

THGR 291, Winter 2004  
Tuesdays, 10-12:50  
144 Galbraith Hall

John Rouse (jrouse@ucsd.edu)  
313 Galbraith, Wed. 2:30-3:30  
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## BRECHT'S MODERNISM

### CLASS SCHEDULE

#### January 6 Introduction

#### January 13 (Post-)Expressionist Beginnings

- Brecht, *Baal*, preferably in *Collected Plays*, Vol. I (Vintage Press)
- Brecht, *In the Jungle of Cities*, preferably in *Collected Plays*, Vol. I (Vintage Press)
- The Introduction and all material on the two plays in the “Notes and Variants” section, *Collected Plays*, Vol. 1 (Vintage Press)  
**NB: Editorial material in the the *Collected Plays* editions is also available in the Methuen edition of *Collected Plays*, although the volumes are numbered differently. This material is also available in the SINGLE-PLAY paperback editions (republished) by Arcade; the material is NOT available in the Arcade collections of plays.**
- Ladislaus Lob, “German Drama before Brecht: From Neo-Classicism to Expressionism,” Chapter 2 of *Brecht in Perspective*, ed. Bartram and Waine.
- Eve Rosenhaft, “Brecht’s Germany: 1898-1933,” *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*; handout.
- Tony Meech, “Brecht’s early plays,” *Cambridge Companion to Brecht*; handout.
- Case, Sue-Ellen, “Brecht and Women: Homosexuality and the Mother,” *Brecht Yearbook 12 (1983)*; handout.

#### January 20 The End of the Aura

- Brecht, *A Man’s A Man*, in *Collected Plays*, Vol. 2 or in a single-issue Arcade editions. DO NOT use the Bentley version, which is an adaptation.
- The Introduction and all “Notes and Variants” material in *CP 2* (or the Methuen equivalent volumes)
- Brecht on Theatre*, #3, 5, 6, 7
- Walter Benjamin, “What is Epic Theatre?” [First Version]
- Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (handout)
- Siegfried Krakauer, “The Mass Ornament” (handout)
- Jane Goodall, “Transferred Agencies: Performance and the Fear of Automatism,” *Theatre Journal* 49.4 (1997) sections entitled “Florence and Frederick” and “The Mass Ornament” 4 on HTML document distributed electronically.
- Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, 33-64 [or, if possible, -71]

#### January 27 To Live and Die in Mahagonny

- Brecht, *Threepenny Opera* and *Mahagonny*, preferably in *CP2* or Arcade single edition
- Threepenny* and *Mahagonny* recordings (handout)
- Introduction and “N&V” material in *CP2* or Arcade or Methuen
- Brecht on Theatre (B on T)*: 14: “Titles and Screens”; Why Does Macheath Have to be Arrested Twice Over“ (These are part of the “Notes to *3P*” not included in the “Notes” in the Arcade or CP editions.)
- B on T*: 8, 9, 10, 13
- J. M. Ritchie, “Brecht and Cabaret,” in *Brecht in Perspective*, ed. Bartram & Waine
- Ronald Speirs, ““You’ll Laugh—the Bible”” (handout)

