Bertolt Brecht and Theatre Photography: Aesthetic and Political Involvement

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Acknowledgments

To Gretl, my beloved grandmother.

To José, João and Gilda, parts of me.

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List of Abbreviations

BFA   *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe* (Bertolt Brecht)

CP   *Collected Plays* (Bertolt Brecht)

WB *GS*   *Gesammelte Schriften* (Walter Benjamin)

WB *SW*   *Selected Writings* (Walter Benjamin)

BBA   Bertolt Brecht Archive (at the Akademie der Künste)

BE   Berliner Ensemble

BEA   Berliner Ensemble Archive

ADK   Akademie der Künste

MB   *Modellbüch/Modellbücher*

AJ   *Arbeitsjournal*

V-Effekt   Verfremdungseffekt

GDR   German Democratic Republic

KF   *Kriegsfibel*

Quem que poderia a coragem
de viver em frente da imagem

do que faz, enquanto se faz,
antes da forma, que a refaz?

Assistir nosso pensamento
a nossos olhos se fazendo,

assistir ao sujo e ao difuso
com que se faz, e é reto e é curvo.

– João Cabral de Melo Neto, 'Debruçado sobre os
Cadernos de Paul Válery', *Agrestes*

Who could the courage
to live in front of the image

of what it does, while it is done,
before form, which remakes it?

Watch our thinking
to our eyes making themselves,

watch the dirty and diffuse
with which it is made, and it is straight and it is curved.

(Author translation)

Opening remarks

This dissertation investigates the aesthetic and political interconnection between Bertolt Brecht's creative process and photography. The primary conceptual interest is to examine photographs from the perspective of the politics of images based on research on the Brechtian concept of *gestus*. Considering that the extensive research on *gestus* is fundamental for Theatre Studies, this study proposes a critical interpretation of the concept using the analysis of photography.

The present study continues the investigative path initiated in my master's thesis *Creative dialogue between theatre and photography*[1], completed in Brazil at *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ) in 2013. The thesis aimed to provide a critical analysis of photography as an instrument of the working process of Brechtian theatre. To that end, a performance based on Peter Handke's *Selbstbezichtigung*[2] was staged under my direction and used the photographic material produced during the rehearsal process on stage. Speaking alternately in Portuguese and German, four actors used their bodies as projection surfaces for rehearsal photography. The German language therefore became a research object and so was associated with a philological attitude, if one considers the reception of a foreign language without translation by an audience. The performance aimed to deal with the sound of unknown words, both for the actors and for the Brazilian audience and at the same time to demonstrate Handke's response to the text. Handke's text possesses a musicality that is very

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[1] *Teatro e Fotografia: diálogos criativos*. Master's thesis held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and supervised by Prof Dr Angela Leite Lopes and Prof Dr Wolfgang Bock.

[2] Handke, Peter. *Publikumsbeschimpfung und Andere Sprechstücke*. Suhrkamp, 1966. In English, see also Handke, Peter. *Plays 1: Offending the Audience, Self-accusation, Kaspar, My Foot my Tutor, The Ride Across Lake Constance, They are Dying Out*. Blommsbury Methuen Drama, 1997.

unique to the German language using the 'ch' sound in 'ich', which would disappear in a Portuguese translation. At that point, the purpose was to provide further perspectives on Brecht's creative process regarding the dialogue between visual images and the dramatic scene. It is interesting to highlight that my academic journey has been profoundly affected by the fact that in addition to being a scientific researcher, I have also developed a career on stage as an actress and a director for more than 20 years. Theory and praxis have been coexisting and feeding both my practical and theoretical experiences. The master's thesis thus became a starting point for the present dissertation.

This research assesses the impact of photography on Brecht's works, such as the *Kriegsfibel* (*KF*)[3], an anthology of epigrams and press photographs collected by Brecht during his years of exile. Below each photograph and often below the original caption there is a four-line poem called an epigram. The four verses of the epigram, generally ironic, generate a certain shock vis-à-vis the image because they produce *war poetry*. Often, the epigrams link with the original captions of the photographs collected from mass-circulation magazines and newspapers. The date of production of the epigrams is uncertain, so it is unknown if Brecht wrote them before or after finding the photographs. The *Arbeitsjournal 1938–1955*[4] (*AJ*) presents diary entries about the author's professional life, starting at the time of his exile in Denmark until his last years in Berlin. Together with some letters, it reveals Brecht's initial

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[3] Brecht, Bertolt. *Kriegsfibel*. Organised by Ruth Berlau and edited by Peter Palitzsch, with texts from Günter Kunert and Heinz Seydel. Eulenspiegel-Verlag, 1955. The second edition was published in 1994 and the English translation, *War Primer*, was published in 1998 by Libris, edited by John Willet and translated by Naomi Replansky.

[4] Brecht, Bertolt. *Arbeitsjournal 1938 bis 1942* und *1942 bis 1955* (2 volumes). Organised by Werner Hecht. Suhrkamp, 1974. In English, see also: Brecht, Bertolt. *Journals 1934–1955: Plays, Poetry and Prose*. Edited by John Willet and translated by Hugh Rorrison. Routledge, 1996. Brecht entitled it *Journal*. It was at the time of the first publication by Suhrkamp in 1973 that it became *Arbeitsjournal*.

involvement with photography. Several photographs appear recurrently in *KF* and *AJ*, leading the way for Brecht's engagement with photography, customising the fragmentary style of the above-mentioned works with the addition of photographs and newspaper reports. The introductory note of the English version highlights that the placement of photographs follows Brecht's original manuscripts to preserve the author's authenticity.

The *Modellbücher*[5] (*MB*) contain photographic documentation of Brecht's plays and often notes, comments and the text itself. Some of the plays were published and produced by the Berliner Ensemble (BE), such as *Galileo* and *Antigone*, and others are available in the Berliner Ensemble Archive (BEA)[6] and the Bertolt Brecht Archive (BBA)[7] at the Akademie der Künste (ADK) in Berlin. The photographs were taken mainly at premières, and the models' purpose was not only to guide future productions and increase the circulation of Brechtian theatre but also to prevent replication by other theatre groups or directors. Finally, *Theaterarbeit* [8] documents the first six productions of the BE—*Herr Puntila und sein Knecht*

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[5] This work quotes Berlau, Ruth. *Antigonemodell 1948.* Henschel, 1955; Berlau, Ruth. *Aufbau einer Rolle - Galileo.* Henschel, 1956; and Berlau, Ruth. *Couragemodell 1949.* Henschel, 1958.

[6] From here on, the Berliner Ensemble Archive will be cited as BEA.

[7] From here on, the Bertolt Brecht Archive will be cited as BBA.

[8] Weigel, Helene. *Theaterarbeit – 6 Aufführungen des Berliner Ensemble.* Henschel, 1961.

Matti [9], *Wassa Schelesnowa*[10], *Der Hofmeister*[11], *Die Mutter*[12], *Biberpelz und roter Hahn*[13] and *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*[14]—and gathers some of the most representative essays on photography. The *MB* and *Theaterarbeit* are not yet fully translated and published in English.

The *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*[15] standardises Brecht's complete works, and the *Gesammelte Schriften*[16] standardises those of Walter Benjamin. As an exception, the quotations from *AJ* originate from *BFA,* as they were initially written by Brecht in lower case, only being modified in the *BFA* after 1973. The decision not to correct Brecht's writings (both orthography and lower/upper case letters), which are very often published following the modern orthographic rules in Germany, was made because the adoption of lower case and

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[9] *BFA* 6. In English, see also: *Collected Plays* 6, *Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*.

[10] Gorki, Maxim. *Wassa Schelesnowa – Drama in 3 Akten*. Tribüne, 1952. In English, see also: Gorky, Maxim. *Gorky Plays: 2. The Last Ones, Vassa Zheleznova, The Zykovs, Egor Bulychev*. Bloomsbury, 2016.

[11] *BFA* 8. In English, see also: Brecht, Bertolt. *Berliner Ensemble Adaptations: The Tutor; Coriolanus; The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen, 1431; Don Juan; Trumpets and Drums*. Edited and introduced by David Barnett. Translated by Wolfgang Sauerland et al. Blommsbury Publishing, 2014.

[12] *BFA* 3. In English, see also: *Collected Plays* 3, *The Mother*.

[13] *BFA* 8. In English, see also: Hauptmann, Gerhart. *Three Plays: The Weavers, Hannele, The Beaver Coat.* Translated by Horst Frenz and Miles Waggoner. Introduced by Horst Frenz. Waveland Press, 1991.

[14] *BFA* 6. In English, see also: *Collected Plays* 5, *Mother Courage and her Children*.

[15] Brecht, Bertolt. *Werke: Große Kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*. Edited by Werner Hecht. 30 volumes. Suhrkamp, 1994. Subsequently cited as *BFA*. In English, see also: Brecht, Bertolt. *Collected Plays*. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. 8 volumes. Methuen Drama, 1998. Subsequently cited as *CP*.

[16] Benjamin, Walter. *Gesammelte Schriften*. Edited by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser. 7 volumes. Suhrkamp, 1980. Subsequently cited as WB *GS*. In English, see also: Benjamin, Walter. *Selected Writings*. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings. Harvard University Press, 2004. Subsequently cited as WB *SW*.

misspelt words represents Brecht's political concern with language. The use of lower case represents a political criticism of bourgeois society that valued uniformity as opposed to simplicity. In 1954, Brecht clarified his position against the orthographic reform, stating that

ich bin gegen eine reform der rechtschreibung von solchem ausmass dass alle die bücher, die auf die alte weise gedruckt sind, schwer lesbar werden. die grossen buchstaben sollte man aber nur für namen und für die fürwörter in der anrede verwenden. (auch für den satzanfang nicht; da genügt der punkt und ein abstand).'

i am against an orthographic reform to such an extent that all the books printed in the old way become difficult to read. capital letters should only be used for names and for the pronouns in addressing someone. (not even in the beginning of the sentence; a full stop and a space are sufficient').[17]

The characteristics of academic works, including their cohesion and coherence, played a decisive role in determining which to include in this dissertation. The main decision was to remove Roland Barthes' analysis from the third chapter, despite the notorious connection between the French writer and Brecht's theatre and photographic production. The primary reason for omitting the Barthesian analysis from the dissertation was based on recurrence. It was clear that an extended bibliography on Brecht and Barthes' interrelation already existed in the scholarly research and that redundancy would be inevitable. After *Sept photos modèles de "Mére Courage"*[18], in which Barthes analyses photographs of performances from the BE

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[17] *BFA* 23, p. 282 (Author translation).

[18] Barthes, Roland. *Oeuvres Complètes*. Edited by Éric Marty. 4 volumes. Tome I - 1942–1965. Seuil, 1993 (Théatre populaire, no. 35, 1959. Sur les photographies de Pic lors de la venue du Berliner Ensemble à Paris en 1957 pour les représentations de la pièce de Brecht; voir également Préface à Brecht, *Mère Courage et ses enfants*, L'Arche, 1960, et 'Mère

Parisian tour in 1957, Barthes is considered alongside Walter Benjamin as one of the most important Brecht commentators, particularly in the photographic field. Nonetheless, Barthes' views on photography remain a point of reference for this research in terms of crucial concepts, such as *studium* and *punctum*, developed in *La chambre claire*[19]. Besides Barthes, other sources, artists and literature had to be set aside, such as the work of the photographer Martha Rosler[20] and the literature on photography produced by philosophers Jean-Luc Nancy (*Au fond des images*)[21] and Vilém Flusser (*Für eine Philosophie der Fotografie*)[22].

Previous studies offer a descriptive and analytical account of the *gestus* concept and the meaning of photography from a political perspective. They draw upon Brecht's aesthetic and political involvement with photography to employ alternative paths in studying the concept of *gestus*, looking for innovative ways of developing Theatre Studies in a

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Courage aveugle', in Essais critiques, 1964.), pp. 833–847. In English, see also: Barthes, Roland. "Seven Photo Models of Mother Courage". Translated by Hella Freud Bernays. Theater Drama Review (1967–1968), vol. 12, no.1, Autumn, pp. 44–55. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1125292.

[19] Barthes, Roland. *La chambre Claire – Note sur la Photographie*. Gallimard, 1980. In English, see also: Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Macmillan, 1981.

[20] The American artist works in video, photography, text, installation and performance. In *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home (1967–72)* and *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home (2004–2008)* Rosler contextualises images from mass circulation press in photomontages criticising the media's approach to the wars in Vietnam and Iraq in idealised American domestic interiors.

[21] Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Au Fond des Images*. Galilée, 2003. In English, see also: Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Ground of the Image*. N. 51. Translated by Jeff Fort. Fordham University Press, 2005.

[22] Flusser, Vilém. *Für eine Philosophie der Fotografie*. Editions Flusser, 1997. In English, see also: Flusser, Vilém. *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. Translated by Anthony Mathews. Reaktion, 2000.

transdisciplinary approach to photography. These studies, developed worldwide based on

decades of Brechtian scholarly research, nevertheless represent the basis for the discussion

about Brecht's relationship with photography. They are mainly represented by Nikolaus

Müller-Schöll in *Das Theater des "konstruktiven Defaitismus": Lektüren zur Theorie eines

Theaters der A-Identität bei Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht und Heiner Müller*[23], Jan

Gerstner in *Das andere Gedächtnis – Fotografie in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts*[24],

Grischa Meyer in *Ruth Berlau – Fotografin an Brechts Seite*[25], Georges Didi-Huberman in

Quand les Images Prennent Position[26], Judith Butler *in Frames of War - When is Life

Grievable?*[27] and Kristopher Imbrigotta in *History and the Challenge of Photography in

Bertolt Brecht's Kriegsfibel*[28]. Several relevant studies in this area were also published during

the course of this research, such as *Brecht e la fotografia* (2015)[29] edited by Francesco

Fiorentino and Valentina Valentini and *The Rise and Fall of Modelbooks, Notate and the

Brechtian Method: Documentation and the Berliner Ensemble's Changing Roles as a Theatre*

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[23] Müller-Schöll, Nikolaus. *Das Theater des "konstruktiven Defaitismus": Lektüren zur Theorie eines Theaters der A-Identität bei Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht und Heiner Müller.* Vol. 59. Stroemfeld, 2002.

[24] Gerstner, Jan. *Das andere Gedächtnis – Fotografie in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts.* transcript Verlag, 2013.

[25] Meyer, Grischa. *Ruth Berlau – Fotografin an Brechts Seite*. Propyläen, 2003.

[26] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Quand les Images Prennent Position.* L'œil de L'Histoire, 1. Minuit, 2009.

[27] Butler, Judith. *Frames of War - When is Life Grievable?* Verso Books, 2016.

[28] Imbrigotta, Kristopher. "History and the Challenge of Photography in Bertolt Brecht's *Kriegsfibel*". *Radical History Review,* Issue 106, Winter, 2010, pp. 27–45, doi: 10.1215/01636545-2009-019.

[29] Fiorentino, Francesco and Valentina Valentini (eds.). *Brecht e la fotografia*. Bulzoni, 2015.

Company (2016)[30] by David Barnett.

The analysis in this dissertation spans from the origins of Brecht's relationship with photography described mainly in his letters to the huge collection of photographs from newspapers and magazines amassed during Brecht's exile and, most importantly, to performance and rehearsal pictures. Throughout this work, there is an interest in analysing specific plays. However, this is manifested in a broad narrative of Brecht's relationship with photography in order to support the development of Brechtian notions—such as *gestus* and *interruption*—through photographs. Following this reasoning, the importance of this study is not related to the specificities of Brecht' plays but to a global perspective of the interdisciplinarity of his creative process, joining theatre and photography in the contemporary sphere.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a photographic panorama as a historical contextualisation based on Georges Didi-Huberman's[31] concept of the politics of images and serves as a theoretical basis upon which to develop Brecht's relationship with photography. This relationship is a starting point for the contemporary analysis of a creative system. Beginning with the framing of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy[32] and Gisèle Freund[33], the chapter moves forward to the relevance of photojournalistic pictures from *Life* and *Time* magazines in the 1930s and 1940s.

The second chapter develops a discussion about the relationship between Bertolt Brecht's creative process and photography. The main elements of the analysis—

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[30] Barnett, David. "The Rise and Fall of Modelbooks, Notate and the Brechtian Method: Documentation and the Berliner Ensemble's Changing Roles as a Theatre Company." *Theatre Research International,* vol. 41, no. 2, 2016, pp. 106–121, doi:10.1017/S0307883316000031.

[31] b. in 1953.

[32] Hungarian painter, photographer and professor in the Bauhaus school.

[33] German-born French photographer and photojournalist.

Theaterarbeit, *AJ*, *MB* and *KF*— play an essential role for Brecht the practitioner, as they supported both the organisation and preservation of the material. The selected material has one feature in common, which is that their controversial content generated intensive discussion and criticism among intellectuals and artists. Photographs, mainly from *Antigonemodell, Aufbau einer Rolle – Galilei*, and *Couragemodell* are examined and discussed, as are other topics in the theatrical field that have come to light in the debate surrounding the use of the model and artistic freedom. *Theaterarbeit* contains crucial writings on photography; *AJ* reveals the nature of the relationship between Brecht and photography; and *KF* highlights the dialogue between Brecht and the politics of images. Last, Susan Sontag's[34] philosophical approach of conscious development opens pathways for contemporary interpretations of the relationship between theatre and photography. Considering Didi-Huberman's approach to the politics of images via photojournalism as a crucial source, Swiss theatre director Milo Rau[35], Lebanese visual artist Rabih Mroué[36] and Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar[37] contribute to the discussion with some of their recent works. The contemporary approach reveals the artistic vision of a scientific researcher as a director, actress and spectator who continuously examines works steadily with the connections between performance and scientific research. Based on research on the concept of *gestus* grounded on a photographic bias, new formulations on contemporary theatre gain relevance, producing creative and renewed interpretations of Brechtian theatre and thus enabling the creation of theatre performances aligned with our time and historical context.

The third chapter concerns aspects of *gestus* as a concept, which is at the centre of

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[34] American writer, philosopher and political activist (1933–2004).

[35] b. in 1977.

[36] b. in 1967.

[37] b. in 1956.

Brechtian theatre and the specific form of the creative process. If photography stands out at the precise moment of interruption of the dramatic action and thereby captures a significant gesture, the comparison between such a static photo and the notion of interruption in Bertolt Brecht's theory forms the foundation of this chapter. Stage photography's analysis of four plays from the BE's repertoire in the 1950s—*Leben des Galilei*[38], *Der Zerbrochene Krug*[39], *Katzgraben*[40] and *Der kaukasiche Kreidkreis*[41]—provides an examination of the relationship between interruption and gesture at the level of the dramatic action and the photographic medium. In constructing the theoretical framework, the work of the philosophers Walter Benjamin and George Didi-Huberman contributes to the analysis. The last chapter analyses Brecht's rehearsal and creative process through photographs of the four plays mentioned in the sub-items. To study those plays means to identify details of the applicability of *gestus* discussed in the preceding chapter.

The dissertation uses sources produced up to the summer of 2018, including internet-based sources. The original quotations in German by Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and other German writers will appear directly in the text, together with the English versions. Other languages, such as Spanish, French and Portuguese, will be included in the footnotes. Following Brecht's flow of concepts, I mainly use the term *Brechtian* instead of *epic* or *dialectical* theatre. Therefore, it is assumed that the Brechtian narrative covers various approaches and is not restricted to opposing other narratives, such as the dramatic one.

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[38] *BFA* 5. In English, see also: *Life of Galileo*, *CP* 5.

[39] Kleist, Heinrich von. *Der Zerbrochene Krug – Ein Lustspiel*. Hoffenberg, 2016. In English, see also: Kleist, Heinrich von. *The Broken Jug*. Translated by Roger Jones. Manchester University Press, 1977.

[40] Strittmatter, Erwin. *Katzgraben: Szenen aus dem Bauernleben; Die Holländerbraut: Schauspiel in fünf Akten*. Aufbau-Verlag, 1978.

[41] *BFA* 8. In English, see also: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *CP* 7.

However, the terms *epic* and *dialectical* are preserved in quotations and cited essays, mostly by Walter Benjamin. Accordingly, the titles of the plays are quoted in German throughout the text. Upon their first appearance, a footnote gives the English translation of each title.

The field research revealed insights that greatly facilitated the progress of the study. The first phase of the field research occurred in Berlin in January 2016. The research aims were to observe and analyse Brecht's photographs and to access the *MB*. In this regard, both the BEA and the BBA offered a complete collection of materials. The main difference between the archives is that the BBA offers materials from Brecht's life, while the BEA houses a huge amount of diverse material from all BE productions, including photographs, negatives and notes. Together, the two archives embody the efforts of Helen Weigel, Ruth Berlau[42] and other Brecht collaborators who worked to preserve and organise all shreds of evidence relating to Brecht's life and work. Brecht produced several *MB*, which allows a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between Brechtian theatre and photography. Each one presents at least 100 pictures, and they can be found in both archives along with the *Regiebuch* (director's notes), *Inspizierbücher* (stage manager's book) and *Soufflierbücher* (prompt books)*.* These all attempt to provide contextual support for the plays and contain notes by Brecht and his collaborators, rehearsal photographs and photographic field research.

The second phase of the field research occurred in June 2016 in Svendborg, Denmark[43]. When Brecht left Germany, the writer Karin Michaelis[44] sheltered Helene Weigel (Brecht's wife) and her family. Michaelis' house on Thurø, an island near Svendborg, was a

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[42] In 1940 she published *Ethvert Dyr Kan Det* (*Jedes Tier Kann Es* or *Every Animal Can Do It*) under the pseudonym Maria Sten, a controversial work on sexuality.

[43] See also: Oliveira, Alexandra. "*Skovsbostrand 8*". E-cibs: *Communications of the International Brecht Society*. Issue 2017.2. https://e-cibs.org/issue-2-2017/#marinhoskovsbostrand.

[44] 1872–1950.

refuge for several German Jews, intellectuals and artists, such as Anna Seghers, Hans Eisler and Alfred Kantorowicz. Today, it is the *Bergmannhus* cultural centre where Svendborg's cultural heritage is celebrated. It is also where Berlau was introduced to Brecht and Weigel in 1933. She had a twenty-three-year association with Brecht as a photographer, writer, translator and director, following him to Sweden, Finland, the USSR and the US. The house in which Brecht lived for six years[45] during his Scandinavian exile, in Svendborg, became a residence for writers, artists and intellectuals since the 1990s. The experience of living in Skovsbostrand provided me the opportunity to use the resources at a comprehensive library on Brechtian works and a Danish bibliography on Brecht.

As a researcher and artist, I intend to reflect on the relationship between theatre and photography, avoiding generalisations.[46] There are a number of undesirable generalisations, but one in particular stand out. The general way of reading Brecht should be replaced by a specific and unique interpretation of a Brazilian researcher with a differentiated cultural background. The inevitable and necessary comparison between Brechtian studies in Brazil and the access to archives and primary sources in their original language in Germany must be taken into consideration. Because the analysis of photographs derived from the perspective of the politics of war, taking a position is necessary in order to 'fight against generalities',[47] which in Claude Lanzmann's terms means brotherly knowledge acquisition.

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[45] From 1933 until 1939.

[46] For generalisation, read also generality, vague notion, abstraction.

[47] Lanzmann, Claude et al. "Seminar with Claude Lanzmann 11 April 1990". *Yale French Studies*, No. 79, 1991, pp. 82–99. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2930247.

1   Photography: a terrible weapon *against* the truth

welche ausbeute für das theater bieten die fotos
der faschistischen illustrierten wochenblätter!
diese akteure verstehen die kunst des epischen theaters,
vorkommnissen banaler art den historischen anstrich zu geben.[48]

— b.b., *AJ*, 1940

Bertolt Brecht's theatre photography and collection of the mass circulation press had a decisive impact on his work as a poet, playwright and theatre director. This chapter aims to relate this impact to a Brechtian artistic background and Brecht's aesthetic influences. To do so, a historical approach based on the framing of László Moholy-Nagy and Gisèle Freund is taken, seeking to strengthen the politics of images. Brecht's relationship with photography changed over time. This chapter attempts to distinguish two distinct phases—photography as a weapon *against* the truth (from the beginning of the 1920s until the early 1930s) and photography as a weapon *in favour of* the truth (from the early 1930s until the 1950s).

The first half of the twentieth century, a turbulent political period between the world wars, certainly influenced society's relationship with the politics of images. Inherently, the process of photography remained contradictory during Brecht's lifetime. Based on a historical and social panorama, this chapter will analyse the complexity of Brechtian commitment to the photographic subject at this time.

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[48] ('what is the yield for the theatre offered by the photos
of the fascist illustrated weeklies.
these actors understand the art of epic theatre,
giving banal events a historical touch.' - Author translation).

Brecht's essay *Die Dreigroschenprozeß – 1932*,[49] probably 'the most famous objections to the value of knowledge in photography',[50] asserts that

> Die Lage wird dadurch so kompliziert, daß weniger denn je eine einfache,
> Wiedergabe der Realität' etwas über die Realität aussagt. Eine Fotografie
> der Kruppwerke oder der AEG ergibt beinahe nichts über diese Institute.
> Die eigentliche Realität ist in die Funktionale gerutscht. Die Verdinglichung
> der menschlichen Beziehungen, also etwa die Fabrik, gibt die letzteren nicht
> mehr heraus. Es ist also tatsächlich 'etwas aufzubauen' etwas 'Künstliches',
> 'Gestelltes'. Es ist also ebenso tatsächlich Kunst nötig.[51]

> The situation becomes so complicated, that a simple 'reproduction of
> reality' says less than ever about reality. A photograph of Kruppwerke or
> AEG reveals almost nothing about these institutes. The actual reality has
> slipped into the functional. The objectification of human relationships, such
> as the factory, no longer, gives out the latter. So, it really is 'to build
> something' 'artificial', 'posed'. So, it is also really art that is needed.[52]

At that time, Brecht considered photojournalism a manipulation tool that would offer society more disadvantages than benefits by either presenting situations out of context or by landing in the 'wrong hands'. In observing a photographic image of a building housing a factory, for example, Brecht believed that photography was not an adequate means of analysing its functioning, organization or social relations, let alone the working conditions. According to

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[49] *BFA* 21, pp. 448–514. In English, see also: Giles, Steve. *Bertolt Brecht and Critical Theory: Marxism, Modernity, and the Threepenny Lawsuit*. P. Lang, 1997.

[50] Uecker, Matthias. *Wirklichkeit und Literatur: Strategien Dokumentarischen Schreibens in der Weimarer Republik*. Peter Lang, 2007, p. 224. ('Die wohl berühmtesten Einwände gegen den Erkenntniswert der Fotografie'… - Author translation).

[51] *BFA* 21, p. 469. This quotation was also published in "Zum zehnjährigen Bestehen der 'A-I-Z' 1931/32" ("On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 'A-I-Z'").

[52] Author translation.

Welf Kienast, 'Brecht shifts the question of the significance of photography to the question of the significance of reality'.[53] The lack of contextualisation results in a meaningless image. The photograph of the building is able to portray a real image of reality, but it cannot generate a narrative about the reality of its workers. Thus, photographic images serve as a confirmation of the functional contexts that produced them.

Brecht observes that such relationships are a major concern for cinema, for example, in the films of Charlie Chaplin and Sergei Eisenstein from the 1920s. *Aus dem ABC des Epischen Theaters*[54] with the term *film* heading the text is one of the first writings expressing how the films represented a fruitful artistic tool for the development of the Brechtian aesthetic project in contrast to photography.

> Im epischen Theater erreicht der Film eine große Bedeutung. Jedoch muß er seinem künstlerischen oder wissenschaftlichen Wesen gemäß angewendet werden, gerade als ob er für sich selber stünde. Der Film gehorcht den gleichen Gesetzen wie die Grafik. Er ist statischen Wesens und muß behandelt werden wie eine Folge von Tafeln. Aus diesem deutlichen Abbrechen muß Wirkung entstehen, da es sonst ein gewöhnlicher Fehler wäre. [55]

> Film can be of great importance in the epic theatre. Yet it must be used in a way that is appropriate to its artistic or scientific nature, precisely as if it

[53] Kienast, Welf. *Kriegsfibelmodell: Autorschaft und "kollektiver Schöpfungsprozess" in Brecht's Kriegsfibel*. Edited by Heinrich Detering. Band 313. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001, p. 20. ('Brecht verschiebt hier die Frage nach dem Aussagewert der Fotografie auf dir Frage nach dem Aussagewert der Realität' – Author translation).

[54] *BFA* 21, pp. 210–212. In English, see also: Brecht, Bertolt. *Bertolt Brecht on Film & Radio*. Edited and translated by Marc Silberman. Methuen, 2000. pp. 6–7.

[55] *BFA* 21, pp. 210–212. Here, pp. 210–11.

stood on its own. Film obeys the same laws as graphic art. It is essentially

static and must be treated like a series of tableaux. Its effect must arise from

the clear interruptions, which would otherwise just be common errors.[56]

Moreover, according to a manuscript (around 1930)[57], 'Sie brauchen nicht zu

bezweifeln, daß der Film zeitgemäß ist! Die Fotografie ist die Möglichkeit einer *Wieder*gabe,

die den Zusammenhang wegschminkt'.[58] ('You do not need to doubt that the film is

contemporary! Photography is the possibility of a reproduction that removes the context').[59]

Once again, Brecht relates photography to the threat of decontextualisation drafted by the

bourgeoisie. In 1921, after seeing Chaplin's *The Face on the Bar Room Floor* (1914), Brecht

declared that '(…) er ist das Erschütterndste, was es gibt, es ist eine ganz reine Kunst'.[60] ('…

he is the most upsetting thing there is, it is pure art').[61] Chaplin's non-psychological acting

greatly influenced the notion of *gestus* later developed by Brecht. In an article titled *Weniger*

Sicherheit,[62] Brecht refers to Chaplin's *The Gold Rush (1925)* as an actor's masterpiece,

stating 'Dieser Künstler ist ein Dokument, das heute schon durch die Kraft historischer

Ereignisse wirkt'[63] ('This artist is a document that today already works employing the power

of historical events')[64]. In *V-Effekte bei Chaplin*,[65] Brecht recognises that in simple gestures,

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[56] Brecht, *Bertolt Brecht on Film & Radio*, pp. 6–7.

[57] *BFA* 21, p. 443. "Durch Fotografie keine Einsicht" ("No Insight through Photography")

[58] *BFA* 21, p. 443.

[59] Author translation.

[60] *BFA* 26, p. 257.

[61] Author translation.

[62] *BFA* 21, pp. 135–6. In English, see also: Brecht, *Bertolt Brecht on Film & Radio*, p. 5.

[63] *BFA* 21, pp. 135–6, here p. 135.

[64] Author translation.

[65] *BFA* 22, p. 223. In English, see also: Brecht, *Bertolt Brecht on Film & Radio*, p. 10.

such as eating the boot (with proper table manners, removing the nail like a chicken bone, the index finger pointing outward) and aided by the whole mechanical structure 'Chaplin erscheint seinem hungernden Freund als Huhn. Chaplin seinen Nebenbuhler vernichtend und zugleich hofierend'[66] ('Chaplin appears to his starving friend as a chicken. Chaplin destroying his rival and at the same time courting him').[67] The following image (**Figure 1**) shows the mutual admiration when Chaplin congratulated Brecht on the premiere of his *Galilei* in Beverly Hills in 1947.

Figure 1: Helene Weigel, Hanns Eisler, Charles Spencer Chaplin and Bertolt Brecht (July 30,1947) at the premiere of *Galilei* at the Coronet Theatre in Beverly Hills (US)

Source: Meyer, *Ruth Berlau - Fotografin an Brecht Seite*, p. 65. Photograph: Ruth Berlau.

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[66] *BFA* 22, p. 223.

[67] Author translation.

Parallels with Eisenstein's *Potemkin* (1925) appear in *Die Beule – Ein Dreigroschenfilm*[68] (1930) when the author describes scenes depicting city centres and, making reference to Chaplin's *City Lights* (1931), narrating a bank robbery scene. According to Roland Barthes, 'nothing separates the scene in epic theatre from the Eisenstein shot (except that in Brecht the tableau is offered to the spectator for criticism, not for adherence)'.[69] The evidence of Brecht's and Eisenstein's affinities relies mostly on the appreciation of the tableaux. Both artists believed that the 'meaning and pleasure bears on each scene, not on the whole (…) due to the fact that no image is boring, you are not obliged to wait for the next in order to understand and be delighted'.[70]

Brecht declared that photography was a 'terrible weapon against the truth' (furchtbaren Waffe 'gegen' die Wahrheit) that serves to 'obscure the facts' (der Verdunkelung der Tatbestände) in his essay for the tenth anniversary of the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*:

> Die ungeheure Entwicklung der Bildreportage ist für die *Wahrheit* über die Zustände, die auf der Welt herrschen, kaum ein Gewinn gewesen: die Photographie ist in den Händen der Bourgeoisie zu einer furchtbaren Waffe *gegen* die Wahrheit geworden.

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[68] *BFA* 19, pp. 307–332. In English, see also: "The Bruise - A Threepenny Film". Brecht, *Bertolt Brecht on Film & Radio*, pp. 131–143.

[69] Barthes, Roland. "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein (1973)". *Image, Music, Text*. Edited and translated by Stephen Heath. Hill and Wang, 1984, pp. 69–78, here p. 71. In French, see also: Barthes, *Oeuvres Complètes*, pp. 1591–1598, here p. 1592. [' (…) rien ne sépare la scène épique du plan eisensteinien' ('sinon que, chez Brecht, le tableau est offert à la critique du spectateur, non à son adhésion') - Author translation].

[70] Barthes, Roland. "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein (1973)". *Image, Music, Text*. Edited and translated by Stephen Heath. Hill and Wang, 1984, pp. 69–78, here p. 71. In French, see also: Barthes, *Oeuvres Complètes*, pp. 1591–1598, here p. 1593. [' (…) rien ne sépare la scène épique du plan eisensteinien' ('sinon que, chez Brecht, le tableau est offert à la critique du spectateur, non à son adhésion') - Author translation].

Das riesige Bildmaterial, das tagtäglich von den Druckerpressen ausgespien wird und das doch den Charakter der Wahrheit zu haben scheint, dient in Wirklichkeit nur der Verdunkelung der Tatbestände. Der Photographenapparat kann ebenso lügen wie die Setzmaschine.[71]

('The tremendous development of picture reportage has hardly been a gain for the truth about the conditions prevailing in the world: photography has become a terrible weapon *against* truth in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The huge images that are spat out every day by the printing presses and which still seem to have the character of the truth, really only serve to obscure the facts. The camera can lie as much as the typesetter'). [72]

Following the concept of class consciousness[73], Brecht recognized photography as a domination tool because 'the naturalistic doubling of the visible world in photography creates at best the dangerous illusion of an appropriate perception in which the prevailing ideology of the immutability and naturalness of existing conditions is reproduced.'[74]

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[71] *BFA* 21, p. 515.

[72] Author translation.

[73] The term 'class consciousness' first appears in Brecht's writings a year before in 1930 in *Die Massnahme* (*BFA* 3, p. 76); '(…) wir bringen nichts für euch. Aber über die Grenze nach Mukden bringen wir den chinesischen Arbeitern die Schriften der Klassiker und der Propagandisten: das Abc des Kommunismus; den Unwissenden Belehrung über ihre Lage, den Unterdrückten das Klassenbewußtsein und den Klassenbewußten die Erfahrung der Revolution'. In English, see also: *The Decision*, *CP* 3, pp. 64–5. ('we have nothing for you. But for the Chinese workers across the frontier in Mukden we have the teachings of the Marxist classics and their propagandists, the ABC of Communism. For the ignorant, to shed light upon their situation; for the oppressed, to teach them class-awareness; and for the class-conscious, the experience of the Revolution'.)

[74] Uecker, *Wirklichkeit und Literatur*, p. 224. ('erzeuge die naturalistische Verdoppelung der sichtbaren Welt in der Fotografie allenfalls die gefährliche Illusion einer angemessenen Wahrnehmung, in der tatsächlich die herrschende Ideologie der Unveränderbarkeit und Natürlichkeit der bestehenden Verhältnisse reproduziert werde' - Author translation)

On the day following the February 1933 Reichstag fire, Brecht's books were burnt together with thousands of works by authors the Nazi regime called *un-German* writers. Brecht's family went into exile; Weigel and Brecht travelled by train to Prague, leaving both his children and his manuscripts in the safety of friends and family. He would later be reunited with them in Denmark. For six years, Brecht lived in Svendborg (near Thurø) with his family. Finally, after spending some months waiting for their American visas in Sweden and Finland, they fled to the US in 1939 and stayed there until October 1947. Brecht then went back to Europe, living first in Switzerland and then in 1949 going back to East Berlin, where he lived until his death in 1956. Brecht and Weigel had endured political persecution for nearly two decades. As one of the most notorious opponents of the National Socialist state, Brecht lost his German citizenship in 1935. Two years later, Weigel—who joined the Communist Party in Berlin in the 1930s—and the children had their citizenship revoked. Even though Weigel withdrew from the Jewish community in the late 1920s, her relatives were killed in Auschwitz and her father, Siegfried Weigel, was deported and murdered in the Łódź ghetto when Weigel was in the US.

During his exile, Brecht's interest in photography, expressed in several letters and essays, grew when he realized that *other hands* (meaning the 'wrong hands') could also use the weapon. Even if deriving from the mass-circulation press, there was still the possibility of transforming a photograph into a Benjaminian allegory[75], bringing together inscriptions, subscriptions, original captions and epigrams and building new constellations. Since the beginning of Brecht's development of the *Lehrstücke*, it is possible to see his interest in building a relationship between the written word and images. Since then, and even before the Benjaminian theory of allegory and the Brechtian concept of *gestus* were developed, Brecht

assumed that the media technique of photography was able to bring movement to a still image. Thus, photography might be inherent in the idea of dialectics at a standstill.

According to Jan Gerstner, '[t]he renunciation of a practice characteristic of newspaper reading is to be overcome with a reception attitude demanded by the photo epigrams'.[76] As a result of a specific perception of an artistic experience, these montages appear after Brecht's *Lehrstücke* written in the 1920s and express the complexity of their references and intertextuality.

From the beginning of his exile, Brecht visibly changed his perception in relation to the use of photography. Upon reading the essays of Siegfried Krakauer, who stated that the observation of photography should not be superficial, and prior to the publication of *KF*, Brecht realised the possibilities of redefining photography *in favour of* the truth, depending on who examines the photographs.

In the 'decontextualisation and recontextualisation of photographic images',[77] Brecht manipulated those images, 'addressing his distrust of photographs, manoeuvring them to operate against their usual tendencies, and in particular is critiquing the masking of truth he has located in the photojournalism use of images of war'.[78]

Brecht collected pictures from mass media magazines and newspapers, and these became the raw material for *KF* and *AJ 1934–1955*. Later, the *MB* and *Theaterarbeit* increased the importance of theatre photography in the Brechtian creative process **(Figure 2)**. 'This recruitment of photography as part of the rehearsal and production process, while not unique, was—and remains—rare, and Brecht was likely one of the first practitioners to

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[76] Gerster, *Das andere Gedächtnis,* p. 211. ('Der für die Zeitungslektüre charackteristische Praxisversicht soll mit der von den Fotoepigrammmen eingeforderten Rezeptioshaltung gerade überwunden werden' – Author translation).

[77] Anderson, Joel. *Theatre & Photography*. Macmillan, 2015, p. 77.

[78] Anderson, *Theatre & Photography*, p. 78.

employ photographs in this way'.[79] In the following image, Brecht studies performance
photographs during the *I Internationale Festival der dramatischen Kunst* in Paris.

Figure 2: Bertolt Brecht studies photographs of *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* at the Sarah
Bernhardt Theater in Paris (June 30, 1955)

Source: www.br.de/br-fernsehen/sendungen/lido/bertolt-brecht-102.html. Photograph:
picture-alliance/dpa.

In *Antigonemodell*, Brecht highlights the relevance of theatre photography as a
valuable instrument to study performance.

> Auch die Masken, zu denen erheblich mehr Schminke verwendet wurde, als
> es üblich ist, sollten etwas erzählen: z.B. bei den Alten die Verwüstungen,

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[79] Anderson, *Theatre & Photography*, p. 181.

welche die Gewohnheit zu herrschen in den Gesichtern anrichtet usw. Wie die Bilder zeigen, kam dies nicht ganz heraus.[80]

Also the masks, for which considerably more make-up was used than usual, should say something: e.g. the devastations caused by the habit of ruling in the faces of the elderly, etc. As the photographs show, it did not quite come out.[81]

Beyond observing the scene, Brecht trusted the photographs in the first place, for analysing technical problems, such as incorrect lighting or an inadequate scenario.

