staging history

brecht's social concepts of ideology

astrid oesmann

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Brecht's Social Concepts of Ideology

Astrid Oesmann

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Foreword

All translations of quotations from the works of Bertolt Brecht were prepared specifically for this book in order to facilitate the English speaker's reading of the analyses based on the original German passages. However, for the convenience of readers who desire access to more complete English translations of the works discussed, the translated titles of these works follow, wherever possible, those listed in:

Brecht, Bertolt. *Collected Plays*. 8 vols. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. London: Methuen, 1970–1987.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Poems, 1913–1956*. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. London: Methuen, 1976.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. 2d ed. Edited and translated by John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.

Brecht, Bertolt. *The Good Person of Szechwan*; *Mother Courage and Her Children*; *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*. Translated by John Willett. New York: Arcade, 1993.

Brecht, Bertolt. *The Measures Taken and Other Lehrstücke*. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. New York: Arcade, 2001.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Stories of Mr. Keuner*. Translated by Martin Chalmers. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2001.

CHRIS LONG

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Acknowledgments

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This book is the result of a long and complex process of thinking about Brecht and his works. From this perspective I thank my parents for keeping an old recording of *The Threepenny Opera* and my brother Rainer for playing it because this introduced me to Brecht when I was a child. I also want to thank my high school teachers for withholding Brecht's works from us and thus for not spoiling for us the pleasures of his texts. More recently, Andreas Huyssen, my dissertation advisor at Columbia University, fostered a productive dialogue and provided insightful observations about my research and writing. Joachim Lucchesi, Jan Knopf, Siegfried Mews, and Marc Silberman have also stimulated my work through their discussions and comments on multiple talks, papers, and chapters. I would especially like to thank Jan Knopf and Marc Silberman for their thorough readings and valuable critiques of my various writings on Brecht. I am also grateful to Chris Long for her exemplary work editing the final version of my manuscript and translating into English the Brecht material quoted in this book as well as to James Peltz and Michael Haggett at SUNY Press for their dedication to this project. Finally, *Staging History* would not have been realized without James Sidbury, himself a historian, who in countless discussions about Brecht and perusals of chapter drafts made the transition from German thought to English syntax not only possible, but enjoyable. To him I dedicate this book.

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Introduction

Some years ago there was a conference in Berlin on *Die Maßnahme (The Measures Taken)*, one of Brecht's most infamous plays. It is a short play, about twenty pages, but the conference lasted four full days. Literary critics were well represented at the podium and in the audience, but, interestingly enough, a small majority of the presenters came from other academic disciplines ranging from anthropology to sociology to philosophy. Everyone struggled with the play's brutality—it presents a young communist activist being killed by his comrades for the sake of the revolution—but everyone also agreed that Brecht's theatre continues to have much to say about Marxism and that it addresses questions about past (and present) communist systems and thought in important ways. This book uses the tools of literary criticism to unravel the complexities of Brecht's theories of history and revolution, revealing in the process why such diverse thinkers continue to find the supposedly propagandistic playwright's thought so relevant more than a decade after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

Conventional periodizations of Brecht's career have hindered a proper appreciation of the development of his thought. His career is generally divided into an early period (1919–1927) during which he produced anarchistic and undertheorized plays, a middle period (1927–1932) during which he read Marx and wrote the "crudely propagandistic" teaching plays, and a mature phase (1933–1956) during which he developed his new and impressive theory of "epic theatre" and wrote his most famous plays (e.g., *Mother Courage* and *The Good Person of Szechwan*), which have earned him his place in the canon. *Staging History* demonstrates that Brecht's writings during Germany's Weimar Republic should be seen as a coherent whole. Prior to the triumph of National Socialism, Brecht's experiments with theatre and politics created a genuinely theatrical concept of historical materialism. This assertion does not deny the importance

of Brecht's readings of Marx, but it insists that he had already begun to present historical materialism on stage before he embraced Marxism in 1927. Recognizing the continuity between the "early" plays and the "teaching" plays reveals the underappreciated theoretical sophistication of his Weimar-era theatre and sheds new light on the break that the Nazi triumph in Germany produced in his work. This book shows how Brecht's supposedly inferior early work enriches our understanding of his entire career as a playwright.

