



The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui

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The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, (Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui) was written by the great German dramatist Bertolt Brecht over the course of 3 furious weeks in 1941, while a refugee in Helsinki, Finland. A dizzyingly intelligent political satire on the (ir)resistibility of political thuggery, Arturo Ui satirizes the rise of Hitler in Nazi Germany by dressing it up as “the gangster film” we thought we knew. In Arturo Ui, the metamorphosis of thug-to-politician through corruption, intimidation and all manner of brutality is thinly masked by a Chicago gangland epic where the young Arturo Ui stages a violent takeover of the green grocer trade.

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui Details

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From Reader Review The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui for online ebook

Tyler Jones says

I read this close on the heels of a biography of Hitler and found that Brecht did a great job using this parable to show how the rise of Hitler came about.

The epilogue is chilling:

Therefore learn how to see and not to gape.
To act instead of talking all day long.
The world was almost won by such an ape!
The nations put him where his kind belong.
But don't rejoice too soon at your escape -
The womb he crawled from is still going strong.

Nat K says

"Bada bing bada boom..."

Considering how long ago Bertolt Brecht wrote this play, it sure packs a punch, and is still very valid.

I wanted to read this as I'll be seeing a production by the Sydney Theatre Company shortly. I don't make a habit of reading the plays that I'm about to see, as the element of surprise is always nice. But I'd seen a production around twenty years ago, and it's one of those plays that gets under your skin, and has always stuck in my mind.

Arturo Ui is a gangster with a vision. A racketeer who wants to provide protection to the cauliflower growers of Chicago. To help the good people buy their vegies more cheaply. To be a one-stop shop. I found it wryly amusing and sometimes bizarre that Bertolt Brecht used this humble vegetable to tell his tale of thuggery. But also very clever.

"No-one's talking about me anymore. This town's got no memory. Ah, how fleeting fame is. Two months without a murder, and they forget you ever lived."

-Ui

John & Joan Citizen have little choice but to agree to Arturo Ui's schemes. The few who do stand up to him, find themselves mysteriously shot by their own hand, poisoned or their business burnt to the ground.

"Clearly I'm a socialist – which I prove by taking money from the rich."

-Ui

I believe the translation of this play is a good one, as it deftly captures the playwright's intentions. The dialogue is sharp and snappy. It's a quick read and interesting in that it goes to show you just can't change the greed of human nature.

Ça?da? T says

Brecht, Arturo Ui nezdinde asl'nda Hitler'in yükseli?ini anlat?yor. Hitler'in Almanyada iktidar olu? çabalar? ve ya?anan olaylar günümüz Türkiye'siyle o kadar örtü?üyor ki ?a??rmamak elde de?il.

Laboreta says

Nje nga veprat me inovative qe kam lexuar ndonjehere! Jo vetem nga struktura e drames, por edhe nga permbajtja dhe angazhimi i skenave me njera-tjetren, nga forma se si shtjellohen dialoget, statusi i perkthimit dhe mbi te gjitha kompetencat e mendimit te thelle qe Breht sjell me kete drame.

Eshte drame e cila lexohet dhe shikohet ne te njeften kohe.

Analogjia ndermjet Arturo Uise dhe Hitlerit eshte aq e thelle saqe edhe pa pershkrimet e nderfutura lexuesi/shikuesi do te mund te hiqte po te njejtat paralele. Nga anatjeter, jane pikerisht keto citime, te cilat jo vetem qe te kalin nervin, por te bejne te mendosh mbi apatine dhe mbi papergjegjshmerine qe njerezit e thjeshte kane per jeten dhe te drejtat e tyre. Skena e mesimit te aktrimit, eshte skena me perfekte qe e ilustron kete fakt, jo vetem sepse nje personazh si Arturo Ui e ka pikasur, por edhe sepse paradoksalisht asnje tjetere, me i kultivuar nga morali dhe nga intelekti sesa Ui, nuk ka arritur ta shohe!

Satira me te cilen e shet Ui veten te njerezit, publiciteti qe ai i ben vetes dhe injoranca per te vepruar e njerezve, te tremb dhe te intrigon ne te njeften kohe.

Ka kaluar nje kohe e gjate qe kur kam lexuar nje drame dhe e kam pelqyer kaq shume sa kete. Jua sugjeroj ne youtube e keni gjithashtu te vendosur ne teater nga aktore shqiptare... gjendet lehte mjaft te kerkohe. Ia vlen!