1.1   Politics of images

Introduced through a historical and sociological approach, it is vital to contextualise photography for Brecht between the 1920s and 1950s, as this will become the basis for the discussions in the following chapters. Therefore, some of the most important facts relating to photography are highlighted.

Attempting not to be too specific to that period, this chapter will also present a brief photography panorama. The photographers, critics, events and images mentioned were chosen due to their intersection with Brecht's artistic practice. The subject is not only photography but, importantly, also its relationship to theatre, specifically Brechtian theatre. After presenting a photographic panorama, it will be possible to analyse Brecht's political and aesthetic involvement with photography in the subsequent chapters.

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[80] Berlau, *Antigonemodell 1948*, preface written by Brecht and Neher.

[81] Author translation.

It is important to be aware of the environment in which Brecht created a photographic archive, which today comprises almost 12,000 photographs. It transforms the contemporary attitude towards photography. It is hard to imagine the time when photography was virtually unknown, mysterious and, most critically, neither technologically nor economically easy to achieve. Cameras and accessories; film; developing and processing film; and storage all represented a whole new world, even for professional photographers.

Brecht's interest in photography is not as widely acknowledged by the public as his commitment as a playwright and theatre director. It is therefore important to understand the effect of the work of artists and photographers with the same cultural background. Brecht's trajectory is manifestly interconnected with warfare, which can also be considered a point of intersection between Brecht and photography. A comprehensive and critical overview will be developed based on the warfare images produced since *New Objectivity*[82] until the present time.

The era of middle-class portraits; the discovery of coloured photographs; the way society dealt with photographic apparatus; the founding of *Life* magazine; and the invention of compact cameras, particularly the Leica, all impacted Brecht and his artistic choices. In the 1930s, after the invention of the compact camera, the photographer's attitude towards photography changed radically. The photographic medium no longer belonged to professional photographers and wealthy people; indeed, the average citizen was able to become a photographer. Amateurs, including Brecht's children and wife, Helene Weigel, took numerous private photographs. Ruth Berlau was the most prolific photographer who worked for Brecht. The compact camera provided the technical means for the development of theatre

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[82] Post First World War movement (Neue Sachlichkeit) founded by German artists who performed in realistic style in contrast to expressionism and abstraction. It only lasted until the rise of Nazism.

photography. The apparatus did not disturb the audience as much during performances, either with noise or with the light of the flash. In an unpublished article for the *Antigonemodell*, Berlau stated that '[t]he photographer's profession is an important one in 1955 (…) All that is needed is for it to be properly appreciated, understood, respected, and above all, supported'.[83]

Brecht's connection with the world during his years of exile was mostly through the radio, newspapers and illustrated magazines, despite his lack of knowledge of the local language, such as Danish, Finnish, Swedish and English. For this reason, *Life* and *Time* magazines were his primary sources for remaining informed of world news during that period. Not only *KF* and *AJ* but also the *Inspizierbücher, Soufflierbücher* and *Studienmaterial*, which are available in Brechtian archives, present several photographs collected by Brecht and his collaborators.

1.1.1   László Moholy-Nagy's *New Vision*

Lazlo Moholy-Nagy believed that photography could represent a universal visual language for modern society. The Hungarian photographer, painter, writer and illustrator enlisted in the Austro–Hungarian army during the First World War and spent time drawing

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[83] Berlau, Ruth. *Brechts Lai-Tu – Erinnerungen und Notate von Ruth Berlau*. Edited by Hans Bunge. Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1985, pp. 280–284, here p. 284. In German, see also: Berlau, Ruth. *Living for Brecht – The Memoirs of Ruth Berlau*. Edited by Hans Bunge and translated by Geoffrey Skelton. Fromm International, 1987, pp. 231–235, here p. 235. ('Der Beruf des Fotografen ist im Jahre 1955 (…) ein wichtiger Beruf. Er muß nur richtig wahrgenommen, angesehen, geehrt und vor allem unterstützt werden'.)

hundreds of 'colourful, lively, and often humorous'[84] sketches whilst waiting in artillery observation posts. After being severely wounded, Moholy-Nagy was sent to serve in the military reserve force. It was at this point that he started developing his artistic career and style in Berlin, following the Russian Constructivists' model. In 1923 during the post-War period, he designed sets for Erwin Piscator in Berlin and was hired by his mentor and friend Walter Gropius. As a member of the Bauhaus movement, he developed an interest in photomontage in both the artistic and the commercial sense.

Figure 3: *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Jacques Offenbach), Berlin, 1929.
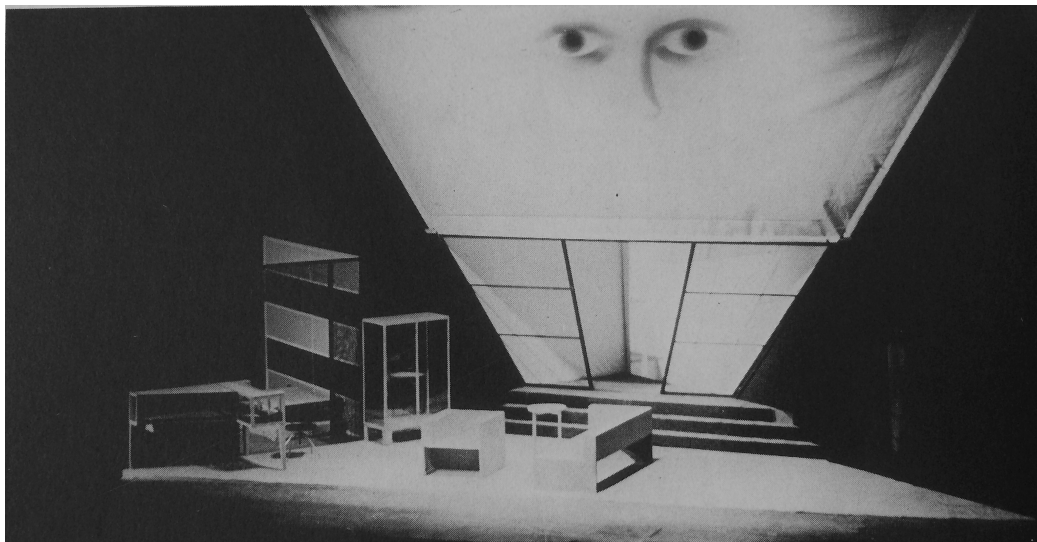
Source: *Weimarer Republik*, p. 130.

The preceding and subsequent images (**Figures 3 and 4**) show the third act of *The Tales of Hoffmann* by Jacques Offenbach at the Staatsoper am Platz der Republik in Berlin in 1929. In the third act, Antonia's room (in Moholy-Nagy's set) is furnished in Bauhaus style,

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[84] Moholy-Nagy Foundation. "Lászlo Moholy-Nagy: A Short Biography of the Artist. A Talk by Hattula Moholy-Nagy at University Commons, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 9 March 2009". moholy-nagy.org/biography/

and the face of the ghostly doctor Miracle appears on a big screen via an image projection. The designer intended to build a contemporary outline using elements such as stainless-steel furniture and plain white walls for opera classics.

Figure 4: The Moholy-Nagy stage design for *The Tales of Hoffmann* by Jacques Offenbach
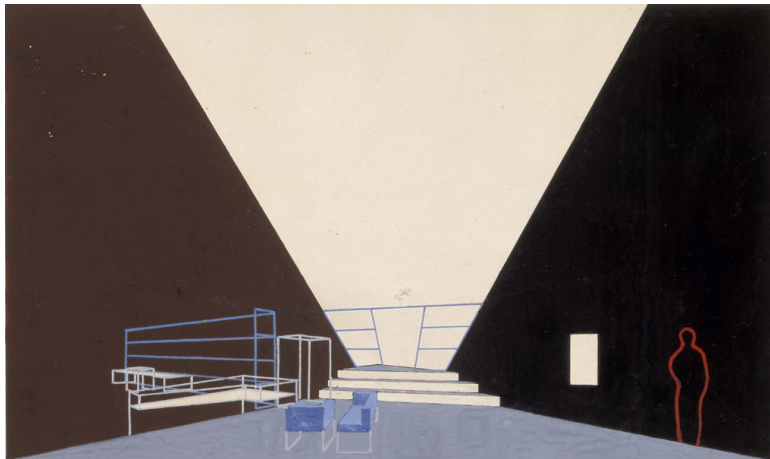
Source: www.jitter-magazin.de/laszlo-moholy-nagy/laszlo-moholy-nagy_buehnenbildentwurf_1928_bauhaus-archiv_foto-markus-hawlik_vg-bild-kunst/. Photograph: Lucia Moholy-Nagy.

In *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*[85] Moholy-Nagy challenged the conventional ideas on vision, space and light. To prove the potentialities of photography that '*make visible* existences which cannot be perceived or taken in by our optical instrument, the eye',[86] he tried to determine different perspectives of the objects. He systematically produced new relationships using a conceptual image as a starting point **(Figure 5)**.

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[85] Moholy-Nagy, László. *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*. Albert Langen, 1927. In English, see also: Moholy-Nagy, László. *Painting Photography Film*. Lund Humphries, 1969.

[86] Moholy-Nagy, *Painting Photography Film,* p. 28. In German, see also: Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*, p. 26. ('… die mit unserem optischen Instrument, dem Auge, nicht wahrnehmbar oder aufnehmbar sind…').

Figure 5: *Berlin, Funkturm* (Berlin, Radio Tower) 1928

Source: www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/objects/84043.html.

Photographed from above, the image of the *Berliner Turm* produced by Moholy-Nagy expresses more than the visual object and its specific characteristics. Is it God's perspective? Is God *empowered* by the means of communication? Who is that God? Does the image represent the common perspective of the lower classes? The photograph taken from above appears in Moholy-Nagy's essay "Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung"[87] published in 1928 in the *Bauhaus Journal*. The artist denaturalised the image of the Berlin Radio Tower, converting the symbol of the centre of global technology into abstract and geometric forms. Lucia Moholy-Nagy, a writer, editor and photographer, helped him to develop the work with photograms, one of his great interests. The photograms gave him the opportunity to be 'one of the earliest artists to create art with purely mechanical means'.

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[87] Moholy-Nagy, László. *Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung. Bauhaus*, v. 2, n. 1, 1928. (Photography is Creation with Light)

In addition to his interest in producing photograms and photomontages, Moholy-Nagy took part in the Dadaist and Constructivist movements, which resulted in attempts to defamiliarise familiar objects. The Hungarian master asserted that 'the reality of our century is technology: the invention, construction, and maintenance of machines. To be a user of machines is to be of the spirit of this century. Machines have replaced the transcendental spiritualism of past eras'.[88] That *reality* was revealed by photography. Moholy-Nagy's avant-garde *Das Neue Sehen* (1928) project changed the relationship between photography and society, creating new spaces for art and creativity and introduced the Bauhaus philosophy, the teaching methods of which aimed 'to educate the whole person, so that he or she could make a contribution to society'[89]. According to the philosophy, 'one can never experience art through descriptions. Explanations and analyses can serve at best as intellectual preparation. They may, however, encourage one to make a direct contact with works of art.'[90]

After severe Nazi persecution, the Bauhaus movement ended in 1933, and Moholy-Nagy's family moved to Amsterdam. There, he took up colour photography. He later joined Gropius and other exiled artists and intellectuals and moved to London, where he acquired his first 35 mm Leica. After founding the Institute of Design in Chicago in 1938, he continued experimenting with colour photography, using his Leica and the new Kodachrome slide film that came onto the market in 1937. According to Gisèle Freund, Moholy-Nagy 'was the first

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[88] Moholy-Nagy, Sybil and Lászlo Moholy-Nagy. "Constructivism and the proletariat". *Experiments in Totality*. Harper & Brothers, 1950, p. 19.

[89] Moholy-Nagy Foundation. "Lászlo Moholy-Nagy: A Short Biography of the Artist. A Talk by Hattula Moholy-Nagy at University Commons, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 9 March 2009". moholy-nagy.org/biography/

[90] Moholy-Nagy, László. *The New Vision, 1928, and Abstract of an Artist*. Preface by Walter Gropius. G. Wittenborn, 1947, p. 12.

to understand the new creative possibilities photography had opened up.'[91] In *Photography &*
Society, she reproduced a camera advertisement from 1925[92] that appeared in the newspapers
consisting of a photograph of Dresden at night:

> NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS AND INDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY WITHOUT
> FLASH
> You can take photographs in the theatre during a performance – short or
> instantaneous exposures. With the ERMANOX camera – small, easy to handle,
> and not easily seen.[93]

The relevance of photographing spectacles and the technological advances with the
advent of Ermanox (which preceded the Leica) endorses Benjamin's theory that 'was über die
Photographie entscheidet, immer wieder das Verhältnis des Photographen zu seiner
Technik'[94] ('what is again and again decisive for photography is the photographer's attitude to
his techniques').[95]

> László Moholy-Nagy saw photography not only as a means of reproducing
> reality and relieving the painter of this function. He recognized its power of

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[91] Freund, Gisèle. *Photography & Society*. David R. Godine Publishers, 1980, p. 195. In
French, see also: Freund, Gisèle. *Photographie et Société*. Seuil, 1974, p. 187 ('le premier qui
comprit les voies nouvelles qu'elle ouvrait dans la création.')

[92] *Münchner Illustrierte Presse*, no. 9, 1925.

[93] Freund, *Photography & Society*, p. 119.
In French, see also: Freund, Gisèle. *Photographie et Société*. Seuil, 1974, p. 108.
(PHOTOGRAPHIES DE NUIT ET D'INTÉRIEUR SANS FLASH - Vous pouvez faire des
photos au théâtre durant la représentation – expositions de courte durée ou instantanés. Avec
la caméra ERMANOX, petite, facile à manier et peu visible.)

[94] WB *GS* II (1), pp. 368–85, here p. 377, "Kleine Geschichte der Photographie" (1931).

[95] WB *SW* 2.2, p. 517. "Little History of Photography".

discovering reality. 'The nature which speaks to the camera is a different nature form the one which speaks to the eye', wrote Walter Benjamin years after Moholy had developed the experimental conditions for Benjamin's theory.[96]

Both Moholy-Nagy's *New Vision* and Brecht's *V-Effekt* appeared almost simultaneously under the same fundamental principles—to make people aware that nothing is natural; on the contrary, social constructions are modifiable.

1.1.2 *Life* and *Time* magazines – photographs from the exile years

The mass circulation press, represented in this research mainly by *Life* and *Time* magazines, played a central political and aesthetic role in the 1930s and 1940s. During the rise of the Nazi regime and the beginning of the Second World War, photojournalism gained a lot of prestige thanks to photojournalists such as Robert Capa[97], George Rodger[98] and Gisèle Freund. However, looking back at the *Life* and *Time* editorial teams, one notes the presence of Nazi collaborators, such as Hugo Jaeger.[99] It is therefore clear that these magazines played the propaganda game on both sides, publishing items related to both Nazi opponents and collaborators. Both magazines portrayed the rise and fall of the Second World War without a clear political stance.

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[96] Moholy-Nagy, *Painting, Photography, Film*, p. 145.

[97] The Jewish Hungarian war photographer and photojournalist (whole real name was Andre Friedman) founded Magnum Photos in 1947 with Henri Cartier-Bresson and David Seymour (1913–1954).

[98] British, first photographer to enter Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945 (1908–1995)

[99] Hitler's personal photographer.

Following Lanzmann's fight against generalisations, this dissertation agrees with the political choice that is based on the attempt of not building a photographic archive of the Shoah (Holocaust), as it 'was constructed against every archive'[100]. In the third chapter, Didi-Huberman's contrary point of view in *Images in Spite of All* will be discussed. That work presents archival photographs taken by prisoners as a way of resistance instead of the falsification of reality, the construction of a supposed counter-archive.[101]

A highly celebrated photo taken by Robert Capa, *Falling Soldier,*[102] was published in *Life* magazine in 1937. It introduced a revolutionary technique of war photography—capturing the moment of death from the point of view of the 'insider'. The photographer took part in the battles, which allowed him to shoot every single movement from the front. This paradigmatic photograph has had a great impact and has fostered much discussion about its veracity. Famous for his black and white war photographs, Capa started taking colour photographs in 1938 using Kodachrome, the latest technological innovation. Because colour photographs required more time to develop than black and white ones, Capa only started taking colour pictures after the war. While photography celebrated its first centenary, photojournalists, such as Englishman George Rodger, were among the first photographers not working to produce Nazi propaganda to photograph a concentration camp. One of his most famous photographs was the May 1945 photo of former camp guard Anneliese Kohlmann,

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[100] Lanzman, Claude. "Le Monument Contre l'Archive?" *Les Cahiers de Médiologie.* No. 11, 2001, pp 271–279, here p. 273, doi: 10.3917/cdm.011.0271 ('Je voulais simplement opposer l'archive à Shoah, qui s'est construit contre toute archive'.)

[101] Like Didi-Huberman, Brecht followed the idea of a counter-archive in *Kriegsfibel*, where the only photograph of a concentration camp shows Brecht's friend Lion Feuchtwanger while arrested in a French camp behind barbed wire. It was taken and smuggled out by Feuchtwanger himself.

[102] The photograph was taken in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. It captures the soldier being shot in the head.

who was forced to bury victims at the liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Freund, a Jewish photojournalist, also pioneered Kodachrome experimentation and considered Brecht one of the most significant influences on twentieth-century theatre. In the early 1930s, she studied social sciences at the University of Frankfurt, where she decided to use photography as a weapon in her socialist practice. On May 1, 1932 she photographed the last demonstration before the end of the Weimer Republic **(Figure 6)**.

Figure 6: *Zuchthaus*, Frankfurt am Main, May 1, 1932.

Source: gisele-freund.com/frankfurt-am-main-1st-may-demonstration-1932/.

The photograph was taken in the Römerplatz in Frankfurt am Main. At that time, there were more than six million unemployed people in Germany, and Labour Day was marked by many street demonstrations representing more than 20 million people living in poverty in the country. Some people were demonstrating against the government, whilst others were supporting it. A year later, Freund fled to Paris, following her friend Walter Benjamin with whom she would play chess in Parisian cafés and meet at the National Library. In 1935, she photographed Brecht and many other artists at the *Congress of Writers for the Defense of*

Culture **(Figure 7)**. In 1936, she became known worldwide for a sequence of photos published in *Life* magazine showing the effects of the depression in England. In 1940, she escaped to Dordogne due to the Nazi invasion of France, whilst Benjamin committed suicide after being arrested at the French–Spanish border attempting to escape being persecuted by the Nazi regime.

Figure 7: Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture in Paris (1935)
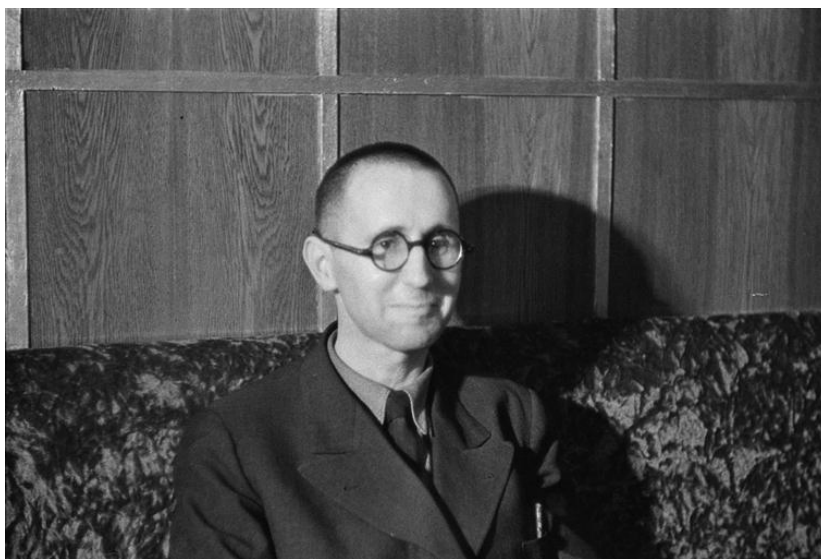
Source: www.photo.rmn.fr/archive/14-585173-2C6NU0AWCZLEY.html. Photograph: Gisèle Freund

Photojournalism remains a powerful instrument in political and aesthetic terms. It is important to highlight that *Life* and *Time* magazines portrayed political facts through photography to the world. The photographers represented diverse ideologies, from pro-Nazism to anti-Nazism. The best-known photographs of concentration camps depict liberation, which was a critical mechanism in manipulating public opinion. Seeing a former Nazi officer digging up bodies of extermination camp prisoners was supposed to give the impression that justice was being done, prompting a sense of relief. Since the beginning of

Second World War, the media has affirmed itself as a tool to manipulate public opinion, mainly in favour of propagandists supporting the ruling elite and their economic interests. Further examples of manipulating public opinion will be pointed out in the second chapter, for example Alfredo Jaar's work, such as *Rwanda Project 1994–2000: Searching for Africa in Life* and *From Time to Time*.[103]

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[103] www.alfredojaar.net/index1.html

2   Photograph collections

> *Dabei schrieb Brecht seine Verse in großer*
> *Ruhe auf seiner Schreibmaschine. Oft sah ich ihn mit Schere*
> *und Klebstoff in der Hand. Was wir hier sehen, ist das*
> *Resultat aus dem Dichter „Schneiderei": Bilder vom Kriege.*
> *Auf die dicken Eichenbalken seines Arbeitsraumes hatte*
> *er sich einen Spruch geklebt: DIE WAHRHEIT IST KONKRET.*
> *Das, glaube ich, ist der Grund, warum er Bilder ausschnitt:*
> *ein Dokument kann man schwerer ableugnen.* [104]

> – Ruth Berlau, *KF*

This chapter sets out to identify and describe the trajectory of Brecht's involvement with photography from his youth until his last days. Brecht was influenced by both friends and collaborators, which determined how he drew on photography as a writer and director. An analysis of this influence is developed in the following chapter, elaborating on the concept of *gestus* from a photographic perspective.

The focus is on four main things representing the presence of photography in Brecht's life and work: 1) *MB* and *Theaterarbeit* containing the photographs of model performances; 2) *KF* and *AJ*, containing the photographs collected from newspapers and magazines; 3) the

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[104] ('Brecht wrote his verses in great silence on his typewriter. / I often saw him with scissors and glue in his hand. / What we see here is the result of the poet "tailoring" :/ Pictures from the war. He had stuck a saying on the thick oak / beams of his workspace: THE TRUTH IS CONCRETE. / That, I think, is the reason why he extracts images: / it's harder to deny a document.' - Author translation).

photographs used in performances, taking as an example *Messingkauf* [105] and *Das Badener Lehrstück vom Eiverständnis*[106]; and 4) Susan Sonntag's[107] framing that reveals an updated commentary on examples of a contemporary warfare representation, searching for the link between politics of images and diverse types of creative theatrical processes.

It is essential to note that working with photography was not a premeditated decision for Brecht. Since seeing his grandfather at work in his small lithographic workshop during his childhood, Brecht was connected to the impact of images in his life. It seems as if his interpersonal relationships stimulated his curiosity about photography and consequently its use in his work. Caspar Neher, his best friend since youth and his set designer sent him drawings from the front line during the First World War.

In the early 1920s, Brecht mentioned his appreciation for photography for one of the first times in a letter to his first girlfriend, Paula Banholzer, who became the mother of his first son, Frank. *Trommeln in der Nacht*[108] is dedicated to her a year before her pregnancy. From Berlin, he wrote about his delight with Paula's letter that came along with a photograph: '(...) und für die Photographie, auf der Du so schön dumm aussiehst. Ich habe doch alle Deine Bilder hier – bis auf das bei Otto, im Kimono, an dem Vorhang, kannst Du mir das nicht auf kurz schicken? Ich sehe Dich immer, viele Male am Tag, wenn ich die Briefmappe aufmache' [109] ('for the photograph, in which you look so nicely stupid. I have all your pictures here –

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[105] *BFA* 22. In English, see also: Kuhn, Tom et al. (eds.). *Brecht on Performance - Messingkauf and Modelbooks*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.

[106] *BFA* 3. In English, see also: *CP* 3, *The Baden-Baden Lesson on Consent*. The title used for this study is *The Baden-Baden Learning Play of Consent prioritizing* the term *Lehrstück*, which means *Learning Play* rather than *Lesson*.

[107] American writer, philosopher and political activist (1933–2004).

[108] *BFA* 1. In English, see also: *CP* 1, *Drums in the Night.*

[109] *BFA* 28, pp. 143–4, here p. 143 (An Paula Bahnholzer, Berlin, Dezember 2, 1921)

except the one at Otto's, in your kimono by the curtain, couldn't you send me that one for a while? I always see you, many times a day, when I open my file of letters').[110] Brecht had three more children after Frank—Hanne in 1923 with the famous singer and actress Marianne Zoff **(Figure 8),** Stefan in 1924 with Helene Weigel and Barbara in 1930, also with Helene Weigel. Photographing children, friends and girlfriends played an important role in the author's youth, as can be seen in his autobiographical records.

> Mit Kindern kann man, auch wenn sie so erstklassig wie meine Tochter [Hanne] sind, mit Ausnahme von fotografieren wenig anfangen. Sie sind zu weise und zu defektlos, um interessant zu sein; dem Normalen, An-sich-Befriedigenden gegenüber aber versagt die Beobachtung. Übrigens hat sie die Unermüdlichkeit und den abnormen Konsum von ihrem Vater geerbt. Sie hat Augen, die sie zu einer großen Tragödin machen müssen, wenn sie nicht einfach nur die Merkmale des Unglücks sein werden.[111]

> Except for photographing children, even when they are as first-class as my daughter [Hanne], you cannot do much with them. They are too wise and too defect-free to be interesting; but the observation fails towards the normal, towards itself-satisfying. Incidentally, she inherited the tirelessness and abnormal consumption from her father. She has eyes that must make her a great tragedy if they are not simply to be the hallmarks of the disaster.[112]

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[110] Brecht, Bertolt. *Letters 1923–1956*. Edited by John Willet and translated by Ralph Manheim. Routledge, 1990, p. 61.

[111] Hecht, Werner (ed.). *Brecht - Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten*. Insel Verlag, 1988, p. 66.

[112] Author translation.

Figure 8: Brecht with his daughter Hanne, May 1926.

Source: Hecht, *Brecht - sein Leben in Bildern und Texten*, p. 66.

Motivated by artists such as Karl Valentin, Büchner and Wedekind during the 1920s, Brecht came to realise the potential of photography in his work. Besides introducing the term *epic* (later appropriated by Brecht), Erwin Piscator was a pioneer in using projections, captions, statistics, musical numbers, narrators and images during performances during this time at the Volksbühne and in Nollendorfplatz. Along with the artistic expressions of German expressionism, for example, Eisenstein's movies, Piscator's stage contributed to Brecht's literalisation and development of *V-Effekt*.

For *Fahnen*[113], Piscator projected photographs on two big screens and presented written titles and critical commentaries on each scene. For*, Hoppla, Wir Leben!*[114] **(Figure 9),**

[113] Paquet, Alfons. *Fahnen: Ein Dramatischer Roman.* München: Drei Masken, 1923. (The play opened in Volksbühne Berlin, on May 26, 1924.)

[114] Toller, Ernst. *Hoppla, Wir Leben!* Kiepenheuer, 1927. (The play opened at Piscatorbühne in Berlin on September 3, 1927.)

immense film projectors were used to integrate the play into a historical process. The projections elicited further explanations and comments about the scene instead of illustrating or correcting it.

Figure 9: *Hoppla, Wir Leben!* Berlin (1927)
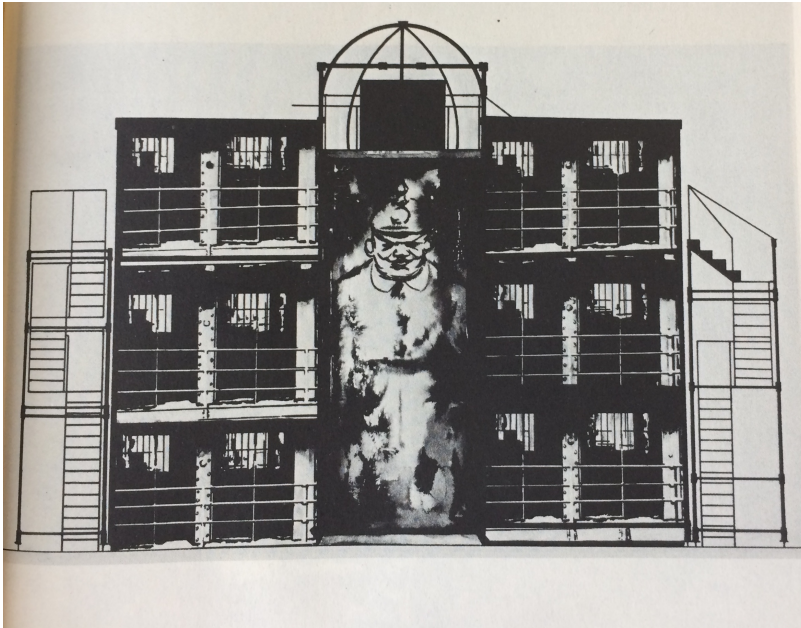
Source: *Weimarer Republik*, p. 729.

In 1927, Brecht wrote in Piscatorbühne's opening programme **(Figure 10)**, quoting his notes on *Mann ist Mann* and stating his belief that 'er wird sich nicht durch die Maschinen verändern lassen, sondern er wird die Maschinen verändern, und wie immer er aussehen wird, vor allem wird er wie ein Mensch aussehen[115] ('he [this new type of human being] will not let the machines change him, but he will change the machines, and whatever he will look like, above all he will look like a human being).[116] The 'new type of human being' represented in the play by the main character, Galy Gay, is a man who becomes strong after ceasing to be a

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[115] *BFA* 24, pp. 40–41.

[116] Author translation.

private person and only finds his strength in the masses, representing the unconditional will of

a crowd. The decontextualisation of the quotation from the opening programme may seem

upon first reading to be a justification for the 'new type of human being', but in the notes on

the play it is clear that the 'new type of human being' is the representation of a new era in

which ethics are set aside in favour of a society where the winner is always the strongest, the

kind of human being that Nikolaus Müller-Scholl calls 'noch-undarstellbar' ('still

unrepresentable').[117]

Figure 10: Eröffnungsheft from the Piscatorbühne

Source: *Weimarer Republik*, p. 818.

Motivated by technological breakthroughs on stage, Brecht worked on *Aufstieg und*

Fall der Stadt Mahagonny,[118] *Die Dreigroschenoper*[119] and *Die Mutter* using several stage

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[117] Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des "konstruktiven Defaitismus",* pp. 187–199.

[118] *BFA* 2. In English, see also: *CP 2, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

[119] *BFA* 2. In English, see also: *CP 2, The Threepenny Opera*.

elements that allow the development of *literalisation* with projections of images and titles. He argued that '[d]ies ist ein Milieu von nicht geringerer Natürlichkeit als jedes andere. Nach Jahrhunderten allgemeiner Lektüre haben Inschriften Wirklichkeitscharakter angenommen'.[120] ('This is an environment no less natural than any other. After centuries of general reading, inscriptions have taken on a real character').[121] In *Notes on The Threepenny Opera* (1931), Brecht explains the first attempts of *literalising* theatre, which (…) bedeutet das Durchsetzen des 'Gestalteten' mit 'Formuliertem', gibt dem Theater die Möglichkeit, den Anschluß an andere Institute für geistige Tätigkeit herzustellen (…)[122] (means interspersing 'construction' with 'formulation' – it gives the theatre the opportunity to make links with other institutions for intellectual activity (…)).[123] For Brecht, the 'milieu' related not only to the notion of environment but also to the notion of the 'umgebung', which means that the milieu was not being changed by technology but that it was the technology itself. After reflecting on the usage of photography on stage, Brecht developed a method of recording performances and rehearsals. The *MB* represented one of the most audacious and complex projects. The first question that emerges is whether the *MB* were made for political or artistic purposes. Above all, Brecht was mainly interested in *artistic matters*, admitting this to his friend Walter Benjamin in Svendborg in 1934 during a conversation about *Mann ist Mann.*[124] Brecht encountered in the pictures and notations an accurate way of building these models and found indispensable visual and theoretical organisation in the *MB*.

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[120] *BFA* 22.1, pp. 265–6. "Über die Literarisierung der Bühne".

[121] Author translation.

[122] *BFA* 24, pp. 56–73, here p. 58.

[123] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 71–80, here pp. 71–72.

[124] *BFA* 2. In English, see also: *CP 2, Man Equals Man*.

During Brecht's exile in the 1930s, Walter Benjamin's most relevant essays on photography, such as *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*[125] and *Neues von Blumen*[126], significantly increased Brecht's interest. Amazed by Karl Blossfeldt's photographic atlas, *Urformen der Kunst: Photographische Pflanzenbilder*[127], Benjamin predicted that it 'unser Weltbild noch unabsehbar verändern wird, das Seine geleistet'[128] ('will alter our image of the world in as yet unforeseen ways').[129] Paraphrasing Moholy-Nagy, Benjamin stated that '[d]ie Grenzen der Photographie sind nicht abzusehen. Hier ist alles noch so neu, daß selbst das Suchen schon zu schöpferischen Resultaten führt. Die Technik ist der selbstverständliche Wegbereiter dazu. Nicht der Schrift- sondern der Photographieunkundige wird der Analphabet der Zukunft sein. '[130] ('The limits of photography cannot be determined. Everything is so new here that even the search leads to creative results. Technology is, of course, the pathbreaker here. It is not the person ignorant of writing but the one ignorant of photography who will be the illiterate of the future.')[131]

Brecht was intensely criticised and so endeavoured to find a way to describe his theatre. In his last years, he stated in *'Katzgraben'-Notate* 1953[132] that the critics were mainly

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[125] *GS* II (1), pp. 368–384. In English, see also: *SW* 2 (2) 1931–1934, pp. 207–530. "Little History of Photography".

[126] *GS* III, pp. 151–153. In English, see also: *SW* 2 (1) 1927–1930, pp. 155–7. "News About Flowers".

[127] Blossfeldt, Karl. *Urformen der Kunst: Photographische Pflanzenbilder. Originary Forms of Art: Photographic Images of Plants*, edited and with an introduction by Karl Nierrendorf. Ernst Wasmuth, 1928.

[128] WB *GS* III, pp. 151–153, here, p. 151.

[129] WB *SW* 2 (1) 1927–1930, pp. 155–7, here p. 155.

[130] WB *GS* III, pp. 151–153, here, p. 151.

[131] WB *SW* 2 (1) 1927–1930, pp. 155–7, here p. 155.

[132] *BFA* 25, pp. 400–490. In English, see also: Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 249–276. "Katzgraben Notes".

opposed to his aesthetic; thus, the *MB* could be a refined way to explore Brechtian concepts through his performances. The photographic *praxis* would continue throughout Brecht's entire life.

One of the central points of Brechtian theatre is to prove that the world can be changed. Therefore, Brecht dialectically chose static photographic images to help him achieve his ambitious goals. There is nothing less changeable than a photographic image, but by interrupting a gesture or a scene Brecht was able to deeply analyse his work and the work of his actors and technicians. This was done not only through the models but also through photographs he studied during the rehearsals. Brecht revealed his working process as theatre director and listed the mains steps in a model direction in *Theaterarbeit*. Here, based on photographic studies, the development of the scene demonstrates the great importance of photography in Brecht's creative process.

Following the investigation of the Brechtian creative process and its relationship with photography, two important questions arose: Is it possible to think about contemporary theatrical scenes through the lens of photography? What is the role of theatre photography today? In fact, there are several possibilities regarding theatre photography; for example, it can be used as inspiration, as a recording method and as a working tool.

There are four main groups of photographs to be analysed in this research: 1) the photographs taken during Brecht's performances; 2) the images Brecht collected from magazines and newspapers; 3) a collection that contains various types of photographs (e.g. those depicting Brecht's private life, those used in projections during presentations and those taken during rehearsals; and 4) a collection that contains the pictures taken during Brecht's rehearsals. The latter will be analysed in the fourth chapter, as they relate closely to the concepts of *gestus* and interruption developed by Brecht, not only theoretically but also during rehearsals with his actors and collaborators.

All the various photographs cover different kinds of situations in which photography played an important role in Brecht's creative process, such as those taken of him as an actor, those taken of him playing the role of a clarinettist in Valentin's *Oktoberfestbude* in 1919[133] and those used in the beginning of the learning play *Das Badener Lehrstück vom Eiverständnis.* Here, Brecht guides the actors through stage directions to show the audience 20 pictures of men massacred by other men in war. The material concerning Brecht and Piscator's experience in Nollendorfplatz at the end of the 1920s when Brecht first started thinking about *literalisations* is also included in this work.

It is well known that Brecht had a long list of collaborators who worked on dramaturgy, direction and translation. However, regarding the photographic medium, there were two essential people—Ruth Berlau, who collaborated for 23 years as a photographer, and Brecht's wife Helene, who was responsible for his archive in Berlin. Berlau, his lover, was an actress, writer and director[134]. As Brecht's photographer for about 20 years, she took thousands of photographs with her Leica, almost all of them in landscape format. Berlau also took photography classes with Josef Breitenbach[135] in 1944, the year she gave birth to Brecht's fifth and premature son, Michel, who lived for just a few days. While recovering from an emergency caesarean section in a hospital in Los Angeles[136], Berlau was being investigated by the FBI for working for the Communist Party as Brecht's secretary and photographer; they had a 'special interest in the photography work that he commissioned her

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[133] Völker, Klaus. *Brecht – A Biography*. Translated by John Nowell. The Seabury Pr., 1978.

[134] She was born in Copenhagen in 1906 and died in 1974 in Berlin.

[135] Breitenbach (1896–1984) was a leftist Jewish emigrant who first worked in Paris and then became a photographer in New York. In Paris in 1937, he took Brecht and Weigel's portraits.

[136] *AJ*, p. 433. ('Ruth wird operiert in Cedars of Lebanon'). In English, see also: *Journals,* 327. ('Ruth has as operation at Cedars of Lebanon').

to do in 1944–45 (…) the extensive photographic copying of German language poems'.[137] The FBI searched Berlau's luggage at the hospital for evidence against Brecht. Despite this, Berlau began the photographic archive of Brecht's works that same year.

Berlau was the one who encouraged Brecht to start and publish the *MB*. Her pioneering spirit made her one of the first directors to use the *MB* in her own stage directions of Brecht's plays. Brecht compares Weigel and the Danish actress, Dagmar Andreasen in performing the role of Mrs Carrar in *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar*[138]. Andreasen, who was directed by Berlau, was also highly regarded by Brecht because she respected the epic principles in her performance by using the models introduced by Berlau from the Parisian performance. Brecht asked

Wo bleibt, werden sie fragen, bei Modellbenutzung das Schöpferische? Die Antwort ist, daß die moderne Arbeitsteilung auf vielen wichtigen Gebieten das Schöpferische umgeformt hat. Der Schöpfungsakt ist ein kollektiver Schöpfungsprozeß geworden, ein Kontinuum dialektischer Art, so daß die isolierte ursprüngliche Erfindung an Bedeutung verloren hat.[139]

Where remains, they will ask, creativity when using the models? The answer is that the modern division of labour has transformed creativity in many important areas. The act of creation has become a collective process of creation, a dialectical continuum in which the isolated original invention has lost its significance.[140]

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[137] Stephan, Alexander. *Communazis: FBI Surveillance of German Emigré Writers*. Yale University Press, 2000, p. 127.

[138] *BFA* 4. In English, see also: *CP* 4, *Señora Carrar Rifles.*

[139] Berlau, *Antigonemodell 1948*, preface written by Brecht and Neher.

[140] Author translation.

Above all, Berlau knew that photography was Brecht's ally in discussions about the creative processes during rehearsals (with or without Brecht's presence) and in making their work available for use by other theatre groups. When the BE was founded in 1949, a photo archive and laboratory were built, and Berlau was nominated to be the head. On various occasions, especially during his exile, her photography was the only way Brecht could maintain contact with the productions he was not able to be near, both for political reasons and because he sometimes worked on many projects simultaneously.

Helene Weigel[141] compiled, documented and organized almost all Brecht's plays, letters and photographs. She classified all the photographs, papers and documents during the 15 years of exile. In the time that she did not work as an actress, she provided Brecht a proper environment for working in exile, organizing the relocations and journeys through various countries and raising their children. Until her death in 1971 she dedicated her life to organising all the material relating to Brecht and to the BE. Before her death, she was one of the most important women in German theatre—a fabulous actress, the director of the BE and the manager of the BBA, which she founded after her husband's death.