I pursue this argument through five chapters, the first of which positions Brecht's work in literary theory. In chapter 1, "Brecht and Theory," I trace Brecht's awkward position among the major leftist theorists in twentieth-century Germany, mainly between members of the Frankfurt School on one side and the Soviet-oriented leftism of Georg Lukács on the other. I focus less on a comparison of theorists' contemporary political commitments—something that has been done sufficiently in the past and which can divert attention from the importance of their theories in today's world—than on Brecht's development of the concepts of mass culture, mimesis, and natural history, each of which continues to be important throughout the following chapters. Brecht's famous differences with major leftist critics in Germany were based less on ideological disagreement than on his refusal to take either ideology or history for granted; rather than treating them as static givens, he sought to release them into disturbing theatrical investigations. These investigations interrogate Marxist ideology, but they also seek to unravel Nietzsche's concepts of morality and history, Benjamin's concepts of mimesis and mass culture, and Adorno's concept of natural history. Critics have long acknowledged the ways that Brecht intersects with Benjamin and Nietzsche, but his thought is still perceived as irreconcilable with that of Adorno. This chapter shows that their concepts of natural history are, in fact, comparable in their respective diagnoses of the pathologies of twentieth-century European history. After establishing the context in which Brecht wrote, in terms of his place both in the history of ideology and in literary theory, I turn to close readings of his early writing for and about the stage.

Chapter 2, "Prehistories," shows that even at the very beginning of his career, Brecht, like Benjamin and Adorno, sought radically new ways to present history without falling into the trap of coherent historical narrative. *Trommeln in der Nacht (Drums in the Night)* and *Im Dickicht der Städte (In the Jungle of Cities)*, two of Brecht's first plays, share a commitment to the theatrical destruction of traditional notions of history

and subjectivity. *Trommeln (Drums)* is set during the revolutionary upheavals that occurred in Berlin in 1919, but it is scarcely a traditional narrative of rebellion. It focuses on the return of Kragler, a soldier in World War I, from a POW camp in Africa. Kragler reemerges as a survivor, and the key to his ability to survive is his ability to adapt to new surroundings—he has become a "Negro" during his time in Africa. Kragler's gift for mimesis, rather than the rebellion in the city, is presented as the key to subaltern survival. Brecht continues to experiment with the traditional theatrical element of mimesis in *Im Dickicht (In the Jungle)*, in which two Chicago men carry on a protracted and seemingly pointless feud, transforming both socially and racially in the process of imitating one another. Both plays use the traditional theatrical trope of mimesis to present natural history, with all its incoherence and contingency, as an alternative to traditional history's grand narratives. Brecht appropriates Aristotelian mimesis to present experiments on nonlinear historical understandings.

After exploring the complexities of historical narrative and change in *Trommeln (Drums)* and *Im Dickicht (In the Jungle)*, Brecht began to interrogate the ways in which people could perceive and respond progressively to social reality. In chapter 3, "Man Between Material and Social Order," I trace Brecht's development of a concept of theatre as a "counterpublic sphere," a space in which participants (those acting and those watching) can learn to observe and understand the power relations that shape their lives and, by understanding them, learn how to act in appropriately subversive ways. In *Der Dreigroschenprozeß (The Threepenny Trial)* and *Die Straßenszene (The Street Scene)*, Brecht begins to explore how one could present reliable evidence about systematic injustices that are endemic to bourgeois society but are rendered undetectable because they are culturally accepted. In *Mann ist Mann (Man Equals Man)*, an important transitional play, Brecht returns to the theme of transformation through mimesis in order to present a man's successful adaptation to bourgeois social relations in one version of the text and to fascism in the other. That Brecht conceived of the two texts as different versions of the same play, rather than as one play about bourgeois society and another about fascism, underscores that his primary interest in this text lay less in questions of state politics and political ideology than in the role of mimetic transformation in human survival.

Chapter 3 culminates in a close reading of *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches (Fear and Misery of the Third Reich)*, a play that has received much less critical attention than it merits. Here Brecht dramatizes the

difficulties that individuals face in comprehending and formulating effective resistance to the effects of fascist politics and terror. Effective strategies can only be developed by those who are able to stage, observe, and respond to fascist situations within an acknowledged "counterpublic sphere." Theatre, both the conventional theatre involving actors and an audience and the theatre of everyday life informed by the techniques taught in Brecht's theatre, offers a forum in which people can learn to resist fascism in their daily lives.

