

Die Singularität und der Rest: Brechts Theater der Anderen

Im *Messingkauf* verweist Brecht wiederholt auf den Menschen, den intendierten Gegenstand der Darstellung, als jemanden, der nicht völlig begriffen oder erkannt werden kann. Mehr noch, er erscheint als jemand, der mit jedem Versuch, ihn entweder durch das Gesetz oder das Theater vollständig auszubestimmen, als Individuum ausgelöscht wird. Brecht antwortet auf die Unbegreiflichkeit des Menschen mit einem *Theater der Anderen*, einer realistischen Theaterpraxis. "Realistisch" bezieht sich hier auf eine Auffassung von Realismus, die von Brecht in einer paläonymischen Geste (Derrida) entleert worden ist, bei der das Attribut sich auf die Realität des Darstellens selbst bezieht. Einerseits zeigt Brechts Auseinandersetzung mit dem Realismus-Begriff, dass als Nachahmung der Vorgänge zwischen unbegreiflichen Menschen jede Darstellung selbst so ungreifbar sein muss wie die Menschen selbst und das Zusammenleben zwischen ihnen, um diese Realität wahrhaft auf die Bühne zu transportieren. Andererseits verweist sein Verständnis des Begriffs auf die Realität des Theaters, auf die Tatsache, dass Menschen sich in einer vorübergehenden Gemeinschaft versammelt haben, und dass jedes Theater, das geheime Abmachungen eingeht, um diese Tatsache zu verbergen, den Anspruch auf das Attribut "realistisch" überhaupt nicht erheben kann.

In *Buying Brass*, Brecht makes repeated reference to the human being, the intended object of presentation on the stage, as somebody who cannot be comprehended, known, or fully grasped. It appears as somebody who is erased as an individual with every attempt made, either by the law or the theater, to fully define it. Brecht's response to the unknowability of the human being is a *theater of Others* that engages in a realistic theater practice. "Realistic" here refers to a notion of realism that has been emptied by Brecht in a paleonymic gesture (Derrida), where the attribute is based on the reality of presentation itself. On the one hand, Brecht's examination of the term reveals that, as an imitation of the interactions that take place between unknowable human beings, all presentation must itself be just as incomprehensible as those human beings and their interactions if it is to truly transport this reality onto the stage. But his understanding of realism also refers to theater reality, to the fact that human beings have gathered in a temporary community with each other, and that any theater that enters into secret arrangements to hide this fact cannot claim to be realistic at all.

Singularity and Remainder: Brecht's Theater of Others

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Bertolt Brecht's relationship to realism has been a hotly contested topic in Brecht research since time immemorial. Some claim links between Brecht and the programmatic bourgeois realists of the nineteenth century,¹ while others claim that Brecht condemned and rejected realism.² However, both of these positions at either end of the spectrum fail to recognize that Brecht's interest in realism seems to have had little to do with merely aligning himself with or rejecting realist aesthetics. Instead, in the 1930s and 1940s and in the *Messingkauf* (*Buying Brass*) too, he seems to have been *rethinking* existing concepts of realism and theater in a paleonymic manner (Jacques Derrida). There is one aspect of this conceptual rethinking that has seemingly received little attention, namely Brecht's renegotiation of the idea of the *Mensch*, the human being, which is carried out in particular in his *Messingkauf* and other texts written at a similar time during his exile, such as "Die Straßenszene" ("The Street Scene"). In this article, I contend that the concept of the human being negotiated in these texts puts Brecht's thinking in close proximity to discussions of alterity and the Other, revealing a theater that is ultimately nothing less than a *theater of Others*.³

The concept of "egology" derives from Husserlian phenomenology: for Edmund Husserl, as for René Descartes, there is nothing in the world that does not relate back to the perceiving subject; the subject is "the ground for all worldly objects since what defines them as objects in the first place is that they are given in consciousness."⁴ The world is thus egological due to the fact that it is rooted in the *ego*, the Self. Emmanuel Levinas picks up on the concept of egology and uses it in his critique of ontology to describe an order that violently excludes the Other from the totality of its self-referentiality. In his book *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas posits against this egological order a radical exteriority, an infinitude that moves toward the Other, welcoming the Other as Other. It does not overcome the ego of the Self; rather, the Self, by overcoming its own interiority and finitude, stays open to the Other by acknowledging that it "escapes [the Self's] grasp by an essential dimension."⁵

The theater under scrutiny in the *Messingkauf* is the egological theater of a humanism that, according to Nikolaus Müller-Schöll, takes as its premise the "prästabiliert[e] Identität des Menschen . . . , die [es] in jedem

Einzelnen ‘reproduziert’ sehen will. Dieser Humanismus muss zerstören, was immer sich dem Ideal der vorausgesetzten ‘Menschheit’ widersetzen könnte” (“pre-stabilized identity of the human being . . . that it wishes to see ‘reproduced’ in every single being. This humanism has to destroy anything that might resist the ideal of a preconceived ‘humanity’”).⁶ The human being that is shown in this theater is knowable and comprehensible and behaves according to the laws of a human ideal. In the *Messingkauf*, an unspecified character puts it in the following words:

Viele gehen davon aus, dass der Mensch eine fertige Sache ist, so und so aussehend in diesem Licht, so und so in jenem, dies und das sagend in dieser Lage, dies und das in jener, und so versuchen sie von Anfang an diese Figur zu erfassen und ganz zu werden.

Many people assume that a human being is the finished article, looking like this in one light and like that in another, saying this in one situation and that in another; and so right from the start they attempt to grasp this figure and to become it completely.⁷

The notion of the human being as a “fertige Sache,” a “finished article,” is based on the conviction that it is possible to account for and present the human being as it is, to explain its actions and ontologically determine its essence. This is the basis for not just the “old” theater under scrutiny in the *Messingkauf* but also for laws and principles in general. One such principle is the Marxist principle of class, which, as the Philosopher in the *Messingkauf* explains, must necessarily generalize and schematize:

Der Begriff Klasse z.B. ist ein Begriff, in dem viele Einzelpersonen begriffen, also als Einzelpersonen ausgelöscht sind. Für die Klasse gelten gewisse Gesetzlichkeiten. Sie gelten für die Einzelperson so weit, als sie mit der Klasse identisch ist, also nicht absolut; denn man ist ja zu dem Begriff Klasse gekommen, indem man von bestimmten Eigenheiten der Einzelperson absah.

