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Heiner Müller as the End of Brechtian Dramaturgy: Müller on Brecht in Two Lesser-Known Fragments

DAVID BARNETT

Two lesser-known fragments written by Heiner Müller in 1979 and 1990 openly refer to Brecht and offer perspectives on the problematic relationship between the two playwrights. Form and content in Brechtian dialectical theatre are treated ironically in both fragments. Müller reveals an ambivalence that accepts the tenets of Brechtian dramaturgy in order to surpass them. Müller criticizes perceived limitations in Brecht's poetics yet redirects the dialectic for the postmodern times in which he lived. The degree to which Müller radicalizes Brecht's principles and practice represents an endpoint of (but not an all-out break with) Brechtian dramaturgy. An important corollary of this conclusion is that Müller is still associated with the Enlightenment project. This latter assertion is at odds with many readings of the later plays as documentations of 'the end of history', a category Müller roundly criticized in his life and resisted in his own dialectical drama.

On 24 March 1995, Heiner Müller, together with three actors from the Berliner Ensemble and the director Einar Schleef, read a range of texts under the title 'Heiner Müller – Antikenmaterial' ['Material from the Ancients']. One of the texts he read was not listed on the official playbill. At that time it had only been printed in *Die Zeit*, and thus the fragment was probably unknown to the audience. Its first public airing, however, elicited belly laughs and knowing smiles from the auditorium.

Philoktet 1979 [*Philoctetes* 1979], a short text of barely eleven column-inches, features a mythological figure employed by Müller in a poem in the fifties and in a full-length play in the sixties.¹ The treatment of Philoctetes in this piece is surprisingly burlesque and ironic. Müller asserts that Philoctetes was not alone on Lemnos and was actually the only man among a host of women who inexplicably had murdered their men-folk. Every day they roll a die to determine who is next to drag the exhausted Philoctetes off to a cave for their sexual gratification. Just as the hero is about to escape, his traditional adversaries, Odysseus and Neoptolemus, arrive. Contradicting Müller's other two versions of the play, Philoctetes rushes to rejoin the Greeks, who ignore him and head for the women. Over time the three men form a trade union to regulate their working hours and involve the audience in their collective decision-making processes, a satire on the West-German labour practice of *Mitbestimmung* [collective decision-making]. In the background, the noted German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann (1822–90) awaits the departure of the Greeks so that Troy can be destroyed and he can discover its ruins. The new working conditions mean, however, that the Greeks never return to the fray. Schliemann trumps this stasis by

producing one of his own: we are told, 'he transforms the audience into an object, the scene into an exhibit, the theatre into a museum, himself into his own memorial, and creates the neutron bomb, the dream-weapon of archaeology, the end product of humanism'.

The scenario is theatrical and anachronistic: Schliemann flies in on a *Bundeswehr* helicopter and the women of Lemnos make socks for Philoctetes' wounded foot with a sewing machine. The sewing machine provides an opportunity for a parody that was endorsed by whoops of laughter from the audience at the Berliner Ensemble. The fragment features five footnotes, each of which was read out at the relevant point in the scene. The first footnote reads, 'the use of sewing machines is feasible, if it is made possible for the audience to understand their *modus operandi* (Minor Pedagogy) or to carry out technical improvements on them (Major Pedagogy)'. The quotation refers directly to Brecht's major theories of political theatre: 'minor pedagogy' was the term he used for his 'compromised' Epic Theatre, 'major pedagogy' for the radical form of the *Lehrstück*, the Learning Play. Brecht also appears in the third footnote in the form of a slightly modified quotation taken from the *Svendborg Poems*. The footnote refers to Philoctetes' attempts at suicide, undertaken as a means of liberation from his sexual slavery. The tone of this footnote diverges from that of the first: 'YOU SURELY WON'T SNUFF IT / BEFORE THE SEEDS ARE SOWN, YOU DOG.'²

