

BERTOLT BRECHTS HAUSPOSTILLE AND THE RHETORIC OF THE 'NEUE SACHLICHKEIT'

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While literary criticism has often pointed to Bertolt Brechts *Hauspostille* as a parodic revisiting of Martin Luther's *Hauspostille* and in general of the tradition of religious books for spiritual exercises, hardly anyone has highlighted its subversive function in terms of a "Umwertung" of poetry as a *genre*. A formal reading of Brecht's collection of poems shall give an account of the reasons why this "Gebrauchstext" represents a challenge to the lyric tradition, especially if considered from the perspective of a work which belongs to the literary canon of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

The first specific element of the book attesting its incongruity in relation to the tradition of poetry as a *genre* is the Introduction to the poems, which contains *Anleitung zum Gebrauch der einzelnen Lektionen*. "Anleitung" is a key-concept in order to understand not only the structural novelty presented by this work, but also its implications according to the *neusachliche* rhetoric. In fact, the introduction of "Anleitungen" at the beginning of a book of poems is a most unexpected gesture, especially if we look at it in comparison with the lyrical form of the "Erlebnisdichtung", as it has been suggested by Jan Knopf and extensively resumed by René Schmidt: "Die Anwesenheit eines lyrischen Ich war eine der Grundvoraussetzungen der subjektiven Erlebnislyrik: dieses Ich war der Träger, der den Ausdruck der Subjektivität, der Gefühle ermöglichte. Diese wichtige Komponente konnte Brecht selbstverständlich nicht unberührt lassen, wollte er mit der Tradition

dieser subjektiven Lyrik brechen”.¹ Brecht distances himself from the tradition of the “Erlebnisdichtung”, which assumes poetry as being the expression of subjectivity, of a lyrical voice and feelings. On the contrary, he claims the usefulness of lyrics, its practical employment. It is almost pointless to say that – as a consequence – the act of reading cannot just be the same after the exposure to the *Anleitung*, which is anyway inseparable from the text as every other section, since it explains how to handle the book. This is a relevant assumption, which draws attention to the importance of *pathos* for the structure of Brecht’s work. Quite obviously, the author of the *Hauspostille* aims to prepare the reader for approaching the poems according to a certain modality, which is different for every single section and for some specific poems. In other words, the author is prescribing to the reader the conditions under which he is required to make use of his poems. The effect caused by this subversive, propaedeutic gesture is a sense of alienation in the reader, since, in opposition to the lyrical tradition, reading poetry cannot be considered any longer the very act of meeting the lyrical voice of the poet and in a way to experience a profound sense of intimacy with the self. Poetry has rather become a conditioned practice, in which the external setting up of its principles decides on the reader’s way of perceiving it. In this way, the act of reading poetry is no longer originary, but somehow already determined by prescribed expectations.

For instance, every *Lektion* in the book is designed to target different sides in the reader, like “das Gefühl” or “den Verstand”. First of all, this sort of ostensive and artificially posed dramatization of the components of human understanding makes the reader reflect on his own act of reading poems and it eventually leads him to think of himself as a dissociated subject while reading. And in a way, this can ultimately be

¹ René Schmidt, “Bertolt Brechts Hauspostille: eine Auseinandersetzung mit der konventionellen Lyrik”. *Cahiers d’Études Germaniques*, 1993: 25, 180.

seen as an “Umwertung” of the aesthetic theorization of poetry set forth by Kant, in particular of the very principle of an harmonic interplay between imagination and reason, which is allowed especially by poetry. It is precisely the experience of harmony in the subject to be interdicted to the reader. Moreover, the *Anleitung*, with its detailed comments for every single section of the book, does not support the idea of a holistic project, originated by a “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” as Wordsworth would say, but rather that of a collection of discrete episodes or chronicles.

So the effects aroused by reading poetry are already anticipated (and hence induced) before the very act of reading takes place. In this way, not only is the reader kept from the possibility of encountering the poet’s voice, but this structure also prevents him from making the experience of self-identification, from going back to his own origin: actually, there is no origin to which the reader can go back, since the act of reading itself succumbs to a certain convention and therefore it is no longer original. Reading makes the reader only experience his heteronomous relationship with the self. Now, this fact acquires a specific significance in relation to the *neusachliche Lebensphilosophie*. In *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte*, Helmut Lethen outlines a complex scenario for the discussion of the fundamental question: “Was für ein Naturding ist der Mensch?” in the years following the First World War. He refers to the anthropological claims made by Helmuth Plessner on the nature of man: “Mit dem Terminus »Radikalismus« greift Plessner jede Weltanschauung an, die sich von der Überzeugung leiten lässt, »dass ein Rückzug auf die Wurzeln der Existenz« not tue. Den Wunschbildern der »ungesonderten Einheit« und den Therapien der Radikalität setzt Plessner seine Verhaltenslehre der Distanz entgegen, die von dem anthropologischen Grundsatz ausgeht, dass die Existenz jedes Menschen von Geburt