The production of *Leben des Galilei* in the US is a fitting example of Brecht's creative process and photography. Two versions of *Leben des Galilei* were published in the *MB*, that by Charles Laughton (US) and that by Ernst Busch (Germany). The pictorial material Brecht collected during the war, particularly after the advent of the nuclear age, influenced the text, for example when Galileo says 'Es ist nicht das Ziel der Wissenschaft, der unendlichen

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[141] Pintzka, Wolfgang et al. *Die Schauspielerin Helene Weigel*. Henschel, 1959. It contains pictures that are also published in *Theaterarbeit (1961)* and several *Modellbüucher*. The roles portrayed by the photographer Gerda Goedhart are *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder, Die Mutter, Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar, Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis, Katzgraben, die Ziehtochter* and *Die Antigone des Sophokles.*

Weisheit eine Tür zu öffnen, sondern eine Grenze zu setzen dem unendlichen Irrtum'[142] ('It

isn't their job to throw open the door to infinite wisdom but to put a limit to infinite error'[143]).

2.1   Using a model: artistic freedom or subordination?

Theaterarbeit and the *MB* play a major role in Brechtian theatre because they helped

in organising and preserving the material, both for him and for future generations. The

publication and usefulness of these books as models to be copied were intensely criticised

when they were published. However, Brecht's intention was not to create a model to be

copied but rather a model to be used as a fundamental basis for reinterpretations. Other topics

in the theatrical field are revealed in the debate surrounding the use of the model and artistic

freedom. The 'invention of new methods of documentation'[144] was an attempt to explain the

kind of theatre he developed after 17 years in exile. According to Carney, 'these books stage

for us the element of textual performativity that Brecht sought to bring to the stage through

complex seeing.[145] The model—'einer Sammlung von Fotografien nebst erklärenden

Anweisungen ersichtlich ist'[146] ('a collection of photographs and explanatory instructions')[147]

as a basis for future performances must not be seen as a model to simply be copied. The

directors and groups who work with the models should not approach their work as a

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[142] *BFA* 5, pp. 7–115, here p. 68.

[143] *CP* 5, p. 69.

[144] Müller-Schöll, Nikolaus. "The Castrated Schoolmaster: Brecht, *The Tutor*, and Lenz".
Translated by Lydia White. *Das Brecht-Jahrbuch: Recycling Brecht 42*. Edited by Tom Kuhn
et al. Camden House, 2018, pp. 67–82, here p. 75.

[145] Carney, Sean. *Brecht and Critical Theory.* Routledge, 2005, p. 834.

[146] Berlau, *Antigonemodell 1948*, foreword written by Brecht and Neher.

[147] Author translation.

mechanical reproduction of the original. Above all, the model should leave traces, openings and spaces for the recreation of the play.

For Brecht, the *MB* were to be used as guides for later productions. The creation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was controversial, and for the first time, Brecht had to face both those from the Soviet sector and those who inherited the Third Reich's theatre. In an attempt to devote himself to artistic freedom, Brecht tried to adapt to the GDR's political system. Aware that it was challenging to be an artist under extremely difficult conditions, Brecht maintained a suspicious attitude towards the totalitarian dictatorship. In 1953, he commented in his diary that 'nazis, zu zehn jahren verurteilt wegen vergehen ,gegen menschenrecht', seien zur volkspolizei geholt worden, wird in der stadt erzählt'[148] ('people in town are saying that nazis condemned to ten years of crimes against "human rights" are being recruited into the people's police').[149] According to the actress Angelika Hurwicz, '[e]very little thought striving for art was a treasure that had to be placed in chests for posterity'.[150] Brecht urged the production of *MB*, the keeping of a logbook of daily work, director's notations and shorthand discussions

2.1.1   *Teamarbeit*

The *MB* contain a vast amount of Brecht's scenic structure material organised by his collaborators with photographs and descriptions, thus '(…) enabling both imitation and

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[148] *AJ*, p. 598 (December 9, 1953).

[149] *Journals*, p. 455.

[150] Hurwicz, Angelika and Gerda Goedhart (eds.). *Brecht Inszeniert: Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis.* Vol. 14. Friedrich Verlag, 1964. ('Jeder kleine, um Kunst bemühte Gedanke war ein Schatz, der für die Nachwelt in Truhen gelegt werden mußte.' – Author translation.)

critical analysis on the basis of the pictorial and documentary record'.[151] Descriptive captions,

notations and the complete dramaturgy follow the pictures.

> Together with sketches drawn by Caspar Neher at the beginning of the work
> on the piece, which served as "templates for the arrangement" for the
> scenes, and with photos by Ruth Berlau and notes on the relationship
> between the "poetic and the artistic", the "rehearsal results" were to be
> compiled into a further *Modellbuch* into the documentation of not just the
> finished piece but also the rehearsal process and the consideration that
> accompanied it.[152]

Of all Brecht's collaborators, Berlau had a crucial role in the elaboration of the *MB* as

a photographer. It can therefore be said that she was co-responsible for the *MB*. Although

never a professional photographer, Berlau was in charge of photographing the performances

and rehearsals for 20 years, 'develop(ing) the concept of model books for Brecht's

productions'.[153] She photographed not only the performances but also the rehearsals,

costumes, scenography elements, casting and everything related to Brecht's work, as

indicated in Brecht's letter to Berthold Viertel from Santa Monica in 1941:

> Ich muß herzlich danken für die Aufführung der "Furcht-und-Elend"-
> Szenen, die sehr gut gewesen sein muß, und auch für den ausführlichen
> Bericht. Wunderbar wäre es, wenn man beir [sic] 2. Aufführung Fotos

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[151] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, p. 143.

[152] Müller-Schöll, "The Castrated Schoolmaster: Brecht, The Tutor, and Lenz", pp. 67–82,
here p. 75.

[153] Weber, Carl. "Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble, The Making of a Model." *The Cambridge
Companion to Brecht*.
Edited by Thomson, Peter and Glendyr Sacks. Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 167–
184, here p. 169.

nehmen könnte. (Ich machte das immer so: mit Leica, während der
Aufführung, von einem Punkt aus, der womöglich im ersten Rang ist, jede
Aufnahme so, daß die ganze Bühne drauf ist; so ein Film kostet sehr
wenig.) [154]

Thank you very much for the performance of the *Fear and Misery* scenes,
which must have been excellent, and also for your detailed report. It would
be wonderful if photographs could be made of the second performance.
(This is how Ruth used to do it: with a Leica, during the performance, from
a point in the first row if possible, in such a way that each shot takes in the
whole stage; this sort of film costs so little.) [155]

Brecht's analysis of Berlau's performance as a photographer was as controversial as
their relationship. In a letter to Berlau in 1945, he recognises the beautiful photographs she
took and states that 'am besten sind die, wo man die ganze Bühne sieht'[156] ('the best are the
ones where one sees the whole stage').[157] Five years later, he complained about Berlau's
photographs, saying that

[d]ie Fotos, die ich bisher kriegte, zeigen, was man machen *könnte*, d. h. mit dem
Licht, wie es ist. Aber sie sind eben merkwürdig unpoetisch und es fehlt fast immer
das besondere, individuelle Auge, das die Deinen haben. Es ist halt keine mechanische
Sache'.[158]

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[154] *BFA* 29, p. 236.

[155] Brecht, *Letters*, p. 346. Note that in the English translation and also in the German edition of
the *Letters*, pp. 448–9, instead of using the pronoun in first person 'Ich machte...' there is
'[Ruth] machte'. In fact, the description of the photographic methodology is by Ruth.

[156] *BFA* 29, p. 361.

[157] Brecht, *Letters*, p. 395.

[158] *BFA* 30, p. 22.

(The photos I've received up to now show what *might* be done, i.e. with the light as it is. But they're strangely unpoetic, and almost all lack your special, individual eye. Photography simply isn't a mechanical business.)[159]

Created to be a performance record, the photographs were also used to study rehearsals and improve them and to work as a basis for future stagings. As Ruth Berlau stated, '[o]ft führen die Untersuchungen der Bilder zu Berichtigungsproben'[160] ('studies of the pictures often result in corrective rehearsals').[161] In his last days, Brecht wrote an enlightening farewell letter to Berlau, stating that her work as a photographic collaborator is to be at all times mentioned: 'Deine Erfindung des Modellbuchs ist von großer Bedeutung für die Studierbarkeit meiner Arbeiten'[162] ('your invention of the *Modellbücher* is of great importance for the studiability of my work').[163] According to Berlau, 'the reality on stage can only be controlled photographically. A picture can be studied for a long time in the quiet morning, far away from the direction table.'[164] The photographer described Brecht's routine of analysing rehearsal pictures every morning after a working day. According to Berlau, 'the Berliner Ensemble possesses a larger photographic laboratory and archive than any other

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[159] Brecht, *Letters*, p. 492. Letter 639 to Ruth Berlau.

[160] *BFA* 25, pp. 535–7, here p. 536.

[161] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 234–236, here p. 235.

[162] *BFA* 30, pp. 416–8, here p. 417.

[163] Author translation.

[164] Berlau, *Brechts Lai-Tu - Erinnerungen und Notate von Ruth Berlau*, pp. 280–284, here p. 283. ['Die Wirklichkeit auf der Bühne kann nur fotografisch kontrolliert werden. Ein Bild kann man lange am stillen Morgen, fern vom Regietisch studieren.' – Author translation.]

theatre in the world. In none of the countries in which we have worked has there been a photo lab devoted to the needs of stage direction and dramaturgy.'[165]

Brecht lived in more than 10 different countries during his exile, so he was never sure if his manuscripts and books or indeed he himself would arrive safely in the next country. Brecht's collaborators, such as Elisabeth Hauptmann, Margarete Steffin, Caspar Neher, Helene Weigel, Kurt Weil, Lion Feuchtwanger and Ruth Berlau, were involved in writing, translating, inspiring, organising, taking pictures and making notations. He admitted once that working alone was very tedious and lonely and that he was not able to work by himself. According to Berlau,

> Great photographers know no laws. "You cannot go in there – there you
> bother someone – that is forbidden ...",
> A real photographer does not even smile – he goes through – he reaches his
> goal - he photographs what he had in his head. A real photographer's mind
> is not what you call "normal". (Ruth Berlau, immortal photographer)[166]

Brecht and Berlau knew each other during the period of exile in Denmark. The Brechts lived there for six years and received many guests, such as Berlau, Margarete Steffin, Walter

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[165] Berlau, *Living for Brecht – The Memoirs of Ruth Berlau*, pp. 231–235, here p. 234. In German, see also: Berlau, *Brechts Lai-Tu - Erinnerungen und Notate von Ruth Berlau*, pp. 280–284, here p. 283. [(…) 'hat das Berliner Ensemble das größte fotografische Laboratorium und Archiv aller Theater in der Welt. In allen Ländern, in denen wir waren, gab es kein Fotolabor, das nur für die Regie und die Dramaturgie gearbeitet hat'.]

[166] Meyer, *Ruth Berlau: Fotografin an Brechts Seite,* p. 5. ('Große Fotografen kennen keine Gesetze. Da darf man nicht rein – da stört man – das ist verboten…', da lächelt ein / Echter Fotograf nicht mal – er geht durch – er erreicht sein Ziel – er fotografiert, was er in seinem Kopf hatte. / Ein echter Fotografenkopf ist nicht, was man so nennt: 'normal'. Ruth Berlau, Unsterbliche Fotografen - Author translation.)

Brecht, Karin Michaellis and many others. There are only a few notes and two pictures referring to that period in Brecht's *AJ*. In 1938, Berlau used the photographs as a model in *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar* in Denmark, where she staged the play with the same set and staging as the original performance directed by Brecht with the amateur actress Dagmar Andreasen in the leading role, which had been previously played by Weigel under Brecht's direction. In *Weigel und Andreasen als Frau Carrar. Unterschiede der Spielweise*,[167] Brecht differentiated the actresses regarding their talent in working with the model and with epic theatre principles. In the introduction to *Antigonemodell*, he complimented both actresses (Weigel and Andreasen) and the director (Berlau), saying that 'Der Versuch gereichte sowohl ihr als der Weigel, die etwas veränderbar Nachahmbares geschaffen hatte, zur Ehre'[168] ('the attempt paid tribute both to her and Weigel, who had created something changeably imitable')[169]. The starting point of the experiment was the photographs of Weigel's *Carrar*, directed by Brecht.

> Denn das Modell ist wahrhaftig nicht aufgestellt, die Aufführungsweise zu fixieren, ganz in Gegenteil! Auf der Entwicklung liegt das größte Gewicht, die Änderungen sollen provoziert und wahrnehmbar gemacht werden, an die Stelle der sporadischen und anarchischen Schöpfungsakte sollen Schöpfungsprozesse mit schritt- oder sprunghaften Änderungen treten. Das Modell in einundeinhalb Dutzend Proben am Stadttheater in Chur hergestellt, ist von vornherein als unfertig zu betrachten; gerade daß seine Mängel nach Verbesserungen schreien, sollte die Theater einladen, es zu benutzen.[170]
>
> Because the model is really not set up to fix the way of performance, quite
> the opposite! The greatest weight lies on the development, the changes are
> to be provoked and made perceptible; the place of the sporadic and anarchic

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[167] *BFA* 24, pp. 223–5. In English, see also: *CP* 4, 356–7, "Different Ways of Acting – Weigel and Andreasen as Mrs Carrar 1938".

[168] *BFA* 25, pp. 71–168, here p. 77.

[169] Author translation.

[170] *BFA* 25, pp. 71–168, here p. 77.

acts of creation is to be taken by processes of creation with step- or abrupt changes. The model produced during the course of a dozen and a half rehearsals at the municipal theatre in Chur is to be considered unfinished from the outset; just that its shortcomings cry out for improvements, should the theatres invite to use it.[171]

Berlau took classes on stage photography from Roger Pic[172]; bought a Leica; more than once built a photographic laboratory at home; and dedicated her life to the photographic task. It was crucial to have a photographer who could easily understand Brecht's demands. Indeed, she made every effort to deliver the required photographic work.

Dies alles sind für Regisseure und Regieassistenten lehrreiche Arbeiten, auch Dramaturgen können bei der Herstellung der Modelle lernen. Es ermöglicht das Auffinden übertriebener Gesten, unwahrer Ausdrücke, falscher Haltungen, guter Ausdrücke und charakteristischer Gesten. So bekommt nicht nur das fertige Modellbuch einen Wert, den für die Benützer, sondern es hat auch einen Arbeitswert, einen Lehrwert schon für die Hersteller. Es ist klar, daß diese Arbeit sich nur lohnt, wenn eine Aufführung nachahmenswert oder wenigstens in Einzelheiten nachahmenswert ist. Der Wert liegt auch darin, daß man etwas für spätere Zeiten festhalten kann. Sei es nun Spielweise, Bühnenbau oder Geschmack unserer Zeit. Jede Vorstellung zeigt etwas Lehrreiches – auch von den schlechten kann man lernen.[173]

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[171] Author translation.

[172] A French photojournalist who began his professional life in the theatre, born in 1920 and died in 2001. He compiled books on Brecht and Samuel Beckett (of whom he took a famous portrait in 1953). He was interested in countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba and China. His inheritance contains 280,000 negatives, 72 television documentaries and a biography.

[173] *BFA* 25, pp. 535–7, here p. 537.

All this is very instructive for directors and directors' assistants, and dramaturges can also learn from the production of models. It helps them to identify exaggerated gestures, untrue expression, false attitudes, good expressions and characteristic gestures. Thus, the finished *Modelbook* is not only valuable for the user but is also of value for the work and instruction of the producer. It is clear that this work is only worthwhile if a production is worthy of imitation as a whole or at least in certain details. It is also of value because something can be recorded for later ages; be it the acting style, set construction or the taste of our age. Every performance show something instructive – one can even learn from bad ones.[174]

The *MB* were initially made to provide a record; however, the photographs were also used to study the rehearsals and consequently to correct them. Often, Berlau photographed the rehearsals during the day, developed the photographs at night and delivered them to Brecht in the morning. All the material—pictures and writings—were kept, organised and published by Helene Weigel. Because Weigel was forced to stop acting during her exile, she started developing her organisational skills, learning how to make book bindings by herself. On her return to Berlin, in addition to working as an actress again, she was nominated as the BE's director, a position she held until her death **(Figure 11)**.

Though she had reservations about the East German totalitarian system, she did nothing that might jeopardize her work as director of the Berliner Ensemble and her challenging mission of publishing Brecht's complete works and setting up his archives after his death in 1956.[175]

Figure 11: Helene Weigel in Berliner Ensemble's office, 1965.

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[174] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 234–236, here p. 236.

[175] William, Jennifer M. "Helene Weigel". *Jewish Women's Archive*. March 1, 2009. //jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/weigel-helene.

According to Weigel, the main reason for being chosen for this task was that Brecht did not want to do it. During all the years that the couple lived together, Brecht noticed her 'true organisational talent'[176] and so invited Weigel to head the BE.

2.1.2 *Modellbücher*: variations

Each *MB* is different from the other, which provokes investigation. By changing the style of each *MB*, Brecht was also igniting the reader's thought process. The different styles encourage the reader to investigate not only the content but also the form. Brecht thereby reinforces his theory of an alterable world.

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[176] Hecht, Werner. *Helene Weigel - Eine Große Frau des 20. Jahrhunderts.* Suhrkamp, 2000, p. 32 ("wirkliches Organisationstalent" - Author translation.)

If one looks at the components planned for the book, it is evident that every single *Modellbuch* was fundamentally different from the others. They were literally singular attempts at archiving and to this extent also attempts at "anti"-archiving: they were evidence of the impossibility of documenting and archiving comprehensively and of the necessity to continuously reinvent the form of each production's memory.[176]

Some of the *MB* present only photos, such as *Die heilige Joahanna der Schlachthöfe*[177] and *Hirse für die Achte 1954*[178]. The *Der Prozeß der Jeanne D'Arc zu Rouen MB* is a huge album of 200 pages divided into two volumes. The photographs from the premiere on November 23, 1952 are numbered on the back. Loose beige sheets are folded as a book instead of being bound. There is no text at all. The first volume consists of 97 pages with three photographs per page, one under the other. The second volume has the same format. In the *MB* for *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar 1937*[179], written between 1952 and 1955 and referring to the premieres in Paris (1937), Copenhagen (1938) and Greifswald (1952), one can find photographs and text but no comments. Aesthetically, this *MB* is totally different from the others. Here, the loose sheets are also folded as a book instead of being bound, with black and beige cardboard pages. The black ones have no text at all, and the beige ones have lines of text or the stage directions. The black pages, usually on the left, contain pictures glued in an artistic layout, shuffled, without a pattern, and they have different sizes and orientations. The pictures on the beige pages are displayed one under the other, six or seven pictures in

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[176] Müller-Schöll, "The Castrated Schoolmaster: Brecht, *The Tutor*, and Lenz", p. 75.

[177] *BFA* 3. In English, see also: *CP* 3, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*.

[178] BBA MB 0047. From here on, the *Modellbücher* will be cited as MB and the Bertolt Brecht Archive as BBA.

[179] BBA MB 0006.

contact prints, as in a filmstrip layout. Numbered typewritten text is found beside the pictures. This *MB* was published in 1952[180] **(Figure 12).**

Figure 12: *Modellbuch* for *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar*
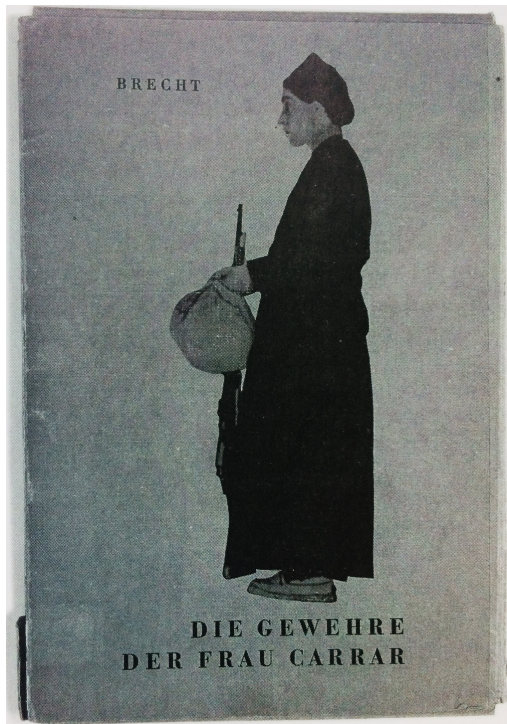
Source: Meyer, *Ruth Berlau: Fotografin an Brechts Seite,* p. 165.

The *MB* for *Urfaust 1952*[181]*, Das Glockenspiel des Kreml 1952*[182] and *Biberpelz und Rother Hahn 1953*[183] display the pictures with a line of typewritten text under each one. *Mann ist Mann 1931* was recorded in three different styles—with pictures glued on the right-hand pages, with pictures and typewritten text under each image and with contact prints in small

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[180] *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar – Modellmappe mit Szenenfotos der Aufführungen in Paris (1937), Kopenhagen (1938), Greifswald (1952).* Edited by Peter Palitzsch with notes by Ruth Berlau. Verlag der Kunst, 1952.

[181] BBA MB 0100.

[182] BBA MB 0046.

[183] BBA MB 0003.

format, as in a filmstrip.[184] *Antigonemodell* includes photographs and text with detailed stage directions and Brecht's dialogues about the performance, highlighting both strong points and specific mistakes. It is refined and complete, as the reader can follow Brecht's thoughts through Berlau's pictures. The photographs and comments in three *MB— Antigonemodell, Aufbau einer Rolle – Galilei* and *Couragemodell—*are mainly examined in this research.

During his exile, Brecht was able to photograph his manuscripts with Berlau's help and to *scan* the writings in case he should have to flee the Nazis without his papers. The following image **(Figure 13)** shows the contact prints of *Gedichte im Exil*[185]. Brecht stated that

> daneben photographische experimente mit r[uth], bestimmt, ein archiv von filmen meiner arbeiten anzulegen. unzählige versuche, bei denen uns einmal sogar reichenbach unterstützt. amüsant, die fehlerquellen in den papieren, filmen, lichtanlagen, linsen usw. zu entedcken. erstes resultat GEDICHTE IM EXIL. dann arbeite ich dafür die STUDIEN erneut durch.[186]

> besides that, making photographic experiments with r[uth] with a view of setting up an archive of my work on film. innumerable experiments, once even with the help of reichenbach. it is amusing to discover what sources of error there are in the kinds of papers, the types of film, the lighting equipment, the lenses etc. first result POEMS IN EXILE. then i go through the STUDIES again to the same end.[187]

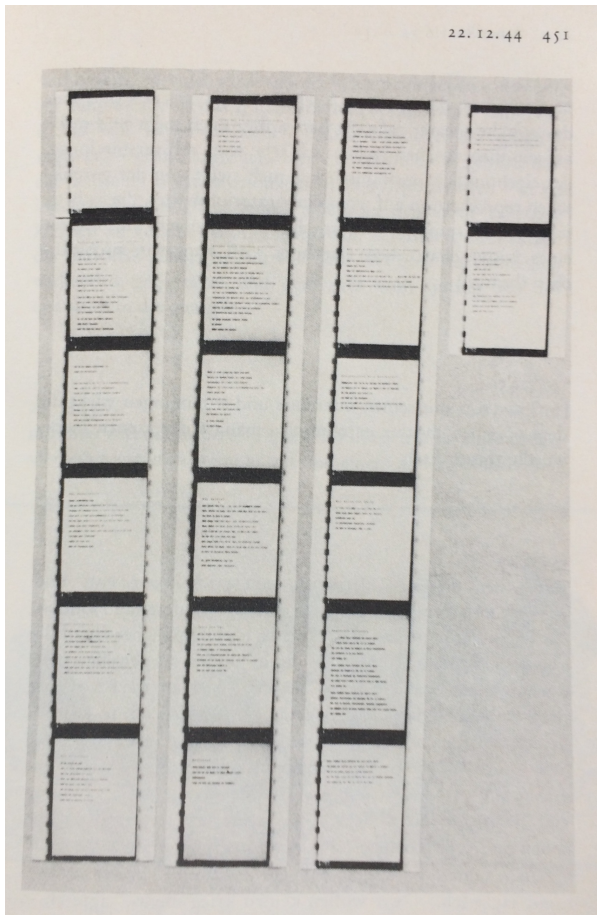**Figure 13:** Contact prints of *Gedichte im Exil*.

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[184] BBA MB 0072-74.

[185] *BFA* 12. In English, see also: Brecht, Bertolt. *Poems 1913–1956*. Edited by John Willet and Ralph Mahnheim. Routledge, 1988.

[186] *AJ*, p. 449.

[187] *Journals*, p. 339.

Source: *AJ*, p. 451.

He could also send the material to other collaborators, as he did with his typed versification of the *Communist Manifesto*, copies of which were sent to Karl Korsch and his son, Stefan, as he explained in a diary entry: '(…) ein wenig zu dem entschluß trägt die neue möglichkeit bei, kleine fotografische ausgaben zu veranstalten, die nicht nur die illusion von büchlein geben, sondern auch kritische korrespondenz verheißen'[188] ('the possibility of producing little photographic editions which not only give the illusion of miniature books, but also promise critical correspondence').[189] A few days later the playwright narrated his experience in helping

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[188] *AJ*, pp. 454–5

[189] *Journals*, p. 343.

Ruth to produce the archive and, in order to work more productively, he had photographic prints of the original text laying everywhere.

Those previous experiences with photography certainly led both Brecht and Berlau to the *MB* idea. Their aim was to convert a theatrical performance into a chrono-photographical sequence, exposing the *gestus* of the play though the interruption of a thousand flashes. Brecht and Berlau's pioneering achievements for the theatre photography, result in 'an almost unimaginable number of images of rehearsals, performances, role portraits and photographed materials for theatrical work'.[190] The *MB* served as an answer to post-Second World War German theatre, in which the Stanislavskian tradition was still the predominant one and the so-called 'red' authors (from a Communist perspective) were impeded from opening artistic spaces in the divided Berlin.

When Brecht needed to take photographs, some questions arose: Who is going to take them? Will they be published? If so, where? By whom? How are the photographs going to be taken? During performances or rehearsals? How will the models be used? What will the public's response be? Many of these questions appear in his letters, particularly those written to Berlau, and yet in 1955, he writes as a postscript, 'ich sehe wieder, wie wichtig Modellbücher sind!'[191] ('...once again I see how important model books are!'),[192] although most of the questions remained unanswered.

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[190] Meyer, *Ruth Berlau: Fotografin an Brechts Seite*, p. 184. ('Es sind "Pionierleistungen" für die Theaterfotografie, so wie er sie verstanden haben wollte: eine nahezu unvolstellbare Menge Bilder von Proben, Vorstellungen, Rollenporträts und fotografierten Materialen für die Theaterbeit' - Author translation).

[191] *BFA* 30, p. 335.

[192] Brecht, *Letters,* p. 541.

Antigonemodell 1948

In 1948, Brecht staged *Antigone* at the Chur Theater in Switzerland. The premiere was a landmark in the history of theatre. Helene Weigel had a leading role after years of exile being off stage. The play tells the story of two sisters in Berlin in 1945 who had to take down the body of their brother who the Nazis hanged for treason. After the opening, *Der Spiegel* stated that 'Mythology is sacrificed to actuality. (…) He let the play in Caspar Neher's stage play continuously in front of an illuminated auditorium'.[193] It is possible that besides aiming to radicalise his concept of anti-illusionist theatre, Brecht wished to facilitate the lighting for the photographs.

The play was 'prolifically photographed by Berlau; this production provided material for the first full-scale *Modellbuch*.'[194] The complete text with numbered lines from the play *Die Antigone des Sophokles*, based on Hölderlin's translation, is in the Appendix. *Antigonemodell* contains 87 photographs on the right-hand pages with lines of text and stage directions. The left-hand pages contain Brecht's notes, mainly in dialogical form, and actors' stage directions followed by the numbered lines of the text. At the end of the book are a number of photographs—Weigel as the *Berliner Frau*; Creon's third figure; Antigone's (Weigel) and Creon's (Gaugler) costumes; and some props, such as the board of masks and the gong. Also included are the stage outline and Neher's first, second and third sketches of the stage for *Antigone,* and seven of Neher's scene sketches. There is also a photograph of the

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[193] "Antigone 1945". *Der Spiegel*. February 29, 1948. www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-44415800.html. ('[d]ie Mythologie wird der Aktualität geopfert' (…) Er ließ das Stück in Kaspar Nehers Bühnenbild pausenlos vor erleuchtetem Zuschauerraum spielen. – Author translation).

[194] Thompson, Peter. "Brecht's lives". In Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 22–39; here p. 36.

actors who took part in the Swiss presentation in 1948. There are no performance comparisons in this *MB*. In an introductory note, Berlau complains about the lighting apparatus at the theatre, explaining that '(…) under the given circumstances, the recordings could not do much more than show the groupings and individual attitudes'.[195] The preface, written in 1948 by Brecht and Neher, comprises an ode to photography and to the use of the model. The specificity of the model is by no means to be followed. On the contrary, the authors highlighted that the failure of the reproduction due to technical limitations is a real possibility due to the production's specific personality. 'Damit etwas mit Gewinn nachgeahmt werden kann, muß es vorgemacht sein. Die aktuale Leistung bei der Benutzung von Modellen kann dann eine Mischung von Beispielhaftem und Beispiellosem sein.'[196] ("For something to be imitated at a profit, it must be demonstrated. The actual performance when using models can then be a mixture of exemplary and unprecedented').[197] When Brecht searched for new experiences, the ideas of 'nie dagewesen' and 'unerhört' fortified the search for a productive use of the model. 'And therefore, each image must inevitably be more than a mere image, altered repetition. Due to this contamination of the first and all other images, every update of the model becomes a representation that holds and hides possibilities.'[198]

It is assumed that the artists involved in the creative process of Brechtian plays and their corresponding *MB* should have knowledge of theatre and ideally of Brechtian theatre to

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[195] *BFA* 25, p. 83. (' (…) unter den gegeben Umständen nicht viel mehr tun, als die Gruppenführung und einzelne Haltungen zu zeigen' - Author translation.)

[196] *BFA* 25, p, 76.

[197] Author translation.

[198] Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des "konstruktiven Defaitismus",* p. 317. ('Und deshalb muß jedes Abbild zwangsläufig mehr als bloßes Abbild sein, veränderte Wiederholung. Durch diese Kontamination des ersten wie aller weiteren Abbilder wird jede Aktualisierung des Modells zu einer Darstellung, die Möglichkeiten birgt und verbirgt. ' – Author translation).

create a production according to the model. In *Antigonemodell*, Berlau describes how she took the photographs during the 1948 premiere in Switzerland. As always, she used a Leica 1:9 (as it was the best compact camera at the time) and Superpan film. Positioned in the middle of the audience, she had to place herself and her camera in a way that did not frame the audience in her shot. To fulfil Brecht's unique requirements, the scene had to be very well lit. However, a ramp cast too many shadows, hindering the photograph, as can be seen in the following photograph **(Figure 14).** This is the first photograph in the *Antigonemodell*, and it shows the moment when Weigel, in the title role, is carrying an iron kettle whilst trying to convince Ismene to bury their brother illegally.

Figure 14: *Antigone*
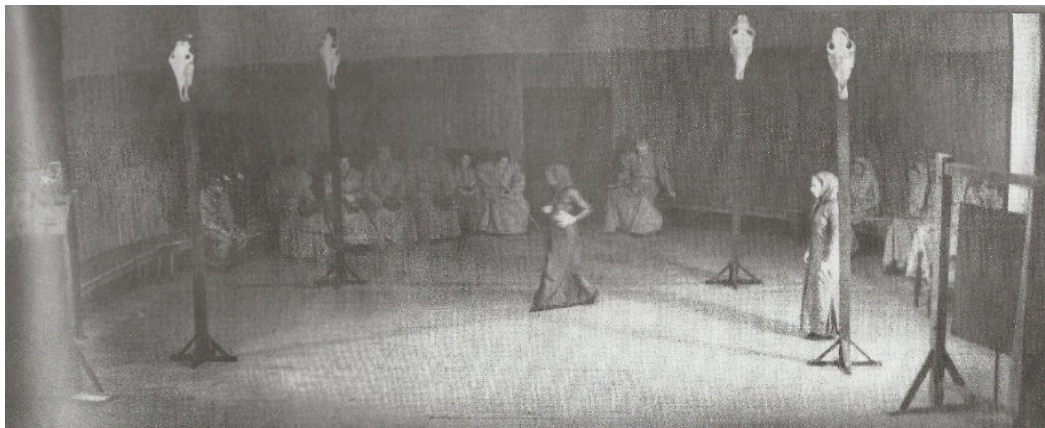
Source: *Antigonemodell 1948* - Photograph: Ruth Berlau.

Designed by Neher **(Figure 15)**, the stage was considered uncommon for a Greek tragedy due to the lack of traditional Greek columns. However, it was organised in a semicircle, thus referencing ancient Greek theatre. In front of huge screens and serving as a 'backstage' were benches on which the actors waited until they took part in the scene. The 'real' stage was marked out with four poles crowned with horse skulls, delineating the space for action, whilst the 'outside' space was a neutral zone with clearly defined entrances and exits.

Figure 15: Caspar Neher's sketch for *Antigone.*

Source: de Ponte*, Caspar Neher & Bertolt Brecht*, illustration 121.

The following note accompanies the picture: 'Aber Antigone ging, des Oedipus Kind, mit dem Kruge / Staub aufsammeln, damit Polyneikes' Leib? Zu bedecken, / den der erzürnte Tyrann vor die Vögel und Hunde geworfen'[199] ("But Antigone went, King Oedipus' child, with her pitcher/Gathering dust to cover the body of dead Polynices/Which the wrathful tyrant had thrown to the dogs and the vultures').[200] It refers to the dramaturgical action. On the opposite page, Brecht gives specific stage directions for the casting. Here, for example,

> Die Alarmplatte wird zweimal angeschlagen. Die Darstellerinnen der
> *Antigone* und der *Ismene* stehen auf und gehen, die der *Antigone* den
> Eisenkrug von der Bank mitnehmend, schnell zur Grenze des Spielfeldes,
> das zwischen den vier Pfählen liegt. Dort platziert die der *Antigone* den
> Krug in der geplanten Weise an der linken Hüfte, wendet den Kopf, die
> Heimlichkeit des Ganges anzudeuten, und geht weiten Schrittes über das

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[199] *BFA* 25, p. 91.

[200] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, p. 179.

Spielfeld. Das Gehen mit dem Krug muß, so kurz es dauert, einprägsam in seiner Freiheit sein, damit sie beim Brettschleppen in der Streitszene desto mehr fehle. Das Staubaufsammeln unter dem Schädelpfahl geht eine Weile; dann überschreitet die Darstellerin der *Ismene* die Spielfeldgrenze.[201]

The gong is beaten twice. Those portraying Antigone and Ismene stand up and move quickly to the edge of the acting era, which lies between the four posts. The Antigone figure picks up the iron jug off the bench and takes it with her. The Antigone figure then places the jug on her left hip in a calculated manner, turns her head to indicate the secrecy of the movement, and moves with long strides across the acting area. Although it is brief, this walk with the jug must be conspicuous in its freedom, so that her freedom is all the more lacking when the board is tied to her during the quarrel scene. The gathering of dust under the skull post proceeds for a while; then the person portraying Ismene steps into the acting area.[202]

Berlau stated that her photography records three different artistic expressions—direction, dramaturgy and interpretation. It is possible to do this during the performance in front of the audience. She stated that 'the pictures of collaboration between Brecht, Neher and Weigel that I am presenting here comprise only a small selection from a total of two thousand photographs. In the archives, we have successful colour exposures that reveal the beauty of the decorations and the costumes.'[203]

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[201] *BFA* 25, p, 90.

[202] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, p. 178.

[203] Berlau, *Living for Brecht*, p. 232. In German, see also: Berlau, *Brechts Lai-Tu,* p. 281. ('[d]ie Aufnahmen, die ich Euch hier überliefere von einer Brecht-Neher-Weigel-Zusammenarbeit sind nur eine kleine Auswahl aus zweitausend Fotos. Im Archiv haben wie gelungene farbige Aufnahmen, die Schönheit der Dekoration und der Kostüme zeigen').

The black set of *Galilei's MB* is sophisticated and contains three volumes. The volume with a yellow cover is the complete text, and the other two compare Ernst Busch's and Charles Laughton's versions of *Galilei*. The *MB* titled *Aufbau einer Rolle – Galilei* highlights the differences between the distinctive processes. As *in Couragemodell,* it shows how the model is used to (re)create a performance. The volume containing Laughton's version starts with a foreword accompanied by Neher's sketches and 14 notes on individual scenes. The pictures were placed randomly throughout the text. Busch's version opens with Hans Eisler's epigraphy describing how Brecht wanted to publish a book after working with Busch on *Galilei.* Therefore, following a suggestion by Weigel, Brecht took on the job of editing the books. Brecht died on August 1956, just a few months before the premiere of this production (directed by Erich Engel) on January 15, 1957. Later, Eisler included a letter in the preface that Brecht wrote to Busch some days before his death, saying that everything was going as planned and that he was sure they would do a good job. After the letter, there is a text from the *Theaterarbeit* titled *The Popular Actor Ernst Busch* and a prologue by Eisler. Together with the pictures are lines of the text and stage directions. There are one, two, three or even four pictures on each page.

The well-known rehearsal process that Brecht and Laughton developed is based on gestures and not words, as Brecht did not have sufficient English and Laughton knew no German. Berlau was in charge of documenting the process and the American premiere.

> Brecht was delighted; now back in Zurich he wrote: 'The photos are splendid! Now you're a specialist' (mid-December 1947 – not in the English edition); and he immediately proposed she do the same for the production of Antigone that he was planning in Switzerland. So Berlau

returned to Europe, now more or less entirely dependent on Brecht, as she had never been in Scandinavia or the States. Under Brecht's direction Berlau took literally thousands of pictures of this Antigone production, including some at specially organised extra rehearsals with brighter lighting, and some even in colour. [204]

The photograph below **(Figure 16)** shows scene nine, when Galileo lays down a needle on a piece of paper and launches it on the water. Galileo asks Federzoni what has happened, and Federzoni replies 'Die Nadel schwimmt! Heiliger Aristoteles, sie haben ihn niemals überprüft! *Sie lachen*'[205] ('The needle is floating. Holy Aristotle, they never checked up on him!' *They laugh*).[206] In addition to the photographs, the *MB* contains a description of the actor's attitude: 'Ein Lehrsatz des Aristoteles wird widerlegt. Busch zeigt dabei auch den Respekt Galileis vor dem großen Griechen. Man wird noch viele widerlegen, auch ihn. Das ist nötig und kein Anlaß zur Überheblichkeit'[207] ('A theorem of Aristotle is refuted. Busch thereby also shows the respect Galileo has of the great Greeks. One will disprove many, even him. This is necessary and there is no reason for arrogance').[208]

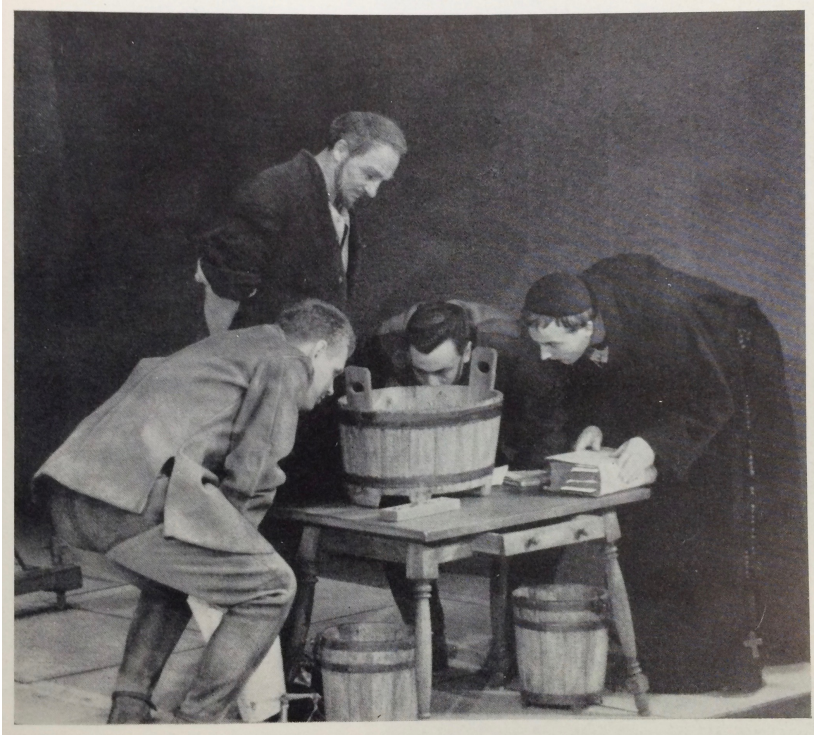[204] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 143–150, here p. 145.