In a second fragment, published eleven and a half years after *Philoktet* 1979, Müller takes up the figure of Brecht as a dramatic character. *Nachleben Brechts Beischlaf Auferstehung in Berlin* [*Brecht's Afterlife Intercourse Resurrection in Berlin*] is a parody of the final section of Müller's *Gundling's Life Frederick of Prussia Lessing's Sleep Dream Cry* (1979) and it contains allusions to *Germania Death in Berlin* (1978), *The Task* (1980) and *The Hamletmachine* (1978).³ The fragment opens with a projected text – 'Baal's Song' comes first and is followed by a quotation from the American director Joseph Losey, 'HE ATE LITTLE DRANK LITTLE AND FUCKED A LOT.'⁴ An actor playing Brecht delivers a long speech that mixes glosses on Brecht's dramaturgies and his pornographic musings on women. The spirit of Germania then arrives and the actor continues with an elaboration on the themes of the first speech. The spirit of Fatzer, the spirit of Herr Keuner and Baal himself then appear. Once they have delivered their speeches (and once Baal has fallen into the orchestra pit), Iron Maiden's 'Children of the Damned' is heard, a neon sign on a tower block on the Alexanderplatz radiates the legend 'BRECHT IS ARISEN', a fire swallows an unspecified theatre forcing the audience to flee. The theatre is destroyed. Müller's final stage direction reads, '*Curtain transcendent. O. V. E. R.*'

These two almost unknown⁵ fragments from Müller's *œuvre* merit examination for their treatment of Brecht and his theories. The relationship between the two dramatists has been the subject of much comment rather than serious investigation for many years in Müller scholarship. Casual references abound and some attempts have been made to address it.⁶ A little more light on the mechanics of the affinity between the two playwrights may be shed by addressing major common dramaturgical issues which will relate the ambivalent acceptance of Brecht that emerges to matters that concern Müller's formal strategies as a whole. In their own ways, the two texts serve as allegories for Müller's problematic relationship with Brecht and his theatre. Thus a case can be made for Müller

not only being situated within the Brechtian tradition but also for marking its most extreme point – Heiner Müller is the end of Brechtian dramaturgy.

Philoktet 1979 refers to Brecht both satirically and more respectfully. The application of Brechtian dramaturgical categories to a sewing machine already points to Müller's sardonic deployment of the terms. Where Brecht attempted to analyse human subjects in their socio-historical contexts, Müller substitutes a mechanical object. Müller satirizes a perceived reductionism in the Brechtian scheme. This critique is coupled with his pithy exegeses of 'major' and 'minor' pedagogy. Müller's simplified interpretations of Brecht's educative strategies for the theatre emphasize the latter's limitations. In 'minor pedagogy', education is linked to rationalism in Müller's reading: the dramatist can influence an audience by providing the correct information. Education is a cerebral activity in this version. Brecht's 'major pedagogy' is indeed more 'hands on', although here it is utilitarianism which is being satirized.⁷

Yet Müller does not stop at a comic attack on a theatre he criticizes for dramaturgical idealism. The *Svendborg* footnote suggests another Brecht. The brief excerpt is founded in the Brecht of dialectical contradiction. The farmer in the poem, addressing his ox, dramatizes an irony of labour and capital. He treats the ox with kindness and respect until he hears the animal wheeze. The final lines of the poem are the ones Müller cites. The ox, upon which the farmer is dependent, is ultimately treated with contempt as if the dependency were inverted. The brutal and schizophrenic twist also introduces a visceral aspect, which supports Müller's earlier critique of rationalism. This is a Brecht of contradiction without harmonization. The relationship between the speaker and the addressee is fraught with socio-political contexts that are problematic and intertwined. The inclusion of these brief sentiments signals the sustained importance of a dialectic which does not reduce the complexity of its constituent elements.

The implicit support for the persistence of dialectical analysis is contrasted by the Stalinist figure of Schliemann. The failure to retain the dialectic and thus to maintain a dialogue with history is dramatized with the arrival of the archaeologist. He, with the aid of the *Bundeswehr*, seeks an end to history and the preservation of an unproblematic past, one which also leads to his own historical aggrandisement. The irony of Schliemann's action is that it runs parallel to the endeavours of Philoctetes and his fellow 'workers' who prevent the advance of history through reformist politics. The oppressive status quo is perpetuated by the illusion of workers' rights. Collective decision-making is just as unproductive as the petrification of history by Schliemann, even though it involves democratic trade unionists and the audience.⁸ Müller's own comment, 'shameless, the lie of *POSTHISTOIRE* before the barbaric reality of our prehistory',⁹ counters arguments made by critics that claim Müller for a resigned chronicler of 'the end of history'.¹⁰ These readings refer to the stasis evident in Müller's later works without probing their historicizing dramaturgies. *Philoktet 1979* points to the confines of Brecht's deployment of the dialectic whilst arguing for its reformulation to oppose the myth of the end of history and the real dialectical processes it smothers.