an gebrochen sei. »Deshalb ist der Mensch »von Natur« künstlich und nie im Gleichgewicht.«² Lethen underlines the importance of Plessner's anthropology for the *Neue Sachlichkeit* and he historicizes his position according to the idea of "Verhaltenslehre": "Künstlichkeit als genuines Medium humanen Verhaltens – das ist ein Axiom, mit dem das Polaritätsdenken der Lebensphilosophie über Nacht umgewertet wird. Die polare Spannung, in die eine ganze Epoche Triebregung und sozialen Zwang, unentfremdetes Sein und Verdinglichung, authentischen Ausdruck und verhaltene Konvention versetzt hatte, wird zwar nicht plötzlich aufgehoben, aber doch so gewendet, dass Entfremdungs-Kälte der »Gesellschaft« als Lebenselixier denkbar wird".³ Therefore, an explanation for man's "Verlust der Mitte" can be provided through Plessner's fundamental claim about the "Künstlichkeit" of human existence: according to Plessner's anthropological theory, the question of the duality of "Körper" and "Seele" shall be overcome by the mere fact that the human being has no determination of any kind in himself – in other words, man lacks a proper human nature, his existence is given as "abgründlich". The only way in which man is possible is by fixing his lack of nature in a social order: the human existence is social of necessity. If man cannot trace back his existence to an origin – because of his very own nature, which is "künstlich" – it is because his identity is determined by external forces.

If Lethen historicizes Plessner's radical postulation in his essay on the *Verhaltenslehren*, Brecht formalizes it in his book of poems. In this sense, the *Anleitung* to the *Hauspostille* represents very much a *mise-en-abyme* of the *Fremdbestimmung* or heteronomous determination of the subject, as it shows that, in the end, the act of reading is the act of being.

² Helmut Lethen, *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994, 52.

³ Lethen, 9.

Secondly, the *Anleitung* also provides directions about the time to be spent by reading, the character and conduct of the addressee, personal comments and even explanations, and finally notes for a musical accompaniment. All in all, the preface is not least a kind of script for the act of reading poetry, which is itself a performance. From this viewpoint, “Anleitung” is a key-word in the lexicon of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, since it refers to the assumption that man is not a “Schwieriger”, a subject whose identity is anchored in the interior world and whose conduct is regulated by the conscience, but he is rather “außen-gelenkt”. The subject in the years after the war has undergone a process of “Entpsychologisierung”. The new human order is now focused on the primacy of the body and its phenomenology. His life is conditioned by outer rituals of social recognition: the way in which the individual acts under the others’ eyes determines his own identity. The vital concern of the subject has turned to a “Selbstinszenierung[en] eines Lebensstils”, since authenticity has been dismissed by “Künstlichkeit”.

So, if the human existence is to be conceived as a “Lebensführung”, then “Anleitungen” are precisely the forces which make this existence possible, since the “neusachlicher Mensch” is no longer a complex subject, who acts according to an interior voice and feelings, but rather a “persona”, or an “unterkomplexes Subjekt”, who is defined by his own acting. As a consequence, it is once again made clear that poetry is not to be intended as the expression of a lyrical voice: on the contrary, it has become evident that the word “expression” no longer means to bring out what is supposed to be concealed inside, but rather to externally prepare or “stage” what is going to be brought inside.

It has already been pointed out by several critics the fact that for Brecht's *Hauspostille*: "Lyrik als Gefühl, als subjektiver »Aus-Druck« ist nicht zu erwarten."⁴ The question of "Ausdruck" is a fundamental one. First of all, it is interesting to focus on "expression" primarily as the act of transmitting a message, since it is clear that the author's work is deeply engaged with the exhibition of the relation between the author and the reader. If we submit Brecht's poems to Roman Jakobson's classic model of linguistic communication, we note that he radically revises the *genre* of poetry by superseding the emotive function with the referential and the poetic one. The emotive function is oriented to the producer of the message and tends to give the impression of some kind of emotion, whereas the referential function aims to provide some information on a context. The poetic function is oriented to the message itself and it aims to draw the addressee's attention to the form of that and hence it is self-reflexive. In Brecht's poems both the referential and the poetic function prevail and overshadow the emotive function. In the first case, this point will be better discussed later on, while speaking of the narrative character of his poetry. For what concerns the poetic function, related to the form of the message, it has already been pointed out how the very structure of the book obstructs the direct externalization of any sort of feeling.

