

**AFFECT FOR EFFECT: EMOTION AND PROSOCIAL CHANGE IN
BRECHT'S THEATRE**

by

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BPhil, Theatre Arts & Psychology, University of Pittsburgh, 2018

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2018

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

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In this thesis, I meld theories of emotional expressiveness with concepts of Brecht's dialectical theatre to examine the potentiality of fomenting prosocial change in spectators. I ask how Brecht's theatre can become a more efficacious prosocial tool in cultures and communities. On Brecht's stage, theatrical elements coalesce and collide with an emphasis on the social conditions of contradiction. This dissonance is embodied for both actor and spectator to actively critique during performance and promote synthesizing social transformation. For instance, Brecht's concepts of *Gestus* and *Haltung* manifest both as the representation of role in society and the social contradiction of external human relations. Within *Gestus* and *Haltung*, emotion and affect via the face and body can be analyzed as a shaping force of social behavior that requires scrutiny from the actors on stage and the spectators being affected by these motivating expressions. I root this project in Brecht's 1938 anti-fascist play, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*. The 25 playlets of *Fear and Misery* offer a cross-section investigation of daily German life under Nazi power and display how the violence and fear of fascism produces a miserable society. Psychophysiological constructions of fear are ubiquitous in *Fear and Misery*. Previous research posits more accurate recognition and interpretation of fear portrayals predicts prosocial behavior in others. In Brecht's dialectical theatre, emotion and affect, along with other theatrical devices, must be considered and commented on by spectators to create a dialogue. Perhaps, most importantly, this performative discourse must realize that social conditions *can* and *must* change. Thus, I argue that the

combination of expressions of fear and the anti-fascist material of *Fear and Misery* may tune a spectator to a motivated prosociality against fascism in self and society.

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For my parents.

Infinity.

The persecutors can only be got rid of once enough people understand the causes of their dangers and miseries, and the way things really happen, and how to get rid of the persecutors. So it's a question of communicating this understanding to as large a number as possible. It isn't easy, however one chooses to go about it.

Today I would like to discuss with you theatre people what you might be able to do.

- Bertolt Brecht, The Messingkauf Dialogues

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On May 21st, 1938, a small group of proletarian actors debuted *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* in Paris. In response to growing tension in Europe and the horrors of Nazi rule reported from confidants in his home country, the self-exiled Bertolt Brecht composed a play to criticize the tumultuous dissemination of fascism. However, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, Hermann Göring, or Heinrich Himmler, were not to take center stage in this narrative. Rather, *Fear and Misery* endeavors to dissect and expose a cross-section of daily German life and everyday social relations driven and distorted by fear and misery. Nazis are portrayed as tramps; farcical beings that were just as likely to trip on their own shoelaces as to commit sadistic behavior. This violence predicates, though, on one unifying paste that bonds oppressor and oppressed: fear. Fear-laden social events are ubiquitous in *Fear and Misery*, but their presence does not just attempt to instill horror in a spectator to accomplish a political effect. By complicating the representation of emotional fear on the stage, terror maintains a reciprocally motivating influence on audiences. This force contrasts with dimensions of humor and prosocial behavior in response to the unsettling prospects, and laughable worldview, of the feebly composed base of fascist ideology. To begin, I will discuss my guiding questions, then I examine the critical gap that makes this study important and, finally, I consider my current methodology and outline the coming sections.

The present study seeks to meld Bertolt Brecht's theatrical concepts of *Gestus* and *Haltung* with psycho-neuroscientific theories of emotional communication and expressiveness. I ask, how can emotion and affect help Brecht's theatre become a more efficacious and fomenting prosocial tool in cultures and communities? Prosocial behavior, or the socially-minded drive to aid another or society-as-a-whole, corresponds intuitively with Brecht's political theatre. Drawing from cognitive and affectual science, I contend that the depiction of emotional articulacy, especially fear, in the face and body via *Gestus* and *Haltung* can promote prosocial behavior in a spectator when joined with theatre for political change. As a result, my intervention combats narratives of the "emotion-less Brecht" and supports a placement of the emotions in Brecht's theatre as a dialectical conveyance of social behavior for spectator critique and instigation. In other words, affect for effect.

Presently, I use *Gestus* and *Haltung* to express theories of a socially representative performance that resides in the external relations of peoples. *Gestus* and *Haltung* thus regard the matter of stances taken by a figure on the stage towards another or a circumstance. *Haltung* bares the present social relations and enables spectators to witness how social forces can carve the behavior of figures in specific situations. Take for instance how an unexpected death, a discrete power play, or a familial revelation shifts a person's behavior towards others, themselves, and the event they reside in. It is in this pliability of human nature towards certain events that reveal a variation in *Haltung*. *Gestus*, on the other hand, is the *entire* bearing or stance considered by actor, figure, language, design, and music. For example, the position a figure maintains towards these unforeseen deaths, power struggles, and family troubles detail the *gestic* representation of their total role in society and overall stance taken towards social matters.

As *Gestus* and *Haltung* manifest, in part, as an embodied act, these concepts fit well with theories of emotions and affects. To put it broadly, emotion is: “any strong mental or instinctive feeling, as pleasure, grief, hope, fear, etc., deriving *esp.* from one's circumstances, mood, or relationship with others.”¹ The “feeling state” that constitutes emotion thus produces affect, which classifies in two apt ways: 1.) “A feeling or subjective experience accompanying a thought or action or occurring in response to a stimulus; an emotion, a mood,” or, 2.) “the outward display of emotion or mood, as manifested by facial expression, posture, gestures, tone of voice, etc.”² I place *Gestus* and *Haltung* in conversation with the latter definition, in that, affect or affectual expression is the physiological production of the emotion felt.

This study leans and builds upon significant undertakings by scholars of Brecht's aesthetics, the cognitive turn in theatre studies, and the psychology of emotional expression.³ My intervention concentrates on the construction, recognition, and portrayal of the communication of the emotions, namely fear, in Brecht's theatre. Despite the cognitive turn in theatre studies, there has not yet been an explicit union of *Gestus* and *Haltung* with psycho-neuroscientific theories of affectual expression. While scholars are placing Brecht's positions on emotion and affect under reconsideration, these methods create a discourse that centers more on the theory behind affect in the vein of comparative literature or philosophy, rather than social scientific research.⁴ This gap has been filled, in a way, by the beginnings of a cognitive look at Brecht's theatre, like Bruce McConachie's 2006 essay “A Cognitive Approach to Brechtian Theatre.” McConachie offers an

¹ “emotion, n.3.” OED Online. January 2018. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11125>.

² Ibid, “affect, n. 5b.”

³ For instance, I engage with the work of Bruce McConachie, Rhonda Blair, Paul Ekman, Brian Parkinson, David Barnett, Abigail Marsh, Megan Kozak, and Nalini Ambady. I delineate my dialogue with these scholars below.

⁴ See: Vidar Thorsteinsson, “‘This Great Passion for Producing’: The Affective Reversal of Brecht's Dramatic Theory.” *Cultural Critique* 97, no. 97 (2017): 57-83.

analysis of Brecht's concept of estrangement, *Verfremdungseffekt*, emotion, and empathy in relation to cognitive theorists.⁵ My project expands on his foundation to highlight the social communication of the emotions and how these processes may bolster Brecht's theorem of *Gestus* and *Haltung*.

Similarly, David Barnett's *Brecht in Practice – Theatre, Theory, and Performance* supplies an accessible reading of Brechtian theorem and its translation to the stage. It would seem Barnett's book expresses a desire to abate the misapplications and misunderstanding Brecht's theories, as "it is in the theatre itself where the most significant problems lie."⁶ As a result, his distillation of the concepts of *Gestus*, *Haltung*, and emotion in actor provide necessary definitions that make this work possible.

Regarding the realm of psychology, I draw from the research of Paul Ekman, Silvan Tomkins, and Brian Parkinson, among others. Most notably, Paul Ekman's foundational studies on the Fore Tribe in Papa New Guinea established the modern universal theory of emotional expressions. Ekman classifies the six "core" emotions as fear, anger, surprise, disgust, happiness, and sadness, and, as of now, the universal theory upholds with hardy empirical evidence. Though, as I show in the proceeding sections, the universality of the emotions has its own culturally representative caveats that calls forth a strong need for analysis in theatrical medium. I use these theories and other discrete empirical studies to elucidate the communicative and inciting prosocial possibilities of emotional assessment in Brecht's aesthetics of social transformation.

As I show, contradiction is a key part of Brecht's dialectical theatre, most noticeably in the examination that results from a spectator commenting on witnessed relationships. I define

⁵ Bruce A. McConachie, "A Cognitive Approach to Brechtian Theatre," *Theatre Symposium: A Journal of the Southeastern Theatre Conference* 14, (2006): 9-24.

⁶ David Barnett, *Brecht in Practice: Theatre, Theory and Performance* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 2.

contradiction most closely as the taught state of being between two or more opposing forces. In Brecht's theatre, we are to observe social behavior that oft unveils contradictions in various elements, be it concerning the relationship and stances of actor and figure, language and figure, figure and spectator, spectator and set, and so on. For example, in *Fear and Misery* a contrast between language and figure occurs when a worker shouts "Heil Hitler!" to shirk Nazi suspicion of his communist leanings. The worker fulfills a sociopolitical obligation but opposes actual devotion for the Führer with fearful deference. Contradiction then relates most appositely to dialectics. To advance this discussion, I must first delineate what I mean by "dialectical" and how figure severely differs from the depiction of character on Brecht's stage.

Dialectics, or the dialectical, defines as the "critical investigation of truth through reasoned argument, often *spec.* by means of dialogue or discussion."⁷ In other words, understanding via critique. However, given the influence that Hegel's dialectics had on Marxism which in turn captivated Brecht, it is possible to view his perception of dialectics as Marxist.⁸ Due to this, new ways of thinking and inferring are born out of a contradiction between the thesis and the antithesis that results in a synthesis thereby creating a new thesis. Dialectics in Brecht's aesthetics endure to challenge that which society propagates as stable, thus the theatre as a site for the depiction of this contradiction was attractive to Brecht. The "epic" theatre, a term he would later consider as "dialectical," seeks to utilize this model.⁹ For instance, a Brechtian performance may have two sites of contradiction (thesis and antithesis) that synthesize into an incitement of social action. In

⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, "dialectic, n.1a."

⁸ The Hegelian dialectic entails three distinct facets: the thesis, the antithesis, and the synthesis.

⁹ Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 277. Brecht clarifies in the *Appendices to the Short Organum*, "The theatre of the scientific age is in a position to make dialectics into a source of enjoyment. The unexpectedness of logically progressive or zigzag development, the instability of every circumstance, the joke of contradiction and so forth: all these are ways of enjoying the liveliness of men, things and processes, and they heighten in both our capacity for life and our pleasure in it. Every art contributes to the greatest art of all, the art of living."

a broad sense, *Fear and Misery* illustrates the opposing friction of fascism (thesis) and resistance or dispiritedness from oppression (antithesis). The synthesis, then, expects to occur from audience critique and their desire to shift the social relations rather than propagandistic content that does not concern political *effect*. The observance of conflicting social behaviors reaches out to spectators and calls for change via critique, contemplation, and the formation of a specific stance, not through the promulgation of a beleaguered political message.

To avoid falling prey to fresh misconceptions of Brecht's aesthetics, I must also explain what is meant by a theatre for political effect. Manfred Wekwerth, a previous director of the Berliner Ensemble, offers two salient observations related to any misapplications. He asserts, "these plays aren't just political because they have a political subject or because political songs are sung in them, but rather because they adopt a certain political stance ('Haltung') and want to spread the message: that social circumstances need to be changed."¹⁰ Furthermore, Wekwerth advocates that the "unpolitical" may become political, in that, plays that do not prescribe to definite political effects and aesthetics can in themselves sustain political implications.¹¹ From the *Fabel*, or "story," of a performance to the figures themselves, dialectics are an integral facet of all Brechtian theorem. As a result, it is in the contradictions of figure where one may begin to construct *Gestus* and *Haltung*.

Furthermore, differences between the use of "figure" and "character" requires sizable consideration. In Brecht's mind, character fixes an actor and constitutes inflexible characteristics. Characteristics of character are predictable and sustain relatively unmovable trajectories of behavior (think archetypes: the hero, the villain, the nerd, the cool guy, the "hot" girl, etc.). Some

¹⁰ Manfred Wekwerth and Anthony Hozier, *Daring to Play: A Brecht Companion* (New York: Abingdon; Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 23.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 21.

characteristics may lead a character and actor to behave in a permanent manner without displaying the social malleability of human nature. If theatre is to embody and portray why humans behave in the ways we do, the concept of set character equip with lasting characteristics does not accomplish this goal. Figure, on the other hand, concentrates on how qualities of figure can be contradictory and dwell in external relations and circumstances. Simply put, Brecht saw the use of “figure” as a more plastic concept for both performance and actor.¹² A figure is open to change and free from tropes that materialize a compact resolution of self. The figure revolves around contradiction. If a figure can change, society may affect it. Therefore, spectators can witness these contradictions and attempt to understand why figures may behave as they do in a variety of settings. Specifically, when they perform an act or affect other figures in a manner that disagrees with previously presented behavior. In turn, the audience can witness and critique these contradictions within their own selves, relationships, and/or society and may wish to placate the dissonance by enacting social change.