Chapter 4, "Revolution: Change and Persistence," turns to Brecht's most experimental texts—the teaching plays—in which he moves from his earlier attempts to interrogate the nature of historical representation to an even more elaborate effort to explore revolutionary change on the stage. The teaching plays are brutal, and it is unsurprising, given the bloody history of twentieth-century revolution, that much critical attention has focused on this brutality. Without denying the plays' cruelty, I return to Benjamin's insight that the cultural situation in Germany following World War I was determined by poverty and the barbarism that grew out of poverty. The economic poverty of postwar Germany is obvious, but even more important, Benjamin insisted, was the cultural poverty created by the loss of an entire generation to World War I and the resulting deficit in collective social experience. Brecht's teaching plays stage the inherent brutality of people seeking to understand profound change in the absence of the experience that ordinarily guides such understanding.

The teaching plays pursue this end through radical simplification. The stage is an empty space, and the distinction between actors and spectators is largely erased. Each play's plot (or "fable" in Brechtian terminology) presents a small group of people playing out a revolutionary maxim and facing the life and death choices produced by following the logic of that maxim. Characters are cut off from the personal and communal histories that create individual personality and normally inform important choices. Brecht's use of the mask in *Die Maßnahme (The Measures Taken)*, and of the concept of masking in the other teaching plays, anticipates and enriches anthropologist Michael Taussig's famous conceptualization of "the face" by using the face both as a cultural disguise and as a tool for political education rather than as a marker of identity. It is from this scenario of depersonalization and ahistoricity that the teaching plays explore the human brutality produced by abstract social thought and the change it fosters.

Finally, chapter 5, "Brecht's Archaeology of Knowledge," uses a number of theatrical fragments (only recently made generally available) in

order to synthesize the concerns of Brecht's pre-exile theatre. Of central importance to my argument is the enormous *Fatzer* fragment, a project Brecht began writing in 1926 and returned to intermittently until he abandoned it altogether in 1930 in anticipation of fascism's victory in Germany. The fragment spans much of Brecht's early career and touches on all of his theatrical concerns during that period. *Fatzer* follows four men who desert from combat and hide out in an industrial town. While in hiding they prepare to undertake a revolution through which they hope to end the war. Ultimately, they fail because they lack the patience necessary to wait for the right moment and to adapt to their conditions until that moment arrives.

Brecht uses this simple scenario to question some of the most fundamental notions of history and change. He complicates the notion of revolution by insisting that the Renaissance view of social revolution as the natural and perpetual alteration in the position of peoples and nations, which was based on the Copernican model of orbiting celestial bodies, remains a part of the "modern" sense of revolution as a complete overturning of the given social order. This fundamentally subverts standard Marxist revolutionary ideology because it rejects the belief in progress that lies at the heart of Marxist (and liberal) conceptions of history. Brecht does not turn away from revolution or Marxism as a result of this antiprogressive vision. He does, however, formulate a rather fatalistic concept of a communist society as a society in which poverty rather than plenty is equally distributed and individual intellectual progress is impossible. He brings these dark insights together in the *Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner (Stories of Mr. Keuner)* and the *Buch der Wendungen (Book of Changes)*, which he wrote while going into exile. His turn toward the aphorism as a literary form probably reflects, at least in part, his loss of access to theatres in which he could stage his experiments.

Staging History demonstrates the continuing relevance of Brecht's work in the postcommunist world. The epic plays of his late career, with their grand ideological ideas, are now firmly and deservedly entrenched in the canon. This reading of his early work as a profound response to a brutalized society that had, in the face of military and economic disaster, lost faith that it could predict the direction of history helps explain the current cross-disciplinary interest in his early plays. To a world in which "capitalism" and "the market" seem to stand as largely unquestioned social and cultural forces, Brecht's early work offers a concept of the theatre as a "counterpublic sphere," as a space in which people can play out

and analyze the hidden brutality of accepted social relations. That he does all of this in the beautiful language that has made him one of Germany's greatest twentieth-century poets, and that he accomplishes it through experiments in dramatic form that continue to transform German theatre underscores Brecht's centrality to twentieth-century Western culture.