At the same time, it is also evident that Brecht creates a work, which is typical for the *neusachliche* rhetoric. One of the main features of this rhetoric, which Lethen has underlined in his essay, is the process of "Abwertung" that affects: "die Kategorie des »Ausdrucks« als Form eines *inneren* Erlebnisses".⁵ With the crisis of the so-called "Gewissenskultur", "Ausdruck" meant as the exhibition of inwardness is dismissed and displaced by a rhetoric of acts and signs, the only observable facts about the human presence. "Ausdruck" seems to have become quite foreign to an

⁴ Jan Knopf, *Brecht-Handbuch. Lyrik, Prosa, Schriften*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984, 32.

⁵ Lethen, 102.

epistemological order which describes the human existence in terms of a “Verhaltenslehre” and assumes the supremacy of the body.

Yet “Ausdruck” can well be considered as a term which does not necessarily imply “Innerlichkeit”. On the contrary, it might be intended as a mere signal with no ambivalence nor meaning left over or else as pure “Entscheidung”. Or it can ultimately be reduced to the formal aspect of the word. An example in the text is offered by the repeated presence of the prefix “Ab-”, like in the word “Abgestorbene”. In this case, the prefix becomes a signal disseminated in the text that attaches to the signifier the function of pointing to the very “Ab-gründlichkeit” of human condition. On a superficial level, it is as if even the word would carry with itself a marker of manifest allusion to man natural lack of an origin, to his being a “homo ab-sconditus”. Yet, in the case of the *Hauspostille*, it is certainly erroneous to proclaim the absolutization of form. Brecht does not indulge in a counterposition of formal inebriation. The referential function by far imposes itself on the poetic one.

In this respect, how should the role of “Ausdruck” be further understood in the *Hauspostille*? How does the “Abwertung des Ausdrucks” affect poetry as a *genre*? In order to tackle this relevant issue, our attention shall now be drawn to two main (rhetorical) elements: the voice and the glance.

The importance of the voice for Brecht’s poems comes out both on a superficial and on a more profound structural level. First of all, the book ends with a section called “Gesangsnoten”. The poems have been conceived to be accompanied by music and to be sung, as it is explained in the *Anleitung*. Thus, if we consider that the expression of words is acted by singing, then “Ausdruck” itself has truly become a “Geste”. By analyzing the question of the expression, Lethen has pointed out that for the writers of the *neusachlicher* period: “Jeder Ausdruck hat einen performativen

Aspekt”.⁶ Later on, he refers explicitly to this issue in Brecht: “Brecht ersetzt die Kategorie des »Ausdrucks« im epischen Theater durch die der »Geste«, die er – ähnlich wie Plessner – als »Ausdruck im Lichte einer Handlung« definiert. In der Geste werden die abstrakten Zeichen der Verständigung wieder an den Körper zurückgebunden. Grenzte das Zeichen den Körper aus, so stellt ihn die Geste wieder ins Zentrum”.⁷ In a way, Brecht is translating the principle of “Ausdruck” as a gesture from drama to poetry, by conceiving the act of reading as a performance and associating it to singing and playing music.

So the first contamination of poetry as a *genre* comes from the theatre. But the voice assumes a fundamental role also on a deeper textual level. The purpose of this essay is to show how the uncommon polyphonic character of this work represents a further challenge to the *genre* of poetry.

This time poetry encounters the narrative *genre*.

First of all, it is useful to introduce some theoretical remarks on the role of the voice in poetry and in the novel. In *Discourse in the Novel*⁸, Mikhail Bakhtin clarifies the importance of the voice in a narrative text. He claims that a novel is the space of a “dialogized heteroglossia”⁹ *par excellence*: the novel contains a voice which is the receptacle of the voice of the others. The narrator’s task is to make sure that the word in the novel is imbued with the world’s voices. The dialogical character of the word is due to the fact that this is always socially charged. According to Bakhtin, every word carries with itself a stratification, or we could say an “opacity”, which means that whenever a speaker utters a word, this does not belong fully to him, but it rather conveys all the meanings and all the ways in which others have already inhabited that

⁶ Lethen, 117.

