

Bertolt Brecht: Case Study and Analysis

1. COLLECTED WORKS

There are four collected editions of the plays: *Versuche*, *Malik* and *Stücke*. Of the *Versuche*, the first seven volumes were published by Gustav Kiepenheuer, Berlin, and have been out of print since 1933. Volume 8 reached proof stage only. Volumes 9-15, edited by Elisabeth Hauptmann, are published by SuhrkampVerlag, Berlin and Frankfurt-am-Main, and in an east German edition by AufbauVerlag, Berlin. They contain poems and essays as well as plays.

The Malik-Verlag, directed by Wieland Herzfelde, published two volumes of *Gesammelte Werke* in 1938. These were printed in Prague and published as from London, and have been out of print since the war. A third volume was ready for binding and a fourth had reached proof stage by the time of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939. The collected plays, or *Stücke*, have appeared in ten volumes, edited by Elisabeth Hauptmann and published by Suhrkamp-Verlag in Frankfurt, then subsequently under licence by Aufbau-Verlag in east Berlin. The Aufbau edition contains some later amendments, and has an important new introduction to Volume I by Brecht; these have been included in the second impression of the Suhrkamp edition. Besides these, an 'historical-critical' edition of all Brecht's works is being planned by the Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv set up in October 1956 in (east) Berlin by Brecht's literary executors and the east German Academy of Arts.

A good inexpensive introduction to the plays is available in the Deutsche Volksbibliothek volume *Mutter Courage und andere Stücke* (i.e. *Puntilla, Die Mutter* and some theoretical essays), Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1957. And Berlott

Brecht (Kulturbund, Berlin, 1957) is a useful collection of excerpts from plays, poems and other works.

2. POEMS

Hauspostille (1927). Suhrkamp-Verlag, Frankfurt, 1951. With appendix giving some of Brecht's tunes. *'Die Drei Soldaten'*. (Long poem, ostensibly for children, with drawings by George Grosz.) *Versuche* 6, Kiepenheuer, Berlin, 1932. *Lieder Gedichte Chöre* (with Hanns Eisler. New poems and songs from plays, with appendix giving some musical settings). Editions du Carrefour, Paris, 1934. *Svendborger Gedichte*. (Poems in exile.) Malik-Verlag, London, 1939. *Hundert Gedichte*. (Selection by Wieland Herzfelde of published and unpublished poems.) Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1951. Not published in Western Germany. (Includes *"Die Erziehung der Hirse"*: a long poem also published separately by the same firm.) *Gedichte*. (Selection by Siegfried Streller of poems included in *Hundert Gedichte*.) Reclam, Leipzig, n.d. (1955). *Kriegsfibel*. (War photographs annotated in four-line verses.) Eulenspiegel Verlag, Berlin, 1955. *Berlott Brecht Gedichte und Lieder*. (Selection by Peter Suhrkamp of published and unpublished poems.) Suhrkamp-Verlag, Berlin and Frankfurt, n.d. (1956). A number of further poems are contained in different volumes of the *Versuche*, notably *'Aus dem Lesebuch für Städtebewohner'* (2), *'Chinesische Gedichte'* (10), *'Studien'* (11), *'Buckower Elegien'* (13) and *'Gedichte aus dem Messingkauf'* (14). A complete edition of the poems is being prepared by Suhrkamp and Aufbau Verlags. *In translation*: *Selected Poems*. (Fifty poems, with English translation by H. R. Hays.) Reynal and Hitchcock, New York, 1947. *Chansons et Poèmes*. (French translations by Alain Bosquet.) Seghers, Paris, 1952.

3. FICTION

Der Dreigroschenroman. (Novel. 1934.) *De Lange and Kiepenheuer*, Amsterdam/Cologne/Berlin, 1950; Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1951. *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Cäsar.* (Unfinished historical work in diary form.) Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1957; Gebrüder Weiss, Berlin, 1957. *Kalendergeschichten.* (Short stories and poems, first collected in 1948.) Rowohlt, Hamburg, 1953; Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1954. *'Flüchtlinggespräche.'* (Dialogues between anti-Nazi exiles.) Part published in second *Sinn und Form* Sonderheft, 1957. For uncollected stories published in periodicals, see Mr Nubel's bibliography. *In translation: A Penny for the Poor.* (*Der Dreigroschenroman*, translated by Desmond Vesey and Christopher Isherwood.) Robert Hale, London, 1937. Under title *The Threepenny Novel*, evergreen Books, New York, 1956; Hanison, London, 1958. *Tales from the Calendar.* Translated by Yvonne Kapp. In course of preparation. *"Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Cäsar."* Partial translation by Dorothy Alexander in *Nimbus* (London), February 1958.

