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Theatre for the Scientific Age: A Study of Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre

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Abstract:

Twentieth century Drama assays analysis various avant-garde techniques employed by the writers in their works. Bertolt Brecht, a theatre practitioner, playwright, and writer, left a lasting legacy in the modern era through his development of Epic Theatre, which dismantled the structure of Aristotelian drama, disregarded the technique of suspension of disbelief, and rejected progressive character development. Instead, it encouraged the audience to engage with the world as it is and sought a more critical and objective approach from them. The paper aims to examine the performing arts concepts, themes, and techniques employed by the trailblazer Brecht, who created a theatre for the scientific age.

Keywords: Modern drama, Bertolt Brecht, Epic Theatre, Alienation effect, Objectivity, theatre for the scientific age.

Introduction

Theatre being an acoustic, visual and sensational form of art is a powerful outlet for expression, and an effective medium of enrichment, efflorescent and evolution. Modern English drama has brought phenomenal revolution, made impactful innovation concerning themes and theatrical techniques. The 20th century was marked by countless struggles, apprehensions and

fixations. People balked at profound changes, but the uncertainty made it difficult for them to uphold the old values. Art forms witnessed radical transformation during this period.

The infancy of Modern British Theatre can be traced to the Irish Literary theatre by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, which laid its foundation. The wars deeply affected people and their art and paved the way for Avant Garde Theatre. Absurdism, Dadaism, Symbolism, Surrealism and Expressionism manifested in the drama and theatre of the Modern era.

Bertolt Brecht, born in 1898 in Augsburg, is one of the giants of modern literature. Before going to Munich and then to Berlin to pursue his career in theatre, he performed the duties of a medical orderly in the First World War. He articulated his ideas in a way that was striking and developed the field of drama. However, his voice was curbed and he had to leave when Nazis came in power in Germany. He returned to Europe in 1947 after having appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Cumbersome times through which Brecht lived were his formative years that gave him powerful political voice. After Second World War, groundbreaker Bertolt Brecht, rejected the realistic features and his ideas and techniques lead to the innovation of Epic Theatre which aimed at preserving the social and political values that it portrayed. The establishment of the Berliner Ensemble was the culmination of his persistent efforts and experimentation. By his death in 1956, he was renowned as one of the most influential theatrical practitioners.

Epic Theatre

“Art is not a mirror with which to reflect reality but a hammer with which to shape it.” (Brecht)

Bertolt Brecht displayed genuine competence in playwriting, poetry, direction, theatre

practicing. He facilitated the advent of blurring the distinctive line between life and theatre and directed the world to take social action. Much of his work was devoted to the liberation of humanity. According to Brecht, the trials of social change “are not mastered by keeping silent about them” so he made it his mission to expose them, loudly. Once the empirical reality is brought to people’s awareness and understanding, it would pave the way to alteration of social relationships or social forces. In order to achieve this goal, he created a new theatre that would not focus on the rigidity of societal structure and show it as something that can be influenced, changed and recreated. Being a staunch supporter of Marxist theory, his plays had an intense political and social message.

Epic Theatre establishes its significance and ceaselessly obtains a lively consciousness from it being a theatre. German playwright, Brecht, made his presence known in the theatrical world after World War II. He emphasized theatricality and viewer participation because he believed that Aristotelian theatre had caused the audience’s engagement to grow stagnant and passive. He attempted to use Dadaism and Expressionism in his initial plays, but was more influenced by Marxist theory and detested Aristotle’s concept of drama. He breathed life into his dreams with the development of “The Berliner Ensemble” that came to represent what is today called “epic theater”.