[205] *BFA* 5, p. 252.

[206] *CP 5,* p. 69.

[207] Berlau, *Aufbau einer Rolle – Galilei* (1956, Busch Fassung), p. 27.

[208] Author translation.

Figure 16: *Leben des Galileo* – Ernst Busch (Berlin)

Source: Berlau, *Aufbau einer Rolle – Galilei* (1956, Busch Fassung*)*, p. 27 – Photograph: Ruth Berlau.

Couragemodell 1949

Couragemodell, which has a yellow cover, is composed of three parts: aufführung (performance), anmerkungen (notes) and text. In the part on performance, there are more than 350 pictures (almost all of them followed by numbered sentences with a scene description). The great achievement of the second *MB* published by the BE was the comparisons between three performances, Deutsches Theater (Berlin, 1949), Münchner Kammerspiele (1950) and BE (1951) **(Figure 17)**.

Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder tells the story of Anna Fierling, called Mutter Courage, who goes to war with her three children selling provisions to the soldiers. She loses

her children one after the other and in the end keeps working all alone. The play is structured in 12 scenes that function as independent processes, as if they could be performed separately.

Figure 17: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*

GESTISCHES
135 *Der Feldwebel prüft die Papiere der Courage, der Werber ihre Söhne · Die Courage prophezeit dem Feldwebel frühen Soldatentod, um ihre Söhne vor dem Kriegsdienst zu warnen*

Source: *Couragemodell – Aufführung* (plate 135).

The caption in the photo above reads 'Der Feldwebel prüft die Papiere der Courage, der Werber ihre Söhne. Die Courage prophezeit dem Feldwebel frühen Soldatentod, um ihre Söhne vor dem Kriegsdienst zu warnen' ('The sergeant checks the papers of Courage, the recruiter checks her sons. Courage prophesies early soldier death to the sergeant, in order to warn her sons against military service'). The photograph shows the gestural conception of the first scene in which Courage has her documents checked by the sergeant. The scene, which opens the play, works as a summary. The war will bring death to all Courage's children.

Thus, a fake prophecy becomes reality. According do Roland Barthes[209], Courage shows through her gestures that despite predicting a dark future for her children, finding her documents is the main objective in this first scene. Although far from being formal identification, these documents are for an unusual family, as each child has a different father, none of whom stayed. However, the documents are there, carefully kept in a metal box by Courage, representing a guarantee of being an individual in a civil society.

Courage's gestures aim to change a situation and not to comment on it. However, the spectators perceive the gestures through a representation, which is the theatre itself. As such, a double gesture happens—the gesture of the character and the one created by the stage for the spectators. In other words, Barthes assumes that instead of creating an essential mother, Brecht created a functional mother without hidden values, assuming that the war is her way of living. There is no moral agenda behind the text.

Designed and edited by Peter Palitzsch, the *Anmerkungen* (Notes) include no pictures. The 12 scenes of the play are deeply analysed, emphasising the *Grundarrangement* (Essential arrangement), the *Detail* (Detail) and comments on the performances, including the performance comparisons. Photographs were taken from a selection of 800 at the BEA. The original quantity of photographs taken was much larger. In the publication, Berlau and Brecht considered the chosen pictures disappointing due to technical problems, which were treated very carefully by the productions. In *Couragemodell*, for example, '(…) die Hintergründe erscheinen dunkel, während sie in Wirklichkeit hell und klar waren (…) Der Beleuchtungsapparat des Deutsches Theaters ist jedoch zu schwach, in der Fotografie das matte goldene Licht zu zeigen, das die ganze Bühne badete'[210] ('the background appears dark,

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[209] Barthes, *Oeuvres Complètes,* pp. 833–847. In English, see also: Barthes, "Seven Photo Models of Mother Courage", www.jstor.org/stable/1125292.

[210] *BFA* 25, p. 172.

whilst it was actually bright and clear (…) However, the lighting apparatus of the Deutsches Theater is too weak to show the dull golden light that bathed the entire stage').[211]

Brecht wrote several essays concerning the critique on the usage of a model, the most relevant of which were published in the Model's opening remarks and preface. Misunderstandings about the models also encouraged the director to highlight their importance to other theatre groups and directors through the building and usage of the models. To his more traditional contemporaries who accused him of lack of creativity and freedom in his methods, Brecht states that '[w]as das Theater betrifft, werfen wir in den Bruch hinein die Modelle[212] ('as far as the theater is concerned, we throw the models into the rupture).[213] The rupture refers to a new way of facing the ruined world after the Second World War. However,

> [s]ie werden sogleich heftig bekämpf von den Verfechtern des Alten, der Routine, die als Erfahrung, und der Konvention, die als freies Schöpfertum auftritt. Und sie werden gefährdet von den Übernehmern, die nicht gelernt haben, sie zu handhaben. Gedacht als Erleichterungen, sind sie nicht leicht zu handhaben. Sie sind auch nicht gemacht, das Denken zu ersparen, sondern es anzuregen; nicht gemacht, das künstlerische Schaffen zu ersetzen, sondern es zu erzwingen.[214]

> They are immediately fiercely opposed by the proponents of the old, the routine that appears as experience, and the convention that appears as free creativity. And they are endangered by the buyers who have not learned to handle them. Designed as a relief, they are not easy to handle. They are also

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211 Author translation.

212 *BFA* 25, p. 171.

213 Author translation.

214 *BFA* 25, p. 171.

not made to spare thinking, but to stimulate it; not made to replace artistic

creation, but to force it.[215]

Arguing in defence of the model, Brecht stated that the use of models 'ist so eine eigene Kunst'[216] ('is such an art of its own')[217], transforming the copyist into an artist. The art of observation and recreation based on a model is to be valued as much as the creation itself.

Outlined *Modellbücher*

Berlau and Brecht's project of publishing the *MB* did not go as far as they wished, as some of the projects remained as photography albums, with little text and few comments. The material is available in both the BEA and BBA, but their form is fragmentary, geographically dispersed into albums, Regiebücher, Soufflierbücher and other documents.

Der Hofmeister Modellbuch is an album with 147 green cardboard pages with two pictures on each page. Under each photograph is glued the respective line of typewritten text. The photographs are very distinct. Pages are numbered by hand. A *Regiebuch* (1950) containing notes about the rehearsals and opening performance comprises the whole *MB*.[218] What Müller-Schöll considers revealing in this case is that

Although five copies were available at the publishers that could be borrowed by

theatres to enable further productions in Brecht's manner, it neither appeared as a

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[215] Author translation.

[216] *BFA* 25, p. 172.

[217] Author translation.

[218] *BFA* 8, p. 566. "*Regiebuch 1950*: *Zu Beginn der Probenarbeiten am 14. Februar 1950 liegt ein Matrizentext vor*".

book nor was it concluded in the Brecht editions (…) Nowadays the Brecht Archive stores seven copies, which are significantly different from each other'.[219]

Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan Modellbuch[220] is an album from the premiere on October 5, 1957 with 139 beige cardboard pages with four pictures on each page. The photographs are 10.5 cm x 7.5 cm, black and white and glossy. The respective line of typewritten text is glued beside each photograph. When there is no line of text or stage direction, *Pantomime* is written. The majority of pictures have a distinct glue mark on all four sides. In the BEA files (file no. 25), photographs, text and *Regiebuch* are also available to study. There are also high-quality photographs from a Besson staging in 1957. If the *MB* were created to record the Ensemble's productions for those who did not have the opportunity to see them live, according to David Barnett their documentation was related 'to Brecht's understanding of the company as an innovative creative force.'[221]

2.2   *Theaterarbeit*

In *Theaterarbeit*, Brecht theorises about his work at the BE as an artistic director and lists the steps of exemplary staging there. Written by Berlau, Brecht, Claus Hubalek, Peter Palitzsch, and Käthe Rülicke and edited by Weigel, six plays are analysed through photographs and comparisons between different versions of the same play. The selected plays

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[219] Müller-Schöll, "The Castrated Schoolmaster: Brecht, *The Tutor*, and Lenz", pp. 67–82, here p. 75.

[220] *Berliner Ensemble*, 1955.

[221] Barnett, David. "The Rise and Fall of Modelbooks, Notate and the Brechtian Method: Documentation and the Berliner Ensemble's Changing Roles as a Theatre Company." Theatre Research International, vol. 41, no. 2, 2016, pp.106–121, here p. 1. doi:10.1017/S0307883316000031.

are *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*, *Wassa Schelesnowa*, *Der Hofmeister*, *Die Mutter*, *Biberpelz und roter Hahn*, and *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder.*

Several photographs and writings from the *MB* were republished in *Theaterarbeit*, which includes a compilation of the *MB* from both the published and the unpublished ones. It becomes clear that Weigel and Brecht were determined to circulate their methods and results across the world. Back in Germany after their exile, Brecht and Weigel founded the BE in 1949 and published *Theaterarbeit* three years later. The propagation of Brechtian theatre was a necessity after so many years abroad, and through photography they found a way to carry out their intentions. It can be said that *Theaterarbeit* is a photo book, as it is composed of photographs, writings commenting on those photographs and texts explaining why those photographs are so important for the development of other theatre groups' performances. It goes far beyond a book of records. Its political position appears on the first page with the symbol of the theatre, the dove of peace created by Pablo Picasso, printed on the curtain of the BE. The illustration, 'which was used in BE publicity materials, depicted four differently coloured faces looking outwards with another dove of peace in the middle',[222] embodies a clear statement: We shall talk about Peace. This is a manifesto for reform.

In *Vergleich des Modells von 1932 mit der Aufführung 1951*[223], detailed technical directions are given in order to compare the performances. The importance that the photographic technique had for Brecht and Berlau (and other collaborators and photographers) becomes clear.

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[222] Barnett, David. *A History of the Berliner Ensemble*. Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 131.

[223] Weigel, "Vergleich des Modells von 1932 mit der Aufführung 1951" (*Comparison of the 1932 model with the 1951 performance*) in *Theaterarbeit*, pp. 338–41.

All pictures of the Berliner Ensemble are taken in motion, except for those showing background projections. If you want to get background projections, the scene has to be played and paused, because it cannot be recorded in motion due to the long exposure time required for this: ½ second of pre-exposure - full stage lighting - close the lens - light on the stage off – projections post-exposed for 4-16 seconds, depending on the density of the projection plate. Opening of lens 6.8 to achieve depth.[224]

The description above accompanies pictures from two performances, one in 1932 (Leipzig) and the other in 1951 (Berlin) **(Figure 18)**. Here, Brecht demonstrated how he used the

**Figure 18:** *Die Mutter* (Leipzig, 1932 and Berlin, 1951)
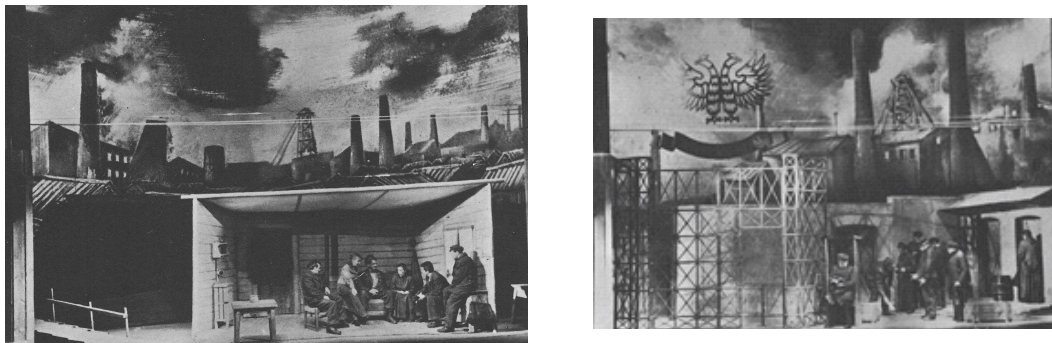
Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 339.

models in *Die Mutter*. His aim was to prove his theory; although both performances followed the same model, they are entirely different. It would be impossible to perform *Die Mutter* or

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[224] Weigel, "Vergleich des Modells von 1932 mit der Aufführung 1951" (*Comparison of the 1932 model with the 1951 performance*) in *Theaterarbeit*, pp. 338–4, here p. 340. ('Alle Bilder des Berliner Ensembles sind in Bewegung aufgenommen, außer denen, die Hintergrundsprojektionen zeigen. Will man Hintergrundsprojektionen bekommen, muss die Szene angespielt und angehalten werden, da sie wegen der dazu nötigen langen Belichtungszeit nicht in Bewegung aufgenommen werden kann: ½ Sekunde vorbelichten – volles Bühnenlicht – Linse schließen – Licht auf der Bühne aus – Projektionen 4-16 Sekunden nachbelichten, je nach Dichte der Projektionsplatte. Öffnung der Linse 6,8 um Tiefe zu erreichen.' – Author translation).

any other play in the same way 20 years apart. Most importantly, the Second World War took place between the two performances. Photography clearly illustrates the differences between those decades, for example, with the projection of images of Chinese and Russian revolutions in the later BE performance **(Figure 19).**

Figure 19: *Die Mutter* (Leipzig, 1932 and Berlin, 1951)
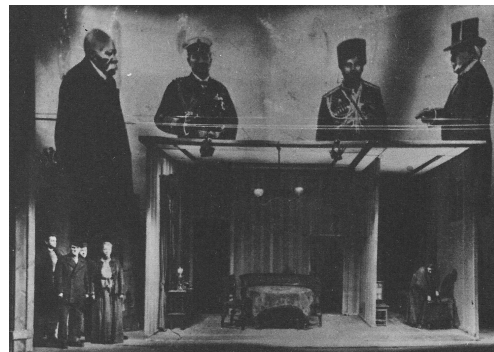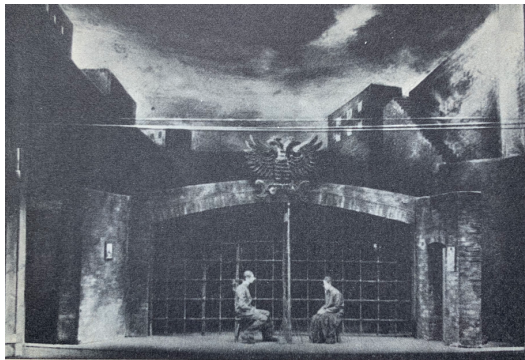
Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 340.

One of Weigel's notable achievements whilst managing Brechtian documentation was the publication of *Theaterarbeit* with pictures and notes from six performances from the BE that were not published in the *MB*, as well as essential Brechtian essays on models and photography. Examples are "Hemmt die Benutzung des Modells die Künstlerische Bewegungsfreiheit?"[225] ("Does the Use of the Model Restrict Artistic Freedom")[226] and "Modelle des Berliner Ensembles"[227] ("The Berliner Ensemble Models").[228] The first essay is a vigorous defence of the artistic use of models, the text having been written as an imaginary dialogue between Brecht and theatre director Erich Winds (the artistic director of the

[225] *BFA* 25, pp. 386–91.

[226] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance,* pp. 238–242.

[227] *BFA* 25, pp. 535–7.

[228] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance,* pp. 234–236.

Wuppertal theatre). Brecht wrote both questions and answers, as was requested by Winds in response to the harsh criticism of the *MB*. At the very beginning, he explained that

> Es gibt kein rein theoretischer Zugang zu den Methoden epischen Theaters; am besten ist praktisches Kopieren, verbunden mit dem Bemühen, die Gründe für die Gruppierungen, Bewegungen und Gesten auszufinden. Wahrscheinlich muss man eine Kopie gemacht haben, bevor man selber ein Modell machen kann.[229]

> There is no purely theoretical way of approaching the modern epic theatre; the best thing is practical copying, along with a wish to find out the reasons for grouping, movements and gestures. One probably needs to have made a copy before one can make one's own model.[230]

The second essay explains why and how the *MB* were made and shows the details of some *Mutter Courage* scenes through seven photographs. Other articles, such as "Beispiele von Anmerkungen aus dem Modellbuch"[231], "Das Modellbuch warnt vor falscher Darstellung"[232], "Originalität"[233] and "Künstlerische Theaterfotografie"[234] give a careful description of photographic techniques and the use of the model.

Both Weigel and Berlau were notable figures who undertook various private projects concerning memories, photography and records. However, *Theaterarbeit* can be distinguished as a valuable example of this partnership because it contains texts by Brecht and photographs

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[229] *BFA* 25, pp. 386–91, here p. 386–7.

[230] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, p. 239.

[231] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 230. ('Examples of remarks from the Modelbook')

[232] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, pp. 298–9. ('The Modelbook warns against misrepresentation')

[233] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 309. ('Originality')

[234] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 345. ('Artistic theatre photography')

and texts edited and organised by Berlau and Weigel. For instance, the photograph Berlau took of Weigel playing *Mutter Courage* (directed by Brecht) in the scene of the silent scream, is one of the most well-known images of Brecht's productions. In "Was eine Aufführung von *Mutter Courage* hauptsächlich zeigen sollte",[235] Brecht explores the theme through a photomontage. The caption says 'Die Baukosten sind die gleichen'[236] **(Figure 20)**.

Figure 20: *Mutter Courage* - Montage

Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit,* p. 284.

Under the photograph are details about the performance (including the duration of the rehearsal, which was 46 days) and a short subtitle, 'That the big deals during the wars are not done by ordinary people. The fact that the war, which is a continuation of deals with other

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[235] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 284. ('What should a performance of Mother Courage mainly show?')

[236] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 284. ('The construction costs are the same.')

means, makes the human virtues deadly, also for their owners. That it must therefore be fought').[237]

The photomontage displays three comparisons: 1) a photograph of several bombers ("Ein Bombenflugzeug") next to the picture of a hospital (Ein Krankenhaus); 2) a picture of a tank (Eine Panzer-Abteilung) next to a workers' housing estate (Eine Arbeiter-Siedlung); and 3) a warship (Ein Panzerschiff) next to a factory. The associations produced by the pictures are related to the dramaturgy of the play. However, besides this first analogy a second analysis emerges from the fact that Brecht's intention with *Mutter Courage* was to create an opposing character to the revolutionary Pelagea Wlassowa from *Die Mutter*. Mutter Courage is not a pacifist, on the contrary, she supports the war to make a profit from it. It is important to take into consideration that *Mutter Courage* was written during exile (1938–9), having its premiere in 1949 at the Deutsches Theater and with Helene Weigel playing the leading role. The gap between dramaturgy and performance caused an unexpected reception for Brecht; Weigel's performance converted a profit-maker mother into a hero. In *Couragemodell*, Brecht highlighted in the final notes[238] and even at the end of the play when Courage seems to be 80 years old that she still does not understand anything. Brecht criticised the GDR's socialist society and in1953 commented in his diary that Mutter Courage was misunderstood worldwide.

> auch in polnischen diskussionen wurde MUTTER COURAGE UND IHRE
> KINDER immer wieder als pazifistisch bezeichnet. historisch betrachtet

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[237] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 284. ('Dass die großen Geschäfte in den Kriegen nicht von den kleinen Leuten gemacht werden. Dass der Krieg, der eine Fortführung der Geschäfte mit andern Mitteln ist, die menschlichen Tugenden tödlich macht, auch für ihre Besitzer. Dass er darum bekämpft werden muss.' - Author translation).

[238] *BFA* 25, p. 241. "Mutter Courage Lernt Nichts" ("Mutter Courage Learned Nothing").

zeit das stück die erlebnisse einer kleinen händlerin, die im krieg geschäfte machen will und alles verliert. der krieg trifft sie keineswegs als blindes schicksal, sondern sie erkennt ihn als die profitablen machenschaften der großen; an ihnen will sie sich beteiligen. über das einzelne hinaus gewinnt ihr schicksal symbolische bedeutung. das bild deutschlands taucht auf, raubkriege führend, andere und sich selber vernichtend, unbelehrt durch alle katastrophen. die aktion gegen den krieg dieser art ist nicht vernachlässigt. (die stumme kattrin.) aber die völlig aufs tätige gerichtete ungeduld unserer neuen sozialistischen gesellschaft ist damit nicht befriedigt.[239]

even in poland MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN was constantly described as a pacifist. from an historical standpoint the play shows the experiences of a small trader who wants to do business in wartime and loses everything. the war does not strike her blind fate, on the contrary, she recognises it as the profit-making wheeling and dealing of the mighty; she wants a piece of the action. her fate goes beyond the individual and achieves symbolic significance. This conjures up the picture of germany, waging wars of conquest, destroying itself and others, learning nothing from all these catastrophes. Resistance to this sort of war is not overlooked. (dumb kattrin.) but all this does not satisfy the impatience of our new socialist society which is obsessed with getting things done.[240]

It is possible to observe that since Brecht's early years in the GDR, the working environment was controversial. The lack of freedom at that time was a result of both the GDR and the post-war society, with the presence of officers who belonged to the National Socialist party.

Theaterarbeit analyses not only the photographs but also raises technical matters. Berlau gave lessons on taking photographs, describing the positioning of the camera, which

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[239] *AJ*, p. 595.

[240] *Journals*, p. 453.

and how many cameras should be used and how many films and exposures should be taken. Berlau explained what the pictures could report, detailing the procedures so minutely that it seems to be a model to build a model.

> The performance can be photographed in full over two evenings using two Leicas. The equipment must be placed on tripods and have shutter release cables, so that many images can be taken quickly and securely. The scenes must be recorded from the same angle, as otherwise the model users will be unable to orient themselves as to the positions of the figures. The photographic equipment is located on the balcony, not in the middle but at the side; if there is no balcony, a platform must be constructed so that the stage can be recorded from above. In this way, the images gain certain depths, and the arrangement can emerge vividly. (The *Modelbooks* show quite how much is missed by the spectators whose seats are not above the level of the stage.) Twenty films are taken in one evening; every film has thirty-six exposures. Two evenings produce around one and half thousand pictures. [241]

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[241] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 234–236, here p. 235. In German, see also: *BFA* 25, pp. 535–7, here p. 536. ('Die Vorstellung kann mit zwei Leicas an zwei Abenden durchfotografiert werden. Die Apparate müssen auf Stativen angebracht und mit Kabelauslösern versehen sein, damit man schnell und doch sicher viele Bilder erhält. Die Szenen müssen von ein und demselben Blickpunkt aus aufgenommen werden, da sonst die Modellbenutzer sich in den Positionen der Figuren nicht zurechtfinden. Die Apparate stehen auf dem Balkon, nicht ganz in der Mitte, sondern seitlich; wo kein Balkon vorhanden ist, muss ein Podest aufgebaut werden, damit die Bühne von oben aufgenommen werden kann. Die Bilder bekommen so einige Tiefe, und das Arrangement kann sich plastisch entfalten. (Die Modellbücher zeigen, wieviel dem Zuschauer in Theatern entgeht, deren Sitze nicht über dem Niveau der Bühne aufgestellt sind.) An einem Abend werden 20 Filme genommen, jeder Film hat 36 Aufnahmen. Zwei Abende ergeben etwa 1500 Bilder').

According to Berlau in "Theatre Photography",[242] 'at present theatre photography is rarely taken seriously'.[243] This is because it was technically hard to do, and most people still took posed pictures, which for her killed 'the purpose of the photography'.[244] The importance of technical directions underlines Brecht's intent behind recording. It was imperative to keep a memory of his staging directions for future artists. As Berlau explained,

> It must, after all, be important to the directors that their productions are recorded, and they should therefore talk things through carefully with the photographer. Every theatre should set up a photo archive with pictures of both good and bad performances: for critics, for actors, for those building the sets, for future generations.[245]

In 1947, before going back to Europe, Berlau and Brecht deposited the photographic copies of translations of *Gedichte im Exil*, *Studien*[246], *KF*, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*[247],

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[242] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 236–238. In German, see also: *BFA* 25, 531–2. "Theaterfotografie".

[243] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 236–238; here p. 236. In German, see also: *BFA* 25, 531–2, here p. 531. ('Sie wird in Augenblick wenig ernst genommen (…)').

[244] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 236–238; here p. 236. In German, see also: *BFA* 25, 531–2, here p. 531. ('(…) bedeuten, daß der Gegenstand zum Zweck der Aufnahme getötet wurde').

[245] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 236–238; here p. 237. In German, see also: *BFA* 25, 531–2, here p. 532. ('Die Regisseure, denen doch daran gelegen sein muss, dass ihre Aufführungen festgehalten werden, sollten sie mit den Fotografen sorgfältig durchsprechen. Jedes Theater sollte ein Fotoarchiv mit Abbildungen seiner guten und seiner schlechten Aufführungen einrichten: für die Kritik, für die Darsteller, für die Bühnenbauer, für den Nachwuchs.')

[246] *BFA* 11.

[247] *BFA* 8. In English, see also: *CP* 7, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

Schweyk[248] and other writings at the New York Public Library. Thus, they could start planning

what to send to publishers and keep the unpublished material safely.[249]

> Ruth Berlau, with whom he had been living when in New York, had taken a
> photography course in that city before coming to Los Angeles in the
> summer. There she started making photographic copies of the 'Poems in
> Exile', the 'Studies' (i.e. the literary sonnets), the *War Primer*, the
> *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Schweyk in the Second World War* and a number
> of other works that would be deposited in the New York Public Library on
> 21 March 1947. War Primer (in German, *Kriegsfibel*) was ready for
> possible publishers.[250]

Brecht also demonstrated his sophisticated theory of modelling by acting as a copyist

using Caspar Neher's stage sketches **(Figure 21)**. He stated, for example, that 'Schließlich

geben wir dem Theater überhaupt nur Kopien menschlichen Verhaltens'[251] ('After all, we give

the theatre nothing but copies of human behaviour').[252] Carl Weber also remembered how

Brecht usually created a model for himself:

> Brecht encouraged his designers to draw numerous sketches exploring
> options of the scenes' groupings. This often resulted in a kind of storyboard

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[248] *BFA* 7. In English, see also: *CP* 7, *Schweyk in the Second World War*.

[249] See also Willet, John. "The case of Auden" in *Brecht in Context – Comparative Approaches*. Methuen Drama, 1998. Pp. 53–67, here p. 63. 'So I wrote to him, and in due course set about finding a copy of the Auden-Stern *Caucasian Chalk Circle* script. Bentley put me on the track of a microfilm which Brecht's Danish mistress Ruth Berlau had made and deposited in the New York Public Library (…).'

[250] *War Primer*, 1998, Afterword, xii.

[251] *BFA* 25, pp. 386–91, here p. 388.

[252] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 238–241, here p. 240.

to be used as a point of departure by Brecht when he began to block a
production, without restricting in any way his or the actors' liberty to arrive
at very different solutions.[253]

Figure 21: Caspar Neher's stage sketches for *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*

Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, pp. 310–13.

The above two scenes from Puntila were designed according to Neher's sketches. The
first one is Scene 5: Skandal auf Puntila (Scandal at Puntila Hall) and the corresponding line
is when Puntila says 'Ich komm gleich zu euch! Matti, komm herein, ich brauch dich zum
Wasserübergießen (…) Ein Kübel ist genug, ich hass Wasser'[254] ('I'll be with you in a
moment. Matti, come inside, I need you to pour the water over me. (…) One bucket's enough.

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[253] Weber, "Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble", p. 183.

[254] *BFA* 6, pp. 283–374, here p. 312.

I loathe water'). The second one is Scene 7: Der Bund der Bräute des Herrn Puntila ('the confederation of Mr Puntila's fiancées) **(Figure 22)**.

> The Confederation of Mr Puntila's fiancées, Neher gave Matti a broom in his hand. Matti returned to the yard and used it for a little demonstration of the behaviour in the High Court in Viborg. At the end of the scene, the four women throw their straw wreaths on the ground and leave the yard. Matti sweeps the straw into a pile.[255]
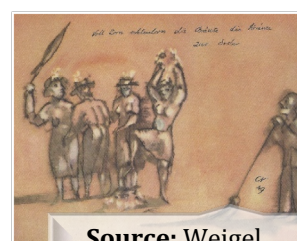
Figure 22: Scene 7 - The Confederation of Herr Puntila's fiancées.

Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit,* p. 25

Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit,* p. 26

Source: Weigel, Theaterarbeit, p. 27

Source: Weigel, Theaterarbeit, p. 27

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[255] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit,* p. 312. Note: In the annotation for the sketches, there is a mistake regarding the scene order. The correct scene to be mentioned is the seventh. ('In der 6. Szene gab Neher dem Schofför einen Besen in die Hand. Matti kehrte damit den Hof, besonders als Herr Puntilla auf den Balkon trat. Er benutzte ihn für eine kleine Demonstration über das Verhalten vor dem hohen Gericht in Viborg. Am Schluß der Szene kehrte er mit ihm die Strohkränze zusammen, die sich die Frauen zornig abgerissen hatten. Eine solche Erfindung belebt eine ganze Szene. ' - Translation/correction by the author.)

Neher's colourful sketches also contain stage directions and the artist's signature; his initials, CN; and the year.

Meanwhile, Berlau's most enlightening text in *Theaterarbeit* about the importance of the *MB*, 'Modelle des Berliner Ensembles', explains very clearly that not only was the edited *MB* useful but so was the process of creating it.

> Initially, all the pictures showing entrances, exits and changes of position are assembled. Then come the finer touches, the selection of movements and instances of *gestus* that have a characteristic nature. Subsequently we ascertain whether the action is told in the pictures: the plot must be visible. The pivotal moments are brought together. Finally, the points that are still missing are photographed. A director's assistant or the director sits with the photographer and specifies the precise moments. The key words for every scene have been noted down beforehand.[256]

In the following example **(Figure 23)**, Berlau demonstrated how the details are observed in the photographs. They look like a movie filmstrip. Here, Kattrin has been attacked on a walkway by merchants and has been disfigured forever. In vain, Mother Courage offers Yvette's red shoes as a consolation prize.

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[256] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 234–6, here p. 235. In German, see also: *BFA* 25, pp. 535–7, here p. 536. ('Zunächst werden die Bilder der Auftritte und Abgänge und der Stellungswechsel zusammengestellt. Dann kommt die Feinarbeit, die Auswählen von Bewegungen und Gesten charakteristischer Art. Danach prüfen wir, ob die Handlung in Bildern erzählt ist: die Fabel muss sichtbar sein. Die Drehpunkte werden zusammengestellt. Zuletzt werden die noch fehlenden Punkte aufgenommen. Ein Regieassistent oder der Regisseur sitzen bei dem Fotografen und geben die genauen Punkte an. Die Stichwörter für jede Szene sind vorher aufgeschrieben worden.')

Figure 23: Preacher (Geschonneck), Courage (Weigel) and Kattrin (Hurwicz) in *Mutter Courage*.
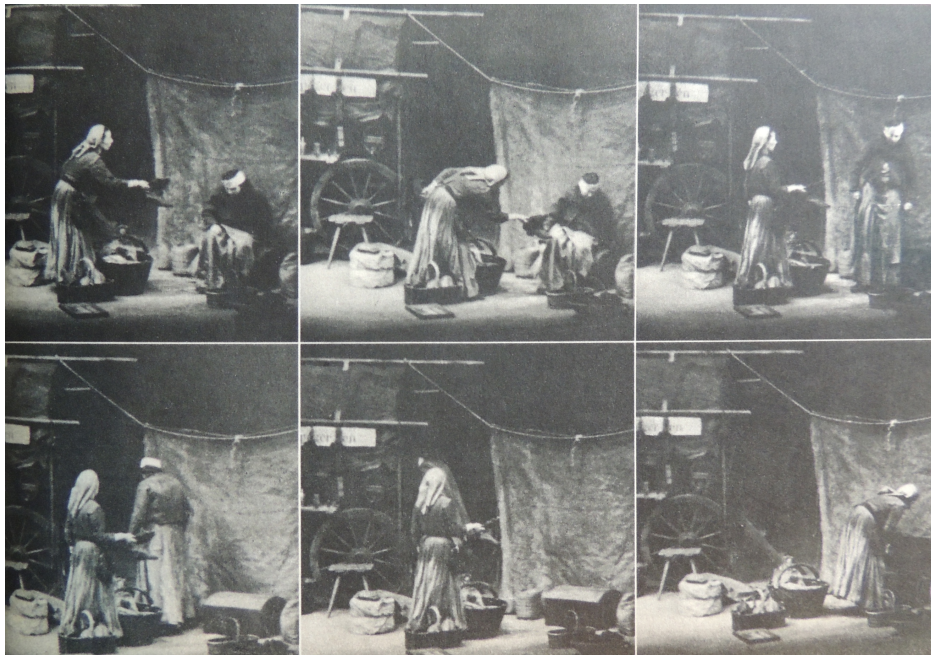
Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 295.

The notion of *detail* is vital in Brechtian theory. For example, in the *MB* for *Mother Courage*, every scene has a comment with subtitles; the notion of *detail* is always present. In analysing the *details*, Brecht developed the concept *gestus*, which became the foundation of Brechtian theatre.

2.3   Montage: *Arbeitsjournal* and *Kriegsfibel*

Concerning the Brechtian experience relating to montage, *AJ* and *KF* are central publications analysed through selected examples in the following images of this item. Several images were published in both writings; therefore, this chapter aims to discuss their relationship and derivation. *KF* was published in the same year that the *AJ* ended and for this reason is sometimes seen as the entries Brecht did not write formally in a journal. The last

montage in *KF* indicates a second volume for future publication that would be called *Friedensfibel*. In this chapter, I will compare photographs from both *AJ* and *KF* and attempt to analyse the repetition of usage and to contextualise them as montages.

Kriegsfibel

KF was published a few months before Brecht's death following considerable challenges in the form of critiques, censorship and resistance. In 1948, it had been rejected by Kurt Desch Publishing, and the GDR's Cultural Advisory Council of Publishing prohibited Verlag Volk und Welt's publication in 1949. Finally, in 1955, Eulenspiegel published *KF*, edited by Berlau and designed by Palitzsch. The English version, titled *War Primer,* was published by Libris over 30 years later in 1988, with an afterword and notes by John Willett. There are a few differences between the German and English versions, such as the sequence of the pages; the insertion of an additional four plates in *War Primer*, two from *Addendum* and two from *Peace Primer*; the sources of the photographs; the absence of *Nachbemmerkungen zu den Bildern*; and Berlau's introductory text in the English version. This chapter quotes both the German and English versions, differentiating them by their title and year of publication. The combination of pictures, original captions and epigrams reveals Brecht's engagement with the montage technique. Each page presents several correlations among its elements, generating multiple layers of interpretations. For this reason, each montage becomes a plate, providing a personal construction of discourse. *KF* features 69 pictures, and for each one Brecht wrote an epigram. The epigrams follow the lapidary's inscription style, typically consisting of verse.

According to Didi-Huberman, 'the major uncanniness – and the potential – of his War Primer consists in creating, quick as a flash, a link between images of crime and texts of

poetry in the way that visible things in the photo suddenly "speak" in the epigrams'.[257] The photos were gathered during his Scandinavian and American exiles from the mass-circulation press, such as *Life* and the *New York Times Magazine*, mainly from 1933 until 1945. They represent Brecht's engagement with photography in exile and his concerns regarding the fight against a 'Verdrängung aller Fakten und Wertungen über die Hitlerzeit und den Krieg bei uns'[258] ('a repression of all facts and assessments about the Hitler era and our war').[259]

> Brecht's step-by-step progression had something in common with the sequence of scenes in *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, the disjointed episodes that he had strung together on a chain of twenty-seven verses so as to add up to a formal parade or 'march-past' of Nazi Germany on the eve of war. Both that play and the War Primer would be compared with a still greater precursor: Goya's *Disasters of the War*.[260]

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[257] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*. Translated by Shane B. Lilis. RIC Books, 2018, p. 34. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Quand les Images Prennent Position*. L'œil de L'Historire, 1. Minuit, 2009, p. 44. ('L'étrangeté majeure – et la puissance – de son *ABC de la guerre* consiste à tirer un trait d'union, rapide comme l'éclair, entre images du crime et textes de poésie, dans cette facon qu'ont les choses visibles, sur la photographie, de tout à coup "prendre la parole" dans les épigrammes.')

[258] *BFA* 30, p. 472.

[259] Author translation.

[260] *War Primer* afterword, p. ix.

Brecht's *AJ* 'looks like a gigantic montage of *texts* with more or less diverse status, and a montage of *images*, equally heterogeneous, that he cut out and glued here and there in the body or flow of his associative thinking'.[261] On August 28, 1940,[262] Brecht was considering the connection between epigrams and the photographs related to warfare. The decision to write rhymeless quatrains strengthened Brecht's desire to avoid empathy.

in den altgriechischen epigrammen sind die von den menschen verfertigten gebrauchsgegenstände ohne weiteres gegenstände der lyrik, auch die waffen. jäger und krieger weihen den bogen der gottheit. ob der pfeil die brust des menschen oder des rebhuhns durchbohrt, macht keinen unterschied. es sind in unserer zeit nicht zuletzt moralische hemmungen, welche das aufkommen solcher lyrik der gegenstände verhindern.[263]

in ancient greek epigrams man-made utensils are straightforward subjects for lyric poetry, weapons too. hunters and warriors dedicate their weapons to the gods. whether an arrow enters the breast of a man or a partridge makes no difference. in our day, it is to a great extent moral scruples that prevent the rise of a comparable poetry of objects.[264]

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[261] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 17. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 25. ('(…) apparaît comme un gigantesque *montage de textes* aux statuts les plus divers *et d'images* également hétérogènes qu'il découpe et colle, ici et là dans le corps ou le flux de sa pensée associative.')

[262] Marlebäk, Finland.

[263] *AJ*, p. 127.

[264] *Journals*, pp. 93–4.

The four verses, usually ironic, cause shock in relation to the image, as they look like *war poetry*. Ultimately, the cruelty of joining war and poetry is reinforced because the epigrams reveal new connotations for the photographs, as well as staging a dialogue.

> The writer in exile is obliged to take this position, as he is always ready to pack his bags, to go somewhere else. He can do nothing that will weigh him down or slow his down too much and must reduce the formats and rhythm of his writing, lighten any collections, as assume the de-territorialized position of a poetry in war, or *war poetry*.[265]

The verses dialogue with the photographs and sometimes with the original captions (which are sometimes translated). The epigrams were not written at the time Brecht found the pictures; they could have been written before or after collecting the photographs. According to Berlau, during exile a writer has 'the ability to "foresee so many things" beyond the actuality of the moment that he is currently experiencing'[266] with the montage technique.

> The photographs do not simply document the events of war but are also and above all documents of their origin. It is not simply a matter of showing the ideological messages of the newspaper and propaganda, it is also a matter of

[265] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 5. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 13. ('Position obligée de l'écrivain en exil, toujours en instance de replier bagages, de repartir ailleurs ne rien faire qui alourdisse ou qui immobilise trop, réduire les formats et les tempos d'écriture, alléger les ensembles, assumer la position déterritorialisée d'une poésie dans la guerre ou d'une *poésie de guerre*.')
[266] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 24. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 33. ('la capacité de 'prévoir tant de choses' par-delà l'actualité du moment qu'il est en train de vivre.').

the mediality of war and history—and that also means mediality as part of history—and the view conveyed therein.[267]

Didi-Huberman argues that as a montage-maker, Brecht embodies what Benjamin means by 'author as a producer'. For example, besides being a complete work *KF* produces new knowledge, hidden from mass circulation by official means. The point of intersection between the *AJ* and the *KF* vis-à-vis the photographs analysed in this section relates to the politics of images in Brecht's creative process. For that, two examples are considered, *Der Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* [268] and *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*.

An example of the strict relationship between photography and Brecht's creative process in *KF* **(Figure 24)** is Helene Weigel's performance in *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* at the BE (1951) **(Figure 25)**.

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[267] Gerster, Jan. *Das andere Gedächtnis – Fotografie in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts.* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013, p. 218. ('Die Fotografien dokumentieren nich einfach die Kriegsereignisse, sondern sind auch und vor allem Dokumente ihrer Herkunft. Dabei geht es nicht einfach um den Aufweis der ideologischen Botschafen der Zeitungen und der Propaganda, es geht auch um die Medialität von Krieg und Geschichte – und das heißt auch der Medialität als Teil der Geschichte – und des darin vermittelten Blicks.' – Author translation).