⁷ Lethen, 118.

⁸ “Discourse in the Novel”, in Michael Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

⁹ Bakhtin, 272.

word. Every word says the relation that others have already engaged with it. Bakhtin considers the novel as the place of a social dialog: the literary word decentralizes the subject and it sets him in a dimension made of several voices.

The voice of poetry is different. To say it with Seamus Heaney, poetry is the place where you look for a unique voice in order to get to an object which appears to be impenetrable. The poet's task would be that of finding a word which could bridge the gap between the subject and the object. So while the narrator's path is saturated with all the representations of an object that have been conceived in time through the voice of the others, the poet strives to reach the object, or more precisely to find his own voice among all the others. He has to strip the object of all the representations given by others and establish a unique relation with it. The poet moves in the opposite direction compared to the narrator. He longs to find out the peculiar flavour of his own lyrical voice, as Heaney explains: "Finding a voice means that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them; and I believe that it may not even be a metaphor, for a poetic voice is probably very intimately connected with the poet's natural voice, the voice that he hears as the ideal speaker of the lines he is making up."¹⁰

This preliminary distinction is particularly suited in order to define the importance of the voice in the *Hauspostille*. As a matter of fact, critics have already pointed to the dispersion of the lyrical voice in Brecht's poems. For example, Knopf raises this issue by calling the *Hauspostille* "Rollenlyrik". Yet, by using this term, the critic does not explicitly refer to the idea of the plurality of voices that is conveyed throughout the poems. On the contrary, he underlines the importance of "Rolle" by claiming that poetry, in this case: "fordert vielmehr eine gewisse Bewußtheit vom

¹⁰ Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations. Selected Prose 1968-1978*. London: Faber&Faber, 1980, 43.

parodierten Rahmen und Distanziertheit, nämlich Gefühle zu kontrollieren, vom Leser geradezu heraus.”¹¹ Basically, he interchanges the terms “Rollen- bzw. Funktions- (Gebrauchs-) Charakter” of lyric in order to point to the functional character of poetry, to its utility. Schmidt has recognized the validity of Knopf’s main claim, namely: “Der Rollencharakter vieler Gedichte ist von der Forschung entweder nicht gesehen oder nur als nebensächlich abgetan worden. Immer wieder hat man so die lyrische Darstellung als subjektiven Selbstaussdruck genommen, als Erlebnisdichtung, die Schlüsse auf die Lebenseinstellung und die Weltanschauung des jungen Brecht ohne weiteres zulasse”.¹² Schmidt has further developed Knopf’s ideas and he has reformulated them in a way that opens up the question of polyphony, as it has been mentioned above. The critic quotes Knopf’s notion of “Rollencharakter” and he adds: “In solchen Gedichten kommt in der Regel ein Ich zum Ausdruck, das in der Tat auf einen fiktiven Sprecher verweist, der auf keinen Fall mit dem Dichter selbst verwechselt werden darf. Es können unter Umständen auch mehrere nebeneinanderwohnende oder abwechselnde Ichs sein...”.¹³

We would like to start from the suspension dots at the end of Schmidt’s last observation and analyse the presence of different subjects, or voices, in the text.

As a general remark, it is very unusual to find a poem in the collection which does not involve more than one subject, if not even literally “speaking voice”. Even poems which start with the pronoun “ich” and seem to gather around the poet’s lyrical voice (or someone’s else voice), easily open to a plurality of other speakers distributed anywhere throughout the text and often admitted with emphasis. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the first and second *Lektion*, those sections of the book which more directly address the reader. *Das Schiff*, for instance, is a

¹¹ Knopf, 34.

¹² Knopf, 35.

¹³ Schmidt, 180.

remarkable case, since this is one of those rare poems where a unique subject persists alone quite long: the only speaking voice in five strophes is an “ich”, but the performance of the solo ends with the sixth and last strophe, as the poem switches to the plural “sie”. This poem is paradigmatic for many reasons: first of all, because it shows the unexpected (and typical) intrusion of another subject. Second, because the introduction of this new voice is typographically stressed like in many other poems. Third, because it introduces the notion of “dialogic” (“sagten aus”).

