  
 Und Taifune, wo sie nicht auslangen.  
 Und gerade so ist der Mensch:  
 Er muß zerstören, was da ist.  
 Wozu braucht's da einen Hurrikan?  
 Was ist der Taifun an Schrecken  
 Gegen den Menschen, wenn er seinen Spaß will?

The hurricane-typhoon does not destroy Mahagonny, but it does destroy Pensacola along with the policemen who are still looking for the founding fathers of Mahagonny. The Mahagonnians decide to emulate this manifestation of the natural order and do whatever they want regardless of the consequences, physical or metaphysical. And this is a crucial difference with Dr. Faustus, for Faustus never questions the essential justice of God and his order. The heavens which he beholds contain no hurricane-typhoons and he doesn't want to take God's place, he only wants to be like him. The rather senseless pranks that take up the middle of the play--the spiriting away of Bruno from the pope and the scenes with Charles V, for example--seem harmless and even childish in comparison with the Mahagonnian idea of Spaß. Some fundamental transformation has taken place in the intervening three hundred years or so, marked perhaps by Voltaire's reaction to the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. On the other hand, it is not difficult to see in the death and slaughter of World War I along with its prolonged aftermath of political and economic crisis the typhoon-hurricane which swept away the belief in and the willingness to bear the discipline, or, if you will, the repression, of industrial existence.

The Mahagonnians decide to devote themselves to gluttony, love, boxing and drinking in that order. The maxim becomes "man darf hier alles dürfen." In practice, the program is presented in a wonderful song by the glutton Jacob:

Jetzt habe ich gegessen zwei Kälber,  
 Und jetzt esse ich doch noch ein Kalb.  
 Alles ist nur halb, alles ist nur halb.  
 Ich ässe mich gerne selber.

Jacob does not do things by halves: he goes whole hog--or calf--and dies of his overeating, whereupon he receives the highest accolade of the community: "Sehet, Schmidt ist gestorben, ein Mann ohne Furcht!"

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There follows a love scene between Jim and Jenny in which they sing the song of the cranes whose flight through the night serves as a metaphor for love and the Helen syndrome. Jim asks and Jenny answers:

Wohin ihr?	Nirgendhin.
Von wem entfernt?	Von allen.
Wie lange sind sie schon beisammen?	Seit kurzem.
Und wann werden sie sich trennen?	Bald.
So scheint die Liebe Liebenden ein Halt.	

The disillusioned keep their illusions, although with the knowledge that they are illusions. Helen is only a shadow of the flame of life, but no less consuming for all that.

Alaska Joe gets involved in a boxing mismatch with Trinity Moses who kills him. Jim, out of friendship for the seven years they spent together in Alaska, has bet all his money on Joe and loses. When he goes on to one of Mahagonny's other great exercises, drinking, he finds he has no money and cannot pay the bill. Not having money in the world of Mahagonny, like not having faith in the world of Christendom, is the one unforgiveable sin. Jim is tried, convicted and sentenced to death "wegen Mangel an Geld, was das größte Verbrechen ist, das auf dem Erdrunde vorkommt." However, in Scene 8, the scene of Jim's execution, he shows no regret:

Laßt euch nicht verführen  
Zu Fron und Ausgezehr.  
Was kann euch Angst noch rühren,  
Ihr sterbt mit allen Tieren,  
Und es kommt nichts nachher.

Jim manages to put a better face on things than does Faustus, whose knowledge that he is a higher creature of God seems to bring him only fear of damnation. Jim emulates his friend Jacob the Glutton and dies in the electric chair "ein Mann ohne Furcht." But while he is sitting in the electric chair he raises the question of God:

Ihr wißt wohl nicht, daß es einen Gott gibt?

This observation by which he hoped to prevent his execution brings on a discussion of the day God came to Mahagonny. He looked around, saw all the drunks, cut-throats, whores, etc. and curtly ordered them all to go to hell. Whereupon

Ansahen sich die Männer von Mahagonny.  
Nein, sagten die Männer von Mahagonny.  
... An den Haaren  
Kannst du uns nicht in die Hölle ziehen  
Weil wir immer in der Hölle waren.

The inhabitants of Mahagonny realize that they are the author of their own hell, much as Mephistophilis answers Faustus' question about the location of hell (2, 1, 115):

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed  
In one self place, for where we are is hell,  
And where hell is there must we ever be;  
And, to be short, where all the world dissolves  
And every creature shall be purified,  
All places shall be hell that is not heaven.

From this emerges the one truth which is the theme of the song ending Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny: "Können einen toten Mann nicht helfen." The brute fact of mortality stands over against all our wishes and striving, whether through the necromancy and alchemy of magic or politics. Mephistophilis has the last word (5, 11, 93):

Fools that will laugh on earth must weep in hell,  
Wherever that hell may be.

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## Puritan Epic Theatre: A Brechtian Reading of Edward Taylor's Gods Determinations

Lincoln Konkle, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fifty years after the publication of The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor, there is still much to be said about Gods Determinations Touching His Elect: AND The Elects Combat In Their Conversion, AND Coming Up to God In Christ: TOGETHER WITH The Comfortable Effects Thereof (hereafter, Gods Determinations) regarding its generic classification, the literary influences upon its composition, and the textual manifestations of Edward Taylor's purview and rhetorical intention. Scholars who have taken up the issue of Gods Determinations' generic status have agreed, for the most part, that it does not qualify as literal drama: "But a dramatic analysis--satisfying and informative though it may be--believes the fact that Gods Determinations is not a play." (1) However, if Gods Determinations is read without the narrow preconceptions of genre which continue to dominate academia even this late in the twentieth century, if it is read instead with a knowledge of theatre and drama broad enough to recognize that the Aristotelian aesthetic represents only one choice on the menu of dramatic styles (albeit the most common choice), then it can be seen that Edward Taylor, a Puritan writing in the second half of the seventeenth century, indeed wrote a play.

There are several reasons why it has been difficult for scholars to conceive of Gods Determinations as a play. First, as a literary artist Taylor is known to us primarily as a lyric poet, having produced two long series of preparatory meditations, as well as many individual lyrics and other works in verse. Gods Determinations is composed of thirty-six titled sections written in various meters, rhyme schemes, and stanza forms, but it hardly needs to be pointed out that in both ancient Greece and medieval Europe, as well as during the Renaissance, plays were written wholly or partially in verse. What previous studies have de-emphasized is that Gods Determinations imitates divine and human actions, and that dramatic dialogue is the predominant vehicle for representing those actions. Of Gods Determinations' 2,132 lines, 1,354 (or 64%) are in dialogue form, 320 (or 15%) are in monologue form (as soliloquy, prayer, and choral interlude), and 458 (or 21%) are the narrator's exposition of events. Undeniably, Gods Determinations is an amalgamation of literary forms: drama, epic, lyric, allegory, sermon; my argument is that the drama genre subsumes the others. (2)

Another reason scholars have been unwilling to read Gods Determinations as a play is that they do not think it would be performable: "It could not conceivably be acted: narrative and dialogue are jumbled together; Taylor depends too much upon the titles of the individual poems; the central character 'man' assumes a constantly shifting role; and the speeches are tediously long" (Grabo 165). First of all, given that Taylor did not publish his poetry and was adamant that his family not publish it after his death, it is a reasonable assumption that he considered Gods Determinations to be closet drama. Even so, to classify a story written in dialogue as a play does not depend on the work's potential for stage performance. (3) But even if performability were a definitive feature of all drama, none of the characteristics of Gods Determinations cited by Grabo preclude theatrical production.



One can see performed today many classical, Renaissance, and twentieth century plays that contain all the elements Grabo thinks are unperformable. (4)

The infamous Puritan aversion to drama also makes it difficult to believe that a minister as conservative in matters of doctrine and devotional practice as Taylor would have attempted to write, of all things, a play; however, this stereotype of the Puritan attitude toward drama is not altogether accurate. (5) We know for a fact that university-educated Puritans including Taylor, read drama, as Donald Stanford has pointed out: "In grammar school [Taylor] had studied and perhaps acted in the Latin comedies of Terence and Plautus, and he had probably read various dialogues in Latin based on Bible stories." (6) There were also at least two Puritans who wrote dramatic works of which Taylor most likely would have been aware: Arthur Dent, an English Puritan divine, cast his best-selling devotional manual in dramatic form; (7) and of course, John Milton, the most famous of all Puritan authors, wrote drama both early and late in his career. (8) Finally, Taylor himself wrote, in addition to Gods Determinations, two metrical paraphrases of the Old Testament book Job, which is constructed mostly as a series of dialogues framed and occasionally interrupted by narration. In sum, there was ample precedent of Puritans appropriating drama for their own purposes to make plausible the present study's claim that Taylor chose to work in that genre.

The major reason scholars have been of the opinion that Taylor either did not write a play, or failed miserably in the attempt, is that their assessment is based upon a limited, monolithic paradigm of drama: "All the dramatic elements necessary for a play are present, but Taylor did not take advantage of them" (165). By this, Grabo apparently means Taylor did not assemble the elements into a play; however, if Taylor were working from an aesthetic of loose assemblage in which the parts retain a degree of independence while making up the constructed--rather than the organic--whole, then Taylor may have arranged his dramatic elements more artistically than Grabo realized.

The dramatic elements present in Gods Determinations are four major actions initiated by four characters (thus four candidates for protagonist): one, God creates the world and (assisted by his representatives Justice, Mercy, and Christ) salvages it after Man's fall; two, Satan tempts the elect away from Christ; three, the elect ("Soul") seek assurance of election from the pious wise ("Saint"); and four, the narrator (an unidentified first person singular voice that speaks the prologue and narrates some of the action) strives to offer praise that does justice to God's greatness. None of these characters "hold the stage" long enough to unify the plot into one action. God and other divine agents exit after "Christ's Reply"; Satan enters in "Satan's Rage at them in their Conversion" and last appears in "The Third Rank Accused," obviously functioning as antagonist to God and his representatives; Soul metamorphoses into plurality after Saint's sermon in "Difficulties arising from Uncharitable Carriages of Christians"; and though the narrator begins, interrupts, and ends Gods Determinations, it isn't always clear if the first person singular voice that speaks the segments praising God is a continuation of the narrator who invokes the Christian muse in "the Prologue" or if it is Soul. Granted, Gods Determinations does not fit the conventional notion of drama in terms of its plot construction and representation of characters, but in considering Gods Determinations' generic status

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it makes sense to draw upon the full range of dramatic theory and practice, for there has always been more than one aesthetic of playwriting. (9)

In the Poetics, which was still regarded as the definitive critical study of drama even as late as the seventeenth century when Taylor composed Gods Determinations, Aristotle favors the kind of play that features one protagonist, a single coherent plot, and--at least according to the Renaissance reading of the Poetics--a high degree of mimesis (i.e., verisimilitude) over the kind of play that has several protagonists, an episodic plot, and openly acknowledges its artifice. The less mimetic, more fragmented style of drama is commonly referred to by theatre/drama artists and scholars today as "epic theatre," a term made famous by German playwright and director Bertolt Brecht, though he did not claim to have invented the concept or the practice: "From the standpoint of style, the epic theatre is nothing especially new. In its character of show, of demonstration, and its emphasis on the artistic, it is related to the ancient Asian theatre. The medieval mystery play, and also the classical Spanish and Jesuit theatres, showed an instructive tendency." (10) To clearly distinguish between the two poles of the dramaturgical spectrum, it is worthwhile to quote from Brecht at length:

Even by Aristotle's definition the difference between the dramatic and epic forms was attributed to their different methods of construction, whose laws were dealt with by two different branches of aesthetics. The method of construction depended on the different way of presenting the work to the public, sometimes via the stage, sometimes through a book; and independently of that there was the "dramatic element" in epic works and the "epic element" in dramatic. The bourgeois novel in the last century developed much that was "dramatic," by which was meant the strong centralization of the story, a momentum that drew the separate parts into a common relationship ... The epic writer Döblin provided an excellent criterion when he said that with an epic work, as opposed to a dramatic, one can as it were take a pair of scissors and cut it into individual pieces, which remain fully capable of life. (70)

To briefly confirm Brecht's reading of the Poetics, Aristotle himself said "by an epic plan I mean a fable composed of many fables." (11)

Brecht's reading of the Poetics in relation to both Western and non-Western dramatic tradition constitutes a history of world drama in which epic theatre--though always an alternative aesthetic--was nonetheless available to Taylor in both theory and practice if he had sought, as artists are wont to do, a precedent or paradigm after which to model his play. Although no direct evidence exists that Taylor read the Poetics specifically, it is quite possible that he studied it along with Aristotle's other works while he was at the university in England or America or both. (12) From the Poetics Taylor could have derived, at least in the abstract, the form he needed for a specifically Puritan play, one that would suit the minister's didactic purpose and that--as a dramatic representation of Divine and human will and action--would not violate the Second Commandment. (13)

Taylor might also have learned about the kind of dramatic structure he used in Gods Determinations from medieval and renaissance plays which Brecht--or a scholar employing Brecht's anatomy of drama--would classify as epic

theatre. (14) Even if Taylor did not personally witness a theatrical performance, he might have known enough about the purpose and form of The Castle of Perseverance or Everyman from conversation or correspondence with those who had seen the plays acted or from the Puritan writings which described the subjects of their attack to have modeled his own Puritan morality play after them, as suggested by Nathalia Wright in one of the earliest studies of Gods Determinations' dramatic qualities. (15)

The dramatic from indigenous to the late Renaissance that best qualifies as epic theatre is the masque. Masques were most often court allegories and thus more abstract than mimetic in characterization, and their narrative construction was episodic, due, in part, to frequent interruption by songs praising the sovereigns for whom the masque was written and performed. However, the masque was not always a piece of decadent entertainment or propagandistic pageantry; it could manifest a spiritual theme as well, as did Milton's "Puritan masque," Comus. (16) In fact, Comus could very well have been Taylor's dramatic model for Gods Determinations. Although a close textual comparison might not result in enough concrete similarities to prove that Taylor was directly influenced by Milton's earlier work to any great degree, a number of analogies in character, action, and purpose do exist between the earlier famous Puritan masque and the later obscure one. (17) If even pre-twentieth century critics described Comus in language similar to Brecht's definition of epic theatre--

Perhaps it would be useful to take Dr. Johnson seriously and ask if, as he called it, Comus is not "a drama in the epic style" ... A drama written in epic style would first of all flow like a narrative poem, and secondly it would be a drama raised above the requirements of realistic decorum to a level of inspired, prophetic, or epic voice (18)

--then this much is certain: Taylor employed a dramatic style that was, so to speak, in the English aesthetic air before he emigrated to America.

Call Gods Determinations a masque, a morality play, or what you will; but if most plays are constructed in accordance with either the Aristotelian or epic theatre dramaturgy, it is the latter to which the only known example of New England Puritan drama belongs. An analysis of the formal characteristics of Gods Determinations in relation both to the tenets of Puritanism and to the specific rhetorical purpose inscribed in the text, as identified in previous studies, will demonstrate that Taylor's choice of the dramatic style that has come to be known as epic theatre was the perfect mating of form to content and intent. (19)

German drama theorist Peter Szondi's description of the alternative aesthetic made paradigmatic for the twentieth century by Brecht is especially applicable to the design of Gods Determinations:

The most successful of these Szondi calls "epic," a term he applies to a wide range of experimentation of which Brecht is only one example. Such works point outside themselves, present a "microcosm representing a macrocosm" which is explained and set forth by an "epic I," a creative presence that acknowledges an audience to whom this demonstration is directed. (20)

From the outset the narrator of Gods Determinations avows the quintessential audience for this Puritan "demonstration"--God. However, one example of where Taylor's play points outside itself and acknowledges its human audience, thus calling attention to its own artifice vis-a-vis epic theatre, rather than disguising its artifice vis-a-vis Aristotelian or fourth-wall naturalistic theatre, occurs near the end of "A Dialogue Between Justice and Mercy" as Justice and Mercy shift their references to Man from third to second person. That is, suddenly they begin to address the "Humble and Haughty Souls" directly. Mercy says, presumably to the discouraged half-way members, "Though simple learn of mee; I will you teach/ True Wisdom for your Souls Felicity." Justice says, perhaps to those full members who presume their election, "You that Extenuate your sins, come see/Them in Gods multiplying Glass: for here/Your little sins will just like mountains bee," followed by this final tender appeal from Mercy: "My Dove, come hither, linger not, nor stay." (21) Is this just a slip of composition, Taylor lapsing momentarily into the direct address of the sermon, or is it the same kind of playing to the audience that occurs in such morality plays as Everyman and Mankind?

Prior studies have described Gods Determinations structure in a variety of ways, (22) but none have analyzed it by the procedure modern actors, directors, and playwrights employ in breaking down a play's action into smaller units ("beats" being the smallest) by determining which characters embody the plot-driving volition. Using this method, Gods Determinations divides into two sections of supernatural and human actions, which, thus, might as well be called acts. In the first act, God and his divine representatives (Justice, Mercy, Christ) battle with Satan for the soul of Mankind until Christ's final appearance on stage in "Christ's Reply," in which he exhorts Soul to "fight on" (64), and Satan's final speech in "The Third Rank Accused," in which he makes a last ditch attempt to waylay Soul. Following this scene, there are no divine characters, either allegorical or literal, to urge Soul on, and there are no more external sources of temptation and doubt. In the second act, beginning with "A Threnodiall Dialogue between the Second and Third Ranks," what happens in the narrative is the result of Soul's volition (his desire for slavation and his nearly paranoid fear of presumption of election). Such a shifting of the limelight from the supernatural to human protagonists can be read as a manifestation in narrative form of New England Covenant theology. (23)

One can understand why Puritan lay men and women might be anxious about the destiny of their souls, given their Calvinistic beliefs; however, the New England Puritans, especially, found a way to humanize an impervious and sovereign God's predestination of the elect by means of a legalistic interpretation of the Covenant of Grace, as Perry Miller has discussed in his seminal works. (24) In Gods Determinations, what Taylor offered his half-way members who were not assured of their election was a dramatization of the Covenant in action; or, rather, the dichotomous structure of the action of Gods Determinations is itself a representation of Covenant theology, which one Puritan understood as follows: "that God had done His part and it was up to him now to do his" (Miller 387). By arranging their respective actions earlier and later in the plot, Taylor dramatized both God and the Elect holding up their respective ends of the bargain.

Epic theatre also allowed Taylor to represent the Puritans' understanding of the analogous relationship between providential and personal progress

by combining the panoramic scope of epic and the psychological close-up of drama--"a microcosm representing a macrocosm." As Leopold Damrosch says of John Bunyan's plot construction in The Pilgrim's Progress, which exhibits many of the same formal attributes for concretizing Puritan beliefs as New England Puritan narratives, "the biographical subplot is conflated with the cosmological main plot, and this frees the self from unescapable anxiety about election. Heilsweg is harmonized with Heilsgeschichte, the individual journey of the spirit with the universal history of God's elect." (25) On the macrocosmic level, the plot of Gods Determinations depicts, in order, God creating the universe, mankind falling and the personified Man blaming it on his mate (following, obviously, the allegory of Adam--Man--in Genesis), Justice and Mercy devising a plan to redeem Man, Satan tempting and Christ encouraging the elect, and the elect making progress toward heaven as full members in the church. "Epic tends to confirm the order of history" (Damrosch 119), but historical progress was God's responsibility; the individual Puritan's duty was to concern himself with his own spiritual development one day at a time. (26)

Epic theatre effectively represents the microcosmic level of the Puritan purview as well. The episodic structure of Gods Determinations appears most obviously in the titles of the thirty-six segments which comprise it. However, these divisions do not always correspond to the units of action. A single scene between two characters may extend through several titled segments (for example, the six segments in which Satan tries to comfort and preaches to Soul); or several events may take place in one titled segment (for example, "The Effect of this Reply [by Christ] with a fresh Assault from Satan"). Another indication of the divisions of the four major lines of action are the following recurring conceits: for God--a courtroom debate and a royal couch to fetch the invited guests to a feast; for Satan (and Christ)--military battle; for Soul--a pilgrimage and flowers grown in a garden; for the narrator--the apprentice musician striving to play well. These extended metaphors occur too frequently throughout the play and identify the characters and their actions too exclusively in some scenes to be granted lyric status only. (27) Each conceit represents progress on the human scale, but also relates analogously to the cosmic scale; "History is a narrative, but the narrative is built up out of timeless symbols" (Damrosch 62); surely vegetative growth, military battle, a pilgrimage, a coach ride and a feast, learning to play a musical instrument, even a courtroom debate are timeless symbols. Using the litmus test for epic theatre Brecht cited, one could disassemble Gods Determinations along these conceits, and not only would each one stand by itself structurally and thematically, it would also still express the macrocosmic theme of Gods Determinations in microcosmic form.

The episodic conceits in Gods Determinations also serve Taylor's didactic intention toward the half-way members of his congregation. Of the effect of epic theatre on the audience, Brecht says, "By means of a certain interchangeability of circumstances and occurrences the spectator must be given the possibility (and duty) of assembling, experimenting and abstracting" (60); in other words, the audience should be able to interact existentially with different aspects of the text. Taylor similarly invites the individual half-way member to respond to whatever metaphor of spiritual progress that will persuade her or him to become a full-fledged member of the church. He was saying, in effect, does it give you assurance to comprehend election as a

courtroom debate and verdict? Do you want to see it as winning a military battle? As a flower growing? As an apprentice musician learning to play and praise? As riding in a coach to a great man's feast? However you see it, just be sure you do see it and come into full membership.

The crucial question for the consideration of Gods Determinations as a play is, in choosing what is normally the most public and mimetic of genres for his literary response to the crisis of the half-way covenant, did Taylor achieve dramatic effects, at least on the stage of his mind, that would not have been possible with other genres? The answer is yes. As both Colacurcio and Gatta have demonstrated, Gods Determinations is the most humanistic and empathetic of Puritan texts. Taylor achieves that relationship to his audience by the dramatization, however abstract, of not just the ideas of Puritan belief but also the emotions that accompany the attempt to live according to those beliefs. For example, In "A Dialogue between Justice and Mercy," a personification allegory of contradictory concepts within Christian doctrine (if not within the divine nature itself), this exchange occurs:

JUSTICE

I'll take thy Bond; But know thou this must doe:  
 Thou from thy Fathers bosom must depart,  
 And be incarnate like a slave below,  
 Must pay mans Debts unto [the] utmost marke  
 Thou must sustain that burden, that will make  
 The Angells sink into th' Infernall lake.  
 Nay, on thy shoulders bare must beare the Smart  
 Which makes the Stoutest Angell buckling cry;  
 Nay, makes thy Soule to Cry through grieffe of heart,  
 ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHT[H]ANI.