[268] *BFA* 7. In English, see also: *CP* 6, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*.

Figure 24: The Singaporean Mother

Source: Brecht, *KF*, plate 39.

O Stimme aus dem Doppeljammerchore

Der Opfer und der Opfere in Fron!

Der Sohn des Himmels, Frau, braucht Singapore

Und niemand als du selbst brauchst deinen Sohn.[269]

O voice of sorrow from the double choir

Of gunmen and the victims of the gun!

The Son of Heaven needed Singapore

And no one but yourself needed your son. [270]

The photograph in **Figure 24** also appeared in Brecht's *AJ* with the original caption

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[269] *Kriegsfibel*, plate 39. For this plate, there is an additional text: 'Japanischer Luftangriff auf den britischen Stützpunkt Singapore. Am 8. Dezember 1941 hatte der Krieg zwischen Japan und USA mit dem Luftangriff auf den amerikanischen Kriegshafen Pearl Harbour begonnen.' ('Japanese air raid on the British base in Singapore. On December 8, 1941, the war between Japan and the USA had begun with the air raid on the American war port of Pearl Harbor' - Author translation).

[270] *War Primer*, p. 48.

'After the bombing (Singapore)'[271] whilst Brecht was in exile in the US. The photograph was presumably taken by a British photographer for *Life* magazine in March 1942[272]; the poem dates to 1944.[273] The photograph shows two women grieving over the body of a child in the streets of Singapore after a Japanese bombing. Also shown are some carts similar to the one used by Neher on the *Mutter Courage* set.

> hier lyrik zu schreiben, selbst aktuelle, bedeutet: sich in den elfenbeinturm zurückziehen. es ist, als betreibe man goldschmiedekunst. das hat etwas schrulliges, kauzhaftes, borniertes. solche lyrik ist flaschenpost, die schlacht um smolensk geht auch um die lyrik.[274]

> to write lyric poetry here, even a current one, means: to withdraw into the ivory tower. it is as if one were practicing goldsmithing. this has something quirky, odd, narrow-minded to it. such lyricism is a message in a bottle, the battle of smolensk is also about lyricism.[275]
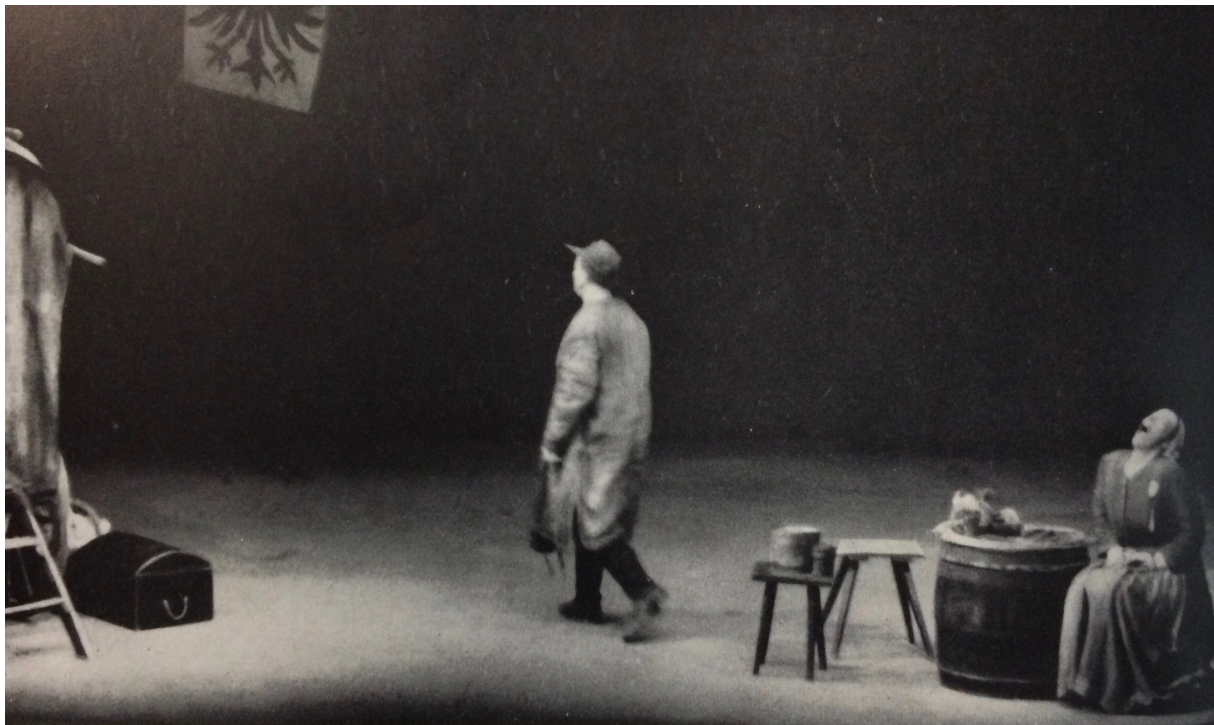
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[271] *AJ*, p. 283 (May 4, 1942).

[272] *Life Magazine*, March 23, 1942, p. 34.

[273] *War Primer* notes

[274] *AJ*, p. 283.

[275] Author translation.

Figure 25: Helene Weigel in *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*

Source: Berlau, *Couragemodell 1949*, p. 36.

According to John Rouse, the silent scream in Figure 25 is an exemplary *gestus* performance, as 'the technically accomplished extremity of Weigel's acting, in short, defamiliarizes Courage's grief through the very demonstration of that grief'.[276] Weigel is therefore able to demonstrate her feelings because her character is built on the contradiction of trying to be a mother and a businesswoman simultaneously in a time of war.

> As she hears the salvo that signals the execution of her son Swiss Cheese,
> Weigel's Courage is seated on a low stool with her hands in her lap. She
> clenches her rough skirt, leaning forward with a straight, tense back as if
> shot in the stomach. At the same time, she thrusts her head straight back

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[276] Rouse, John. "Brecht and the Contradictory Actor". *Critical Theory and Performance*, edited by Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach, The University of Michigan Press, 2007, pp. 295–310, here p. 303.

against her shoulders; her mouth tears open until it seems that her jaw will
break, but no sound comes forth.[277]

Initially, Weigel did not connect the picture from *KF* with the silent scream scene. It was only after Brecht declared in *Theaterarbeit* that she was inspired by the photograph that she told Hecht that the story is true but did not remember exactly when or the way in which it happened. In other words, Weigel said that if Brecht said she saw the picture, he must remember better than her.

The controversial but famous example of the relationship between photography and Brecht's work leads to a second instance of character building in the form of Courage's twisted body during the scream, giving the idea that Courage is feeling her son's pain. Weigel comments that observing both real life and images was a key strategy in building the role.

> WEIGEL: (…) This is an observation that women can confirm to you at all: a woman feels a lot in her abdomen. A shock also: the uterus contracts ... I do not know what it is. This is a very typical thing. You cramp yourself together, that is the centre.[278]

Mother Courage was written in 1939 during Brecht's exile in Svendborg and opened in Zurich in 1941, with Therese Giehse playing the leading role. Weigel performed her version eight years later. The photograph taken from *Life* magazine is from 1942 and the epigram is from 1944, meaning it is possible that the silent scream only appeared in the BE

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[277] Rouse, "Brecht and the Contradictory Actor", p. 303.

[278] Hecht, Werner. *Helene Weigel: Eine Grosse Frau des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Suhrkamp, 2000, p. 18. (WEIGEL: '(…) Das ist eine Beobachtung, die Ihnen Frauen überhaupt bestätigen können: Eine Frau spürt sehr viel in ihrem Unterleib. Einen Schock auch: die Gebärmutter zieht sich zusammen…Ich weiß nicht, was es ist. Das ist eine sehr typische Sache. Man krampft sich zusammen, das ist der Mittelpunkt. ' - Author translation)

premiere in 1949. It would therefore be a rare example of the opposite relationship—the theatrical scene influencing the pictures in Brecht's collection.

During the BE's Parisian tour, Roland Barthes analysed the silent scream scene using Roger Pic's photographs[279] **(Figure 26)**. While emphasising that photography enables the comprehension of the details of Brechtian theatre, Barthes drew attention not only to the scream but also to the fact that the chaplain is facing away from Mother Courage. Courage's pain and solitude is emphasised by the chaplain's posture. Barthes therefore constrasts the scream with the chaplain's posture. In this relationship, both *gestus* and detail are visible because they co-exist.

Figure 26: Silent Scream – Berliner Ensemble in Paris.
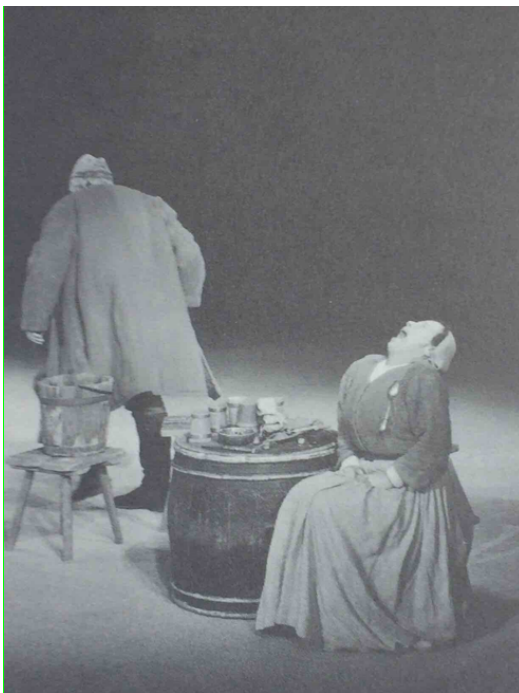
Source: *Oeuvres Complètes*, Tome I, p. 896 - Photograph: Roger Pic.

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[279] Barthes, Roland. "Commentaire: Préface à Brecht, Mére Courage et ses enfants (avec des photographies der Roger Pic)". *Oeuvres Complètes*. Edited by Éric Marty, Seuil, 1993, Tome I, pp. 889–905.

Brecht described Weigel's essence in 'Aus: Abstieg der Weigel in den Ruhm'[280] ('Weigel's Descent into Fame')[281] when he proudly stated 'Sie bat nicht die Unterdrücker um Mitleid mit den Unterdrückten, sondern die Unterdrückten um Selbstvertrauen'[282] ('She did not call on the oppressors to have pity on the oppressed, but called on the oppressed to have confidence in themselves').[283] With this statement, Brecht shows that Weigel unquestionably was the inspiration for many Brechtian characters.

According to Didi-Huberman, 'Brecht undertook an approach to the war, an *exposition* of the war, that was at the same time a knowledge, a position-taking, and an absolutely decisive collection of aesthetics choices'.[284] In Brecht's journal entries from April 1942 and June 1944, he expresses a kind of guilt regarding the powerlessness of the poet during the war, referring to *Leidensgeschichte*, as it took place in Singapore and Kerch[285], the

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[280] *BFA* 22, pp. 798–9.

[281] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 72–75.

[282] *BFA* 22, pp. 798–9, here, p. 799.

[283] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 72–75, here p. 75.

[284] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 5. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 13. ('Brecht aura pratiqué une approche de la guerre, une *exposition de la guerre* qui fut à la fois un savoir, une prise de position et un ensemble de choix esthétiques absolument déterminants.')

[285] *War Primer*, p. 69. It shows a picture under the original caption: 'After the liberation of Kerch by our units, there come to light the shocking details of one of the most fiendish crimes that the German Army perpetrated on Soviet territory – the shooting of over 7,000 civilians. The German commandant's office assembled the population by Ruse, having posted Order N. 4 directing that citizens were to appear in Sennaya Square. After they assembled, they were seized, driven outside the city and mowed down by machine gun fire.' – From the note on German atrocities issued by People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov on April 27, 1942. This picture was taken as two parents returning to Kerch after its recapture by the Red Army in February 1942 identified the body of their son.' It was translated in *Kriegsfibel*, 59: 'Nach der Befreiung von Kertsch durch unsere Verbände kamen dort die

plate showing a father identifying the body of his son. Brecht later confirmed that the play

Furcht und Elend des III. Reiches[286], the essay "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der

Wahrheit"[287] and the epigrams from *KF* would represent his experience in exile.

Berlau, who edited *KF*, stated that 'This book wants to teach art to read pictures',[288]

therefore justifying the importance of the return use of images of war contextualised by a poet

and agreeing with Moholy-Nagy on the necessity of interpreting images. According to Nicolaj

Lübecker,

> It is important to stress that Brecht is not trying to depict or to document
> historical events (…) Rather, he is trying to explore the political situation by
> creating interruptions in the material at hand. This is what it means to think
> in montages: 'to disarticulate our usual perception of the relations between
> things or situations' Like the *Verfremdungseffekte*, (…) the montage aims to
> produce a new relation to reality that brings about its reinvention. The

erschütternden Einzelheiten über eines der infernalischsten Verbrechen ans Licht, das die deutsche Armee auf sowjetischem Gebiet verübte – die Erschießung von über 7 000 Zivilpersonen. Die Dienststelle des deutschen Kommandanten versammelte die Bevölkerung durch einen Trick, indem sie den Befehl Nr. 4 bekanntgab, der anordnete, die Bürger hätten auf dem Sennaya-Platz zu erscheinen. Nachdem sie versammelt waren, wurden sie gepackt, aus der Stadt getrieben und mit Maschinengewehrfeuer niedergemäht. – Aus der Note über deutsche Grausamkeiten, herausgegeben von Volkskommissar für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Wjatscheslaw Motolow, am April 27, 1942. Dieses Bild wurde aufgenommen, als ein Elternpaar – nach der Wiedereroberung von Kertsch durch die Rote Armee im Februar 1942 zurückgekehrt – den Leichnam ihres Sohnes identifizierte.'

[286] *BFA* 4. In English, see also: *CP* 4, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*.

[287] *BFA* 22, pp. 74–89. In English see also: Kuhn, *Brecht on Art & Politics*, "Five Difficulties in Writing the Truth", pp. 141–57.

[288] Brecht, *Kriegsfibel* (1955) – Berlau's introductory note. ('Dieses Buch will die Kunst lehren, Bilder zu lessen.' - Author translation.)

montage, as we shall see, offers a sensorial and political re-education of the spectator.[289]

There is also an English translation, named *War Primer*, that contains some peculiarities. There are a few differences between the books in terms of the pictures (and their order) and the texts. Therefore, I will specify in the footnotes to which publication I am referring. The photographs are mainly divided into three groups: the first is comprised of those taken before leaving Europe (1941); the second is comprised of those taken in the US before the war ended (1943–4); and the third comprises those taken in the US after the war was over.

The title *Kriegsfibel* is already a montage. 'It joins the term for the worst thing, Krieg ("war"), to a word that initially addresses children: Fibel ("primer")'.[290] It is assumed, then, that it is a book meant to *teach* something from the very beginning. In this case, what are the readers supposed to *learn*? The title is, in fact, the first shock. Instead of learning the ABCs, one can *learn* about the cruelty of the war. Is the war to be understood or forgotten? If it is to be learned about, is ironic poetry appropriate? And finally, why should we learn about it?

> *War Primer* is only a primer, an ABC, a tool for finishing with childhood
> (at least in the eyes of the pedagogue). Which amounts to saying that for
> Brecht, in the context of Leninist materialism, any position-taking must end

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up – and disappear and cease to scatter – in a better organization of social reality.[291]

The learning process begins and ends with two different sources. The first one is represented by the poems chosen by Berlau and Brecht regarding the necessity of learning. Berlau's introductory text quotes Brecht's poem "Lob des Lernens" ("Praise of Learning")[292] that first appeared as the lines for the 1931 play *Die Mutter*:

> Lerne das Einfachste! Für die,
> Deren Zeit gekommen ist,
> Ist es nie zu spät!
> Lerne das ABC, es genügt nicht, aber
> Lerne es! Lasse es Dich nicht verdrießen!
> Fang an! Du mußt die Führung übernehmen!
>
> Study the simple things: nothing
> Comes too late for those whose day is
> About to dawn.
> Study your ABC. True, it's not enough, but
> Study it. Don't neglect your potential
> But learn! Knowledge is essential.
> You must be ready to [take the lead].[293]

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[291] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 242. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 248. ('L'ABC *de la guerre* n'est qu'un abécédaire, soint un outil pour en finir avec l'enfance (du moins aux yeux du pédagogue). Façon de dire que, pour Brecht, dans le contexte du matérialisme léniniste, toute *prise de position* doit aboutir – et disparaître – dans une *prise de parti*, tout travail de l'imagination doit aboutir – et cesser d'extravaguer – dans une meilleure organisation de la réalité sociale.')

[292] *CP* 3, p. 120.

[293] According to Brecht's speech during the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings (HUAC; 1947) (available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjGOWGQwUMM), the

The last epigram from the jacket of the German edition relates to a photograph of students in a class sitting in precarious conditions. The epigram (which is also the third stanza of Brecht's poem "An die Studenten der Arbeiter- und Bauernfakultät"[294] ("To the Students of the Workers' and Peasant's Faculty") says

Vergeßt nicht: mancher euresgleichen stritt
Daß ihr hier sitzen könnt und nicht mehr sie.
Und nun vergrabt euch nicht und kämpfet mit
Und lernt das Lernen und verlernt es nie! (aus der *Friedensfibel*)[295]

Never forget that men like you got hurt
So you might sit there, not the other lot.
And now don't hide your head, and [fight] [296]
But learn to learn, and try to learn for what.[297]

Here, Brecht returns to his *Lehrstücke*, frequently employing the theme of the learning process itself (e.g. *Die Mutter*). The students in the photograph from *KF* are sitting in boxes instead of at desks and are trying to keep their heads out. Thus, a very positive point of view is *learned*, namely that through *learning*, one can think about a better future. This plate refers to a note from Brecht's poetry (Frankfurt, 1981) as the starting point of the planned *Friedensfibel* (*Peace Primer*). The poem expresses the natural pleasure stemming from

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term 'take over' was changed to 'take the lead'. At the time, Brecht explained that the best translation was to 'take the lead'.

[294] *BFA* 15, p. 290. The same poem under a different title: "Dass Ihr Hier Sitzen Könnt".

[295] *Kriegsfibel*, book jacket.

[296] According to the original 'kämpfet mit' from *Kriegsfibel*, the translation to 'fight' was chosen instead of 'don't desert' from *War Primer* (1998), translated by John Willet.

[297] *War Primer*, p. 85.

learning and questioning, which is also the central point of a primer for a young child who is learning to learn.

"Lob des Lernens" was also quoted by the House Un-American Activities Committee when Brecht was judged by the anti-Communist trial in 1947 just before returning to Europe. The judges read the poem translated into English and asked Brecht if he had written that revolutionary piece of art. He denied authorship, saying that he had written a German poem that was totally different from that incorrect translation.

The second direction of the Brechtian learning process is expressed by the photographs that open and close the Brechtian photographic atlas (the German edition), which are of Hitler giving speeches and which are meant to represent the rise and fall of the Führer. The first plate presents a simple man speaking with a very subtle swastika in the background of the podium, whilst the last plate shows a fervent politician performing a very strong Nazi gesture with a set covered by the same Nazi symbols.

For Didi-Huberman, the learning process developed by Brecht in *KF* raises the question of the necessity of learning in dark times: 'Pedagogy in wartime—or in exile—might that then be another name for resistance? The decision to learn in spite of everything, the effort to never, whatever the cost, "unlearn to learn"'? [298] A positive answer would mean looking at *KF* and to a certain extent the *Lehrstücke* as works of resistance. Brecht made a decision to resist through art. Parallelly, Berlau assumed the role of teaching and learning.

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[298] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 191. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 198. ('La pédagogie en temps de guerre – ou en temps d'exil – ne serait-elle pas, alors, un autre nom pour la Résistance ? La décision d'*appendre malgré tout*, l'effort pour ne jamais, quoi qu'il en coûte, "désapprendre à apprendre?'')

According to Meyer, 'the discussions about the images, the backgrounds and methods of their publication influenced her view of images as well as her view of the world'.[299]

The BEA houses precious iconographic collections. One item is a text detailing Brecht's creative process for *Der Aufstieg des Arturo Ui.* The play was written in 1941 in collaboration with Steffin when Brecht was in Finland. Looking forward to premiering the play on the American stages, he spent less than a month writing the play, which is based on an unfinished story called *Giacomo Ui* Brecht had written some years before in Svendborg.

Photographs from mass magazines made up Brecht's primary research source, some shown in his *AJ* and most shown in *KF*; all of them can be found in the BE and ADK Archives. *Der Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* is probably the play for which Brecht most used photography as motivation, having collected a huge number of photographs, especially of political personalities and astronomical apparatus.

The play's *Inspiration Books* (*Inspizierbuch* and *Soufflierbuch*) contain thousands of pictures showing the gestures and behaviours of Hitler and various Nazi officers. The pictures mainly relate to speeches and show the subjects shaking hands, walking by foot, riding in cars journeys and appearing at cultural events. Some of those pictures also appear in the *AJ*, which can be viewed as a precursor of *KF* [300]. Included, for example, are the following images **(Figure 27)** that are accompanied by four-line ironic epigrams.

The following examples analyse photographs that Brecht found in exile and published in *AJ*. They are related to Hitler's gestures and poses while engaged in daily activities during the Second World War. *KF* (1955) was also meant to contain these, but due to censorship

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[299] Meyer, *Ruth Berlau: Fotografin an Brechts Seite*, p. 15. (‚Die Gespräche über die Bilder, über die Hintergründe und Methoden ihrer Veröffentlichung beeinflussten ihre Sicht auf Bilder ebenso wie ihre Sicht auf die Welt.')

[300] *War Primer*, plates 26 and 27 were not included in *Kriegsfibel* (1955) until the second German edition (1994), which included, for example, plates 83 and 84.

they could only be published in the appendix of the German second edition (1994) with 18 other unpublished plates, and four epigrams displayed on an extra page, an epilogue written by the editor Günter Kunert and an article by Professor Jan Knopf. The aim of this subitem is to analyse the relationship between the following photographs and Brecht's creative process for *Der Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* **(Figure 27)**.

Figure 27: Hitler in mass media magazines

 Source: *AJ*, pp. 144–145.

> Hier seht mich froh bei einem Topfgericht
>
> Mich, der ich keinerlei Gelüsten fröne
>
> Als dem nach Weltherrschaft. Mehr will ich nicht.
>
> Ich brauche nichts von euch als eure Söhne.
>
> Die alten Weiber lasset zu mir kommen!

Daß sie noch sehn, vor sie zur Grube fahren

Der ihre Söhne in sein Heer genommen

Als jene noch aus ihren Gruben waren.

[You see me here, eating a simple stew

Me, slave to no desire, except for one:

World-conquest. That is all I want. From you

I have but one request: give me your sons.

Suffer the old women to come unto me

That they may glimpse, before their graves close o'er them

The man their sons obeyed so faithfully

As long as he had graves left open for them.][303]

In his selection of two images of Hitler's private moments of joy and happiness, the entries reveal Brecht's interest in the *theatricalisation of politics through fascism*.[304] The first shows Hitler shaking hands with an old woman on the street. The second shows him personally serving his guests at the table. The dialogue arises from the epigrams, revealing the commitment of the press media to building a humanitarian image of one of the harshest dictators in history. The *theatricality* also occurs through the relationship between the two scenes, it being possible to identify a specific *gestus*, that of fascism.

Brecht's portrait of a man who wishes to conquer the world with the help of 'our sons' lives' **(Figure 27)** was the inspiration for *War Primer 2*, a contemporary reading and reinterpretation of *KF*. Published in 2011 by Broomberg and Chanarin, *War Primer 2* is dedicated to discussion on the recent *War on Terror*. Using the original photographs and epigrams from *War Primer* as a background, the black and white original photographs are

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[303] *War Primer*, plates 26 and 27.

[304] *BFA* 26, p. 443. "Theatralisierung der Politik durch den Fascismus".

overlaid with images from 9/11, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. Using the montage

technique, the authors added an allegorical layer to the relationship between image and text

and their contextualisation. The new images have no additional text or original captions.

When France surrendered in 1940, Brecht dedicated several pages from the *AJ* to

showing 20 pictures of Hitler dancing, celebrating his victory in Paris[305] **(Figure 28)**. The

sequence of photos aroused Brecht's interest in exposing the isolation of Hitler's gestures

through the interruption inherent in photography. It is therefore the same method Brecht used

in his work with the *MB*. In addition to political criticism of Hitler's behaviour, Brecht

demonstrated his interest in photography as a tool for disrupting the gesture. According to

Didi-Huberman, 'Brecht uses his iconographic documentation of the present war as a

montage table, an atlas within which to identify and reconstruct the geographical and

historical movements of human gesture and affect triggered politically in the body of each'.[306]

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[305] *AJ,* pp. 82–93. Photos from *Life* (October 21, 1940) taken from a film made by Walter

Frenz presented in "Deutshe Wochenschau", No. 512, 27/1940. A sequence of Hitler

'dancing' appears from 28:21 until 28:35. https://youtu.be/4vmXyobQLDo.

[306] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*. p. 153. In French, see

also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 164. ('Brecht utilise sa

documentation iconographique de la guerre présente comme une table de montage, un atlas où

repérer et reconstruire les mouvements géographiques et historiques du geste et de l'affect

humains politiquement suscités dans le corps de chacun.')
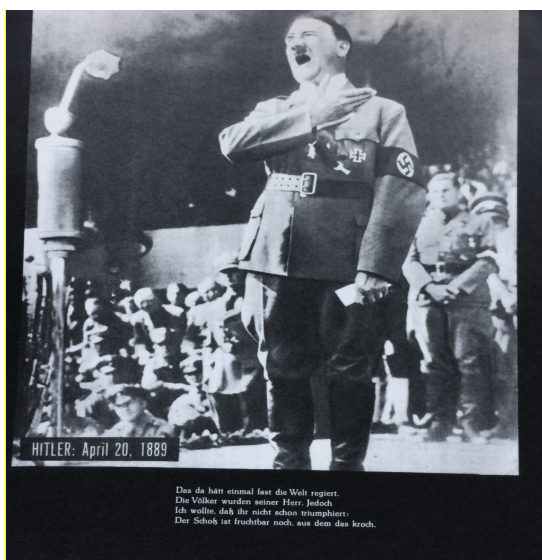
Figure 28: Hitler dancing

Source: *AJ,* pp. 82–93.

The last plate in *KF* showing Hitler giving a speech at an official ceremony **(Figure 29)** is 'almost identical with the last four lines of the Epilogue to Brecht's play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*'.[307]

Figure 29: Hitler discoursing

Source: Brecht, *KF,* p. 69.

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[307] *War Primer*, notes, p. v.

Das da hätt einmal fast die Welt regiert. Die

Völker wurden seiner Herr. Jedoch

Ich wollte, daß ihr nicht schon triumphiert:

Der Schoß ist fruchtbar noch, aus dem das

kroch.[308]

That's how the world was going to be run!

The other nations mastered him, except

(In case you think the battle has been won)

The womb is fertile still from which that

crept.[309]

Der Aufstieg des Arturo Ui (Epilog)

So was hätt einmal fast die Welt regiert!

Die Völker wurden seiner Herr, jedoch

Daß keiner uns zu früh da triumphiert

Der Schoß ist fruchtbar noch, aus dem das kroch![310]

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (Epilogue)

The world was almost won by such an ape!

The nations put him where his kind belong.

But don't rejoice too soon at your scape -

The womb he crawled from still is going strong.[311]

In the prologue to *Der Aufstieg des Arturo Ui*, the announcer says:

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[308] *Kriegsfibel*, p. 69.

[309] *War Primer*, p. 81.

[310] *BFA* 7, p. 112.

[311] *CP 6,* p. 211.

Jedoch ist alles streng wirklichkeitsgetreu

Denn was Sie heut abend sehen, is nicht neu

Nicht erfunden und ausgedacht

Zensuriert und für Sie zurechtgemacht:

Was wir hier zeigen, weiß der ganze Kontinent:

Es ist das Gangsterstück, das jeder kennt![312]

But everything you'll see tonight is true.

Nothing's invented, nothing's new

or made to order just for you.

The gangster play that we present

is known to our whole continent.[313]

One of the main sources for *Arturo Ui* was undoubtedly the photography research, reaffirming Brecht's motto 'Die Wahrheit ist konkret' ('Truth is concrete'). This worked as 'a reminder or admonishment against which he would measure his writing: dramatic, theoretical, fiction, poetry. He looked up at it and asked himself: Have I realized the truth concretely enough?'[314] In an essay that recalls Brecht's motto concerning the concreteness of truth, Berlau remembers that '[f]rom photographs of postures, gestures, walks and groupings we take what we need to achieve truth on the stage, bad postures as well as good postures: the bad ones in order to change them, the good to make them worth copying'[315]. In fact, it would

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[312] *BFA* 7, p. 114 (appendix – 'Frühe Variante des Prologs').

[313] *CP* 6, p. 118–9.

[314] Constantine, David. *Poetry: The Literary Agenda*. Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 9.

[315] Berlau, *Living for Brecht,* pp. 231–235, here, page 234–5. In German, see also: Berlau, *Brechts Lai-Tu,* pp. 280–284, here p. 283. ('(…) wir benutzen von fotografierten Haltungen, Gesten, Gängen und Gruppierungen, was wir brauchen können, um die Wahrheit auf die Bühne zu bringen: schlechte Haltungen ebenso wie gute Haltungen, die schlechten, um sie zu verändern, die guten, um si nachahmenswert zu machen.')

be more adequate to affirm that the representations of truth would be taken from photographs during the creative process of rehearsing theatre plays.

Because the play satirises Hitler's rise to power in Germany and the National Socialist state, the characters can be identified as real figures, with Arturo Ui representing Hitler, Dogsborough representing Hindenburg and Giuseppe Givola representing Joseph Goebbels. Although Heinrich Hoffman's sequence **(Figure 30)** appears neither in Brecht's *KF* nor in the *Journals*, the similarity of the images with the sixth scene of *Arturo Ui* in which Ui takes lessons and practises in front of a large standing mirror with the help of a famous actor and says '(…) da es unvermeidlich sein wird, bei dem oder jenem Anlaß ein paar Worte zu äußern, ganz besonders, wenn's einmal politisch wird, will ich Stunden nehmen. Auch im Auftreten. '[316] ('It looks like I'm going to have to say a word or two on certain occasions, especially when I get into politics, so I've decided to take lessons. The gestures too.')[317]

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[316] *BFA* 7, p. 49.

[317] *CP* 6, p. 156.

Figure 30: Hitler rehearsing while listening to his own speeches on the gramophone

Source: Heinrich Hoffmann (1925) / National Archive and Records Administration (Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-10460 / Hoffman, Heinrich / CC-BY-SA 3.0).

2.4 Photographs on stage

The last group of photographs that this study aims to examine comprise those that worked as *characters* in *Messingkauf* and *Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis*. In the first example, a photograph of the Yokohama earthquake is analysed, and in the second one, photographs that are shown to the audience are discussed.

2.4.1 *Messingkauf*

At the end of the "Third Night" (1945) of the *Messingkauf Dialogues*, the philosopher recalls a photograph of Yokohama destroyed by an earthquake. The dialogue was written

around 1945 and reveals once more the importance photographs had in Brecht's work during his exile. The photograph that the character refers to in the following line is from an American advertisement **(Figure 31).**

DER PHILOSOPH: Nicht so eilig! Ich erinnere mich da an eine Photographie, die eine amerikanische Stahlfirma im Anzeigenteil der Zeitungen veröffentlichte. Sie zeigte das durch ein Erbeben verwüstete Yokohama. Ein Chaos von zusammengeschüttelten Häusern. Aber dazwischen ragten noch einige Eisenzementgebäude, die ziemlich hoch waren. Darunter 'Steel Stood', Stahl blieb stehen.
DER SCHAUSPIELER: Das ist schön.
DER DRAMATURG *zum ARBEITER*: Warum lachen Sie?
DER ARBEITER: Weil es schön ist.
DER PHILOSOPH: Diese Photographie gab der Kunst einen deutlichen Fingerzeig.[318]

(THE PHILOSOPHER: Not so fast! Talking about this reminds me of a photograph used by an American steel company in a newspaper advertisement. It showed Yokohama just after it had been destroyed by an earthquake. There was a big pile of rubble – houses that had collapsed in the quake. Between them, however, there still towered one or two fairly tall buildings of reinforced concrete. The caption was *Steel stood*.
THE ACTOR: That's lovely!
THE DRAMATURG *to the WORKER*: Why are you laughing?
THE WORKER: Because it's lovely.
THE PHILOSOPHER: That photograph gave an unmistakable hint to art.)[319]

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[318] *BFA* 22, p. 801.

[319] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, p. 77.

Figure 31: Steel stood

Steel Stood the Test

The great earthquake was the crucial test between steel structures and the older type of Japanese buildings.

shock came, like houses of cards, the buildings of the older upon the helpless people. Many of the buildings in Tokyo royed by earthquake or fire, but the steel structures stood monuments to the protection and practicability of steel , available to mankind everywhere.

Exporters of the products of
EGIE STEEL CO.   AMERICAN BRIDGE CO.
STEEL CO.   NATIONAL TUBE CO.
            TENNESSEE COAL, IRON & RAILROAD CO.
                MINNESOTA STEEL CO.

Source: *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* Nr. 15 (April 13, 1924).

The advertisement quoted by the philosopher criticises the lack of ethics in a capitalist power, which saw something remarkable in a disaster and used the motto to advertise steel production. The shocking aspect of the picture is the caption: *Steel stood*. In fact, the caption is even worse than mentioned by Brecht: *Steel Stood the Test*. Brecht refers to this photograph in several writings, such as "Kann die heutige Welt durch Theater wiedergegeben werden 1955/6".[320] Ten years earlier, Brecht used the same theme in "Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit" (1935). The article on political aesthetics expresses his interest in photography as related to the truth, as it is articulated in the third item 'Die Kunst, die Wahrheit handhabbar zu machen als seine Waffe' ('The skill to make the truth fit for use as a weapon'):

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[320] *BFA* 23, p. 341.

In vielen amerikanischen Zeitschriften konnte man nach einem großen Erdbeben, das Yokohama zerstörte, Photographien sehen, welche ein Trümmerfeld zeigten. Darunter stand "steel stood" (Stahl blieb stehen), und wirklich, wer auf den ersten Blick nur Ruinen gesehen hatte, bemerkte nun, durch die Unterschrift darauf aufmerksam gemacht, daß einige hohe Gebäude stehen geblieben waren. Unter den Darstellungen, die man von einem Erdbeben geben kann, sind von unvergleichlicher Wichtigkeit diejenigen der Bauingenieure, welche die Verschiebungen des Bodens, die Kraft der Stöße, die sich entwickelnde Hitze usw. berücksichtigen und zu Konstruktionen führen, die dem Beben widerstehen. Wer den Faschismus und den Krieg, die großen Katastrophen, welche keine Naturkatastrophen sind, beschreiben will, muß eine praktikable Wahrheit herstellen. Er muß zeigen, daß dies Katastrophen sind, die den riesigen Menschenmassen der ohne eigene Produktionsmittel Arbeitenden von den Besitzern dieser Mittel bereitet werden.[321]

After a great earthquake which destroyed Yokohama, many American magazines published photographs depicting a field of rubble. Underneath was the caption 'steel stood' and indeed, anyone, who at first glance had only seen ruins, noticed – now that the caption had drawn attention to them – that several tall buildings had remained standing. Of all the possible depictions of an earthquake, the ones of unparalleled importance are those by the construction engineers, those which take note of the shifts in the ground, the strength of the tremors, the developing heat, etc., and which lead to constructions which withstand earthquakes. Anyone who wants to describe Fascism and war, the great disasters which are not natural disasters, must produce a practicable form of truth. He must show that these are catastrophes which are brought on the huge masses of working people, who lack their own means of production, by the owners of these means of production.[322]

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[321] *BFA* 22, p. 79–80.

[322] Kuhn, *Brecht on Art & Politics*, pp. 141–57, here, p. 147.

According to Brecht, '[w]enn man erfolgreich die Wahrheit über schlimme Zustände schreiben will, muß man sie so schreiben, daß ihre vermeidbaren Ursachen erkannt werden können. Wenn die vermeidbaren Ursachen erkannt werden, können die schlimmem Zustände bekämpft werden.'[323] ('If one wants to write the truth about terrible conditions successfully, one has to write it in such a way that the avoidable causes of these conditions can be recognized. Once the avoidable causes are recognized, the terrible conditions can be resisted.')[324] Thus, in Brecht's essay about writing the truth (Wahrheit) the author suggests that making truth manageable as a weapon is an art, and that is the kind of art he is interested in. A critique of the advertisement was published in April 1924 in *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*,[325] which coincidently also presented a full-page article about the young Brecht and his *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England* [326] world premiere.

2.4.2 *Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis*

Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis[327] introduces for the first time a recurrent theme in the Brechtian *Lehrstücke*: the agreement. It is the agreement that results from the moment when there are no laws anymore—the state of exception. To live in the state of exception is to be flexible. Here, the chorus and the crowd must come to a consensus about

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[323] *BFA* 22, p. 80.

[324] Kuhn, *Brecht on Art & Politics*, pp. 141–57, here p. 147.

[325] *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* Nr. 15 (April 13, 1924), p. 384.

[326] *BFA* 2. In English, see also: *CP* 1, *The Life of Edward II of England*.

[327] The premiere directed by Brecht was on July 28, 1929 in Baden-Baden during the Festival Deutsche Kammermusik under the title 'Lehrstück' at the Stadthalle.

whether men should help each other. Brecht's discussion is about human kindness in this play. Finally, it becomes clear that men do not help each other, so both the act of helping and lack of it must be discussed.

> DER SPRECHER: Betrachtet die Toten!
> *Es werden sehr groß zehn Photographien von Toten gezeigt, dann sagt der Sprecher: "Zweite Betrachtung der Toten", und die Photographien werden noch einmal gezeigt.*
> *Nach der Betrachtung der Toten beginnen die Gestürzten zu schreien.*
> DIE GESTÜRZTEN: Wir können nicht sterben.[328]

> THE SPEAKER: Contemplate the dead!
> *Ten photographs of dead bodies are shown. The Speaker then says: 'Second contemplation of the dead', and the photographs are shown again.*
> *After the contemplation of the dead,* THE CRASHED AIRMEN *begin shouting:*
> We cannot die![329]

The sixth scene comes after the conclusion that they will die anyway. Once again, Brecht relates the ephemeral (life) with photography. *Betrachtung der Toten* (*Contemplation of the Dead)* presents photographs of dead bodies twice. After the dialogue, a dance of death is performed by Valeska Gert on a film screen. The public reaction to the pictures and the dance was extremely condemning, generating a scandal with protests and vehement counter-reactions.

If, according to Brecht, the *Lehrstücke* point to the learning of the participant and not that of the spectator, the contemplation of dead corpses would rather disturb the actors than

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[328] *BFA* 3, p. 37.

[329] *CP* 3, p. 21–43, here, pp. 32–3.

the audience. The brutality of that specific *gestus* created by Brecht—the exhibition of dead corpses and the film showing a death dance—could be an example of what Nägele calls *theatre of cruelty*. It is clear that the cruelty of that *gestus* provokes the most emotional reactions in the audience, which Brecht claimed to be a result of the rational form of the Lehrstücke. As 'dying is an exercise in Einverständnis',[330] the author tries to build through *gestus* the only possible scenario to overcome death—agreeing with it. However, '[e]motions are therefore "historical" for Brecht – they are no way "universal" or "timeless". But to be in history is also to be crossed though by a memory'[331], which is, according to Didi-Huberman, the photographic medium's ability that attracted Brecht's attention.

Having analysed Brechtian narratives created by the *Lehrstücke* and Rainer Nägele's theory on the *gestus* in the brutal images of war, the next step of this research proposes a closer examination of contemporary aspects of the politics of images from recent performances and artists committed to a political discourse.

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[330] Nägele, Rainer. "Brecht's Theatre of Cruelty" in *Reading after Freud: Essays on Goethe, Hölderlin, Habermas, Nietzsche, Brecht, Celan and Freud*. Columbia University Press, 1987. p. 124

[331] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 163. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 171. ('Les émotions sont "historiques", affirme donc Bertolt Brecht. Elles ne sont "nullement universelles ni intemporelles". Mais être *dans l'histoire* c'est, aussi, être *traversé par une mémoire*.')