Brecht’s ideas of “theatre, art and literature” were more than just formal fabrications. Instead, they were ends in themselves. For him, they had “to form the ‘ideological superstructure’ for a solid, practical rearrangement of our age’s way of life. He aspired to produce work for “an audience of the scientific age” that would retrace concepts like marriage, war, money etc. via his theatre. Brecht’s historical imagination and his revolutionary and inspired actions demanded audience’s incisive attention. His works like *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Good Woman*

of Szechwan, Life of Galileo, The Threepenny Opera and his theoretical writings which attempted to create a revolution revered him. He is best known for his unique way of engaging with social, political and cultural processes and theorizing them. Brecht's contribution to theatre has been well described by Bentley as he declares Brecht as "fountainhead of so much in the theater." The distinctive features of his theatre include episodic plot structure and culminating development of character. "Estrangement" or "Verfremdung" is one of the principal goals with an emphasizing rationality and detachment rather than sentiments. This modality causes the separation of audience from the stage and encourages them to integrate into a society that contemplates on the action taking place. Brecht dismissed illusion and sought to reform the society by challenging the conventional ideologies.

"Over time the desire to unsettle, to shock, even to alienate the audience became one hallmark of modern drama." (Stephen Greenblatt 5)

The remarkable philosopher Aristotle theorized the preconditions and specifications for the creation and production of play that were followed religiously for about two thousand years in the West. His findings and theatrical postulations were challenged by the emergence of Brecht who questioned his dominance, authority and credentials. Brecht affirmed that his advanced theatre was for a "different audience" and his new pieces "are not going to satisfy the old aesthetics, rather they are going to destroy it." The emergence of this new kind of progressive theatre, according to him, was the need of the hour as surroundings were changing drastically. Scientific discoveries were taking place and since life of a man is molded by science to a great extent, self-examination was required to embrace the new way of life. The horrors of World War I, postwar sufferings of lower and middle classes, World War II, the Great Depression, everything had shocked human beings to the core. After the Second World War, Germany was in ruins and capitalism was in the

process of restoration after the crisis in the 1970s. The field of education was facing an incredibly bleak future too. People were clinging to the darkness, to the old ways of living, especially the Bourgeois who held onto the past too tightly and hence, were oblivious to the new stimulations of the age that were demanding to be felt by them. Brecht felt the nudge to reset the worldview, embody the new spirit and to teach people to stand against the political injustice and social inequality and make necessary changes for a fulfilling future.

“Epic” is abstracted from the greatest poems of Literature, for instance, The Mahabharata, The Iliad, The Odyssey and Paradise Lost. These poems often had numerous periods, a narrator figure, an episodic structure and many techniques which Erwin Piscator and Brecht strived to include in their theatre.

Finally, *'The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre'* was an elaborative article he brought out by him in 1930 which he composed as *'Notes to the Opera Rise and Fall of the city of Mahagonny'*. He traced the distinctions between Dramatic Theatre and Epic Theatre and mentioned the positive effect of the latter on the collective society. The fundamental lying under this fresh form was didactic. It comprised political lessons that could be best learnt and employed by the audience when their mental diet is changed. Since it was made for modern, scientific age, it was logical and critical and its primary concern was to investigate and dissect the parts of social relations that determine action in bourgeois society. Brecht's biggest desire was to help people break their habit of being in the bourgeois world and broaden their worldview by experiencing the new scientific culture of the twentieth century. His fire was fueled by the Marxist principle of progress of history. He embodied the time he was present in. The essence of his theatre that carried the political and social consciousness of the age can be best described by Lyotard's modernistic idea. “This idea of progress as possible, probable or necessary was rooted in the certainty that the development of the

arts, technology, knowledge and liberty would be profitable to humanity as a whole.” (*Lyotard 1986, 6*)

Since the scientific aura was not yet penetrated among the masses as they were entangled in mutual social relations, he used his ideas as a tool for rationalization and for making science and art meet to make space for alteration, advancement and aesthetic pleasure. The job of all art involved in an drama is “to entertain the children of the scientific age, and to do so with sensuousness and humor”, Brecht wrote.

