we are translated to the sphere of the irrational. (If the audience sang at the sight of him the case would be different.) The more unreal and unclear the music can make the reality — though there is of course a third, highly complex and in itself quite real element which can have quite real effects but is utterly remote from the reality of which it treats — the more pleasurable the whole process becomes: the pleasure grows in proportion to the degree of unreality.

"The term 'opera' — far be it from us to profane it — leads, in Mahagonny's case, to all the rest. The intention was that a certain unreality, irrationality and lack of seriousness should be introduced at the right moment, and strike with a double meaning.

The irrationality which makes its appearance in this way only fits the occasion on which it appears.

It is a purely hedonistic approach.

As for the content of this opera, its content is pleasure. Fun, in other words, not only as form but as subject-matter. At least, enjoyment was meant to be the object of the inquiry even if the inquiry was intended to be an object of enjoyment. Enjoyment here appears in its current historical role: as merchandise.

It is undeniable that at present this content must have a provocative effect. In the thirteenth section, for example, where the glutton stuffs himself to death; because hunger is the rule. We never even hinted that others were going hungry while he stuffed, but the effect was provocative all the same. It is not everyone who is in a position to stuff himself full that dies of it, yet many are dying of hunger because this man stuffs himself to death. His pleasure provokes, because it implies so much.

In contexts like these the use of opera as a means of pleasure must have provocative effects today. Though not of course on the handful of opera-goers. Its power to provoke introduces reality once more. Mahagonny may not taste particularly agreeable; it may even (thanks to guilty conscience)

1 This limited aim did not stop us from introducing an element of instruction, and from being everything on the stage. The eye which looks for the gest in everything is the moral sense. In other words, a moral tableau. A subjective one, though . . .

2 A dignified gentleman with an empyrized face had fished out a bunch of keys making a piercing demonstration against the Epic Theatre. His wife didn't desert him at the decisive moment. She had stuck two fingers in her mouth, screwed up her eyes and blazed out her cheeks. The whistle was louder than the key of the safe. (Alfred Polgar on the first production of Mahagonny in Leipzig.)