MERCY

All this I'll do, and do it o're and o're,  
 Before my Clients Case shall ever faile.  
 I'll pay his Debt, and wipe out all his Score,  
 And till the pay day Come, I'll be his baile. (37)

Taylor's choice of dramatic rendition over narration proves effective in this scene by vividly illustrating the doctrine that Christ is himself a divine personification allegory: "the word made flesh" (this scene dramatizes that the word is mercy). But the exchange between Justice and Mercy is not just point-counterpoint; it is, in dramatic form, a heated debate. The dialogue of these personified concepts is moving precisely because of the passion of their speeches, which manifest a slight sense of characterization. In order to reassure the doubting half-way member, Taylor dramatized not only "God's determinations" but also God's determination to redeem fallen Man.

The scene with which Taylor reaps the most benefits from the drama genre is "A Threnodiall Dialogue Between the Second and Third Ranks." If there were any tone one would least expect to find in a Puritan text it would have to be farce, yet in this scene Taylor lampoons the too-humble half-way members of his congregation by representing Second and Third Ranks' exaggerated self-doubts in stichomythic dialogue:

SECOND

There's not a Sin that is not in our Heart,  
 And if Occasion were, it would out start.  
 There's not a Precept that we have not broke,  
 Hence not a Promise unto us is spoke.

THIRD

Its worse with us: The Preacher speaks no word,  
 The Word of God no sentence doth afford;  
 But fall like burning Coals of Hell new blown  
 Upon our Souls, and on our Heads are thrown.

SECOND

Its worse with us. Behold Gods threatenings all;  
 Nay, Law and Gospell on our Heads do fall.  
 Both Hell and Heaven, God and Divell Do  
 With Wracking Terrours Consummate our Woe.

THIRD

We'le ne're believe that you are worse than wee,  
 For Worse than us wee judge no Soul can bee.  
 We know not where to run, nor what to doe;  
 Would God it was no worse with us than you.

SECOND

Than us alas! what, would you fain aspire  
 Out of the Frying Pan and into the Fire? (74)

The verbal slapstick continues, each Rank trying to top the other in laying claim to supreme unworthiness of grace. The choice of a gently mocking caricature of the half-way members, rather than a pulpit-thumping, Juvenalian lashing of those uninitiated Puritans for whom it had been necessary to devise a half-way covenant in the first place, testifies to Taylor's compassion. He implicitly acknowledges here and explicitly acknowledges later in the Soul-Saint scene that the Puritan way to salvation is hard. Taylor does not, however, apologize for nor deviate from the requirements of Puritan doctrine regarding church membership. A subtle cause of the half-way members' arrested spiritual development is revealed by this one-upmanship debate: their pride even in self-abasement. Again, the humorous affect and the didactic effect would have been reduced had Taylor chosen to narrate the conversation rather than to let the characters speak for themselves.

Taylor's use of comic techniques in Gods Determinations to uplift the spirits of his half-way members has been thoroughly analyzed by John Gatta, though perhaps he goes too far in his attempt to demonstrate tonal unity in Gods Determinations by reading humor into virtually every scene. (28) What even Gatta has failed to acknowledge is that Taylor's choice of a dramaturgy which allows so much variation in tone, characterization, and action represents a sophisticated solution to the particular aesthetic challenges presented by his Puritan beliefs and rhetorical intention. Only a paradigm of drama which does not require homogeneity of parts, such as epic theatre, accurately describes Taylor's technique in Gods Determinations.

If my attempt to settle the issue of Gods Determinations' generic status once and for all has been successful, i.e. if it can be agreed that Taylor's work can and should be read as an actual play which embodies the doctrines of the New England version of Puritanism, then--at the very least--any future references to Gods Determinations' generic status should have no quotation marks around the term drama. Of course, where there is literal drama, the question of performance invariably arises. Given that no record of a production of Gods Determinations exists, that public performance was precisely the aspect of theatre which Puritans thought violated God's decree against imagemaking, and that Taylor, as far as we know, was without exception a closet artist, any speculation about a staging or oral reading of Gods Determinations--even under the auspices of a dramatic sermon, of which a few examples are known and have been discussed by scholars--would be un-supportable. (29)

However, the probability that Taylor did not produce Puritan Epic Theatre does not preclude the possibility that in composition he intended Gods Determinations to be a Puritan Everyman, especially since his rhetorical purpose--to encourage the half-way members of his congregation to become full members--is so dramatically inscribed in the text, as Colacurcio's, Gatta's and the present study have shown. No absolute evidence can be found to support this speculation either, except that, as has been demonstrated here, Gods Determinations is--more than anything else--a play. Perhaps, then, it would not be going too far to suggest that histories of the American drama will have to be revised to give credit to Edward Taylor, whose artistic genius we are still learning to appreciate, as the author of the first play written on the North American continent.

#### Notes

1. Norman Grabo, Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), 163. Grabo's comments quoted here and elsewhere are representative of previous scholarly considerations of Gods Determinations' dramatic form in that they entertain the possibility that Gods Determinations is a play but then retreat from that idea, assigning Taylor's work instead to a genre more commonly found in Puritan writing. For other studies besides Grabo's which have straddled the fence on the issue of Gods Determinations' generic status, see Willie T. Weathers, "Edward Taylor, Hellenistic Puritan," American Literature, 18 (1946): 18-26; Austin Warren, New England Saints (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 1956); Roy Harvey Pearce, The Continuity of American Poetry (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961); Jean L. Thomas, "Drama and Doctrine in Gods Determinations," American Literature, 36 (1965): 452-62; Robert Arner, "Notes on the Structural Divisions of Edward Taylor's Gods Determinations," Studies in the Humanities, 3 (June 1973): 27-29, Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor (Amherst: U Massachusetts P, 1975); John Gatta Jr., "The Comic Design of Gods Determinations touching his Elect," Early American Literature 10 (1975) 121-43; and Lynn Haims, "Puritan Iconography: The Art of Edward Taylor's Gods Determinations" in Puritan Poets and Poetics: Seventeenth-Century American Poetry in Theory and Practice, ed. Peter White (University Park: The Pennsylvania UP, 1985): 84-98.

2. Most studies of Gods Determinations' generic status have resolved the issue by labeling the work as a literary hybrid, but the difference between



prior classifications and the present study's is one--and it is an all-important one--of emphasis. Where Thomas describes Gods Determinations as "dramatic homily," I propose "homiletic drama"; where Pearce and other scholars regard Gods Determinations as a "dramatic poem," I prefer "poetic drama" or "drama in verse"; where Haims emphasizes the "allegory or emblem" form, I subordinate it as "allegorical or emblematic drama," and so on.

3. Most handbooks (for example, John Russell Taylor, The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre. Baltimore: Penguin, 1966; Jack A. Vaugh, Drama A to Z: A Handbook. New York: Ungar, 1978; C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature. 4th ed. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980) either do not define drama as a genre requiring performability or the authorial intention of performance; or if they do mention performability as a criterion, then in practice throughout the handbook they do not actually use "play" in that sense. I maintain that the term play should be applied to Gods Determinations because, unlike the more general terms "drama" or "dramatic work" which can describe novels, narrative poems, etc., play makes clear that Gods Determinations is a work in which action occurs in the present and is represented primarily in dialogue without speaker tags or description of characters' appearances.

4. The use of a theatrical narrator to set the scene, bridge a span of time, report action which has occurred off-stage, etc. dates back to classical drama. Just as dialogue does not disqualify a work as a novel or narrative poem and make it a play, neither does narration disqualify a work as a play and make it something else. For example, in Our Town the Stage Manager's narration constitutes a higher percentage of the text than do the lines of the narrator in Gods Determinations, yet no one denies that Wilder's work is a play. The Stage Manager also assumes different roles in the story, and though some of his speeches are quite long, Wilder's poetic prose, especially when spoken by a gifted actor, need not be tedious. Both Brecht and Wilder have employed scene titles on cards or projection screens in productions of their plays.

5. In Puritanism in America: New Culture in a New World. (New York: Viking, 1973), Larzer Ziff says, "Opposition to the theater was not opposition to drama but rather to the falsification to the point of obscenity of what was to be acted out by each man in his own person rather than by a class of men in assumed roles. Drama, indeed, as Wigglesworth and Thompson among others demonstrate, was of the essence of life" (168).

6. Edward Taylor. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1965, 26.

7. The Plain Mans Pathway to Heaven (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975, reel 1376) reads more like Socratic dialogue than narrative drama, but Dent was aware of the similarity between his work and a play, as he explains in his "Epistle to the Reader": "I am in a dialogue, not in a Sermon... For this Dialogue hath, in it, not the nature of a Tragedy, which is begunne with joy, and ended with sorrow: but of a Comedie, which is begunne with Sorrowe, and ended with joy." Dent was writing at a time (1601) when Shakespeare and Elizabethan drama were at their zenith; it is significant, therefore, that he echoed the language of Aristotle's definition of tragedy from the Poetics, which was well-known in the Renaissance. The Plain Mans Pathway to Heaven even represents a human action and thus could be said to have a comic plot in that Philagathus undergoes "repentance, and true conversion

unto God" (392) as the result of his dialogue with Theologus, a Puritan minister he meets on the road. One could not, however, make the same argument regarding generic classification for The Plain Mans Pathway to Heaven that the present study is making for Gods Determinations since Dent's devotional manual was book-length (398 pages), and was published in approximately 30 editions during the 17th century in a format obviously designed for personal use as a reference work (all but the last three titles in the six-page table of contents are discursive rather than narrative; a minimum of 20 of Gods Determinations' 36 segment titles describe actions rather than ideas, and Taylor did not write a table of contents).

8. "Arcades" (1633), Comus (1634), Samson Agonistes (1671). Like Dent, Milton makes direct reference to the Poetics in his preface to Samson Agonistes.

9. Among previous studies, John Gatta's discussion of Taylor's comic techniques comes the closest to identifying Gods Determinations literally as a play, but even Gatta could make the following statement only if he were working from a preconception of drama similar to Grabo's: "is it simply because Taylor lacks theatrical sense that so much of the work seems to be, at best, only half-way drama? ... Yet it is possible that Taylor, aware of the crudity of his theatrics, is more often playing on the notion that his performance is nothing more than a comparatively inept staging of a very real and momentous drama... Granting this possibility, one finds an animating purpose behind the construction of dialogues and situations that may, on the surface, resemble shabby play-acting more than fully developed drama" (139-40, emphasis added).

10. Brecht on Theatre, John Willett, tr. (London: Methuen, 1964), 312. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

11. Aristotle's Politics and Poetics, B. Jowett and T. Twining, trans. (New York: Viking, 1957), 246. As we shall see, Gods Determinations is a fable composed of many fables.