The most important aspect of his theatre was to present the accurate depiction of humans and the elements that determine or influence human action and behavior. He geared it into reality to let people face the world the way it was. Such raw representation of the society imbued with wisdom made the audience appreciate it. The understanding of the construction of society and its workable nature stimulated people and encouraged them to practically examine everything. Brecht theatre demands to be seen. It did not want the audience to be in a state of trance. The feeble representation of the real world in the plays of middle age stirred the feelings of the audience but did not stimulate their intellect. They remained passive as they plunged into the life of 'dreamy' figures on the stage. The world that was represented on the stage did not allow itself to be influenced by the society. For example, Oedipus, who revolted against primordial principles of the society of his time, was executed. Shakespeare's most significant characters, valiant and able, were all slaves to their own tragic flaws and could not break the shackles of their fate. The Gods, the death, the tragedy caused by one's own unavoidable flaw, the futility of own fate made people sympathize with the characters but left no room for intellectual and mobile response from them.

Brecht's focus was on instilling a sense of wisdom to create solutions, presenting anger as an emotion that needs to be regulated and suffering acting as a catalyst to growth. Even the darkest

and most destructive phase of life can be accepted when a person knows that he can rise again by mastering his own thoughts and actions. He made people aware of their own role in creating the social conditions “man does not have to stay the way he is now, nor does he have to be seen only as he is now, but also as he might become” (BT, 1949)

Brecht created his ‘learning plays’ in an unconventional form that aimed to erase the dividing line between the audience and the actors and to help them engage logically. Since he believed that Aristotelian techniques deluded the audience to the point of submissiveness, he declared his plays to be “dialectical” and he explored the concept of “distancing” as a tool to dismantle the hegemonic structure. He used “theatricality” as the central notion and applied the effects of “alienation” for the audience to maintain an obvious emotional distance, “historicization” to emphasize that history is changeable by the subjects and of “gestus”.

Epic Theatre was seasoned to disconcert people by expressing human life and its complexities with an abrupt alienation of familial conditions. Dialectical theatre is a title that the German theatre practitioner came to opt for at the place of Epic theatre near the end of his career. He chose the term “dialectical” for his theatre to put an emphasis on argument and discussion. It did not allow direct intervention of the audience but a critical awareness was expected to penetrate their psyche. His promotion of 'function' over infecundity of form and content lead to advancement of aesthetics. His understanding of dialects, deeply influenced by Marxism, was formulaic. What made it essentially dialectical was character’s death, abolishment of the fourth wall, sequential, fragmented plot and concerned approach to the action shown in the theatre. This denial of thingness, i.e., of definite, non-negotiable particulars, extremely impacted the portrayal of character in the contemporary postmodern theatre. *Man in Man*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, and his various plays dared to question the immaculacy of the self-contained, distinguished

character. He had a more reforming effect than the plays of Churchill, Foreman, Müller and Newman.

The notion of “theatricalism” lucidly means the awareness of the audience that they are watching a play. Brecht desired to destruct the belief of seducing the audience to believe they were watching real life on the stage. His goal was to discuss the truth of the society with a critical lens. “It is most important that one of the main features of the ordinary theatre should be excluded from epic theatre: the engendering of illusion.” (Colin Counsell, 44)

Alienation also known as defamiliarization, distancing, estrangement, or *Verfremdung* in German is a technique employed by Brecht to eliminate illusion and identification that was evident through the element of catharsis in the Aristotle's rules of drama. It severs the connection between the actors and spectators and cause the audience to shift from being mere spectator to critics of the theatre by thinking, taking actions and raising objections. The alienation effect manifested itself in the acting style as Brecht wanted the actors to strive for stability by “being” their character onstage and “showing the audience that they have embodied the character and it is being performed”.