4. THEATER

Schriften zum Theater. (Selected theoretical essays, etc.) Suhrkamp-Verlag, Berlin and Frankfurt, 1957. This contains 'Kleines Organon für das Theater' from *Versuche* 12, 'Gedichte aus dem Messingkauf' from *Versuche* 14, 'Dialektik auf dem Theater' from *Versuche* 15, extracts from *Theaterarbeit* (below), notes on plays, and other published and unpublished writings, edited by Siegfried Unseld. *Theaterarbeit.* (Collective account of the Berliner ensemble's first six productions, edited by Brecht, Berlau, Palitzsch, etc., and fully illustrated.) Dresdner Verlag, Dresden, 1952; Progress-Verlag Johannes Fladung, Düsseldorf, n.d. (1955). This contains a number of important notes and fragments by Brecht, as well as work by other hands and many photographs of the ensemble's performances. Of the published notes and essays not included in either volume the most important for Brecht's theory

are: *'Der Dreigroschenprozess'* (in *Versuche* 3); *'Augsburger Theaterkritiken'* (in second *Sinn und Form Sonderheft*, 1957), and the notes to *Mann ist Mann* and *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe*. A large number of essays in periodicals prior to 1930 have never been collected. 'A Little Organum for the Theater.' (*'Kleines Organon für das Theater'*, translated by Beatrice Gottlieb.) In *Accent* (Urbana), XI, 1, winter 1951. 'The Fourth Wall of China.' (*'Verfremdungseffekte auf der chinesischen Bühne'*, from *Schriften zum Theater*, translated by Eric Walter White.) In *Life and Letters* (London), winter 1936. 'Chinese Acting.' (*Ibid.*, revised version by Eric Bentley.) In *Furioso* (Northfield), Fall 1949. 'A Model for epic Acting.' (*'Die Strassenszene'*, from *Schriften zum Theater*, translated by Bentley.) In *The Sewanee Review* (Sewanee), July-September 1949. 'A New Technique of Acting.' (*'Neue Technik der Schauspielkunst'*, from *Schriften zum Theater*, translated by Eric Bentley.) In *Theatre Arts* (New York), January 1949; in *New Theatre* (London), March 1949. 'Notes to The Threepenny Opera.' (Translated by Vesey and Bentley.) In Bentley (ed.): *From the Modern Repertoire, I*, University of Denver Press, 1949. 'Two essays.' (*'Anmerkungen zur Oper'* and *'Über die Verwendung der Musik'*, translated by Willett). In *The Score* (London), July 1958. 'The German Drama, pre-Hitler.' (Never published in German. Anonymous translation.) In *Left Review* (London), July 1936.

5. POLITICAL WRITINGS

'Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit.' (essay in five parts on the position of the anti-Nazi writer, originally published in 1934.) In *Versuche* 9. *'Drei Reden, zwei Briefe.'* (Speeches of 1935, 1937 and 1955; open letters of 1951 and 1956.) In *Versuche* 15. *'Die Horst-Wessel Legende'* (1935). In *Neue Deutsche Literatur*, Berlin, June 1957. In translation: 'Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties.' (Translation by Richard Winston of *'Fünf Schwierigkeiten'*, etc.) In Dorothy Norman (ed.): *Art and Action*, Twice a Year Press, New York, 1948. (Speech to Paris Writers' Congress of 1935 and Letter to West German Bundestag of 1956, from *'Drei Reden, Zwei Briefe'*, French translation.) In

special number of europe (Paris), January-February 1957. (Brecht's evidence) in House Un-American Activities Committee: *Hearings Regarding Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry*, 80th Congress, 1st Session, 20-30 October 1947. (Brecht's statement, disallowed by the Committee.) In Gordon Kahn: *Hollywood on Trial*, New York, 1948.

6. CRITICISM

'Ober reimlose Lyrik mit unregelmässigen Rhythmen.' (Brecht's essay on his own verse style, first published 1939.) In *Versuche* 12. 'Weite und Vielfalt der realistischen Schreibweise.' (Literal translation of Shelley 'Mask of Anarchy', followed by an essay; first published 1938.) In *Versuche* 13. 'Kulturpolitik und Akademie der Künste.' (On Socialist Realism and the position of the east German Academy.) In *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin), 12 August 1953. *Geschichtene vom Herrn Keuner*. (Aphorisms, etc) In *Versuche* 1, 5, 12 and *Kalendergeschichten*. Collected by Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1958. *Das Wort*, a monthly literary review edited by Brecht, Feuchtwanger and Willi Bredel, was published by Meshdunarodnaya Kniga, Moscow, from July 1936 to March 1939. In translation: 'On Unrhymed Lyrics in Irregular Rhythms.' (Translation by Beatrice Gottlieb of 'Über reimlose Lyrik', etc.) In *The Tulane Drama Review* (New Orleans), November 1957. 'Meditations of Herr Keuner.' (Short selection, translated by Heinrich Fraenkel.) In *New Statesman* (London), 3 November 1956, p. 542.

The basis of Brecht's theoretical writings is his strong dislike of the orthodox theatre, and especially of the ranting and pretentious German classical stage. So many critics who do not understand the language have dismissed Brecht as a typical German that it is important to get this straight. Certain of Brecht's theoretical recommendations can only be understood in terms of the particular German (and Austrian) tradition against which he was revolting.

They may confuse anyone who tries to apply them in a theatre where this tradition no longer holds.

This does not mean that his general objection to the orthodox theatre is not valid for other countries too. From America to Russia, the theatre has designs on the spectator's emotions which tend to prevent him from using his head. The audience is drawn into the 'plot' and made to identify itself with the characters; the means by which this is achieved falsify the picture of reality; and the audience is too contentedly hypnotized to see that it is false. However brilliant the production, its effect (if not its object) is to put us in an uncritical frame of mind.