

CLOUDS OF KNOWING, SONGS OF EXPERIENCE, SEASONS OF LOVE: BERTOLT BRECHT'S INTIMATIONS OF DANTE AND HAIKU

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Performing detailed comparative readings of three of Brecht's love poems, this article examines how Brecht's compositions confront the complex ties between love and knowledge, demonstrating how in his continuous lyric acts of commemoration Brecht has woven an intricate mnemonic texture out of love poetry's time-honored heritage. With a tight focus on the figure of the white cloud as an image that allows for Brecht's controversial play with poetic tradition, this article unravels Brecht's provocative vulgarization of Dante's vernacular, his sacrilegious introduction of memory failure into the love genre, and his deliberately disillusioning references to transience as the only thing to count on – a situation likewise exemplified in the poetic sensibility of the Japanese haiku, with which Brecht's lyric has an intimate affinity. Precisely by inscribing loss, transience, and disappearance, Brecht, Dante, and haiku pave the way for a commemorative return in a lasting poetic image. The West conceives of poetry as a process of making, while the East thinks of poetry as a process of knowing: Brecht's rewritings of Dante place not only Brecht himself, but Dante, too, on the poetic path towards knowledge.

KEYWORDS: *Brecht, Dante, haiku, 'Erinnerung an die Marie A*

'... tirer l'éternel du transitoire ...', Charles Baudelaire.¹

'... per una vera mille sono finte ...', Fabrizio de Andrè.²

It was for a myriad of reasons that Bertolt Brecht was fascinated and yet repulsed by Dante Alighieri, the poet of the high medieval courtly love song who wrote in the Florentine vernacular and who at the age of nine, so his story goes, had first set eyes on Beatrice Portinari, dressed in red and his junior by one year.³ The mere

¹ 'Extracting the eternal from the transient' (my translation) (Charles Baudelaire, *Le peintre de la vie moderne* (Paris: Éditions René Kieffer, 1923), p. 35).

² 'One true cloud among a thousand fake ones' (my translation) (Fabrizio de Andrè, 'Le nuvole,' in *Le Nuvole* (1990)).

³ Mark Musa (ed. and trans.), *Dante's Vita Nuova: A Translation and an Essay* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 3.

sight of the beautiful young woman made Dante's heart tremble, leading to his most profound spiritual experience, which he memorably recorded in his 1295 *Vita Nuova*, an autobiographically inspired collection of poetry and prose recounting his lifelong love for Beatrice. Dante only stole a few glimpses of Beatrice, and had hardly much occasion to converse, not to mention consort with her. While he was transforming his strong affection into a series of sublime poetic visions, Beatrice was married off to another man, Dante to another woman. His life as a poet, however, famously centers on this powerful early encounter on the one hand, and on his later expulsion from Florence and subsequent exile in Romance landscapes and their vernaculars on the other, of which the treatise *De vulgari eloquentia*, the epic poem *La Divina Commedia*, and the autobiographical *Vita Nuova* bear witness: 'it was my intention from the beginning,' declares Dante, 'to write in the vernacular.'⁴

In the very first line of the *Vita Nuova* Dante refers to his work as 'libro de la mia memoria' [a book of my memory].⁵ The *Vita Nuova* practices a youthful form of courtly love-writing in the mode of an escalating paean of highly stylized praise of the idealized beloved, is composed in *prosimetrum* (an intricate post-Provençal mixture of verse and prose), and precedes Dante's more seasoned *Convivio*, an invitation to a metaphorical symposium, in the course of which the pursuit of love bonds intimately with the pursuit of knowledge. The *Vita Nuova* presents the reader with love poems (sonnets and *canzoni*, plus one *ballata*) alongside the author's extensive commentaries that accompany these poems. Dante's detailed explanations in prose provide the autobiographical occasions as well as the poetological contexts for the young poet's journey towards a poetry which opens up a *new life*, as the title of the volume suggests. Such writing enables Dante to recount his love for Beatrice from the first moment it was conceived all the way through to the beloved's death and the poet-lover's ensuing waves of mourning. Dante also elaborates on his understanding of such a love as an initial step in the direction of the kind of refined knowledge that would eventually pave the way to divine love – a learning process in the course of which Beatrice's name is not only memorialized, but is literalized ever more into a lady-savior's bestowal of bliss and blessings.

Even if Dante's 'haunt[ing] presence'⁶ in modern writing has been convincingly traced, Brecht and Dante seem to provide 'unlikely company' for one another, as Jochen Vogt has pointed out in his fine speculative contribution on Brecht and 'the

⁴ Musa, p. 63.

⁵ Musa, p. 3.

⁶ In their introduction to *Metamorphosing Dante: Appropriations, Manipulations and Rewritings in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Vienna and Berlin: Verlag Turia + Kant, 2011), the editors Manuele Gragnotati, Fabio Camilletti and Fabian Lampart appropriately speak of Dante's œuvre's influence as 'fluid, sometimes subterranean and always complex,' stating that 'the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have found in Dante a field of tension in which they can mirror, explore and question the tensions within their own realities' (p. 9). While this assessment certainly holds true for Brecht as well, the references to Brecht and Dante in the volume are few and mostly refer to the city as hell and to Brecht's play *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*. There is, however, no reference to Brecht's poetry.

classics'.⁷ True, beyond considerations of the two poets' lives and vernacular love-writing in exile,⁸ and their potentially related epic interests, Dante and Brecht resemble one another about as closely as Plato and Casanova – Brecht's imagination being physical rather than spiritual, polemical rather than discreet, vulgar rather than elegant. He favors writing of whores and lovers in the plural rather than of one sanctified lover or Madonna, envisioning sexual pleasure rather than purity, chastity and virginity. However, in its various ambiguities, Brecht's anti-Dante posturing with regard to love-writing is not unlike his fierce non-Aristotelianism regarding the role of affect on stage.

While Brecht has a close affinity with his Florentine precursor, his frequently controversial ideas about the literary heritage are marked by compelling contradictions. His claim that 'über literarische Formen muß man die Realität befragen, nicht die Ästhetik'⁹ provides an interesting backdrop for a closer examination of the intimate relationship that Brecht entertains with the literary past. It is in the name of reality (including physical love) that Brecht experimentally focuses on the most traditionally stringent and formally codified of genres in Western literature – tragedy (and Aristotle following the Attic tragedians) on the one hand, and the sonnet (and Dante following the Provençal troubadours) on the other.

Brecht is drawn to Dante as an exile who wrote poetry in his native language, which he called the *volgare illustre*, and which Brecht not only celebrates both in the sense of the living and frequently unlettered speech of the people (as in the Swabian-Bavarian dialect of his native Augsburg), as well as in that of the vulgar and obscene potential of such speech, but which he also happily attributes to Dante's rare literary use of common words. In his 'Sonett Nr. 15: über den Gebrauch gemeiner Wörter,' Brecht playfully proposes an increase of sexual pleasure through the use of such words, and yet remains likewise interested in the paradox of an almost explicit omission of the vulgar (for instance at the very end of the third sonnet, where the gesture of putative reticence proves far more efficient than an actual expression of *the word*).

In 'Das dreizehnte Sonett' Brecht writes: 'Das Wort, das du mir schon oft vorgehalten | Kommt aus dem Florentinischen, allwo | Die Scham des Weibes Fica heißt. Sie schalten | Den großen Dante schon deswegen roh | Weil er das Wort verwandte im Gedichte.'¹⁰ Even though Dante did deploy *the word*, some critics have observed that whether Dante actually wrote of the vagina as *fica* remains, as a matter of (missing) fact, a mystery. More importantly, Dante's introduction of such an obscenity into his love poetry would clearly not have fared too well. He

⁷ Jochen Vogt, 'Unlikely Company: Brecht and Dante', in *Kulturpolitik und Politik der Kultur/Cultural Politics and the Politics of Culture*, ed. by Helen Fehervary and Bernd Fischer (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 457-72.

⁸ 'The medieval – and thus what we call the modern [...] – lyric is invented in bitter exile' (María Rosa Menocal, *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 89).

⁹ Jan Knopf, 'Epigraph', in *Brecht-Handbuch: Lyrik, Prosa, Schriften: Eine ästhetik der Widersprüche* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984).