Brecht's theatre allowed the audience to sit in the roller coaster ride and pursue the adventure but it was not confined to a small circle and it expected them to maintain an emotional objectivity. It transcended the hypnotization of the masses and allowed the people of the scientific age to break free from the limitations and feelings of the chief characters that were forced on them. One of the element of this effect was to eliminate support and empathy. The action on the stage made the spectators see the characters in a new light but did not cause them to lose themselves in the fictional character. This gave birth to spectator's critical thoughts. The shutting down of countenance and compassion aimed to maintain an essential gap so that the audience's imagination subsequently allows them to take action once the play finishes. This gap called for a significant

change in the theatre where the characters would not be presented as not incentive or unchangeable. “Instructive theatre separates the daily petrified and insensible reality.” (Willett and Brecht, 1964)

Brecht’s alienation effect had an instructive aura that pervaded the audience and introduced them to a practical performance. It had a convincingly pragmatic outcome of separating philosophical explanation of the modern public realism. By estranging the people from their problems, affairs like war, violence, dictatorship, migration, multiculturalism and various social issues can be dealt with a more critical mindset and a dialectical debate. To examine everything appropriately and summarize, alienation is an alternative for ‘estrangement’. Brecht said, “Estrangement means to historicize, that is, consider people and incidents as historically conditioned and transitory.” (Ewen, 1967)

Historicization is one of the defamiliarization effects that Brecht has applied. One of the major keys is to show happenings of a different and distant country on the stage so that the spectators are alienated from what happens in their own land. History manifested itself as an evolving process, a dialectical one where the contribution of human to the shift of history. Brecht historicized the theatre to show the impermanence of a society and the various impulses that drove the people of different ages. His social ontology is one of continual stream. With this effect, he strives to question the validity of reality and deconstructs the relationship with time. For him the struggle had to be fought to bring it to end and the end would lead to the transitioning of the world from bourgeois to scientific. His objective was to transform his audience into teachers proficient in the study of society and history and thus turn them into “statesmen, thinkers and engineers [of society]” (MD, p. 100).

Thus, Brechtian theatre proposed a dialectical analysis of dramatic subject matter focusing on the articulation of socially contextualized contradictions. The essential aspects of his “Theatre

of showing” was to present an actual representation of human beings, their ever-changing nature and the social factors that contribute to radical changes in the world. His aims for production were Theatricality, the V- effect and Historicization. Fabel, gestus, arrangement, haltungen, inductive rehearsal, realistic details and contradictions were the means he employed to achieve his aim.

A study of Bertolt Brecht's plays as the plays for the scientific age Brecht being one of the most influential figures of 20th century wrote *The Life of Galileo* and *Mother Courage and Her Children* which hold the spirit of the scientific age. The prominent themes of *Life of Galileo* were still pertinent decades after its publication. The story revolves around the great Italian scientist and philosopher Galileo and centers the time when Roman Catholic Church possessed so great a power that Galileo was blamed and persecuted for blasphemous scientific discoveries. Brecht gives voice to the purpose of science and fathoms the depth of religious, political and commercial impact on scientific endeavours through his play. The thoughts and feelings he evoked were palpable to the audience.

The major driving force behind the scientific treatment of this play was the second “Scientific Revolution” initiated by Albert Einstein and reassessment of role of Galileo by modern historians. Brecht's Galileo does not express himself as the “Father of Empirical Science” to distance the critical audience. Brecht used Historicization to deal with 17th century issues in Italy while mirroring the contemporary society to make his audience meditate upon the behavior and actions of the characters. The play stored and screened his strong political views. His audience was encouraged to reinterpret the image of Galileo by alluding Einstein's findings who does not directly appear in the play but makes his presence known through his immortal discoveries throughout the play.

The play is written in a chronological order and begins with a forty-six-year-old Galileo

burning midnight oil to prove the theories of Copernicus, which is a study of the revolution of earth around the sun. His research was in discordance with the Church's doctrine of the Earth being the centre of the Universe. The Church argued that his teaching disapproved the Church's the primordial cosmic arrangement and disregarded its political power in society. As a result, he was inquired and had to recant, for he feared corporal punishment. Since the play had its setting as Renaissance in the backdrop, it embodied the conflict between reason and faith and the clash between religion and science. There is an accurate depiction of the martyrdom science had to endure when people's vision was blurred with the fog of primitive religious and social beliefs.