Kaleidograph says

Als jemand, der 50 Jahre nach dem Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs in Österreich aufgewachsen ist, hatte ich irgendwie - vielleicht verständlicher-, vielleicht verurteilungswürdigerweise - in meinen frühen Erwachsenenjahren eine ziemliche Abneigung gegen jegliche Form von Belletristik entwickelt, die sich des zweiten Weltkriegs als Thema bedient. Mein damaliger bester Freund hat mir daraufhin unhaltbaren Lesesnobbismus vorgeworfen und gemeint meine Aversion sei ebenso absurd wie wenn ich sämtliche Bücher mit grünen Einbänden meiden würde. Das wiederum fand ich absurd: ich habe im zweiten Weltkrieg als Setting abgesehen von historischer und kulturbewusstseinsbezogener Wichtigkeit in erster Linie eine überverwendete, einerseits reißerische, andererseits ausgelutschte, und damit fast schon kitschige Literaturtrope gesehen. Dass es allerdings nicht nur ein formales Kriterium war, war mir schon klar (und vielleicht war das ja sogar das versteckte Argument meines Freundes). Heute sehe ich vieles anders und obwohl mir die immer noch gängige literarisch letztklassige Aufarbeitung der Kriegsgeschichten des Großvaters, ein lebensinhaltliches Plagiat in Ermangelung eigener Ideen und/oder eines eigenen Lebens unter dem fadenscheinigen Deckmantel von Geschichtsbildung, immer noch gestohlen bleiben kann, habe ich doch im großen und ganzen meinen Frieden mit Hitler und den seinigen als Romanfigur gefunden.

Ich beschreibe das alles hier nicht nur, weil ich ohne diese Entwicklung dieses Brecht-Stück vermutlich nie gelesen hätte; und auch nicht nur, um festzustellen, dass sich *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* gerade dadurch von den oben genannten Ergüssen unterscheidet, dass es Hitler nicht wie einen Hollywood-Star auf dem Promo-Poster für einem Blockbusterfilm glorreich und aufmerksamkeitsheischend in den Vordergrund

rückt, sondern ihn gezielt verfremdet, um ihn (wenn auch vielleicht überzeichnet) menschlich und schmutzig und glorienlos zu machen, wobei das schon näher an die Sache kommt; ich wollte vor allem folgendes sagen: Hitler realistisch zu fiktionalisieren ist fast nicht möglich mit all dem Promi-Schein, dem Horror und der Gewichtigkeit, die ihm anhaftet; die soziale Verantwortung der Literatur im "in Erinnerung behalten" und "nicht vergessen" ist schwierig zu halten, wenn man bedenkt dass sowieso ständig neue Grausamkeiten geschehen und die Menschheit eine beachtliche Vorliebe für die Verdammung der Oberfläche (Hitler und Hakenkreuze) aber dann doch Tolerierung der tiefergehenden Symptomatik (nicht nur Antisemitismus, nicht einmal nur Rassismus oder Faschismus, sondern schlicht und einfach schamlose, rohe, organisierte, rhetorisch aufgewiegelt und gestützte Gewalt) an den Tag legt; als literarische Trope ist Hitler verkitscht und so oft verwendet und verrissen worden, dass er fast schon dem bösen Wolf in Rotkäppchen gleichkommt - warum also überhaupt weiterverfolgen und suchen und stöbern in diesen Hitlertexten?

