

The Brecht Phenomenon, Part 1: Successful Antisocial Behavior

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by

Christine Mealey Mudarri - Sarah Lawrence College, Department of Women's History, MA 2002
428 West 46th Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 315-0645
cmealeymudarri@hotmail.com
chrismudarri@yahoo.com

Aubrey Immelman – College of St. Benedict and St. John's University, Department of Psychology, Faculty
Department of Psychology, Saint John's University
Collegeville, MN 56321
(320) 363-3198
aimmelman@csbsju.edu

Please address correspondence to Christine Mealey Mudarri.

Abstract

Part I, presented as a poster, outlines and graphs an indirect personality assessment of theater director and Marxist Bertolt Brecht. Published sources, both primary and secondary, provide biographical data for this profile based on psychodiagnostic criteria adapted by political psychologist Aubrey Immelman, from the personological model of clinical personality psychologist Theodore Millon. The pilot study shows Brecht's personality as highly narcissistic with antisocial (psychopathic) tendencies. Scholar John Feugi's recent argument against Brecht's claims of authorship, especially to work done by the many women in his life, figures prominently. Ironically, Brecht's antisocial behavior both as plagiarist and political gadfly not only won him individual acclaim, but also had a positive outcome for women as a group. Natural selection of amoral personality traits may play a role in the "Brecht phenomenon." Part II will focus on successful referencing of Brecht's name in 1980s Marxist-feminist theater writings and their use of "alienation effect," a theatrical technique for which Brecht receives credit, but again that he did not create.