To coagulate contradiction in figure, Brecht offers the “not-but” trick. The idea behind telling an actor to ponder the “not-but” of their figure is to mark that situations can oft happen differently when varying social forces inflict transformations. For instance, Oedipus does *not* accept that he has fulfilled the prophecy *but* blinds himself. In *Fear and Misery*, “The Jewish Wife” does *not* stay with her gentile husband in Germany *but* leaves to preserve his career and reputation. Use of “not-but” requires the actor to understand that their figure can always react inversely to a myriad of social events and contexts. Thus, these circumstances comprise the “story” or *Fabel*. The *Fabel* is *not* plot *but* an “*interpreted version of events*” and thus “an account of the play’s

¹² Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 84.

action from a dialectical view because it teases out contradictions.”¹³ *Fabel* is contrasting and interpretative to construct socially representative events. The *Fabel* then becomes transparent via an *Arrangement*, the condensation of contradiction in a scene for spectator engagement and analysis.¹⁴ These elements of Brecht’s theatre are important and must be kept in play, despite my attention towards *Gestus* and *Haltung*.

My critical lens thus engages with cognitive and affectual science to support the application of Brecht’s aesthetics for subsequent political and prosocial effect. I find Brecht’s theatre vital to employ due to its foremost prominence on the cause and effect of behavior in the external social relations of human beings. In *Fear and Misery*, violence and fear pair to produce ubiquitous misery. Thus, the anti-fascist stance of the work renders social relationships to allow spectators to scrutinize the interplaying cause and effect of daily life in Nazi Germany. As I show, the observation of behavior in others, specifically regarding emotional communication, is a significant facet of human motivation. I emphasize fear as its representation and recognition has curious effects on the prosociality of others. Prosocial behavior then maintains a major influence on the political impact of *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*.

Moreover, Brecht’s view of fear greatly buttresses my coming assertions. As Astrid Oesmann outlines, Brecht asserts that “fear results from visual perception” and “that our fear mirrors the fear observed in others.”¹⁵ Thus, this position provides the connective tissue between the theatrical realm of observation and fear in self resulting from terror interpreted in society. In the manner of an inherently social scientific approach, Brecht finds the motivation of fear to lie in

¹³ Ibid., 86.

¹⁴ Ibid., 90.

¹⁵ Astrid Oesmann, *Staging History: Brecht's Social Concepts of Ideology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 192.

its affectual expression and communication with others. Due to the leading role of observation in these processes, *Fear and Misery* becomes an ideal medium for this theatrical enactment. In addition, *Fear and Misery* has a political past that is no less important than the sociopolitical implications the play upholds. Scholars, like John and Ann White, hail it as one of Brecht's most well-composed works, especially in the vein of anti-fascist rhetoric.¹⁶ Though as Stephen Parker reminds, "the difficult production history of a variable text has hampered that recognition, and other plays have eclipsed it."¹⁷ Despite this lack of acknowledgement, I find *Fear and Misery* to be an excellent object of study for this analysis.

As such, *Fear and Misery* becomes an exemplar of *Gestus* and *Haltung* in practice as well as the embodiment of the emotional state and affectual expression of fear. The recognition of facial fear has been shown to predict prosocial behavior in others.¹⁸ This priming of prosociality, when coupled with Brecht's dialectical theatre, combines critical contradiction in theatrical elements with spectator critique to, hopefully, incite societal change. In this way, I posit that the displays of facial and bodily fear made prominent through the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of figures and their relations prepares subsequent prosocial behavior in spectators. Given the political effect considered in *Fear and Misery*, this prosociality in spectator tunes to the anti-fascist *Fabel* present, congealing in a motivated prosocial stance against fascism.

Lastly, the current study constitutes two parts. Part One centers on Brecht's theories of *Haltung* and *Gestus*. I begin with an investigation of the historical contexts that establish *Fear and*

¹⁶ John J. White and Ann White. *Bertolt Brecht's Furcht Und Elend Des Dritten Reiches: A German Exile Drama in the Struggle Against Fascism* (Rochester, N.Y: Camden House, 2010), 8. Brecht, too, appears to place *Fear and Misery* as a solid example of an anti-fascist play.

¹⁷ Stephen Parker, *Bertolt Brecht: A Literary Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 374.

¹⁸ See: Abigail A. Marsh, Megan N. Kozak, and Nalini Ambady. "Accurate identification of fear facial expressions predicts prosocial behavior." *Emotion* 7, no. 2 (2007): 1-25. See also: Abigail A. Marsh, and Nalini Ambady. "The influence of the fear facial expression on prosocial responding." *Cognition and Emotion* 21, no. 2 (2007): 225-247.

Misery of the Third Reich as a model for Brecht's aesthetics in practice. Then, I unpack *Gestus* and *Haltung* to join these concepts with *Fear and Misery*. Following the examination of *Gestus* and *Haltung*, I divulge the ways in which these theorems can pair with affect theories of affectual expression and the social communication of the emotions.

In Part Two, I explore the psychophysiological science of the articulation of emotion and, most intently, the potentiality for a conveyance of the expression of fear as a primer for prosocial behavior in spectators of Brecht's political theatre. By placing these ideas in conversation, I uncover a relationship between the numerous portrayals of fear in *Fear and Misery* that formulate the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of figures. Regarding the recognition of emotion, I reveal the possibility of utilizing fear to impel prosociality in spectators. When merged with the specific political effect of the anti-fascist *Fear and Misery*, the translation of fear in *Gestus* and *Haltung* becomes the precedent for a prosocial action in the audience, all reliant on witnessing social conditions that require change. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of avenues for future study.

2.0 PART ONE

Haltung and Gestus: The Dialectics of Emotion

Mediocre actors cannot communicate terror, only innocuousness.

*Bertolt Brecht, Letters, 1938*¹⁹

Brecht's theatre upholds important methods for portraying the emotions dialectically for political effect and prosocial motivation. As a spectator observes the suspenseful circumstance of "walking on eggshells" around an SS officer, viscerally responds to the flogging of a fear-filled person, or witnesses change in behavior due to terror-laden blackmail, displays of emotion detail evocative information. For Brecht, viewing these vignettes stimulates criticism and oft provokes one salient conclusion: this horror is unnecessary, and the social conditions *can* and *must* change. Due to this, actors should construct their figures in such a way that emotional communication is not only clear and meaningful but also complicated dialectically. The means to enact this emotional complication are Brecht's theories of *Gestus* and *Haltung*. The external residence of *Gestus* and *Haltung* explicitly elicits the verbal and non-verbal social communication of emotion to an audience for prosocial fomentation. *Gestus* marks the whole bearing of a figure in a situation and an entire performance. Similarly, *Haltung* (pl. *Haltungen*), is the stance taken by figures to particular events that make both relationships lucid to spectators and show how social dynamics can mold behavior.

¹⁹ Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Letters* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 285.

In the anti-fascist montage of playlets *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, dialectics, *Gestus*, and *Haltung* are key. When figures of power, such as the Nazis, portray the facial expression of fear via a shift in their *Haltung*, it contrasts the *Gestus* of associations with others on stage, their uniform, authoritative vocal modulation, and positionality of the body emphasizing social role. Thus, the dialectical bearing of fear in the milieu of fascist dictatorship undermines power schemas with sociopolitical connotations. In displays of emotions that contrast within and between figures, the spectator may question why figures behave in certain ways that result from said emotion(s) in the external social relations. This critical questioning from the spectator will then accentuate an emotion like fear that impels the main theme of *Fear and Misery*, as contradictory. Hence, a variation in *Gestus* or *Haltung* overtly motions for one to ponder how much power these figures truly hold when they are just as fearful as those they oppress.

The coming section seeks to understand how theories of emotional expressiveness enmesh with Brecht's notions of *Gestus* and *Haltung*. I first delineate a history of *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* to contextualize its present elements of *Gestus* and *Haltung*. I then detail *Haltung* and, following, *Gestus* to cement conceptualizations of these theories in Brechtian performance. In Part Two, I explore affect theories to parse the role of the emotions in verbal and non-verbal social communication via the face and body with my connections to *Gestus* and *Haltung*.

2.1 FEAR AND MISERY OF THE THIRD REICH IN CONTEXT

Brecht, self-exiled from his native Germany under the Nazi Regime, began composing a “series of (horror) scenes” in 1937 which he believed would lend itself greatly for production in

the United States.²⁰ Though, the catalyzers of what would eventually manifest *Fear and Misery* is seen in his poems of the mid-1930s and a continued relationship with Margarete Steffin.²¹ Steffin, both confidant and a previous lover of Brecht, provided essential concrete eyewitness reports and combined documentary evidence of life under Nazi rule, influencing the development of these poems and plays.²² Come 1938, Brecht began sending many of the playlets to Erwin Piscator, an influencer and collaborator to Brecht. As Piscator decided not to work on a production, Brecht contacted Slatan Dudow, a filmmaker and communist who would become the director of the first production of *Fear and Misery*, and Karl Korsch, the prominent Marxist philosopher who spent time with the exiled Brecht in Denmark.²³ These correspondences expose the insistency of Brecht's belief in *Fear and Misery* as a significant undercutting stance against fascism and a piece of resistance. The roots of such opposition lie in the depictions of the everyday of the Third Reich encompassing the paper-thin façade of a powerful might that relies shakily on violence and fear. In a 1938 letter to Piscator, Brecht states:

Everybody is wondering how long a war Hitler could fight. And the so-called democracies are very much interested in knowing how the Nazi dictatorship affects the various social groupings. The play gives a cross section of all German society in nineteen scenes (a few more could be added). Terror and resistance everywhere.²⁴

This note indicates Brecht's intention for *Fear and Misery* as a depiction of everyday life under fascist ruling, and one that can also inform or educate other societies. Similarly, in a letter to Korsch, Brecht discusses the possibility of a production of *Fear and Misery* in Paris and his want to produce the play in the United States as "fear has now gripped Europe."²⁵ Albeit, one of

²⁰ Brecht and Willett, *Letters*, 280-281.

²¹ Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Poems & Songs from the Plays* (London: Methuen, 1990), 119-160.

²² Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2009), xlii.

²³ Brecht and Willett, *Letters*, 281. Brecht considers Korsch to be one of his Marxist teachers.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 280.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 281.

the most conspicuous instances of Brecht's plan to produce *Fear and Misery* arises in letters to Dudow, who was concerned the play may prompt a message that was too depressing. To rebut, Brecht marks multiple points of resistance throughout the play, how necessary the displaying of "the struggle" is, why the casting of capable actors is pertinent, and his assertions that the piece is not dismal.²⁶ In this heated exchange with Dudow, Brecht affirms what I contend is the thesis of *Fear and Misery*:

Because it shows too clearly what a fragile foundation fear and misery are for a Reich, how few supporters the Nazis can really count on, how ineffectual terror is bound to be, in fact, how inevitably, it must create resistance, even in sections of the population that originally welcomed it with cheers.²⁷

Given this thesis, considering *Fear and Misery* a piece of resistance can appear justifiable as it is a direct stance against fascism. Though, the representations of resistance that are apparent only support a robust critique of the Third Reich; any possible pieces of progressive, working-class rhetoric are secondary to this scrutiny as Brecht assures: "After all, we're not showing the working-class movement and its resistance, we're criticizing the Nazi system, and everything depends on the incisiveness of our criticism."²⁸ Hence, the exact method of "resistance" in *Fear and Misery* has come under some debate.

As is true with Brecht's dialectical theatre, representations of resistance are complex, but *Fear and Misery* does not portray an "active" conception of resistance. Rather, the play accentuates "figures who either fail to resist altogether, or whose resistance is limited."²⁹ So, *Fear and Misery*

²⁶ Ibid., 281-282. The series of letters with Dudow contain Brecht's frustration with the actors at the disposal of Dudow and the selection of scenes for *Fear and Misery*, with Brecht going as far to state, "I see that I'm sounding rather emotional. That's because I'm upset." His concern regarding the actors is most notable in his questioning of their talent, worrying that their own mediocrity would lead to "political feebleness." As this play was a critique of the Third Reich, whose power was far greater than the provocative attempts of a few theatre practitioners, it must withhold the "hallmark of durability."

²⁷ Ibid., 282.

²⁸ Ibid., 284.

²⁹ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, xlvi.

may represent a method of resistance, given the fervent “NO!” that ends the play and indicates a position against the coming war combined with moments of solidarity amongst figures. Nonetheless, the play fluctuates about an outlook of opposition that more often displays its negation than its success.³⁰ John Willett clarifies this position by stating, “So while Brecht’s portrayal of resistance may be class oriented, his representation of the suffering caused by Nazi dictatorship pays no heed to class divisions.”³¹ The conceptions of resistance weaved in *Fear and Misery* then coalesce as a matter of the external social relations, with contradictions of figure abounding to jut forth perceptions of political like-mindedness against fascism, how unity is squelched by hegemony, and those who have fallen prey to the furor of authoritarian belief systems. Perhaps, Brecht’s most intriguing mode of “resistance” is in the building of figures in *Fear and Misery*. No matter class or power status, no one figure is a victim and all misery of dictatorship is as resistible as the fear that stifles opposition. In my analysis of *Haltung* and *Gestus* via *Fear and Misery* and affect theories, the ways in which fear greatly determines Brecht’s critiques of fascism and attempts of resistance will become clearer.