- February 3 Theatre for Learning and Instructing**  
—Brecht, *Lindbergh's Flight, The Baden-Baden Lesson on Consent, He Said Yes/ He Said No, The Decision (The Measures Taken)*, in the new Methuen CP3  
—All the introductory and “N&V” material on these plays  
—Audiotapes and videotapes handed out and played in class  
—Roswitha Mueller, “Learning for a New Society: The Lehrstück,” in *Cambridge Companion*; handout.  
—Nägele, “Brecht's Theater of Cruelty”; handout.  
**Recommended:**  
—Lunn, M&M, Chapter 4  
—Brit Doherty, “Test and *Gestus* in Brecht and Benjamin”; electronic file
- February 10 The Threepenny Lawsuit** (Guest: Prof. Marc Silberman, U Wisconsin, Madison)  
—G.W. Pabst, *The Threepenny Opera*, film on videotape (library reserve)  
—Slatan Dudow & Brecht, *Kuhle Wampe*, film on videotape (library reserve)  
—”The Bruise”; handout  
—”The *Threepenny Lawsuit*”; handout  
(Marc Silberman suggests we concentrate particularly on Part III (The Critique of Ideas) and IV (Summary). We'll also want to spend time on the chart on p. 178.
- February 17 Theory and Practice of an Epic Theatre, I**  
Brecht, *The Exception and the Rule* in Methuen CP3 or Bentley  
—Introduction and “N&V” material to *Exception* in Methuen CP3  
—*B on T*, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31  
—Walter Benjamin, “What is Epic Theatre?” [Second Version]; handout  
—Marc Silberman, “The Rhetoric of the Image”; handout  
—From last week: *He Said Yes/No; The Decision; Decision* tape; secondary reading
- February 24 The “Brecht/Lukacs” Debate**  
—Lukacs, “Narrate or Describe?” handout  
—”Presentation II,” from *Aesthetics and Politics*; handout.  
—Brecht, “The Expressionism Debate,” And “Practical Thoughts on the Expressionism Debate” (these are also ripostes at Lukacs); handout  
—Lunn, *M&M*, Chapter 3; Chapter 5; review chapter 4
- March 2 The “Socially Comic”**  
—Brecht, *Puntila* and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, in CP6. *Puntila* is also available in an Arcade edition.  
—Introductory and N&V material in CP6  
—*B on T*, 33, 34  
—Video handout (BE film of *Puntila*; Brecht rehearsing; *Ui* 1958 & 1995)
- March 9 Epic Theatre II, Postmodernism 0**  
—*B on T*, 38 (*Short Organon*)  
—Elin Diamond, “Brechtian Theory / Feminist Theory”; handout  
—Heiner Müller, *Mauser*; handout  
—Heiner Müller, various essays; handout

## **Basic Premises**

Brecht is universally recognized as an important contributor to the development of modernism in the arts, particularly, of course, in the theatre. The hallmark of Brecht's contribution is his insistence on combining formal innovation with political commitment. Both his innovations and his commitment developed within the parameters of Weimar culture, a distinctively modernism culture that also displays several of the general possibilities and problems of modernism in a particularly revealing light, not the least of which is the relationship between Marxism and modernism.

To examine "Brecht's Modernism" isn't really different from examining Brecht in terms of important techniques and ideas. Our particular focus will, however, hopefully allow us to see Brecht's work in an appropriate historical perspective—surely an element in any "postmodern" rediscovery. Our focus also will allow us to use Brecht to raise important questions regarding historical modernism, questions answered in different ways by, say, Weimar and contemporary US culture, or between Weimar Germany and the Progressive theatre movement of post-colonial Bengal (to name a few broad areas in which seminar papers might explore topics).

## **The Logistics of Reading**

The bad news is that several of the Brecht plays I want to discuss are out of print in the USA. The good news is that our libraries have multiple copies. I've put one copy of these plays on reserve and checked out the other copies for UCSD students. So long as the class remains small, we should be able to do most of the primary reading using copies on hand. Also, you may use any edition of the play you own, although you may have to read some secondary material in editions on reserve.

I am hoping to provide secondary material either in electronic format or by distributing copies at no or minimal expense. I'm trying to avoid creating an expensive Reader. But one consequence of all this is that the reading list is a bit, shall we say, flexible right now. What follows is not a complete list of readings as regards the handouts.

I recommend two exceptions to my rule. I will recommend that buy a copy of Eugene Lunn, *Marxism to Modernism* and a copy of Brecht, *Collected Plays 3* (new Methuen edition); you'll need to buy this latter book from me. I'll explain this in more detail in class.

Incidentally, anyone wanting to read Brecht's plays in German has a treat in store—the new Berlin/Frankfurter Ausgabe, which uses the early versions of Brecht's early plays as its editorial touchstone. More on this in class as well.

## **Requirements**

Your grade will be based on your class participation (and the level of preparation it reveals) and on a research, analytic, or theoretical paper of approximately 20 pages. We should begin discussing these papers in individual meetings no later than third week. I will read drafts, and I will work with those who might want to use this seminar paper as a writing project after the quarter.