12. In the preface to The Poems of Edward Taylor (New Haven: Yale, 1960), Donald E. Stanford says, "In his sophomore year [at Harvard, Taylor] reviewed Hebrew, Greek, logic, and Rhetoric" (xl-xli), and Harvard's reproduction of Cambridge's curriculum included "A smattering of Classical belleslettres" (xli). As noted by Michael Colacurcio, "Gods Determinations touching Half-Way Membership: Occasion and Audience in Edward Taylor," American Literature 39 (1967): 298-314, "For Taylor, as for all Puritans, poetry was a branch of rhetoric" (313), and thus any study of rhetoric may well have included the Poetics. In The Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge (Cambridge: Harvard, 1958), William Costello says, "Rhetoric, the art of eloquent communication, included, informally, history, poetry, drama, epistolary prose, classical geography, ethical dialogues, and readings in sacred scripture, in so far as these were the sources of ideas and the models of phraseology which the eloquent man must muster" (39). Later, Costello says, "As examples of student proficiency in Greek, one may turn to a series of commonplace books kept in Trinity... All of them are jammed with excerpts from the Greek of Aristotle particularly" (63). As noted above, we know of at least two other Puritans, Arthur Dent and John Milton, who were familiar enough with the Poetics to echo the language of passages on tragedy.

13. Lynn Haims notes, "In Gods Determinations we observe the struggle of the artistic sensibility to create within the confines of scriptural prohibitions against imagemaking" (85), and she also cites "The deliberately rough form of Gods Determinations" (96, emphasis added). Similarly, Roy Harvey Pearce says, "His Puritanism, like [his peers'], obliged him to put Art below Nature, and both below God, in the scale of being. Yet for that very reason, his Puritanism forced him to find--dare one say create?--an 'artless' art, one which in the hands of a master like him is art indeed" (54). Perhaps Taylor's obedience to the commandment to not hold up "graven images" accounts for his giving dialogue to every character in Gods Determinations except God, whose speeches are represented only through indirect discourse by the narrator.

14. Although Brecht mentioned the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as periods exhibiting epic or instructional theatre or alienation effects, he did not cite (or his editor-translator did not include) specific medieval, Elizabethan or Jacobean plays he regarded as examples of the aesthetic. However, morality plays--with their obvious didacticism, their abstract representation of character and action, their epic and episodic narratives--are undoubtedly what Brecht had in mind. In the Renaissance, presentational plays in which the chorus or prologue figures addressed the audience and narrated action (for example, The Spanish Tragedy, Henry V, Pericles) and metafarces, heroic plays, or tragicomedies in which there were multiple, episodic, or disjointed lines of action (for example, Knight of the Burning Pestle, Tamburlaine, A Winter's Tale), while not qualifying as pure examples of this type, do make use of epic theatre techniques.

15. In "The Morality Tradition in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," American Literature 18 (1946): 18-26, Wright made the point that Taylor may have modelled Gods Determinations after morality plays, which, she claimed, were still being performed in the seventeenth century near where Taylor was born and raised. In "Drama and Doctrine in Gods Determinations," Thomas counter-argues (453) that all such performances had ceased by the time of Taylor's childhood and that he wouldn't have seen them anyway since they were of Catholic origin. Again, the extremity of the stereotype of the Puritans as iconoclasts in their religion prevents an open-minded assessment of their art. Besides, scholars have observed traces of Catholic devotional themes and forms in Puritan devotional practices (see, for example, Charles Hambrick-Stowe's The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England (Chapel Hill: North Carolina, 1982) 48-51).

16. See M. C. McGuire, Milton's Puritan Masque (Athens: U Georgia P, 1983).

17. For example, the plot of Comus does correspond in the abstract to the overall plot of Gods Determinations: "Milton's dramatic vision of life found vivid expression in the central device of the masque--the journey. As Maynard Mack suggests, the masque depicts a spiritual pilgrimage: it is "clearly in some sense an emblem of the perplexity and obscurity of mortal life which constitutes God's trial of the soul" (McGuire 67). The journey or pilgrimage references in Gods Determinations occur less frequently and have less substance than other representations of spiritual progress, but there are at least six instances of the Elect or Soul described as being on a journey; for example, "At my journies end in endless joyes/I'll make amends

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where Angells meet" (67). There is also an analogous relationship between the main characters of the two plays: Comus to Satan, The Lady to Soul, her two brothers to Second and Third Ranks, the Attendant Spirit to Saint. Finally, certain scenes in the two works have similar individual actions which also have similar relationships to their respective overall plots. For example, scene five in Fletcher's plot summary of Comus (168-75), the temptation of the Lady by Comus, reads quite a bit like and functions analogously to the scenes in Gods Determinations in which Satan rhetorically attacks and tempts Soul and Second and Third Ranks.

18. Angus Fletcher, The Transcendental Masque: an Essay on Milton's "Comus" (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1971), 148, 150 (emphasis added).

19. Colacurcio was the first Taylor scholar to demonstrate that Gods Determinations is, in fact, an occasional work: "The implied audience of the poem is precisely the half-way member of the Puritan congregation" (299). For those unfamiliar with the crisis of declining membership in Puritan congregations during the latter part of the seventeenth century and the attempted solution the half-way covenant represents, see, for example, Chapter Seven, "Half-Way Measures," in P. Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Cambridge: Harvard), 1953. In brief, a half-way member was a Puritan man or woman who had not publicly testified to the experience of converting grace in his or her life, which would signify his or her status as one of the elect entitled to full participation in the devotional practices of the church. John Gatta further established that in this one work, at least, Taylor did not merely write with himself or God as the audience.

20. From Theorie des modernen Dramas, paraphrased in Marvin Carlson's Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984), 430.

21. Gods Determinations touching his Elect...in Poetical Works; subsequent references are cited parenthetically.

22. In dramatic terms, Grabo noted (162) five acts and Hains (84) four. Other schematics of Gods Determinations' structure have included conversion morphology (G. Sebouhian, "Conversion Morphology and the Structure of Gods Determinations," Early American Literature (1981): 226-40), Christian paradox (S. Bush Jr., "Paradox, Puritanism, and Taylor's Gods Determinations," Early American Literature 4 (1971): 48-66), and the Jawbones image (W. J. Scheick, "The Jawbones Schema of Edward Taylor's Gods Determinations," in Puritan Influences in American Literature, ed. E. Elliott. Urbana: Illinois, 1979, 38-54).

23. Scholars acknowledged the presence of Covenant theology in Gods Determinations long ago, but they detected it primarily in expository passages and legal metaphors. For example, T. Johnson says in his preface to Poetical Works, Taylor "did not purpose to give epic effects to Chaos, Heaven, and Hell, but to justify Covenant theology by way of poetic exposition in highly wrought imagery" (20). My claim is that Taylor did purpose to give epic effects to Covenant theology, in part to justify it, but more importantly to reassure his half-way members of their election. For other comments on this, see Hains, Wright, Barbour, Keller, and Colacurcio.

24. In The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Harvard, 1954), Miller says, "They achieved this remarkable feat without dethroning His omnipotence, without circumscribing His sovereignty, by the plausible device of attributing the instigation of the deal to Him" (379).

25. God's Plots and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1985), 119. Damrosch derived his title from a sermon by the New England Puritan minister, Thomas Shepard.

26. As Damrosch explains, "A traditional Anglo-Catholic philosophy [sees time] as a coherent structure with an Aristotelian beginning, middle, and end. But Puritan thought, in its quest for the epiphanic moment and its suspicion of human interpretation, is committed to admiring the grace that rescues each separate instant from the void, rather than tracing the pattern that connects one instant with another in temporal sequence" (60).

27. Addressing the genre issue, Damrosch also sees the boundary between narrative and lyric as nebulous: "The novel, far from occupying a position diametrically opposed to the subjective lyric, is in a certain sense its expanded expression" (13). One could substitute Taylor for Bunyan in the following statement and Damrosch's point would accurately describe the epic theatre design of Gods Determinations: "Bunyan's special genius is expressed in a union of emblem with mimesis that has as many affinities with lyric intensity as with novelistic breadth" (185).

28. For example, I read "The Third Rank Accused" as a chilling portrayal of Satan's subtlety, not the "comic reduction from his traditional epic stature" in the utterance of "wry quip[s]" (132, 133) as Gatta characterizes it

29. See, for example, Jean Thomas's general remarks (452-53) regarding dramatic aspects within the homiletic tradition; Charles Hambrick-Stowe's brief description (121-22) of a sermon Thomas Shepard preached as a wedding in which he, as minister, married the congregation to Christ, thus dramatizing the Biblical metaphor and Christian doctrine that Christ is the bridegroom and the church the bride; and Sargent Bush Jr.'s similar, though less radical argument than the present one, about Thomas Hooker's sermons: "Hooker, always the devout Puritan, plays the role of incipient dramatist, substituting narrative description for the actions and speeches of full-fledged stage creations. For the Puritans the imaginative, creative preacher could provide--probably without either his or his audience's realization--a substitute for other available forms of entertainment which for them were outlawed" in The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds (Madison, WI: U Wisconsin P, 1984), 182.

### *Production Reviews*

"Lead Instead of Cheese"--Mother Courage  
at the University Theater, Madison, Wisconsin, March 1990

Friedemann Weidauer, German Department,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

It is the distinct quality of "classics" like Brecht's Mother Courage that they resist all attempts to assign to them the status of a museum piece. Wherever they surface they surprise us with a new kind of relevance. Still, one had to be sceptical: Why Brecht, and why his Mother Courage in the peaceful intellectual enclave of Madison, Wisconsin, in a state which after all makes a profit selling cheese, not lead?

The set of Meredith Alexander's production unobtrusively hinted at the message of this play for audiences in the early 1990s. Guards surveying the stage with binoculars from the catwalk conjured up images of the by now historic Iron Curtain. The "Titularium" was written on a wall like the graffiti on THE WALL. Now that another war, the Cold War, is over, the play again asks its disquieting questions: Who profited? What have we learned from it? Again, it was not the little people who made a profit. Again, the other question can only be answered in Brecht's words from 1949: "The war would not only bring them suffering but also the inability to learn from it." (1) In the West, no "peace dividend" (who wants to lose his/her job in the military-industrial complex?)--and in the East, thousands of victims of ideological terror (where did the people go who reported their neighbors to the Stasi?). And, again, the question "who won?" shifts the attention away from the fact that the war is continuing, as class warfare within each country and worldwide.

In addition to suggesting such an updated interpretation of the text, the production seems to have benefited from two productive misunderstandings of Brecht. According to the director, it had been her intention to reduce the historical details in the play. Central Europe in the seventeenth century would be a setting too far removed for an American audience. But isn't it exactly the distance created by the alien historical guise which allows the audience to take a new analytical look at the social mechanisms at work in their own time? Nevertheless, the result of this misunderstanding was a set that was remarkably barren, thus providing for a sober, laboratory-like atmosphere. It bordered on sterility, though; there was not much of that playfulness Brecht deemed necessary for a relaxed audience. Still, one had to like this production for its audacious plainness in these times of sensual overkill.