Brecht presents Galileo as a prototype and executes the examination of his behavior of withdrawing under duress of the authority. Galileo was unafraid and continued his experiments despite the mortal threat it possessed. Conventional drama have a propensity of concentrating on elements leading to advancement of actions whereas Brecht applied unconventional theatrical techniques. The audience is asked to observe closely and reconsider the events.

The play unfolds with the conversation of Galileo with his housekeeper's young son, Andrea about the functioning of solar system. Galileo displays a wooden model illustrating the contemporary and most commonly accepted arrangement of planets. The model that has earth in the middle of the Universe surrounded by eight crystal spheres which are representative of the moon, the sun and other planets was widely accepted by everyone. But Galileo proposes that people's beliefs are going to shatter with the advancement of knowledge and technology. He explains to Andrea the idea of Nicolaus Copernicus of Sun being placed at the center of the Universe while the Earth and other plants revolve around it. Galileo makes use of wooden design accompanied by a couple of logical demonstrations with an apple to suggest the truth in Copernicus' theory. Serious concerns are shown by his mother as the theory goes against the

Church and can get Andrea into hot water at school. Money conflict is one of the primary concerns and is cited throughout as Galileo needs it to facilitate his research work. His financial condition does not even allow him to perform simple tasks of day to day life. He requires more money so he shifts to Florence and starts working as the court mathematician. Though the astronomers of Rome admire his theory, it is not supported by the court. The theory caused a widening schism between him and the Holy Office and was declared as a heresy. It was dreaded that his scientific mind may question the prevailing truth, social order and the may cause religious beliefs to dismantle. Following a warning to stop his learning, he is questioned and investigated intensively. As a result, Galileo divorces from his research for eight years. With the resumption of his research, trouble came along. His future son in law refuses to marry his daughter to sustain his respect in the society. His reputation was tarnished by allegation that he is a Bible killer. Publication of his findings in Italian leads to more Inquisition. Neither Florentine court nor Pope Urban VII himself can save him. He is forced to renounce his work helplessly. His students were disheartened and his disciples saw the age of reason to fade away. He was labeled a coward. Satri, one of his students said, "Unhappy is the land that breeds no hero" to which Galileo gave a contrasting respond. He declares, "Unhappy is the land that needs a hero." He was sentenced to home detention till death for being an intellectual convict. In his secluded life of nine years, he writes the Discorsi, which is the summation of his scientific discoveries. The pages of the manuscript are seized by the Church but he succeeds in hiding a copy and confiding it to his student, Andrea who moves it out of Italy. In the end, Galileo announces: "I have betrayed my profession. Any man who does what I have done must not be tolerated in the ranks of science."

Brecht applied his theory of anti-illusionist theatre in his play *Life of Galileo* to invoke intellectual presence among the audience. Coherence and unity of plot is not encouraged as Brecht

made use of long pauses throughout the play to obstruct its flow and for the maintenance of critical stance. Brecht grasped the virtue and vice in the scientific practice, he perceived that the momentary success of the Church and the surrender of science would probably lead to destruction. He saw the probability for the atomic bomb in the forced attrition of Galileo, in the defeat of the social and political prospect and in the Marxist potential of science. His play is a historical drama that involves the recreation of history. He bounds his play by the usable past of Galileo but he does so by doing justice to the happenings of the scientist's life and the clash with the Catholic Church. He presents the facts, both ebb and flow, both waning and growth authentically. He utilizes the past to build a moral framework for the present. His impulse is to inform the audience about the need to dissect the political instructions hidden in the history. His ink and the eyes of the people embodying the contemporary spirit can parse the lessons that need to be learnt. Brecht painted Galileo in words as a humanist and a philosophical visionary. He gave both science and uncertainty to the people of Italy through his work. The Scientific Revolution was a cinch after his recantation. He accelerated the efficacy of reason-driven discoveries over authority. The authority galled at his thesis and presented it to people as skeptical. Brecht found this doubt and skepticism to be expressing the truth about the modern life.