The concept of “class,” for example, is a concept which embraces a great many individuals and thereby deprives them of their individuality. There are certain laws that apply to class. They apply to individuals only in so far as those individuals coincide with their class, i.e. not absolutely; for the concept of class was only arrived at by ignoring certain idiosyncrasies of the individual.⁸

Here, the Philosopher reveals the limitations of one of Marxism’s central concepts but also demonstrates the extent to which a law can only ever generalize and therefore never account for the idiosyncrasies or singularity of the actions of the *Einzelperson* (or “single person,” which I will refer to

in the following as *Einzelperson* instead of using the term from the *Buying Brass* translation—“individual”—as “individual” has other connotations, and Brecht seems to intentionally avoid using this term throughout the *Messingkauf*). The law or principle is paradoxical in that it “embraces” (as *begreifen* is translated in *Buying Brass*)—that is, “grasps” or “accounts for”—the *Einzelperson*, but also extinguishes it at the same time. In the act of being “grasped”—*begriffen*—the *Einzelperson* becomes a general person and therefore disappears as an *Einzelperson*, as the law does not allow for any exception. The English translation quoted above is a little problematic, as the German text specifically says that the *Einzelperson* is therefore “ausgelöscht” under the law, which literally translates as “extinguished”—expunged, erased, obliterated. It is not merely a matter of depriving them of their individuality. This extinguishing or obliterating of the *Einzelperson* under the law is reminiscent of the young comrade in *Die Maßnahme* (*The Measures Taken*), who, unmasked and an *Einzelperson* once more, is literally “extinguished,” erased in the lime pit, as he is unable to sacrifice his singularity to the law: “Wer für den Kommunismus kämpft, hat von allen Tugenden nur eine: dass er für den Kommunismus kämpft” (“He who fights for Communism / Has of all virtues only one: / That he fights for Communism”).⁹

The passage from the *Messingkauf* pertaining to the human being as a “fertige Sache” or “finished article” ends with the following: “Es ist aber besser, den Menschen als eine unfertige Sache zu betrachten und ihn langsam entstehen zu lassen, von Aussage zu Aussage und von Handlung zu Handlung” (“But it’s better to see a human being as an unfinished article, one who should be allowed to develop gradually, from utterance to utterance and action to action”).¹⁰ Here, the human being is seen as something processual: letting it “develop gradually” implies a becoming that, together with the reference to the human being only being knowable at the end of its actions, is very reminiscent of the Hegelian model.¹¹ It is only at the end of the human being’s life, when its actions have been completed, that it will become an absolute being and will be knowable as such. But until then, it cannot be known, and it must also be presented in such a way: as unknown and unknowable. However, it is precisely by continuously using and emphasizing words like *Einzelmensch* and *Einzelperson*, by stressing the *singularity* of the human being, that the *Messingkauf* goes beyond the notion of the human as being merely processual. As the Dramaturg explains:

Ein Bauer, der auftritt ist nicht *der* Bauer, d.h. der Inbegriff aller Bauern, etwas Schematisches, Mittleres, sondern *ein* Bauer, ein besonderer Bauer mit Privateigenschaften und Sonderschicksal. Gegenüber einem städtischen Arbeiter oder einem Beamten ist er aber allerdings *der* Bauer. Er vertritt da den besonderen Standpunkt der Bauernklasse.

[A] peasant on the stage is not *the* quintessential peasant, the embodiment of all peasants, a schematic, average figure; he is *a* peasant, one particular peasant with his own personal character traits and his own special fate. In relation to an industrial worker or a public servant, however, he is *the* peasant. In that case he represents the specific point of view of the peasant class.¹²

If we disregard the unique characteristics of the specific peasant, he tends to behave in a particular way compared with a worker or a public servant, but the class in itself is made up of *Einzelpersonen* who, due to their own unique singularity, do not necessarily behave according to the logical determinations of class law. Hans-Thies Lehmann and Helmut Lethen discuss at length the notion of singularity in Brecht's *Lehrstück* (learning play) theory in their 1978 essay. According to them, human singularity is not subsumed within the supposed dialectics of Brecht's *Lehrstücke*. There is a remainder, a *Rest*, which refuses and withdraws from the dialectic that seeks to resolve any contradiction. There is no "restlose Überführung," remainderless, complete subsumption of the singular under the law.¹³ There is thus a "radikale *Heterogenität* im Subjekt dem Begriff gegenüber, die von keiner Dialektik verschlungen werden kann, sondern immer von neuem jede begriffliche 'Position' aufs Spiel setzt" ("radical *heterogeneity* within the subject compared with the concept, which cannot be engulfed by any dialectic, but which again and again puts each conceptual 'position' on the line").¹⁴ Although the *Messingkauf* cannot be described as a *Lehrstück*,¹⁵ both the learning plays and the *Messingkauf* constantly reveal the shortcomings of the law and the measure, and demonstrate the extent to which the human being is an exception that cannot be subsumed by the law and therefore must be understood as such, as an exception that no "philosophisches, wissenschaftliches oder politisches System . . . erkennen, begreifen oder beherrschen [kann]" ("philosophical, academic or political system can recognize, grasp or command").¹⁶ As the Philosopher says, "Ihr stellt nicht Prinzipien dar, sondern Menschen" ("You are not portraying principles but human beings"),¹⁷ thereby setting the human being in opposition to a mode of thinking based on principles, as that which cannot be subsumed by the principle or the law.

In "What is Epic Theatre," there is a quote that Walter Benjamin attributes to Brecht in which the human being is described as "nicht ganz, noch endgültig zu erkennen," and as a "nicht so leicht Erschöpfliches, viele Möglichkeiten in sich Bergendes und Verbergendes" ("he can never be recognized completely, never once and for all, . . . he is not so easily exhaustible, . . . he holds and conceals so many possibilities within himself").¹⁸ According to this description, it is not possible, as Müller-Schöll writes, "[den Menschen] in Gänze nach den Gesetzen der Kausalität [zu] erfassen, seine Handlungen . . . vollkommen vorher[z]u sehen" ("to fully

grasp the human being according to the laws of causality, to completely predict its actions”).¹⁹ The human being can behave *this way*, but it can also behave in quite a different way.²⁰ According to an unspecified figure in the *Messingkauf*, humans must similarly be presented as “wandelnde Rohstoffe, unausgeformt und unausdefiniert, die überraschen können” (“shifting raw material, not fully formed and not fully defined, capable of surprising us”).²¹ Characters are not simply entities presented in order to execute plot points or to arbitrate the action, nor are they fully psychologized. They should have just as much potential and be just as undefined and unpredictable as human beings in reality.