1

Brecht and Theory

»Ich denke oft an ein Tribunal, vor dem ich vernommen werden würde. ›Wie ist das? Ist es Ihnen eigentlich ernst?‹ Ich müßte dann anerkennen: ganz ernst ist es mir nicht. Ich denke ja auch zu viel an Artistisches, an das, was dem Theater zugute kommt, als daß es mir ganz ernst sein könnte. Aber wenn ich diese wichtige Frage verneint habe, so werde ich eine noch wichtigere Behauptung anschließen: daß mein Verhalten nämlich *erlaubt* ist.«

["I often think of a tribunal before which I am being questioned. 'What was that? Do you really mean that seriously?' I would then have to admit: Not quite seriously. After all I think too much about artistic matters, about what would go well on the stage, to be quite serious; but when I have answered this important question in the negative, I will add a still more important affirmation: that my conduct is *legitimate*."]

—Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht (Reflections)*

This 1934 remark, in which Brecht describes his attitude toward theatre and politics to Walter Benjamin, reveals how and why Brecht felt close to Benjamin as a critic. Among the German-speaking theorists, Benjamin was personally and theoretically the closest to Brecht. They had been friends since 1929, and Benjamin witnessed Brecht's most innovative work periods, ranging from his early plays to the teaching plays and Brecht's encounter with Marxism. Here, Brecht reveals to Benjamin his awareness of an issue that has continually occupied Brechtian criticism to the present: Brecht's hypocrisy regarding political principles and personal

morals. Most recently, it has been John Fuegi who voiced his disappointment with Brecht the exploitative socialist.[1] On the opposite side is Fredric Jameson, who celebrates Brecht as a poet reminiscent of the young Goethe.[2] Jameson discerns a transfer from intellectual into collective activity that I will locate in the space between the critical and the hypocritical. It is the Brecht between Marx and Nietzsche, between theatre and theory, between principle and betrayal whose work remains so intriguing in a postcommunist world.

The Brechtian split between the critical and the hypocritical also polarized the reception of Brecht's work by his contemporaries. While Benjamin used this split to read Brecht's work in its relationship to the brutality of German culture, other critical theorists, namely Theodor W. Adorno and Georg Lukács, considered Brecht's attitude inexcusable. Adorno and Lukács, themselves two polarizing figures in the German culture wars, were united only in their rejection of Brecht—of his ideological commitment (Adorno) and of his flippancy (Lukács). Nevertheless, a comparative reading of all four authors shows that, despite their differences, they share an initial critique of bourgeois culture: it suffers from "wrong projection" or, as Adorno calls it, "gesellschaftlicher Verblendungszusammenhang" (social context of blindness). Through a reading of their understandings of natural history and mimesis, a surprisingly broad kinship between Brecht and Adorno reveals itself in their shared opposition to "wrong projection." This kinship may help explain why Benjamin could feel close to both of them.

This kinship would have surprised Brecht and Adorno themselves because the original conflict between them was real, and they nurtured it. For Adorno, Brecht was the ideological artist who pursued political change through a commitment to popular culture that disqualified him from producing "autonomous art"—the art of true recognition.[3] For Brecht, Adorno was one of the so-called "Murxisten" of the Frankfurt Tui, who were engaged in narcissistic intellectual reflection unrelated to the social change they claimed to seek.[4] These accusations may (or may not) have had substance when they were made, but the course of German history since that time has turned them into interesting historical artifacts rather than significant ideological differences. German history after 1945 ironically reversed these positions by granting Brecht the "durchschlagende Wirkungslosigkeit eines Klassikers" (thoroughgoing ineffectiveness of a classic author) (Max Frisch), while members of the Frankfurt School found themselves equated with the "Rote Armee Fraktion" (Red Army Faction) (a CDU politician), the

terrorist organization that was supported by the German Democratic Republic, Brecht's final home.

