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0521817080 - Post-Imperial Brecht: Politics and Performance, East and South

Loren Kruger

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## Post-Imperial Brecht

*Post-Imperial Brecht* challenges prevailing views of Brecht's theatre and politics. Most political theatre critics place Brecht between West and East in the Cold War, and a few have recently explored Brecht's impact as a Northern writer on the global South. Loren Kruger is the first to argue that Brecht's impact as a political dramatist, director and theoretical writer makes full sense only when seen in a post-imperial framework that links the East/West axis between US capitalism and Soviet communism with the North/South axis of post-colonial resistance to imperialism. This framework highlights Brecht's arguments with theorists like Benjamin, Bloch, and Lukács. It also shows surprising connections between socialist East Germany, where Brecht's 1950s projects impressed the emerging Heiner Müller, and apartheid-era South Africa, where Brecht's work appeared on the apartheid as well as anti-apartheid stage. Brecht also shaped the work of South Africa's Athol Fugard, whose work reappeared in state and dissident theatres in East Germany. The book concludes with a reflection on Brechtian aspects of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and introduces new more precise translations of key Brechtian terms.

LOREN KRUGER is a graduate of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and Cornell University, and teaches the history and theory of drama and other cultural forms at the University of Chicago. She is the author of *The National Stage* (1992) and *The Drama of South Africa* (1999), and the editor of *Lights and Shadows: The Autobiography of Leontine Sagan* (1996), and of South African special issues of *Theatre Journal* and *Theatre Research International*.

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# **Post-Imperial Brecht**

Politics and Performance, East and South

Loren Kruger

*University of Chicago*



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## Acknowledgments

This book has its origins in a hunch that personal experience of cultural and political life in Germany and South Africa could be grounded in historical connections that are compelling as well as surprising. Its evolution has followed a characteristically comparative literary path between languages, discourses, and cultures, but owes its substance to the study of theatre, a subject still often marginalized in the fields of comparative and other literatures.

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## Abbreviations

AdK	Akademie der Künste, Berlin, including Theaterdokumentation (GDR Theatre Documentation; TD), Athol Fugard, and Heiner Müller collections
ANC	African National Congress, South Africa (1912–); underground 1964–90
BE	Berliner Ensemble
BBA	Bertolt Brecht Archive, Berlin
Brecht, <i>Werke</i>	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Werke: Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe</i> in 30 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988–)
<i>BoT</i>	<i>Brecht on Theatre</i> , ed. and trans. John Willett (1964; New York: Hill and Wang, 1992)
BOSS	Bureau of State Security, South Africa (1964–77); succeeded by the State Security Council (until 1990s)
BPT	Bantu Peoples' Theatre (1937–9); later the African National Theatre (1940–1)
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa (1919–50)
CWLP	Culture and Working Life Project, South Africa (1980s)
<i>DSM</i>	<i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i> , 4th edn (Washington: American Psychiatric Association, 1994)
DWCL	Durban Workers Culture Local, South Africa (1980s)
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth): SED-affiliated German youth organization

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FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (West), 1949 (Ger.: Bundesrepublik Deutschland or BRD)
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East), 1949–90 (Ger.: Deutsche Demokratische Republik or DDR)
GWU	Garment Workers' Union, South Africa
HfÖ	Hochschule für Ökonomie (GDR): College of Economics
HRV	Human Rights Violations Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa
HUAC	House UnAmerican Activities Committee, USA (1938–75)
IU/LL	Indiana University Lilly Library; includes Athol Fugard collection
JATC	Junction Avenue Theatre Company, <i>At the Junction: Four Plays by the Junction Avenue Theatre Company</i> , ed. Martin Orkin (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995)
JPL/STC	Johannesburg Public Library: Strange Theatre Collection
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands or German Communist Party (1919–33; 1945–6)
MK	UmKhonto we Sizwe or Spear of the Nation (1964–94): guerrilla arm of the ANC
NELM	National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown, South Africa
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or Nazi Party (1924–45)
PACT	Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal, South Africa (1963–98)
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SABTU	South African Black Theatre Union (1969–73)
SACP	South African Communist Party (underground 1950–90; legal from 1990)

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SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands or Socialist Unity Party, ruling party of GDR
SPD	Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands or Socialist Party; absorbed in the GDR by the SED in 1946
Stasi	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit or Ministry for State Security (GDR, 1951–90)
STC/JPL	Strange Theatre Collection, Johannesburg Public Library
Steinweg	Brecht, <i>Die Massnahme</i> , ed. Reiner Steinweg
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa (1996–2000)
UCT	University of Cape Town
UW/WC	University of the Witwatersrand William Cullen Library: includes Garment Workers' Union (GWU), South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) collections, Lewis Sowdon's "Red Rand", and other materials