¹⁰ Bertolt Brecht, *Liebesgedichte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009), pp. 54 and 83.

integrated it instead in Vanni Fucci's hardly arbitrary explosion of obscenity in canto XXV of the *Inferno*,¹¹ where the thief makes the obscene fig-gesture to God: 'fists with both figs cocked,' while finishing an utterance upon whose conclusion he is promptly silenced by snakes: 'Al fine de le sue parole il ladro | le mani alzò con amendue le fiche, | gridando: 'Togli, Dio, ch'a te le squadro!'.¹²

As a consequence of his oscillating attraction to Dante, Brecht was able to be intensely provocative as well as hilariously comical regarding the thirteenth-century Tuscan's lofty longings for the unreachable beloved. Brecht celebrated his protest against (and hence questioned his homage to) one father of European love poetry, favoring a lighter sort of writing of erotic play, sexual joy and the inspiring powers of seduction. However, the kind of *carpe diem* that Brecht celebrates in his love poems more often than not relates to absent lovers and past encounters (reminiscent of troubadour long-distance love, or *amor de lonh*). In a vivacious sonneteer's mnemonic acts of sublimation such poems poetically recall an erotic realization which necessarily predates the inscription, and which the later exile may well deny. The speaker, however, is always aware of poetic commemoration as secondary experience: 'das Berühren selbst ist unersetzlich', as Brecht unequivocally states.¹³

I 'DAS ZWÖLFTE SONETT (ÜBER DIE GEDICHTE DES DANTE AUF DIE BEATRICE)'

Brecht's twelfth sonnet was written in Denmark in 1934, where Brecht spent his first years in exile with Helene Weigel and others. This twelfth sonnet is one of thirteen lyric poems composed for Brecht's absent lover Margarete Steffin, and was later integrated into a series of private poems entitled *Studien*, which Brecht sent, in hectographed form, to his friend Walter Benjamin, who according to Gershom Scholem read some of these private poems to him, pronouncing Brecht's vulgarities with surprising ease.¹⁴

'Das zwölfte Sonett (Über die Gedichte des Dante auf die Beatrice)'

Noch immer über der verstaubten Gruft
In der sie liegt, die er nicht vögeln durfte
Sooft er auch um ihre Wege schlurfte
Erschüttert doch ihr Name uns die Luft.
Denn er befahl uns, ihrer zu gedenken
Indem er auf sie solche Verse schrieb
Daß uns fürwahr nichts andres übrigblieb
Als seinem schönen Lob Gehör zu schenken.

¹¹ That *Inferno* is the first canticle of the *Divina Commedia* is of course a significant part of this very epic 'Gedicht' to which Brecht refers here.

¹² Allen Mandelbaum (trans.), *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno* (New York, Toronto, London, Sydney and Auckland: Bantam, 1982), pp. 226–227. 'When he had finished with his words, the thief raised high his fists with both figs cocked and cried: "Take that, o God; I square them off for you"' (my translation.)

¹³ Bertolt Brecht, 'Das erste Sonett', in *Liebesgedichte* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1966), p. 15.

¹⁴ Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin – Die Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Frankfurt: Surhkamp, 1975), p. 259. See also Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Ungeheuer Oben: über Bertolt Brecht* (Berlin: Aufbauverlag, 2001), pp. 112–14.

Ach, welche Unsitt bracht er da in Schwang
 Als er mit so gewaltigem Lobe lobte
 Was er nur angesehen, nicht erprobte!
 Seit dieser schon beim bloßen Anblick sang
 Gilt, was hübsch aussieht und die Straße quert
 Und was nie naß wird, als begehrenswert.¹⁵

Far more ink has been spilled on Brecht the revolutionary playwright than on Brecht the lyric poet. But then such a generic distinction seems doubtful after all, for it is, indeed, a painstaking task to separate Brecht the poet from Brecht the dramatist, as the legion of poetic devices and elaborate lyrics and songs within his plays demonstrate as clearly as his innumerable poems about the theater and the stage, about actors, actresses and roles, such as ‘Das Zeigen muß gezeigt werden’, ‘Caspar Neher, der Bühnenbauer’, ‘Die Schauspielerin im Exil’, ‘Die Requisiten der Weigel’, ‘Schminke’, and ‘Ballade vom Azdak’.

Between 1913 and 1956 Brecht (co)authored more than two thousand lyric poems, of which well over a hundred are erotic in nature. Quite a few of these are composed in the time-honored form of the sonnet, which already in Dante’s time conventionally signified a poem of fourteen lines with a strict rhyme scheme and a rather specific thematic structure. In his sonnets, Brecht more than once parodies the concept of courtly love, allowing for those taboos to enter the genre that previously had hardly been considered worthy of it: while they might be a part of Dante’s *Inferno*, they play no role in his love poetry. Even in the case of Shakespeare, whose sonnets simultaneously endorse and challenge convention, vulgarity and sexuality tend to be far more frequently explicit in the plays. In spite of Brecht’s acts of profanation (most striking in ‘Sonett über einen durchschnittlichen Beischlaf’) he keeps the form intact, even though he takes liberties not only with regard to the sonnet’s themes and the related choice of (un)common words, but also to its traditional rhyme scheme – Dante himself had dealt rather freely with rhyme.

While created by Giacomo Lentini of the *scuola siciliana*, it was Guittone d’Arezzo who brought the sonnet to Tuscany, where Guido Cavalcanti and Dante wrote sonnets, as did, most famously, their younger contemporary Petrarca, with whom the Italian sonnet is generally associated. Typically, the Petrarchan sonnet’s first octave (made of two quatrains) presents the reader with a problem, a question or a proposition. In the first octave of his twelfth sonnet, Brecht deploys words such as ‘verstaubte Gruft’ [dusty grave] and ‘vögeln’ [to screw], by which he manages to break the taboo of sex on the one hand, and that of death and physical decay on the other, thereby challenging Dante’s pure love, Beatrice’s death and her soul’s ascent to heaven as a white cloud (‘nuvoletta’).¹⁶ And yet Brecht’s piece lends an ear to Dante (‘schenk[t] Gehör’), in that it plays by the rules, confronting the reader with an unconsummated love as the foundation for the lauding love

¹⁵ Bertolt Brecht, ‘Das zwölfte Sonett (über die Gedichte des Dante auf die Beatrice)’, in *Über Verführung: Erotische Gedichte mit Radierungen von Pablo Picasso* (Frankfurt: Insel, 2000), p. 40. When the poem re-appeared in *Versuche* in 1951, Brecht had replaced the obscene, writing ‘haben’ instead of ‘vögeln’. (Cf. *Liebesgedichte* (1966), p. 39). N.B.: This twelfth sonnet is not identical with ‘Sonett Nr. 12: Vom Liebhaber,’ printed in the same volume (p. 36).

¹⁶ See note 23 below.

song – whether we like it or not (‘daß uns fürwahr nichts andres übrigblieb’). Beatrice’s name, according to Brecht, still makes the air tremble above and beyond her grave, thick with the very kind of literary commemoration that Dante poetically demanded on her behalf, as well as on that of love and love-writing more generally: ‘er befahl uns, ihrer zu gedenken’ is a recalled mandate in verse that reminds the reader of the beloved as much as of the poet-lover as the very first one to commemorate her.

The second part of the traditional Italian sonnet is formed by a sestet made of two tercets and proposes an answer or hints at a consequence, with the ninth line usually functioning as the *volta* or turn, which rhetorically separates the eight initial lines from the final six, and signals the transition from question to answer or from problem to solution. While playfully engaging with Dante here too, Brecht’s poem follows the structural principle that the genre conventionally provides. Brecht’s ninth-line turn calls Dante’s praise and practice of such a generic prescription an ‘Unsitte’, bad manners – not to say an immoral habit – of celebrating the unknown, the unconsummated, in a praise that is based on a first glance alone (‘nur angesehen, nicht erprobt’ and ‘bloße[r] Anblick’). When Dante saw Beatrice for the second time, she was ‘dressed in purest white [...] and passing along a certain street,’ which is the moment in which the poet-lover ‘seemed [...] to behold the entire range of possible bliss’ based on her having ‘greeted [him] so miraculously’¹⁷ – a scene which Brecht picks up and renders humorous as well as trivial: ‘gilt, was hübsch aussieht und die Straße quert | und was nie naß wird, als begehrenswert’.¹⁸

‘Scorn not the Sonnet’ – thus Wordsworth warns in the form of a sonnet, mentioning great sonneteers such as Shakespeare, Petrarca and Dante, to whom and to whose lovers and readers the time-honored form has done much good.¹⁹ While Brecht surely disagreed with most Romanticist tenets, he was clearly not one to scorn the sonnet, but instead thrived as a sonneteer, albeit in his own innovative and de-familiarizing fashion (his dramatic device of *Verfremdungseffekt* likewise permeates his lyric oeuvre). Brecht’s composition of a sonnet *against* the traditional sonnet as a place to celebrate courtly unconsummated love, that is at the same time a sonnet *for* the sonnet that accommodates physical love as well, not only extends the tradition of love-writing in very specific terms, but also parodies it²⁰ – not so much the sonnet itself, but the *mise-en-abîme* that Brecht reverts to in his

¹⁷ *Vita Nuova*, p. 5.

¹⁸ Even though ‘naß’ here refers specifically to the imagined sexual act that does not take place, wetness more broadly conceived is an erotic image that is prominent in world poetry, for instance with Ophelia, an image that Brecht deploys in ‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’ when he writes of ‘stille bleiche Liebe’ and ‘geschwommen,’ as well as frequent scenes of wet tangled hair in the traditional Japanese poem.

¹⁹ William Wordsworth, ‘Scorn not the Sonnet’, in *Great Sonnets*, ed. by Paul Negri, *Great Sonnets* (New York: Dover, 1994), p. 26: ‘Scorn not the Sonnet, [...] / with this key / Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody / Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch’s wound; / [...] this pipe did Tasso sound; / With it Camöens soothed an exile’s grief; / The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf / Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned / His visionary brow [...] / It cheered mild Spenser [...] / in his hand [Milton’s] / The Thing became a trumpet [...].’

²⁰ Cf. Franz Norbert Mennemeier, *Bertolt Brechts Lyrik: Aspekte, Tendenzen* (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1982), p. 63. He speaks of Brecht’s ‘Anti-Sonette’ to then relativize this term — an assessment with which I could not agree more fully.

love-writing in order to endorse poetic tradition precisely while challenging and re-inventing it. ‘Das Zeigen muß gezeigt werden’, thus the maxim which transcends the title of one of Brecht’s poems and applies to both his poetry and drama much more broadly.