This renders especially ironic Adorno's rejection of Brecht for his political commitment to Marxism. As Adorno puts it, "Sein didaktischer Gestus jedoch ist intolerant gegen die Mehrdeutigkeit, an der Denken sich entzündet: er ist autoritär" (His didactic style *[gestus]*, however, is intolerant of the ambiguity in which thought originates: It is authoritarian).[5] He attacks Brecht for his "pedagogical" approach to theatre, for his outspoken Marxism, and for his commitment to social change—three elements that disqualify Brecht's theatre as autonomous art.[6] In autonomous art, reality can be mediated only indirectly because it is "in sich vielfältig zur Realität vermittelt" (mediated with reality in many ways).[7] Adorno's criticism of Brecht's "commitment" was a response to Brecht's attack on autonomous art, which "wiederhole einfach, was eine Sache ohnehin sei" (simply reiterates what something is).[8] In preferring Beckett for the way his negativity goes to the core of art and life, Adorno portrays Brecht's work as enmeshed in superficial communication. In Adorno's aesthetics, what necessitates "zu jener Änderung der Verhaltensweise, welche die engagierten Werke bloß verlangen" (the change in attitude that committed works only demand) rests upon the acceptance of the incomprehensible.[9] This renders unacceptable Brecht's concept of a pedagogical theatre because the performative acts of explaining and demanding disqualify the plays by requiring only that the audience comprehend the idea being communicated. Adorno uses the term *unterjochen* (to subjugate) to point to the repression of historical guilt in Brecht's work, something that Beckett's plays unfold. Once disqualified as inartistic, Brecht's work has nothing to offer "was nicht unabhängig von seinen Stücken, und bündiger in der Theorie, erkannt worden oder den auf ihn geeichten Zuschauern vertraut gewesen wäre" (that could not have been understood apart from his didactic plays, indeed, that could not have been understood more concisely through theory, or that was not already well known to his audience).[10] For Adorno, *Lehre* (teaching) falls short in comparison with theory because it entails a commitment to obeying the rules of communication—meaning domination—and is thus unavoidably propagandistic. Committed art responds directly to reality, and through this positive commitment, it takes part in the dynamics of domination, thus losing its autonomy.

In reducing Brecht's theatre to a representation of ideology, Adorno not only ignores the form and structure of Brecht's texts, he also overlooks the fact that a dramatic text must eventually meet performance in

unpredictable ways. Brecht, who always writes with the theatre in mind, is always aware of the stage's subversive force and of the idiosyncratic nature of education and entertainment; indeed, he makes it the motivating force of his plays. Through idiosyncrasy and plagiarism, Brecht demonstrates that humane ideals are intertwined with egoistic and evil motivations. His theatre thus unveils the dynamic to which Adorno accused him of succumbing.

The aesthetic principle through which Brecht achieves this effect is, surprisingly enough, mimesis. Brecht reappropriates mimesis (which is considered a traditional Aristotelian dramatic principle) as an innovative approach to history. Imitation, then, is not employed as a principle of representation, but as a social and physical exchange that produces history as genealogy. At this point, Brecht's theatrical practice intersects with Adorno's aesthetics and Benjamin's concept of history because all three use mimesis as a key concept. For Adorno, mimesis is the way the subject encounters the object; for Benjamin, mimesis combines historical experience and revolutionary activity. In Brecht's early plays and poetry, mimesis comes alive as the primary force of seduction in the midst of politics. When Heiner Müller insists that "was mich an Brecht interessiert ist das Böse" (what interests me about Brecht is the evil),[11] he points to what has kept Brechtian theatre alive up to the present: the tension between principle and its violations. This constitutes the most challenging aspect of Brecht's work today, and it is the aspect that, from the perspective of the early twenty-first century, is in surprising harmony with Adorno's aesthetic theory.

Realism and Reversed Perception

> . . . under the rule, discover the abuse; under the maxim, discover the concatenation; under Nature, discover History.
>
> —Roland Barthes, "Brecht and Discourse"

The bitterly opposed factions within German critical theory that rallied during the first half of the twentieth century around one or another of the major Weimar cultural Marxists—Brecht, Benjamin, Adorno, and Lukács—began their critique of capitalism with the same insight: they all insisted upon the illusory nature of unmediated experience in a capitalist society. Adorno's critique of modern subjectivity finds different echoes in both Benjamin and Brecht and even, to some extent, in Lukács.

Adorno's reflections on "gesellschaftlicher Verblendungszusammenhang" (social context of blindness) through which the subject constitutes its own identity, extend to the illusory projections through which we experience the object world and apply meaning to history. This critique of enlightened subjectivity is also present in Benjamin's critique of historicism, in Lukács's critique of the "unmittelbares Erlebnis" (immediate experience), and in Brecht's theatrical techniques that seek above all to defy the processes of identification upon which bourgeois drama is founded. Beginning, as they began, with a common critique of subjectivity, we can trace their different departures into Lukács's advocacy of realism, Adorno's commitment to the avant-garde, Benjamin's understanding of mimesis, and Brecht's use of natural history. In this way we can recapture some of the fundamental insights that they shared without glossing over their differences.