An entirely different from Aristotle's concept of hero and anti-hero, Galileo is revered posthumously for his work but he spends his life fearing the punishment and abandons his previous research. Moreover, unity of time, place and action is not followed in contrast to traditional drama which laid an immense emphasis on the adherence to these unities. The plot tours decades and events occur at places distant from one another. Even the protagonist is not committed to one action. The play uses the past as an object for dramatization. It is against the unfolding of events as if it were happening for the first time and narrates the facts of the history instead. The play gives

the audience space to reflect on the events without giving in to emotions. It does not demand empathy from them, it calls for a deep detachment that frees one from the shackles of sentiments and insists on the importance of criticism Galileo's findings were in contrast to the widely accepted view of the Universe. The rugged surface of the moon contradicted the idea of perfection of heaven. Nicholas Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus*, the first book that proposed the idea of a heliocentric (sun-centered) universe, was banned by the Catholic Church in 1616. Galileo was summoned to Church to be informed that he could no longer support the argument of Copernicus publicly. The publication of Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in 1632 presented the concept of heliocentrism both in favor and against it. He was called on by the Church and was proved guilty of "vehement suspicion of heresy" and the reprimand he received forced him to deny his own opinions and curse his errors. His laws of motion facilitated the codification of classical mechanics. His profound research and inventions transformed astronomy and biology. His discovery of the moon's surface, phases of Venus, Jupiter's moons and the stars of the galaxy shaped astronomy. His thoughtfulness and inventions modernized the scientific methods. Despite his intelligence, he was mainly in conflict with the Church. Litigation was stirred up to trivialize philosophy and suppress the curiosity to avoid the tension between religion and science.

Power dynamics also have a crucial role in the play as Brecht religiously examines the role of truth and power. Galileo states that truth 'is born of times, not of authority' and the importance of voicing it to sustain its value. "Only truth that gets through will be what we force through." He nurtures the idea of anti-illusion to provoke thought that would eventually cause an action. The story of Galileo could also be studied as a tragedy in fragmentary episodes but the character does not respond historically or in a manner Aristotle's hero would do. A person at a different time and in a entirely different situation would not give the same response. The stage gives life to the

character and his circumstances breathe life into his actions and aspirations. This leaves the spectator's mind free and fills them with the power to see the naturalness of a view and be able to manipulate their world. The Alienation effect had bewildered the audience who looked it through old lens but it did free people from passivity and allowed suspicion and curiosity to unfold. It led to development of a detached mindset with which Galileo observed a swinging Chandelier. The play has contrast and contradictions. Initially it is declared, "The millennium of faith is ended, said I this is the millennium of doubt". Galileo is suspicious and warns about his own discoveries. His foreshadowing creates a contrast between the religious conviction of the catholic church and the incredulous scientific approach. Galileo's life and play is bound by this conflict.

In scene three, Galileo states, "The evidence of your own eyes is a very seductive thing." Brecht's Galileo acquaints himself with the truth and teaches that truth is ever-present if only people are willing to see it with their naked eyes. Observance is such a powerful thing that it can change the direction of one's life. There is absolutely no representation without objective and observation. Brecht's art was said to criticize politics because it did not align with the greatness of the 'ruling' power.

Galileo is presented to the audience as a devoted person with a penchant for science who spends his life researching and translating the truth for the people but is punished for it. Subsequently, he concludes, "And the worst thing is that what I know I have to tell people, like a lover, like a drunken, like a traitor," even knowing that "it is an absolute vice and leads to Disaster." No matter how people perceive the present, Galileo says "I enjoy doing my stuff" that reflects his contentment and inclination towards his work.