A *mise-en-abîme* is a self-reflexive technique to achieve such a showing of showing, in that it is ‘the kind of structure by means of which it is clear that the text becomes itself an example of what it exemplifies’.²¹ Brecht uses the sonnet while debunking it by adding the de-familiarizing, disorienting twist of comic relief to his otherwise serious poetic endeavor, taking delight in juxtaposing the lofty and the vulgar, the delicate and the obscene, tradition and innovation, chastity and seduction, virginity and consummation, shame and joy, solemn commemoration and an allegedly nonchalant drawing of blanks.²² But however he slices it, Brecht’s love poems, like Dante’s, remain memorable monuments to a lyrically prolific exile – to love and beauty in seasonally determined transience.

In the prophetic vision of chapter XXIII of the *Vita Nuova*, Dante anticipates recalling (paradoxical as this instance of a future perfect might seem) that upon his later learning of Beatrice’s death, the sun and stars will have seemed to be weeping (‘poi mi parve vedere a poco a poco | turbar lo sole e apparir la stella, | e pianger e lli ed ella’), birds falling from the sky (‘cader li augelli volando per l’are’), the earth shaking (‘la terra tremare’) and the angels raising Beatrice’s innocent soul to heaven in a diaphanous cloud: ‘li angeli che tornavan suso in cielo, | [...] una nuvoletta avean davanti.’²³ While this is certainly not the only instance in which Dante memorably deploys the image of the cloud – atmospherically charged clouds appear in the *Purgatorio*, at whose mountaintop the earthly paradise is located where Beatrice reveals herself to Dante in a metaphorical cloud of flowers – it is clearly a moment where, on thoroughly mnemonic terms, transience and transcendence are visualized in the image of a small white cloud.

Brecht neither continued the celebration of the kind of love that in Dante’s *dolce stil novo* was burgeoning to its highest spiritual qualities, nor did he spend any time writing about transcendence. He did, however, compose a variety of poetic

²¹ Paul de Man, ‘Conclusions: Walter Benjamin’s The Task of the Translator’, in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 86. De Man presents this definition of *mise-en-abîme* in the context of Walter Benjamin’s reading of Friedrich Hölderlin.

²² Brecht once opposed marble and dirt in classical versus modern poetry in the contemporary German idiom, pointing out that Horace worked in marble so that even the commonest thought would never come across as trivial or vulgar, whereas Brecht and his contemporaries worked in dirt, bearing and at the same time celebrating the consequences of vulgarization that this material necessitates. Cf. Lion Feuchtwanger, ‘Bertolt Brecht’, in *Sinn und Form*, 9 (1957), 103-108 (p. 106).

²³ *Vita Nuova*, p. 50. The Italian diminutive *nuvoletta* denotes *small cloud*. Dante’s text does not make the whiteness of his *nuvoletta* explicit, likely because *nuvoletta* commonly connotes lightness both in weight (a hovering or rising small cloud) and color (white or at most pink). Dante makes the overpowering significance of Beatrice’s mortality and her anticipated death so transparent in this prophecy that when she does die he deems it unnecessary to provide any further details about her death.

and dramatic texts in which the image of the cloud as an image of transience on the one hand, and of knowledge on the other, appears as a very prominent vision. These include the ending of *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, where careless gods float off to heaven on a pink cloud, while singing ‘Das Terzett der entschwindenden Götter auf der Wolke’, as well as love poems such as ‘Terzinen über die Liebe’²⁴ and ‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’, which recalls the white cloud while inscribing an intricate dynamic of knowing and unknowing, remembering and forgetting.

II ‘ERINNERUNG AN DIE MARIE A.’

Brecht’s ‘Marie A.’ poem moves from the past to the present and future tenses, and at times deploys the subjunctive mode to convey indirect questions and hypothetical conditionals (‘sei’, ‘hätt’ and ‘wär’). It remembers an early love set in late summer or early autumn (‘blauer Mond September’) rather than in the spring, which would have been the traditionally privileged season for the amorous encounter – Dante’s setting in May strictly observes the rule, whereas Brecht equally appropriately displaces a long-gone love to the season of change par excellence (change being what Brecht indubitably desires incessantly and on all possible grounds).

‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’

An jenem Tag im blauen Mond September
 Still unter einem jungen Pflaumenbaum
 Da hielt ich sie, die stille bleiche Liebe
 In meinem Arm wie einen holden Traum.
 Und über uns im schönen Sommerhimmel
 War eine Wolke, die ich lange sah
 Sie war sehr weiß und ungeheuer oben
 Und als ich auf sah, war sie nimmer da.

Seit jenem Tag sind viele, viele Monde
 Geschwommen still hinunter und vorbei
 Die Pflaumenbäume sind wohl abgehauen
 Und fragst du mich, was mit der Liebe sei?
 So sag ich dir: Ich kann mich nicht erinnern.
 Und doch, gewiß, ich weiß schon, was du meinst
 Doch ihr Gesicht, das weiß ich wirklich nimmer
 Ich weiß nur mehr: ich küßte es dereinst.

Und auch den Kuß, ich hätte ihn längst vergessen
 Wenn nicht die Wolke dagewesen wär
 Die weiß ich noch und werd ich immer wissen
 Sie war sehr weiß und kam von oben her.
 Die Pflaumenbäume blühen vielleicht noch immer
 Und jene Frau hat jetzt vielleicht das siebte Kind
 Doch jene Wolke blühte nur Minuten
 Und als ich auf sah, schwand sie schon im Wind.²⁵

²⁴ This poem’s striking imagery of clouds and cranes is later integrated in Brecht’s opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, where lumberjack Ackermann and prostitute Jenny sing the aria in the midst of the brutalized world they live in.

²⁵ *Liebesgedichte* (1966), p. 57.

Clouds and seasons, their transient qualities and ever-changing formations have long been canonized items of cultural identification and literary attraction in the East and the West. This appears most importantly perhaps in poetic depictions of the four seasons – Japan’s *waka* poetry for instance, which contains sophisticated seasonal motifs, widely drawn on in the *Nō* play as well as the haiku poem.²⁶ Granted, Brecht’s interest in Asian art, theater and philosophy sets in slightly later than the writing of ‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’. The *Tao Te Chin*, however, reaches Brecht in 1920, the year he composed ‘Marie A’. Brecht visits Japan only in 1932, and probably the most significant moment for his Asian interest came in 1935, when he witnessed a performance by Mei Lan Fang’s company in Moscow: this is the time when Brecht coins the term *Verfremdungseffekt*, informed by the Chinese actor as well as by Russian Formalism and Japanese *Nō* drama. However, Brecht practiced de-familiarization long before coining the theoretical term, and similarly practiced poetic composition in forms reminiscent of Asian aesthetics significantly before he explicitly engaged with its actual sources.

Such a sequence is clearly no exception. Sigmund Freud, for instance, approached the human mind in vertical terms long before he actually visited major sites of excavation of ancient ruins and buried cities such as Pompeii, eventually hitting upon the most appropriate image for what he might already have been searching for: only then did he coin the metaphor of psychoanalysis as an *archeology* of the mind. Likewise Ezra Pound, who defined the poetic image as he and his fellow-*Imagistes* understood it, and only saw it exemplified a year later in the visible etymology of the Chinese ideogram (via Ernest Fenollosa), which Pound considered, for better or worse, to be a perfect visualization of what he had previously intended: an image as ‘that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time’.²⁷

I am not arguing for or against any direct influence. Rather, I intertextually read the white cloud in ‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’ – one of the most famous love poems written in the German language – as the most dominant image (or complex, in Pound’s sense) in the piece, pursuing Brecht’s intimation of Dante and haiku based on two shared sensibilities, two major affinities that this striking image entertains in its confluence of visual forces.²⁸ One such affinity (or hidden

²⁶ ‘Clouds over China and Europe tend to behave in a similar way,’ argues Anthony Tatlow against Martin Esslin and Patrick Bridgwater’s take on what he considers their erroneous reading of an inspiration of Brecht’s white cloud in ‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’ by cloud imagery in Chinese and Japanese poetry. Tatlow provocatively states that due to their similar behavior across oriental and occidental skies, these clouds ‘have therefore suggested,’ independently of any direct influence, ‘certain associations to imaginative minds’ – in the arts of the East as well as in those of the West (Anthony Tatlow, *The Mask of Evil: Brecht’s Response to the Poetry, Theatre and Thought of China and Japan: A Comparative and Critical Evaluation* (Bern, Frankfurt a. M., Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1977), p. 88).

²⁷ Ezra Pound, ‘A Retrospect’, in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 4.

²⁸ Even though this is no attempt at tracking indebtedness or proving Brecht’s appropriation of recognizable sources in the case of ‘Marie A.’, it is worth mentioning that Brecht’s library included a 1912 Swedish edition of Dante’s *Divina Commedia* (acquired in exile), a 1925 German edition of Dante’s *De vulgari eloquentia*, as well as a 1928 English edition of Shikibu Murasaki’s *A Wreath of Cloud*, and a 1955 English *One Hundred Poems from the Japanese*. None of these, however, seem to have been available to him in his own library in 1920. Cf. *Die Bibliothek Bertolt Brechts: Ein kommentiertes Verzeichnis*, ed. by Bertolt Brecht Archive (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), pp. 208–211.

proximity) can be traced between Dante's *nuvoletta* and Brecht's very white and immensely high cloud (even if the angelic *nuvoletta* ascends to heaven, whereas Brecht's cloud, at least at first, comes 'von oben her,' before it vanishes into the skies). Another such affinity (or phenomenological comparison) may be drawn between Brecht's image of the white cloud and the time-honored cloud image in Japanese poetry (in the classical and in particular in the haiku poem) with a stress on their shared interest in the Japanese *mono no aware* or the underlining of beauty in transience. Brecht's white cloud and its aura in a love poem that is torn between commemoration and distanciation might well unveil the author's susceptibility to an imaginative encounter of the Western love lyric with Eastern distance and reduction as he subsequently found them in Asian poetry and theater.