Ich glaube *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* (obwohl ja sowieso zeitgenössisch geschrieben und somit ohnehin vom Vorwurf der endlosen Iteration befreit) zeigt in gewisser Weise was es bringen kann und wie und warum es versucht worden ist: Hitler wird in dem gesamten Stück kein einziges Mal benannt (zumindest in der Schriftversion, wo die am Ende der Szenen auftauchenden "Schriften", die historische Parallelen zum Aufstieg Hitlers aufzeigen, erst nach dem Haupttext als "Zeittafel" im Anhang angeführt werden), es wird einem die Tragik und Tragweite der Situation nicht wie so oft mit dem Vorschlaghammer eingehämmert, man kann die Satire also komplett ignorieren, und gerade dadurch ist man selber versucht die Implikationen bar zu legen. Wie üblich bei Brecht, sagt er alles geradeheraus, zeigt, deutet nichts an, ist sogar fast schon befremdlich simplistisch und gerade dadurch denkt man nach über die Hintergründe nach. Natürlich ist die Satire (auch wie üblich) mindestens so düster und bedrückend wie zynisch-amüsan, natürlich geht der Wirklichkeitsbezug auch nicht immer perfekt auf (Brecht macht sich zum Beispiel genauso einer indirekten Dämonisierung und also Glorifizierung der rohen Gewalt schuldig indem er den bei weitem nicht unschuldigen, totalitären österreichischen Kanzler Dollfuß durch den aufrichtigen und unbeugsam der Wahrheit verschriebenen Journalisten Dullfuß spielen lässt), aber Brecht ist eben Brecht und selbst in diesem nicht finalisierten und zur Aufführung überarbeiteten Stück zeigt er doch deutlich, wie klein und zufällig diese großen Figuren des Nationalsozialismus doch alle waren und wie groß und platt und vorhersehbar die Geschichte der organisierten Gewalt ist im Vergleich; wie lächerlich und gerade deshalb herzerreißend, dass die wirtschaftliche Bredulle eines Karfioltrusts der Anfang vom Ende sein kann.

Der Epilog zum Stück, der so leicht zur moralisierenden Holzkeule hätte werden können, ging für mich voll auf, eben weil das ganze davor konsequent ohne Moralisation oder Sentimentalisierung als Gangster-Story durchgezogen wurde, weil es sprachlich wirklich gut zusammengebaut ist, und letztlich leider auch, weil man nicht umhin kommen kann auch heute, über 70 Jahre später, noch die Relevanz zu sehen:

*Ihr aber lernet, wie man sieht statt stiert
Und handelt, statt zu reden noch und noch.
So was hätte einmal fast die Welt regiert!
Die Völker wurden seiner Herr, jedoch
Daß keiner uns zu früh da triumphiert –
Der Schoß ist fruchtbar noch, aus dem das kroch!*

Mélanie says

I read this because I was obliged to, but I can tell I loved Brecht's parallelism. Having read various biographies of Hitler, this was supposed to be no different, but instead this was definitely my favourite. It must have been the wit, the characters, even the catchy setting or the language used. My personal favourite bit is when Ernesto Roma tells him (read it in Albanian so the following is my adaption) "Step on the world, but not on your same feet", inferring Ui's betrayal to him, as part of his own clique since the very beginning.

I liked how every character fitted perfectly into the real-life person's shoes and how it was so easy to make the whole book out. Not engaging, nor complicated, neither boring or cluttered with details. This is what I will, from now on, suggest to everyone wanting to learn Hitler's rise in no time at all! Nice epilogue and very actual too!

Μαρ?α Γεωργι?δου says

3,5* | ?να θεατρικ? που, σ?μφωνα με τον Μπρεχτ, γρ?φτηκε για να εξηγ?σει στον καπιταλιστικ? κ?σμο την ?νοδο του φασισμού και γι' αυτ? τοποθετε?ται στο οικε?ο περιβ?λλον εν?ς τραστ. Εμ?να β?βαια ακριβ?ς αυτ? ?ταν και το κομμ?τι που με δυσκ?λεψε -αγνο? τους τρ?πους λειτουργ?ας του καπιταλιστικο? συστ?ματος της εποχ?ς.

Σε κ?θε περ?πτωση, πρ?κειται για μ?α σαφ? αλληγορ?α που γ?νεται ακ?μη σαφ?στερη απ? τις επεξηγηματικ?ς πινακ?δες που εμφανι?ζονται στο τ?λος κ?θε σκην?ς. Στην πραγματικ?τητα, ε?ναι ?να βιβλ?ο που σε πρ?το επ?πεδο μιλ? για τη σταδιακ? κατ?ληψη της εξουσ?ας απ? τον Χ?τλερ, αλλ? σε δε?τερο -και ουσιαστικ?τερο, θα 'λεγα- για το μ?σο ?νθρωπο που μπορο?σε να αντισταθε? αλλ? δεν το ?κανε.

Fabio says

Storie di gangster, cavolfiori e totalitarismi

È il 1941, e Brecht trasforma in «commedia parabolica» l'avvento del nazismo, trasladando e semplificando eventi storici di modo da rendere comprensibile al *mondo capitalistico* la presa del potere da parte di Hitler.