The bigger surprise was that the director called Brecht's theory of drama an ideology. This means that one looks at it as a set of ideas rather than a method. Instead of using the hammer to drive in nails, the hammer itself becomes an object of representation. As a consequence, the local critic (2) remarked that the actors were delivering their lines not in the Brechtian quotation marks but in parentheses and, one might add, in a mode of two-fold alienation. One could interpret this in a positive way: If Brechtian

theater is to survive not as a commodity but as a critical method, it will time and again be necessary to put the method itself at a distance, to defamiliarize defamiliarization.

It was not like that with Colleen Burns as Mother Courage; she is a full-blooded Brechtian actress. But she herself seemed put in parentheses. No one in the cast, except for Christian Tallman as the cook, was a match for her faulty, common-sense wit. But this, too, had a positive side-effect. No one was misled to see her just as a victim of circumstances, the most common misinterpretation of this figure. The way in which she dominated the stage made it clear that she is both victimizer and victim. In general, the cast of student actors deserves high praise. They had to master a script written for highly trained professionals and a new way of acting that stands in opposition to their familiarity with psychological realism.

It is no doubt the problematic mother figure on which any new approaches to this play will have to focus. The contrast between the "bad mother" Courage and the "good mother" Kattrin falls short of interrogating the social construction of the concept "mother" itself. Brecht himself understood that his plays not only make visible how reality is structured, but also participate in structuring it. It will be the task of further productions to use Brecht's techniques for demasking the constructed nature of seemingly natural roles. One path that might be taken for such an endeavor was hinted at here. Pantomime and choreography were used to represent how Eilif was made into a soldier. Similar techniques can be used to expose the artificial imposition of other, "natural" roles. The real test for a classic is whether its critical thrust can be turned against its own suppositions.

#### Notes

- 1) Gesammelte Werke, Frankfurt am Main, 1967, Vol. 17, 1148 (my transl.)
- 2) Kent Williams, "Lost in the Translation," Isthmus, March 9, 1990, 28.

Et, a Paris, Brecht Revient ...

Petermichael von Bawey, The American University of Paris

Parisian theaters honor Brecht at least twice a year: in March 1990 the prestigious Comédie-Française produced La Vie de Galilée (Galileo), and in April 1990 the less known suburban Théâtre de Gennevilliers staged La Bonne Ame du Setchouan (The Good Person of Szechwan).

Under the direction of Antoine Vitez, also the administrative director of the Comédie-Française, Galileo was staged in timely response to the political changes in Eastern Europe. Galileo is Vitez's second production of a Brecht drama; familiar with Brecht's works since the mid-1950s when the Berliner Ensemble made its historic appearance in Paris, Vitez directed Mother Courage in Nanterre in 1973. In Vitez's view, Brecht's politics suggest the drama's theme. Galileo's physical science and the play's implication of the progress of science stand as root metaphor for Brecht's social science and the advancement of Marxism. In a Le Monde interview of March 1, 1990, Vitez

stated: "La pièce, Galilée, évoque les problèmes que pose la science dans son ensemble--la science sociale,--y compris dans ce qu'on appelait, puisqu'il faut bien parler au passé, l'idée du communisme." With the present collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Brecht's social science receives a "mortal wound." But it is this new historical situation that makes Brecht's work interesting to Vitez. He argues: "Brecht alors perd son actualité, il entre dans le passé, c'est émouvant. Il devient possible de prendre la distance nécessaire pour 'traiter' son oeuvre." In other words, with the current failure of Brecht's basic political ideas, his works now receive their historicity and necessary distance, fundamental, according to Vitez, for the treatment of his dramas. Vitez adds: "L'espoir est mort depuis longtemps déjà, monter Galilée au moment où le pays se défait, c'est presque trop beau." Thus, the rejection of communism in Eastern Europe has terminated the political utopia in Brecht's works and consequently aestheticized his Marxian ideas.

The political collapse of Communist Europe also permitted Vitez to apply Brecht's methodology to Brecht's oeuvre. Just as Brecht gave the material he extracted from the "cultural treasures" at hand a use value--what he called "gestural content"--Vitez attempted to use Brecht's material--his "science sociale"--as gestural content in his staging of Galileo. In Vitez's interpretation, Galileo's science and Brecht's politics function as "gestural quotation" offering the spectator a critical perspective of their historical content. As such, Vitez gave the spectator a Brecht drama with a dual history. The one presented the playwright's parable of seventeenth century science in conflict with traditional metaphysics and ideology, understood in Brecht's world of the late 1930s as rationalism and Marxism versus irrationalism and fascism. The other presented Brecht's Marxism compared to the history of communism. This stereoscopic history took form on stage. Yannick Kokka's costume designs had Brecht's characters appear in both seventeenth century and contemporary dress: the pope and cardinals in Baroque regalia, their agents in East Bloc fashion, crossing the stage in heavy, black overcoats and dark hats. Vitez's historical images merged, allowing the spectator to shift from Brecht's parable to current events. Visually, papal oppression was metaphorized to communist oppression as papal agents became East German Stasis or Rumanian Securitas forces.

Galileo appeared on a stark, nearly empty stage. Kokka's set designs were variations on the aesthetics of terror and power: stark arcades, shadowed streets and mostly dim plazas under an empty sky. Angular lighting of deserted Italian squares with diminishing arcades and grand palaces brought to mind images of Giorgio de Chirico's painting Mystery and Melancholy of a Street, suggesting a strangely sinister air.

Vitez's interpretation of the central character supported the dual history he gave the drama. Galileo, marvelously played by Roland Bertin, may stand for Brecht's Galileo and for Brecht himself. Bertin's talented representation described an intellectual who successfully resisted an authoritarian government, not by opposition but by guile. He represented the intellectual who publicly acquiesced to authority to save his work and his life, placing him in a morally gray and ambiguous area. Thus he cannot stand with the current heroes of Eastern Europe: Lech Walesa, Wolf Biermann and Vaclav Havel, who openly opposed oppressive governments. In the Comédie Française's program for the play, Bernard Dort rightly captured Vitez's produc-



tion aesthetics, stating that "la vie de Galilée est bel et bien le Faust de Brecht." Brecht, who wagered his intellect with the Mephisto of communism, received critical appraisal through Vitez's skillful references to contemporary European politics.

Bernard Sobel's interpretation of The Good Person of Szechwan with Sandrine Bonnaire in the title role offered another view of Brecht's ideas in light of current changes in Eastern Europe. Brecht's split character of Shen Te/Shui Ta illustrates the difficulty of "goodness" in a society where human exploitation is fundamental to human survival. The drama's action disclosed the pitfalls of certain capitalist practices such as capital investment which Sobel found timely subject matter in view of the new capitalist experimentation taking place in formerly communist Eastern Europe.

Sandrine Bonnaire's intense acting strengthened Brecht's characterization of the protagonist's split personality. Shen Te's natural inclination to the good and Shui Ta's determination to apply the "cash nexus" to all human relationships demonstrated the forces of moral and economic pressures which dominate social life. Bonnaire's expressions, gestures, and intonations highlighted the dual personality and double standard necessary for Shen Te's struggle for existence. Antoine Pece's costume designs offered vivid images of Shen Te's conflict as they were metaphors of a mind set: Shen Te in flowery Chinese dress with lotus blossoms contrasted to Shui Ta in riding pants, jackboots with leather crop; the former an image of Pearl Buck's gentle Chinese woman, the latter of a stormtrooper. Clothes also make the god: with costume changes from the sacred to the profane, from golden priest robes to business suits, the appearances of the gods visualized the drama's paradox of spiritual purity in a fundamentally material world.

Sobel's stage, designed by Nicky Rieti, followed deconstructionist aesthetics: the sets were small installations, assembled and disassembled during the performance, emphasizing a Brechtian dictum--this is theater! Similar to a factory, the stage contained industrial design fixtures and multilayered platforms with interconnecting stairs and catwalks, permitting several events to appear simultaneously. The audience's space was used as well; and when the actors brought dramatic action to often surprised spectators, a nervous excitement accompanied the performance. Thoughtful stage design added to the production: a hydraulic lift served well to allow the gods to descend from the heavens and create a "garden of Eden," where Shen Te falls in love with her pilot. After her "paradise" returned to the heavens, Shen Te or, more correctly, Shui Ta faced the earthly consequences of providing for her future child and of escaping her lover's greed. Superbly stylized acting of manners and gestures highlighted the drama's social conflict of ethical principles and material demands, a conflict presently experienced in Eastern Europe.

Brecht's dramas on the Parisian stage this year are an example of the viability of his work in an emerging post-communist Europe. For Vitez, Brecht's social science may "enter the past" but his theater method has become a distinctive aspect of Vitez's own dramaturgy; and for Sobel, Brecht's social ideas are indeed actual in light of current European events. As Europe changes, interpretations of Brecht will undoubtedly change, but as these productions show, Brecht's work can address contemporary social trans-

formations with insight and historical depth. This speaks for the force of Brecht's theater.

Ba(n)al in the Bush Era  
Katrin Sieg, School of Drama, University of Washington

Matthew Silverstein's adaptation of Brecht's Baal ran as part of the 1990 "Repfest" at the University of Washington School of Drama in Seattle.

The play, one of Brecht's earliest, has traditionally proven a challenge to directors because of its central character's transgressive rebelliousness. Silverstein tailored his script from a heavily cut mixture of all three versions that Brecht wrote, including the previously untranslated scenes with Baal's mother, and added songs and lyrics of his own.

Silverstein, who directed this production in partial fulfillment of his MFA degree, declared as his goal to "blow the dust off Brecht." This ostensibly served as the rationale to turn the play into a critique of consumer capitalism which views the "artist" as always and already a part of the system she/he rebels against. Everything that defines Brecht's Baal as an outsider--his sexuality, his wild lyricism, his excessiveness--was collapsed under the heading "addictive behavior" in this production: in an effort to critically examine capitalism, the production represented addiction as a mechanism of exploitation. However, this critique unwittingly replicated the "Say No To Drugs" rhetoric which is the stamp of the Bush era, and thus defeated its own purpose.

The overriding metaphor of "Schnapps" reduces Baal's subversive creativity to the simplistic notion of "abuse." As a silver-colored coke-bottle, the contents of which are inhaled through a straw, Schnapps signifies the ultimate consumer product. The performance was interspersed with commercials for the drug, quoting various styles and media of advertising. It foregrounded the--usually invisible--apparatus of production by showing the director of the film studio, the crew, and the clients that pay for it.

Contrary to the expressionist notion of an asocial, creative, but potentially destructive subjectivity springing from within, Silverstein's post-modern adaptation stressed the always-already constructed nature of subjectivity. Consequently, characters were not "originals," but the products of a social imaginary shaped by and filled with media images. In this production, the visual quotations from film and TV history, which registered in gestures, make-up and costumes, ranged from Hollywood B-movies from the 1940s to contemporary soaps. Johanna was reminiscent of Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," Eckart's costume was modelled after "The Great Gatsby," while the TV studio producer resonated with Elliott of the series "thirty-something."

Silverstein employed a unit set consisting of two wire-mesh boxes on wheels. The top of the boxes provided elevated playing areas, in addition to their insides. Baal's "attic" was located on the upper level, as well as the "control room" of the TV studio. The boxes, the clearly visible lights,

exposed cables and cords, and the presence of musicians and technicians in an area adjacent to the stage proper gave the production a constructivist look.