In his first “Nachtrag” or “Appendix” to the theory of the *Messingkauf* in a journal entry dated August 2, 1940, Brecht writes that art is

nur an ganz bestimmten Abbildern, d.h. Abbildern mit bestimmter Wirkung, interessiert. Der Einfühlungsakt, den sie produziert, würde durch ein kritisches Eingehen des Zuschauers auf die Vorgänge selbst lediglich gestört. Die Frage ist nun, ob es überhaupt unmöglich ist, die Abbildung der wirklichen Vorgänge zur Aufgabe der Kunst zu machen und damit die kritische Haltung des Zuschauers zu den wirklichen Vorgängen zu einer kunstgemäßen Haltung.

only concerned with specific depictions, i.e. depictions with specific effects. The act of empathy produced by these effects would simply be disrupted if the spectator adopted a critical approach to the incidents themselves. So the question is whether it is at all possible to make the representation of real-life incidents the task of art, and thereby to make the spectator’s critical attitude towards those real-life incidents compatible with art.²²

The task that Brecht therefore sets for himself must take place in two steps: firstly, he needs to establish whether art can render “wirkliche Vorgänge” or “real-life incidents,” which implies that the presentation of these real-life incidents is not yet the task of art. If the answer to this first question is “yes,” in a second step, a way must be found to allow the spectator to take a critical attitude towards these presentations of real-life depictions as part of an artistic experience. Thus, in the list of characters, the Philosopher is described as searching for a theater that delivers “getreue Abbilder der Vorgänge unter den Menschen” (“accurate depictions of incidents between people”) and allows for “eine Stellungnahme des Zuschauers” (“a response from the spectator”).²³ The “wirklichen Vorgänge”—now the “getreuen Abbilder der Vorgänge unter den Menschen”—are set in a causal relation to the critical “Stellungnahme des Zuschauers.” The latter is dependent on the former. But what does Brecht mean by “getreue Abilder” or “accurate depictions”? Brecht seems to be alluding to realism, but how does he understand this realism? Is Brecht turning towards Socialist Realism? And,

perhaps most confusingly: how can the singular human being described in the *Messingkauf* be presented realistically if it cannot be utterly known or presented, and cannot be fully recognized or grasped?

Before we go on, it is important to note the decided lack of terminological determinacy that prevails throughout the *Messingkauf*. Although Konstantin Stanislavski and Gerhard Hauptmann, for example, are occasionally mentioned by name, generally speaking, no real qualitative difference seems to be made between Naturalism and Realism or between the various Realisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although it does seem to be above all Socialist Realism and its Engelsian (“the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances”²⁴), Stanislavskian–psychological-realist (i.e., “die minutiösen Imitationen der Reaktionen lebender Menschen” [“minutely detailed imitations of the reactions of living human beings”]²⁵), and Lukácsian (“diese Wirklichkeit so zu erfassen, wie sie tatsächlich *beschaffen ist*” [“to grasp this reality as it is actually *constituted*”]²⁶) manifestations that are the subject of criticism. Brecht constructs a kind of straw man that he uses to scrutinize the theater developments of at least the last two hundred years, the origins of which he situates in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. This is important, as what unites all of these positions in the *Messingkauf* is their use of the technique of *Einfühlung* (empathy) to achieve the desired effect. The Actor describes one of the paradoxes of *Einfühlung* in the theater as follows:

Damit der Zuschauer sich in den Helden einleben konnte, musste er eine ziemlich schematische Figur mit möglichst wenigen Einzelzügen sein, damit er möglichst viele Zuschauer “deckte.” Er musste also unrealistisch sein. Stücke mit solchen Helden nannte man dann realistische, da man von diesen Helden etwas über die Realität erfuhr, aber nur auf unnaturalistische Weise.

For the spectators to identify with him, he needed to be a fairly schematic figure with as few individual characteristics as possible, so that as many spectators as possible would be “included.” So he had to be unrealistic. Plays with heroes like this were then labelled “realist,” because such heroes did communicate something about reality, but in a non-naturalistic way.²⁷

In order to create a realistic effect, characters had to be made flat enough and have so few corners that as many spectators as possible could seamlessly identify with them, which, in turn, has little to do with the singularity of the human being that I have just described. The supposedly realistic, flat depiction of the human being was thus necessarily unrealistic. In a long exchange with the Actor and the Dramaturg, the Philosopher makes similar remarks about the contradictions of supposedly realistic practice:

Die Figur, welche für die Einfühlung bereitgestellt wird (der Held), kann nicht realistisch geschildert werden, ohne für die Einfühlung des Zuschauers verdorben zu werden. Realistisch geschildert, muss sie sich mit den Geschehnissen ändern, was sie für die Einfühlung zu unstat macht, und sie muss mit begrenzter Blickweite ausgestattet sein, was zur Folge haben muss, dass ihr Standpunkt auch dem Zuschauer zu wenig Rundblick gewährt.

You can't give a realistic portrayal of the characters you are making available for empathy [e.g., the hero] without making it impossible for the spectator to empathize with them. A realistic portrayal would mean that they have to change with events, which would make them too erratic to empathize with, and they must also be given a very limited viewpoint, which would inevitably mean that the spectator who shared it would lack an overall perspective.²⁸

Both passages criticize a supposed realism whose presentations are too inflated, too essentialized.²⁹ Therefore, the supposed realism of the previous theater under scrutiny is not just unrealistic due to its flat presentation of human beings without singular characteristics, but also because it does not allow the human being to change during the course of the presentation. A character that is as singular and contradictory as the human being, a character who changes, is unable to bring about the effect that the bourgeois theater must generate in order to fulfil its purpose. The "flat" human being without singular characteristics thus becomes the principle of idealistic-realistic *Darstellung* (presentation) in the previous theater.

In a *Messingkauf* text entitled "Einfühlung" ("Empathy"), an unspecified character describes this process in Stanislavski's dramatic theory as follows:

Die vorläufig letzte theoretisch durchgeplante Spielweise bürgerlichen Theaters, welche man mit dem Namen des großen russischen Regisseurs und Schauspielers Stanislawski verbindet, benutzt eine Technik, welche die *Wahrheit* des Spiels garantieren soll. Das Verhalten der Schauspieler auf der Bühne soll sich in nichts, nicht im kleinsten Detail, von dem Verhalten der Menschen im wirklichen Leben unterscheiden. Durch einen besonderen psychischen Akt der Einfühlung in die darzustellende Person bringt es der Schauspieler zu minutiösen Imitationen der Reaktionen lebender Menschen. Dieser psychische Akt besteht aus einer tiefen Selbstversenkung, in welcher der Schauspieler sich in die Seele der darzustellenden Person "einlebt," sich selber so restlos in diese Person verwandelnd, welcher Akt, richtig ausgeführt, vom Zuschauer dann mitgemacht wird, so dass auch dieser sich restlos in die vorgeführte Person einleben kann.