L'azione viene spostata negli Stati Uniti, la Germania diventa Chicago, l'Austria Cicero; i personaggi principali dell'opera sono il gangster in ascesa Arturo Ui/Adolf Hitler, i suoi sgherri Ernesto Roma (Ernst Röhm), Emanuele Giri (Hermann Göring) e Giuseppe Givola (Joseph Goebbles). L'ascesa, chiaramente *resistibile* ma quasi indisturbata, di Arturo e della sua cricca parte dallo sfruttamento del malcontento e dei problemi dei capi del trust dei cavolfiori (gli *Junker* prussiani e gli industriali tedeschi) alla ricerca di prestiti statali, passa per la corruzione del politico Dogsborough (il cancelliere del Reich Heindenburg), in un crescendo di minacce, violenze, diffidenze interne che porteranno alla "conquista" di Chicago e della vicina Cicero, ma anche all'eliminazione fisica di avversari e amici pericolosi (Roma/Röhm, ovvero la notte dei lunghi coltelli).

Lo scopo di Brecht è dichiarato, *spiegare al mondo capitalistico l'ascesa di Hitler trasportandola in circostanze a quel mondo familiari*, la rappresentazione deve essere *in stile grandioso...naturalmente va evitata la pura e semplice parodia, e anche in chiave di grottesco non deve mai venir meno l'atmosfera di orrore*. L'Autore, andando contro un parere diffuso all'epoca, pensa che *i grandi delinquenti politici vanno denunciati, esponendoli soprattutto al ridicolo. Giacché essi anzitutto non sono grandi delinquenti politici, bensì autori di grandi delitti politici, il che è assai diverso. Non si tema la verità banale, purché sia vera! Come il fallimento delle sue imprese non fa di Hitler uno stupido, così la mole di queste imprese non ne fa un grand'uomo*. Per Brecht, soprattutto, bisogna liberare l'umanità dall'ammirazione per il delitto, per gli assassini (cita come esempi Napoleone I e Gengis Khan, ma anche *un massacratore di nome Kneisel* tanto ammirato nella città natale dell'Autore).

Una «commedia parabolica», dal fine didattico, dunque. Incompleta, oltretutto: venne pubblicata postuma,

prima che Brecht potesse procedere alla revisione definitiva del testo (tra le possibili correzioni, ad esempio, la risoluzione del problema della "assenza del popolo" nel testo, o la pericolosa trasformazione di Roma/Röhm in un semi-martire). Lodevole. Inventiva. Sicuramente didattica (si veda l'autoaccusa di Dogsborough/Heindenburg, o la speranza dei *negozianti di verdura* di Chicago e Cicero, dei tedeschi e degli austriaci, che qualcuno - qualcun altro - fermi i gangster). Commedia, indubbiamente, perché mira a mettere in ridicolo i nazi-fascisti, gli assassini. Ma tutto fuorché divertente, quanto meno sulla carta: magari sul palcoscenico il risultato è diverso, più potente e allo stesso tempo divertente. La mera lettura è più che altro deprimente, perché il 1941 è passato, e si è ben consci delle conseguenze della *resistibile ascesa di Arturo Ui*.

Le valutazioni servono da mera indicazione: per quel che vale, l'intento sarebbe da punteggio pieno, il risultato - a mio modestissimo parere - da tre stelle e mezzo, quasi quattro.

*E così io, l'onesto Dogsborough,
ho acconsentito a tutto ciò che questa
banda di sanguinari ha perpetrato
dopo avere vissuto con onore
ottanta inverni! [...]
Tutto questo io sapevo, e tutto questo
ho tollerato, io, l'onesto Dogsborough,
per sete di ricchezza, e per paura
che dubitaste della mia onestà.*

Jalen Lyle-Holmes says

Found it very hard to get into initially, I think it would be a lot easier in performance. It would function perfectly well on its own terms without any knowledge of what it is representing (Hitler's rise), which I think is part of good theatrical allegory or metaphor.

Manny says

Not and I have this long-running argument about translations. In nearly every case, I think it's better to read the original, even if my knowledge of the source language isn't particularly good: it means I'm hearing what the author actually said, as opposed to what the translator thought they said. Not disagrees, but I find her arguments unconvincing.

Or, to be more exact, I find her arguments unconvincing in most cases; there are a few rare exceptions. I think this is one of them. Brecht had the wonderful idea of retelling the story of Hitler's rise to power as a mock-Shakespearian tragedy, in the style of Richard III, about a Chicago gangster who takes over the city's vegetable trade. It works extremely well, and the play has huge energy and inventiveness; it's an absolutely first-rate black comedy.