In Paris in May of 1938, Slatan Dudow directed the first production of *Fear and Misery*, at the time bearing the title *99%. Scenes from the Third Reich*.³² This production performed eight

³⁰ Brecht and Willett, *Letters*, 285. The “NO!” in scene 24, “Consulting the People,” of *Fear and Misery* is a clear stance against the coming of Hitler’s war as he begins occupation of Austria. The figures of this scene, wishing to act, attempt to write a manifesto against the war, which the female worker asserts should simply state “NO!” However, the conception of the “NO!” at the end shifted at times during Brecht’s correspondence with Dudow, and subsequent productions of *Fear and Misery* have chosen or may select playlets that do not end with scene 24. As a result, before the first production, Brecht challenged Dudow on the ordering of the playlets saying that other scenes “would give us our *No* at the end.”

³¹ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, xlvi.

³² Parker, *A Literary Life*, 375. The title of *99%* is of note not only due to its topical reference to the Austrian Anschluss Referendum of 1938, but also Brecht’s doubt, “99% (Important objection: it won’t fit into the metre of the ballad) strikes me as a littler too clever, but it’s all right with me if our friends want it. Only it’s rather weak and suggests a different sort of play.” Another title considered by Brecht was *The German-March Past* (Earlier variant: *The German Troops March Past*) in direct reference to the poem and prologue in *Fear and Misery* of the same name.

of the twenty-five playlets Brecht had written at the time.³³ In translating criticism of this first production from the *Brecht Handbuch*, John Willett finds positive comments on the structure of *Fear and Misery* from German critic and theorist Walter Benjamin. However, Benjamin spouts that one actor's empathetic portrayal of an SA man was "politically inappropriate, and so he implied that the epic mode of acting is an absolute necessity in this kind of role," according to Willett's translation.³⁴ These concerns are reasonable and his call for the epic theatre's disruption of empathetic processes understandable, especially given the sociopolitical moment he was in. For Benjamin, it would seem attempts to abate empathetic processes are essential in the performative discussion of the Third Reich. Especially, when considering acting that deters or complicates any potential empathizing with a Nazi, in figure or otherwise.

Apart from the inferences of resistance in the text, the first production of *Fear and Misery* was itself a provocative stance, as it was performed by a "refugee group" of proletarian artists that could not even pay Brecht royalties.³⁵ In the latter half of an August 15th, 1938 journal entry, Brecht appears to express an admiration for the attempts of this proletarian theatre:

the montage, a process that has been so thoroughly condemned, arose here out of letters from dudow who needed something for his little proletarian theatre-group in paris. so the proletarian theatre in exile is keeping the theatre alive. while in Moscow maxim vallentin, the one-time director of a berlin agitprop group, has gone over to the bourgeois theatre and

³³ Now twenty-four scenes, canonically.

³⁴ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, lviii. Relating to *Haltung* and *Gestus*, this notion is of prominence and will garner further consideration in their respective sections and the coming chapter.

³⁵ Brecht and Willett, *Letters*, 291. Brecht notes this in a letter to the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom thanking them for extending his grant. This September 1938 letter also provides another succinct thesis of *Fear and Misery*, stating, "This summer I was engaged in completing my *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* cycle, an attempt in twenty-seven scenes to show the reaction of almost every section of the German people to the National Socialist dictatorship. I tried to bring out two points which I thought it vital to make known abroad: first the enslavement, disenfranchisement, and paralysis of *all* sections of the population under the National Socialist dictatorship (people living in the democracies have far too little concrete knowledge of this); second, the state of mind prevailing in the army of the totalitarian state, which is a cross section of the population as a whole (to give people outside Germany an idea of the fragility of this war machine)." Original emphasis.

announced that in art an appeal has to be made to the emotions, which can only mean reason has to be switched off.³⁶

Here, Brecht supposes the proletarian theatre is surviving and supporting the theatre in a time of disarray. The job at Maxim Vallentin, who had now shifted from agitprop performance to a Stanislavskian method, is curious as it ostensibly links an appeal to audience's emotions (as opposed to reason) with Brecht's negative view of bourgeois theatre. This is also evident when Brecht comments in the *Appendices to a Short Organum*, "The bourgeois theatre's performances always aim at smoothing over contradictions, at creating false harmony, at idealization."³⁷ Brecht, combatting this institution, finds a proletarian theatre without emotion to circumvent reasoning thus disabling achievement of the critical thought to conceive the social reality in an effective manner. I consider Brecht's viewpoints and misconceptions of the emotions in my coming discussion of affect theories. However, I feel it necessary to emphasize the present radicalism of his emotional negation. Although polemical and differing in later theoretical writings, this disavowal was a method of undermining a bourgeois reinforcement of ideals that never culminates to actual change. In other words, theatre that produces and propagates an inactive and complicit nature resulting from an ingrained norm and manufactured emotion that is perhaps destined, fixed, and/or devoid of social meaning. I seek a divergent consideration of emotion in Brechtian performance; this study draws from the affectual science of our current scientific age which, in

³⁶ Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Bertolt brecht journals* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 15. Note: I have reproduced this entry as it is presented in the English translation, including Brecht's penchant for lacking capitalization. The "montage" refers to the montage style of scenes present in *Fear and Misery*. Brecht's ending comment on the "appeal to the emotions" represents his early contention that pure application of emotion undermines reasoning and thus prohibits critique for social change.

³⁷ Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (London: Methuen, 1964), 277. Correspondingly, bourgeois theatre can be defined as performance "produced for maximum profits, its themes and values addressed to '(petit-bourgeois)' audience who spend large amounts of money to consume an ideology and aesthetic already familiar to them." See: Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* (Buffalo [N.Y.]; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 37.

turn, supports the motivations that the emotions trigger in an individual and, most importantly, external sociality.

World War II prohibited any other European productions of *Fear and Misery* until it ended. After the war, two productions were produced in Basel, Switzerland in 1946 and 1947. Germany saw its first performance of *Fear and Misery* on January 30th, 1948 in the Deutsches Theater, West Germany, and a second in 1949 in Dortmund, West Germany, consisting of a “low podium positioned on the black stage. At the side of the podium, two rows of plywood figures formed a mute choir of SA men.”³⁸ From 1957 to 1963, the *Berliner Ensemble* put on 156 performances and other post-WW2 productions occurred throughout Europe.³⁹ The English premiere of *Fear and Misery* was in 1962 as a student production at the Guildhall School.⁴⁰ Other productions in the United Kingdom appeared in Leeds in 1979, at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre in 1972, and the Edinburgh Fringe festival in 1998, to name a few. More recently, *Fear and Misery* has seen two London productions at the Union Theatre in 2016 and the Brockley Jack Studio Theatre in 2018. *Fear and Misery* also inspired adaptations that draw from the political nuances of the text and marked anti-fascist stance.⁴¹ Thus, the pursuing value of *Fear and Misery* is not that it speaks to any specific sociopolitical moment, despite the content being a take on interpreted conditions of the Third Reich. Instead, *Fear and Misery* plays to social circumstances and relations that have been corrupted by particular beliefs and, subsequently, must alter. Figures of fascism can die; ideologies can endure.

³⁸ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, lxiii.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, lxiv-lxv.

⁴⁰ S, L. G. 1962, “Fear and Misery in the Third Reich,” *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)* (4232): 18.

⁴¹ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, lxiv-lxv. Additionally, adaptations have used *Fear and Misery* as anti-communist performance.

As I noted above, Brecht had America on his mind for some time whilst in exile in Denmark. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1941 and saw to multiple productions of *Fear and Misery*. Also, the first English translation of *Fear and Misery*, composed by Eric Bentley with the aid of Elizabeth Hauptmann, came to press in 1941 as well as a full German variant in 1945.⁴² Perhaps the most important and fascinating of these productions was in New York in June 1945. *Fear and Misery* (titled *The Private Life of the Master Race*) was to be directed by Erwin Piscator, who planned many epic elements to be imbued within the piece. These instances included: The on-stage pianist held at gunpoint by a member of the SS and required to change “The Star-Spangled Banner” to the Horst-Wessel song, live critique of democracy and dictatorship, and visible stagehands and actors to perpetually tell the audience they are indeed witnessing theatre, not reality.⁴³ Despite these provocative ideas, Piscator quit just before opening night and a new director was hired.⁴⁴

The initial productions of *Fear and Misery* in Europe and the United States provide vital information regarding its performance as well as the necessary implementation of *Gestus*, *Haltung*, *Verfremdung*, and the “epic” theatre in context. One such incidence relates to *Verfremdungseffekt*, when as part of the June 1945 New York production Maurice Ellis, a black actor and the narrator of *Fear and Misery*, had his face painted white at the persistence of Brecht; “an alienation effect that also referred to racial discrimination in America, which suggests that Brecht considered the play to have implications beyond the particular context of the Third Reich.”⁴⁵ This is a pertinent notion to remind that the present significance of *Fear and Misery* lies in both its relation to *Gestus* and *Haltung* and its social malleability of meaning. Due to this meaning-making via external

⁴² Ibid., lx-lxi. The 1944 English text was seventeen scenes and called *The Private Life of the Master Race*.

⁴³ Ibid., lxi. The Horst-Wessel song was the official anthem of Nazi Germany.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Piscator quit because he felt Brecht was too frustrating to work with. Berthold Viertel directed.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Critics had a contrasting conception feeling the play was largely unnecessary and, even, meaningless since WW2 had already ended.

societal relations, I show the prominence of emotion and affect, most notably the instigating force of fear, in *Fear and Misery*. Astrid Oesmann asserts, “Brecht places fascist thought in specific contexts in order to examine a range of gestures and the ways those gestures change as the contexts producing them alter.”⁴⁶ This plethora of gestures and the compulsions in which society moves them are that of *Gestus* and *Haltung*. Within these contradictory and coalescing societal and psychophysical effects of *Haltung* and demonstrations of *Gestus*, so lies a catalyzation of affectual expression ready to surface, motivate, and, stimulate prosocially.

2.2 *HALTUNG: THE SOCIAL FORCE OF CONTRADICTION*

Gestus is the essence of an attitude. *Haltung* is a stance or bearing towards events manifesting as an attitude or change of said attitudes due to the social relations. As a concept, *Gestus* is undernourished without being paired with Brecht’s theory of *Haltung* (pl. *Haltungen*). Whereas *Gestus* makes the entire social positions of figure visible to an audience, *Haltung* grapples with and entralls the actor in the idea that the “human” is beholden to our reciprocal social development. Theoretically, *Haltung* “mediates between two uses of ‘intervening thinking’: in practical relationships of people to each other and in systematic cognition about people (*Menschenkunde*).”⁴⁷ Literary scholar Darko Suvin breaks *Haltung* into three discrete parts:

1. A refusal of the bourgeois and individualistic concepts of an internalized and atomic character (*Charakterkopf, Seelenkäse*);
2. A revaluation of the Right-wing and militaristic-cum-servile stress on *Strammhalten*, that is, statics and hierarchy;
3. An alternative to the

⁴⁶ Astrid Oesmann, *Staging History*, 127.

⁴⁷ Darko Suvin, “On Stance, Agency, and Emotions in Brecht” (1994), 12.

faceless “economics as last instance of all behavior” in orthodox “Historical Materialism” from Engels through Kautsky to Stalin.⁴⁸

In other words, *Haltung* combats notions of the ultimate “self” and the inescapable individualistic psyche to highlight our behavioral plasticity resulting from a respective stance regarding relationships *and/or* the effects of the external social relations.

Concerning the actor in practice, Brecht contends, “for the smallest social unit is not the single person but two people. In life we develop one another.”⁴⁹ Human behaviors and emotions are always in flux as we are consistently shifting to adapt to different social situations. Through an actor’s *Haltung*, this concept finds representation on the stage. David Barnett states, “*Haltung* combines what is usually a mental state in English (attitude) with physical expression (bearing).”⁵⁰ Thus, *Haltung* differs from *Gestus* in that *Gestus* is meant to enable the whole embodiment of a role or position in society that informs the figure. *Haltung* or *Haltungen* provide the specific stances or reactions to *social* constructs or situations. Nonetheless, the actor “blends *Gestus* (position in society) with a repertoire of contradictory *Haltungen* (responses to specific situations).”⁵¹ Contradiction is key in the implementation of *Gestus* and *Haltung*, as it not only textures the execution of both, but aids in portraying *why humans may behave in the ways they do*, especially if said behavior subverts their preceding, present, and future actions. There is no planned fate for these figures and no catharsis, only dialectics.