Set in a late summer ('Sommerhimmel') that already foreshadows autumn ('blauer Mond September'), 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' parallels the haiku's taxonomy of seasons, in which summer signals a sexual encounter, while autumn implies farewell and separation. Against this background in particular, the plum tree(s) in Brecht's poem appear to be very different from his white cloud. Tatlow duly emphasizes the 'sexual connotation' of Brecht's frequently used word plum as 'Bavarian-Arabian' rather than truly 'oriental'.²⁹ Further, Brecht's German plum tree sounds rather more like Martin Luther's apple tree³⁰ and looks rather less like the haiku image of blooming plum trees in the spring, which for instance Matsuo Bashō's winter haiku illustrates, as it anticipates the plum blossoms of a season yet to come: 'the year is nearly o'er, | and it will do me good to see | the plums in bloom once more.'³¹

Unlike the single very white and incredibly high cloud descending from an otherwise cloudless summer sky above, the noun 'Pflaumenbaum' in 'Marie A.' is used alternately in the singular and the plural. Beyond the sexual connotation of the plum (the equivalent of Fucci's *fica*) however, these plum trees localize a setting rather than being metaphorical-Imagistic in the same way the well-defined white cloud is: the prepositional phrase 'unter einem jungen Pflaumenbaum' has nothing in common with the flowering plums in spring marking the end of the wintry season of loneliness in the Japanese haiku. Moreover, Brecht's poem leaves it rather unclear what the trees' story actually is. The second stanza ponders that they might have been cut down, while the third stanza speculates that they might still be in bloom. This idea runs very much counter to haiku aesthetics, whereas the cloud that 'blühte nur Minuten' not only comes much closer to the idea of haiku's momentary epiphany, but is also reminiscent of Dante's purgatorial cloud of flowers in which Beatrice re-appears upon the pilgrim's entry into paradise – an image that lingers in the mind far longer than a mere instant. In a similar way,

²⁹ Tatlow, p. 34. Cf. Mennemeier, p. 65. The German vulgar use of plum corresponds to the Italian vulgar use of fig.

³⁰ 'Auch wenn ich wüßte, daß morgen die Welt zugrunde geht, würde ich heute noch einen Apfelbaum pflanzen' is generally attributed to Martin Luther.

³¹ Johanna Brownell (ed.), *HAIKU: Seasons of Poetry* (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2001), p. 27.

Brecht's cloud might bloom only briefly, but it clearly lives on in the mind's eye: 'eine Wolke, die ich lange sah'.

In the Dante-Beatrice sonnet, Brecht playfully distances himself from the tradition of a love lyric based on a one-directional act of worship of what is imagined and written about, rather than experienced and recalled. In 'Marie A.' however, this distance may have undergone a compelling revision. Although I am generally not much intrigued by the anecdotes surrounding the young Brecht and the Amann sisters (who figure among other young women in Brecht's later Augsburg years), I do find it curious that he probably wrote his poem in memory of the one, 'die er nicht haben durfte' (to avoid Brecht's less than illustrious vernacular in the sonnet's vulgar version cited above), rather than about her younger sister, who was not called Marie but Rosl, and with whom Brecht in all likelihood entertained a longer relationship.³² Since writing of unfulfilled desire and unconsummated love has been central to the European love lyric, Brecht's poem is after all more traditionally lyrical than one might expect. Furthermore, the issue is not only whether memory or forgetting dominates the poem's scene, but also who and what is actually being remembered or forgotten. A fine twist on Dante, one is tempted to suspect, which requires a sound knowledge of the original before one can enter into the realm of parody, where an unyielding cloud takes on the role of an unsuccessfully repressed face, in the case of which Brecht's 'Lob der Vergeßlichkeit' (as another poem is titled) does not seem to fare all too well. It is precisely this concern with the dynamics of forgetting that simultaneously celebrates an awareness of impermanence as one of modernity's most striking paradigms.

In her compelling analysis of Brecht's cloud as a visual locus of metonymic displacement, Dorothee Ostmeier states that 'the lover' in the 'Marie A.' poem 'observes a cloud as witness to his love relationship [...] remember[ing] the cloud instead of remembering the beloved.'³³ While my reading of 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' is similarly anchored in the vicissitudes of what is clearly the focus of Brecht's poem – memory, remembrance, commemoration – I emphasize the white cloud's almost mythological agency, as well as memory's relationship to the

³² Cf. Jürgen Hillesheim and Stephen Parker, "Ebenso hieß das Mädchen nicht andauernd Marie": Vier (fast) unbekannte Frauenbriefe an Bertolt Brecht aus den Jahren 1916 bis 1918', *German Life and Letters*, 64 (2011), 536-51, especially pp. 537-38 and 544 (Rosmarie is Maria Rosa Amann but a different person from Rosl, who may be Maria's sister or else another young woman unrelated to the Amann family), as well as pp. 547-50 (on Brecht's promiscuity, parodic playfulness with names, desire for exchange and interchangeability in matters sexual, as well as on Maria Rosa Amann's partial rejection of Brecht).

³³ Dorothee Ostmeier, 'The Rhetorics of Erasure: Cloud and Moon in Brecht's Poetic and Political Texts of the Twenties and Early Thirties', *German Studies Review*, 23 (2000), 275-295 (p. 277). Ostmeier's reading of the cloud as witness is interesting in light of Brecht's 'Terzinen über die Liebe,' in which clouds are grouped with cranes. Cranes in Friedrich Schiller's *Kraniche des Ibycus* are the only remaining witnesses of the poet's assassination, and in Asian symbolism the crane tends to stand for joy and longevity. Further, Brecht's *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* stages a conversation between Schweizerkas and his mute sister Kattrin, in which a moment before he is shot to death that which is about to be destroyed is clearly presented. This third scene of the play adverts to a Japanese play in which two boys seal their friendship while showing one another a bird and a cloud. Cf. *Couragemodell 1949* (Berlin and Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1994), p. 201.

poem's vertical imagery ('ungeheuer oben') and metaphoricity ('sehr weiß?'), rather than the discursive elements and narrative horizons of the text's metonymic concatenation, which are the focus of Ostmeier's interpretation. This metaphorical rather than metonymic reading shows, I contend, that Brecht's white cloud is not distinctly separable from the beloved, in that similar to Dante's *nuvoletta* this cloud is an intense, momentous image which continues to re-present her.

Brecht's poetics is no practice of *damnatio memoriae*; rather, he keeps directing the reader's attention to the inherently paradoxical nature of forgetting. After all, Brecht entitles his poem 'Erinnerung'. The name 'Marie A.' introduces a degree of privacy, even anonymity, by concealing her last name as an initial. Brecht's Swabian-Bavarian vernacular, however, simultaneously adds local color by using a definite article before the first name (certainly less common in standard German), which is endearing and renders 'die Marie' more concretely individual, while lending an intimate note to the speaker's memory of her.³⁴ In this poem, 'Brecht explains forgetting as the prerequisite for the ability to experience, which consists not in fixing an identical moment but in experiencing the passing of this moment.'³⁵

It is the speaker's memory of this young woman (whoever she may have been) that assumes center-stage, even if the dense network of remembering to remember, remembering to forget, forgetting to remember and forgetting to forget renders the mnemonic issue rather complex – as does the poem's original provocative title, with which Brecht first adorned it in early 1920: 'Sentimentales Lied No. 1004'.³⁶ Brecht's first draft of the poem parodies a popular song (Leopold Sprowacker's German adaptation of Léon Laroche and Charles Malo's *Tu ne m'aimais pas!*, entitled *Verlor'nes Glück*), referring to both Don Giovanni and Casanova. As an adaptation of this song, 'Marie A.' is certainly more conscious of loss, as well as less spoiled by kitsch than its musical precursor. Brecht's poem reveals his intention to further emphasize an awareness (but not a lament) of loss: the loss of the naïve being of nature (after Schiller), yes; potentially also the loss of the beloved's virginity (the text may hint at an act of defloration in that the cloud as virginal membrane might equal innocence and its disappearance the loss thereof)³⁷; certainly the loss of the youthful beloved altogether (who is imagined as a mother of seven children); and last but not least the looming loss of memory itself (preventively counteracted by the poem as 'a moment's monument [and]

³⁴ Unlike the troubadours' songs, but like Dante, Brecht deploys a proper name, and in his 'Letztes Liebeslied' explicitly mentions Beatrice once again (*Liebesgedichte* (1966), p. 59).

³⁵ Helga Geyer-Ryan and Helmut Lethen, 'The Rhetoric of Forgetting: Brecht and the Historical Avant-garde,' in *Convention and Innovation in Literature*, ed. by Theo D'haen, Rainer Grübel, and Helmut Lethen (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1989), p. 325.