For what concerns the first feature, it has already been mentioned the fact that a poem usually houses many subjects. A typical example is given by the *Psalmen*, lyrics made of an enumeration of thoughts, where the subject may change for every different entry on the list. The unity of the composition is constantly displaced by the change of speakership. The *Dritter Psalm*, for instance, even presents a multiplicity of subjects in a single entry (“ihr”-“ich”). It begins with “ihr”, then it switches to “ich” and it ends with “er”. Moreover, it is interesting to observe how the subject is introduced on the lyrical scene. Sometimes he is a mere walk-on figure, his presence is provisional, like for example in *Ballade von den Geheimnissen jedweden Mannes*, which begins addressing an “ihr”, but then it suddenly changes to “Sie”. This “Sie” is finally dropped in the next strophe and definitely replaced by “ihr”.

Actually, the presence of a subject is not always significant to the scene. Sometimes the personal pronoun even lacks a specific reference: besides the previous *Ballade* and the *Psalmen*, consider also *Vom Mitmensch* or *Der Herr der Fische*, where an “er” (maybe “der Mensch”?) is surrounded by unknown “sie”. Another example is given by *Vom Schwimmen in Seen und Flüssen* and *Vom armen B.B.*. Here the “ich” unexpectedly mentions the presence of someone else by switching to an unqualified “wir”. Sometimes the pronoun finds an occasional identity, like in *Über*

die Anstrengung, a poem which opens with an impersonal “man” and then it reveals a “wir”, which is only temporarily better qualified in the verse: “Wie sollen wir uns, die Bräute, betören?”. Or else, a proper name is invoked, but then the invocation of a name becomes a quite void gesture. In this way, the invocation – whatever the addressee is: “Mond”, “Himmel”, “Gott”, “mein Kind”, “du”, “ihr” – is devoid of any *pathos* and it becomes a mere rhetorical act.

Secondly, it is easy to note that the presence of a third voice is often stressed by typographical evidence. At the end of various poems or interspersed in between, there are strophes highlighted in italics. They can assume different functions: they usually contain an invocation, which can be a plea or an exhortation (*Von der Kindesmörderin Marie Farrar*), or they simply introduce a different point of view (*Das Schiff*) or a moral accent (*Ballade von der Hanna Cash*). In *Liturgie vom Hauch*, the section in italics is repeated almost identical after every five strophes as a chorus; only the last one is different. It is a comment on the story told by the poem and it addresses a “du”, which might presumably be the reader. This technical device is introduced in the lyric as a sort of counterpoint or off-screen voice. It is interesting to note that this comment represents the heterodiegetic viewpoint of the poet: in this sense, the position of the poet is much closer to that of a narrator than that of a lyrical voice. Moreover, it seems that the poet’s voice is more likely represented by this recurring intermission than by any “ich” it assumes each time. Therefore, the presence of this structure introduces a significant wrench in the lyrical *genre*: it suggests the possibility that in a poem the speaking voice is not identical to itself and so it underlines the distance between the poet and the self and also between the reader and the lyrical voice.

Or else, the viewpoint in the poem might well be plural: in this case, it could be compared to the presence of the chorus in the Greek tragedy, with the main difference

that in Brecht's poem the comment is conveyed in an indirect form (even a dialogic one), since in a way this still professes itself as part of the lyric.

In this way, the reader is induced to ask himself: Who is speaking now? In the end, the reader cannot really make the experience of the identification with the poet's voice, since this does not speak for a unique subject; on the contrary, it has become pluralized.

Third, the several subjects are not only quotations of a presence, but they often begin to speak, they become speaking voices in the poem. Frequently they are introduced in order to pose a question or to engage a dialog. This act is exercised regularly, no matter which form has been chosen to let the subject speak. Actually, a speech act can be designated through normal quotation marks, or these can even be omitted, or else it is admitted in the form of "erlebte Rede". It is remarkable to note that there is hardly a poem in the whole collection that does not allow the dialogic form, whether internal or external (maybe with the reader?). Even a poem like *Das Schiff*, which is apparently a soliloquy, breaks up in the final comment made by "fremde Fischer", which represents the plural perspective on the scene and it certainly cannot be left out. In this way, the reader cannot recompose his reading experience around the perception of a unifying flow of sense, but he is constantly released by (diegetic) interferences. For example, sometimes the speech act is brought in through a frame: this is the case in *Von der Kindesmörderin Marie Farrar*, where the whole story is reported through the indirect speech ("sie sagt"), in which the speaker occasionally inserts his own comment. The effect produced is that of increasing the distance between the lyrical voice and the reader. Sometimes the whole poem is explicitly written in the form of a dialog, like *Morgendliche Rede an den Baum Griehn*, in which the poet directly addresses a tree ("Sie"). Other times, a dialog

between different voices is integrated in the lyric with or without inverted commas, like in *Ballade von der Freundschaft* and *Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten*. In any case, the poet's voice is constantly marginalized, if not engaged in an imaginary discussion, but hardly inclined to confession. In this sense, Knopf's objection to the traditional critical misconception about Brecht's first book of poems as representing the expression of a (unitary) self is certainly well-suited.