Müller's burlesque sketch (or maybe satyr play) depicts a theatre of double dramaturgical defeat. A Brechtian approach that bases its educative premises on the rational mind, the utilitarian body and an 'interactive' theatre (which is unable to view the dialectical complexities of a situation) no longer is suited to the condition of postmodernity.¹¹ These

features, however, are resisted by the third footnote. Müller pits Brecht against Brecht. To Müller, the dialectic of the Brechtian theatre has to be expanded to encompass uncharted regions of human behaviour. Müller's incommensurable dramaturgies are linked to his ideas on action in the contemporary world: 'as long as a force is blind, it remains a force. As soon as it has a programme, a perspective, it can be integrated'.¹² The commodification of ideas and movements can only be resisted when such forces cannot be apprehended and named. Müller, thus, is not arguing for a theatre of baffled stasis, rather his slipperiness is connected to his understanding of political action in a world of systems bent on the neutralization of dissent. In *Philoktet 1979*, Müller includes the irrational and the libidinous as a critique of Brechtian pedagogy whilst embracing the sentiments of the *Svendborg* lines and their need to overcome the dialectical contradictions therein.

This qualified acceptance of Brecht's pedagogical dramaturgies is evident in Müller's own *Lehrstück* practices. Brecht's radical idea of abolishing the cleft between the actor and the audience had fascinated Müller for a long time.¹³ Müller, following Brecht, understood the approach as one that exploded the one-way flow of theatrical communication from product to consumer. In its place the actor and the spectator lose their conventional identities and become joint explorers and articulators of the central conflictual issues of the *Lehrstück*. Although Brecht and Müller acknowledged that the context of their respective theatres would not permit necessarily a drama without an audience, Müller did construct his *Lehrstück* as a form which opened itself to the most fundamental questions of theatre practice in a way that pushes Brecht's 'learning dramaturgies' to their limits. One of Müller's tactics in modifying the genre was to engage actors and directors of his *Lehrstücke* more actively in the realization process by refusing to delineate roles. Brecht had suggested the blurring of character identity in the *Lehrstück* in both his use of choruses and, more specifically, in the potential for several actors to play one single named character (seen clearly in the figure of the Young Comrade in *The Measures Taken*, for example). Müller experiments with this practice in his plays *Mauser* (1975) and *The Horatian* (1973) in which choric or unattributed texts start to problematize the identity of the speaker. It is *The Road to Volokolamsk* cycle (1988), however, in which the *Lehrstück* form is fundamentally overhauled.

The *Volokolamsk* plays would appear to the casual reader as poems rather than dramas. Voices are detectable within them, but they are not delimited by character attribution (considered 'indisputably constitutive' by Erika Fischer-Lichte as a marker of the dramatic genre *per se*).¹⁴ The requirement to divide text among the actors encourages active negotiation in the rehearsal process. Here the pre-performance work takes the Brechtian elimination of actor and spectator to its logical conclusion. The actors are exposed to the experience of the text as a whole and are able to play, observe, re-structure and re-play without authorial restriction. There is no reason, of course, why a director will not divide the texts up before rehearsals begin; Müller certainly could not have legislated for that. However, he does offer the actors and directors an opportunity to approach the text in a fashion which leaves fundamental questions open and invites actors to experiment and criticize in a manner conceptualized but never fully realized by Brecht.