³⁶ Brecht was clearly familiar with Don Giovanni's legendary 1003 lovers in Spain alone. Cf. Léon Laroche and Charles Malo, 'Tu ne m'aimais pas!' (Paris: Bathlot, before 1880); and Leopold Sprowacker, 'Verlor'nes Glück', op. 101 (Vienna: Adolf Robitschek, 1896). Cf. Werner Hecht (ed.), *Bertolt Brecht: Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), p. 39, where Brecht's de-familiarizing comment upon completion of the love poem's first draft is reprinted from his *Notizbuch 1920*. See appendix I and II at the end of the present article for 'Sentimentales Lied Nr. 1004' and 'Verlor'nes Glück.'

³⁷ Cf. 'Liebe Marie, Seelenbraut,' a poem on virginity as imposition and defloration as an enormous effort (*Über Verführung*, p. 16).

memorial', which presents the cloud as an irredeemable moment that simultaneously lends the text its momentum).³⁸

Forgetting is an unexpected affront to both love and love poetry, and the forgetting of the beloved's face as 'the signature of the individual'³⁹ is only typical for the acts of generic sacrilege that Brecht has mastered in such an alluring fashion. Looking back upon a moment of transience ('als ich auf sah schwand sie schon im Wind') of a brief but intense time ('blühte nur Minuten'), while forgetting the face ('ich kann mich nicht erinnern') and concentrating on this unique white cloud as it eventually undermines any attempt at forgetting ('und doch, gewiß, ich weiß schon' and 'die Wolke weiß ich noch und werd ich immer wissen'), Brecht's 'Marie A.' performs the irony of a memory of partial forgetting, while at the same time celebrating a mnemonic poetics of the image that disables any sort of impending repression. The speaker cannot remember the face, but remembers the kiss – a kiss he could not remember, were it not for the cloud that *nolens volens* continues to inhabit his mind.⁴⁰

In other poems Brecht writes of the proximity of face and cloud and their relationship to memory and forgetting, for example in his 'Ballade vom Tod des Anna Gewölkegesichts,' composed a year after 'Marie A.': 'Mit Kirsch und Wacholder | Spült er ihr Antlitz aus seinem Gehirn | [...] // Mit Kirsch und Tabak, mit Orgeln und Orgien: | Wie war ihr Gesicht, als sie wegwich von hier? | Wie war ihr Gesicht? Es verschwamm in den Wolken? | He, Gesicht! Und er sah dieses weiße Papier! // [...] Einmal sieht er noch ihr Gesicht: in der Wolke!'.⁴¹ On this occasion, forgetfulness (induced by liquor, tobacco, organs and orgies) might be meant to lead to states of anesthesia or amnesia, but also remains intimately related to the blank page that awaits inscription – 'weißes Papier' as *unbeschriebenes Blatt* comes to mind: a turn of phrase signifying naïveté, inexperience, virginity. In the same vein, in 'Gesang von einer Geliebten' we read: 'Jetzt ist sie nirgends mehr, sie verschwand wie eine Wolke [...] // Aber nachts, zuweilen, wenn ihr mich trinken seht, sehe | ich ihr Gesicht, bleich im Wind, stark und mir zugewandt, | und ich verbeuge mich im Wind'.⁴² Reminiscent of the cloud's disappearance into wind and skies in 'Marie A.,' this poem also suggests that we look to the wind for an answer.

It is by mixing the spirit of troubadour romance and Asiatic de-familiarization that Brecht was able to write on love and memory without jeopardizing his aesthetic and ethical maxim of *Verfremdung*. Always eager to expose what is conventionally defined and ossified, Brecht introduced the principle of distance

³⁸ Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Sonnet', in *The House of Life: A Sonnet-Sequence by Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. by Roger C. Lewis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), p. 35. Cf. appendix III at the end of the present article.

³⁹ Geyer-Ryan and Lethen, p. 325. In Brecht's poem 'Lied von meiner Mutter' (written in 1920 as 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.', the year Brecht's mother died, the year Brecht met Marianne Zoff whom he married two years later and the year his sojourns in Berlin began), he similarly plays with the tension: while the speaker can no longer remember the mother's face, he still sees her hand as it touches the hair on her forehead.

⁴⁰ Roland Barthes speaks of 'une mémoire sans personne' when he discusses the haiku in *L'Empire des Signes* (Geneva: Skira, 1970), p. 106.

⁴¹ Bertolt Brecht, *Die Gedichte*, ed. by Jan Knopf (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), p. 611.

⁴² *Liebesgedichte* (1966), p. 49.

that he envisioned into the relationship of form (be it psalm, sonnet or opera) to content (such as love, separation or memory), thus turning distance into a poetic device that is located beyond questions of moral commitment or appropriate remembrance (as well as a seeming lack thereof). Brecht's is clearly no *Frauendienst*, no troubadour's *fin'amor*, no Dante's sweet praise of one beloved. And yet it is precisely his frequent attempts at counteracting anamnesis that one encounters in his poetry (against all the odds of the consistently proclaimed *carpe diem*). Brecht's love poems time and again raise the issue of a memory that the poet-lover only supposedly seeks to forget, much in the humorous sense of Dai-Ni No Sammi's 'my love for thee as yet | I have forgotten to forget'.⁴³ Likewise (and reminiscent of Brecht's memory of Dante and Beatrice in the twelfth sonnet), 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' stages a compelling tension between the speaker's revived memory of a romantic-erotic moment of the past and an always present potential of forgetting.

In his provocatively sexual formulations of amorous worthiness – the lover's nobility, purity, elegance and beauty had been central considerations in the genre of love – Brecht discards the very privacy and romance that have traditionally accompanied the love poem, focusing rather on tensions between generic prescription and de-familiarizing innovation. Such tensions between intimacy and distance, however, are intricately intertwined with questions of identity, as well as with the ways in which a past experience undergoes a revision and is turned into a mnemonic piece of secondarily experienced love-writing, in which the poles of self and other are played out in ways reminiscent of the Japanese *Nō* play's representation of recollection rather than action. This also calls to mind the *Nō* actor who dons the mask in the mirror room, precisely where 'a close relationship' provides the most crucial trigger for 'moments of distanciation' and 'a pattern of detachment [...] at the emotionally most intense moments'.⁴⁴ If the aim of Brecht's poem is to dispense with emotion and to search instead for 'objective correlation' (in T. S. Eliot's sense of the term), one needs to remember that much as one can only de-familiarize something that one is intimately familiar with, one can only rid oneself of something that one actually has, so that moments of distanciation are, in fact, an aesthetic alteration of a private emotion into the sort of adequate image for which Brecht's white cloud high above is emblematic.

Brecht's 'Marie A.' poem is much longer than the legendarily brief individual haiku of seventeen syllables in three lines. And yet it is crucial to recall that various attempts have been made in Asian poetry to counter the brevity that is seen as typical of haiku poetry in particular. There has been a consistent compiling of individual haikus, as well as a combining of verse and prose (as in Bashō's *Narrow Road to a Far Province* which in this and other literary respects is reminiscent of Dante's *Vita Nuova*). Further, sequential composition (*rensaku*) has often been favored, grouping together individual haikus in such a way that they begin to

⁴³ Brownell, p. 173.

⁴⁴ Martina Kolb, 'The Mask as Interface: Brecht, Weigel and the Sounding of Silence', *Communications from the International Brecht Society*, 34 (2005), 80-93 (p. 84); and Mae J. Smethurst, *Dramatic Representations of Filial Piety: Five Nob in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1998), pp. 14-15.

resemble stanzas of a Western poem, hardly shying away from elements of narrative progression and other epic dimensions.

Granted, Brecht's poem of love and memory poses indirect questions, presents the reader with at least two images rather than only one, as well as with moments of reflection and discursiveness. However, 'Marie A.' is relatable to the haiku principle of *shasei* in that it sketches an intense moment, while inscribing the potent image of the white cloud in its intimate relationship with remembered experience. All of this accords well with haiku poetry's suggestive presentation favoring a focus on a seemingly simple, but in fact profoundly complex image of nature, of 'landscapes, seasons, birds, insects, flowers, phases of the moon and other natural phenomena'⁴⁵ – such as moon and cloud,⁴⁶ wind and snow, plum and cherry blossom, dragonfly and butterfly. 'Marie A.' memorializes epiphany by confirming a remembered transience ('blühte nur Minuten') in a way similar to many instances of haiku composition, such as Uejima Onitsura's: 'tis true the blossoms grow | 'tis true we see their beauty, and | 'tis true they quickly go,' where a poetic sensibility comparable to Brecht's in 'Marie A.' becomes apparent.⁴⁷

The white cloud in 'Marie A.' shares characteristics with the haiku as well as with Dante's 'nuvoletta,' as which the speaker envisions Beatrice's celestial soul traveling heavenwards. In his twelfth sonnet Brecht explicitly names Dante and Beatrice. And his 'Terzinen über die Liebe' are a beautifully complex rewriting of Dante's rendering of Paolo and Francesca's literary seduction into adulterous consummation. The poem consists of six tercets plus a ten-line hypothetical dialogue that resonates with the imagined rhetorical questions posed in 'Marie A.' Scenic, visual, even visionary in their initial appeal to look and see,⁴⁸ Brecht's 'Terzinen' of 1928 recall the three-lined haiku as well as the *terza rima* of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, including its prescribed *endecasillabo*.