For example, the scene “Servants of the People” from *Fear and Misery* aptly displays how *Haltung* can expound socio-behavioral motivations. This very brief playlet involves three

⁴⁸ Ibid. As Suvin correctly points out, this degrading of the individual is hallmarked in Brecht’s work (See: *Mann ist Mann*).

⁴⁹ Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 197.

⁵⁰ Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 97-98.

⁵¹ Ibid., 99.

characters, an SS man, a detainee, and an SS officer. As Brecht did not want an actor or audience tied up in the internal psychology of character, we must move to stress the external interactions between figures in their social relations. Conversely, one may be inclined to play into an individual characterization of good (the withered detainee) and evil (the gruff, authoritative SS man; the sadistic SS officer). However, Brecht's methodology elicits a far more multifaceted portrayal of figure. The SS man is notably exhausted and implores the detainee to just admit he is a communist: "Why can't you say no when they ask if you're a communist, you cunt? It means a lash for you and I have to stay in the barracks. I'm so fucking tired."⁵² The SS man then asks the detainee to flog the ground if the SS officer patrols again, as he does not wish to punish him anymore due to exhaustion. When the steps of SS officer are heard, the detainee begins flogging the ground, but this "doesn't sound authentic" so the SS man instructs him to flog a basket, which causes the footsteps to stop.⁵³ This disconcerts the SS man, so he retakes his whip and flogs the detainee. When the detainee gently asks, "Not my stomach," the SS man smacks his rear instead.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the SS officer peaks around and instructs to "flog his stomach" which the SS man does immediately.⁵⁵

Regarding *Haltung*, the SS man offers us striking contradictions both due to his *Gestus* and to whom his *Haltungen* affects and is affected by. His *Haltung* towards the detainee is tired and authoritatively "lenient," but this swiftly shifts to a contrasting *Haltung* of agitation and obedience when the SS officer changes the social situation with his presence and a subsequent order. If *Haltung* is meant to render the social relations known to an audience and how society

⁵² Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, 140.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

limits and molds, then the commentary of this small scene is significant. In this theatrical instance of challenging fascist behavior, we witness two men withered by work, one in a social position of power and the other stripped of agency. A minor episode of frail mercy squashes under this *Haltungen* by way of deference and fear. The SS man's *Haltung* becomes clear by the physicalized attitude of anxious compliance whilst flogging; his previous clemency now exploited to save himself from reprimand and further oppress at the whim of fascism and sadism.

To achieve these specific embodiments of attitudes, *Gestus* and *Haltung* meld to complicate and bolster the portrayal of figure as it is related to the present society.⁵⁶ Though this concentration on the external does not negate the figure's individuality, rather it presents a unity between peoples based on facets of class, race, creed, gender, etc.⁵⁷ Brecht strives to portray that, much like in social performance, the behaviors a figure elicits requires an individuality, however, these behaviors are restricted and "always dependent on the social conditions of the time."⁵⁸ Therefore, the motivation for the actor is not to reach an apex of complete character that results in a succinct ending to dramatic action. Brecht's dialectical theatre never fixes, and thus never ends, but is ever seeking sociopolitical effect. A dialectical actor utilizing Brecht's methodologies must then pursue to display an amalgamation of their *Gestus* and *Haltungen* for an audience to analyze contrasts both within and between figures. For Brecht, this critique leads to a change in society via an observation of society. As a result, the theatre achieves Brecht's notions of its immense social function as these elements coalesce to attempt a sociopolitical fomentation by "representing the world dialectically."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 99.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 84.

I have discussed the behavioral aspects of *Haltung* as determined by the social relations; that is the cognitive *thinking* about, and the interacting *motivations* of, *Haltung*. Whilst cognitive-behavioral factors are a necessary consideration, I want to shift the focus to *how* and *why* expressions of the emotions may compel Brechtian theorem and find embodiment in theatrical practice (although, this is not to imply a disconnect between cognition and emotion). However, before I intervene with affect theories in Part Two, I must provide elucidations of *Gestus* and its apposite significance to *Haltung* and *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*.

2.3 *GESTUS*: THE QUINTESSENCE OF A COMPLETE SOCIETAL POSITION

For Brecht, the term *Gestus* encompassed multiple manifestations as a loose terminology but he parses it most distinctly in his essay “On Gestic Music.” Brecht notes, “‘Gest’ is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but overall attitudes.”⁶⁰ *Gestus* is the expression of a stance and signifies the external relation between individual and society. This relational societal attitude taken by an actor is determined by the holistic *Gestus* shown to the spectator as “before the actor does anything else on the stage, he must take on a stance towards another individual.”⁶¹ As such, *Gestus* is the aggregate stance whereas *Haltungen* are the specific and oft-contradictory stances towards circumstances. *Gestus* underpins all the actor chooses to bear to an audience via physicality, pitch,

⁶⁰ Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 104. Willett notes this essay, supposedly written in 1932, was published after Brecht’s death in 1956.

⁶¹ Wekwerth and Hozier, *Daring to Play*, 66.

tone of voice, facial expression, and use of language whereas *Haltung* indicates social pliability.⁶² Ultimately, *Gestus* is determined by the relationship of the figure with other figures, which incites the situations that comprise a *Fabel*. The external duality is always available, even in a monologue where the relation is between actor and themselves.⁶³ Thus, as Brecht rightfully points out, we must not assume that *Gestus* is akin to a gesture or is purely that of a physical embodiment; an act that is augmented, extended, or minimized. *Gestus* regards the *whole* position of a figure and provides a veritable “language of theatre.”⁶⁴ When *Gestus* is determined and this language enacted, the social conditions become transparent in figure, music, and design.

Imperatively, Brecht also considered music and set to be *gestic*. Singing and language can have a *Gestus* and so may any music present in the theatrical performance. As Manfred Wekwerth expounds:

Think, for example, of Eisler’s music for Brecht’s *Life of Galileo*. Here the songs that report on the respective state of science and the scientists are sung in the manner of oratorical hymns. The paradox that science and scientist must assert themselves against the dogma of the church even when the church is apparently absent is rendered astoundingly poetic and tangibly real thanks to the way the sacred *Gestus* of the music contradicts the reporting *Gestus* of the verse.⁶⁵

Music can texture a production with its own *Gestus* that feeds the entire *Gestus* of a production. In turn, it can contradict other aspects of *gestic* music, *Gestus* in acting, and any other relevant *Gestus* in a show.

⁶² In the essay “On Gestic Music,” Brecht is sure to define how language may a form *Gestus*. He states, “A language is *gestic* when it is grounded in a gest and conveys particular attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men. The sentence ‘pluck the eye that offends thee out’ is less effective from the *gestic* point of view than ‘if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out’. The latter starts by presenting the eye, and the first clause has a defined gest of making an assumption; the main clause comes as a surprise, a piece of advice, and a relief.” See: Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 104.

⁶³ Wekwerth and Hozier, *Daring to Play*, 66.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

Furthermore, the set can take a *gestic* stance as well. For example, Brecht suggested the scenic design of *Fear and Misery* can utilize “simple indications of scenery (for instance, playing against dimly lit swastika flags).”⁶⁶ As a result, the set can be a *gestic* stance. Perhaps due to a *Gestus* of foreboding omnipresence in subtly illuminated swastikas, one ponders the pervasiveness and/or implications of representing the Nazi flags, therefore engaging spectators by way of their own stance taken towards a *gestic* set.

Nevertheless, *Gestus* as an act relates most apparently to the actor, in that relations or contradictory *gestic* behavior presented on the stage allows for a more complex construction of a figure. An audience is thus at once considering and analyzing the social relations and pressures afflicting the figures of a play, whilst actors employ these oft opposing societal forces to fortify a malleable, yet more involved sense of their figure. In *A Short Organum*, Brecht states:

The realm of attitudes adopted by the characters towards one another is what we call the realm of gest. Physical attitude, tone of voice and *facial expression* are all determined by a social gest: the characters are cursing, flattering, instructing one another, and so on. The attitudes which people adopt towards one another include even those attitudes which would appear to be quite private, such as utterances of physical pain in an illness, or of religious faith.⁶⁷

In this sense, Brecht is outlining *Gestus* as revealing the unabridged social relations of a figure (unlike the particularity of *Haltung*) whilst also providing means for the *cause and effect* of their behavior. Furthermore, as Brecht notes, *Gestus* can become highly nuanced and an actor must carefully integrate all aspects of their figure via the *Gestus* employed. The *Fabel* is determined by the way in which figures affect one another socially, and how said *Fabel* combines all *Gestus* and *Haltungen* into a sequence of events that can be complicated by figure and actor and commented on by an audience. Accordingly, *gestic* acting follows a statute coined by Brecht as “one-thing-

⁶⁶ Bertolt Brecht, Ralph Manheim, and John Willett, *Collected Plays 4* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 327.

⁶⁷ Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 198. Emphasis my own.

after-another.”⁶⁸ Pushing against the fixedness of personality in character, the “one-thing-after-another” rule enables the actor and spectator to watch figures(s) progress and nix a concrete sense of “character.” This combats the “overarching curve” of a character, or as Wekwerth asserts, “In ‘real life,’ no ‘finished’ character exists before someone develops their actions, rather it develops in line with their actions.”⁶⁹ Figures are shifting and affected by external relations as spectators follow a *Fabel* “one-thing-after-another” and realize the contradictions that move said figures to act.

To elucidate this meaning, I return to *Fear and Misery*, which Brecht considered being particularly *gestic* in nature. In a journal entry dated August 15th, 1938, Brecht writes:

Fear and Misery of the Third Reich has now gone to press. Lukács has already welcomed the SPY as if it were a sinner returned to the bosom of the salvation army. here at last is something taken straight from life! he overlooks the montage of 27 scenes, and the fact that it is actually only a table of gestic, the gestic of keeping your mouth shut, the gestic of looking about you, the gestic of sudden fear etc. the pattern of gestic in a dictatorship.⁷⁰

Thus, Brecht underscores a salient feature of *Fear and Misery* as a play revealing the *Gestus* of dictatorship. For instance, perhaps one of the most striking *gestic* incidents occurs in scene sixteen “Charity Begins at Home.” In this scene, two SA men are delivering a package of goods from the Winter Aid Organization to an old woman and her daughter.⁷¹ Unwittingly, the old woman blabbers a bit too much about her daughter’s dissatisfaction with the Nazi regime: “And she got her account book and actually reckoned food had cost her 123 marks more this year than last.

⁶⁸ Wekwerth and Hozier, *Daring to Play*, 77.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁷⁰ Brecht and Willett, *Bertolt Brecht Journals*, 19. Note: Here, Lukács believed that Brecht was utilizing a form of realism in *Fear and Misery*.

⁷¹ The Winter Aid Program was set up to provide supplies and food for impoverished Germans during the harsh winter months.

Didn't you, Erna?"⁷² This does not sit well with the SA men and they both inquire about her account book:

THE FIRST SA MAN. Where do you keep your account book, young woman?

THE SECOND SA MAN. And who are you in the habit of showing it to?⁷³

Feeling that the daughter's findings may lead, or have led, to her spreading lies about the Nazi government, the SA men seize her:

THE FIRST SA MAN. And if she goes about spreading alarm and despondency, are we allowed to object then?

THE SECOND SA MAN. What's more I don't remember her saying "Heil Hitler" all that loud when we came in. Do you?⁷⁴

Frantically, the old woman implores them to stop, but suspect they have come across a "nice nest of Marxists" they do not listen.⁷⁵ Intensely distraught, the old woman shouts "Heil Hitler!" feverously as a form of compensation resulting in her retching up the apple provided to her by the Winter Aid. The scene ends with her spewing "Heil Hitler!" in between heaves of vomit.

The old woman's *Gestus* of abrupt terror and her *gestic* language are just two examples of "the gest of sudden fear" that Brecht discusses. As John and Ann White clarify regarding *Gestus* and language:

Language itself is also a *Gestus* within Brecht's theatrical sign-system, as are such signifiers as uniforms or the absence thereof, who sits and who stands during an encounter, an actor's stage position and the codes of socio-political interaction: the compulsory "Heil Hitler" greeting, the use of "Volksgenosse" (national comrade) as a form of address, and whether or not civilian of the Third Reich choose to stress their allegiance to paramilitary organizations in public or even in the confines of their own home.⁷⁶

⁷² Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, 73.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ John and Ann White, *Bertolt Brecht's Furcht Und Elend Des Dritten Reiches*, 84.