2.5   Contemporary warfare representation

The politics of images has unquestionably gained a particular status after the Abu Ghraib[332] scandal and Susan Sontag's profound analysis of the significance of photography during specific war periods. *On Photography*[333] (1977) elaborates the history of photography from her particular point of view and analyses American photography. The analysis reflects on the role of photography in daily life. Sonntag claimed that as a representation of reality on a small scale, photography is a pretext or an instrument to decode the world, exposing possible perceptions of our modern society. The decodification depends on the photographer and on the theme chosen by him or her. One year before her death, Sontag published *Regarding the Pain of Others*[334] (2003), in which she discusses the way suffering and disgrace are being portrayed in the twenty-first century. How does the cruelty representation influence us? Are we desensitised by our relationship with images? Since the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, which was intensely captured by photographers, the world has had a closer view of human disgrace and grief thanks to photography. In her last book, Sontag reflected on the correlation between news, art and understanding war and pain. Starting with Francisco Goya's famous work *Los Desastres de la Guerra*[335] and ending with the images of 9/11's events in the

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[332] In 2004, more than 100 pictures taken by American soldiers in 2003 at Abu Ghraib prison in the town of Abu Ghraib surfaced and were presented to the world. The photographs showed American soldiers next to tortured and abused Iraqi prisoners.

[333] Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Penguin, 2004.

[334] Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. Penguin, 2004.

[335] *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (1810–1820) is a series of 80 prints that show brutal scenes from the Penninsular War (1808–1814) and its aftermath. Brecht's *Kriesgsfibel* was compared to Goya's work on images of war.

US, she prompts thought that leads to the vital question: Does the relevance of those images ultimately depend on the way *we* observe them?

Sontag answered this question a few months later in *The New York Times Magazine*. In her article *Regarding the Torture of Others*[336], she gave her last words on the Abu Ghraib scandal. The world seemed to have reached its cruellest point. The pain caused by the horrors of war was not enough. Society proudly showed them through photographs. In the article, Sontag says that

> To live is to be photographed, to have a record of one's life, and therefore to go on with one's life oblivious, or claiming to be oblivious, to the camera's nonstop attentions. But to live is also to pose. To act is to share in the community of actions recorded as images.[337]

In other words, Sontag says that the world and society will not be the same after Abu Ghraib. This is also the subject that concerns Judith Butler in *Frames of War* when she asks if 'the way in which suffering is presented to us (…) affect(s) our responsiveness'.[338] The question is almost rhetoric, as black-and-white or amateur photographs represent a large portion of the photojournalist market. All the subtleties that surround photography must be considered in the 'responsiveness' discussed by Butler.

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[336] Sontag, Susan. "Regarding the torture of others." *The New York Times Magazine*, May 23, 2004, www.nytimes.com/2004/05/23/magazine/regarding-the-torture-of-others.html.

[337] Sontag, "Regarding the torture of others." www.nytimes.com/2004/05/23/magazine/regarding-the-torture-of-others.html.

[338] Butler, Judith. "Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag". *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* Verso Books, 2016, pp. 63–100.

The photographs taken in the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq were published in 2004. American soldier Sabrina Harman and other soldiers appeared with tortured or dead prisoners, smiling and posing cheerfully. Harman's satisfaction with taking photographs of tortured prisoners was even more shocking than the act of torturing. One would suppose that she had a cruel career and reputation in the American Army. However, her story suggests something else. In a letter written to her father from Abu Ghraib prison, she tells him that she had seen her first corpse that day and added 'I took pictures!' Why did Harman's pictures become so well-known? Were people shocked by the practices at Abu Ghraib (e.g. sleep deprivation, sexual humiliation, sensory disorientation, the imposition of physical and psychological pain) or by the fact that pictures were taken? Was Harman, in Sontag's words, *regarding the pain of others* through the medium of photography? If by means of photography society reaches distant experiences, were we doing the same?

In Broomberg and Chanarin's *War Primer 2*, which is a montage of Brecht's *War Primer*, photographs from Abu Ghraib contributed to their discussion on the role of photography during the *War on Terror* **(Figure 32)**.

Figure 32: Montage of photographs from Abu Ghraib and *Kriegsfibel*.
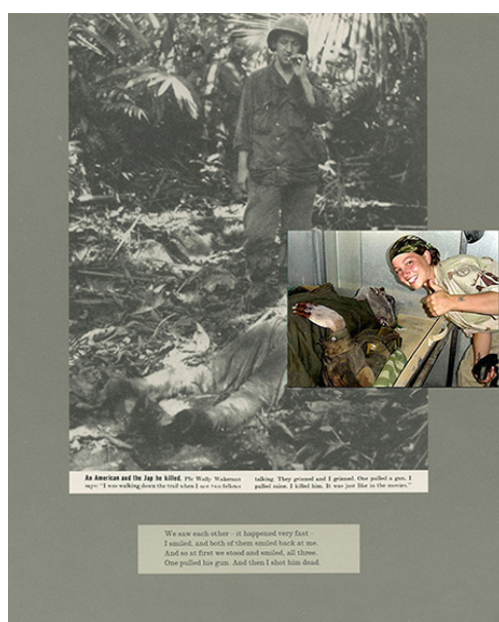
Source: *War Primer 2.*

Both Americans in the images in **Figure 32** boast about a cruel atrocity and seem to be proud of their achievement. Brecht kept the caption where the soldier Wally Wakeman states 'I was walking down the trail when I saw two fellows talking. They grinned, and I grinned. One pulled a gun. I pulled mine. I killed him. It was just like in the movies.' The montage shows an official smoking a cigarette like a movie star, and Harman's mobile phone photograph shows her iconic *thumbs-up*. In *Frieze Talks: Photojournalism and the War of Images*, Broomberg and Chanarin raise the question of the credibility of photography.

> Why is it that images we trust are now most often the lowest resolution or
> blurred images, so-called "poor images"? Images taken by a mobile phone,
> for example, are read as more authentic. Perhaps it's because there seems to
> be a trade-off inherent in these images: a compromise on quality
> (resolution, composition, focus) for speed and authenticity.[339]

The focus in *War Primer 2* is on photographic authenticity and credibility, as the authors recognize the empowerment that the new technological era has allowed. How do the *politics of images* interfere in the modern theatrical scene? Three artistic examples and their recent performances are presented as exemplary interrelations between photography and theatre; Swiss theatre director Milo Rau, Lebanese visual artist Rabih Mroué, and Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar. Their interrelation with theatre and photography, performed in the last years from distinctive cultures and political backgrounds, symbolises the renewed experiences joining theatre and photography following Brecht's practice in the area.

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[339] Broomberg, Adam and Oliver Chanarin. "Frieze talks: Photojournalism and the war of images". *The Guardian*. www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/oct/13/photojournalism-broomberg-chanarin-conflict.

In 2015, a photograph of the Syrian refugee crisis shocked the world. The image was of the dead body of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy. It became the *zeitgeist* of European negligence of the refugees, who were dying on the dangerous route between the Middle East and Europe. Although thousands of people were being killed—either in their home countries or whilst trying to escape from poverty, violence and persecution—the photograph of the little boy was shocking. The most influential newspapers worldwide, such as the *Independent*, *The Guardian* and the *Washington Post*, declared that it was the most dreadful symbol of the refugee crisis. The decision to publish the photograph of the little boy lying dead on a Turkish beach was extremely controversial.

The interplay of photography and theatre can be seen in Milo Rau's[340] play *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs (Compassion. The History of the Machine Gun)*[341]. The performances by the Swiss actress Ursina Lardi and the Belgian-Burundian actress Consolate Sipérius take us along the Mediterranean routes of refugees from the Middle East and the Congolese civil war zones. According to Rau, it 'not only contemplates the limits of our compassion but also on the limits of European humanism'.[342]

Along with other pictures, Lardi presents the photo of Alan Kurdi to the audience **(Figure 33)** while reporting on field research she undertook with Rau in Turkey, Greece and Macedonia. Several photographs are shown during the performance, reflecting the role of the mediatisation of images. They are usually shown in the hands of the actresses and are

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[340] Swiss theatre director, journalist, essayist and lecturer. He was born in 1977 in Bern and won the Swiss Theater Award in 2014. In 2007, he founded the International Institute of Political Murder, a production company for Theatre, Film and Social sculpture. In 2018, Rau assumed the directorship of the National Theatre in Ghent, Belgium.

[341] Schaubühne Berlin, 2016.

[342] "Compassion. The History of the Machine Gun". Performance. *International Institute of Political Murder*. international-institute.de/en/compassion-the-history-of-the-machine-gun/

projected on a screen at the back of the stage. They come from private collections and mass circulation press.

Figure 33*: Ursina Lardi in *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs*.

Source: www.theaterformen.de/de/programm/mitleid.

Is there an ethical issue concerning photography today? In 1993, photographer Kevin Carter took the iconic photo of a vulture stalking a barely alive Sudanese toddler. It was published in the *New York Times*, and instantaneously there was a mass reaction against the photographer who people accused of *just* taking pictures instead of helping the child. Carter, who was 33 years old, won the Pulitzer Prize for this photo. However, consumed by the horrors he witnessed and persecuted regarding ethical questions, he committed suicide two months later.

Alfredo Jaar's[343] eight-minute film installation 'The Sound of Silence' (2006) is a theatre built for a single photograph, one of the most important photojournalism images in his opinion. The installation consists of a metal bunker with a blinding light that flashes towards the entrance. Inside, there is text projected onto the walls. It tells the story behind an image that contributed to the construction of a historical fact.

kevin
kevin
kevin carter is survived by his daughter megan
this photograph is owned by
the megan patricia carter trust
the rights of this photograph
are managed by corbis
corbis is owned by bill gates
corbis is the largest photo agency in the world
corbis controls close to 100 million photographs
the reference number of this photograph
is corbis 0000295711-001
no one knows what happened to the child
the end

Jaar maintains that images are not innocent because they represent an ideological conception of the world,[344] as he demonstrates in four of his most representative projects relating to the politics of images—*The Rwanda Project (1994-2000), Searching for Africa in*

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[343] Alfredo Jaar, who was born in Santiago, Chile in 1956, is an artist, architect and filmmaker. He has participated in the Venice Biennale (1986, 2007, 2009, 2009) and the São Paulo Biennale (1987, 1989, 2010) and Documentas in Kassel, Germany (1987 and 2002).

[344] Jaar, Alfredo. "Alfredo Jaar: Images are Not Innocent", *Louisiana Channel*, 2013, vimeo.com/164688358.

Life, From Time to Time and *The Sound of Silence*. *The Rwanda Project* is a result of six years of research (1994–2000) on the Rwandan genocide as portrayed by the most relevant magazines in Western media. An estimated 800,000 people were murdered in a period of 100 days. Jaar focused on the indifference of the media to the catastrophe. The work exhibits the 17 covers of *Newsweek* magazine during the first year of the genocide, which was the time the magazine took to show the genocide on its cover for the first time. Keeping the original layouts, Jaar added the facts about the genocide for each week that were omitted by the American press. *Searching for Africa in Life* (1996) is a visual installation focused on more than 2,000 covers of *Life* magazine exhibited in chronological order. Jaar notes the remarkable fact that only five of them are related to the African continent, and those focus on showing beautiful scenery. *From Time to Time* (2006) exhibits nine covers of *Time* magazine dedicated to Africa that focus on three different themes, animals, hunger and disease, thus highlighting the lack of representation of 'real' life in Africa.

The photograph of Alan Kurdi also played a role in Jaar's Masterclass[345] in Rotterdam in January 2018, where he described his latest creative processes. He agrees with the theory that the face of a white boy rather than the faces of millions of black people who have died escaping global atrocities provoked a stronger reaction in Western society because they recognise themselves. However, Jaar remembers that the photograph that was published in more than 1500 newspapers worldwide was cropped so as not to show what was happening around, such as cars passing by and people fishing a few metres from the body. In reaction to the medialisation of the photograph, Jaar created a campaign to raise funds for a non-governmental organisation that saves refugees during sea crossings. For that, he used the picture without Kurdi's body.

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[345] Jaar, Alfredo. "Masterclass: Alfredo Jaar", *International Film Festival Rotterdam*, 2018, https://youtu.be/diGaYvPFrgk.

Why are some photographs more compelling and become part of history while others do not? Is it an individual choice or simply mass media manipulation? Some of the most famous photographs of all time were have said to be staged. Was Sontag right when she asked if today 'events are in part designed to be photographed' and if 'the grin is a grin for the camera'?[346] If it is true, photography has become the cause of grins and not a consequence.

Last, Rabin Mroué's[347] recent works deal with photography that triggers political engagement by focusing on images of war since the end of the civil war in Lebanon. His work focuses on the politics of images and shows from the stage the poetics of video and photographic imagery, for example in *So Little Time* and *Pixelated Revolution*. In *So Little Time* (**Figure 34**), Mroué explores the myths, self-portrayals and images of martyrs. During the performance, actress Lina Majdalanie proposes investigating the relationship between personal identity and public memorial in times of war and after war through the live revelation of photographic images of war martyrs, transforming the stage into a photographic laboratory and reliving historical characters based on their photographs.

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[346] Sontag, "Regarding the torture of others." www.nytimes.com/2004/05/23/magazine/regarding-the-torture-of-others.html.

[347] Born in Beirut, 1967. An actor, director, playwright and visual artist, Mroué is the co-founder of the Beirut Art Center and is currently an associate director of Münchner Kammerspiele.

Figure 34: Lina Majdalanie in *So Little Time* by Rabih Mroué - Wiesbaden Biennale (2016).

Source: Photograph by Jeva Griskjane.

     Pixelated Revolution (2012) is a reflection on the visual chaos of media images. Today, it is not rare to see images produced by mobile phones in the news. The images taken during shootings in the Syrian Civil War are an example of this. Those images captured the moment of death, the exact moment of a shot, and eternalised it. 'Assembling material created and utilized by Syrians to document the revolution in its early stages, Mroué compares their revolutionary tactics with the strict cinematic rules adopted by the Danish film movement, Dogme, in the pursuit of the authentic representation.'[348]

     During the 4ª Mostra Internacional de Teatro de São Paulo (4th International Theatre Festival in São Paulo), Mroué stated in an interview with the newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo* that

> [e]very day we are bombarded with images. The world produces an
> uninterrupted iconographic flow, each new image erasing the one that
> precedes it. We cannot tolerate all this burden anymore. Is that why we no

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[348] McKinney, Joslin and Scott Palmer (eds.). *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017, p. 48.

longer know how to see? Is it an inability to see the image as a continuation of the corporeal experience? Do the eyes still retain the faculty of seeing?[349]

Contemporary theatre does not *need* photography to portray reality on stage. Quite the opposite is true; in a digital society, illusion and reality coexist in the photographic territory. Motion does not signify the opposite of stillness anymore. After an uninterrupted development in both areas, neither theatre nor photographs have changed after many decades of interrelation. What has changed is the way they are set. Digital media has replaced the pieces of moveable type with digital development and new methods of manipulation.

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[349] Mroué, Rabih. Arquivo Aberto: "O dramaturgo libanês Rabih Mroué e a morte das fotos". *Folha Uol*. Translated by Paulo Migliacci. March 19, 2017. www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrissima/2017/03/1867373-o-dramaturgo-libanes-mroue-e-a-morte-das-fotos.shtml ('A cada dia somos bombardeados com imagens. O mundo produz um fluxo iconográfico ininterrupto, cada nova imagem apagando a que a precede. Não podemos mais tolerar toda essa carga. Será por isso que já não sabemos como ver? Será uma incapacidade de ver a imagem como uma continuidade da experiência corpórea? Os olhos ainda retêm a faculdade de ver?' – Author translation).

3   *Gestus* and Interruption

> *Das Modellbuch zeigt in Bildern und Anmerkungen*
> *eine künstlerische Konzeption, die den*
> *Grundgestus des Stückes gestalten soll.*[350]
>
> – b.b., "Das Modellbuch zeigt den Grundgestus eines Stückes", *Theaterarbeit.*

This chapter focuses on the research on photography associated with two central and refined concepts of Brechtian theatre—*gestus* and interruption. For this research, the photograph represents an artificial way of making the interruption and consequently the *gestus* visible. The importance of visibility is related to the importance of photography for rehearsal and performance studies. For Brecht, interruption is a technique that aims to disrupt the flow of a dramatic action in order to achieve *V-Effekt*. Thus, the more interruptions during a play, the greater the ruptures, which enables the public to engage with the performance.

This chapter aims to collect arguments in favour of the central hypothesis of this research, that the original aspects of the *gestus* concept—which is at the centre of Brechtian theatre and is the form of the creative process—appear and can be developed through the analysis of photographs. How would it be possible to explore the *gestus* concept from a photographic perspective?

As a starting point, an overview of the concept of *gestus* and interruption as a technique is necessary. In the 1920s in *Anmerkungen zur Dreigroschenoper,*[351] Brecht explains that the actor should not only sing a song but also

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[350] The *Modellbuch* shows in pictures and notes an artistic concept that is to give shape to the fundamental 'gestus' of the play. ('The *Modellbuch* shows the fundamental gestus of the play' – Author translation).

[351] *BFA* 24, p. 56–73. In English, see also: Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 71–80.

(…) einen Singenden zeigen. Er versucht nicht so sehr, den Gefühlsinhalt

seines Liedes hervorzuholen (darf man eine Speise andern anbieten, die

man selbst schon gegessen hat?), sondern er zeigt Gesten, welche sozusagen

die Sitten und Gebräuche des Körpers sind.[352]

(…) show a person singing. His aim should be not so much to bring across

the emotional content of his song. (does anyone have the right to offer

others a dish he has already eaten himself?) but to show gestures that

represent the manners and customs of the body, as it were.[353]

The first steps of the theoretical development of Brechtian theatre were presented in

Anmerkungen zur Dreigroschenoper. These steps are differentiating, representing and

interpreting. The distinguishability of these gestures is the birthplace of the concept of *gestus*,

which depends on the discontinuity of the dramatic action. This was presented by Benjamin

as interruptions, which is the capacity of uncovering the conditions of the action by arousing

astonishment rather than empathy.[354]

While in exile in Denmark around 1938, Brecht first described the term *gestus*, saying

that '[U]nter einem *Gestus* sei verstanden ein Komplex von Gesten, Mimik und (für

gewöhnlich) Aussagen, welchen ein oder mehrere Menschen zu einem oder mehrere

Menschen richten.'[355] ('A *Gestus* is a complex of gestures, facial expressions and (usually)

statements that one or several people make to one or several people.')[356] It becomes clear at

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[352] *BFA* 24, p. 56–73, here p. 65 (in "Über das Singen der Songs").

[353] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 71–80, here page 78. ("Notes on the Threepenny
Opera").

[354] WB *SW* 4, pp. 302–7, here p. 304, "What is Epic Theatre? (2)". In German, see also: WB,
GS II (2), pp. 532–539, here p. 535, "Was ist das epische Theater? (2)".

[355] *BFA* 22.2, pp. 616–7, here, p. 616.

[356] Author translation.

that point that the social relations between the characters and the contextualisation of the historical age are essential to build the concept. Back in Europe in 1949, Brecht stated in *Kleines Organon für das Theater*[357] that 'den Bereich der Haltungen, welche die Figuren zueinander einnehmen, nennen wir den gestischen Bereich'[358] ('the domain of attitudes adopted by the characters towards one another is what we call the gestic domain')[359] and that

> [d]iese gestischen Äußerungen sind meist recht kompliziert und widerspruchvoll, so daß sie sich mit einem einzigen Wort nicht mehr wiedergeben lassen, und der Schauspieler muß achtgeben, daß er bei der notwendigerweise verstärkten Abbildung da nichts verliert, sondern den ganzen Komplex verstärkt.[360]

> These gestic expressions are usually highly complicated and contradictory, so that they cannot be rendered by any single word, and the actors must take care that they lose nothing in the necessary reinforcement of the representation, and instead reinforce the entire complex.[361]

During both *Mutter Courage* performances (in Berlin and Munich), Brecht elaborated. He selected a photograph taken of the eighth scene **(Figure 35)** from among several thousand photos of the play to exemplify the precision of the model guidance and commented that he has struggled to photographically capture this process because it did not last longer than a second. The aim was to shoot the exact moment when the cook and Kattrin

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[357] *BFA* 23, pp. 65–97. In English, see also: Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 229–63. ("Short Organum for the Theatre").

[358] *BFA* 23, pp. 65–97, here p. 89.

[359] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 229–63, here p. 248.

[360] *BFA* 23, pp. 65–97, here p. 89.

[361] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 229–63, here p. 248.

face each other alone without Mother Courage's sacks appearing in the background. Besides searching for the exact moment to take the photograph, Brecht also complained about technical problems, such as lighting and blocking. This is one of the reasons for the creation of the *MB*. In searching for the perfect technical image, Brecht and Berlau preferred to take serial photographs of the scenes, like a filmstrip.

Figure 35: *Mutter Courage* – Scene 8

Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 297.

One of the central points of Brechtian theatre is to prove that the world is changeable; therefore, Brecht chose, dialectically, a static photographic image to help him achieve his ambitious goals. He saw movement through inaction. By interrupting a gesture or a scene, Brecht was able to intensely analyse his work, the acting and the technicians. He was able to do this not only through the models but also by examining photographs.

> Über Gestik wird weiter unten gehandelt, jedoch ist hier zu sagen, daß alles
> Gefühlsmäßige nach außen gebracht werden muß, das heißt, es ist zur Geste

zu entwickeln. Der Schauspieler muß einen sinnfälligen, äußeren Ausdruck
für die Emotionen seiner Person finden, womöglich eine Handlung, die jene
inneren Vorgänge in ihm verrät. Die betreffende Emotion muß heraustreten,
sich emanzipieren, damit sie groß behandelt werden kann. Besondere
Eleganz, Kraft und Anmut der Geste ergibt den V-Effekt.[362]

(...) it can be said once that everything to do with the emotions has to be
externalized; that is to say, it must be developed into a gesture. Actors must
find a sensibly perceptible outward expression, for their characters'
emotions, preferably some action that gives away what is going on inside.
The emotion in question must be brought out, must lose all its restrictions
so that it can be treated on a big scale. Special elegance, power and grace of
gesture bring about the V-Effekt.[363]

With the aim of formulating theoretical issues, Brecht developed the *gestus* concept in
relation to theatrical gestures. Thus, theatrical gestures and *gestus* can be observed in
modelling performance photographs and then studied. He emphasised that 'ein *Gestus*
zeichnet die Beziehungen von Menschen zueinander. Eine Arbeitsverrichtung z.B. ist kein
Gestus, wenn sie nicht eine gesellschaftliche Beziehung enthält wie Ausbeutung oder
Kooperation'[364] ('a *gestus* traces how humans relate to one another. The work process is not
an example of a gestus unless it also shows a social relationship such as exploitation or
cooperation').[365] According to Müller-Schöll, 'the gesture thus interestingly marks a kind of

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[362] *BFA* 22.2, pp. 641–59, here p. 645. ("Kurze Beschreibung einer neuen Technik de
Schauspielkunst, die einem Verfremdungseffekt hervorbringt"). It was probably written in 1940
while in exile in Scandinavia.

[363] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 184–95, here p. 187. ("Short Description of a New
Technique of Acting That Produces a Verfremdung Effect".)

[364] *BFA* 23, pp. 187–8, here p. 188.

[365] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 272.

Surplus'.[366] For Brecht, the *Überschuß* is beyond his flow of thinking. It is literally the overflow. It is the representation of what results from Brecht working together with the actors.

The flow of thinking is a Brechtian hallmark. Brecht used to write in a stream of thinking, resulting in a work in which concepts, practices and ideas proceed side by side. The *MB* are also in flow, as they have different styles, different approaches and different features. Each style introduces a specific concept. The eagerness for change is perceptible in the creation of the *MB*; each one has different organisation and specific aesthetics. According to Brecht, however, for the spectator '(…)beinahe wichtiger als das Imflußdenken das Überdenflußdenken'[367] ('(…)thinking across the flow is almost more important than thinking in the flow').[368] Therefore, it seems that in terms of the *gestus* formulation, *Überdenflußdenken* is for Brecht what *Überschuß* is for Müller-Schöll.

For Hans Martin Ritter, the *gestus* concept appears in Brechtian writings much later than the idea of *gestus*. The *gestus* shows itself as a consequence of an intervention in the living flow of events; the interruption fixes the beginning and the end of the action, making it visible as an interdependent attitude.

> Der Gestus-Begriff hat demnach einmal eine *synthetische* Qualität: er faßt
> mehrere Erscheinungen des menschlichen Verhaltens, die konkret
> wahrnehmbar sind, zusammen zu einem Komplex und ordnet ihm eine

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[366] Müller-Schöll. *Das Theater des "konstruktiven Defaitismus"*, pp. 297–305, here p. 301. ('[D]er Gestus markiert also interessanterweise eine Art von *Überschuß*' – Author translation).

[367] *BFA* 24, p. 59.

[368] Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 72.

bestimmte Bedeutung zu. Diese Bedeutung ist in gewissem Maße auch unabhängig von diesen konkreten Erscheinungen zu denken.[369]

Thus, the gestus concept has a *synthetic* quality: it brings several phenomena of human behaviour, which are concretely perceptible together into a complex and assigns a particular meaning to it. To a certain extent, this meaning can also be thought independently of these concrete phenomena.[370]

In *Anmerkungen zum Lustspiel 'Mann ist Mann',* Brecht stated:

Denn hier war wieder über den Einzelsinn der Sätze hinaus ein ganz bestimmter Grundgestus herausgearbeitet, der zu seiner Wahrnehmbarkeit zwar des Sinns der einzelnen Sätze nicht ganz entraten konnte, aber doch eben dieses Sinns nur mehr als Mittel zum Zweck bedurfte. Der Inhalt der Partien bestand aus Widersprüchen, und der Schauspieler mußte versuchen, den Zuschauer nicht etwa durch Identifizierung mit den einzelnen Sätzen selber in Widersprüche zu verwickeln, sondern ihn *daraus zu halten*. Es mußte eine möglichst objektive Ausstellung eines widerspruchsvollen inneren Vorgangs als eines Ganzen sein.[371]

For here again a very specific fundamental gesture was worked out beyond the individual sense of the movements, which could not completely escape the meaning of the individual movements for its perceptibility, but nevertheless only needed this meaning as a means to an end. The content of the roles consisted of contradictions, and the actor had to try not to involve the viewer in contradictions by identifying himself with the individual

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[369] Ritter, Hans Martin. *Das gestische Prinzip bei Bertolt Brecht.* Prometh,1986, pp. 13–32, here p. 16.

[370] Author translation.

[371] *BFA* 24, pp. 45–51, here p. 48.

movements, but to keep him out of them. It had to be an objective

exhibition of a contradictory inner process as a whole.[372]

If a *gestus* is recognisable as an interruption by observing the details, then there are

two different kinds of *gestus*—the *gestus* of the actor and the *gestus* of the photograph(er).

Undoubtedly, the *gestus* observed in the photograph is performed by an actor, but it is also

performed by the photographer. Thus, the double *gestus allows* a double interpretation. That

being the case, the hypothesis that photography enabled Brecht to deepen the central concept

of his dialectical theatre opens up open paths to develop a whole new atmosphere for theatre

photography and Brechtian theatre.

   While Nägele stated that the 'gestus is structured by the symbolic code of a specific

social situation',[373] Ritter discussed the concept as an aesthetic and epistemological category

and states that before analysing a specific social situation, it is central to see individual

processes or individual moments and only then to perceive relationships between people.

   The *MB* therefore represent the organisation of photographic technology, which is to

search for the *gestus* of the play through photographs. 'Das Modellbuch zeigt den

Grundgestus eines Stückes'[374] can be considered the most significant defence of this thesis.

Ironically, Brecht uses the term *grund* in the title of his essay. It is known that he was not

searching for a *grundgestus* but instead for several contradictory *gestus*. The comparisons

between different performances, such as that of *Mutter Courage* and *Galilei MB*, do not aim

to reinforce the idea of a model to be copied. a base, meaning a root. On the contrary, Brecht

always looked for variability, which is the opposite of an immutable base. The central

questions of the essay are: Are the actors and the playwright representative? Is the play a

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[372] Author translation.

[373] Nägele, "Brecht's Theater of Cruelty", p. 113.

[374] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit,* p. 296. The article is listed in *BFA* 25, p. 537.

circumstance? The author also underlines that in addition to those questions, many others

must be formulated during examination of the *gestus*. These must not be free of contradictory

answers but in turn must be explored transparently during the creative process.

> The modelbook shows in pictures and notes an artistic concept which
> should shape the basic gestus of the play. There is the basic arrangement
> that tells the fable; the interplay of figures and groups in their movements;
> the division of the overall processes into individual operations; reflections
> on the characterisation of the figures and the social significance of the
> events. The modelbook helps to determine the fundamental gestus of the
> play.[375]

When referring to *Grundarrangement* and based on the different ways of translating

German, I decided that *Grund*, as in Brecht's *Grundarrangement* and *Grundgestus* for

example, should be translated as *fundamental* instead of *basic*. The term *basic* is related to the

idea of restricting, and that would result in misunderstandings regarding the critical analysis

of Brechtian theatre. It is also important to highlight the difference between *gestus* and

grundgestus. According to Brecht, '[j]edes Einzelgeschehnis hat einen Grundgestus'[376]

('Every single event has a fundamental gesture'),[377] but it is not necessarily a complete *gestus*.

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[375] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit,* p. 296. ('Das Modellbuch zeigt in Bildern und Anmerkungen eine

künstlerische Konzeption, die den Grundgestus des Stückes gestalten soll. Es gibt das

Grundarrangement, das die Fabel erzählt; das Zusammenspiel der Figuren und Gruppen in

ihren Bewegungen; die Aufteilung der Gesamtvorgänge in Einzelvorgänge; Betrachtungen

über die Charakterisierung der Figuren und die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung der Geschehnisse.

Das Modellbuch hilft, den Grundgestus des Stückes zu bestimmen. ' - Author translation).

[376] *BFA* 23, p. 92.

[377] Author translation.

While rehearsing with Brecht, actors worked on the *Grundgestus* as a preliminary stage, and only after stressing and contextualising it they were they able to develop the social *gestus*.

In *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*, for example, Courage finds out that her daughter is dead and has to follow the army in the last scene. She receives the condolences of the farmers and pays them for her daughter's burial. In the BE performance, Weigel looks at the coins and takes some but not all of them. The fundamental *gestus* of that scene is to take the coins from the bowl and give them to the peasants **(Figure 36)**. However, Weigel takes some minutes, hesitates more than necessary and chooses fewer valuable coins. By doing this, '[e]ven as she displays her character's total personal collapse, Weigel demonstrates once again the basic contradiction between businesswoman and mother that has led to that collapse.'[378]

Figure 36: Mother Courage pays for Kattrin's burial

98 *Mutter Courage zahlt für Kattrins Begräbnis*
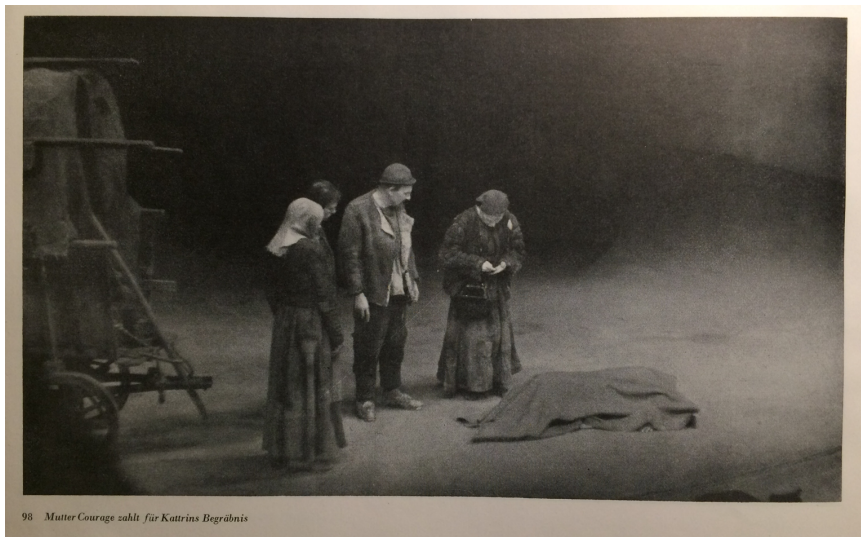
Source: *BFA* 25, p. 297.

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[378] Rouse, "Brecht and the Contradictory Actor", pp. 295–310, here p. 305.

She underlines and exaggerates the fundamental gestus, creating a *gestus* that exists under determined controlled social conditions, contrasting Courage's ambivalence. The *gestus* of fishing coins out from her leather bag shows that (…) 'die Händlerin in all ihrem Schmerz nicht das Rechnen ganz vergißt, da ja das Geld so schwer zu erwerben ist'[379] ('the trader, in all her pain, does not completely forget arithmetic, since money is so difficult to acquire').[380]

Brecht collaborated with the director Erich Engel, and it can be seen that Berlau also contributed with comments on photographs. For example, on the drafts of *Couragemodell 1949* for the following scene **(Figure 37)** Berlau wrote next to the picture 'only now Courage <u>wants</u> to understand that Kattrin is dead'[381]. In underlining the verb 'wants', Berlau stresses Weigel's *gestus* in relation to dealing with her Kattrin's death.

Figure 37: Neher's sketch for *Mutter Courage*.
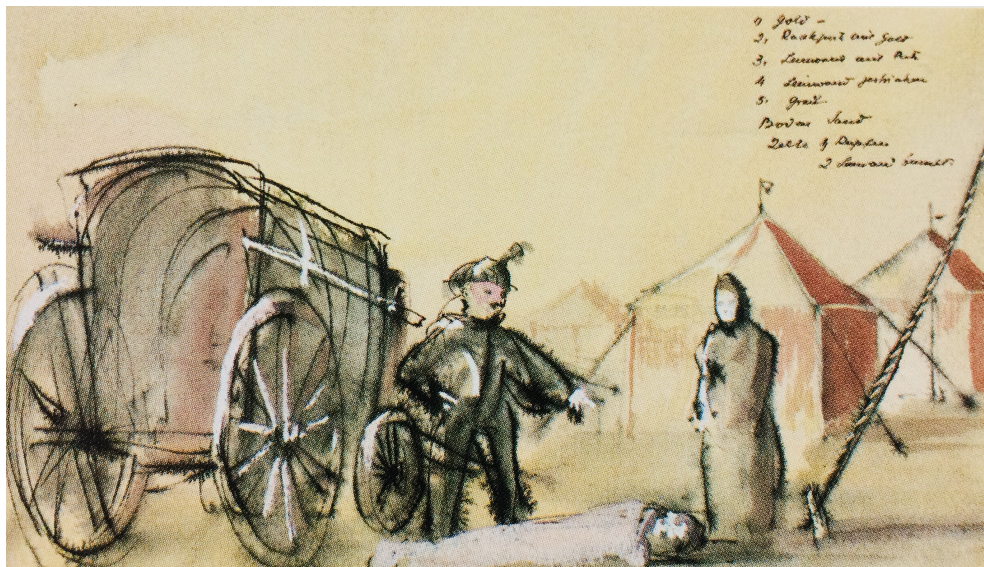
Source: de Ponte, *Caspar Neher and Bertolt Brecht*, fig. 117.

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[379] *BFA* 25, p. 240.
[380] Author translation.
[381] BBA MB 0031 ('erst jetzt <u>will</u> Courge (sic) verstehen daß Katrin (sic) tot ist').

3.1   Walter Benjamin: dialectics as a standstill

In light of Walter Benjamin's dialectical image, this chapter investigates photography in relation to Brecht's *gestus* concept. Benjamin discussed the development of photography and the pioneering spirit of contemporary photographers in numerous essays.[382] A few fragments from *The Arcades Project* and his exposé "Paris, die Hauptstadt des XIX Jahrhunderts 1935" ("Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century") reveal a refined way of reflecting on images: the dialectical image, dialectics at a standstill. Regarding Brechtian theatre, Benjamin's essays "What is Epic Theatre?" (first and second versions) and "Author as a Producer" stand out throughout this chapter.

Benjamin was introduced to Brecht in 1929 by Asja Lacis[383] and they connected intellectually. In a letter to Gershom Scholem,[384] Benjamin says 'You will be interested to know that a very friendly relationship between Bert Brecht and me has recently developed, based less on what he has produced (I know only *The Threepenny Opera* and his ballads) than

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[382] WB *GS* II (1), pp. 368–85, "*Kleine* Geschichte der Photographie" (1931). In English, see also: WB *SW* 2.2, pp. 505–30, "Little History of Photography"; WB *GS* III, pp. 495–507, "Pariser Brief (2): Malerei und Photographie" (1936). In English, see also: WB *SW 3*, pp. 236–48, *"*Letter from Paris (2): Painting and Photography"; WB *GS* III, pp. 542–544, "Gisèle Freund, La photographie en France au dix-neuvième siècle. Essai de sociologie et d'esthétique". Paris: La Maison des Amis du Livre 1936. In English, see also: WB *SW* 4, pp. 120–2, "Review of Freund's Photografie en France au dix-neuvième siècle"; WB *GS* V (1,2) *Das Passagen-Werk*. In English, see also: Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Harvard University Press, 1999.

[383] (1891–1979) Latvian revolutionary female theatre director of proletarian theatre troupes for children and agitprop in Soviet Russia and Latvia. In her first visit to Germany in 1922, she met Brecht and Piscator. In 1924, she met Walter Benjamin; they co-published "Naples", an article in *Frankfurter Zeitung* the following year.

[384] WB *GS* VI.

on the well-founded interest one must take in his present plans'.[385] In the 1930s,[386] the 'deepening friendship with Brecht was an important motivating factor in a good deal of his writing during the years 1930-1933'[387]. Their productive exchanges resulted in an audacious but unrealised plan to publish a new journal to be called *Krisis und Kritik*, with potential contributions from Theodor Adorno, Siegfried Kracauer, Karl Korsch and György Lukács. These exchanges continued in summers spent in Svendborg, where besides playing chess every day after lunch Brecht and Benjamin discussed their writings and ideas. Brecht's house in Skovsbostrand was even home to Benjamin's private library during his exile when he wrote that his books were 'gleichsam das Wetterdach, unter das ich trete, wenn es draußen zu schlimm wird'[388] ('the shelter I step beneath when the weather gets too rough outside'),[389] revealing the despair of those living in a state of exception. Even his books needed a shelter in exile. The 'wichtigere Hälfte'[390] ('more important half')[391] of Benjamin's library was sent to Skovsbostrand from Paris in March 1934, a few months before Benjamin's first summer in

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[385] WB *SW* 2.1, p. 833.

[386] WB *GS* VI.

[387] WB *SW* 2.1, p. 835.

[388] Scholem, Gershom and Walter Benjamin. Briefwechsel. Vol. 1211. Suhrkamp, 1980. (78 – Benjamin an Scholem – Paris XIV, 23, rue Bénard, 24. Oktober 1935.), pp. 207–210, here, p. 209.

[389] Scholem, Gershom and Walter Benjamin. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932–1940.* Harvard University Press, 1992. (78 – Benjamin to Scholem – 23 Rue Bénard, Paris XIV, October 24, 1935), pp. 169–72, here pp. 171.

[390] Hermann Haarmann and Christoph Hesse (organisers). *Briefe an Bertolt Brecht im Exil (1933–1949).* Band 1: 1933–1936. De Gruyter, 2014.

[391] Benjamin, Walter. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940.* Edited and Annotated by Gerschom Scholen and Theodor W. Adorno. Translated by Manfred and Evelyn Jacobson. University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 437 (Letter 232 to Bertolt Brecht from Paris, March 5, 1934.)

Svendborg[392]. In a letter to Brecht, Benjamin asks to be informed immediately about the arrival of the shipment and stated '(…) die Bücher sogleich zu Ihrer Verfügung stehen, brauche ich wohl kaum zu bemerken'[393] ('I hardly need to say that the books are at your disposal').[394] Four photographs of Benjamin remain from the summers in Svendborg; three of them show him playing chess with Brecht and the other, taken by Brecht's son Stefan who was ten at the time, shows Benjamin outside the front door of the house **(Figure 38)**.

Figure 38: Walter Benjamin outside Brecht's house in Skovsbostrand and playing chess with Brecht.

Source: Wizisla, *Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht – The story of a Friendship*, illustrations 15 and 16.