The last acting style in bourgeois theatre thus far to be underpinned by a coherent theoretical plan is the style associated with the Russian director and actor Stanislavsky. It employs techniques designed to guarantee the *truth* of a performance. The way the actors behave on stage is not supposed to differ in any way, not even in the tiniest detail, from the way people behave in real life. By way of a special psychological act of empathy with the characters they are playing, the actors produce minutely detailed imitations of the reactions of living human beings. This psychological act consists in a process of intense introspection, during which the actors “immerse themselves” in the soul of the character and transform themselves completely into that character.³⁰

The “old” theater under scrutiny in the *Messingkauf*, here in its Stanislavskian manifestation, is thus a theater of egology that must extinguish all exteriority and difference in order to achieve its desired effects. The Self must dominate the Other, thus obliterating it. In the pure indifference and interiority of the theater, everybody present—actors, characters, spectators—merge into one. This process creates *one* subject, *one* class, *one* mass, *one* humanity out of the mass. In this theater, whatever is not the Self must be derived from the Self;³¹ subjectivity can only ever refer to itself, never to anything else, thereby violently excluding the Other. In order to unfurl its effects, the realism of the “old” theater requires a theater apparatus that promotes the illusion of egological reality by hiding the very same.

The characters illuminate the architectural aspects of creating such egological illusions in the theater in an in-depth discussion of the fourth wall. The Dramaturg first provides a fairly precise description of the said fourth wall, after which the Actor explains the illusion that it creates as follows:

DER SCHAUSPIELER Du verstehst, das Publikum sieht, selber ungesehen, ganz intime Vorgänge. Es ist genau, als ob einer durch ein Schlüsselloch eine Szene belauscht unter Leuten, die keine Ahnung haben, dass sie nicht unter sich sind. In Wirklichkeit arrangieren wir natürlich alles so, dass man alles gut sieht. Dieses Arrangement wird nur verborgen.

THE ACTOR: You get the idea? The audience sees very intimate episodes without itself being seen. It’s just like somebody looking through a keyhole at a scene between people who have no idea that they are not alone. In reality, of course, we arrange it all so that you get a good view of everything. We just hide the fact that it’s been arranged.³²

After another brief exchange, the Philosopher asks the Actor:

DER ARBEITER Ich brauche sie nicht. Aber vielleicht brauchen die Künstler sie?

DER SCHAUSPIELER Für realistisches Spiel wird sie als nötig angesehen.

DER ARBEITER Ich bin für realistisches Spiel.

DER PHILOSOPH Aber dass man im Theater sitzt und nicht vor einem Schlüsselloch, ist doch auch eine Realität! Wie kann es da realistisch sein, das wegzuschminken? Nein, die vierte Wand wollen wir niederlegen. Das Abkommen ist hiemit [*sic*] gekündigt. Zeigt in Zukunft ganz ohne Scheu, dass ihr alles so arrangiert, wie es für unsere Einsicht am besten ist.

THE WORKER: I don't need it, but perhaps the actors do?

THE ACTOR: For realistic acting it's considered essential.

THE WORKER: I'm in favour of realistic acting.

THE PHILOSOPHER: But it's also a reality that we are sitting in a theatre and not with our eye pressed to a keyhole. How can it be realistic to try and gloss over that fact? No, we need to demolish the fourth wall: the agreement is hereby terminated. Don't be afraid, in future, to show that you've arranged everything in the way best calculated to help us understand.³³

With “Arrangement” and “geheime Abmachung” (“secret understanding”) the Philosopher alludes to something akin to the theatrical pact between actors and spectators, a convention according to which those present in the theater “agree that what takes place on the stage is always referring to what takes place in the story world, and that the corresponding real and mental spaces must not be confused one with the other even though they look very much alike.”³⁴ The Actor insists that the fourth wall is absolutely necessary for “realistisches Spiel” (“realistic acting”), while the Worker—revealing himself to be the true “realist” among the characters—aligns himself with “realistisches Spiel” by claiming that the fourth wall and these secret understandings are not necessary for such a theater, thereby making the reader aware that he has a different understanding of realism. In a next step, the Philosopher expands the concept of “realism” by situating at least one of the realities that realism refers to on the stage and demands that the reality of the theater situation also be accounted for, as any realistic presentation that “gloss[es] over”³⁵ this reality cannot be a realistic presentation at all. The Philosopher states, flat out: “Es scheint . . . das, was ihr Realismus nanntet, kein Realismus gewesen zu sein” (“what you labelled ‘realism’ doesn't seem to have been realism at all”).³⁶ The supposed realism of the “old” theater thus reveals itself to be unrealistic, which poses the question of what a realistic realism might look like in the Philosopher's (or Worker's) eyes.

In his text on Brecht's relationship to realism, Hans-Joachim Hahn writes that what the Augsburgers shared with the “programmatischen Bürgerlichen Realisten” (“programmatically bourgeois realists”) of the

nineteenth century was “dass seine Literatur auf gesellschaftliche Wirkungen setzt und gerade darin ihren Realitätsgehalt bezeichnet. Diese Literatur will auf eine historisch gegebene gesellschaftliche und politische Realität einwirken” (“that its literature focused on social effects, which was precisely where it viewed its reality component to lie. This literature wanted to influence a historically given social and political reality”).³⁷ In 1972, Klaus-Detlef Müller similarly writes of a Brechtian concept of realism, “nach dem die Kunst nicht Abbildung wirklicher Vorgänge, sondern ein Wirklichkeitsfaktor ist, ein wirkendes Moment im dialektischen Prozess” (“according to which art is not the depiction of real-life incidents, but a reality factor, an influential element in the dialectical process”).³⁸ But what self-confessed “political” artist, realist or otherwise, does not want to exert some influence on reality by means of his or her art? Peter Brooker claims that Brecht would later appropriate the conventions of realism and the realities of emotional experience that he had suppressed during the “intellectualism” of his young years.³⁹ By contrast, Katalin Trencsényi takes the position that Brecht condemned realistic-naturalist theater both in the *Messingkauf* and in general.⁴⁰ However, what positions such as these fail to recognize is that, for Brecht, it was not about merely accepting or rejecting realism. Instead, in the 1930s and 1940s and in the *Messingkauf* in particular, the main point seems to have been *rethinking* both existing concepts of realism and theater in general.