The *Gestus* of the old woman is thus displaying the sociopolitical ramifications of a totalitarian state wherein fear drives violence and supports misery. This notion goes beyond any individual characterizations and provides a connection between figure and the social environment. Brecht summarizes this social weight:

naturally the individual can only be reached via the masses. yet it is the individual who is subjected to the full tragic force of the horrors of the development of the human race and the classes ('the motor becomes the brake').⁷⁷

The social conditions have spurred the old woman's terror. Her frantic "Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler!" resonates with none and does not heal the sociopolitical fissure she has just caused. The *gestic* language is contradictory as the old woman does not spout it in a fervor for the Führer, but to save her kin. The experience leaves her throwing up the apple given to her in charity by the "good-will" of the Führer and placing her body, facial expression, voice, and entire bearing in a state of contradiction. The spectator thus critiques *Gestus* and other elements present as, one would hope, wrong and unjust, but, more crucially as social conditions that require alteration. Consequently, *Gestus* enables an actor to build figure via the external representation of their role in society, and thus allows an audience to view one's *Gestus* and *Haltung/Haltungen* to analyze the contradictions and interconnections between other figures. *Gestus* is "the externalization of the socially significant" and as such is rooted most noticeably in notions of how people affect one another.⁷⁸

Currently, I have discussed *Gestus* and *Haltung* to show the central presence of these theories in *Fear and Misery*. As I indicate above, contradiction is an essential facet of performing the dialectical theatre for spectator critique and observation. How these dialectics involve the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of emotion must come under more ample consideration. In Part Two, I shift

⁷⁷ Brecht and Willett, *Journals*, 112.

⁷⁸ Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 94.

my concentration to theories of emotional expressiveness to examine the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of affectual fear as a catalyst for the provocation of prosocial behavior in spectator for possible societal change.

3.0 PART TWO

Affecting with Affect: Evincing Fear in *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*

Emotions change how we see the world and how we interpret the actions of others. We do not seek to challenge why we are feeling a particular emotion; instead, we seek to confirm it.

*Paul Ekman, Emotions Revealed*⁷⁹

In the epigraph above, Paul Ekman considers the emotions as influencers on the human perception of behavior and motivation in self and society. Thus, when we experience emotion we intend to feel *with* rather than act *against* these inherent processes. Conversely, I argue that Brecht's dialectical theatre is an appreciable theatrical environment to represent the emotions and experimentally complicate their utilization. As *Gestus* and *Haltung* portray the social weight of the effects of external relations, I look now to how emotional communication can produce prosocial effects via Brecht's theatrical medium, especially regarding the display and identification of fear. *Gestus* details the manifestation of a social reality through a whole bearing towards situations informed by physicality, tone of voice, spoken language, staging, set, and music. Additionally, Brecht's explanation of *Gestus* includes *facial expression*.⁸⁰ Therefore, manifestations of emotional constructions are also a mode of *Gestus* and *Haltung* that thrust forth for scrutiny by the spectator. I contend that this allows for an emphasis on emotional relations in Brechtian performance by marking how emotion and affect *affects* others; contemporaneously

⁷⁹ Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life* (New York: Owl Books, 2007), 39.

⁸⁰ Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 198.

opposing popular and critical conceptions of the “emotion-less” Brecht. Specifically, with a concentration on the conveyance of emotion via the human face and body, figures can represent emotion on the stage and, with *Gestus* and *Haltung/Haltungen*, accent their functionality as means for effective verbal and non-verbal social communication.

I focus on the *Gestus* of emotional expressiveness and resulting *Haltungen* for two pertinent reasons: 1.) Emotions and affects are motivating and impact human behavior through societal dynamics and 2.) emotional communication, verbal or not, is of immense significance to our species for the delivery of individual and social information.⁸¹ As a result, by attuning my analysis on this aspect of *Gestus* and *Haltung/Haltungen*, one can view the emotions as a social tool. As David Barnett observes, “Brecht’s theatre is not only interested in frustrating the simple communication of emotion to the audience because it wants to resist automatic empathetic response, but also because emotions themselves are worthy of investigation.”⁸² When paired with all elements of Brechtian performance, the emotions may also be ripe to stir change, as this study reveals.

Emotions, in the most common perception of the term, dominate and texture human experience consistently throughout one’s life.⁸³ Though standard cultural conventions may enable us to state what emotions “are,” it is a difficult concept to pin down definition-wise. In psychology,

⁸¹ See: Tom Pyszczynski, Jeff Greenberg, and Sheldon Solomon, “Why do we need what we need? A terror management perspective on the roots of human social motivation,” *Psychological inquiry* 8, no. 1 (1997): 1-20.; Luiz Pessoa, “How do emotion and motivation direct executive control?” *Trends in cognitive sciences* 13, no. 4 (2009): 160-166; Peter J. Lang, Margaret M. Bradley, and Bruce N. Cuthbert. “Motivated attention: Affect, activation, and action,” *Attention and orienting: Sensory and motivational processes* 97 (1997): 135; Peter J. Lang, “The emotion probe: Studies of motivation and attention,” *American psychologist* 50, no. 5 (1995): 372.

⁸² Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 133.

⁸³ The debate over the universality of emotions is complicated. Whether they be culturally contextualized or socially ubiquitous, robust evidence shows that physiological facial expressions of the emotions are universal. Dr. Paul Ekman, one of the hallmark researchers of this concept, tested this universality through the comparison of the facial macro and micro-expressions with indigenous Fore tribe in Papua New Guinea.

the typical explanation of emotion may consider it “a complex reaction pattern, involving experiences, behavioral, and physiological elements, by which the individual attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event.”⁸⁴ However, these psychological delineations often forefront the personal aspects of emotion rather than first depicting them as an intricate method of verbal and non-verbal social communication via affectual expression in face and body.

Also, it is important to repeat how my use of the term emotion differs from affect. Emotion is the specific “feeling state” of neurobiological reactions to human experience and environmental stimuli. This position is suitably defined by affectual neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp who states, “The core function of emotional systems is to coordinate many types of behavioral and physiological processes in the brain and body” and as a result these “neural activities continue at low levels for extended periods of time, they generate moods and, ultimately, such personality dimensions as the differential tendency to be happy, irritable, fearful, or melancholy.”⁸⁵ In relation to the separation of emotion and affect, affect is the occurrence and embodiment of the emotion. As I utilize it presently, affectual expression is thus the display of a discrete emotional state. These facial constructions then relate most prominently to how we communicate socially and how said emotion states and affectual portrayals influence external human relations.

In his book *Ideas and Realities of Emotion*, Brian Parkinson attempts to confront our commonplace notions of emotion as personal and reconsider it a social method of interpersonal communication.⁸⁶ Beholding to Brechtian thought, emotion and affect is therefore political and

⁸⁴ Gary R. VandenBos and American Psychological Association, *APA Dictionary of Psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007), 325.

⁸⁵ Jaak Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15.

⁸⁶ Brian Parkinson, *Ideas and Realities of Emotion* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 170-171.

dialectical as it impacts and resides in social relationships. With Brecht's *Gestus* and *Haltung* as the mode of performative catalyzation, the emotions venture beyond concerns of individual psychology and maintain, I argue, their primary purpose as a conveyer of verbal and non-verbal social information. Additionally, when applied with Brechtian dialectics, emotional expressiveness may begin to not only communicate, but also activate politically.

Furthermore, Paul Ekman's research has provided strong foundational support for a universal theory of affectual expression and builds upon Charles Darwin's assertions of emotion as an evolved product of natural selection. This universal theory proposes that all humans physiologically express emotions in the same manner, quite often with the six "core" emotions of happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and surprise.⁸⁷ Of course, this universality is of great social and evolutionary benefit, especially regarding non-verbal communication. Take fear for example, perhaps the most eagerly studied "core" facial expression.⁸⁸ If there were an event, predator, or object that we should be fearful of to avoid injury or death, non-verbally and quickly interpreting fear in the faces and bodies of others protects us. In other words, we may see a flash of fear in someone running past us in the woods. We need not know what is causing this display, but that it would likely be wise to run along with them. This is useful for the theatre as it feeds into our evolutionary and social proclivities thus engaging audiences and performers in both conscious and unconscious realms of emotion. I will come back to fear momentarily, not only to examine its situatedness in *Fear and Misery* but also its curious effects on prosocial behavior.

⁸⁷ Ekman, *Emotions Revealed*, 58.

⁸⁸ Ekman, *Emotion Revealed*, 152. In recent studies, a support for cross-cultural differences in emotional expression utilizes methodology akin to Ekman's and found that facial expressions, especially fear, differed from notions of universality of meaning. In one culture, the expression of fear was a means for instigating fear in others rather than expressing the fear one is experiencing. Despite an intriguing contrast from past research, this does not change the physiology of the expression, simply the cultural interpretation and significance. See: Carlos Crivelli, James A. Russell, Sergio Jarillo, and José-Miguel Fernández-Dols, "The fear gasping face as a threat display in a Melanesian society," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 44 (2016): 12403-12407.

This concept leads me to another necessary point regarding the emotions in relation to Brechtian theatre: Emotions and affects are motivating. The psychologist Silvan Tomkins was one of the most forward-thinking proponents of emotion as a primary motivator in humans and established the face as the main site of affect.⁸⁹ Moreover, Tomkins' studies began to cement the universality of emotions and provided noteworthy results showing our ability to comprehend and interpret emotional facial expressions across cultures.⁹⁰ Tomkins is sure to state that creating a purposeful emotional representation still "may be a genuine signal of an idea or intention."⁹¹ In Brecht's theatre, we must attempt to control performative affectual expression in such a way that related *Gestus* and *Haltungen* subsequently display said constructs physiologically to an audience. Hence, I place Brechtian performance in conversation with affect theories of emotional expressiveness to involve the dialectical theatre in both voluntary and involuntary methods that formulate realistic, yet deliberate, representations of affectual expressions (when, of course, keeping in mind both purposeful communication and the prominent factor of chance in theatrical performance).

Regarding *Gestus* and *Haltung*, John Willett states we should be able to "read movements Brecht's figures make on stage as revelatory in that social sense."⁹² The ability to "read" this behavior by interweaving an affectual approach bolsters the theatre and Brecht's theorem. Brecht wanted *Gestus* to be a "language of theatre," and, likewise, humans also innately learn the language of the face and body for social and personal interaction and survival. For instance, the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) constitutes a detailed classification of discrete Action Units with twenty-

⁸⁹ Silvan S. Tomkins and E. Virginia Demos, *Exploring Affect: The Selected Writings of Silvan S. Tomkins* (Cambridge; New York; Paris: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 209.

⁹⁰ Tomkins and Demos, *Exploring Affect*, 217.

⁹¹ Tomkins and Demos, *Exploring Affect*, 213.

⁹² Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, xxxiii.

eight main codes that are marked on an intensity scale from A-E. By examining frames of video or images, researchers can use FACS to study these expressions of emotions and uncover their formations in varying empirical contexts. As the studies of Paul Ekman show, the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) enables researchers to take a multitude of subjective observations or “readings” to construct objective accounts of emotional expression.⁹³

Take, for example, the meaning of a monologue from *The Messingkauf Dialogues*. *The Messingkauf Dialogues* is a partial work written by Brecht around the end of the 1930s and early 1940s and is, essentially, an attempt at a play of theory. Here, the Dramaturg speaks and offers exposition as to an experimental process Brecht performed on his wife, Helene Weigel:

The Augsburgers filmed Weigel making herself up. He cut the film up, and each frame showed a complete facial expression, self-contained and with its own meaning. “You see what sort of actress she is,” he said admiringly. “Each gesture can be analysed into as many gestures as you like, and all of them perfect. Everything is there for the sake of something else, and at the same time for its own. Not only the jump is beautiful, but also the run-up.” But what mattered most to him was that every movement of the muscles as she made up brought about a perfect expression of her personality. The people he showed these pictures to, asking them what the various expressions meant, suggested such things as anger, gaiety, envy, compassion. He showed them to Weigel too, telling her that she *only needed to know her own expressions in order to be able to express the various moods without always having to feel them*.⁹⁴

Firstly, it would seem, Brecht’s use of frames of expressions is much akin to the eventual studies of Ekman and other researchers studying the universality of emotional expressiveness. Second, the present notion that one’s knowledge of these portrayals is enough to display them without experiencing said emotions is like Tomkins’ assertion that emotion is still meaningful in instances when we knowingly and socially express them. Lastly, it would appear Brecht places immense

⁹³ Paul Ekman, and Erika L. Rosenberg, eds., *What the face reveals: Basic and applied studies of spontaneous expression using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS)* (Oxford University Press: USA, 1997).

⁹⁴ Bertolt Brecht, *The Messingkauf Dialogues*, (London: Methuen, 1965), 76. The “Augsburger” is in reference to Brecht himself. Emphasis my own.

value in the whole meaning of a facial expression with a specific focus on the shifting musculature of the face. These muscles lead to distinct movements in the face and these emotional constructions are, according to Brecht, the embodiment of one's personality.

On the stage, emotions are not simply subjective but can become partially objective, in that our cognition interprets them naturally via verbal and non-verbal emotional communication. By displaying physiological representations of affect for "reading," we interpret the emotion as meaningful, can comment on it, and further support spectator comprehension of a figure's behavior, contradictory or otherwise. For instance, in a conceptual framework for *Fear and Misery*, Brecht proposes "a troop carrier rumbles on to the stage at the beginning and end, and twice during the play, and is full of actors playing soldiers with chalk-white faces, in order to *exaggerate the fear that propels the action of the whole play*."⁹⁵ This marked fear is not only presented; it opposes the militarized nature of the soldiers. A contrasting expression of fear undermines the soldier's uniform regiment and symbol of militaristic strength. The spectator is then to take this information and question why figures are behaving as they are. Emotional engagement is thus to "perform emotion as in speech marks, so that the audience does not get caught up with the figure's feelings, but rather considers what they signify."⁹⁶ The idea of affectual "speech marks" is a vital distinction and posits a Brechtian approach to emotion that is fundamentally contradictory to shape figures for spectator critique and analysis.