III 'TERZINEN ÜBER DIE LIEBE / DIE LIEBENDEN'

In canto V of Dante's *Inferno* the adulterous lovers' shades are said to resemble cranes ('e come i gru [...] così ombre'), whirled around by gales – a punishment intended to reflect the winds of passion that gripped those who sinned and read no more ('non vi leggemmo avante') of the very genre of courtly love poetry (in their case Lancelot and Guinevere) in which Dante himself excelled, and which had lured the couple in the first place. It is with good reason that Dante is seized by pity: 'pietà', 'pio' and 'pietade' are the affects repeatedly named in a canto at

⁴⁵ Brownell, p. 7.

⁴⁶ That Brecht writes 'Mond September' instead of 'Monat' is reminiscent of Bashō's *Narrow Road to a Far Province*, where in the chapter 'Iro-no-Hama' he writes the 'eighth moon [September 30]'. Cf. Shiro Tsujimura (trans.), *A Haiku Journey: Bashō's Narrow Road to a Far Province* (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodnsha International, 2002), p. 83. The most literal translation would be *Narrow Road to the Interior*, stressing the inward journey reminiscent of Dante's, while the best-known English translation has rendered the title as *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, referring to the poet's actual itinerary in the remote region of Tohoku in northeastern Japan.

⁴⁷ Brownell, p. 64.

⁴⁸ The 'Sieh' is addressed to a 'Du' by an implied, but never explicitly mentioned, first person speaker, and is in a way reminiscent of Virgil showing Dante around hell and purgatory.

whose very end Dante faints for pity when Francesca ends her thoroughly moving tale ('caddi come corpo morto cade').⁴⁹

Mark Musa's take on the *Vita Nuova*, and on the poet-lover's self-pity in particular, provides an interesting twist on the role of affect in this context, in that Musa reads Dante's memory as a comical self-commentary by the poet on a youthful lover who happens to be himself. Were we to adopt Musa's stance for our reading of pity in 'Terzinen,' then Brecht's rewrite might lose some of its de-familiarizing momentum, in that Dante himself would already have paved the way towards such distanciation (following the troubadours and their ever-present awareness of distance and dissonance). While it is obvious why Brecht's de-familiarizing presentation keenly avoided any engagement with pity as the canonized affect that he honored least of all, it remains nonetheless telling that he chose Dante's anaphorically emphasized 'amor' (which relentlessly keeps both lovers and readers under its spell, eventually leading to the lovers' one death: 'una morte') as a foil on to which to project his revision of Dante's rendering of erotic love, adultery and the seductive powers of love-writing.⁵⁰

'Terzinen über die Liebe / Die Liebenden'

Sieh jene Kraniche in großem Bogen!
Die Wolken, welche ihnen beigegeben
Zogen mit ihnen schon, als sie entflohen

Aus einem Leben in ein andres Leben.
In gleicher Höhe und mit gleicher Eile
Scheinen sie alle beide nur daneben.

Daß also keines länger hier verweile
Daß so der Kranich mit der Wolke teile
Den schönen Himmel, den sie kurz befliegen

Und keines andres sehe als das Wiegen
Des andern in dem Wind, den beide spüren
Die jetzt im Fluge beieinander liegen.

So mag der Wind sie in das Nichts entführen;
Wenn sie nur nicht vergehen und sich bleiben
So lange kann sie beide nichts berühren

So lange kann man sie von jedem Ort vertreiben
Wo Regen drohen oder Schüsse schallen.
So unter Sonn und Monds wenig verschiedenen Scheiben
Fliegen sie hin, einander ganz verfallen.

Wohin, ihr?
Nirgendhin.
Von wem entfernt?
Von allen.

Ihr fragt, wie lange sind sie schon beisammen?
Seit kurzem.
Und wann werden sie sich trennen?

⁴⁹ 'And then I fell as a dead body falls.' (My translation)

⁵⁰ All quotations are taken from *Inferno*, pp. 43-7.

Bald.

So scheint die Liebe den Liebenden ein Halt.⁵¹

Wieland Herzfelde edited Brecht's poem under the title 'Die Liebenden'. The definite article encourages a reading of the poem's allusion to concrete examples of further legendary lovers – not only Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, and Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, but also Abélard and Héloïse, or Tristan and Isolde, among others. Even if the better part of troubadour song was marked by an absence of accord and a 'consummation devoutly to be wished' (rather than actually realized), these couples' erotic encounters confirm the principal idea of Western love poetry from the time of its conception in medieval Provence: that of adulterous passion.

The plum trees' appearance in the singular as well as in the plural in 'Marie A.' seems echoed here with the crane(s) and the cloud(s): in the first tercet they are used in the plural, whereas in the third tercet they appear in the singular. This alternation alone makes the image less consistent (and in that sense less *nuvoletta* as well as less haiku) than the single, high, white cloud in 'Marie A.' That said, the 'Terzinen' are more evidently a love poem, even if eventually love as duration is classified as an illusion. Paolo and Francesca's love lasts, but it is only granted duration in infernal punishment – which is the stormy afterlife they are condemned to lead according to Dante's minute hand of justice through *contrappasso*, and which Brecht revises into 'ein andres Leben' and then 'das Nichts' – while in life it remained a momentary affair censured by social norms and religious laws.

In his 'Terzinen' Brecht plays on the tension between longevity and transience. And indeed, cranes have been read as symbols of longevity, while clouds have been read as symbols of transience – in both East and West. The idiomatic phrase 'so lange' (so long as) first hints at, but then quickly suppresses, the more literal meaning: 'that long'. The lovers' mutual love might well be strong and lasting ('einander ganz verfallen'), but it is all that they seem to have ('von allen [entfernt]'). Brecht's readers, to be sure, are quickly cured of their likely illusions: love but seems 'den Liebenden ein Halt'. It is significant for the irony and ambiguity that Brecht intends here that the German *Halt* means *support* or *foothold*, but can also signify *halt* or *stop*. In the same vein 'den Liebenden ein Halt' rhymes with the immediately impending farewell of 'trennen? | Bald.'

Certainly in Imagistic, even in concrete-poetic fashion, this poem's last ten lines following the six tercets are visually impressive scattered fragments on the page that signal dissolution, separation and isolation – all the more so in that they convey a stark contrast to the well-defined tercets and their minutely arranged poetic imagery of cranes and clouds, winds and skies. However, in lines 19 (a summary of the vision: 'Fliegen sie hin [...]'), 24 (the imagined question: 'Ihr fragt [...]') and 28, the poem's very last line ('den Liebenden ein Halt'), Brecht reverts once more to Dante's orderly metric of eleven syllables that he already deployed ever so consistently in the six initial tercets.

Albeit in different ways, Brecht's 'Das zwölfte Sonett (über die Gedichte des Dante auf die Beatrice)', 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.', and 'Terzinen über die

⁵¹ *Die Gedichte*, pp. 795-96. Cf. *Liebesgedichte* (1966), p. 21.

Liebe' all confront the complex ties between love and knowledge via memory. The sonnet and the tercets evoke a genre and in their commitment to poetic tradition and the tricks of its trade (which Brecht knows and confounds equally thoroughly) are more obviously Dantesque. 'Marie A.', by contrast, remembers an experience, and its Dantesque dimension appears to be more subtly realized in an affinity, in a shared Imagistic sensibility, rather than an explicitly named inheritance. The affinity at stake is a form of knowledge that resembles love itself, in that it takes dominion before you know it – the same sort of affinity holds true for the poem's imagined encounter with the Japanese haiku.

Brecht's three texts are very much 'poems of the mind in the act of finding what will suffice', to quote Wallace Stevens.⁵² In the image of the cloud Brecht found a sufficient equation for the complex situations of love and memory that he sought to convey in all their intricacy, interchangeability, contradiction and ambiguity: his cloud is a true one among many fake ones, even if Brecht's clouds and cranes are sooner or later swept away by the wind. Finding has been at the heart of poetry since the troubadours (even though there is controversy about the etymology of the term, one possible meaning of *trobar* is to *find*), who not only specialized in the *alba* as the genre that accommodates socially censured passion, aesthetic eroticism and secret, nocturnal, adulterous love, but who also coined the term for joyful wisdom (adapted by Friedrich Nietzsche in the *Gay Science*): *gaya scienza*.⁵³

Brecht seductively lights up his poetic discussions of memory as knowledge in the sense of Plato's recollection (*anamnesis*) as well as in that of Dante's knowledge as an understanding of 'intelletto d'amore'.⁵⁴ While Plato's insights speak to the paradox of knowledge as located in the repeatedly incarnated human soul (so that what one perceives as an acquisition of knowledge far sooner equals a recovery of what one has forgotten),⁵⁵ Dante's notion refers to a refined understanding of love as anchored in female perception and an intuitive reading between the lines: *intellegere*. Brecht's ongoing homage to Dante's vernacular exile poetry, as well as his obvious repetition of 'weiß' in 'Marie A.' (which is also a fine homonymic find for *white* and *I know*), 'gewiß' and 'wissen' (*figura etymologica*) weaves an intricate mnemonic texture out of love poetry's complex heritage. It is worth recalling that Aristotle and the European traditions that followed in his footsteps have considered poetry as a process of making (*poiein*), whereas Daoism,

⁵² Wallace Stevens, 'Of Modern Poetry', in *The Palm at the End of the Mind*, ed. by Holly Stevens (New York: Vintage, 1971), p. 174.