Nachleben Brechts Beischlaf Auferstehung in Berlin deals with Brecht more explicitly, although it should be remembered that all the characters, with the exception of Baal, are

conscious representations: an actor *plays* Brecht, and his characters are mainly there as spirits. *Nachleben Brechts* also takes the form of a retrospective, and thus a more criticizable and less fixed view of the dramatist emerges. From the outset, then, the audience is presented with a possible rather than a definitive depiction. The version of Brecht seen on stage is also consciously contradictory; Müller asks that the actor's face should be made up as Brecht, yet he should not wear the familiar Brecht-jacket. Instead, a bear skin and a club are to adorn him. It is Brecht the caveman who is taking stock. His self-criticism is presented in a matter-of-fact fashion, as a report. He reviews his activity in the theatre thus, 'I talked the theatre into accepting my models, taught the audience *Verfremdung*, disguised the teacher in a Mao-look, and imposed all manner of other simplifications on people.' The actor narrates a set of positions which were criticized implicitly in *Philoktet 1979*. Again, the challenge is to the self-imposed limitations of the Brechtian theatre. By defining his aesthetics, Brecht has prepared a trap for himself (something which links with Müller's ideas, quoted above, about the commodification and neutralization of articulated concepts). The proposition that Brechtian teaching constricts the material pervades the speech. The caveman, however, has some life in him yet. The utopian moment is situated in the political dimensions of Brecht's incommensurable language. At the turning point of the long speech, the actor playing Brecht moves from the narrating imperfect into the present. He says, 'my words were always powerful, sensual, vital and nasty. My words are rising up again, excavated from the rubble of the last war', at which point the stage hands shovel words to the actor who has been squatting on a pile of debris and charred bodies. The Brechtian dialectic is liberated by its linguistic components that make a simplistic thesis/antithesis model more complex. The adjectives the actor uses to describe Brechtian language resist reductionism. The 'sensual', the 'vital' and the 'nasty' problematize political and moral categories and raise questions that generate ever more dialectical tensions.

What follows is a typically Müllerian montage of words, images and actions. The spirit of the protagonist in Brecht's fragment *The Destruction of the Egoist Johann Fatzer*, delivers a speech on the subject of men's sexual urges, taken from the *Fatzer* material and slightly modified by Müller.¹⁵ He then recites a line of dialogue from the Herr Keuner story 'Das Wiedersehen' ['Meeting up Again']¹⁶ and receives Keuner's reply. The latter then instructs the stage hands to beat the spirit of Fatzer to death with shovels, after which Keuner dons Fatzer's mask. As this is happening, the Brecht actor rams Germania with his club and Baal creeps on with a pessimistic summation of the state of the world.

The section functions as an enactment of Müller's critical response to Brecht's models. It is an exercise in negation, something which Müller locates at the heart of the dialectic: 'Marx did not create a system, on the contrary he concentrated on negation, on a critique of the existing structures, and thus he was principally open to new realities.'¹⁷ The choice of Fatzer, Keuner and Baal as players also allows a set of intertextual references to comment on Brecht's theatre.¹⁸ The *Fatzer* material was 'an object of envy' according to Müller ever since he read it in the 1950s.¹⁹ Its strength lay not only in its density but in the rigour and problematic precision of its language. 'The writing style is that of the researcher, not of the teacher', Müller maintained.²⁰ The dramatic explorer is entrusted with the task of enabling rather than analysing experiences. The strength of *Fatzer* is its rawness and its unwillingness to bend to ideological schemata. The spirit of Keuner, the philosophical rationalist, hijacks

the material and sees to the elimination of the spirit of Fatzter and the re-appropriation of his form. The movement signals the switch from the freedom to experiment to a more controlled and formalized dialectical theatre. Yet Keuner is left with nothing more to say once he has staged his *coup de théâtre*. In the wake of the new silence, Baal, the embodiment of the irrational, vital and morally unencumbered artist, takes the stage. Keuner's violence leaves him speechless, whilst Baal revels in his apocalyptic rant before disappearing into the space between the stage and the auditorium, the pit. The unexplicated montage echoes the dramaturgy of *Fatzter*, a play that Brecht was unable to complete. The resurrection of this form becomes the catalyst for the resurrection of Brecht, whose new life sets a theatre alight. The destruction of the bourgeois theatre is the dream of Brechtian aesthetics. Brecht rises from the dead; his resurrection is the theatre of Heiner Müller.