Without any knowledge of the scientific and psychological advancements that have emerged in recent years, Brecht's method of observing the emotions is fruitful for the assertions of my current study. For instance, an actor could take videos of themselves in conversation, in

⁹⁵ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, lix. Emphasis my own.

⁹⁶ Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 134.

routine, or “making themselves up,” as Brecht did with Weigel. This process shares a considerable closeness to how researchers study facial expressions, especially when using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) applied in research on emotion displays. Then, one can splice together the moments of whole facial expression and analyze the physical movements of the face. Perhaps, an actor may even show these pictures to others and let them consider the portrayals of expression. The emphasis being, of course, on the discrete muscle movements that comprise emotional facial constructions as a technique to augment and complicate figures and the actors that depict them. I will explore this idea more thoroughly in the coming discussion on representations of fear in *Fear and Misery*. The face and body are the essential sites of emotional and social verbal and non-verbal communication. In an array of minute and striking arrangements, so resides not only qualities that can comprise *Gestus* and *Haltung*, but an apparatus for inciting prosociality in spectator(s) as well.

3.1 BRECHT & EMOTION: COMPLICATION, NOT NEGATION

To synthesize these concepts, I turn to Brecht’s complex view of the emotions in theatrical performance. Elly Konijn notes, “For Brecht believability is not only a matter of *technical command* over emotional portrayal, but also revealing conflicting aspects in people.”⁹⁷ As I show above, this technical command enables possibilities for both proper depictions of the emotions through an ostensibly scientific technique, but also amplifies and can push against our understandings of emotional expression in theatre. Moreover, viewpoints that Brecht’s dialectical theatre constitutes an extreme rationality and negation of emotion perhaps sprouts from his earlier

⁹⁷ Elly Konijn, *Acting Emotions: Shaping Emotions on Stage* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 39. Emphasis my own.

and more radical writings. In his years before self-exile, Brecht's polemical spirit towards staples of bourgeois theatre prompted a more distinct divide between emotion and reason in theatre.⁹⁸ Though, a shift occurs in 1939. In a letter to an unknown "Comrade M," Brecht states, "Some people have read into it the notion that I come out 'against emotion and in favor of the intellect.' This is of course not the case. I don't see how thoughts and feelings can be kept apart."⁹⁹ It is thought that Brecht's time in exile, and further dissemination of his ideas, garnered critique that demanded necessary clarifications. The early inklings of the emotion debate, it would seem, stem from the differentiation between "feeling" and "reason" in Brecht's chart on the "epic" theatre.¹⁰⁰ Though, this would spark elucidations on the emotions that would endure to the last versions of a constantly revising dramatic theorem.

In a journal entry dated March 4th, 1941, Brecht writes:

it becomes clear to me that the antagonistic configuration "reason in this corner – emotion in that" has to go. the relationship of *ratio* and *emotion*, with all its contradictions, has to be examined minutely, and opponents cannot be allowed simply to be present epic theatre as rational and counter-emotional. the "instincts" – automated reactions to experience – which have become contrary to our interests. the bogged down, one-track emotions which are no longer under the control of reason. against that the emancipated *ratio* of the physicists with their mechanical formulism. be that as it may, even if the interests of artists ought not to be expressed in especially emotional terms – probably they are – they do express themselves in an emotional form. the epic principles guarantee a critical attitude on the part of the audience, but that attitude is highly emotional.¹⁰¹

Again, he dismisses the debate between reason and emotion, whilst focusing on two significant points: the "epic" theatre requires a critical audience and the spectator is emotional. Thus, the presentation of the emotions should come forth in such a manner that they require commentary and critique from the spectator. Essentially, emotions are unavoidable. In his later years, this was

⁹⁸ Brecht and Willett, *Bertolt Brecht Journals*, 316.

⁹⁹ Brecht and Willett, *Letters*, 317.

¹⁰⁰ Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 37.

¹⁰¹ Brecht and Willett, *Bertolt Brecht Journals*, 135.

recognized again in a long dialogue about the emotions in his theatre, but I will highlight the most salient remark: “We make no attempt to share the emotions of the characters we portray, but these emotions must nonetheless be fully and movingly represented, nor must they be treated with coldness but likewise with an emotion of some force.”¹⁰² As such, this emotional effect is not to connect with a spectator and only cause them to be reciprocally happy, angry, or fearful, but to complicate the representational presentation of emotion.

In turn, if the emotions become fixed in character, not figure, this prevents contradictions from affecting social relations. In the social sciences, psychologists have attempted to define the inner-workings of the emotions as “intrapsychic,” in that they manifest in reaction to specific personal and social criterion which is beholden to a theoretical structure of psychological and neurological operations.¹⁰³ In other words, I may be able to explain the source of fear in a series of chalk-faced troops as meditated, in part, by amygdalae processes.¹⁰⁴ However, emotional occurrences are far too ubiquitous and socially rooted “to develop one all-purpose explanatory account that is true for every conceivable instance of emotion.”¹⁰⁵

The same holds true for emotion in theatre and I do not wish to imply an ultimate form of affectual expression via *Gestus* and *Haltung*. Rather, what I endeavor to detail is the significance of emotional verbal and non-verbal communication for the conveyance of information in everyday life and in the theatrical medium. A single expression by itself can lead to a variety of relational and social interpretations. We will not know why someone is mad, glad, or sad by facial expression alone; the social milieu provides this.

¹⁰² Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on theatre*, 248.

¹⁰³ Parkinson, *Ideas and Realities*, x.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph LeDoux, “The emotional brain, fear, and the amygdala.” *Cellular and molecular neurobiology* 23, no. 4-5 (2003): 727-738.

¹⁰⁵ Parkinson, *Ideas and Realities*, 165.

Herein lies the correspondence of *Gestus* and *Haltung*. The combination of providing information emotionally thorough verbal and non-verbal communication and the ability to contextualize said emotion that motivates the individual and the collective is of astounding importance to us *Homo sapiens*. With *Haltung*, accentuated emotional significance is not simply due to its residence in the external social relations, but in how it contrasts and buttresses *Gestus*. Brian Parkinson acknowledges, “emotional phenomena may be circumscribed mainly by the functions that they serve in everyday social life.”¹⁰⁶ As *Haltung* denotes the diverging changes of and in a figure to particular situations, theatrical performance of one’s *Haltungen* ensures the spectator is able to view how the society can greatly impact and change a figure. Moreover, simply splicing out Brechtian concepts like *Gestus* and *Haltung* does not exactly represent “Brechtian theatre.” Nor, does ignoring any other constituent parts of his theories allow for Brecht’s ideas to coalesce and work in performance. My focus on affectual facial expression is not to assert a dominance of these tactics but supplement that which, I contend, fits Brecht’s dialectical theatre yet has been undertheorized by studies of emotional science in theatrical performance.

3.2 HOW AN INVENTOR MIGHT LAUGH: THE FIRST PRODUCTION OF *FEAR AND MISERY*

The importance of *Fear and Misery* lies in its critique of fascism for political effect. Though, how this purpose plays to spectators is also substantial, if not the most crucial aspect of inciting prosocial behavior. A commentary on audience reaction from Brecht’s own account of the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

first production of *Fear and Misery* comes from *The Messingkauf Dialogues*. In a discussion between The Dramaturg and The Philosopher, they converse about *Fear and Misery*, specifically, the hodgepodge actors of the original cast and the nature of spectator response to the performance.

The Dramaturg delineates the nature of this company:

A few years back when I was visiting Paris I went to a small theatre where a tiny group of German exiles were acting a few scenes from a play showing conditions at home. I've never come across a group whose members were so widely varied in background, training and talents. There was a working man who could hardly have set foot on a stage before and spoke in dialect, and alongside him a great actress whose resources, gifts and stage education are possibly unrivalled. They had two things in common: the fact that they had all fled their country in face of the house-painter's hordes' and a particular style of acting.¹⁰⁷

Here, The Dramaturg marks the commonality present in the proletarian cast of the original production of *Fear and Misery*. The unity of circumstances and political stance is, at least in part, a crucial and perhaps unforeseen aspect of performing *Fear and Misery*. It would seem Brecht desired the work to maintain a simple style that could be produced by workers or those with little to no actor-training and even fewer design resources.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the drive of the specific acting style The Dramaturg references is described succinctly: "Their job as political human beings was to use art or anything else to further their social cause."¹⁰⁹ Regarding the first cast of *Fear and Misery*, the actors are united by their sociopolitical motivations that negate questions of talent, background, or method.¹¹⁰ Then, the political effect can be supported through social relatability, context, and

¹⁰⁷ Brecht, *Messingkauf Dialogues*, 71-72.

¹⁰⁸ Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, liv. Though, this partially undermines Brecht's pre-production worries that Dudow would not be able to muster enough acting talent to display the horrors, comedy, and message of *Fear and Misery*. Therefore, a distinction must be made that Brecht's concerns encompassed talent, but only to extent that the actors would be able to portray the play properly for political effect and not concerning their actor-training. However, as *The Messingkauf Dialogues* are presumed to have been finished after this first production and Brecht is writing retrospectively, his concerns may have been abated after seeing to a successful production of *Fear and Misery*.

¹⁰⁹ Brecht, *Messingkauf Dialogues*, 71.

¹¹⁰ This must also be considered for any productions thereafter and to come.

as these so often predicate on fear. However, the presented *Gestus* and *Haltung* of dictatorship during the first production of *Fear and Misery* did not instill fear in spectator via the portrayal of horror but was instead met with its own antithesis: laughter.

Pertinently, Brecht recounts the time he witnessed a troupe of exiled Germans put on a piece of proletarian theatre in a monologue from *The Messingkauf Dialogues*. I quote it here at length to show the dialectical situatedness of the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of fear in *Fear and Misery*.

The Dramaturg reports:

The play they were performing was *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*. I was told it consisted of twenty-four little plays, of which they performed seven or eight these plays showed how the people in your country are behaving under the housepainter's rod of iron. You saw people of pretty well all classes, and how they resisted or knuckled under. You saw the fear of the oppressed and the fear of the oppressors. It was like a great collection of gestures, observed with artistry: the quarry looking back over his shoulder (the pursuer's look too); the sudden silences; the hand that flies to one's own mouth when one is about to say too much, and the hand that falls on the wanted man's shoulder; the extorted lie, the whispered truth, the mutual distrust of lovers, and much more. But what was so unusual was that the players never performed these ghastly episodes in such a way that the spectators were tempted to call "Stop." The spectators didn't seem in any way to share the horror of those on the stage, and as a result there was repeatedly laughter among the audience without doing any damage to the profoundly serious character of the performance. For this laughter seemed to apply to the stupidity that found itself having to make use of force, and to the helplessness that took the shape of brutality. Bullies were seen as men tripping over, criminals as men who have made a mistake or allowed themselves to be taken in. The spectators' laughter was finely graduated. It was a happy laughter when the quarry outwitted his pursuer, a contented laughter when somebody uttered a good, true word. That's how an inventor might laugh on finding the solution after a long effort: it was as obvious as that, and he took so long to see it!¹¹³

This monologue is key for two reasons. It details the initial audience perception of *Fear and Misery* and how to achieve said spectator reception via contradictions in *Gestus* and *Haltung*. Spectators witness ubiquitous fear; the ultimate emotion linking all who are living in a fascist dictatorship. This is the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of fear: the frightened look to, the horror of bad faith, constant

¹¹³ Brecht, *Messingkauf Dialogues*, 72.

observation, unseen ears, and accidentally speaking your mind, ever residing within the external social relations. These moments are all contradictory, as fear subverts positions of power; terror nullifies the complicit composure or meager resistance of the oppressed. Despite this, fear confronts spectator reaction with its own contradictions. As The Dramaturg notes, the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of fear had not attached itself reciprocally in spectator interpretation, rather in contrast propelled by laughter. However, the humor at the expense of the oppressors, the comedy of demoralizing brutes, and the asinine nature of fanaticism is not victimizing or empowering any social group present. Fear equalizes all. These scenarios of figures bear the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of Nazi rule providing terror and its realities as a thesis. The spectators, not entirely enraptured by these tales of horror, provide the critical antithesis with potential laughter and an acknowledgment regarding the fragility of fascism. The dialectical synthesis may be in this recognition of fear thus bolstering ideologies against totalitarianistic tendencies, governments, or social entities. Though, I now argue, with evidence from the field of psychology, the facial expression of fear has far more prosocial implications than only laughter at the idiocy of brutality.

3.3 BEARING FEAR: PARSING THE PROSOCIAL POSSIBILITIES OF *FEAR AND MISERY OF THE THIRD REICH*

Paul Ekman asserts, “The core of fear is the possibility of pain, physical or psychological.”¹¹⁴ Given this knowledge, it easy to comprehend why experiencing fear is in some way motivating. In a 2007 study titled “Accurate Identification of Fear Facial Expressions Predicts

¹¹⁴ Ekman, *Emotion Revealed*, 158.