⁵³ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Die fröhliche Wissenschaft', in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* 3, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich and New York: DTV/de Gruyter, 1967-1977), 628; see also Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo', in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* 6, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich and New York: DTV/de Gruyter, 1967-1977), pp. 332-33.

⁵⁴ *Vita Nuova*, pp. 32 and 34. This first canzone (chapter 19) communicates an entirely changed speaker's stance toward love and begins thus: 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore, / i' vo' con voi da le mia donna dire, / non perch'io creda sua laude finire, / ma ragionar per isfogar la mente.' (Ladies who have intelligence of love, / I wish to speak to you about my lady, / not thinking to complete her litany, / but to talk in order to relieve my heart.)

⁵⁵ Cf. Plato's dialogues 'Meno' (especially 86b), 'Phaedo' and 'Phaedro' in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1997), pp. 870-97 (especially p. 886), 49-100, and 506-56.

with which the young Brecht was already familiar, has perceived poetry as a process of knowing – including the awareness of the transient, the acknowledgment of the fugitive, the knowledge of the ephemeral.⁵⁶

Brecht hardly presents the predominant theme of forgetting (which one may imagine as a staging of a rhetoric of forgetting on his part) without inscribing his concurrent poetics of memory as a form of literary remembrance – be it of Dante and Beatrice, of sonnets and tercets, of Marie A. and the potent poetic image of the white cloud, or of Paolo and Francesca and the kind of vernacular love poetry which they too have come to represent. True, Brecht clearly pays his dues to *poiein* in that he writes ‘moments’ into ‘monuments’ in the time-honored form of the concentrated poem as ‘coin [whose] face reveals | the Soul, its converse, to what Power t’is due’,⁵⁷ to revert once more to Rossetti’s celebration of the genre in this proem-sonnet. And yet it is unimaginable that Brecht would object to a characterization of his poetic cloud of knowing as Daoist rather than Aristotelian. After all: ‘trans- | ience | is | here | for- | ever, and ‘woman is mortal woman. She abides.’⁵⁸

APPENDIX I

Brecht’s first version of ‘Erinnerung an die Marie A.’, originally titled ‘Sentimentales Lied Nr. 1004.’, in *Bertolt Brecht: Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten*, ed. by Werner Hecht (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), p. 39.

An jenem Tag im blauen Mond September
 still unter einem jungen Pflaumenbaum
 da hielt ich sie, die Bleiche Stille Liebe
 an meiner Brust wie einen Wiegentraum,
 und über uns, im schönen Sommerhimmel
 war eine Wolke, die ich lange sah
 sie war sehr weiß und ungeheuer oben
 und als ich aufstand war sie nimmer da.

 Seit jenem Tag sind viele viele Monde
 geschwommen still hinunter und vorbei
 die Pflaumenbäume sind wohl abgehauen

⁵⁶ One major Daoist tenet is the *qingjing jiaorong*, a fusion of inside and outside, an admixture of emotion and scene — as are Brecht’s clouds of knowing. Chiyo-ni’s winter haiku lines ‘it’s play for the cranes | flying up to the clouds | the year’s first sunrise’ is reminiscent of the troubadour alba or dawn song of secret love as the exact opposite of chaste love as one goal of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a manual on contemplation which counsels putting images beneath a metaphorical cloud of forgetting, so as to allow the naked intent of love to seek the creator. Cf. David Cobb (ed.), *Haiku: The Poetry of Nature* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2002), p. 79; and James Walsh (ed.), *The Cloud of Unknowing* (New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1981).

⁵⁷ *The House of Life*, p. 35.

⁵⁸ Charles Bernstein, ‘Two Stones with One Bird’, in *Poetry*, 6 (June 2008), p. 221; and Robert Graves, ‘In Her Praise’, in *The Making of a Sonnet*, ed. by Edward Hirsch and Eavan Boland (New York and London: Norton, 2008), p. 205.

und fragst du mich: Was mit der Liebe sei –
 So sag ich dir: Ich kann mich nicht erinnern
 und doch, gewiß, ich weiß schon was du meinst.
 Doch ihr Gesicht, das weiß ich lange nimmer
 ich weiß nur mehr: Ich küßte es dereinst.

Doch auch den Kuß, ich hätt ihn wohl vergessen
 wenn jene Wolke nicht gewesen wär:
 die weiß ich noch und werd ich immer wissen
 sie war sehr weiß und kam von oben her.
 Die Pflaumenbäume blühen vielleicht noch immer
 Und jenes Weib hat jetzt vielleicht das 7. Kind –
 Doch jene Wolke lebte nur Minuten
 und als ich aufstand schwand sie schon im Wind.

21. II. 20 abends im Zug nach Berlin

Im Geh. R. Kraus Zustand der gefüllten Samenblase sieht der Mann in
 jedem Weib Aphrodite.

Geh. R. Kraus

Brecht's first draft of the Marie A. poem not only differs in its title 'Sentimentales Lied Nr. 1004.', but also shows a number of variations (including, but not limited to, punctuation, spelling, capitalization and syntax): 'Bleiche Stille Liebe' rather than 'stille bleiche Liebe' (line 3); 'an meiner Brust wie einen Wiegentraum' rather than 'In meinem Arm wie einen holden Traum' (line 4); 'lange nimmer' rather than 'wirklich nimmer' (line 15); 'Doch ... wohl' rather than 'Und ... längst' (line 17); 'wenn jene Wolke nicht gewesen wär' rather than 'Wenn nicht die Wolke dagewesen wär' (line 18); and 'jenes Weib' rather than 'jene Frau' (line 22).

Concerning de-familiarization, there is one important discrepancy between the original version 'Sentimentales Lied Nr. 1004.' and the revised 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.': while the latter conventionally formulates the indirect question including common punctuation and the subjunctive ('Und fragst du mich, was mit der Liebe sei'), the former is less indirect (and therefore initially seems less de-familiarizing), curiously combining subjunctive I ('sei') with the kind of punctuation (colon) and capitalized question word (': Was') that would lead the reader to expect a direct question with a verb in the indicative and a question mark at the end (Was ist mit der Liebe?). This expectation, however, is thwarted at the last when Brecht decides to conclude this twelfth line of the original version of the poem with a dash rather than a question mark.

While Brecht made no changes with regard to what he must have deemed an already perfect poetic image of the single, white, high cloud, in the first draft of the poem, this cloud 'lebte nur Minuten,' while in the revised poem it 'blühte nur Minuten' (line 23). Furthermore, the speaker in the *Urtext* gets on his feet or stands up: 'aufstand' while beholding the cloud as it vanishes in the wind, whereas in the revised 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' version the speaker looks up: 'aufsah' (lines 8 and 24). The poem's manuscript version is not only adorned with Brecht's distancing and provocative vulgarization of mythology, but also mentions 'Geheimrat Kraus'. This has generally been read as a feigned citation of privy counselor Kraus on Brecht's part, by which Brecht managed to add insult to injury, as it were, and at the same time to render the issue more mysterious. The first

volume of the critical edition of Brecht's notebooks will appear in 2012, and will likely provide further insight into this curious form of citation on Brecht's part.

APPENDIX II

Leopold Sprowacker's 'Verlor'nes Glück' (op. 101, Vienna: Adolf Robitschek, 1898), an adaptation of the French original 'Tu ne m'aimais pas!' by Léon Laroche and Charles Malo, quoted in *Lieder zur Laute*, Gottfried Jarmer, Vienna 1918.

<www.bildpostkarten.uni-osnabrueck.de> [accessed 10 December 2011]

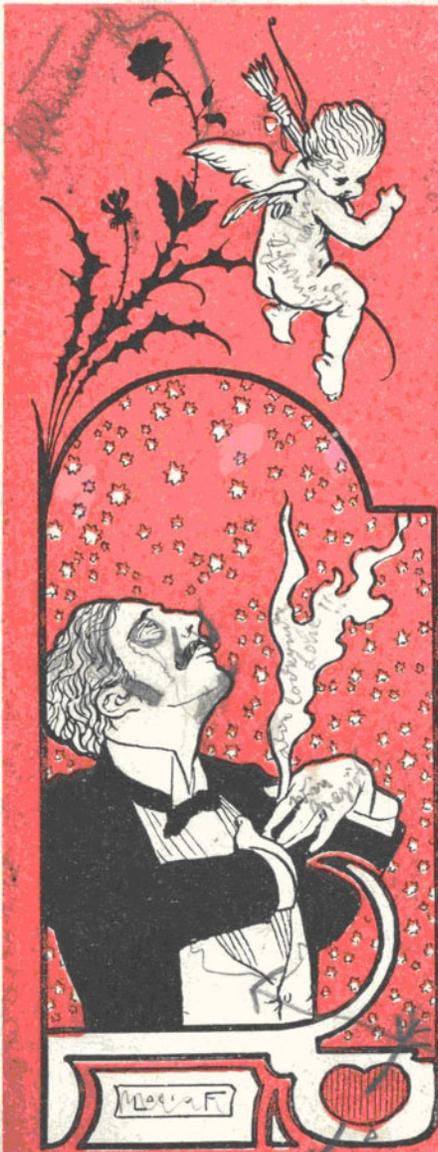
Collection of Historical Postcards

Prof. Dr. Sabine Giesbrecht, University of Osnabrück, Germany

So oft der Frühling durch das off'ne Fenster,
Am Sonntagmorgen uns hat angelacht,
Da zogen wir durch Hain und grüne Felder,
Sag Liebchen, hat dein Herz daran gedacht,
Wenn Abends wir die Schritte heimwärts lenkten
Dein Händchen ruhte sanft in meinem Arm,
So oft der Weiden Rauschen dich erschreckte,
Da hielt ich dich so fest, so innig warm.
Zu jener Zeit, wie liebt' ich dich mein Leben,
Ich hätt' geküsst die Spur von deinem Tritt,
Hätt' gerne Alles für dich hingegeben
Und dennoch du, du hast mich nie geliebt.