Alienation effect in its true and combative essence lets the society understand that it is capable of improvement. The theatre of Brecht that calls for scientific transformation makes

dialectics a source of both knowledge and entertainment. Unexpected practical advancement, prevalent uncertainty, the modality of contradiction were all parts of Epic theatre which let its audience enjoy its liveliness and ignites the passion for life and pleasure in everyone. This art fueled the art of progressive living. The performance in the Bourgeois Theatre intended a smooth flow of plot with minimum or absolutely no contradictions. They aimed to idealize everything and create harmony even if it's unreal. The characters manifested themselves as people incapable of being a change. They were casted in one block and their existence was not filled with real situations. Even if there was progression, it marked a pacifying development of character. The framework was so firm that it did not allow it to be bended and thus, wasn't realistic at all. Brecht's *Life of Galileo* dwells in the realm of realism as it portrays the transition from Bourgeois theatre to a newly found model of enlightenment and progression. While analyzing his work, it is clear that Brecht saw the State as a force that repressed the emerging spirits to preserve the hegemony of dominant class. The state apparatus' function did not aim to protect a philosophy or view of life of an individual. Brecht loudly showcases how truth was swept under the rug to prevent existential crisis. According to him, the renouncement of Galileo of his discoveries emblemized the profound disfiguration of bourgeois worldview. So, Brecht used Historicization to deliver his idea of bourgeois' possession of science and the Church possession of truth that prevented them for spreading like wildfire. They defied new inventions by employing every means to protect hegemonic order.

When literature and cognition coincide, they effect the mind of the readers without making them empathize with the character psychologically. Brecht has made use of Alienation technique immensely in the play *Mother Courage and Her Children*. It is a depiction of story of Anna Fierling, her two sons, Eliff and Swiss Cheese and her daughter Kattrin.

Brecht being a landmark in the world of theatre staunchly followed epic theatricalism and it is essentially reflected in another work *Mother Courage and Her Children*. He communicates his comprehension of reality through his characters effectively. He offers the lesson of taking a stand against the wrong and choosing to do what's right even if it's against conventions. What not to do is to allow the evil to suppress oneself. The play begins with the mentioning of the war between Protestants and Catholics in Germany that lasted for thirty years i.e from 1618 to 1648. The play is a connotation of peace and is an anti-war drama without an explicit label. There is a devastating depiction of misfortune and pain of a family set against the backdrop of a war. The play impacts the mind of the viewers so profoundly as it blatantly portrays the tragic effects of violence on the main characters of the play.

The division of play into twelve scenes contribute in forming an episodic structure. It highlights how war served as an area of profit, capitalism and business at the cost of people's lives. The narrative serves its purpose of revealing the contemporary society and its way of life. The characters are the mute spectators to their own sufferings as they are unable to resist or rebel against the social conventions. Katrin, one of the rebels who tries to announce and alert the people by beating the drum, is punished till death.

Brecht conveys that people most of the times are responsible for their own conditions. Every individual has the power to shape and transform their life at any point but it requires courage to choose new ways, new patterns and patience to dissolve the resistance. The contradiction in the character of Mother Courage allows the reader to alienate oneself and critically observe her. She neither wants her sons to be a part of the army nor wants the war to end. She does not accept that she is 'a hyena of the battlefield' but her ruthless side is revealed while dealing with the wounded Protestants attacked by Catholics. Her character carries the dual personality and complexities of

human mind which makes the reader think and relate to her to a degree that does not delude them. She anxiously wants her children to be safe but is not kind to the child rescued by Katrin. Her cursing the war yet singing its praise reveals the contradictory human nature.

Brecht placards his play for its unique design and setting. The placard demonstrates the time and place along with the details of the future action during the current episode. This notice eradicates the doubts and dilemma from the minds of the spectators regarding the uncertainty of the scene. Since they are made aware of the situation, the awareness accelerates the analysis of the old story that is displayed rather than losing oneself in the disclosed narrative. The viewers' focus ought to be on the ideas of the author. Brecht's diction and his choice of conveying his views was tricky and demands critical attention. Application of this technique can be seen in an instance when scene three begins and the placard carries the following words: "Three years later mother courage is taken prisoner along with elements of a Finnish regiment. She manages to save her daughter, likewise her covered cart, but her honest son is killed" (Brecht, 2003). 'Likewise' is not a mere adverb here. It is applied to make spectators show contempt for Mother Courage's decision of choosing her business over her family.