Having just read both the German original and the brilliant translation I found here, it seems to me that that the translation is better. It's possible that this is due to my indifferent German - though, just before, I read *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* and greatly enjoyed it. I liked the German version of *Arturo Ui* too, but it

seemed to me that Brecht, genius though he may be, was trying to do something that was basically impossible.

The humour of the play derives from the mixing of several different registers, of which the most important are Shakespeare's magnificent blank verse and the flat, vulgar speech of the Chicago underworld; even if these can be transposed to German (and Brecht gives it his best shot), they are essentially English in their nature. There are other linguistic jokes as well, including substantial borrowings from *Faust*, and these passages don't work so well in translation. But the core of the play is the contrast between the Bard and Al Capone, and it's hardly surprising that they achieve their full potential in English.

Enough generalities; take a look at some of the passages I liked most, and judge for yourself. To start, a speech by Ui, who's just initiated his hostile takeover of the cauliflower business:

Well, what to do, you must be wondering.
So listen to me careful. First things first.
The way you're acting just ain't good enough,
Hoping that all will turn out hunky-dory,
Grinding your lazy bums behind the counter
And fainting every time you see a thug.
You're disunited, splintered and without
Some Big White Chief to give you firm protection.
So first comes unity. Then sacrifice.

A stream of invective from a woman who's just seen her husband killed before her eyes by Ui's thugs:

You scum, you monster, oh, you crock of shit!
No, even shit would shudder seeing you
And if you touched it, cry out, Let me wash!
Whoever touches Ui is defiled!
You louse of all the lice! And everyone
Will let him get away with it! You there,
They're hacking us to bloody pieces! Help!
It's Ui, Ui, Ui and the rest!
Where are you? Help! Will no one stop this pest?

A pathetic piece of equivocation from Betty, who's foolish enough to think she can negotiate with Ui:

Clark has told me
That Ui's youthful revels are now ended.
- The best of us have gone through *Sturm und Drang* -
He's sown his wild oats, so to speak and shown
His manner and his grammar much improved:
He hasn't murdered anyone for weeks.
Though if you do persist, attacking him,
You might revive his baser instincts yet.
And put yourself in jeopardy, Ignatius.
But if you keep your mouth shut, they'll be nice.

And, finally, the chilling conclusion to the play:

The actor who plays ARTURO UI comes forward and takes off his moustache to speak the epilogue.

If we could learn to look instead of gawking,
We'd see the horror in the heart of farce,
If only we could act instead of talking,
We wouldn't always end up on our arse.
This was the thing that nearly had us mastered;
Don't yet rejoice in his defeat, you men!
Although the world stood up and stopped the bastard,
The bitch that bore him is in heat again.

Check out this play if you've got nothing better to do over the weekend; it only takes a couple of hours to read. And, oh yes, it's just possible you may find some vague resonances with things that are happening in the world right now. If you're that way inclined.

Bridget says

Brecht's comedic look at how Hitler came to rise. Hitler is in the form of Arturo Ui, a man who claims to be "for the people," especially those in the cauliflower trade. Ui does bad things and allows bad things to happen, but people doubt it could be him because he is interested in protecting "The common man."

It is a serious look into what can happen if people don't learn their history.

Keith says

Most of my favorite Brecht plays are those written while he was in a self-imposed exile from Germany following Hitler's rise to Chancellor (1933), including *The Life of Galileo*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Visions of Simone Marchand*, and this play.

The dynamic time period, and his life in exile, seemed to focus Brecht and, in his better plays of this period, limited his odd theories about socialism (as in *The Threepenny Opera*). In this time of unprecedented strife and world chaos, his core principles came forward.

The play in question presents the rise of Hitler as a Chicago gangster. This is an interesting idea. The play is good, and I'm sure entertaining to watch. Some of today's top actors have performed in it over the past several decades, including Christopher Plummer, Steve Buscemi, Al Pacino, etc

But I wonder if it is an idea for a time – i.e., as Hitler rose to power. But afterward? Today? Now that we know the rise – and fall – of Hitler, does the “parable” seem as relevant? As a satire of the moment (1930s), does it carry the same weight and message today?

I think it would be better as a gangster story that resembled Hitler's rise, rather than the rise of Hitler told as a gangster tale. Additionally, the blank verse is prosaic. If written without line breaks, I wouldn't recognize it as poetry. That could be the translation, though. It doesn't achieve the great sweep and violence of Elizabethan theatre that he was trying to capture.