Brecht's Baal examines the position of the artist in a class society. In Silverstein's production, class differences are displaced onto the difference between addict and dealer--those who control commodities and those who are controlled by them. The disenfranchised, in this stage version, become Schnapps-addicts who have brought into the promise of a well-adjusted existence, ghostings of the glossy images of success that the culture industry produces. Death in this system is refigured as co-optation. The suicidal Johanna is resurrected as a bride in "The Dating Game," and Baal's death signals the artist's transformation into a commercial icon a la Arsenio Hall: a group of white-clad "doctors" dresses him in a grey suit and tie, and the corpse comes back to life under the bright lights of a TV-studio stage, presenting a Schnapps-commercial song.

Brecht's Baal is a charismatic figure, vascillating between revolutionary pathos and poetic sensuality. In Silverstein's production, Baal's sexuality is refigured as economic power. The magneticism of his songs, the sexual spell they cast on both men and women, is replaced with the attraction a TV personality holds for starving actors. Wearing a fat belly as a body-mask, and in some scenes a clown's wig and nose, this Baal possesses no sexual charisma, but draws the power he holds over his fellow-clowns from the institution that marginalizes him.

Since Silverstein's Baal--in a world of AIDS, Safe Sex and state administration of sexuality--cannot champion a "free" homosexuality, the figure is depleted of erotic potency. While in the Brecht text Baal abandons the bourgeois threesome with Johannes and Johanna for the radical Eckart, a tramp who fascinates and tempts Baal, Silverstein denies Eckart his position outside of middle-class, heterosexual ideology, and his potential to threaten and disturb it. In the production, he is a "pretty boy" dressed all in white. His difference from the nerdy, grey-clad Johannes is one of style, not of political position. Also, while both Baal and Eckart as dramatic figures rely to a great extent on the transgressive power of seduction in the Brecht text, the Baal-Johannes-Eckart constellation in Silverstein's production is trivialized as bourgeois, bisexual game-playing.

Silverstein cut Baal's poetry and music down to one song and a few lines, and wrote the lyrics for the commercials and the rock song that replace Baal's spell-binding performances. The song has the raucous, brutal tone of punk-rock. The electronic apparatus that surrounds the stage and the microphone, however, foregrounds Baal's grating voice and gyrating movements as part of an entertainment industry that caters to any taste, as always-already co-opted. The punk song in the beginning is contrasted with the sleek "rockstar" presentation and the commercials that are interspersed with the play. In terms of ideology, all songs and commercials designate points in a spectrum, rather than an inside and outside of dominant practices.

Since in capitalism power is generated through exploitation, the attraction Baal holds for others, which in the Brecht text rests on his sexuality and on his creative talent, is shown to be the result of his exploi-

tative relation with his mother, who finally suffocates in his embrace. Silverstein had those scenes from the 1918 text translated into English--scenes which Brecht (wisely) had cut out of his later versions. Although Baal's frequent returns to his mother's lap ostensibly introduce a gender critique to a male-centered play, they do so at the price of its homosexual politics.

Overall, Silverstein's adaptation of Baal, in its attempt to "blow the dust off Brecht," threw the baby out with the bathwater. His drastically cut version--the performance lasted little over an hour--retained little of the poetry and none of the sexuality. It is precisely those elements that make the play with all of its problems interesting, and not only render Baal into a shimmering figure, but sustain the dramatic conflict. Silverstein's post-modern images, flashing visual quotations from American TV pop culture, did not add up beyond a rather banal critique of consumerism, and failed to address issues of sexual and artistic transgression as formulated by the Brecht text.

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Co-Production of Bremer Theater Moks and Radio Bremen Fernsehen:

BRECHT UP'N SWUTSCH:

Psalme, Balladen und Sonette aus b.b.s Liebespostille

with Senta Bonneval, Imke Büchel, Julie Georgis, Martin Bachmann,  
Stefan Merkelbach, and Erich Radke

Music: Bruinier, Brecht, Dessau, Eisler, Radke, Schwaen,  
Wagner-Regeny, Weill  
Design: Glyn Hughes  
Costumes: Heike Lauer-Schnurr  
Dramaturgy: Ursula Menck  
Book and Direction: Heinz-Uwe Haus

Opening: August 22, 1990  
Place: TV-Studio Up'n Swutsch Bremen

b.b. wrote love songs and poetry all his life, starting as a school boy in Augsburg and continuing until his last days as a theater director in Berlin. Nothing is foreign to them for they know no tabus in theme or description. They were therefore always a thorn in the side for the ruling morality; many texts thought too vulgar were consequently held back from publication for decades.

Our revue presents such hitherto unknown texts for the first time so that the total richness of Brecht's vitality and lust can be brought into play.

We tell of love's blooming and its wasting away; from the early beginnings through to love's death as if through the stages of life and all emotions. Sex and spirit, affairs and dreams, contradictions and melancholy

are, to the delight of the audience, lyrically served to lavish the palate. Brecht knows of the inexhaustable experience of all those who "do it" with each other and can sing their own song of love ...

b.b.'s Love Sermons serve neither to animate nor to preach. The "commandments" enforced upon our senses and imagination are alienated and as a result (then) looked upon in the light of reality. The lover's microcosm lends urgency to the demand to "experience the truth" under humane conditions in the "big world" and urges the demand to not let our senses waste away, but rather to bring friendliness, beauty, movement and productivity into the life of mankind.

--Heinz-Uwe Haus

## MY NAME IST BERTOLT BRECHT — EXIL IN U.S.A.

BRD 1988. R u. B: Norbert Bunge, Christine Fischer-Defoy. K: Norbert Bunge. Sch: Ron Orders, Arpad Bondy. M: Hanns Eisler. T: Caroline Goldie. Pz: Norbert Bunge Filmproduktion. Gl: Wolfgang Pfeiffer. P: Norbert Bunge. V: Ex Picturis. L: 95 Min., 16 mm. DEA: Berlinale 89. Sr: Herbst 1989. Sprecher: Otto Sander.

In seinem Exilland USA ist der Stückeschreiber Bertolt Brecht, wie zahlreiche Aufzeichnungen, Gedichte und Briefe bezeugen, nie heimisch geworden. Brecht beklagt den Zustand einer Gesellschaft, der alles zum bloßen Tauschwert verkommt, kritisiert die „weit fortgeschrittene Merkantilisierung der Kunst“ („Arbeitsjournal“) und sieht sich selbst im Zustand „geistige(r) Isolierung“ (Brief an Karl Korsch).

Nahezu durchweg aus der Perspektive des Exilierten, aus dessen „Arbeitsjournal“ ausgiebig zitiert wird, rekonstruieren die Filmemacher Norbert Bunge und Christine Fischer-Defoy Brechts Aufenthalt in den Vereinigten Staaten, der am 21. Juli 1941 begann und am 31. Oktober 1947, einen Tag nach der Anhörung vor dem „Committee of Unamerican Activities“, endete. Eine Reihe von Bekannten und Mitarbeitern kommen zu Wort, Schauspieler, Übersetzer, Freunde des Hauses. Darunter Hans Viertel, der von der denkwürdigen Zusammenkunft deutscher Exilschriftsteller, unter ihnen Brecht und Thomas Mann, im Haus seiner Eltern Berthold und Salka Viertel berichtet. Insgesamt fördern die Interviews, außer einigen Hinweisen zu Brechts Arbeitsstil, wenig Neues zutage; die Befragten gehörten größtenteils dem „Schüler“-Kreis an, den der Meister,

auch im Exil, um sich zu scharen pflegte. Warum Brechts Kinder, die in der DDR lebende Barbara und der seinerzeit in den USA zurückgebliebene Stefan, nicht befragt wurden, bleibt ungeklärt. Unerwähnt bleiben auch die „Erinnerungen und Notate“ von Brechts langjähriger Mitarbeiterin und Gefährtin Ruth Berlau, die gerade für diese Exilphase höchst aufschlußreiche Schilderungen enthalten.

Außer einigen Aufnahmen von der Anhörung vor dem „Committee“ und stummen Schmalfilmsequenzen der amerikanischen „Galilei“-Inszenierung (mit Charles Laughton) existieren keine Filmbilder von Brechts Leben und Arbeit in den USA. Bunge und Fischer-Defoy kombinieren daher zeitgenössisches photographisches Material mit Filmaufnahmen aus dem heutigen Amerika. Doch diese Bilder von Landschaften, Städten und Menschen fügen den von Otto Sander verlesenen Textpassagen keine neue Qualität hinzu; vielmehr wirken weite Teile des Films wie ein Bilderbogen, der die Worte des Dichters ehrfürchtig zu illustrieren sucht.

Die beiden Filmemacher enthalten sich jeglichen Kommentars, fügen nur kurze Überleitungen ein und verzichten damit auf die Möglichkeit, Brechts Verhältnis zu seinem Gastland und die „mythische Dimension“ seines Amerikabildes (Brecht-Forscher James K. Lyon) aus der Sicht der „Nachgeborenen“ kritisch in Augenschein zu nehmen. Überhaupt ist es fraglich, ob einem solch komplexen Thema mit den Mitteln des konventionellen Dokumentarfilms angemessen beizukommen ist. Obendrein liegen mit Lyons Monographie über Brechts Aufenthalt in den USA und Mittenzweiss zweibändiger Biographie schon gründliche Untersuchungen zu dieser Exilphase vor.

'BB's Amerikabild' wäre sicher der zutreffendere, und bescheidenere, Titel gewesen.

Raimund Gerz

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Comédie-Française.

La Vie  
de Galilée.  
Brecht

N° spécial 184  
MARS 1990

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50 FRANCS

THE tumultuous throng that poured westward through the rents in the Berlin Wall last November emptied the supermarkets and the video shops. Within hours, there was neither fast food nor deodorant left. West Berlin emporiums were stripped of their ample supplies of soft and sometimes hard-core porno videocassettes. T-shirts and jeans, a currency across the Wall in the days of the two Germanys, flew off the shelves. Wide-eyed and knowing, moving to the beat of heavy metal and rock, which, clandestine or overt, had been the odes to freedom throughout Eastern Europe, the young and not so young enacted the first TV revolution. Once "Dallas" had come their way (it could be picked up several hundred kilometres east of Checkpoint Charlie), once tapes of Western soap operas and rock jamborees could be multiplied and sold beyond the "Dallas line," the cataclysm and saturnalia were inevitable. Television sparked the great, wild surge toward a consumer economy, and television packaged (brilliantly) the actual rush. Why live by bread alone when there is peanut butter? Why endure as a Soviet satellite when the word "satellite" means cable television?