Brecht decides at the beginning of his work on the *Messingkauf* to end his great experiment *paleonymically* with and in the theater. A key aspect of Derridean deconstruction, the paleonymic gesture has little to do with “moving from one concept to another” and more to do with “reversing and displacing a conceptual order as well as the nonconceptual order with which it is articulated.”⁴¹ In the course of this shift, the old name is kept “provisionally and strategically.”⁴² What is essential here is that the twofold paleonymic gesture questions the opposition between immanent examination and radical rupture;⁴³ it thus suspends and oscillates outside the dichotomy of “reform” and “revolution,” that is, it is neither about merely reforming something from the inside by adjusting it here or there, nor it is about abolishing it violently from the outside and replacing it with something new. Upon closer inspection, this paleonymic process of deconstruction—*Abbau*, a key term in the *Messingkauf*⁴⁴—reveals itself to be the Brechtian method par excellence. For example, in 1938, Brecht writes in relation to the political issue of realism: “Und jetzt kommen wir zu dem Begriff Realismus. Und auch diesen Begriff werden wir als einen alten, viel und von vielen und zu vielen Zwecken gebrauchten Begriff vor der Verwendung erst reinigen müssen” (“We now come to the concept of realism. It is an old concept that has been much used by many and for many purposes, and before it can be applied we must cleanse it too”).⁴⁵ His aim is to free the term from the dust of its dogmatic utilization by thinkers like Georg Lukács and

the champions of Socialist Realism, who, as Müller-Schöll writes, stood for nothing less than “als eine von Störungen freie Illusion der (klein-)bürgerlichen Wirklichkeit auf der Bühne” (“an illusion of (petty) bourgeois reality on the stage, free from disruptions”).⁴⁶ The “cleansing” of the term is therefore Brecht’s attempt to conquer his opponents by their own means, by turning their own concept against them.⁴⁷ Moreover, Brecht inverts formalism, the pendant to “realism” during the expressionism debate, in a similar paleonymic gesture to again wield it against his opponents: “solange man unter Realismus einen Stil und nicht eine Haltung versteht, ist man Formalist, nichts anderes” (“as long as by realism one understands a style and not an attitude, one is nothing other than a formalist”).⁴⁸ Brecht’s argumentation exposes the supposed realists as nothing more than dogmatic formalists due to their insistence upon limiting themselves to a single aesthetic movement. “Der Kampf gegen den Formalismus,” as Brecht maintains in 1951, “muss sich also richten sowohl gegen die Vorherrschaft der Form . . . als auch gegen ihre Liquidierung” (“The fight against formalism must be directed against both the predominance of form . . . and its liquidation”).⁴⁹ Whereas for the dogmatic thinkers of Socialist Realism the reality of realism always pertains to *what* is being shown, to the content of the presentation, for Brecht, it is also a question of *how*, a question of form. Hahn is partially right when he says that the reality that Brecht’s realism refers to is the reality that is affected by the presentation. But the reality of Brecht’s concept of realism is also located in the *reality of the theater*. The reality that Brecht’s concept of realism refers to, as it is unfurled in the *Messingkauf*, is the reality of presenting, of showing someone else—an Other—the reality of the place in which the presentation takes place and the reality of being together in the theater.

All of the points that we have looked at so far—the idea of the human being propagated in the *Messingkauf* and the discussions of the shortcomings of so-called realism in the previous theater—are brought to a head in a number of texts that all deal with demonstrations that take place on the street corner, such as the poem “Über alltägliches Theater” (“On Everyday Theatre”) and “Die Straßenszene,” the latter published as a separate text in the *BFA*, although it was originally intended for inclusion in the *Messingkauf* in Brecht’s early metatexts.⁵⁰ One of the central aspects of the demonstration on the street corner seems to be that of *Unverständnis*, of incomprehension. In “Einfühlung” (“Empathy”), the unspecified character says the following about Stanislavski’s “realistic” method of presentation:

Vermittels der stanislawskischen Spielweise etwa kann zweifellos ein einfacher Vorgang wie z.B. die Entwicklung einer Eifersucht in einem Individuum so dargestellt werden, dass auf der Bühne nichts vorkommt, was nicht auch im Leben vorkommen könnte. . . . Es ist jedoch nicht schwer, einzusehen, dass eine solche Wahrheit nicht schon ohne

weiteres alle Fragen beantwortet, die gestellt werden können. Auf solche Weise ist jeder beliebige Vorgang zwischen Menschen an einer wirklichen Straßenecke “wahr” und zugleich unverstündlich.

The Stanislavskian style of acting can undoubtedly be used to portray a simple process such as the development of jealousy in an individual, for example, in such a way that nothing happens on the stage which could not also happen in real life. . . . It is plain to see, however, that this kind of truth does not automatically answer all the questions that might potentially be asked. It makes any incident between people on a real street corner “true” and at the same time incomprehensible.⁵¹

I would like to concentrate for a moment on the paradox opened up here between “truth” and “incomprehensibility.” For even if, as shown here, the portrayal carried out by the Stanislavskian actor is as “true” as the incident on the street corner, it is still “incomprehensible.” This incomprehensibility has to do, on the one hand, with the broader social “Kausalnexus” (“causal nexus”)⁵² that is described in more detail in the ensuing discussion: all the spectator sees is the emotion being depicted and its immediate cause, but every immediate cause has its own cause, creating a whole chain of causes that cannot be conveyed in the “true” Stanislavskian presentation or during the incident on the real street corner.⁵³ But, although it was of paramount importance to Brecht to reveal this “causal nexus” in the theater, I would like to leave this aspect aside in order to concentrate on the process of demonstration and suggest that the incomprehensibility described here also stems from the “truth” of the demonstration’s *inability* to present precisely these causes, as described in “Über alltägliches Theater”—more or less a poetic summary of the street scene. In this poem, the real-life demonstration of an incident on the street corner is “true” and “incomprehensible” to the extent that it never claims to answer all questions by fully re-presenting reality; instead, its aim is to stimulate questions from the spectator, that is, it is not the demonstration itself that generates “truth” about the causal nexus but the spectator’s critical interventions and involvement. It would never occur to the demonstrator to present an exhaustive depiction of what he is demonstrating, because:

. . . Immer
Bleibt er der Zeigende, selbst nicht Verwickelte. Jener
Hat ihn nicht eingeweihet, er
Teilt nicht seine Gefühle
Noch seine Anschauungen. Er weiß von ihm
Nur wenig. . . .