Prosocial Behavior,” researchers Abigail Marsh, Megan Kozak, and Nalini Ambady discover a connection between the facial expression of fear and prosocial behavior. To examine the mechanisms undergirding prosociality, Marsh et al. conducted three studies that conclude more accurate recognition of facially expressed fear is a much higher indicator of prosocial behavior than the other “core” emotional expressions.¹¹⁵ Barring any form of psychopathy or other antisocial tendencies, the interpretation of fear leads to higher monetary promises or prosocial perceptions of others. This most likely relates to the relationship between fear and distress. Therefore, resulting prosocial behavior from witnessing fear may stem from an evolutionary and social tendency to benefit group cohesion by placating individual and collective unrest.

Similarly, a 2008 study conducted at MIT examined the neural responses of the amygdalae to facial expressions of fear. Comparing two groups (Native Japanese and U.S. Caucasians), Chiao et al. discovered higher amygdalae reaction to facial expressions of fear when the faces were members of their respective cultures.¹¹⁶ This cultural conditioning affecting neural response is perhaps an implicit bias and thus significant when considering the interpretation of fear expressions.

Moreover, other evidence towards a recognition of fear expression and prosociality holds true in a 2017 study utilizing socio-economic games for examining reciprocity and prosocial behavior. Not only did prosocially-minded individuals recognize distress signals like fear better, these participants were themselves more facially expressive, suggesting a benefit to social

¹¹⁵ Abigail A. Marsh, Megan N. Kozak, and Nalini Ambady. “Accurate identification of fear facial expressions predicts prosocial behavior.” *Emotion* 7, no. 2 (2007): 1-25. See also: Abigail A. Marsh, and Nalini Ambady. “The influence of the fear facial expression on prosocial responding.” *Cognition and Emotion* 21, no. 2 (2007): 225-247.

¹¹⁶ Joan Y. Chiao, Tetsuya Iidaka, Heather L. Gordon, Junpei Nogawa, Moshe Bar, Elissa Aminoff, Norihiro Sadato, and Nalini Ambady, “Cultural specificity in amygdala response to fear faces,” *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 20, no. 12 (2008): 2167-2174.

relationships.¹¹⁷ All this said, a focus on the facial expression of the emotions must not make another important display tool secondary: the body. Researchers have rightfully noted that studies of the face are isolated, perhaps even stereotyped (Ekman's Pictures of Facial Affect and similar catalogs are quite often used). This leaves a discrepancy between research tools and real-life representations of affectual expression. Perhaps most surprisingly, recent research bolsters the significance of *Gestus* and *Haltung* in Brechtian figure(s). Lior et al.'s 2017 study comparing real-life face and body expressions from online videos/images and an instructed Bochum Emotional Stimulus Set shows that real-life *bodily* expressions of fear were often more recognized than the face or provided greater contextualization for the present facial expression.¹¹⁸ As Brecht stressed the need for the actor to participate in observation, this evidence provides support for the whole stance of *Gestus* and specific *Haltungen* to encompass face and body for integrated meaning. By practicing observation, expressions may be more prosocially efficacious if they reflect both empirical and real-life constructions of fear.

In other words: inferring facial and bodily fear in others may lead to prosocial behavior. Conceptually, I have stated much regarding how affectual expressions of fear find representation in *Fear and Misery* and by the actor via *Gestus* and *Haltung*. Although, can this truly be accomplished on the stage? A higher *recognition* of fear incited prosociality and as such fear must be presented accurately. It is necessary to understand the possible implicit cultural biases regarding this representation, too (will a white spectator respond as prosocially to the fear of a black

¹¹⁷ Laura Kaltwasser, Andrea Hildebrandt, Oliver Wilhelm, and Werner Sommer, "On the relationship of emotional abilities and prosocial behavior," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 38, no. 3 (2017): 298-308.

¹¹⁸Lior Abramson, Inbal Marom, Rotem Petranker, and Hillel Aviezer, "Is Fear in Your Head? A Comparison of Instructed and Real-Life Expressions of Emotion in the Face and Body," *Emotion* 17, no. 3 (04, 2017): 557-565. See also: Van Heijnsbergen, C. C. R. J., H. K. M. Meeren, J. Grezes, and B. de Gelder, "Rapid detection of fear in body expressions, an ERP study," *Brain research* 1186 (2007): 233-241.

performer despite both being from the same culture?). A possible entry-point to accurate displays of fear is Susana Bloch's ALBA Emoting technique. ALBA Emoting is "the first method to identify specific, universal patterns in these reproducible aspects of emotional expression, and systematize them into a technique to produce emotions at will."¹¹⁹ By moving through three phases, an actor first focuses on the muscular accuracy and movements of affectual expression, then an introduction of emotion separate from any cognitive stimulus, and finally an integration of these psychophysiological constructs into text, situation, character, figure, etc. Rhonda Blair states:

This process is an embodiment of the paradox, or duality, of the actor's spontaneity: the effector patterns are repeated so that they become automatic or habituated, i.e., organically spontaneous, thereby freeing the actor to be consciously spontaneous and impulsive in the moment.¹²⁰

In effect, ALBA Emoting situates affectual expressions as first physiological and then contextualized in performance. Methods of impulsiveness now become more like those representations in everyday life, effectively adding a sense of natural portrayals of the emotions in the face and body. Hence, Blair raises the question: "What is authentic about weeping, if it is generated solely through physical self-manipulation?"¹²¹ I would argue that the emotions are real if the expression relays to the spectator properly. Intuitively, Blair contends ALBA Emoting holds implications for and buttresses Stanislavskian performance theory and methodology. I assert the same applies to Brecht's theatre.

A secondary entry-point could be learning and experiencing FACS training, the coding system of emotionally expressive "Action Units." This approach is somewhat similar ALBA

¹¹⁹ Roxane, Rix. *Alba Emoting: A revolution in emotion for the actor* (London: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2001), 205-219. This technique, as Rix notes, has been met with mixed reactions: "Some of whom find the *idea* of generating emotion entirely through physical stimulation overly mechanistic or even soulless." I do not agree that a technique such as ALBA Emoting is "soulless" if it is socially representative and commutatively efficacious.

¹²⁰ Rhonda Blair. *The Actor, Image, and Action: Acting and Cognitive Neuroscience*. New York; London: Routledge, 2008.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

Emoting, which is influenced by Ekman's work, but homes in on a particular academic knowledge of these discrete facial movements that comprise affectual representations. Businesses, government agencies, and, occasionally, actors will often utilize FACS training to create a more emotionally tuned work environment, whilst others seek this information to detect deception. Melded or separate, these psychophysiological approaches should be kept in mind for the coming section, and I must clarify that I am not prescribing these methods to actor-training in Brechtian performance. Rather, they offer more concrete elucidations of how affectual expressions of the face can potentially affect and/or foment prosociality in spectators.

In *Fear and Misery*, we see a marked focus on situations about, and the expression of, fear. The concept of a buggy of chalk and fearful-faced troops is an excellent example of this. Still, multiple emotional states texture the performance throughout. Whilst complex intermingling of emotional experiences should always be apparent, I will highlight significant moments of fear, both as an indication of expression to the spectator and its prosocial meanings.

Sadness and fear appear throughout *Fear and Misery*, though, in scene twenty-three "Job Creation" we see specific stage directions to weep:

The WIFE.

Sobbing. No, I know.

The MAN.

as his wife again bursts into sobs. Pull yourself together Martha. You shouldn't say that should sort of thing, Mrs. Dietz.¹²²

The Wife's brother has died in a plane accident and she is in mourning. If the Wife is expressing such clear sadness, then naturally we may get the gist of her current emotional state (think back to Blair's earlier query). However, what makes this scene particularly interesting is not only the Wife's sadness but the reaction of the Man (her husband) and their Neighbor. She is told

¹²² Brecht and Willett, *Fear and Misery*, 88.

continually that her brother's death is justified, and he died serving Hitler's army. Her sorrowful expressions are undermined by the others repression of emotion, and, as a result, they believe she should not feel sadness: "Don't get worked up, Martha. It won't help."¹²³ Such contradiction takes place in these social relations that the Wife eventually proclaims in an outburst: "Don't anyone tell me I'm not going into mourning! If they can slaughter him I have a right to cry."¹²⁴ She then continues to harangue against the needless death caused by the stirrings of Hitler's war, a contrast to the order that must be upheld in a fascist state. The Man looks on with horror and attempts to cover her mouth whilst the Neighbor objects that she must not state such things. The physical *gestic* action of "shutting someone up" and her role in society as wife and woman is clear: "Just shut up, would you? It won't help."¹²⁵ This enables dialectical contrast in *Gestus* and *Haltung* to occur, in that, the Wife's sorrow (thesis) is met with complacency and fear (antithesis) from the others and these contradictions instigate a synthesis of prosocial action that calls forth a new thesis with the ending line: "What does help then? Do something that does!"¹²⁶ As such, the complexity of all affectual expressions is what incites, or at the very least considers, change via mediation by the external social relations of the figures present.

In scene three "The Chalk Cross," we witness perhaps the best exemplar of situational fear. An SA man, home for a meal, converses with his chauffeur, cook, and maidservant girlfriend. When the maidservant's brother, titled "The Worker," comes to visit he is slightly skittish and apprehensive of the SA man's presence. Soon after, a "game" ensues and the SA man and Worker perform play-acting whilst lobbing insults at Hitler, the work camps, and the Worker's ilk. What

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 90.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 89.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 90.

causes the fraught tension in this scene is the exposition regarding how the SA select people to be taken to the work camps:

THE SA MAN. *No longer acting:* Right, then in you go into the office and they'll pick you up bang off.

THE WORKER. What, without you leaving the line and following me in?

THE SA MAN. Yeh.

THE WORKER. And without you giving someone a wink, which might look fishy?

THE SA MAN. Without me winking.

THE WORKER. How's it done then?

THE SA MAN. Ha, you'd like to know that trick. Well, stand up, and show us your back. *He turns him round by the shoulders, so that everyone can see his back. Then to the maidservant:* Seen it?

THE MAIDSERVANT. Look he's got a white cross on it.

THE COOK. Right between his shoulders.

THE CHAUFFEUR. So he has.

THE SA MAN. And how did he get it? *Shows the palm of his hand.* See, just a little white chalk cross and there's its impression large as life.¹²⁷

This moment that concludes the play-acting between the SA man and the Worker is, as always, determined by the external social relations. The Worker's *Haltung* of wary, yet bawdy frustration has changed to a *Haltung* of fright due to the SA man's little trick. Whilst in "jest," this experience disconcerts the Worker and he leaves making clear whose side he is on:

¹²⁷ Ibid., 17.

That's set my mind at rest. Me, I don't ever come across that sort of subversive element. I'd gladly confront them if I did. Only I'm not quite so quick to the punch as you. *Clearly and distinctly*: All right, Minna, thanks a lot and Heil Hitler!¹²⁸

In part, the pressure of this scene relies on the “game” between the SA man and the Worker that allows them to state their concerns with both parties (the Nazis and the Communists). The Worker is threatened by this action and the notion of being “marked” is no less comforting than living in fear of stating your words in a problematic manner around an authoritarian. Of course, instilling this fear is a tried and true tactic as the SA man states earlier in the scene: “You're a right bunch of turds. Make me sick, you do. Not a bloody soul got the guts to open his mouth.”¹²⁹ The contradiction is that the SA man wants everyone to join in his “game” and make a joke, but no one is willing out of fear they may say something wrong. Feeling “marked” by the chalk cross, the Worker experiences a fear-filled *Haltung* shift, perhaps accompanied by a facial and/or bodily expression of fear. This stance presented to the spectator contextualizes in the external social relations and incorporates a cognitive and psychophysical aspect to the portrayal of figure.

Moreover, these notions also mingle with political ideology (fascism vs. an ostensible “Left”) providing the possibility for prosocial effects. It is in this cognitive, emotional, and Brechtian soup that a move towards prosocial behavior is realized. Testing this hypothesis, let us consider a spectator like that of the first production of *Fear and Misery*. Moments of horror are met laughter as those present understand and critique the absurdity and fear-laden nature of fascism. During “The Chalk Cross,” the worker flashes psychophysiological fear after he is “marked.” As Marsh et al.'s study displays, recognition of the fear expression predicts prosocial behavior. Now, pair this with an explicit message for political effect: fascism leads to fear and

¹²⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 14.

misery in and for all. Whether a spectator interprets this consciously or unconsciously, the recognition of fear can prompt prosocial behavior and said prosociality tunes to the political message present (given a spectator analyzes and agrees, of course). This is a dialectic, providing a synthesis (prosocial action) that is not simply theoretical, but behavioral and political for the audience. In Brecht's theatrical medium, we have a model to achieve this.