The gains have been tremendous. Regimes of hideous stupidity, of corrupt despotism, of inefficiency beyond credence have been broken. Slowly, human beings east of Berlin and the Oder-Neisse are regaining their self-respect, their liberty of motion, their sense of a possible future. More slowly, but tangibly nonetheless, the hidden dimensions of the iceberg of past massacres, lies, sadistic charades are surfacing. The corpses cry out, the shades of the tortured and the obliterated take on uncanny substance. History is beginning to reënter the uncertain light of truth. Not since 1789 has Europe felt so alive, so inebriate with possibility. Both the Soviet Union and the United States are receding into colossal, lamed—if occasionally belligerent—provinciality. The ancient bells of Prague and Kraków can be heard across sombre but living ground. Leningrad and Odessa are again opening their windows on the Western light (the talismanic image of Russian nine-

teenth-century liberals). The violence and the cant in Romania are fearsome, but even there it is difficult to envisage a recession to the lunatic past. Only an irresponsible mandarin would fail to exult in this season of hope.

But there are losses. Marxism, being itself the product of an intelligentsia, notably in East Germany, felt committed to certain archaic, paternalistic ideals of high literacy, of literary-academic culture. Classical theatre and music, the publication of the classics flourished. Because it carried within its raucous facility and mass seductiveness the germ of anarchic protest, much of what is shoddiest in modernity, in the media, in down-market entertainment was kept (partly) at bay. Now the conductors and the performers are leaving the more than seventy symphony orchestras financed by the East German government. The professors are draining away. The poets, the thinkers wonder whether they can compete on the futures market of commercial choices. Oppression happens to be the mother of metaphor. In the supermarket, Goethe is a lossmaker. These losses, however, are, at an immediate level, luxury losses, and are perhaps recoverable. The minus signs on the balance sheet cut deeper but are much more difficult to define.

After the Mosaic-prophetic summons to justice, after early Christianity, Marxism constituted the third of the major blueprints of hope. When Marx,

in the famous 1844 manuscripts, imagined a society in which love and solidarity, rather than money and competitive hatreds, would be exchanged among human beings, he was simply rephrasing the summons to transcendence of Jeremiah, of Amos, and of the Gospels. When he urged a kingdom of social justice, of classless fraternity on earth, he was translating into secular terms the sunburst of the messianic. We know—I suppose we always knew—that such summonings were utopian: that human beings are more or less gifted carnivores; and that man is wolf to man. What is even grimmer, we know now—and should have known since the utopian fantasies of Plato—that ideals of equality, of communal rationality, of self-sacrificial austerity can be enforced only at totally unacceptable costs. Human egotism, the competitive pulse, the lust for waste and display can be suffocated only by tyrannical violence. And, in turn, those who practice such violence themselves wither into corruption. Ineluctably, collectivist-socialist ideals seem to lead to one or another form of the Gulag.

Such knowledge lessens us. It makes louder the yawp of money in the marketplaces of the West and, even more stridently, on the black markets around the Brandenburg Gate and on the once comely squares of Prague. Moribund utopias leave venom behind. The drug pusher, the salesman of kitsch, the hoodlum have moved into the East





European and Russian vacuum. The Marxist dream turned to unpardonable nightmare, but the new daydreams are rabid; tribalism, regional chauvinism, nationalist loathings are blazing from Soviet Asia to Transylvania, from the skinheads of East Berlin to the muggers of Croatia and Kosovo. With them comes inevitably the hatred of Jews—the intuition that the Marxist program of internationalism, of the abolition of frontiers, was radically tainted by Judaic universalism. Trotsky was, after all, a Jew. So once again the old crazy drums of irredentist territorial claims and ethnic autonomy are pounding in the jungle of the cities.

THERE is, of course, scarcely a sentence I have written up to this point which does not incorporate, more or less directly, a phrase, an idea, an ambiguity out of Bertolt Brecht. I just adapted the titles of two early masterpieces: "Drums in the Night" and "In the Jungle of Cities." No lyric poet, no dramatist, no pamphleteer has given sharper voice to the hymns of money, has rendered more palpable the stench of greed. Few minds have seen more unsparingly into the cant and into the fluent self-deceptions that oil the wheels of profit and make outwardly hygienic the power relations in mercantilism and mass-consumption capitalism. At the same time, and often inside the same Aesopian, oblique texts, Brecht bore witness to the cynicism, to the ruses (he was the most cunning of survivors, catlike in his sinuous maneuvers and landings) needed if one was to endure in the homicidal labyrinth of Leninism and Stalinism. In Brecht's greatest poems (some are among the finest in our century), in his best plays, in the innumerable songs of rebellion and scarred hope which he inspired and sang, the ultimate key is minor, the beat, though sometimes imperceptibly, downward. "Man Is Man" (another famous title)—man's avarice, his cowardice, his frenetic selfishness will most likely prevail. Mother Courage, her children slain, the land made waste, harnesses herself to her fatal cart: armaments for sale. The stage turns and turns. History is a self-inflicted treadmill. The visions of justice turn to red apocalypse. What will remain of our cities is, as a great early lyric proclaims, the black winds that have swept through them. Yet the absurd, murdering dreams were worth dream-

ing. Knowingness is not knowledge, however accurate it turns out to have been. Those who were wrong, hideously wrong, like the Bolsheviks, the Communards in France in 1871, the International brigades in the Spanish Civil War, the millions who died proclaiming their fidelity to Stalin, were, in a paradoxical, profoundly tragic way, less wrong than the clairvoyant, than the ironists and the yuppies, than the Madison Avenue hype peddlers and the jobbers "bellowing" on the floor of the bourse. (The image is from W. H. Auden, whom Brecht knew, for a time, as Comrade Auden.) It is better to have been hallucinated by justice than to have been awakened to junk food. The cruiser whose blank shot initiated the Petrograd uprising was named Aurora, or Dawn. So felt Brecht, "who came out of the Black Forest."

And seems to have come almost fully formed, like some incubus ready to wreak mischief. The Brecht intonations, the cunning gait, the corner-of-the-mouth wit, the carapace of the tightrope walker tensed for survival are there in the earliest of the "Letters, 1913-1956," selected, edited, and annotated by John Willett and translated into straight, faithful English by Ralph Manheim (Routledge; \$39.95). Bertolt Brecht is only fifteen when we pick up the trail. But the credo has been arrived at: "To combine fidelity to nature with idealism—that is art." And so is the fierce insight. Brecht has a poem in mind: "In the afternoon the enemy is defeated." (We are in November, 1914.) Joy on one side, rage and despair on the other: "This is a night when mothers weep." Nothing revelatory in that, but then the Brecht stroke: "On both sides." Those impotent tears were to fill his works. Mothers—militant, blind, cynical, idealistic—recur over and over. Later, Brecht would turn Gorky's "The Mother" into a play very much his own. But B.B. himself did not weep. April, 1918, a month before his call-up: "These are heavenly days. . . . At night we sing songs by Goethe, Wedekind and Brecht. Everybody loves us. . . . And I love everybody. . . . I'd sooner have victors than victory. . . . You will conquer the world and listen to my teaching, and you will die old and surfeited with life like Job who was admired by 100 camels. And then, together, we shall reform hell and make something of it." This to Caspar Neher, Brecht's

lifelong colleague, collaborator, designer. The entire program is set: to reform, to make something of hell, be hell the defeated Germany after 1918, the crazed hive of refugees when Hitler came to power, the tin pots of Californian exile, or the gray gangsterism of the East German regime.

The "everybody" Brecht loves comprises a bevy of Rosies, Helenes, Ruths. Bullheaded, ungainly, prone to bohemian vulgarities, systematically promiscuous, B.B. fascinated women. He used them and used them up, as Baal does in the early autobiographical play. For Brecht, a ménage à trois meant meagre fare. At times, his caravan (those hundred worshipful camels) included at least two accredited mistresses and their brood. Helene Weigel (the association dates from 1923) was to reign supreme—officially, at least. Brecht came to find indispensable her genius as an actress and her rigor as a Communist. But other involvements proliferated. With Carola Neher, with Ruth Berlau—at a terrible cost to the women involved. When Carola Neher was sucked into the Stalinist death machine, Brecht gauged, with almost inhuman caution and dispassion, the limits to which he might go in (vain) attempts to save her. Ruth Berlau collapsed into near-madness. In Mack the Knife, there is more than a touch of Brecht's cavalier sexuality and, one suspects, contempt for the subservience of women to male appetites. "The shark has teeth": creative genius has needs and licenses.

"The Threepenny Opera" is by no means Brecht's best work. It is unimaginable without the brazen bark and lilt of Kurt Weill's music. But it caught and stylized precisely a certain sour-sweet eleventh hour in Western history. Like no other work, it conveys the macabre vitality, the self-lacerating grin of the Weimar twilight. "The theatre is dead," Brecht trumpets throughout 1926 and 1927, but the cadaver can be jolted into feverish life. And in terms of celebrity and earning power those three pennies made Brecht indestructible from 1928 on.

Which was more than fortunate. Hitler makes a very early appearance in the letters, "shitting on Moses Iglstein" in a Munich park in March, 1923. Brecht kept a wary eye on his fellow word-spinner. But his attitudes toward Nazism are complicated, and laced with dialectical-materialist theo-

ry. National Socialism represents for Brecht and his K.P.D. comrades the logical, perfectly predictable terminal phase of capitalism. Its organized violence and bureaucratic efficacy both fulfill and travesty the industrial-assembly-line processes and the book-keeping conventions of Western free-market institutions. Hitler's triumph—this was the appalling, suicidal error of the German Communists—would be brief. It would unleash the authentic proletarian revolution and bring with it the final collapse of the Wall Street empire. To prevent that triumph might well be to falsify the laws of history.

THE carnival of street battles, monetary collapse, and erotic emancipation suited Brecht's observant, analytic sensibility. The period from 1927 to Hitler's takeover in 1933 is one of the most fertile in his career. His several strengths came together. We follow in these letters the hammering out of Brecht's didacticism, his Aristotelian-Marxist conviction that the theatre represents a matchless teaching instrument—that a play is always also a potential manual for human sociopolitical perceptions and conduct. Very much in the manner of such German predecessors as Lessing and Schiller, Brecht sets out to be a teacher, a moral preceptor. His plays are *Lehrstücke*, or "teaching pieces." At the same time, the formal experimenter comes into his own. Even today, a "song play" such as "Mahagonny" remains radically innovative. Brecht breaks with realism and the lyric, Expressionist eloquence of his first dramas. The cabaret, the boxing ring, the cinema enter into his technical and perceptual means. Brecht is among the very earliest masters of radio drama. (See "Lindbergh's Flight.") He experiments with choral techniques and masks. Adopting the modes of collage and montage as these were being exploited by contemporary painters and filmmakers, Brecht incorporates into his poems and dramas the texts of other writers. His adaptations of Gay's "The Beggar's Opera," of Marlowe's "Edward II," of Kipling's ballads and military tales are metamorphic. From the original source they excavate elements marvellously tailored to Brecht's tone and purpose. Jazz, blues, Negro spirituals, Lutheran German, Elizabethan tragedy, the thieves' laments of Villon are interwoven in Brecht's voice.