At this point, it is clear that the conception of poetry as a *genre* has been challenged by the narrative *genre* as well: Brecht's poems clearly endorse the notion of polyphony and the principle of dialogism, as they were theorized by Bakhtin and recognized as distinguishing features of the novel.

After all, it is quite inevitable to note the correspondence between the formal features of Brecht's poems, as they have been described so far, and the *neusachliche* anthropology, especially in relation to the notion of polyphony. As a matter of fact, by referring to Gracián's concept of "kalte persona", Lethen has portrayed the identity of the subject as being determined by "äußeren Stimme". The dialogic principle embodied by the poems seems to endorse this statement accordingly. Lethen recalls Plessner's idea of a "»Reziprozität der Perspektiven«" and he further specifies it by quoting from Karl Löwith's *Das Individuum in der Rolle des Mitmenschen*: "das Individuum [...] wesentlich in mitmenschlichen Rollen existiert, »d.h. überhaupt von Grund auf an ihm selbst durch entsprechende *Andere* und formal fixiert«".¹⁴

Brecht exemplifies both formally and substantially this assumption in his poems by interspersing the poet's voice with a plurality of other voices. Even when the poet seems to be left alone, he does not really speak for himself; on the contrary, he personifies the viewpoint of someone else.

¹⁴ Lethen, 61.

In the end, if the perspective of the poet has been revealed as unstable if traced back to the act of “aus-drucken”, also the point of view of the reader is called into question by the text. As a consequence, our attention shall finally turn from the voice to the glance.

One of the privileged movement of the eyes in the text is from the bottom upwards, or more precisely towards the “Himmel”. Whenever “Himmel” is addressed in a poem (and it happens in almost every poem), it appears as a deontologized presence: it is invoked as the merely natural and unescapable destination of the human glance. It is interesting to note that the position of the subject in relation to “Himmel” is overtly inferior, in the sense that “Himmel” is introduced to frame the events according to a vertical perspective. Now, the remarkable fact concerning the role of the glance in the text is the following: once that the point of view of “Himmel” is assumed, this turns out to be void. In the last poem of the collection, called *Legende vom toten Soldaten*, the poet suggests to observe the final scene from above: “So viele tanzten und johlten um ihn/ Daß ihn keiner sah./ Man konnte ihn einzig von oben noch sehn/ Und da sind nur Sterne da”. In the *Erster Psalm* this point is made even more explicit: “Immer denke ich: wir werden nicht beobachtet. Der Aussatz des einzigen Sternes in der Nacht, vor er untergeht!”. Should the glance from above be assimilated to that of the reader, it is once again made clear that the text lays a distance between itself and its addressee. In the end, the identity of the receiver of the message is not less questionable than that of its source: the destination of the message is inscrutable (if not already given).

As a final remark, it is obviously not sufficient to reduce the question of “Ausdruck” to the discussion of the role played by the voice and the glance in the *Hauspostille*. All the more so, if we admit that not only does this collection of poems

dissociate itself from the “Erlebnislyrik”, but also that – as Schmidt has rightly pointed out – “ist es Brecht nicht gelungen, eine ‘Gebrauchslyrik’ im engen Sinne des Wortes zu erzeugen, sondern eher ein Werk, das sich der Eindeutigkeit entzieht, das Fragen aufwirft, Überlegungen und Empfindungen hervorruft”.¹⁵ Yet it is as much evident that the voice and the glance appear as the elements which are more consistently deputed to offer a perspective on this issue, especially considering the reading parameters which have been assumed in this essay in order to look at Brecht’s work from the *neusachliche* viewpoint.

In the end, “Ausdruck” should be regarded as the realization of a distance – which is not necessarily a constitutive act, but rather demonstrative and certainly rhetorical. Should this be the case, then it has been proved not only Knopf’s assumption that: “die formale Gestaltung soll die inhaltliche Darstellung stützen und stärker betonen”,¹⁶ but above all that the formal composition Brecht has assigned to his *Hauspostille* displays at different levels its involvement with the *neusachliche* rhetoric, and not least it represents a creative act of emancipation from the lyrical tradition.

¹⁵ Schmidt, 185.

¹⁶ Knopf, 29.

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