Müller's interpretation of the *Fatzter* material, as dramatized at the conclusion of *Nachleben Brechts* is again indicative of the extent to which Müller pushed his own dialectical theatre.²¹ For him, the Marxist tension between labour and capital had to be expanded to take into account its multifarious constituent elements. Müller is led to present the human subject as a complex cipher set against a backdrop of memory and history. Even in his earliest works, which are more distinctly reminiscent of Brecht's epic dramaturgy, history informs an important contradiction in the biographies of the characters. Balke, in Müller's first major play, *The Wage-Squeezer* (1958), is the exceptionally committed worker who should serve as an inspiration for all. This would be true, excepting the fact that he also denounced the Party Secretary, Schorn, when the latter was sabotaging production in a Nazi factory where Balke also worked furiously. The burden of the past and present demands for gratification and happiness pervade almost every work that was to follow. In the later plays, such as *The Hamletmachine* or *Waterfront Wasteland Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts* (1983) the proliferation of dialectical tensions assume overwhelming proportions and swamp the audience with the density and range of their manifestations. This is not to say that Müller has surrendered to a world in which the dialectic no longer has a place. In an age of fragmentation, the playwright still contextualizes the malaise historically. Comments on consumer society and failures in the course of history to liberate the subject from capitalism are very much in evidence in all the later work. By viewing postmodernism not as the end of history but as one of its stages, Müller suggests that while capitalism still prevails, barbarism does, too. He continues to articulate contradictions which confront the discourse of stasis and arouse a desire for alternatives.

Müller was also fascinated by Brecht's deployment of 'the nasty' and 'the anti-social' which he located not only in some of Brecht's characterizations but also in his language. The two categories challenge accepted social values and beg questions as to their provenance and their eradication. Müller recognized the existence of a neo-Nazi chic, for example, as a symptom of those social areas which capitalism was not able to satisfy.²² Müller takes up the question posed by Büchner's Danton, 'what is it in us that whores, lies, steals and murders?', and applies it to Brecht's dialectical theatre.²³ The figure of Fondrak, for example, in Müller's comedy *The Settler, or Life on the Land* (1961) will settle for nothing less than total personal satisfaction and serves as an archetypal thorn in the side of the ideological positions of the play's main characters. It is not difficult to identify his recurrence in a host of characters in the later work, from Debuissou in *The Task*, to Merteuil and Valmont in

Quartet (1982), to almost every malcontent in *The Road to Volokolamsk*. The qualities that so allured Müller in *Fatzer* paved the way to a dramaturgy that accepted the dialectic of Brecht only to surpass it. Müller's language, just as 'powerful, sensual, vital and nasty', to quote his Brecht actor, was the instrument with which he investigated Brecht's dialectic and dramatized the complexities that undermined the Soviet experiment, the founding principles of the GDR, and the ideals of European humanism.

The critiques of Brechtian dramaturgy found in *Philoktet 1979* and *Nachleben Brechts* place Müller at the end of its tradition. It is difficult to imagine formal strategies that a post-Brechtian playwright could employ that trump Müller's.²⁴ He has turned the *Lehrstück* into a site of total experience and has accepted the dialectic only to multiply its tensions at every turn. His deployment of characters, language and forms frustrate reductionism and push the theatre of Bertolt Brecht to its limits. Yet the retention of the dialectic signals an important corollary. The dialectic is still a tool with which the dramatist may approach and analyse the world. This world may be complex and contradictory but it is neither absurd nor beyond redemption. The retention of the dialectic, therefore, situates Müller at the end of the Enlightenment tradition as well. Yet Müller's dialectic goes beyond a sober analysis and includes the visceral and the irrational in a drama that encourages experiences. His is a theatre in which learning is coupled with the profound experience of conflict. The later Müller never resolves the exponential fissures presented in his plays and thus defines a pedagogy that emphasizes confrontation. Müller, however, does envisage a new stage in human development after the catastrophe of capitalism, and that is the era of the collective individual. This 'new animal', as Müller calls it,²⁵ is the synthesis of the dialectic of survival and extinction depicted in the nightmares of his later work. Its composition as yet cannot be foreseen, yet it is Müller's dialectical response to the collapse of the sovereign individual in postmodernity.