These departures occur most prominently in the *Realismusdebatte* (realism debate), which began as an argument over Expressionism's impact on fascism but grew into a broader debate on realism in the wake of Lukács's "Es geht um den Realismus" (Realism in the Balance).[12] This essay opened a discussion not only on realism as an art form, but also on the relationship between art and political resistance. The debate began between Brecht and Lukács in 1937, and it was later joined by Adorno when he critiqued Lukács's defense of socialist realism. When Lukács declares realist art, especially the realist novel, to be the aesthetic norm and avant-garde art to be decadent, he places the climax of German literary history in the nineteenth century. In contrast, both Adorno and Brecht opt for historical rather than timeless aesthetic norms and see realism as appropriate for the nineteenth century in the same way that the avant-garde is the proper aesthetic norm for the twentieth century. Neither accepts Lukács's claim that the realist novel, which offers a utopian *Vorbild* (model) for a communist society that has not yet been realized, reached its climax in the past. Nor do they accept that Lukács creates a "realistic" form of idealism which Adorno calls "Realismus aus Realitätsverlust" (realism on the basis of a loss of reality).[13]

Because the poles of the realism debate are realism versus Expressionism in art and socialism versus fascism in politics, the argument between Brecht and Lukács, and later Adorno and Lukács, was mainly about perception. All three agree that the perception of capitalism and the nature of perception in a capitalist society are fundamentally distorted, and each follows Marx in this diagnosis. Lukács writes:

> Und jeder Marxist weiß, daß die grundlegenden ökonomischen Kategorien des Kapitalismus sich in den Köpfen der Menschen *unmittelbar stets verkehrt widerspiegeln.* Das heißt in unserem Fall so viel, daß die in der Unmittelbarkeit des kapitalistischen Lebens befangenen Menschen zur Zeit des sogenannten normalen Funktionierens des Kapitalismus (Etappe der verselbständigten Momente) eine Einheit erleben und denken, zur Zeit der Krise (Herstellung der Einheit der verselbständigten Momente) jedoch die Zerissenheit als Erlebnis ansehen.
>
> [Every Marxist knows that the basic economic categories of capitalism are always reflected in the minds of men, directly, but always back to front. Applied to our present argument this means that in periods when capitalism functions in a so-called normal manner, and its various processes appear autonomous, people living within capitalist society think and experience it as unitary, whereas in periods of crisis, when the autonomous elements are drawn together into unity, they experience it as disintegration.][14]

Brecht and Adorno concur with Lukács's suspicion that unmediated *Erlebnis* (experience) is the reversed perception of capitalism's economic categories. According to Lukács, conventional perception registers unity where economic elements disperse and crisis where these elements unite. Adorno and Brecht privilege crisis as a signifier for the systematic workings of politics, economics, and culture. What Lukács calls unmediated experience in the reversed perception of capitalism is, for Adorno, part of the "gesellschaftlicher Verblendungszusammenhang" (social context of blindness), and both are comparable to Brecht's complex notion of bourgeois identification, which he seeks to destroy in his epic theatre. The different theorists do, however, attack the problem in different ways. Adorno inserts "vielfältige Vermittlungen" (multiple mediations) between subject and object; Brecht seeks to present the conventional as strange (estrangement); Lukács argues for a "vermittelte Unmittelbarkeit" (mediated immediacy) that consists of revealing both the hidden connections of society and the abstractions required to perceive them.[15] This, as Terry Eagleton points out, "reproduces some of the key structures of bourgeois political power."[16]

The key structures of bourgeois power lie, to a great extent, in the connection that historian Reinhard Koselleck, though far-removed from the social and political intentions of early twentieth-century Marxism, sees between the temporality of the Enlightenment and the formation of the modern subject in the eighteenth-century project of the philosophy of history. Koselleck shows how the project of the Enlightenment depends

on a time structure determined by the privileging of *Erwartung* (expectation) over *Erfahrung* (experience). *Erfahrung* (experience) exists as recollections of the past, *Erwartung* (expectation) as projections into the future. In the process of modernity, according to Koselleck, experience and expectation lose their balance, and expectation becomes the motivating force for human action as well as the primary shaper of memory and experience. Expectation, which Koselleck defines as the future's present, casts history as the future's past.[17]