To conclude, I point to the opening scene of *Fear and Misery* as one of the most ironic portrayals of fascist fear. Scene one, "One Big Family," follows two inebriated SS officers walking down the street on the night of January 30th, 1933, the date Adolf Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany. The playlet sustains multiple *gestic* implications, however, an exploration of an emotional journey may establish my preceding arguments more soundly within performance. While the SS officers move down the street, they discuss the building of Hitler's nation and how they both cannot wait until they have "coaxed out German Man from among all those filthy subhumans."¹³⁰ The SS officer's words are undoubtedly vulgar, but what if this was coupled with a flash of contempt?¹³¹ If we could not hear his words this affectual facial expression provides one possible context: the present figure deeply hates something or someone. With the words reimplemented we gain the perspective of who or what they despise, but this does not diminish the impact and stance of verbal and non-verbal emotional communication and its residence in the external social relations. As the SS officers continue to chat, they express a disliking for the proletarian part of town they have found themselves in:

THE FIRST.

Hey, what part of Berlin is this? Not a flag showing.

THE SECOND.

We've come the wrong way.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹³¹ It is debated whether contempt should be included as a "core" emotion, though, it is undoubtedly distinct.

THE FIRST.

A horrible sight.

THE SECOND.

Lots of crooks round here.¹³²

Here we may see a mixing with contempt or transition to disgust as the SS officers consider the external social conditions and their prejudice for whoever resides there. The emotional *Haltungen* has changed because of the external society resulting in means for portraying the figures affectual relationships to their *Gestus* of spatial and human proximities. The final emotional change, and that which undergirds the severe inferences of this play, is that of fear. Despite the SS officer's contempt, disgust, and haughty nature, fear envelopes them when an old man opens his window to call for an unknown Emma: "Emma are you there?"¹³³ Confronted with a "deplorable" from this horrid part of town, the fear and panic send one SS officer into a frenzy. His *Haltungen* of contempt and disgust have contorted to fear as he calls for help, draws his pistol, and shoots all around.¹³⁴

The emotions are motivating. I have argued for their forefronting as a primary prosocial motivator in Brecht's theatre. The concoctions of our daily emotional drives communicate verbally and non-verbally via the face and body in the external social relations. The SS officer did not suddenly spur with contempt and disgust because he felt so inclined or without cause; sociality catalyzes these emotions through a *gestic* relationship to society which has molded his specific worldview. A perception charged with contrasting emotions that entails more descriptors of figure than words could ever detail. This emotional connection to the spectator causes one to critique why it is the figures are affected in this manner as we are left with the ringing of gunshots during

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 6.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

final tableau of the playlet: “*Behind a window opposite the one where the old man is still standing a terrible cry is heard. Someone has been hit.*”¹³⁵

The current section contends that the expression of emotion, specifically fear, embeds in the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of figures and their contradictions in the external social relations. These representations can motivate, instill another element of the figure for spectator analysis, and, most importantly, aid *Gestus* and *Haltung* in portraying specific behaviors and the pliability of humankind. Attaching affect theories of emotional expressiveness to Brechtian aesthetics realizes the prosocial possibilities of the dialectical theatre for political effect on a spectating body. The expression of fear as a display of distress primes us to help, to placate, and to contextualize the source of terror. When a search for horrors pairs with an explicit stance for political action, this source is criticized in Brecht’s theatre as circumstances that must change via our own awareness and prosocial behavior, all with a few good laughs at farcical fascism.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

4.0 A SYNTHESIS

Emotional Expressiveness & Compassion: A Prosocial Path Forward

In sum, my project argues for blending studies of emotional expressiveness with the concepts of *Gestus* and *Haltung* to offer an approach for more effective prosocial instigation in Brecht's theatre. As I indicate, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* is an excellent play to achieve this as it displays fear frequently and intricately to propel its narrative. By observing the social behaviors of figures via their *Gestus* and *Haltungen*, a spectator can inspect these representations of affectual fear to realize they are determined by the *Gestus* of fascist dictatorship. As contradictions frustrate these figures, expressions of fear and misery pose moments to prime prosociality in an audience. When their critique reveals the sociopolitical implication that fascism brings fear and misery for all, these spectators may now be inclined to assert a prosocial stance against fascism, perhaps in both thought and society. Hence, emotion and affect provide a psychophysiological method of transmitting verbal and non-verbal social information for prosocial change in the external relations of humans.

Still, questions remain as to avenues for future research. Is fear the only emotion that can incite prosocial behavior in a theatrical medium? How can practitioners guarantee that these psychological effects will affect a spectating body to accomplish political and prosocial transformation "in the streets," not just within a theatrical space? What role does empathy play in the enaction of prosocial behavior? Presently, I have skirted around empathy as a factor to be complicated in Brecht's dialectical theatre. That the nixing of empathetic processes can transpire

has come under considerable debate.¹³⁶ Brecht's positions on empathy are as complex as his thoughts on the emotions and, as such, require further analysis in relation to my current assertions.

In short, Brecht's contention with empathy seeks a disruption to empathetic processes, not a purposeful exclusion, which even he recognized as impossible. Within a theatrical space, it would be futile to eliminate empathy entirely when there are no perceivable means of occluding its occurrence. As Barnett asserts, "Brecht feared that the audience would empathize with the characters on stage and experience what they experience without standing back and understanding why the characters acted as they did."¹³⁷ I find Brecht's concerns legitimate and contend that recent studies in cognitive science and social neuroscience are able to support his questionings of "blind" empathy that is not critiqued in self, others, and on the stage.

Cognitive psychologists Claus Lamm & Jasminka Majdandžić posit discretion when analyzing the current research on the science and psychology of empathy, especially in relation to studies of neural activation and mirror neurons.¹³⁸ Their critical comment does not offer support for Brecht's deliberate separation of empathetic processes but provides a decent overview of the present problems in empirical discourse. For instance, Lamm and Majdandžić argue that statements regarding mirror neurons as fixed, ingrained, and reflexive sensorimotor couplings "lead to equally false assertions if applied to the construct of empathy – for example, that we have a biologically hard-wired predisposition to automatically respond empathically to others."¹³⁹ As

¹³⁶ Bruce A. McConachie, *Evolution, Cognition, and Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 120.

¹³⁷ Barnett, *Brecht in Practice*, 68.

¹³⁸ Mirror neurons are neurons that fire when acting and observing. For example, when a spectator observes an actor punch a wall, the same the neurons that fire in actor do in the spectator as well, despite the spectator not performing the action. See: Giacomo Rizzolatti and Laila Craighero, "The mirror-neuron system," *Annu. Rev. Neurosci.* 27 (2004): 169-192.

¹³⁹ Lamm, Claus, and Jasminka Majdandžić, "The role of shared neural activations, mirror neurons, and morality in empathy—a critical comment." *Neuroscience Research* 90, (2015), 20.

opposed to “hard-wired mirroring,” what appears most central to empathetic response and instinctiveness is developmental learning and psychosocial experiences.¹⁴⁰ Thus, in regard to Brecht’s position, his attempts to disrupt known empathetic processes may be dismissed by our acquired knowledge, individualities, and sociocultural ecologies, not mirror neurons and motor resonance.

Lamm and Majdandžić also ask, “Does increasing empathy make us ‘better people’?” Contrary to narratives that disseminate both within public perception and academic study, the short answer is: no. Despite connections made between altruism and empathy “empathy is sensitive to deeply-rooted parochialism and in-group bias.”¹⁴¹ Therefore, empathetic processes weaken easily by biases like that of ethnicity, cause us to express higher altruistic behavior for in-group members such as kin and race, and maintain a lack of evidence for implications on morality, in that morality can be separate from empathy. In this sense, empathy cannot be *solely* relied on, either as a prosocial tool or theatrical mechanism, unless the ideas surrounding its effectiveness change and a veritable training of “resistance” towards empathetic biases ensues in societies. I agree with Lamm and Majdandžić that what we must seek is not simply an increase in empathetic capacities at the neural level and/or amongst social relations. Rather, theatre should incite the “impartiality of prosocial attitudes and actions in our society” that can be “tailored to include individuals that fall outside of our preferred social groups.”¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. See also: Haakon G. Engen and Tania Singer, “Empathy circuits,” *Current opinion in neurobiology* 23, no. 2 (2013): 275-282.; Grit Hein and Tania Singer, “I feel how you feel but not always: the empathic brain and its modulation,” *Current opinion in neurobiology* 18, no. 2 (2008): 153-158.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. See also: Joan Y. Chiao and Vani A. Mathur, “Intergroup empathy: how does race affect empathic neural responses?” *Current Biology* 20, no. 11 (2010): R478-R480; Vani A. Mathur, Tokiko Harada, Trixie Lipke, and Joan Y. Chiao, “Neural basis of extraordinary empathy and altruistic motivation,” *Neuroimage* 51, no. 4 (2010): 1468-1475; Bobby K. Cheon, Dong-mi Im, Tokiko Harada, Ji-Sook Kim, Vani A. Mathur, Jason M. Scimeca, Todd B. Parrish, Hyun Wook Park, and Joan Y. Chiao, “Cultural influences on neural basis of intergroup empathy,” *Neuroimage* 57, no. 2 (2011): 642-650.

¹⁴² Ibid., 22.

Nonetheless, Brecht's attempts to promote the building of complicated figures may still cause one to empathize with unanticipated abandon or in ways that contrast their own positionalities or biases. Brecht grew frustrated with the automaticity of suggestive empathy in audiences that caused identification with the grotesque figures he thrust forth for spectator engagement. Though, at either the conscious and unconscious levels of experience, what does empathy towards the Mack the Knife's, the Arturo Ui's, and, perhaps even, the SS/SA men say about spectator positionality and understanding?

Recall that in the 1945 New York production of *Fear and Misery* Maurice Ellis donned white face to estrange racial discrimination in America. Albeit, as I noted, prosocial behavior resulting from the proper recognition of fear may have its own cultural biases thus diminishing the white face effect. However, this contradiction provides confrontation. To combat cognitive aspects as challenging and ingrained as biopsychosocial and evolutionary empathetic implicit biases, the first step must be an attempt at complicating confrontation. By providing a hopeful theatrical venue for critical commentary on the external social relations, Brecht's theatre understands environmental cause and effect as instigator of prosocial change. Drawing from studies of emotional expressiveness, I contend this path towards empathetic impartiality and cognitive inclusivity is catalyzing *compassion* within Brecht's aesthetics.

As compassion is a complex socio-affective state, it is "said to have evolved to deal with threats and opportunities related to social interactions and to be involved in regulating social behaviour, cooperation, affiliation and maintaining supportive and helpful social relationships."¹⁴³ Also, social neuroscientific research suggests that compassion fortifies a "resistance" against the

¹⁴³ Kirsten McEwan, Paul Gilbert, Stephane Dandeneau, Sigrid Lipka, Frances Maratos, Kevin B. Paterson, and Mark Baldwin, "Facial expressions depicting compassionate and critical emotions: The development and validation of a new emotional face stimulus set," *PloS one* 9, no. 2 (2014): e88783.

caveats of empathy, such as empathetic burnout and implicit biases.¹⁴⁴ Much akin to the contradicting expressions of terror on the chalk-faced soliders and the evidence for the recognition of fear predicting prosocial behavior, compassion is thus a useful, yet intricate, emotional state and affectual expression in human sociality. However, research regarding the specific facial constructions of these complex social emotions is embryonic and cannot yet be investigated on stage in the same manner as fear.

Evidently, more examinations must be conducted in both the fields of psychology and theatre studies to understand the exact potentialities of prosocially activating audiences who participate in Brecht's theatre. To incite a dialectical communication of the emotions, such as observing fear in the playlets of *Fear and Misery*, enacting prosocial change is only as effective as the spectators allow it to be. The contradictions residing in the *Gestus* and *Haltung* of fascist dictatorship *require* scrutiny from a spectator. By evincing affectual expressions of fear, spectators may be inclined to be fearful of, saddened by, and/or laugh at the consequences that fascism has on external social relations. This accomplishes a particular political effect: fascism erodes societies. Let us strive to theatrically and socially foment prosocial behavior not only to foster a resilience against fascist ideology, but to assertively protest for its eradication with a resonating: "NO!"

¹⁴⁴ See: Tania Singer and Claus Lamm, "The social neuroscience of empathy," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1156, no. 1 (2009), 81; Tania Singer and Olga M. Klimecki, "Empathy and compassion," *Current Biology* 24, no. 18 (2014): R875-R878; Shane Sinclair, Kate Beamer, Thomas F. Hack, Susan McClement, Shelley Raffin Bouchal, Harvey M. Chochinov, and Neil A. Hagen, "Sympathy, empathy, and compassion: A grounded theory study of palliative care patients' understandings, experiences, and preferences," *Palliative medicine* 31, no. 5 (2017): 437-447; Olga M. Klimecki, Susanne Leiberg, Claus Lamm, and Tania Singer, "Functional neural plasticity and associated changes in positive affect after compassion training," *Cerebral cortex* 23, no. 7 (2012): 1552-1561; Olga M. Klimecki, Susanne Leiberg, Matthieu Ricard, and Tania Singer, "Differential pattern of functional brain plasticity after compassion and empathy training," *Social cognitive and affective neuroscience* 9, no. 6 (2013): 873-879.

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