The re-activation of the *Lehrstück* form with the advent of the Gorbachev era (having been discarded in Müller's letter to Rainer Steinweg in 1977)²⁶ in the shape of the *Volokolamsk* plays points to his new pedagogy. Müller's lessons confront the actor and the spectator with material that cannot be ignored if learning is to take place. This material, not limited by ideological considerations, challenges the theatre's staging conventions in a bid to manufacture experiences derived from the input of the actors as well as from the dramatist. In 1981, Müller contended, 'the role of terror, I think, is nothing other than to recognize, to learn . . . The main point is a pedagogy of terror.'²⁷ Education goes beyond the Brechtian pedagogy satirized in *Philoktet 1979* and criticized in *Nachleben Brechts* yet still remains a learning experience. By activating Brecht the caveman, Müller introduced lessons which question their contexts, and which put the responsibility for learning back onto the learner. In this sense, Müller's texts are indeed 'texts waiting for history' in that they await the history of the actors and the audience, too.²⁸ Müller's texts thus stand for a theatre of dialectical experience in which the spirit of Brecht still haunts Müller's radical structures.

NOTES

- 1 Heiner Müller, *Philoktet 1979. Drama mit Ballett (Entwurf)*, *Die Zeit*, 29 December 1978. All subsequent references to the fragment take the same reference. All translations are my own. Note: Müller's text is a scenario, not a piece of dramatic literature as such: he describes events in the present tense throughout

- and there is no direct speech. The other fragment, *Nachleben Brechts*, is a play, and has speeches and stage directions.
- 2 Brecht's lines are taken from the poem 'Ansprache des Bauern an seinen Ochsen', found in the *Svendborg Poems* (in Bertolt Brecht, *Die Gedichte von Bertolt in einem Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), pp. 683–4), and reads 'Are you going to snuff it / Before the seeds are sown, you dog?' Müller, as usual, has taken a slight liberty with his source.
 - 3 Heiner Müller, *Nachleben Brechts Beischlaf Auferstehung in Berlin*, *Volkszeitung*, 13 July 1990. All subsequent references to the fragment take the same reference.
 - 4 Losey is quoted as saying, 'he ate very little, drank very little, and fornicated a great deal' in David Caute, *Joseph Losey: A Revenge on Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), p. 166. Müller slims the original and changes the language's register to generate a more pointed effect.
 - 5 *Philoctet 1979* appears in Ingo Schmidt and Florian Vaßen, eds., *Bibliographie Heiner Müller* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1993), p. 44, albeit with incorrect bibliographical information. *Nachleben Brechts Beischlaf Auferstehung in Berlin* does not.
 - 6 See, for example, Uwe Wittstock, 'Die schnellen Wirkungen sind nicht die neuen', in Heinz Ludwig Arnold, ed., *Heiner Müller Text und Kritik*, 73 (Munich: Text und Kritik, 1982), p. 11; Sue-Ellen Case, *Developments in Post-Brechtian Theatre: The Plays of Heiner Müller* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1991); or Jonathan Kalb, *The Theatre of Heiner Müller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 22–43.
 - 7 At the time of writing, in 1978, the *Lehrstück* was considered a primarily utilitarian form – see, for example, Rainer Steinweg, *Das Lehrstück: Brechts Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung* (second, expanded edition) (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976). Since then, important experiential and visceral interpretations have arisen which have challenged Steinweg's more harmonized views of the form, such as in Rainer Nägele, 'Brecht's Theatre of Cruelty', in Nägele, *Reading after Freud* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 111–34.
 - 8 Here the fetish of audience participation is also satirized. This practice, too, is arraigned for its naïveté: rather than empowering an audience, it merely maintains the illusion of productivity. As we see, the audience is contributing to the continuation of a system rather than to its replacement.
 - 9 Heiner Müller, 'Die Wunde Woyzeck', in Frank Hörnigk, ed., *Heiner Müller Material* (Göttingen: Steidl, 1989), p. 115.
 - 10 See the following examples taken from criticism of *The Hamletmachine*: Douglas Nash, 'The Commodification of Opposition: Notes on the Postmodern Images of Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine*', *Monatshefte*, 81, 3 (1989), pp. 298–311; Christa Carvajal, 'Hamletmaschine on Two Stages: Heiner Müller's Allegories and the Problems of Translation', in Karelisa V. Hartigan, ed., *Text and Presentation* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), pp. 13–20; or Nicholas Zurbrugg, 'Post-Modernism and the Multi-Media Sensibility: Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine* and the Art of Robert Wilson', *Modern Drama*, 31, 3 (1988), pp. 439–53. Each contribution suggests Müller's dialectic has stopped, that history has ended. My contention is that he remains a dialectical writer, but who acknowledges the postmodern condition as one which is different from Brecht's modernity and which therefore requires a different treatment of the dialectic.
 - 11 See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) for a dialectical approach to postmodernism, which itself resists the idea that the dialectic is no longer useful as an analytic tool.
 - 12 Heiner Müller, 'Mich interessiert der Fall Althusser', in Hörnigk, ed., *Heiner Müller*, p. 29.
 - 13 See, for example, the interview 'Solange wir an unsere Zukunft glauben, brauchen wir uns vor unserer Vergangenheit nicht zu fürchten' in Heiner Müller, *Gesammelte Irrtümer* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1986), pp. 189–90. Müller is asked, 'is the *Lehrstück* now conceived from the outset with the abolition of the identity between spectator and actor in mind?', to which he replies, 'No, that's the defining feature of the *Lehrstück*.'
 - 14 Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Semiotik des Theaters*, iii (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1983), p. 39.
 - 15 A version of the original text may be found in Müller's organization of the archival material in Bertolt