By privileging expectation over experience, subject formation encompasses the Enlightenment's enormous educational project, and the subject constitutes itself through the "Opfer des Augenblicks an die Zukunft" (sacrifice of the present moment to the future).[18] The subjectivist orientation to the future injects an ethical component called *Fortschritt* (progress) into human behavior through time. History can, as Koselleck points out, "als ein Prozeß andauernder und zunehmender Vervollkommnung begriffen werden, der, trotz aller Rückfälle und Umwege, schließlich von den Menschen selber zu planen und zu vollstrecken sei" (be regarded as a long-term process of growing fulfillment which, despite setbacks and deviations, was ultimately planned and carried out by men themselves).[19] The modern subject, then, determines her or his destination, and it is communism as destination that Lukács identifies as the way out of reversed perception.

While Lukács and Koselleck locate the process of subject formation through expectation in the eighteenth century, Adorno and Horkheimer locate the same dynamic in prehistoric times. Lukács locates reversed perception only in the macroeconomic structures of capitalism and not, like Brecht and Adorno, in the unconscious structures of subjectivity as well. Lukács constantly searches for representations of *Bewußtsein* (consciousness) for the real societal counterforces that are finally transformable into political action. Realism, then, depends on "gedankliche Erhebung" (higher intellectual vantage point) over the chaos of reality, and achieving this is, in Lukács's argument, the task of the writer.[20] Chaos becomes order as part of a historical teleology, and realism, as the right consciousness, anticipates and helps shape this emerging order.

For Adorno, the subject is both timeless and historical. It is timeless because, as he and Horkheimer argue in *Dialektik der Aufklärung (Dialectic of Enlightenment)*, the modern subject is both creator and product of the Enlightenment's philosophy of history, a genealogy that secures a subject's understanding of itself and the world. This is, however, a flawed genealogy because Enlightenment thought has failed to become

the liberating and humanizing force that it proclaimed itself to be. Instead, it has become another tool for acquiring power and domination because "instrumental reason," the key to "enlightened" thought, blocks critical reflection. Instrumental reason plays the same role in Enlightenment thought that myth played in pre-Enlightenment thought, thus constituting what the authors call the *Urgeschichte* (metahistory) of the subject and illustrating the way that the Enlightenment made instrumental reason the driving force in human history. From this perspective, Horkheimer and Adorno equate myth with Enlightenment in their book's famous central thesis, arguing that the Enlightenment and myth are mutually constitutive through instrumental reason with the dominating subject as reason's timeless agent.[21]

Nonetheless, they show that the subject is historical because it cannot control the history that it generates. For Adorno and Horkheimer, this process represents the genealogy of the bourgeois individual in which the Enlightenment "Zusammenhang, Sinn, Leben ganz in die Subjektivität zurück[nimmt], die sich in solcher Zurücknahme eigentlich erst konstituiert" (relocates context, meaning, and life entirely within a subjectivity which is actually constituted only by this relocation).[22] Through internalization and identification, the subject attempts to form a coherent self for whom life and meaning merge as elements of identity:

> Das Subjekt schafft die Welt außer ihm noch einmal aus den Spuren, die sie in seinen Sinnen zurückläßt: die Einheit des Dinges in seinen mannigfaltigen Eigenschaften und Zuständen; und es konstituiert damit rückwirkend das Ich, indem es nicht bloß den äußeren sondern auch den von diesen allmählich sich sondernden inneren Eindrücken synthetische Einheit zu verleihen lernt. Das identische Ich ist das späteste konstante Projektionsprodukt.
>
> [From the traces the thing leaves behind in its senses the subject recreates the world outside it: the unity of the thing in its manifold properties and states; and in so doing, in learning how to impart a synthetic unity not only to the outward impressions but to the inward ones which gradually separate themselves from them, it retroactively constitutes the self. The identical ego is the most recent constant product of projection.][23]

Projection and internalization create the self and its understanding of all aspects of the outside or material world. The subject forms a coherent image of the world by processing and ordering unending sensory traces of perception, building unity from the chaotic welter of physical reality. The subject engages in this continuous process of synthesis, internalizing out-