But that said, it is an entertaining read. There are other Brecht plays I would recommend first, but for a quick read (or an enjoyable evening in the theatre) you won't regret this.

Sidharth Vardhan says

A dark comedy on US gangsters. It is a powerful play in as far as it acts as an allegory of how a corrupt world creates monsters of violence in general. But I don't think it is a very powerful metaphor for particular case of Hitler (who seems to be referred directly in epilogue).

Realini says

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertold Brecht
Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui

Spoiler alert: I will not give you away the finale, the author does. He thinks the Ascension can be stopped. But since I did not enjoy what I heard of the play, I am likely to write about anything except Brecht.

There have been a small series of accidents, books that I did not enjoy.

With Zhivago and Prometheus Bound, there is the Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui.

Yes, the message is worthy and the title, from where I stand says it all.

There is even is no point in reading beyond it.

I am just kidding, but I may have reached the limit of my comprehension, number of authors I can grasp and the time limit.

An impulse to resist Nazis is noble and especially so if we consider that this play was written in 1941, if I remember correctly.

The author was brave and could face retribution, even in the form of death.

On the other hand, it seems somewhat hollow and pointless, for during so many years Hitler could not be stopped.

In other words, the play is plain wrong.

Message and all: Arturo Ui aka Hitler cannot be stopped, resisted – without millions of people dead and countless wounded and affected by his war.

Another thing I hate about Nazism is the fact that somehow it gets all the attention.

It is ok to be communist or extreme left in Europe and forbidden to be a Nazi.

While I understand the last part, I do not get the first.

The communists, Stalin and the bunch have been much bigger killers than Hitler.

Mao may have been the killer Supreme, making the Chinese starve to death for his crazy, evil “ideals”.

He made his subjects kill the sparrows, which had devoured the other crop eaters and it all ended in catastrophe. How stupid and ferocious these people could be.

Another thing that I did not like about Arturo Ui was the silly introduction of cauliflower.

Instead of mentioning Krupp, as an engine, a stimulus for the rise of the Third Reich, Brecht introduces ...cauliflower merchants.

I can understand that he could not give the proper names and here there is a subtle irony, but I just find it risible and bringing it into a note that I do not like.

It is subjective and reflective a lack of understanding, probably a proper training and more research on the subject.

You may enjoy it. I did not.

David Schaafsma says

The Resistible Rise of Fascism in 2017

“Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it.” --Brecht

1. Trump claims because he is famous he has premier access to any woman he wants; he can just grab her pussy or whatever he wants.
2. Several women from his past claim sexual harassment.
3. Trump denies all claims of above and commits to defund Planned Parenthood and other organizations devoted to women’s equality, at the same time claiming he “loves all women, and they love me.”
4. Trump elected President (with a majority of white women voting for him, confirming for him and some others his claim in #3)
5. In his Inaugural address he mentions his desire to unify the country.
6. The next day 2.9 million women from around the planet protest his election, proving his claim in #5.
7. Trump’s own tiny hands count more people at his Inauguration than any other one in history, and when there is widespread media pushback on this claim forces WH mouthpiece Sean Spicer to assert this as one of his increasingly prevalent “alternate facts.”
8. Massive ridicule in response to such claims from the media and various women’s groups.
9. Trump doubles down on his vow to defund Planned Parenthood and vows to define organizations dedicated to the prevention of violence against women. The new Republican Senate votes 51-48 to remove discrimination protection for women in healthcare and against ACA contraceptive coverage and maternity care provision. And this is just one part of what he did in the first week!

I first saw a production of this play in—I think—1979 in Williamsburg, MA, a summer stock production, and I knew nothing about it. I was not at all worried at the time about the rise of fascism in this country, which was exactly Brecht’s point, that in the tradition of Sinclair Lewis’s *It Can’t Happen Here*, everyone smugly believed Hitler couldn’t happen here. The production was consistent with Brecht’s approach: Don’t let the audience sit back and treat this as a comfortable entertaining night out at the theatre. This “play” is for him about political realities we have faced globally many times and allowed to happen: The rise of fascism. But in this play, a darkly hilarious black comedy, we see cheap, crude and inarticulate gangster Arturo Ui not living in some “exotic” location like Germany (!) or Italy or Russia, but living in Chicago, in the 1930’s, as a Hitlerian character intent on taking over the city and country. Ridiculous little buffoon, who does he think he is?! It’s laughable that he would ever want to be president! He’s a joke!