The best of the letters are "from the workshop." Brecht wastes little motion on personal concerns. He is no letter writer in the manner of Keats or of Proust. His letters are neither drafts of incipient texts nor introspective meditations. They are blueprints for productions, organizational bulletins, rough-edged polemics against obtuse critics and sloppy executants. Brecht keeps a cold eye on contracts, royalties, foreign rights. He labors to institutionalize and sustain a Communist stage company, a workers' theatre, a Red cultural front against the mounting Nazi tide. "The trouble with intellectuals is that what starts as feelings ends in a hangover," he writes to the director Erwin Piscator. Brecht feels at home with designers, stagehands, musicians, cabaret folk. He wears his leather jacket and chews on a wet, heavy cigar. Theory is all very well. (There are cordial, respectful exchanges with the unorthodox Marxist thinker Karl Korsch.) But it is praxis that counts. A new marching song (to the tune of "Tipperary") "could be sung with a pointer in front of projected photos." The pointer must be found, the projector must work in the smoky basement or the provincial cinema. Even a crude parable, Stalinist in spirit, such as the "Massnahme" ("The Measures to Be Taken") can have its tactical, pedagogic uses. The masses are bewildered; the hour is late.

WHEN the hour came, in the spring of 1933, Brecht was able to flee: Prague, Vienna, Zurich, Lugano, Paris, New York. B.B. joined the maelstrom of refugees, of the overnight stateless, of the gypsy intellectuals and artists. With a difference: he was a celebrity. He siphoned out of the Reich his immediate family and members of his entourage and found moneys abroad. He chose Denmark as asylum. The "dark times" had begun. They were to prove productive. Brecht wrestled to achieve a political diagnosis consonant with both dialectical historicism and the actual situation. His inner acrobatics make for fascinating reading. To Korsch in January, 1934:

There are compelling reasons for German fascism, which do not apply to other countries. The bourgeois democracies may look wistfully at the way in which wages can be cut in Germany and the unemployed enslaved, but they also see drawbacks. . . . Fascism is a stiff drink; you have to be chilled to the bone, and a quick coup

must have prospects of success. Unfortunately, we still haven't the faintest idea of the significance of the World War. Its origins remain shrouded in dense fog. The "salvation of Germany" could never have been achieved in the old democratic form. Regimented as it was, the proletariat was no longer capable of either a foreign or a domestic policy. . . . That of course is a very special situation.

Friends and fellow-exiles, among them Walter Benjamin, came to stay with Brecht. "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich," a ferocious set of stage vignettes, could be performed by refugee troupes and left-front companies outside Germany. There was Paul Hindemith, an early collaborator, to be ironically instructed: "You seem to have tried to set phone books to music." Neoclassicism and ivory-tower distaste are no longer of any use; they are regressive, but not in the ways of National Socialist reaction and atavistic barbarism. Among Brecht's callers was Ferdinand Reyher, a Hollywood writer he had known in Berlin. Why not write a film script on the censorship and inquisitorial suppression of rational truths—on, say, the persecution and recantation of Galileo?

Brecht's "Galileo" was completed in the autumn of 1938, and is the subtlest of his major inventions. Its muted, constrained force, its oddly divided focus—this is a play about the suffocation of free intellectual inquiry and about the sociopolitical irresponsibility of pure scientific pursuits—point to the core crisis in Brecht's outlook. Neither John Willett's often nostalgically "Party line" commentary nor the letters here provided tell the whole story. But the main lines are evident. It was during the summer and autumn of 1938 that Brecht distanced himself from official Marxism-Leninism and the realities of the Soviet system. A number of Brecht's intimates and friends were vanishing into Stalinist camps. His own more inventive works were being attacked as "formalist" or as inappropriate to the concrete requirements of Soviet and Party policies. Brecht may have come to understand the tragic myopia of Stalin's and the Comintern's strategy of fighting against socialists—in Spain, in Germany—rather than against Fascists and Nazis. The imminent Hitler-Stalin Pact did not altogether surprise B.B.'s disenchanted eye.

The result was a largely private position of some complexity. He did not condemn the U.S.S.R. outright. On the

contrary. "The regime, the state apparatus, the Party, its leadership if you will, are developing the country's productive forces," he wrote. "They are also being developed by the national form in which the Soviet Union must enter into the decisive struggle. And there you have the class character of international politics. The world civil war." Brecht's detestation of bourgeois capitalism remained visceral, his intimations of its impending doom as cheerily anarchic as ever. But much in this prophetic loathing, in both its psychology and its means of articulation, harks back to the bohemian nose-thumbing of his youth and to a kind of Lutheran moralism. His acute antennae told him of the stench of bureaucracy, of the gray petit-bourgeois coercions that prevailed in Mother Russia. Even as Martin Heidegger was during this same time developing an inward, "private National Socialism" (the expression comes from an S.S. file), so Brecht was expounding for and to himself a satiric, analytic Communism alien to Stalinist orthodoxy and also to the simplistic needs of the proletariat and the left intelligentsia in the West. For both men, these internalized tactics were highly generative: of a major philosophy and aesthetics in Heidegger's case, of preeminent poetic and theatrical creations in Brecht's.

When the moment came for renewed flight, Brecht acted with phenomenal astuteness. After an interim stay in Sweden and then in Finland, Brecht just before the Nazi assault on Russia (in which his son Frank was to die fighting with the Wehrmacht) travelled across the entire Soviet Union. Keeping a very low profile, this virtuoso of survival then finessed his domestic caravan across the Pacific to Santa Monica and Hollywood. B.B. is said to have replied when Walter Benjamin—himself soon to die a hounded fugitive—asked whether the great playwright would seek haven in Moscow, "I am a Communist, not an idiot."

America had long been a sort of phonetic source of wonder to Brecht. The mere words "Minnesota" and "Mississippi" rang with ambiguous enchantment and menace. He had felt repelled and magnetized by the "jungle" of Manhattan and by what he read and intuited of the slaughterhouses and crazed winds of Chicago. In Weill's tunes to Brecht's lyrics, American elements and syncopations were frequent.

The realities of wartime California were somewhat different. There have in recent years been books and plays about the German, Central European, and Jewish refugee lives around Los Angeles. They tell a sardonic tale. Such lions as Thomas Mann held tight-lipped court. Franz Werfel flourished in the dulcet shade of the "Song of Bernadette" (his blockbuster best-seller). Arnold Schoenberg strove bitterly for recognition. (He was refused a Guggenheim.) Lesser fry buzzed and begged, improvised hectically, scrambled for minor teaching posts, and intrigued against each other with the nastiness of need. Brecht observed the snake pit and trod lightly through it. Once again, stress and marginality proved highly productive.

These are the years of "Mother Courage" (perhaps the most convincing of the full-scale dramas) and of "The Trial of Lucullus," a radio play later set to superb, neglected music by Roger Sessions. In the midst of Hitler's victories, Brecht shaped the enigmatic "Good Person of Setzuan," the wryest of his parables, and "Mr. Puntilla," his dramatization of the theme of master and servant; the Hitler satire "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui" accompanied Brecht's luggage. Who in America but Charles Laughton could truly incarnate the towering, intricate persona of Galileo?

There were, however, few takers. Despite the understanding of translators and critics like Eric Bentley, Brecht's demands, the idiosyncrasies of his stage techniques, and the extreme discipline they required from actors and producers proved intractable. Kurt Weill's "One Touch of Venus" boomed on Broadway. Brecht found himself seeking out little theatres or offering his skills as adapter, reviser, and auxiliary director to such fringe ventures as Elisabeth Bergner's version of Webster's "Duchess of Malfi." Only "Galileo" ever reached the New York stage. Occasional movie scripts and the sale of the rights to the novel version of Brecht's "Simone Machard" kept the pot boiling, but the princely renown of Thomas Mann, together with Weill's success, got under Brecht's skin. So did the perennial, more and more strident miseries of Ruth Berlau. "You seem determined to do everything and neglect nothing to make me really bitter," he wrote to her. "Do you really want to turn our exile

into an endless lovestory with ups and downs, reproaches, doubts, fits of despair, threats, etc. etc.?"

But the root trouble, to be sure, was the false situation Brecht found himself in ideologically. As a Marxist, he saw scant virtues in Roosevelt's New Deal. What pained him about F.D.R.'s death was that it elevated the detestable Churchill to the apparent leadership of the Western alliance. Shrewdly, Brecht saw through the temporary love feast between the capitalist democracies of the West and the heroic folk of Stalingrad. He knew so much more about "Uncle Joe" than did his entranced California hosts or the fellow-travellers who came his feline way that he anticipated both the incipient Cold War and the surge of right-wing witch-hunts in the United States. Characteristically muffled, Brecht's letters, even to familiars, give only hints of what must have been his ironic, impatient solitude. When the Un-American Activities Committee and the F.B.I. came knocking—absurdly, Brecht's links with Gerhard Eisler were thought to have possible bearing on atomic espionage—B.B. was prepared. The Washington hearing took place on October 30, 1947. Brecht landed in Paris on November 1st.

The letters translated in this generous offering allow only incomplete glimpses of the tortuous history of Brecht's final years. B.B. came home to Marxist East Germany via Zurich. An Austrian passport and a Swiss bank account were the discreet safety net. His beginnings in Paradise Regained were thorny. The place gave Brecht "the creeps." His flirtations with modernism and formalism in music and theatrical techniques displeased the gray mastiffs of "socialist realism"—as did his constant emphasis on Germany's tragic past (notably the Thirty Years' War) and on the general history of the defeated and the victimized (as in "The Days of the Commune"). The official note in the G.D.R. was one of militant optimism, of coercive hope in the Stalinist dawn. Rightly, Party bureaucrats sensed in their most illustrious writer an incorrigible streak of irony, of anarchic clairvoyance. Matters came to a dramatic head during the June, 1953, uprising of the East Berlin workers. Privately, Brecht exulted in the genuine emergence of a politicized working class and felt bitterness at its brutal suppression. In an epigram that

went around the world he urged the Party to remedy its situation by "electing a new people."

Nevertheless, and despite somewhat unctuous outrage in the West, Brecht stoutly refused to condemn the regime or to break with his homeland. Mistakes had been made and would be made in the future, but for Brecht history lay on the side of centralized state socialism. The spurious democracy of mass-consumption capitalism continued to be unacceptable to him. His position bore fruit. Brecht's own Berliner Ensemble harvested support and recognition. "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" was produced exactly as Brecht wished. Directors, actors, filmmakers from far and wide came on pilgrimage to the Brecht workshops. A Stalin Prize awarded by Moscow shielded Brecht from the jealous chicaneries of East German officiousness. A calm penetrates the late letters, even to Ruth Berlau. Brecht helped prepare a visit to London of the Ensemble and its overwhelming productions of the "Chalk Circle" and "Mother Courage." These took place, triumphantly, two weeks after Brecht's death, of a heart attack, on August 14, 1956.

**D**URING the night of last June 30th, columns of armored cars, under helicopter cover, churned into what little is left of the G.D.R. carrying millions of freshly printed Deutsche marks. Beyond the smashed Wall, crowds danced and waved Disneyland T-shirts. Nothing in this circus would have surprised Bert Brecht. Nor would the fact that the few who seek out his lapidary tomb in East Berlin are scholars or occasional theatre folk from the "rotten" West.

The best of the poems, the clutch of great plays (in modern drama, only Claudel is of comparable weight) will stay. And the cry of naked pain as it screamed, in perfect silence, out of the open, torn mouth of Helene Weigel in her performance of Mother Courage seems to be getting louder.

—GEORGE STEINER

### Communications, ade.



Karikatur: Elisabeth Shaw

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