Stets sorgenlos, mit Wenigem zufrieden,
Begabt mit leichtem Muth und frohem Sinn,
So sassen wir am kalten Winterabend
Und wärmten uns am traulichen Kamin.
Wir schwärmten nur von Liebeslust und Wonne,
Dein Haupt es ruhte sanft auf meinen Knie'n,
Dein Auge über mir war meine Sonne
Des Feuers Knistern süsse Harmonie.
Zu jener Zeit, wie liebt' ich dich mein Leben,
Ich hätt' geküsst die Spur von deinem Tritt,
Hätt' gerne Alles für dich hingegeben
Und dennoch du, du hast mich nie geliebt.

Ich glaubte fest an deine Liebe, Treue,
Ich glaubt' dein Herz sei nun auf ewig mein,
Doch eines Tag's, du flatterhafte Schöne
Entflohist du mir und liessest mich allein.
Ich habe dich beweint in langen Nächten,
Wär' unterlegen meines Kummers Last,
Wenn ich es nicht zu bald erfahren hätte,
Dass du seit jeher mich betrogen hast.
Und doch warst Du mein Glück, mein ganzes Leben
Ich hätt' geküsst die Spur von deinem Tritt,
Hätt' gerne Alles für dich hingegeben
Und dennoch du, du hast mich mich nie geliebt.



Verlor'nes Glück
 Lied von OSNABRÜCK
 Leop. Sprowacker.

So oft der Frühling durch das off'ne
 Fenster,
 Am Sonntagsmorgen uns hat angelacht,
 Da zogen wir durch Hain und grüne Felder,
 Sag' Liebchen, hat dein Herz daran ge-
 dacht,
 Wenn Abends wir die Schritte heimwärts
 lenkten
 Dein Händchen ruhte sanft in meinem Arm,
 So oft der Weiden Rauschen dich er-
 schreckte,
 Da hielt ich dich so fest, so innig warm.
 Zu jener Zeit, wie lieb' ich dich mein
 Leben,
 Ich hätt' geküsst die Spur von deinem
 Tritt,
 Hätt' gerne Alles für dich hingegeben
 Und dennoch du, du hast mich nie geliebt.
 Stets sorgenlos, mit Wenigem zufrieden,
 Begabt mit leichtem Muth und frohem
 Sinn,
 So sassen wir am kalten Winterabend
 Und wärmten uns am traulichen Kamin,
 Wir schwärmten nur von Ljebeslust und
~~Wonne~~ ~~war~~ ~~schön~~
 Dein Haupt es ruhte sanft auf meinem
 Knie'n,
 Dein Auge über mir war meine Sonne
 Des Feuers Knistern süsse Harmonie.
 Zu jeder Zeit wie lieb' ich dich mein
 Leben,
 Ich hätt' geküsst die Spur von deinem
 Tritt,
 Hätt' gerne Alles für dich hingegeben
 Und dennoch du, du hast mich nie geliebt.
 Ich glaubte fest an deine Liebe, Treue,
 Ich glaubt' dein Herz sei nun auf ewig mein,
 Doch eines Tag's, du flatterhafte Schöne,
 Entflohest du mir und liessest mich allein.
 Ich habe dich beweint in langen Nächten,
 Wär' unterlegen meines Kummers Last,
 Wenn ich es nicht zu bald erfahren hätte,
 Dass du seit jeher mich betrogen hast.
 Und doch warst du mein Glück, mein
 ganzes Leben
 Ich hätt' geküsst die Spur von deinem
 Tritt,
 Hätt' gerne Alles für dich hingegeben
 Und dennoch du, du hast mich nie geliebt.

*Das ganze Heim gemindert
 In die Welt hinausgeführt.
 In die Welt hinausgeführt.
 In die Welt hinausgeführt.*

Since it is evident that Brecht was inspired by Sprowacker's lyrics, it is probably more rewarding to look at Brecht's moments of alteration rather than repetition, even though he did adapt the theme of love, loss and memory that Sprowacker's translation provides. It is precisely Sprowacker's strikingly clichéd form of remembered love that spoke to provocateur Brecht.

Sprowacker's piece sings of a blissful love relationship over various years ('so oft der Frühling') and seasons ('Frühling', 'Winter'), with a love that is accordingly set indoors at the cozy fireplace ('am traulichen Kamin') as well as out in the green ('durch Hain und grüne Felder'). He emphasizes the ongoing character of this love, the repetition of experience, and the retrospectively expressed hope and desire for this love to last forever ('ich glaubt' dein Herz sei nun auf ewig mein'), even if the lonesome speaker found out in a timely fashion that his beloved had betrayed him for a long time.

Granted, Brecht did not adopt Sprowacker's refrain as a confirmation of love. However, he was clearly inspired by the subjunctive structures that convey a world of options and possibilities rather than actuality. Brecht also repeats some of Sprowacker's words verbatim, for example 'da hielt ich' (even if he continues in the more detached third-person 'sie' rather than Sprowacker's direct address 'dich') and the concessive 'und doch' which is so crucial in 'Sentimentales Lied Nr. 1004'/'Erinnerung an die Marie A.'

Beyond the obvious contrast in overall tone and message, the most striking difference between the two texts is the absence of one potent image in Sprowacker and the powerful presence of such an image in Brecht. The white cloud in Brecht's first and third stanzas frames this poem, thoroughly permeating its presentation of the vicissitudes of love and memory. That this cloud only existed for a few minutes while the poem's speaker was embracing his love on that one late summer day ('an jenem Tag im [...] September'), and yet lived on forever in the speaker's mind's eye not only portrays a poetically condensed contrast to Sprowacker's lyrical cliché, but makes for Brecht's poem's complex quality and literary affinity with Dante's poetry as well as haiku.

APPENDIX III

Bertolt Brecht's 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' in Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben der Anderen/The Lives of Others* (DVD 2006)

Von Donnersmarck's filmic deployment of Brecht's 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' is thoroughly enlightening in the present article's context of looming loss on the one hand, and of irredeemable memory on the other. In *Das Leben der Anderen*, von Donnersmarck stages a complex reading scene, in which Stasi officer Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe) expectantly opens a yellow volume of Brecht that he had previously purloined from dramatist Georg Dreyman's (Sebastian Koch) apartment (Dreyman is the object of Wiesler's minute surveillance). While an external voice is heard reciting the first stanza of Brecht's 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.', Wiesler not only reads along silently, but continues doing so beyond the first stanza, while the external voice fades into the background.

Brecht's 'Marie A.' poem of love and memory not only gives rise to Wiesler's subtle entry into the world of love and letters – and does so precisely at the moment when Wiesler is maximally exposed to, as well as seemingly irresistibly immersed in, the life of a couple (lovers and artists) which he has come to vicariously live at the cost of losing his own existence to professional surveillance; it is the presence of Brecht's poem which eventually leads to Wiesler's change of heart with regard to his office, enabling him to gradually leave behind his life of monitoring, as well as to cultivate love, letters and memory as forms of survival. It is by virtue of his encounter with Brecht's 'Marie A.' that Wiesler sets out to get back in touch with himself – a dynamic which von Donnersmarck develops brilliantly in an ongoing tension between full absorption, vicarious alienation, precarious de-familiarization and mnemonic re-familiarization.

Bertolt Brecht's 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' in Jan Schütte's *Abschied aus Buckow – Brechts letzter Sommer/The Farewell* (DVD 2000)

Schütte's *Abschied aus Buckow* is a free portrait that puts great emphasis on what can be summarized as Brecht's life-long collaborations and promiscuities. The film shows how Brecht (Josef Bierbichler), his wife Helene Weigel (Monica Bleibtreu), their daughter Barbara (Birgit Minichmayr) and a few of Brecht's former and present lovers (such as Elisabeth Hauptmann/Elfriede Irrall and Ruth Berlau/Margit Rogall, as well as Käthe Reichel/Jeannette Hain and Isot Kilian/Rena Zednikova) live Brecht's last day of vacation in lakeside Buckow, while Brecht and Weigel return to Berlin for the autumn theater season. Among the group is philosopher, journalist and reformer Wolfgang Harich (Samuel Finzi) and his wife, actress Isot Kilian, who are eventually arrested at the gates of the Buckow summer estate.

In a chapter titled 'Summer Farewell,' Schütte stages a curious recital of Brecht's 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.' on the porch of Brecht's summer house. Brecht, only a few days before his death, is captured as an attentive listener to the first stanza of one of the first love poems he had ever written: 'Erinnerung an die Marie A.,' cited by a boy who is part of a group of children sent to remind 'Genosse Brecht' of his status as one of GDR's 'große Heimatdichter' upon his impending departure from Buckow – 'Sommer Ade,' says the boy before he starts reciting the stanza. Schütte's scene has the poem's 'blauer Mond September' as well as its dynamics of remembering come full circle, showing a fragile Brecht in August 1956, who is visibly moved while dwelling on memories of youth and love rather than de-familiarization and repression.