. . . He always
Remains the demonstrator, the one not involved. The man

Did not open his heart to him, he
 Does not share his feelings
 Or his opinions. He knows hardly anything
 About him. . . .⁵⁴

The act that is imitated on the street corner thus remains incomprehensible, as the demonstrator himself does not understand everything, cannot render or fully re-present the incident in his demonstration. This is because, as it is stated in “Die Straßenszene,” the demonstrator derives “seine Charaktere ganz und gar aus ihren Handlungen. . . . Er imitiert ihre Handlungen und gestattet dadurch Schlüsse auf sie. . . . Für unseren Straßendemonstranten bleibt der *Charakter* des zu Demonstrierenden eine Größe, die er nicht völlig *auszubestimmen* hat” (“his characters entirely from their actions. He imitates their actions and so allows conclusions to be drawn about them. . . . To the street demonstrator the *character* of the person being demonstrated remains a quantity that *need not be completely defined*”).⁵⁵

In contrast to the ontological objective of the previous theater, the aim here is a phenomenological one, as the demonstrator can “only” claim to imitate what he perceives. *Er kann ihn nicht ausbestimmen*: he cannot completely—*restlos*—define the Other; he cannot “capture” him, his character, his substance within his presentation; he does not appropriate him. The Other remains an Other: “Unser Demonstrant braucht nicht alles, nur einiges von dem Verhalten seiner Personen zu imitieren, ebenso viel, dass man ein Bild bekommen kann” (“Our demonstrator need not imitate every aspect of his character’s behaviour, but only so much as to give a picture”).⁵⁶ However, this picture is fleeting and can only ever be an excerpt, an allusion. A theater that takes the street scene as its model and breaks with the “Gewohnheit des üblichen Theaters, aus den Charakteren die Handlungen zu begründen, die Handlungen dadurch der Kritik zu entziehen, dass sie als aus den Charakteren, die sie vollziehen, unhinderbar, mit Naturgesetzlichkeit hervorgehend dargestellt werden” (“orthodox theatre’s habit of basing the actions on the characters and having the former exempted from criticism by presenting them as an unavoidable consequence deriving by natural law from the characters who perform them”)⁵⁷ presents an act that “offenbar keineswegs das [ist], was wir unter einem Kunstvorgang verstehen” (“is clearly very far from what we mean by an artistic [incident]”).⁵⁸ This is because the act of demonstration that is carried out by the demonstrator is an act among *humans*: “wandelnde Rohstoffe, unausgeformt und unausdefiniert, die überraschen können” (“shifting raw material, not fully formed and not fully defined, capable of surprising us”).⁵⁹

For Levinas, the “Stranger” is one of the faces of the “Other.”⁶⁰ Brecht himself did not seem to use the term “Other”; however, he did make repeated reference to aspects of *Fremdheit*—strangeness—in expressions such as “fremde Person” (“stranger,” “strange person”). I would, however,

argue, that by using such expressions, Brecht is in fact referring to an entity very much like the Other. For, just like Levinas' Other, the Stranger being presented by the demonstrator is not fully or exhaustively comprehended or appropriated; the demonstrator

muss den Demonstrierten als eine fremde Person wiedergeben, er darf bei seiner Darstellung nicht das "er tat das, er sagte das" auslöschen. Er darf es nicht zur *restlosen Verwandlung* in die demonstrierte Person kommen lassen. . . . Er vergisst nie und gestattet nie, zu vergessen, dass er nicht der Demonstrierte, sondern der Demonstrant ist. Das heißt: was das Publikum sieht, ist nicht eine Fusion zwischen Demonstrant und Demonstriertem, nicht ein selbstständiges, widerspruchloses Drittes mit aufgelösten Konturen von 1 (Demonstrant) und 2 (Demonstriertem), wie das uns gewohnte Theater es uns in seinen Produktionen darbietet.

must present the person demonstrated as a stranger, he must not eliminate the "he did that, he said that" element in his performance. He must not go so far as to be *completely transformed* into the person demonstrated. . . . He never forgets, nor does he allow it to be forgotten, that he is not the subject but the demonstrator. That is to say, what the audience sees is not a fusion between demonstrator and subject, not some third, independent, uncontradictory entity with isolated features of (a) demonstrator and (b) subject, such as the orthodox theatre puts before us in its productions.⁶¹

Thus, when an actor "ein fremdes Gesicht schneide[t]" ("[adopts] somebody else's facial expression"—literally a "strange/foreign/other face"), they should never, as stated in another passage in the *Messingkauf*, completely erase their own: "Was er tun soll, ist: das Sichüberschneiden der beiden Gesichter zeigen" ("What they should do is show the two faces overlapping").⁶² In the Janus-like "Sichüberschneiden" between the face of the presenter and that of the Stranger, the former retains its distance to the latter:

Und mit Staunen
Mögt ihr eines betrachten: dass dieser Nachahmende
Nie sich in einer Nachahmung verliert. Er verwandelt sich
Nie zur Gänze in den, den er nachahmt. Immer
Bleibt er der Zeigende, selbst nicht Verwickelte.

And with surprise
Observe, if you will, one thing: that this imitator
Never loses himself in his imitation. He never entirely
Transforms himself into the man he is imitating. He always
Remains the demonstrator, the one not involved.⁶³

When the demonstrator steps into his character, it never leads to his *restlos*, remainder-less, transformation; he must always show both himself and the character that he is showing. He must also “sein Wissen um das Betrachtetwerden zum Ausdruck bringen” (“demonstrate [his] awareness of being observed”),⁶⁴ that his showing is being seen, and therefore point to the remainder, the excess, between him and the character he is presenting. The presenter therefore concedes that we do not encounter the Other being presented “unmittelbar, auf Augenhöhe, als verständliches Zeichen” (“immediately, eye-to-eye, as a comprehensible sign”), but as a Levinasian *trace*.⁶⁵ Consequently, the demonstrator should not hide the process of embodiment but must always remain visible as a presenter presenting a character. The only thing that the demonstrator on the street corner and therefore the presenter in the theater that is based on this model can present is *that he is presenting*—the reality of his presentation. The remainder, the excess, the *Rest* between him and the character resists representation and alludes as a trace to the concrete reality of the theater situation as that of *being-with*.⁶⁶ The Philosopher’s repeated pleas for “Schicksal” (“fate”)⁶⁷ to be understood as something made by human beings and the class to be understood as a gathering of singular *Einzelpersonen* shows that the presentation of the “Zusammenleben der Menschen” (“the way people live together”)⁶⁸ pertains veritably to human beings and their lives *with Others*.