- Brecht, *Untergang des Egoisten Johannes Fatzer*, edited by Heiner Müller (Leipzig: Suhrkamp, 1994), p. 29.
- 16 See Bertolt Brecht, *Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), p. 26.
- 17 Heiner Müller, 'Da trinke ich lieber Benzin zum Frühstück', in Heiner Müller, *Zur Lage der Nation* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1990), p. 44.
- 18 They also demonstrate how Brecht can be mobilized against Brecht under the aegis of a less fettered montage principle. Müller's theatre as a whole may be conceptualized as the struggle of Brecht against himself.
- 19 Heiner Müller, *Krieg ohne Schlacht. Leben in zwei Diktaturen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1992), p. 309.
- 20 Heiner Müller, 'Fatzer + Keuner', in Hörnigk, ed., *Heiner Müller*, pp. 35–6
- 21 For arguments to support this assertion, see Moray McGowan, 'Marxist – Postmodernist – German. History and Dramatic Form in the Work of Heiner Müller', in Martin Kane, ed., *Socialism and the Literary Imagination: Essays on East German Writers* (Oxford: Berg, 1991), pp. 125–46; or David Barnett, 'Collective Dramaturgy: A Marxist Challenge to the Stage. Or: Heiner Müller's Political Theatre of Destruction', *Heiner Müller: Probleme und Perspektiven* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 45–55. Both articles argue that Müller presents his apocalyptic visions in a historicized context, thus suggesting their changeability.
- 22 Heiner Müller, 'Althusser', p. 28.
- 23 Georg Büchner, *Dantons Tod*, in Georg Büchner, *Werke und Briefe* (Munich: DTV, 1980), p. 37.
- 24 Roland Barthes envisages a post-Brechtian theatre which anticipates Müller's theatre with eerie precision: 'doubtless there would be no difficulty in finding in post-Brechtian theatre . . . *mises en scène* marked by the dispersion of the tableau, the pulling to pieces of the "composition", the setting in movement of the "partial organs" of the human figure, in short the checking of the metaphysical meaning of the work – but then also of its political meaning; or, at least, the carrying over of this meaning towards *another* politics', Roland Barthes, 'Diderot, Eisenstein, Brecht', in Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 22.
- 25 Heiner Müller, 'Der Schrecken die erste Erscheinung des Neuen. Zu einer Diskussion über Postmodernismus in New York', in Hörnigk, ed., *Heiner Müller*, p. 24.
- 26 Heiner Müller, 'Verabschiedung des Lehrstücks', in Hörnigk, ed., *Heiner Müller*, p. 40.
- 27 Heiner Müller, 'Ich muß mich verändern, statt mich zu interpretieren', in Heiner Müller, *Gesammelte Irrtümer 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1990), p. 23.
- 28 Müller, 'Verabschiedung', p. 40.

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