In the Williamsburg production, the set was from the outset multicolored, as one might expect a set to be, but throughout the play as gangster crimes of robbery and murder and extortion increased, painters were gradually whitewashing the set until every inch was white. The effect was visually electrifying. And to remind us that the comedy we were watching was specifically tied to the rise of Hitler’s Third Reich, placards accompanied each scene to show the parallels.

Now, Hitler wasn’t a gangster, exactly. No one initially took him seriously at all, until socio-economic conditions helped him argue that it was time to Make Germany Great Again. Ui, as the proto-fascist of this drama, works hard to get popular, against all odds; he takes elocution lessons, acting lessons, and his coach helps him ape Shakespearean language and tones so that he can sweet talk his way into strong-arming the city until he corners the cauliflower market. There are terrific echoes of Richard III and Macbeth in this play.

At the conclusion of the play the actor playing Ui ran down to the edge of the play, ripping off his moustache, addressing the audience directly, telling his (actual) name, told us he was an actor; hey, talk about “breaking the plane” of the understood separation between audience and stage! Precisely as Brecht would have wanted, we who saw that play went out and talked about the issues in the “play” as it pertained

to the old US of A. We agreed that Brecht was decidedly not merely “play”-ing around with political realities.

Wanna read the version I read? Here it is:

<https://waldentheatre.files.wordpress...>

What would it be like to see such a production, now, today, in January 2017, with a new USA President with his powerful billionaire corporate cabinet backing him?

“If we could learn to look instead of gawking,
We'd see the horror in the heart of farce,
If only we could act instead of talking,
We wouldn't always end up on our arse.
This was the thing that nearly had us mastered;
Don't yet rejoice in his defeat, you men!
Although the world stood up and stopped the bastard,
The bitch that bore him is in heat again.”--Brecht

Licia says

Una lettura che non si può affrontare a cuor leggero, sia per il contenuto dell'opera ma anche per il genere teatrale che l'autore ha scelto.

L'opera teatrale appartiene al teatro epico brechtiano, dove lo spettatore/lettore rimane distante dagli avvenimenti narrati, sviluppa un pensiero critico e comprende che quella rappresentazione è una parabola della sua contemporaneità, solo sublimata in un'altra epoca e ambientazione.

L'Arturo Ui è l'allegoria dell'ascesa al potere di Hitler in Germania: Brecht scrisse quest'opera nel 1941, in Finlandia e non venne mai rappresentata mentre lui era ancora vivente; con la metafora del clan dei cavoli che controlla il mercato di Chicago, il drammaturgo ripercorre gli atti salienti dell'ascesa di Hitler, quasi ridicolizzando la figura di Ui, che va da un attore dilettante per prendere lezioni di retorica.

Per chi vuole ripassare il teatro epico o per chi cerca un'opera che sia attuale tutt'ora, questa è quella giusta

Jolien says

not my kinda book

Manny says

(See my review of the English translation)

tomwrote says

I've never read any Brecht before, and he takes a little getting used to, if this is anything to go by.

A funny; both ha-ha and odd, parody of Hitler's rise to power, and more importantly the circumstances that allowed it, using an Al Capone stand in taking over the cauliflower business in Chicago.

Chilling, mechanical, smart, emotionally distancing, controlled, didactic, selective, political...there is a lot going on, even before noting that the play has Shakespeare references galore and is written blank verse. Yet it is somehow simplistic too and perhaps to its credit.

The epilogue is, I believe, famous and understandably so. It is a chilling and sadly relevant reminder of how easy it is to produce both the circumstances and monsters to drag us all to hell again.

Harry Boyd says

Bertolt Brecht was a genius. This play is fantastic, I couldn't talk about all the reasons why I think this because there are just too many. To list a few, the parallels between the play and the rise of Hitler in the Weimar Republic are masterfully presented and very true to real historical events. All Brecht's qualities like spass, the alienation effect, demonstration of characters and presentation to spectators are all present here. But the best thing about it is what the title suggests, Arturo Ui's rise to power is SO resistible! He isn't initially in power or even liked; at literally every point in his rise, if ONE person would just stand against him then he would never have made it to where he ends up at the end of the play. The whole thing is so fragile and is amazing to watch. It's a masterpiece of theatre written by a master of Epic Theatre.