Unlike the previous egological theater and its techniques that extinguish the singularity of the *Einzelperson*, the incomprehensibility of the Other, the *Messingkauf* propagates a *realistic* presentation and *realistic* presenting whose attribute is based on the reality of presenting itself. In the *Messingkauf*, a practice of presentation is therefore in the midst of taking shape that is less a practice of realism than it is a realistic practice in a twofold sense: on the one hand, as it is based on “Nachahmungen von Vorfällen aus dem menschlichen Zusammenleben” (“imitations of incidents from people’s lives together”),⁶⁹ which are just as ungraspable and incomprehensible as “menschliches Zusammenleben” itself, and, on the other, because it refers to its own theater reality or theatricality, to the fact that humans, Others, have gathered in a temporary community and are together, that they observe and are being observed. This practice of realistic presentation points to the reality of the stage and, at the same time, to the reality of being on the stage, being in the theater and therefore to being with Others. While in the *Messingkauf* the previous theater claimed to represent reality without leaving any remainders, any traces, by wiping away or “gloss[ing] over” (“weg[s]chminken”)⁷⁰ its own reality, the practice of presentation alluded to here always points to a remainder that accounts for the Otherness of the Other.

In an unpublished talk on Levinas’ thinking about the Other and Brecht’s *Messingkauf*, Mayte Zimmermann interprets both projects as “Versuch[e] einer Antwort auf die Totalisierungen der Politik . . . , in deren

Kern eine Neubestimmung des Menschen in seiner sozialen Verfasstheit steht” (“attempts to respond to the totalization of politics, at the heart of which is a redefinition of the human being in its social constitution”).⁷¹ Both thinkers, who experienced the terrors of the early twentieth century up close, “reagieren auf die im Namen von Faschismus und Kommunismus verübte Gewalt mit dem Versuch eines anderen Denkens” (“are reacting to the violence exerted in the name of fascism and communism with an attempt at another way of thinking”).⁷² The concept of the human being that is renegotiated in the *Messingkauf* takes into account—like Levinas—the fundamental alterity of the Other to which the repeated use of concepts like *Eigenheit* and *Einzelperson*, *fremde Person* and *fremdes Gesicht* refer. It is about being with Others, a *being-with*, a theater of Others, because there is no life without the Others: “Ein reiner Individualist wäre schweigsam” (“A pure individualist would remain silent”).⁷³

Notes

¹ Cf. Hans-Joachim Hahn, “Realistische Moderne?” in *Von den Rändern zur Moderne: Studien zur deutschsprachigen Literatur zwischen Jahrhundertwende und Zweitem Weltkrieg. Festschrift für Peter Sprengel zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Tim Lörke, Gregor Streim, and Robert-Walter Jochum (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014), 417–30, here 420; Klaus-Detlef Müller, “Der Philosoph auf dem Theater: Ideologiekritik und ‘Linksabweichung’ in Bertolt Brechts ‘Messingkauf,’” in *Sonderband: Bertolt Brecht I*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1972), 45–71, here 65; Peter Brooker, “Key Words in Brecht’s Theory and Practice of Theater,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, ed. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 209–24, here 209.

² Cf. Katalin Trencsényi, *Dramaturgy in the Making: A Users Guide for Theatre Practitioners* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 117.

³ For more in-depth discussions of the points raised in this article, see Lydia J. White, *Theater des Exils: Bertolt Brechts “Der Messingkauf”* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2019), in particular chapters 6 and 7.2.

⁴ Rochelle Tobias, “Ecology and Egology: Husserl and Rilke on the Natural World,” *Yearbook of Comparative Literature* 58 (2012): 218–22, here 219.

⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 39.

⁶ Nikolaus Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des “konstruktiven Defaitismus”: Lektüren zur Theorie eines Theaters der A-Identität bei Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht und Heiner Müller* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 2002), 190, my translation.

⁷ *BFA* 22.2, 812; Bertolt Brecht, “Buying Brass,” trans. Steve Giles, in *Brecht on Performance: Messingkauf and Modelbooks*, ed. Tom Kuhn, Steve Giles, and Marc Silberman (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), 1–125, here 109.

⁸ *BFA* 22.2, 744; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 76.

⁹ *BFA* 3, 78; Bertolt Brecht, “The Measures Taken,” trans. Carl R. Mueller, in id., *The Measures Taken and Other Lehrstücke*, ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (New York: Arcade, 2001), 9–34, here 13.

¹⁰ *BFA* 22.2, 812; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 109.

¹¹ Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 24.

¹² *BFA* 22.2, 751; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 86.

¹³ Hans-Thies Lehmann and Helmut Lethen, “Ein Vorschlag zur Güte: Zur doppelten Polarität des Lehrstücks,” in *Auf Anregung Bertolt Brechts: Lehrstücke mit Schülern, Arbeitern, Theaterleuten*, ed. Reiner Steinweg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 302–18, here 310, my translation.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁵ Cf. Hyung-Ki Kim, *Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Brechts Theatertheorien im “Messingkauf” und im “Kleinen Organon für das Theater”* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 114–17, 123, 129–30, 182. Kim claims matter-of-factly that the *Messingkauf* “von vornherein von Brecht als ein Theaterstück—und zwar als ein ‘Lehrstück’—zur Realisierung auf der Bühne geplant worden [ist]” (“was planned by Brecht from the beginning as a theater play—and as a ‘learning play’ at that—to be realized on the stage”; 129, my translation), although there appears to be no real evidence to support this claim.

¹⁶ Nikolaus Müller-Schöll, “Theater der Potentialität,” in *Jahrbuch der koreanischen Brecht-Gesellschaft* 29 (2013): 25–51, here 33, my translation.

¹⁷ *BFA* 22.2, 744; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 76.

¹⁸ Benjamin quotes Brecht in Walter Benjamin, “Was ist das Epische Theater? (1),” in id., *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.2, ed. Hermann Schweppenhäuser and Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 519–31, here 531; Walter Benjamin, “What is Epic Theatre? [First Version],” in id., *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: Verso, 1998), 1–13, here 13.

¹⁹ Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des “konstruktiven Defaitismus,”* 198, my translation and emphasis.