As a result of their close friendship, Benjamin's influence on Brecht's writings is as obvious as Brecht's influence on Benjamin's. They had a profound connection that grew during the summers in Svendborg when 'in den Jahren von 1933 bis 1940 haben Benjamin und Brecht – vor allem durch die ausgedehnten Sommeraufenthalte Benjamins in Dänemark –

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[392] Benjamin spent three summers in Skovsbostrand in 1934, 1936 and 1938.

[393] Hermann, *Briefe an Bertolt Brecht in Exil*, p. 158.

[394] Benjamin, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*, p. 437.

insgesamt gut elf Monate in unmittelbarer Nähe zueinander gewohnt und gearbeitet'[395] ('he and Brecht spent a total of more than eleven months living and working in direct proximity to each other').[396] Berlau also comments in her memories that 'sie verstanden sich auch ohne zu sprechen'[397] ('they understood each other even without speaking').[398] Benjamin's sister, Dora, wrote in a letter to Karl Thieme that

> (…) I have meanwhile seen *Galileo*… I was particularly gripped and moved
> by his way of formulating things, and I believe—probably correctly—that I
> can detect in it the results of my brother's work with Brecht, which was—as
> you presumably know—very intensive for a number of years. During his
> time in Paris, my brother spent several summers with Brecht in Denmark—
> the last was the summer of 38.[399]

According to Müller-Schöll, the *gestus* concept appeared in Brecht's writings almost at the same time Benjamin published his essay on Brecht. Therefore, '(…) the child of two

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[395] Wizisla, Erdmut. *Benjamin und Brecht: Die Geschichte einer Freundschaft*. Suhrkamp, 2004, p. 98.

[396] Wizisla, *Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht – The Story of a Friendship,* p. 55.

[397] Berlau, *Brechts Lai-tu*, p. 105.

[398] Author translation.

[399] Wizisla, *Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht – The Story of a Friendship*, p. 23. In German, see also: Luhr, Geret (ed.). *Was noch begraben lag.* Berlin: Bostelmann & Siebenhaar, 2000. (Dora Benjamin and Karl Otto Thieme – Regensberg, d. 20.IX.43) Pp. 279–80, here 280. ('Ich habe übrigens inzwischen den *Galilei* gesehen. Sie werden Recht haben, daß er unter Ihrem Gesichtspunkt uninteressant ist. Mich hat besonders die Art der Formulierung gepackt und berührt, und ich glaube darin – wahrscheinlich nicht mit Unrecht – noch Folgen der Zusammenarbeit meines Bruders mit Brecht zu erkennen, die ja – wie Sie vermutlich wissen – Jahre hindurch recht intensiv war. Mein Bruder verbrachte mehrere Sommer von Paris aus bei Brecht in Dänemark – zuletzt den Sommer 38.')

fathers'[400] must be differentiated from the simple gesture on the stage. Brecht's concept of social *gestus* only exists when it expresses relationships and marks a kind of surplus, which is the actor's ability to create the *gestus* beyond the simple gesture. In this way, Benjamin's writings contributed to Brecht developing the concept of *gestus*.

Above all, Brecht was mainly interested in *artistic matters*, as he admitted to Benjamin in Svendborg. In *Tagebuchnotizen 1938*[401], Benjamin commented on Brecht's preoccupation that what might work on stage is more important than the seriousness of the work of art. At that time, Brecht was in exile after fleeing the Nazi regime and was under threat of being arrested and killed, like other German writers who opposed Hitler's dictatorship. Therefore, while constantly living in fear, Brecht and Benjamin focused on their productions in relation to the difficulties of being exiled. That conversation started when Brecht remembered the first time the idea of epic theatre came to his mind during a *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England* rehearsal in Munich[402] **(Figure 39)**.

Figure 39: *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England* – Munich Kammerspiele 1924

Source: Schumacher, *Leben Brechts in Wort und Bild*, p. 85.

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[400] Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des Konstrukitven Defaitismus*, here, p. 297. ("(…) das Kind zweier Väter" - Author translation).

[401] WB *GS* VI (2), pp. 532–9. In English, see also: WB *SW* 3, pp. 335–343.

[402] The play opened at the *Munich Kammerspiele* on March 19, 1924.

Brecht kam mit den Soldaten nicht zustande. (Asja [Lacis], seine
Regieassistentin, auch nicht.) Er wandte sich schließlich an den damals ihm
nahe befreundeten [Karl] Valentin, der Probe beiwohnte; er tat es,
verzweifelt, mit der Frage: "Also was ist das, wie steht es eigentlich mit den
Soldaten? was ist denn mit ihnen?" Valentin: "Blaß sind's – Furcht haben's.
"Diese Bemerkung war die entscheidende. Brecht setzte noch hinzu: "müde
sind's. "Die Gesichter der Soldaten wurden dick mit Kalk belegt. Und an
diesem Tage war der Aufführungsstil gefunden.[403]

Brecht was not satisfied with the performance of the soldiers. (Neither was
Asya, his assistant.) He finally turned to Valentin, a close friend in those
days who was present at the rehearsal, and asked him despairingly: "So,
what is it? What's going on with these soldiers? What's wrong with them?"
Valentin: "They're pale, they're afraid." This observation was the decisive
one. Brecht added: "They're tired". He then had the faces of the soldiers
thickly covered with chalk. That was the day Brecht discovered his
performance style.[404]

Some years later,[405] Brecht included an image in his *AJ* **(Figure 40)** that shows German

soldiers with the original caption describing them as tired. However, it can be seen that the

soldiers are, in fact, having a break, eating and freshening up. Possibly, the shock discrepancy

between the photograph and the original caption turned it into research material.

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[403] WB *GS* VI, pp. 532–9, here pp. 534–5.

[404] WB *SW* 3, pp. 335–343, here pp. 337.

[405] On December 3, 1941.

Figure 40: Tired German soldiers

Source: *AJ*, 232.

KF also alludes to the image of tired soldiers. The cover of the book, which makes up plate 61 and the montage, joins the photograph, the original caption, an epigram and a German translation of the caption on the left page. The photograph, taken from *Life*, [406] shows 'the face of the German Army' with tired, wounded and frozen soldiers who used to be the elite troops[407] **(Figure 41)**.

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[406] On February 22, 1943.

[407] *Kriegsfibel,* 61. The original caption states: 'The face of the German Army in Russia now appears frozen, dazed, exhausted of will or pride. There were once crack troops, the terror of the world of 1940 and 1941 but the farther they got into Russia, the less they liked the cold and the ample room to die in. However, as (..) Russians advance westward, the warmer it feels and the more delightful the prospe (…).'

Figure 41: German Army

Source: Brecht, *KF*, plate 61.

Seht unsere Söhne, taub und blutbefleckt

Vom eingefrorenen Tank hier losgeschnallt:

Ach, selbst der Wolf braucht, der die Zähne bleckt

Ein Schlupfloch! Wärmt sie, es ist ihnen kalt.[408]

These are our children. Stunned and bloody faced

Out of a frozen Panzer see them come.

Even the vicious wolf must have a place.

To hide in. Warm them, they are getting numb. [409]

Also, in plate 74, the representation of those montages of photographs and poems raise the

question answered by Karl Valentin in the early 1920s about the tired soldiers.[410]

Oh, hättet ihr, nun für euch selbst zu kämpfen

Ein Zehntel eurer Kraft noch, Kampfesmüde:

Die Welt, in Todes- und Gebärungskrämpfen

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[408] *Kriegsfibel,* p. 61.

[409] *War Primer*, p. 71.

[410] See note 404.

Wär froh, daß sie sich, euch zu schlagen, mühte. [411]

Worn out by battle, if you could only had

Sufficient strength now for yourselves to fight

The world, in death – and birth-pangs, would be glad

It took the pains that led to your defeat.[412]

In *KF*, plate 52 shows a montage of photographs from May 1944 (**Figure 42**). At first, it causes amazement because the soldiers look like they are dead in their graves, but in fact they are taking a nap in their trenches. In a way, they are getting ready for death.

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[411] *Kriegsfibel*, p. 64.

[412] *War Primer*, p. 74.

Figure 42: Dead soldiers
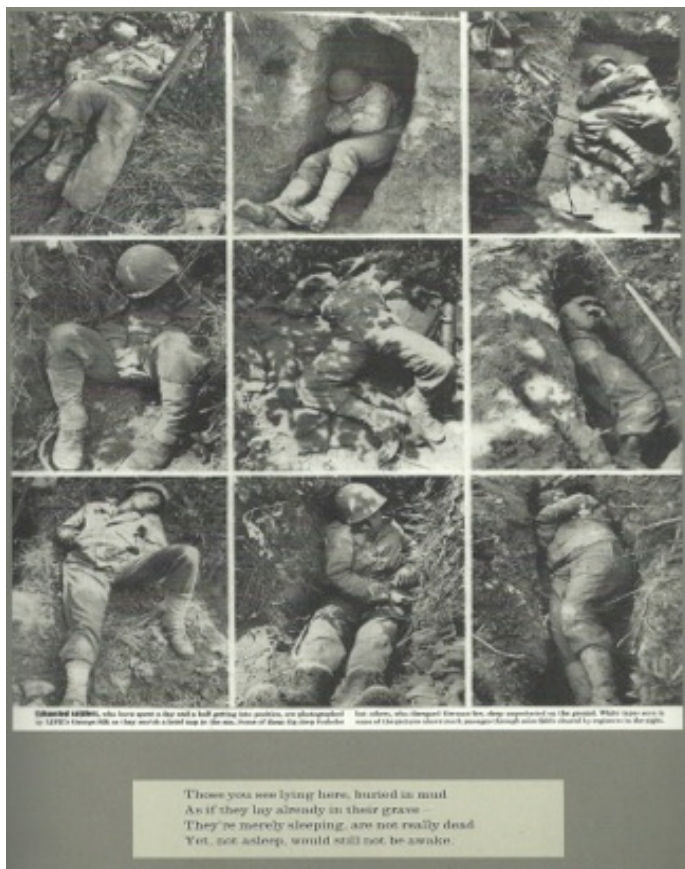
Source: Brecht, *KF*, plate 52.

The epigram says:

Die ihr hier liegen seht, gedeckt vom Kot

Als lägen sie nun schon in ihren Gräbern, ach –

Sie schlafen nur, sie sind nicht wirklich tot.

Doch wären sie, nicht schlafend, auch nicht wach.[413]

Those you see lying here, buried in mud

As if they lay already in their grave –

They're merely sleeping, are not really dead

Yet, not asleep, would still not be awake.[414]

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[413] *Kriegsfibel*, p. 52.
[414] *War Primer*, p. 62.

And the original caption states:

> Erschöpfte Soldaten, die anderthalb Tage dazu gebraucht haben, in Stellung
> zu gehen, sind hier vom LIFE-Reporter George Silk fotografiert, als sie die
> Gelegenheit erhaschen, ein kurzes Schläfchen in der Sonne zu machen.
> Einige von ihnen gruben tiefe Fuchslöcher, aber andere, die sich nicht um
> das deutsche Feuer kümmerten, schlafen ungeschützt auf dem Erdboden.
> Weiße Bänder, auf einigen der oberen Bilder sichtbar, markieren Pfade
> durch Minenfelder, die in der Nacht von Pionieren gesäubert wurden.[415]

> Exhausted soldiers, who have spent a day and half getting into position, are
> photographed by LIFE's George Silk as they snatch a brief nap in the sun.
> Some of them dig deep foxholes but others, who disregard German fire,
> sleep unprotected on the ground. White tapes seen in some of the pictures
> above mark passages through mine fields cleared by engineers in the
> night.[416]

In 'Das Land, in dem das Proletariat nicht genannt werden darf – Zur Uraufführung von
acht Einaktern Brechts',[417] Benjamin praises Brecht's ability to always begin from the
beginning, especially in his *theatre of emigration.* The author points out Epic Theatre's main
unique qualities saying, for example, that '[d]ie berühmte "Peripetie" ist der Wellenkamm,
der, vornüberfallend, zum Ende rollt. Das epische Theater seinerseits rückt, den Bildern des
Filmstreifens vergleichbar, in Stößen vor'.[418] ('the famous "peripeteia" is the crest of the
wave, which topples over as it rolls to its end. Epic theatre moves forward in a different way -

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[415] *Kriegsfibel*, p. 52.

[416] *War Primer*, p. 62.

[417] WB *GS* II (2), pp. 514–8. In English, see also: WB *SW* 3, pp. 330–4, "The Land Where the
Proletariat May Not Be Mentioned – The Premiere of Eight One-Act Plays by Brecht".

[418] WB *GS* II (2), pp. 514–8, here p. 515.

jerkily, like the images on a film strip').[419] Benjamin is actually referencing the concept of interruption, visible in a filmstrip, which is made with a sequence of photographs. Indeed, the very structure of short pieces reinforces the epic style via interruption. Optimistically, Benjamin recognised the development of Brechtian theatre in exile, acclaiming the high value of new ideas.

When the flow of dramatic action is interrupted, there is a reflux, which in Brecht's theatre is a haunting astonishment resulting in the *V-Effekt*. The reason for this astonishment is dialectics in a state of rest, in motionless suspension (not progression). The concept of *gestus*, both for Benjamin and Brecht, was in a constant process of change that led to a fragmentary interpretation of the concept. Brecht found in his theatrical practice and in the use of photography as a constant tool in his creative process a way to refine the concept. According to Hanns Eisler, '"The gestus" is one of Brecht's brilliant discoveries. He discovered it in the same way as Einstein, for example, discovered his famous formula.'[421]

Sean Carney underlines that gestures are 'produced by interruptions, and so for Benjamin, the disruption of action is an integral activity in Brecht's theatre'.[422] In the interrupted flow, one sees the tensions. At each interruption, there is a readily defined *gestus* that represents a definite beginning and end. According to Benjamin,

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[419] WB *SW* 3, pp. 330–333, here p. 331.

[421] Eisler, Hanns et al. *Brecht, Music and Culture: Hanns Eisler in Conversation with Hans Bunge*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014, p. 58 (Conversation 3, May 5, 1958). In German, see also: Eisler, Hanns et al. *Gesammelte Werke. Serie 3. Schriften und Dokumente: Band 7. Gespräche mit Hans Bunge: fragen Sie mehr über Brecht*. Dt. Verlag für Musik, 1975, p. 67. ('*Das Gestische* ist ja eine der genialen Entdeckungen von Brecht. Er hat genauso entdeckt wie der Einstein zum Beispiel die berühmte Formel. ')

[422] Carney, *Brecht and Critical Theory*. Routledge, p. 837.

"Gesten zitierbar zu machen" ist eine der wesentlichen Leistungen des epischen Theaters. Seine Gebärden muß der Schauspieler sperren können wie ein Setzer die Worte. Dieser Effekt kann zum Beispiel dadurch erreichet werden, daß auf der Szene der Schauspieler seinen Gestus selbst zitiert.[423]

"Making gestures quotable" is one of the signal achievements of the epic theatre. An actor must be able to space his gestures the way a typesetter spaces type. This effect may be achieved, for instance, when an actor quotes his own gesture on the stage.[424]

The quotation above highlights that 'gesture, interruption and citability'[425] are the fundamental principles of Epic Theatre. The English term 'citability' is even more appropriate than 'quotable' as a translation of 'Zitierbarkeit', as it means the quality of being citable.

Photography was one of the primary tools Brecht and the actors developed for expressing *citabilities*. The detail expressed by the photograph clearly reveals the essence of the scene through the *gestus*. The photographer's operation and the photograph produced at a specific moment capture the moment to which Benjamin refers as the moment of the interruption.

The interruption of the action is the discovery of the real situation, which is to say to make it alienated. It is the interruption of the context. The following images show the sixth scene from *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* when Kattrin returns to her mother after being attacked on her way back from accomplishing a dangerous task requested by Courage. In this example, the mother's guilt is reflected in her posture, comprising the *gestus*. Kattrin is seated

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[423] WB *GS* II (2), pp. 532–9, here p. 536, "Was ist das epische Theater? (2) ".

[424] WB *SW* 4, pp. 302–7, here p. 305, "What is Epic Theatre? (2)".

[425] Weber, Samuel. "Citability of Gesture". *Benjamin's -abilities*. Harvard University Press, 2009, pp. 95–114, here p. 96.

at a lower level, weakened. Courage asks for no excuse but relieves her regret by giving her daughter a present she always wanted, the red boots. The *gestus* of motherhood in dark times can be analysed using that photograph.[426] The photographs below show the Munich (**Figure 43**) and Berlin (**Figure 44**) *Varianten* from the *MB*.

Figure 43: Therese Giehse as Mutter Courage in Munich.

Source: Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, 345.

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[426] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 345. "Theaterfotografie, eine neue Möglichkeit" ("Theatre Photography, a new possibility"). Here, Berlau highlights the importance of theatre photography for the history of theatre and the role of the photographer. Hildegard Steinmetz, a theatre photographer, took part in several rehearsals before taking 600 pictures of the performance in Munich.

Figure 44: Helene Weigel as Mutter Courage in Berlin.

Source: *BFA* 25, p. 374.

Answering the question 'Was eine Aufführung von *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* hauptsächlich zeigen soll?'[427] in the *Couragemodell*'s *Anmerkungen*, Brecht explained

> [d]aß die großen Geschäfte in den Kriegen nicht von den kleinen Leuten gemacht werden. Daß der Krieg, der eine Fortführung der Geschäfte mit andern Mitteln ist, die menschlichen Tugenden tödlich macht, auch für ihre Besitzer. Daß für die Bekämpfung des Krieges kein Opfer zu groß ist.[428]

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[427] *BFA* 25, pp. 171–7. In English, see also: Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 187–8. "What is a production of 'Mother Courage and her Children' primarily meant to show?"

[428] *BFA* 25, pp. 171–7, here p. 177.

That in wartime the big profits are not made by the little people. That war, which is a continuation of business by other means, makes human virtues fatal even to those who possess them. That no sacrifice is too great for the struggle against war.[429]

Also understood as a shock, interruption and *gestus* act as *V-Effekt* tools, providing the core of Brechtian theatre. Benjamin states in 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte' that '[z]um Denken gehört nicht nur die Bewegung der Gedanken, sondern ebenso ihre Stillstellung. Wo das Denken in einer von Spannungen gesättigten Konstellation plötzlich einhält, da erteilt es derselben einen Schock, durch den es sich als Monade kristallisiert'.[430] (Thinking involves not only the movement of thoughts but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallized as a monad.)[431] Benjamin's messianic standstill in a 'gesättigten Konstellation' is probably what distinguishes his viewpoint from that of Brecht. The richness of this counterpoint is discussed in Müller-Schöll's *Exkurs: Brechts Gesten.*

Wherever Brecht tends to introduce a standing invariant, Benjamin insists on the dialectic image or dialectic at a standstill as the only conceivable (and ultimately unthinkable) invariant. Where Brecht adheres to what is calculable, Benjamin insists on the unpredictable, outrageous or uncanny "over".[432]

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[429] Kuhn, *Brecht on Performance*, pp. 187–8.

[430] WB GS I (2) p. 691–704, here pp. 702–3. "Über den Begriff der Geschichte" (XVII).

[431] WB *SW* 4, pp. 389–411, here p. 396, "*On the Concept of History*".

[432] Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des konstruktiven Defaitismus*, pp. 304–5. ('Wo Brecht dazu tendiert, eine stehende Invariante einzuführen, da insistiert Benjamin auf dem dialektischen Bild oder der Dialektik im Stillstand als der einzig denkbaren (und letztlich auch genau nicht mehr denkbaren) Invariante. Wo Brecht sich an dasjenige hält, was berechenbar ist, insistiert

In *The Arcades Project*, the notes on the dialectical image appear in the essay entitled 'On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress'[433] in which the author affirmed that '[d]as dialektische Bild ist ein aufblitzendes. so, als ein im Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit aufblitzendes Bild, ist das Gewesene feszuhalten'[434] ('the dialectical image is an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash. What has been is to be held fast, as an image flashing up in the now of its recognizability.')[435] The Benjaminian theory of standstill thinking can be perceived, for example, in the observation and even in the decision of the exact moment of the click of a camera. In the *MB*, Brecht applies what can be called the dialectic of mobility when he compares photographs from two different performances of the same play, such as *Mutter Courage* and *Leben Galilei*. In every photograph of the play, his answer can be revealed. Thus, the photographic medium is the *Stillstellung*. Benjamin explained that

> Der Zustand, den das epische Theater aufdeckt, ist die Dialektik im Stillstand. Denn wie bei Hegel der Zeitverlauf nicht etwa die Mutter der Dialektik ist, sondern nur das Medium, in dem sie sich darstellt, so ist im epischen Theater nicht der widersprüchliche Verlauf der Äußerungen oder der Verhaltungsweisen die Mutter der Dialektik, sondern die Geste selbst.[436]

> The conditions which epic theatre reveals is the dialectic at a standstill. For just as, in Hegel, the sequence of time is not the mother of the dialectic but only the medium in which the dialectic manifests itself, so in epic theatre

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Benjamin auf dem unberechenbaren, ungeheuerlichen oder unheimlichen *über*. ' – Author translation).

[433] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, pp. 456–88.

[434] WB *GS* V, pp. 591–2.

[435] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 473.

[436] WB *GS* II (2), pp. 519–31, here p. 530. "Was ist das espische Theater? (I)"

the dialectic is not born of the contradiction between successive statements
or ways of behaving but of the gesture itself.[437]

When Benjamin referred to the *Mutter der Dialektik* as the matrix of a gesture, he affirmed that there is no need for a succession of facts, as there is already contradiction in every *gestus*. Samuel Weber explained that Benjamin designates interruption rather than contradiction as 'the mother of dialectics' and that the character of that interruption, which is the framing (*Umrahmung*) of the gesture, allows the actor to define the beginning and the end of the gesture. Last, the conditions (*Zustände*) emerge and become visible. The leading function of the *visible conditions* is to provide reflection (*Nachdenken*).[438]

Each *gestus* can be observed and analysed independently from the others. This is one of the most important points about the Brechtian *gestus* for Benjamin. In addition, the creation of *gestus* is not only dialectical, but it is at the origin of dialectical thinking. The origin arises from the time. At this point, Benjamin reveals one of his most controversial thoughts, the dialectics at a standstill, which means, a movement that does not move and a movement that is suspended in time. Benjamin's concept of dialectics at a standstill creates not only a contradiction but layers of contradictions. The dialectical thinking of Benjamin also appears in Didi-Huberman's considerations about the silent scream performed by Weigel in *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*. The French author highlighted that besides being immobile, the scream is also silent.

> It appears exactly like a photographed cry or the cry of a statue, that is, as a
> cry shown in its "dialectics at a standstill"; it is a cry that is deliberately
> exposed in its *image*. And that is why the documentary iconographical
> collections created by Bertolt Brecht assume, beyond their historical

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[437] Benjamin, Walter. *Understanding Brecht*. Verso, 2003, pp. 1–13, here p. 12.

[438] Weber. *Benjamin's -abilities*, p. 104.

function, a heuristic aspect destined to resume a theatrical and lyrical approach to the pain of the world.[439]

It is worth remembering Benjamin's reflections about epic theatre in relation to the action itself. Considering that the interruption is the basis for a discovery and investigation of the situation, the medium of photography allows a creative distance to the theatrical process and enhances discussions about the ideas presented by Benjamin. Therefore, photography supports the development of Brecht's gestural theatre. The greater number of interruptions, the closer we get to Benjamin's thoughts when he says that '[i]m übrigen ist das epische Theater per definitionem ein gestisches. Denn Gesten erhalten wir um so mehr, je häufiger wir einen Handelnden unterbrechen. '[440] ('Epic theatre is by definition a gestic theater. For the more frequently we interrupt someone engaged in acting, the more gestures result.'[441])

Samuel Weber highlighted that interruption for Benjamin is at the core of Benjaminian elucidation about the gesture. More specifically, the interruption of the action (and its context) provides the *citability* of the gesture. Thus, the interruption of the scene, expressed by photography, reveals a specific time, which leads the observer to an interpretation of that image based on his or her previous experience. From this interpretation, a dialectical image arises. The dynamics of thought are born from immobility, which means that

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[439] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 158. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 165. ('Mais il se présente alors, exactement, comme un *cri photographié* ou statufié, c'est-à-dire comme un cri montré dans sa 'dialectique à l'arrêt', bref, un cri délibérément exposé dans son *image*. Et c'est pourquoi les collections iconographiques *documentaires* réalisées par Bertolt Brecht revêtent, en plus de leur fonction historique, un aspect heuristique destiné à ressaisir l'approche théâtrale et *lyrique* de la douleur du monde.']

[440] WB *GS* II (2), pp. 532–9, here p. 536, "Was is Epische Theater? (2)".

[441] WB *SW* 4, pp. 302–7, here p. 305. "What is Epic Theatre? (2)"

[D]as epische Theater gibt also nicht Zustände wieder, es entdeckt sie vielmehr. Die Entdeckung der Zustände vollzieht sich mittels der Unterbrechung der Abläufe. Nur daß die Unterbrechung hier nicht Reizcharakter, sondern eine organisierende Funktion hat.[442]

Epic Theatre, therefore, does not reproduce situations; rather, it discovers them. This discovery is accomplished by means of the interruption of sequences. Yet interruption here has the character not of a stimulant but of an organizing function.[443]

This organisation to which Benjamin refers brings the core of epic theatre to the surface; the spectator (or the observer of the photograph) no longer has the option of losing touch with his or her thoughts. There is no place for alienation; it brings the action to a standstill; '[s]ie bringt die Handlung im Verlauf zum Stehen und zwingt damit den Hörer zur Stellungnahme zum Vorgang, den Akteur zur Stellungnahme zu seiner Rolle.'[444] ('it arrests the action in its course and thereby compels the listener to adopt an attitude vis-à-vis the process, the actor vis-à-vis his role.[445])

In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin stated that 'das Zeitmoment im dialektischen Bilde nur mittels der Konfrontation mit einem anderen Begriff ermitteln. Dieser Begriff ist das "Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit"'[446] (the temporal momentum in the dialectical image can be determined only through confrontation with another concept. This concept is the "now of recognisability"'[447]). The lightning bolt of the dialectical image shapes the relationship

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[442] WB *GS* II (2), pp. 683–701, here p. 698, "Der Autor als Produzent".

[443] WB *SW* 2.2, pp. 768–782, here p. 778. "The Author as a Producer" (1934).

[444] WB *GS* II (2), p. 698.

[445] WB *SW* 2.2, pp. 768–782, here p. 778.

[446] WB *GS* V (2), p. 1.038.

[447] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* p. 867.

between image and *gestus*.

3.2   Didi-Huberman: *When images take position*

Georges Didi-Huberman is a French art historian whose research crosses the visual arts, the historiography of art, psychoanalysis, the human sciences and philosophy. The following texts were selected from a long list of publications: *Ce Que Nous Voyons, Ce Qui Nous Regarde*[448], *Images Malgré Tout*[449] and *Quand les Images Prennent Position*[450] and illustrate precisely Didi-Huberman's point of view regarding the image, photography and political discourse via a debate about Brechtian theatre. The author's examination of the relationship between Brecht and his connection with photography was a crucial part of the induction of this research hypothesis:

> Is this not exactly what animates the epic tone of Brecht's words, between poetry and photography, between the written and the stage, between the simplicity of the object shown and the complexity of the montage of objects? Is there not at the same time in Brecht this will to give back to language its imagination (as we can see clearly in the montages in the *Arbeitsjournal*), but also to give back to images their (poetic) speech, their capacity for political address and invocation (as we can see in every plate of *Kriegsfibel*)? Can we not see here the double necessity – a psychological

[448] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*. Minuit, 1992.

[449] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Images Malgré Tout*. Minuit, 2003. In English*,* see also: Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Images in Spite of All - Four Photographs from Aushwitz*. Translated by Shane B. Lillis. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

[450] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Quand les Images Prennent Position.* L'œil de L'Histoire, vol. 1. Minuit, 2009. In English, see also: Didi-Huberman, Georges. *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*. Translated by Shane B. Lilis. RIC Books, 2018.

and a scenic necessity, a necessity specific to the *Darstellung* – of the montages of photographs created by Brecht outside of his poems and plays, which, in this period of exile and war, could not be presented on a visible stage? [451]

When Didi-Huberman asked whether the photographs taken during exile worked as a tool for Brecht that was necessary for the *Darstellung,* the author extended photography to a higher dimension. The montages in the *AJ* and *KF* represent a new way of being a playwright—without a play but full of dramaturgy. The photographs dialogue with the poems, the epigrams and the notes, which is a dramaturgical way of talking about the dark times, the state of exception and about life in exile.

Notably, in *Quand les Images Prennent Position* Didi-Huberman conceptualised the primordial political function of images and discusses their influence on our judgment of political events. Based on Brecht's montages, he investigated the photographic atlas *KF* through mass media photographs collected by Brecht, particularly during his exile. As Didi-Huberman's main concern is to describe the ides that '*seeing* and *being in time* are

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[451] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 170. In French, see also Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, pp. 178–9. ('N'est-ce pas cela exactement qui anime la tonalité épique des œuvres de Brecht, entre poésie et photographie, entre l'écrit et la scène, entre la simplicité de l'objet montré et la complexité du montage d'objets ? N'y a-t-il pas tout à la fois chez Brecht cette volonté de *rendre au langage son imagination* (comme on peut le voir exemplairement dans les montages de l'*Arbeitsjournal*), mais aussi de *rendre aux images leur parole* poétique, leur capacité d'adresse et d'invocation politiques (comme on peut le constater à chaque planche de la *Kriegsfibel*) ? Ne peut-on voir ici la double nécessité – nécessité psychique et scénique, nécessité propre à la *Darstellung* – des montages de photographies réalisés par Brecht en marge de ses poèmes et des pièces de théâtre qui, en cette époque d'exil et de guerre, ne pouvaient être présentées sur une scène visible ?')

inseparable and are even mutually grasped',[452] the images collected by Brecht acquire new meanings. This means that the 'eyes' that look at these images today are different from those in the past. These 'eyes', according to the author, are even able to shift the meaning of the images.

> To montages capable of punctuating for us the apparitions and deformations and that are capable of showing us, in images, *how the world appears*, and *how it is deformed*. It is in this way, by taking position in a given montage, that the different images that make it up – by composing its chronology – can teach us something about our own history – by which I mean something *else*.[453]

Didi-Huberman's concept of 'position' is constructed from the perceptions formed after observing images and that are based on the perceptual identity developed throughout our lives. In other words, the notion is born from experience. Thus, the author assumes that taking a position results from two sides of one's inner voice, the one a person decided to listen and the one a person chose not to listen to. This decision must be assumed consciously, which means that taking a position signifies desiring and demanding something from your present time. Brecht dealt with the images of mass media magazines and therefore their editors' point of view whilst in exile. After observing the images, his position was based on the material

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[452] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, preface, p. xv.

[453] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 251. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 256. ('Aux montages qui savent scander pour nous les apparitions et les déformations : qui savent nous montrer dans les images *comment le monde apparaît, et comment il se déforme*. C'est en cela qu'à prendre position dans un montage donné, les différentes images qui le composent – en décomposant sa chronologie – peuvent nous apprendre quelque chose sur notre propre histoire, je veux dire : *quelque chose d'autre*.')

available during that time. An unavoidable irony is associated with *montage*: a shock between image and epigram. That shock resulted in Brecht's *position* on the war.

The *KF* materialises a representation of Brecht's concept of *Historisierung*[454] (historicisation) when images and epigrams together suggest an anachronism, where present and past coexist to create a new contemporaneity. To be able to *historicise*, one must have a background—memory and knowledge. If a new configuration of the present is created from the past, the *KF* allows us to think and *learn* not only about the war but also about peace. In addition to historicising, readers of *KF* also *learn* how to *distance*, the central concept of Brechtian theatre. According to Didi-Huberman, 'by informing the spectator that what he sees is only an incomplete aspect and not the entire thing',[455] Brecht is 'disposing differences'.[456]

In *Images in Spite of All,* Didi-Huberman chose four photographs taken clandestinely by Jewish prisoners at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration/extermination camp in August 1944 to expand the debate on images of war. In contrast to the majority of photographs in *KF*, these depict an insider point of view. The author narrates the saga of the group of surviving prisoners from the *Sonderkommando,* the ones 'who testify for the dead'[457] and who despite

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[454] *BFA* 22.2, pp. 641–59. See "Kurze Beschreibung einer neuen Technik der Schauspielkuns, die einen Verfremdungseffekt hervorbringt". In English, see also: Silberman, *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 184–95, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting that Produces a Verfremdung Effect".

[455] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 57. In French, see also Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 67. ('… que ce qui'il voit n'est qu'un aspect lacunaire et non pas la chose entire').

[456] Didi-Huberman, Georges. *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 78. In French, see also Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 86. ('… *disposer les différences*.')

[457] Lanzmann, Claude et al. "Seminar with Claude Lanzmann 11 April 1990". *Yale French Studies*, No. 79, 1991, pp. 82–99, here p. 99. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2930247.

already being sentenced to die risked their lives to take photos of people being sent to the gas chambers as a 'project of insurrection'[458]. The photograph, in this case, means the desire to document reality. By capturing the historical event in photographs, the prisoners were also capturing their freedom, as collaborating in the remembrance of the Shoah became the project of their lives. The horror of the photographs would have to convince the world about the Nazi's methods of extermination, which were by any means hidden to create a 'machinery of disimagination'.[459] The *disimagination* comprises not only the attempt to not leave traces and thus to avoid historical judgement but also includes social and cultural misappropriation, such as of language and religion. The negation of the Shoah still exists, and it is a crime. The 'perpetual lie'[460] described by Didi-Huberman starts with the rhetoric associated with the terms Schutzstaffel (SS) and Sonderkommando. In German, Schutzstaffel means a protection squadron and Sonderkommando means a special unit. The Sonderkommando comprised concentration camp prisoners who worked in the gas chambers and who were isolated from the other prisoners in a Sonderbau (special building). Theirs was the most unimaginable work of sending other prisoners to their death and getting rid of the bodies. According to Lanzmann, the Shoah 'is not visible'[461]. He states that no representation is possible because there are no survivors of the gas chambers. His argument is based on the idea that to imagine is not to represent. He admits that the only exception is the Sonderkommando and,

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[458] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, preface, p. xxv.

[459] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, p. 20. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Images Malgré Tout*, p. 30 ('*désimagination*').

[460] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, p. 21. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Images Malgré Tout*, p. 31 ('*... perpétuel mensonge*').

[461] Lanzmann, Claude et al. "Seminar with Claude Lanzmann 11 April 1990". *Yale French Studies*, No. 79, 1991, pp. 82–99, here p. 99. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2930247.

accordingly, they took the photographs that appear in *Images in Spite of All*. According to Judith Butler,

> [T]here are ways of framing that will bring the human into view in its frailty and precariousness, that will allow us to stand for the value and dignity of human life, to react with the outrage when lives are degraded or eviscerated without regard for their value as lives.[462]

The four photographs in *Images in Spite of All* comprise what Didi-Huberman calls a counter-archive, which is a way of resistance. Instead of keeping simple records, the *Sonderkommando* prisoners realised that by photographing other prisoners they could communicate their reality during the Shoah and leave a trace resulting from the act of photographing.

According to Emmanuel Levinas, the notion of a trace concerns that which is not possible to appropriate. It is a way of thinking of *alterity* or *otherness*; it is neither presence nor absence but the space between them that respects the existence of the other and consequently recognises the impossibility of reaching the other. This space or impossibility is an invitation for being responsible for the *Other,* who has already erased the traces. The Levinasian responsibility for the *Other* is expressed by the absence of the archive for Lanzmann and the presence of a counter-archive for Didi-Huberman.

In "The Trace of the Other", the author explained that

> The manifestation of the other is, to be sure, first produced in conformity
> with the way every signification is produced. The other is present in a

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462 Butler, *Frames of War*, p. 77.

cultural whole and is illuminated by this whole, like a text by its context. The manifestation of the whole ensures this presence and this present; they are illuminated by the light of the world.[463]

He stated that the 'abstractness of a face'[464] is the principle of the face itself. Thus, an abstract face cannot appear in a photograph or produce a trace, as it does not exist in the present.

Therefore, the experience of the Shoah produced in recent history an abstract face that appears or does not, nonetheless leaving a trace. The generations following the Shoah are often produced by families of emigrants who did not maintain their familiar Jewish names, resulting in whole generations of Jewish families without their names, as happened to my own family. Exterminating the facts is one of the main perverse characteristics of the Shoah. In this sense, photography can be considered to have been the greatest subversion in Auschwitz, as Didi-Huberman exemplified.

Photography, from this angle, shows a particular ability – illustrated by certain well- or lesser-known examples – to curb the fiercest will to obliterate. It is technically very easy to take a photograph. It can be done for

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[463] Levinas, Emmanuel. "The Trace of the Other". Translated by A. Lingis. *SCRIBD,* pp. 345–59, here p. 351. www.scribd.com/doc/282361898/The-Trace-of-the-Other-Levinas. In French, see also: Levinas, Emmanuel. "La Trace de L'Autre". Tijdschrift voor Filosofie, 25ste Jaarg., Nr. 3 (September 1963), pp. 605–623, here p. 613. Peeters Publishers/Tijdschrift voor Filosofie. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40881053. ('La Manifestation d'Autrui se produit certes, de prime abord, conformément à la facon dont toute signification se produit. Autrui est présent dans un ensemble culturel et s'éclaire par cet ensemble, comme un texte par son contexte. La manifestation de l'ensemble assure cette présence et ce présent. Ils s'éclairent par la lumière du monde.')

[464] Levinas, "The Trace of the Other", www.scribd.com/doc/282361898/The-Trace-of-the-Other-Levinas, p. 354. In French, see also: Levinas, "La Trace de L'Autre", www.jstor.org/stable/40881053, p. 617. ('l'abstraction du visage')

so many different reasons, good or bad, public or private, admitted or concealed, as the active extension of violence or in protest against it, and so on. A simple piece of film – so small that it can be hidden in a tube of toothpaste – is capable of engendering an unlimited number of prints, of generations and enlargements in every format. Photography works hand in glove with image and memory and therefore possesses their notable *epidemic power*. For this reason, photography was as difficult to eradicate in Auschwitz as was memory in the bodies of the prisoners.[465]

The four photographs taken by the prisoners are proof of the concept of 'disobedient traces'. They are the survivors. They represent the traces of history that come to us 'from the time of a flash'[466]—the flash that interrupts the flow of history. In this particular case, it is not only the interruption of the flow of history but also the interruption of life.

Didi-Huberman presents photography in *Ce Que Nous Voyons, Ce Qui Nous Regarde* as a double interruption of the flow discussed by Benjamin and Brecht. The first interruption is the *gestus* performance and the second is the moment of the flash. The observer is

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[465] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, p. 23. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Images Malgré Tout*, pp. 34–5. ('Or, la photographie manifeste, sous cet angle, une aptitude particulière – qu'illustrent certains exemples plus ou moins bien connus – à enrayer les plus farouches volontés de disparition. It est techniquement si facile de prendre une photo. Et on peut le faire pour tant de raisons différentes, bonnes ou mauvaises, publiques ou privées, avouées ou non, en prolongement actif de la violence ou en protestation contre elle, etc. Un simple bout de pellicule – si petit qu'on peut le cacher dans un tube de dentifrice – est capable d'engendrer un nombre illimité de tirages, de générations et d'agrandissements en touts formats. La photographie a partie liée avec l'image et la mémoire : elle en possède donc l'éminent *puissance épidémique*. Elle fut, à ce titre, aussi difficile à éradiquer d'Auschwitz que la mémoire dans les corps des prisonniers.')

[466] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, p. 46. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Images Malgré Tout*, p. 63. ("Du temps d'un *éclair*").

prompted to take a position about what he sees, and at the same time he is seen through the work.

> Benjamin's great lesson, through his notion of dialectical image, was to warn us that the proper dimension of a modern work of art is neither its absolute novelty (as if everything could be forgotten), nor its claim to return to the sources (as if we could reproduce everything). When a work manages to recognize the mythical and memorial element from which it *proceeds* to *overcome* it, when it manages to recognize the present element from which it *participates* to *overcome* it, then it becomes an "authentic image" in Benjamin's sense.[467]

How is it possible to take a position in the present day? In whose interest is it to take a position? In the *fake news* era, are photographs reliable as source of truth? What kind of technological resources working as factories of fake news are available? Are sources such as online magazines and journals, mobile phone cameras and photoshop creations taking a critical position before the reader? How can we *learn* to observe images today? 'In his illustrated primer, Brecht also examined our own capacity to know how to see, today, the documents of our dark history'.[468]

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[467] Didi-Huberman, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde,* pp. 148–9. ('La grande leçon de Benjamin, à travers sa notion d'image dialectique, aura été de nous prévenir que la dimension propre d'une œuvre d'art moderne ne tient ni à sa nouveauté absolue (comme si l'on pouvait tout oublier), ni à sa prétention de retour aux sources (comme si l'on pouvait tout reproduire). Lorsqu'une œuvre parvient à reconnaître l'élément mythique et mémoratif dont elle *procède* pour le *dépasser*, lorsqu'elle parvient à reconnaître l'élément présent dont elle participe pour le *dépasser*, alors elle devient une 'image authentique' au sens de Benjamin.' - Author translation).