One of the most effectual and intellectual techniques used by Brecht is to "break the fourth wall" which allows the character to step outside to communicate with the audience, express their views, articulate the summary or sing songs. By being vocal about one's actions and choices, theatrical illusion is also shattered and the minds of the audience are left free to think about the political and social background of the play. For example, in scene seven, Mother Courage speaks to the audience like a singer and delivers: "I won't have you folk spoiling my war for me. I'm told it kills off the weak, but they're write-off in peacetime too. And war gives its people a better deal" (Brecht, 2003) This dialogue is followed by singing to make them distant and perspective.

Another theatrical technique used by Brecht is Gestus to depict the emotions within the character and the context. It creates a gap between the characters and spectators and opens their eyes to see the bigger picture of any given situation in a realistic or non-realistic way. This strategy is applied in portraying Mother Courage as being more attached to her cart than her children. Such a technique also uncovers the layers of flawed and unjust social relationship and gifts the viewer a fresh perspective to analyze the world. Gestus usually exaggerates an action or exposes the disparity in the social relations.

Brecht is known for his stage design, action, Gestus, Historicization, alienation effect and use of songs that hindered the emotional involvement of the audience, Brecht despised the concept of emotional absorption. Throughout the play, audience is made aware of the impending future—the death of Mother Courage’s children. Her character bewilders the audience as she continues to choose materialism over motherly love while her daughter Kattrin sacrifices her life to save a baby. In scene nine, Song of Solomon reveals the truth before everyone, “great virtues do little to save great men from disaster.” This explicit statement causes commotion in the intellect of an individual as it reveals the ravages of the war. But it is intended to convey the importance of making peace with the war which is what Mother Courage does, she endures its brutalities and lives.

The characters of Brecht are not self-absorbed. They are the product of their society and their actions are driven by the lessons of the contemporary world. Their world is a direct reflection of their choices. Mother Courage is one of such plays that represents this mode of thinking. Every time Mother Courage has to decide something, she makes the wrong choice and the scenes shift to more destruction of everything that is tangible and worth-living. Most importantly, she is a businesswoman whose every decision is driven by the motive of profit from war. She continues to do what society would have accepted from a businesswoman and thus, lives a unfulfilling life.

Every scene is of such great importance that it is whole in itself. Every scene is a motif connected by commentaries woven on the cloth of history. The lesson one has to learn is make changes within. To incline oneself to good, one must stop adhering to false values. Therefore, Brecht uses non-illusory and purposeful settings to bring clarity among the audience. For example, loud, intimidating music was played after a calm scene as an irony on the actions of the characters. Brecht's piece of art connects to the thread of scientific knowledge and makes a social commentary. It is on the audience to justify or decline it. He succeeds in attaining a level of aesthetics that leaves his work open for thoughts, judgments and criticism.

Conclusion

Transformation requires shedding of the old and embracing everything that is emerging. Brecht's drama is about everything and nothing. It is in an co-existing disguise, with exhilarating details of the reality yet not accurate to life. A dent is casted and the viewer watching the play in the theatre or the reader going through his drama is presented with a paradox of choice- to see the social- political situations with a new lens and change one's actions to transform one's life or to just ramble and appreciate his work. There is lesser involvement of pleasure principle and more of formulation of learning and a new belief system. What Brecht wanted while practicing this Epic Theatre, was that an analysis is constructed in the minds of his spectators along with a meditative experience. The simple exercise of examining the action while not being completely immersed in astonishment, of being curious and not getting lost in wonderland, of observing everything in solace of one's own mind while being in the company of various objects and people is what Brecht wanted his audience to learn. In his case, he used alienation effect, fractured the narrative and destroyed the fourth wall and from his audience, he expected to ponder on the issues he left

unresolved in his drama. The fragmentary narrative was the gap between for the critical analysis to take place. This unique and intricate process where the intellect and judgement peak high while reading or watching a play was pioneered to devour the old world and create a new one for the people of scientific age. The issues remain as it may and the audience is expected to evolve as it should.

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