²⁰ Cf. Benjamin, “Was ist das epische Theater?” 525; Benjamin, “What is Epic Theatre?” 8.

²¹ *BFA* 22.2, 725; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 54.

²² *BFA* 22.2, 698; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 121–22.

²³ *BFA* 22.2, 696; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 11.

²⁴ Friedrich Engels, letter to Margaret Harkness, beginning of April 1888, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx & Engels on Literature & Art: A Selection of Writings*, ed. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1973), 114–16, here 114; see also Anna Czajka, “Rettung Brechts durch Bloch?” *The Brecht Yearbook* 18 (1993), 121–38, here 127.

²⁵ *BFA* 22.2, 785; “Buying Brass,” 33.

- ²⁶ Georg Lukács, “Es geht um den Realismus,” in id., *Werke*, vol. 4, *Probleme des Realismus // Essays über Realismus* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1971), 313–43, here 318; my translation.
- ²⁷ *BFA* 22.2, 770; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 33.
- ²⁸ *BFA* 22, 792; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 98.
- ²⁹ Cf. Bernd W. Seiler, “Das Wahrscheinliche und das Wesentliche: Vom Sinn des Realismus-Begriffs und der Geschichte seiner Verundeutlichung,” in *Zur Terminologie der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Christian Wagenknecht (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989), 373–92, here 375.
- ³⁰ *BFA* 22.2, 784–85; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 33.
- ³¹ Cf. Bernhard H. F. Taureck, *Emmanuel Levinas zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 1997), 25.
- ³² *BFA* 22.2, 802; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 63.
- ³³ *BFA* 22.2, 802–3; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 63–64.
- ³⁴ Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 97.
- ³⁵ Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 63–64; *BFA* 22.2, 802–3 (*wegzuschminken*).
- ³⁶ *BFA* 22.2, 792; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 97.
- ³⁷ Hahn, “Realistische Moderne?” 420; my translation.
- ³⁸ Müller, “Der Philosoph auf dem Theater,” 65; my translation.
- ³⁹ Cf. Brooker, “Key words,” 209.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Trencsényi, *Dramaturgy in the Making*, 117.
- ⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman, in id., *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwest University Press, 1988), 1–21, here 21.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Cf. Sascha Bischof, *Gerechtigkeit–Verantwortung–Gastfreundschaft. Ethik-Ansätze nach Jacques Derrida* (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 97.
- ⁴⁴ Cf. White, *Theater des Exils*, 206–12.
- ⁴⁵ *BFA* 22.1, 408; Bertolt Brecht, “The Popular and the Realistic,” in id., *Brecht on Theatre*, 3rd ed., ed. Marc Silberman, Steve Giles, and Tom Kuhn, trans. Jack Davis et al. (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), 200–206, here 202.
- ⁴⁶ Nikolaus Müller-Schöll, “Der kastrierte Lehrmeister: Brecht, der Hofmeister und Lenz,” in *Lenz-Jahrbuch* 23 (2016): 7–32, here 19; my translation.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Bertolt Brecht, journal entry from November 26, 1948, in Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal*, vol. 2, 1942–55, ed. Werner Hecht (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 863; Bertolt Brecht, *Journals 1934–1955*, ed. John Willett, trans. Hugh Rorrison (London: Methuen, 1993), 404.
- ⁴⁹ *BFA* 23, 148; my translation.

- ⁵⁰ For an in-depth discussion of what constitutes the *Messingkauf* and the history of its editions, see White, *Theater des Exils*, 31–52.
- ⁵¹ *BFA* 22.2, 786; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 34.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*
- ⁵⁴ *BFA* 22.2, 858–59; Bertolt Brecht, “On Everyday Theatre,” in *id.*, *Poems 1913–1956*, ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (New York: Routledge, 1976), 176–79, here 177–78.
- ⁵⁵ *BFA* 22.1, 374–75; Bertolt Brecht, “The Street Scene,” in *Brecht on Theatre*, 176–83, here 179, second emphasis my own.
- ⁵⁶ *BFA* 22.1, 373; Brecht, “The Street Scene,” 178.
- ⁵⁷ *BFA* 22.1, 375; Brecht, “The Street Scene,” 179.
- ⁵⁸ *BFA* 22.1, 372; Brecht, “The Street Scene,” 177.
- ⁵⁹ *BFA* 22.2, 725; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 45.
- ⁶⁰ Cf. the following passage in *Totality and Infinity*: “The absolutely other is the Other. He and I do not form a number. The collectivity in which I say ‘you’ or ‘we’ is not a plural of the ‘I.’ I, you—these are not individuals of a common concept. Neither possession nor the unity of number nor the unity of concepts link me to the Stranger [l’Étranger], the Stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself [le chez soi]. But stranger also means the free one. Over him I have *no power*. He escapes my grasp by an essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal.” Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.
- ⁶¹ *BFA* 22.1, 377; Brecht, “The Street Scene,” 180.
- ⁶² *BFA* 22.2, 740; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 65.
- ⁶³ *BFA* 22.2, 858; Brecht, “On Everyday Theatre,” 177.
- ⁶⁴ *BFA* 22.2, 728; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 48.
- ⁶⁵ Mayte Zimmermann, “Bertolt Brecht und Emmanuel Levinas: Spuren des Theaters und Theater der Spur,” 4, unpublished talk, held at the conference “AUSSICHTEN: Neuere Ansätze und Perspektiven für die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Werk Bertolt Brechts” during the Brecht Tage in Berlin, February 10, 2012, my translation; see also e.g., Emmanuel Levinas, “The Trace of the Other,” in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 345–59.
- ⁶⁶ Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- ⁶⁷ Cf. e.g., *BFA* 22.2, 710, 726, 735; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 35, 54, 55.
- ⁶⁸ Cf. e.g., *BFA* 22.2, 702, 715, 748, 773, 784, 786, 857; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 13, 33, 34, 39, 81.
- ⁶⁹ *BFA* 22.2, 777–78; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 17.
- ⁷⁰ *BFA* 22.2, 803; Brecht, “Buying Brass,” 64.
- ⁷¹ Zimmermann, “Bertolt Brecht und Emmanuel Levinas,” 4, my translation.

⁷² Ibid., 2, my translation.

⁷³ *BFA* 21, 180; Bertolt Brecht, “The Socialisation of Art,” in id., *Brecht on Art and Politics*, ed. Tom Kuhn and Steve Giles, trans. Laura Bradley, Steve Giles, and Tom Kuhn (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 46–47, here 47; cf. Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des “konstruktiven Defaitismus,”* 192.