[468] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, p. 27. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 37. ('Brecht interroge aussi, dans son abécédaire illustré, notre propre capacité à savoir voir, aujourd'hui, les documents de notre sombre histoire.')

By playing with images, however, Brecht constantly composes effects of interpretation and heterogeneous temporalities, so that he fears neither abyssal regressions towards prehistory nor the dizzying projections into the most unverifiable future. His experimentation with images is the only other way to express his experimentation with current history – his principal object of anxiety – like a sort of game with fate from a position of exile.[469]

Photography was a way Brecht found to express his position artistically during his exile in addition to the plays, poems and writings he produced during the war. Above all, Brecht was a theatre man who found in photography one of his most productive collaborators. The observation and analysis of the *KF*, the *MB* and the *AJ* demonstrate that photography was undeniably *one way* of potent artistic expression.

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[469] Didi-Huberman, *The Eye of History: When Images Take Position*, pp. 239–241. In French, see also: Didi-Huberman, *Quand les Images Prennent Position*, p. 244. ('Mais, en jouant avec les images, Brecht y compose sans cesse des affects d'interprétations et de temporalités hétérogènes, en sorte qu'il ne craint ni les régressions abyssales vers la préhistoire, ni les projections vertigineuses vers le futur le plus invérifiable. Son expérimentation sur les images n'est que l'autre façon de dire son expérimentation sur l'histoire en cours – son principal objet d'angoisse -, sorte de jeu avec le destin depuis sa situation d'exil.')

4   *Gestus* studies

But a photograph is not only like its subject, a homage to the subject.
It is part of, an extension of that subject;
and a potent means of acquiring it, of gaining control over it.

- Susan Sontag*, On Photography.*

During the BE years, Brecht developed a way of working that involved the study of the concepts and techniques—such as *gestus*, interruption and literalisation—developed before and during his years of exile. At the rehearsals, at least two assistants were responsible for taking notes on the rehearsal process. The *Notizen* or *Notate (Notes*) specify the way Brecht worked as a director, sharing his thoughts about the performance of the actors and actresses with assistants during rehearsals and inviting contributions. However, the *Notes* were not enough to achieve his goals. First, the aim was to study each working day and in doing so to improve the following one. Second, Brecht wanted to record his plays as models for himself and other directors and theatre groups. However, the image was missing. The iconographic image, a solution achieved by Berlau, enriched the material in the *Notate* in studying the gestures of the actors, the lighting and the scenery during the rehearsals. It eventually also became a way to conduct field research. Later, the combination of the *Notate* and photography gave rise to both *Theaterarbeit* and most of the *MB*. This chapter presents, compares and analyses some examples of Brecht's experience of examining the concept of *gestus* in rehearsals and field research.

The following examples appear in chronological order. The first example presents two versions of *Leben des Galilei*, the American one performed in 1947 and the one performed in Germany in 1956. They represent the solidification of Brecht and Berlau's creative process of working with photography, as can be seen in the *MB* for the play. After the end of his exile,

Brecht started planning the organisation of his working material into the *MB*. When he came back to Germany in 1952, *Der Zerbrochene Krug* was evidence of the relevance of photography in Brechtian theatre. In the following year, *Katzgraben* featured material that included photography and notes. In 1954, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* points the way to cohesion between photography and theatrical creative process, strengthening what could be called a pioneering method of working in the theatre.

The process of working with actors adopted by Brecht was very intensive, even when he only appeared as a collaborator or a supervisor in a BE production. Hans Curjel, the director of Stadttheater Chur where Brecht premiered *Antigone* in 1948, stated that

> Brecht did not possess the physical predispositions of an actor, but he could say exactly what he wanted to hear and see in the actors, and he could present it with what were, so to speak, not acting gestures. He sounded the things he wanted to get into.[470]

According to the actress Angelika Hurwicz, 'Brecht is a great methodologist and pedagogue'[471]. The actress—who played some of the most important parts in BE's productions in the 1950s, such as Kattrin in *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (1949), Brigitte in *Der Zerbrochene Krug* (1952), Frau Perez in *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar* (1953),

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[470] *Bertolt Brecht - Gespräch auf der Probe*. Galerie Sanssouci, 1961, p. 12 ('Brecht besaß nicht die körperlichen Veranlagungen eines Schauspielers, aber konnte genau sagen und mit gleichsam unschauspielerischen Gesten darstellen, was er schauspielerisch zu hören und zu sehen wünschte. Er tönte die Dinge an, auf die er hinaus wollte' - Author translation).

[471] BBA 2130/56. Interview by Angelika Hurwicz on November 6, 1955 (Berlin) *Brechts Arbeit mit dem Schauspieler* – The clipping (unknown source) is illustrated with a rehearsal photograph (see **Figure 53**). ('Brecht ist ein großer Methodiker und Pädagoge' - Author translation.)

Gruscha in *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* (1954), the Kleinbäuerin in *Katzgraben* (1953) and Frau Sarti in *Leben des Galilei* (1957)—remembered that

he replaces an emphasis with a gesture, a gesture with a pause, a look with a clearing of the throat, etc. In this way, Brecht trains actors to be precise, to take responsibility for their role and the whole play without oppressing them.[472]

In Peter Palitzsch's notes on *Mutter Courage*,[473] for example, it can be seen that the work of the collaborators was also carried out based on the observation and analysis of the photographs. The notes present a writing style based on photograph analysis and comment on 'Gruppierungen'[474] 'Bühnentemperament'[475] and 'der Durchführung eines starken theatralischen Gedanke der Weigel'.[476] The notes were a result of observing stage rehearsals stage and rehearsal pictures. They start with 'Die Bilder … zeigen …' ('The pictures … show…'), searching for a narrative that belongs to photography instead of theatre performance. One could argue that the photograph reveals the gestus through the interruption inherent to the medium. For example, Palitzsch commented that

In pictures 46/25 - 28 Courage stretches herself in front of the covered wagons. Weigel shows how such professional tasks are carried out in

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[472] BBA 2130/56. ('Er ersetzt eine Betonung durch eine Geste, eine Geste durch eine Pause, einen Blick durch ein Räuspern, usw. So erzieht Brecht Schauspieler zur Genauigkeit, zur Verantwortung ihrer Rolle und dem ganzen Stück gegenüber, ohne sie zu vergewaltigen. ' – Author translation).

[473] BBA 2130.

[474] BBA 2130/74. ('Groupings' – Author translation).

[475] BBA 2130/71. ('Stage temperament' – Author translation).

[476] BBA 2130/72. ('Weigel's strong theatrical thought' – Author translation).

phases that have been tried and tested for a long time, first this movement,
then that movement, etc. In her gesture something of that terrible
indestructibility of man comes to light which allows such great crimes of
other men against her.[477]

4.1 *Leben des Galilei*

There are three versions of *Leben des Galilei*; the first version was written during

Brecht's Danish exile in Svendborg in1938–9 and was titled *Leben des Galilei* (based on the

draft titled *The Earth Moves)*; the second is the English adaptation written in 1947 by Charles

Laughton titled *Galileo*; and the third was written in collaboration with Margarete Steffin in

1955–6. The play is set in the seventeenth century and recounts the life of Galilei, a

mathematics professor who wishes to demonstrate that new laws of the universe—for

example that the Earth revolves around the sun—must be accepted despite political and

religious resistance. Galilei is judged and condemned by the Inquisition for heresy and is

obliged to renounce his discoveries and beliefs. After his resignation, he is placed under

house arrest and secretly writes his famous book *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*.[478]

According to Fernando Peixoto, the play is about

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[477] BBA 2130/73. ('Auf den Bildern 46/25 – 28 spannt sich die Courage vor den Planwagen.
Die Weigel zeigt, wie solche beruflichen Verrichtungen in lang ausgeprobten Phasen gemacht
werden, erst dieser Handgriff, dann jene Bewegung usw. In ihrem Gestus tritt etwas von jener
schrecklichen Unzerstörbarkeit des Menschen zu Tage, die so große Verbrechen anderer
Menschen an ihm erlauben'. - Author translation).
[478] Galilei, Galileo. *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*. Translated by Henry Crew and
Alfonso de Salvio. Cosimo, 2010.

the behaviour of the intellectual before a repressive society: his meaning as a man, the purpose of his actions, the consequence of his concessions and commitments to power, what an abjuration can mean for the victory of truth or what services it provides to the diffusion of the lie, the analysis of an ethics and a moral not metaphysically studied, but directly linked to certain historical moment, which determines, in turn, the meaning of his options and the understanding of the essential and the demands of this reality.[479]

Leben des Galilei (Life of Galileo) rehearsals in the US lasted more than two years. Brecht and Laughton did not speak each other's language, so the rehearsals aimed to 'translate the gestures'[480] instead of translating the text. According to Brecht, Laughton's work in rehearsals was so productive that analysis of the photographs would become useless. 'No image reflects the simplicity and elegance with which L. carried out the small experiments with the floating piece of ice in the copper tub'.[481] There is a photograph of this scene in the *MB* for *Galilei*[482] **(Figure 45)**.

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[479] Peixoto, Fernando. *Brecht, vida e obra*. Paz e Terra, 1974, p. 175. ('o comportamento do intelectual diante de uma sociedade repressiva: seu significado como homem, o sentido dos seus atos, a consequência de suas concessões e compromissos com o poder, o que uma abjuração pode significar para a vitória da verdade, ou que serviços presta à difusão da mentira, a análise de uma ética e de uma moral não estudada metafisicamente, mas sim diretamente vinculada a um momento histórico determinado, que determina, por sua vez, o sentido de suas opções e a compreensão da essencial e das exigências desta realidade.' – Author translation).

[480] *BFA* 25, p. 12. ('Gesten übersetzen' - Author translation).

[481] *BFA* 25, p. 45–6. ('Kein Bild vermag die Leichtigkeit und Eleganz widerzugeben, mit der L. die kleinen Experimente mit dem schwimmenden Eisstück in der Kupferwanne vollführte' - Author translation).

[482] *BFA* 25, p. 46.

Figure 45: Laughton's Galilei – Scene 9

Source: *BFA* 25, p. 46.

Another remarkable example of the use of photography during the creative process

occurs in Scene 14 titled *Das Lachen*[483] **(Figure 46)**. Due to Brecht and Laughton's fruitful

relationship, Brecht dedicated a photograph to exemplify an evident mistake, proving

Berlau's theory that even from bad photographs there is something to be learned. This is an

example of Brecht complaining that the *wrong* gestus effect, namely a laugh, was produced.

He made it clear that the laughter 'was not provoked by the text, and it was terrible'.[484] In the

scene, when Galileo's former favourite pupil Sarti reports that he is back in a shop grinding

lenses, Galileo answers that he would not read the books without knowing Latin. At this

point, Laughton laughs and Brecht reacts, arguing that

> In this laughter there is no bitterness against society, which reserves science
> as a secret to the wealthy, but a highly lascivious mockery of the inadequate

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[483] *BFA* 25, p. 59–61.

[484] *BFA* 25, p. 59. ('war durch den Text nicht provoziert, und es war schrecklich' - Author
translation).

Federzoni and a bold agreement with his degradation: this is simply (and completely) explained by his inadequacy![485]

Figure 46: Laughton's laugh – Scene 9.

Source: *BFA* 25, p. 60.

Whilst Brecht was working in Zurich, 'Ruth fotografierte und filmte alles, so können sie in N.Y. zurechtkommen ohne mich'.[486] ('Ruth photographed and filmed everything, so they can manage in New York without me').[487] Occasionally, Brecht compared photographs from California to those from New York, explaining which were the best to be observed in

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[485] *BFA* 25, p. 61. ('In diesem Lachen ist jedoch nicht etwa Bitterkeit gegen die Gesellschaft, welche die Wissenschaft als eine geheime den Vermögenden vorbehält, sondern ein höchst lasziver Spott über den unzulänglichen Federzoni und ein freches Einverständnis mit seiner Degradierung: diese erklärt sich einfach (und vollständig) aus seiner Unzulänglichkeit!' - Author translation.)

[486] *BFA* 29, p. 422. (Letter to Ferdinand Reyher, Santa Monica, September 1947)

[487] Brecht, *Letters*, pp. 426–7, here p. 426.

each scene. For example, regarding Scene 12 Brecht said that 'this and the following is best seen in pictures of the Californian performance').[488] There are also several photographs of astronomical apparatuses for the theoretical research **(Figure 47)**.

Figure 47: Photos of *Galilei*'s theoretical research
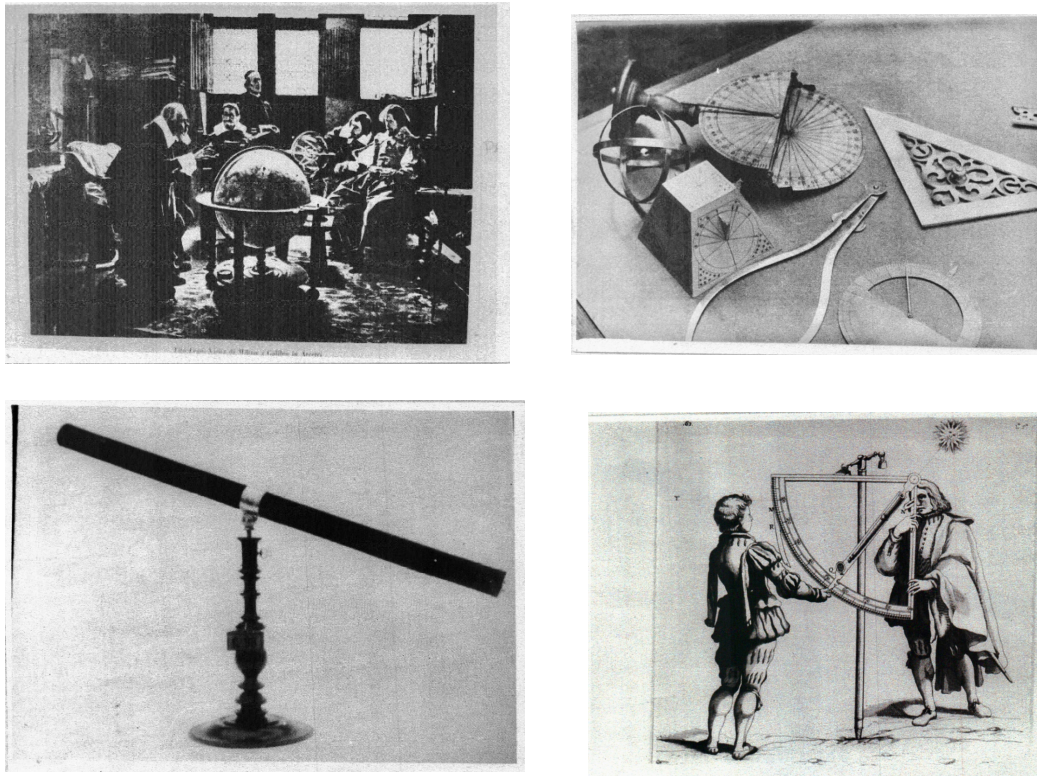
Source: BEA.

The last example shows Brecht a few days before his death in 1956 rehearsing the German version[489] of *Leben des Galilei* with Ekkehard Schall **(Figure 48)**. The original photograph[490] shows the whole stage. The photographer also captured Busch as Galileo during

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[488] *BFA* 25, p. 56. ('dies und das Folgende ist am besten auf Bildern der kalifornischen Aufführung zu sehen' - Author translation).

[489] Premiere on January 12, 1957.

[490] BBA FA 11/197.

the same rehearsal day a few months before his death, when Erich Engel took over the direction of the play.

Figure 48: Brecht and Ekkehard Schall rehearsing *Leben des Galilei*

Source: *Leben Brechts*, p. 340. Photographer: Gerda Goedhart.

In the photograph above, Brecht is most probably rehearsing the first scene of the play, where Galileo and Andrea have a conversation in his study at home in Padua.[491] In the photograph we can assume that Schall is playing his character, Andrea, and Brecht is playing Busch's part of Galileo. Andrea is bringing a book to Galileo, and we can see the blackboard Galileo uses to give private lessons and to study.

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[491] Scene 1: Studienzimmer in Padua.

4.2   *Der Zerbrochene Krug*

The following example shows Brecht on stage, even though the production was not directed by him. **Figure 49** shows Brecht with Regine Lutz in *Der Zerbrochene Krug* directed by Therese Giehse at the BE. It premiered on January 23, 1952.

Figure 49: Brecht and Regine Lutz in *Der Zerbrochene Krug* (1952): rehearsal photographs

Source: Hecht, Werner. *Bertolt Brecht 1989–1956 – Zeit Leben Werk.* 1978. Poster 35. Photograph: Hainer Hill.

In the figure above, the sequence of photographs taken by Hill[492] shows Brecht working on stage with Regine Lutz, who played the part of country girl Eve Rull in *Der Zerbrochene Krug*. First published in 1811, the play is a comedy adapted by the BE from Heinrich von Kleist and makes reference to the idea of temptation (and corruption) in Paradise, inhabited by Adam and Eve. In the central plot line, a trial in an eighteenth-century village, a parallel between a jug and Eve's chastity becomes clear. Whilst the audience knows since the beginning that Adam (who also plays the Judge) is guilty of stealing Eve's chastity, Eve keeps the secret until she feels that her real love, Ruprecht, is being threatened by the jury.

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[492] Wekwerth, *Brecht auf der Probe*, pp. 14–18.

In the photographs above, Brecht is likely highlighting the importance of the gestus of the scene in which Eve refuses to say who broke the jug. She lies, and the audience knows it; therefore, her lie must sound genuine. Giehse was accused by Brecht of not constructing the *Fabel* properly, so he took over the direction in favour or the *gestus* development and '(…) applied the dialectical method to the comedy and had his actors rehearse from the social point of view by developing a Gestus for each figure and a series of active and reactive *Haltungen*'.[493]

4.3   Katzgraben

Katzgraben, written in 1953 by Erwin Strittmatter, premiered at the BE in the same year[494], and was directed by Brecht[495]. Aiming to feature a GDR literary talent and introduce a comic tradition, the play arose as a response to the pressure the Ensemble suffered for denying the Stanislavskian method. The play is set in Katzgraben, a fictional small countryside village, and discusses economic conflicts there. The plot is built on the debate surrounding the construction of a road to a neighbouring town, which would bring prosperity to one part of the population and losses to the other part.

The notes and photographs in *Katzgraben* exemplify Brecht's rehearsal process. Ruth Berlau and Hainer Hill were responsible for taking photographs, whereas other assistants, actors and the author, Erwin Strittmatter, were expected to make notes. The *Katzgraben-Notate 1953* were published in 1994 in *BFA*, volume 25. However, it was done so without the photographs, which were not yet published. Some of the notes remain unpublished and

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[493] Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, p. 160.

[494] On May 23, 1953. Music by Hanns Eisler and scenography by Karl von Appen.

[495] Manfred Wekwerth as a director assistant.

available in the BBA and the BEA, as well as the unfinished MB for *Katzgraben*.[496] The

material differs from the published *MB* because the photographs were taken during the

rehearsals[497] as opposed to during performances. There are so many photographs that when

put together it seems like a filmed version of the play. In fact, the film *Katzgraben* was shot

by Manfred Wekwerth according to the world premiere version at the BE in 1957. The huge

album containing 359 beige cardboard pages with a sophisticated beige fabric cover holds

photographs with different shapes and orientations, some with the typewritten text of the play

glued under the image, some without comments and some with stage directions and lines of

text. The dimensions of the photographs differ (17.0 cm x 10.5 cm / 17.0 cm x 8.5 cm / 16.0

cm x 5.5 cm / 7.5 cm x 7.0 cm / 3.0 cm x 6.5 cm), transmitting once again a cinematographic

dynamic.

In addition to the many photographs taken during rehearsals, field research

photographed by Berlau occurred in 1952 and lasted three weeks. Strittmatter joined the

Ensemble on the trip to the Lusatian (Slav–German) village where he grew up, as recorded in

his biography.[498] After extensive field research with Strittmatter, Brecht rehearsed *Katzgraben*

(Figure 50), which was according to Brecht '(…) das Erste Stück, das den modernen

Klassenkampf auf dem Dorf auf die deutsche Bühne bringt'[499] ('the first play that brings the

modern class struggle in the village to the German stage').[500] Brecht's worries during the

rehearsals mainly concerned the interpretation of the big farmer's role. He explained to the

actors that the character looked ridiculous and that most importantly, he did not have the

necessary credibility for someone who is leading a class struggle, which was the *gestus*

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[496] BBA MB 0057.

[497] From May 23, 1953 until April 26, 1955.

[498] Leo, Annette. *Erwin Strittmatter: Die Biographie*. Aufbau, 2012, p. 443.

[499] *BFA* 24, p. 437.

[500] Author translation.

considered during the rehearsal. In the following photograph, Brecht has his arms raised, demonstrating his reaction to the actors: 'Aus dem Schuldenzahlen muß ein großer historischer Vorgang werden'[501] ('The debt figures must become a great historical event').[502]

Figure 50: Erwin Geschonneck (Großmann), Friedrich Gnaß (Kleinschmidt), Bella Waldritter (Frau Mittelländer), Gerhard Bienert (Mittelländer) and Brecht during a *Katzgraben* rehearsal at the BE (1953).

Source: Hecht, *Helene Weigel*, p. 215. Photograph: Hainer Hill.

In addition to this, the Hainer Hill Archive[503] contains a part of a sequence of five photographs (including **Figure 50**) taken during the rehearsal.[504] Three show Brecht with his

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[501] Hecht, *Helene Weigel*, p. 215.

[502] Author translation.

[503] In Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

[504] Hainer Hill Archive (Hill 0014_002 until 005).

hands raised, one depicts Weigel showing only her head through the stage curtain and one shows Brecht on stage with several people through in front of the curtain.

It is possible to see in the *Katzgraben-Notate 1953* the collaborative working method of discussing before and after each scene and each rehearsal. Every contribution of Brecht's team was seriously considered and tested. The final decision was always made by Brecht only after rehearsing all possibilities in a collaborative way. After one rehearsal, Berlau commented on Angelika Hurwicz's[505] blocking, and the actress agreed that Berlau's observation would benefit the photographic image, although not necessarily the creative process of the scene. Berlau stated that 'what is good for the photographic image is good,[506] and Brecht experimented with ideas on stage, concluding that '(…) die Szene tatsächlich gewinnt, und weitere psychologische Erörterungen werden überflüssig'[507] ('the scene actually wins, and further psychological discussions become superfluous').[508]

The field research extensively photographed **(Figure 51)** by Berlau and Hill in 1952 played a unique role in his discussions during rehearsals. Coexisting with people from the village and studying the photographs taken at that time allowed the director to elaborate most of the *Katzgraben Notes*. In the following image, both director and author can be seen as they visit the machine rental area at Eichwege station.

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[505] *BFA* 25, p. 422 on April 2, 1953. Hurwicz played the role of the small farmer (Kleinbäuerin).

[506] *BFA* 25, p. 422. ('[w]as für das fotografische Bild gut ist, ist eben gut' - Author translation).

[507] *BFA* 25, p. 422.

[508] Author translation.

Figure 51: Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Strittmatter in Lausitz

Source: Hecht, *Bertolt Brecht 1989–1956 – Zeit Leben Werk.* 1978. Poster 37. Photograph:

Angela Hanschke

4.4   *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

Written while in exile in the US (1944–1945), *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* is inspired

by a Chinese fable, analogous to Solomon's Judgement in the Bible. The fable is about a

governor who lives with his wife and their young son, Michael. Suddenly, the city is attacked

in a political coup by Fat Prince and the governor and his family must quickly flee, taking

their material possessions but forgetting Michael. Gruscha, the maid, finds the child and

decides, despite everyone's warnings, to take the children to the mountains where her brother

lives. After a difficult journey, Gruscha finds her brother's house but is forced to marry a

dying man in order to avoid the criticism of being a single mother. A few years later, Gruscha

and Michael are captured, taken to the city and brought to trial. During the trial, the judge

places Michael in a circle between two women, each of whom claim to be his real mother.

The woman who pulls the child out of the circle to her side should keep him. Twice the wrong

mother wins. She pulls the child unerringly and mercilessly, whilst the real mother fears

hurting him and therefore lets him go. This is how the judge recognises Gruscha, the kitchen

maid, as the legitimate mother and legally responsible for Michael.

Figure 52 illustrates a rehearsal of *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* (which, uncommonly,

lasted for eight months) and shows Brecht's intention to preserve 'Die Auswahl der Einzelnen

Elemente (1937–38)'[509] regarding details of the third scene in which the character of Gruscha

risks her life for the child by hiding him from Fat Prince and his soldiers and then running

away.[510]

Figure 52: Brecht and Angelika Hurwicz rehearsing *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*
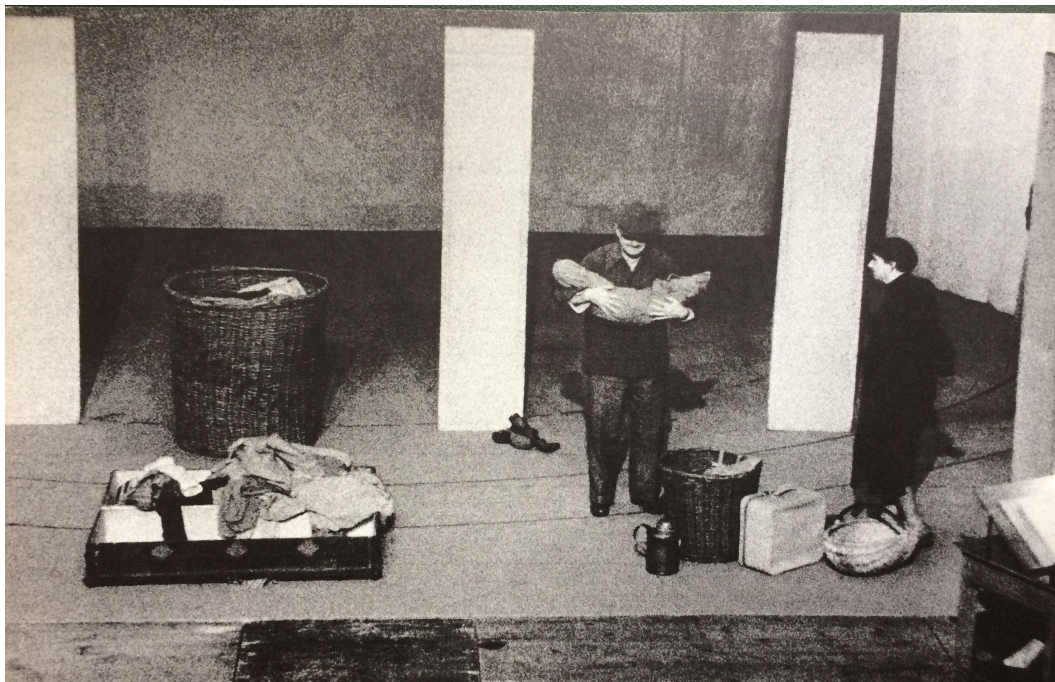
Source: *Brecht auf der Probe*, 24. Photograph: Horst E. Schulze.

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[509] *BFA* 22.1, pp. 251–4. ('The Selection of the individual Elements').

[510] See also photographs from the *MB* for *Kaukasiche Kreidekreis*. BBA MB 0061. Premiere
on October 7, 1954. Photographs from premiere until December 22, 1958.

Hurwicz was asked to 'show' togetherness instead of being satisfied with Gruscha's statement 'We belong together'. The actress reported that 'several postures were tried out, culminating in the clumsy, overly clear positioning of the infant on the chest.'[511] She explained that Brecht often arranged certain turning points of the plot separately. Later it was difficult to establish the connection with the rest of the arrangement.[512] The *gestus* of togetherness appears in Goedhard's photographs organised in the *MB* for *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* (1954)[513] **(Figure 53)**, in which Brecht's introduction explains that

> All recordings were used. The photographs were pasted in the order of the scenes - roughly following the course of the action. When numbering the images, the film number appears before the slash, followed by the image number on the film. In some cases, which were each indicated, it was taken into account that a role was played by different actors.[514]

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[511] Hurwicz, *Brecht Inszeniert,* preface. ('Man probierte mehrere Haltungen aus, geriet bis zum plumpen, überdeutlichen An-die-Brust-Legen des Säuglings' – Author translation).

[512] Hurwicz, *Brecht inszeniert, preface.* ('Oftmals arrangierte Brecht bestimmte Drehpunkte der Handlung gesondert. Später war es schwierig, den Zusammenhang mit dem übrigen Arrangement herzustellen. ' – Author translation)

[513] BBA MB 0059.

[514] BBA MB 0059 (a huge album with 83 pages with four photographs each page). Photographs from October 7, 1954 until December 22, 1958. ('Es wurden sämtlichen Aufnahmen verwendet. Die Bilder wurden in der Reihenfolge der Szenen eingeklebt – etwa dem Ablauf der Handlung folgend. Bei der Nummerierung der Bilder steht vor dem Schrägstrich die Filmnummer, dahinter die auf dem Film vorhandene Bildnummer. In einigen Fällen, die jeweils bezeichnet sind, wurde berücksichtigt, daß eine Rolle von verschiedenem Darstellen gespielt wurde. ' - Author translation)

Figure 53: Angelika Hurwicz as Gruscha in *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

Source: Hurwicz, *Brecht Inszeniert*

The decision to save the child takes some time—more than expected in such a risky situation—and is expressed through a sigh by Hurwicz. After making the decision, Gruscha must be careful with their lives. She bundles Michael up in a clumsy way, as she lacks the experience of motherhood. However, in this scene while deciding whether to save Michael or not, the mother is born and instead of nine months Gruscha has only a few minutes.

Cutting the scene into small independent frameworks allowed a detailed analysis, which is a crucial point vis-à-vis the concept of *gestus*. In other words, it would be almost impossible to point out the relevant relationship between the characters without analysing the

details 'so that such details do not appear naturalistic, they must be played in an almost blatantly obvious, realistic manner'.[515]

The complexity of the *gestus* was at the forefront of Brecht's work as a director. The many photographs showing Brecht on stage with the actors reflects his concern with searching that *gestic* domain. According to Carl Weber, '(…) Brecht instructed his actors to develop it by careful attention to all the contradictions to be discovered in the actions and verbal text of the role'.[516] There are, in fact, several photographs showing Brecht side by side with the actors during rehearsals to ensure the actors were making their gestures quotable. Five photographs from the 1950s were chosen to exemplify Brecht's work in East Germany where the playwright was 'fighting not just against a National Socialist ideology that continues to exert power but also, less obviously but ultimately of higher priority, against a new ideology that is no less powerful'.[517]

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[515] Weigel, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 298. 'Das Modellbuch zeigt die Behandlung von Details'. ('damit solche Details nicht naturalistisch wirken, müssen sie fast überdeutlich, realistisch gespielt werden' - Author translation).

[516] Weber, "Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble", pp. 167–84, here p. 182.

[517] Müller-Schöll, "The Castrated Schoolmaster: Brecht, *The Tutor*, and Lenz", pp. 67–82, here p. 71.

Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to examine the notion of *gestus* through a photographic analysis. To that end, Brecht's involvement with photography had to be analysed. Four chapters were presented, aiming to contextualise and discuss that connection. The first chapter is an overview of photography based on Moholy-Nagy and Freund's framings to situate the research historically. The second chapter comprises an account of how Brecht related to photography and explores the crucial differences and similarities among the *MB*, *Theaterarbeit* and *KF*. These are undoubtedly the main *characters* of this study. They are the pieces of evidence that guide the formulation of the hypothesis of this study. After studying the photographs and understanding Brecht's relationship with them, it was possible to discuss in the third chapter why Brecht's involvement with photography was useful for the development of theatre concepts. The fourth chapter links analyses of four performances to the study of *gestus*.

Considering the existing, this research is relevant due to questions about Brecht's relationship with photography being innovatively discussed based on the concept of *gestus*. Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this study which is to examine photographs from the perspective of the politics of images based on research on the Brechtian concept of *Gestus*; it is now possible to state that photography paves an exciting path for further concepts related to Brechtian theatre. Dramaturgy would also be a starting point for further research on this topic. Unfortunately, the plays mentioned were not specified instead of analysed, making the research incomplete. This could be considered one of the main limitations of the study. The plays cited—*Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*, *Lebens Galilei* and *Antigone*—deserve dramaturgical research to deepen the discussion of their relationship with photography.

This work reveals that existing studies discuss Brecht's relationship with photography but do not necessarily connect it with the study of *gestus*. The approach therefore has the potential to suggest that other concepts related to the Brechtian theatre, such as *V-Effekt* and the theory of the *Lehrstücke*, can be strengthened using the perspective of photographic analysis. The choice of working on Brechtian theatre through photography can be understood by researchers as a tool to *re-think* Brechtian theatre. The research conducted at both the BEA and the BBA opened the way for new areas of questioning and expanding the initial hypothesis. The last chapter, for example, arose from one of the last demands of this research: to explore the existing rehearsal photographs in the archives. With particular reference to the *MB*, this research exposes the necessity of a broad interpretation of all the material and not just the published material.

A work written in English about Brecht and Benjamin means there will be translation issues. As a Brazilian researcher, the comparison between original texts and their versions in other languages was unavoidable. Acknowledging that the birth of the project research occurred based on the translated versions of the materials, it can be affirmed that a re-organisation took place in order to deal with both points of view. This means reading the original language without losing the critical view of the translations and more importantly acknowledging the possible misunderstandings that may have arisen due to the differences between Portuguese and German. Therefore, starting from a completely different standpoint, this study occasionally uses *re-translations* in an attempt to propose alternative meanings. Brecht's works are included in every university programme in Brazil mainly because of Fernando Peixoto's translations and are hugely relevant to Theatre Studies. Augusto Boal[518], who read the *translated* Brecht, founded the *Theatre of the Oppressed* in the 1970s and admitted that 'Brecht is and has been linked to my work in many moments of my life, and in

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[518] 1931–2009.

many important respects'[519]. Since Boal's years in exile, *Theatre of the Oppressed* has spread

all over the world. Centres have been founded in more than 70 countries and thus a

postmodern Brecht appears as part of a renewal process. Hans-Thies Lehmann reminds us that

translating 'crosses not only the boundaries of language but also those between cultures and

genres, (so) we are confronted with a sort of translation in the broadest sense of the term –

Übersetzung as Über-Setzen, carrying over'.[520] Thus, this work opens two possibilities for the

Brechtian field—either to break new ground in Brechtian studies produced in the English

language or to rearticulate the German Brechtian narrative. Research on German theatre from

the perspective of a Brazilian scholar could yield unique results, as in the field of scientific

research cultural background is a definite factor affecting the results. In this way, language is

absorbed and exceeded into a bridge for scientific research. A relationship of dependence is

replaced by one of productivity.

Brecht also faced translation issues, particularly as a writer who adapted plays from

other languages, such as *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England (The Life of Edward II of*

England) from English and *Antigone* in Hölderlin's German version from the Greek. While in

Denmark in exile, for example, Brecht wrote *Svendborger Gedichte* (1938) in German;

however, it took almost 80 years until it was translated into Danish by Hans Christian

Nørregaard. The translation, *Svendborgdigte* (2017),[521] resulted in a performance directed by

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[519] In a letter to Marc Silberman from August 13,1997.

https://institutoaugustoboal.org/2016/09/16/carta-para-marc-silberman-sobre-brecht-em-1977/

('Brecht está e esteve ligado ao meu trabalho em muitos momentos da minha vida, e em

muitos aspectos importantes"- Author translation) (last accessed on July 10, 2018)

[520] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. "Brecht Translating/Translating Brecht". Translated by Marc

Silberman and Steve Giles. *Das Brecht-Jahrbuch: Recycling Brecht 42*. Edited by Tom Kuhn

et al. Camden House, 2018, pp. 1–18.

[521] Publishing Multivers.

Petra Leonie Pichler from the *Augsburg Kollektiv Bluespots* together with the Danish composer Søren Huss and Baggård Teatret (Svendborg).

The analysis of contemporary theatre productions was not part of the initial goal; however, the writing process proved that the absence of dialogue between the past and the present would create a gap. Hans-Thies Lehmann's lecture during the 15th Symposium of the International Brecht Society[522] about the performance of *Bühne frei für Mick Levcik!* directed by René Pollesch in Zurich in 2016 highlighted the importance of this dialogue. The theatrical experiment is based on reflections about the *MB* for *Antigone*. The German director brought to stage the hammering of Brechtian concepts, as it is described in the booklet for the performance. It says that in René Pollesch's new text, the ensemble is involved in a game between 'before' and 'behind' the stage, between remake and originality, between rehearsal and performance. Most of all, the performance questions the way Brecht is now (mis)understood.

> Wie man überdies das ganze Experiment nicht für unwichtig halten sollte, wenn man es nicht für gut ausgeführt hält, so sollte man es sich auch nicht durch die Befürchtung verleiden lassen, es könnte ein Aufgeben aller bisherigen Praxis bedeuten. Theater ist einfältig, wenn es nicht vielfältig ist.[523]

> Moreover, as one should not think the whole experiment is unimportant if one does not think it is well done, one should not let oneself be disguised by the fear as it could mean giving up all previous practice. Theatre is simple, if not multifaceted.[524]

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[522] Recycling Brecht (June 2016), St Hugh's College, University of Oxford.

[523] Berlau, *Antigonemodell 1948,* preface written by Brecht and Neher.

[524] Author translation.

The initial plan was to encompass the work of all collaborators who worked with Brecht, especially as photographers. However, the focus on Ruth Berlau's work was the result of an attempt at dealing with the necessary limits of the dissertation. Because Neher's sketches were used as a starting point for rehearsals until Berlau's photographs, the whole creative process was scarred by the contribution of writers, translators, composers, painters, actors and actresses and directors. Brecht's plays are almost always signed by him and one of them—*Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*—opens with the statement '[d]ieses Stück schrieb ich mit Lion Feuchtwanger' ('I wrote this play with Lion Feuchtwanger'). Ruth Berlau officially appears as a collaborator in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan, Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis* and *Die Tage der Commune* but it would be possible to consider her, as the photographer for so many plays, a very strong collaborator bearing in mind the role of photography in Brecht's plays. The number of photographs and their importance for the plays was so significant that one can say that for some of them, such as *Katzgraben*, the photographic research performed by Berlau constituted co-authorship. Several photographers worked with Brecht, such as Roger Pic, who was responsible for recording the BE's tours in Paris. Other photographers included Hainer Hill (*Mutter Courage*, *Katzgraben*); Hildegard Steinmetz, Willi Saeger and Ruth Wilhelmi (*Mutter Courage*); and Percy Paukschta and Inge Steinert (*Katzgraben*).

Certainly, the biggest challenge was to elucidate the concept of *gestus* and its relationship with photography in Brecht's work. In this dissertation, the choice to limit the theoretical approach to the essential analysis of Benjamin and Didi-Huberman meant the unavoidable absence of other extremely rich narratives, like the one of Rebecca Schneider, for example, who questions the importance of representation and re-evaluates the meaning of the failure to recall the past, aiming to reread it in *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (2011). That reflection is aligned with the discussion of the concept

of *gestus* and the use of the model as a form of creation proposed in this research. Schneider's dedication to the study of the gesture undoubtedly provides a path for the future development of this study.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Brechtian theatre has been researched by scientists of different nationalities with different interpretations. As a result, almost a century later, it is possible to identify the 'didactic Brecht', the 'international Brecht', the 'Marxist Brecht', the 'exiled Brecht', the 'Cold War Brecht' and others. The main purpose of this research is to develop an 'interdisciplinary Brecht' who transits between theatre and photography, showing that the connection between different fields is an effective method of theatre research. The interdisciplinarity proposed by the study of Brechtian concepts under the gaze of photography results in original and updated research on theatre. Therefore, I conclude that it is possible to deepen the study of Brechtian concepts, such as *gestus*, based on their relationship with photography. In the future, other Brechtian concepts and notions, including *V-Effekt,* can be researched using their relationship with photography as a starting point.

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