

EPIC THEATRE AND BRECHT

**MOTHER COURAGE AND HER
CHILDREN**

**THE CAUCASIAN CHALK
CIRCLE**

EPIC THEATRE AND BRECHT	4
INTRODUCTION	4
EPIC THEATRE AND BRECHT	4
BRECHT'S GENERAL APPROACH TO THE THEATRE	5
POLITICAL BACKGROUND	5
BRECHT AND DRAMATIC THEORY – THE EPIC THEATRE	7
Historification	9
Alienation	9
Alienation techniques	10
<i>Presentation and text</i>	10
<i>Design and space</i>	12
<i>Décor and costumes</i>	13
<i>Lighting</i>	14
<i>Music</i>	15
<i>Acting techniques and style</i>	16
CONCLUSION	17
<i>MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN</i>	19
BACKGROUND	19
DISCUSSION	19
Scene 1	19
Scene 2	21
Scene 3	22
Scene 4	24
Scene 5	24
Scene 6	26
Scene 7	27
Scene 8	27
Scene 9	28
Scene 10	30
Scene 11	30

Scene 12	33
<i>THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRLE</i>	34
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	34
STRUCTURE	34
DISCUSSION OF THE EVENTS AND CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY	37
Prologue	37
Act 1	38
Act 2	40
Act 3	41
Act 4	42
Act 5	45
STRUCTURAL SYNOPSIS	46
SOURCES	48

EPIC THEATRE AND BRECHT

INTRODUCTION

The importance of Epic theatre to the history of the Western theatrical history (like and theatrical stream) cannot be studied in isolation. The characteristics, theoretical principles and the acting and presentation style are results of organic developments and counteractions against and from the previous theatrical style and/or systems. The historical, social and economic climate of the surroundings where the stream developed, had a clear influence on the stream itself, as well as other art streams.

The term “Epic theatre” has many meanings. Although this term is associated with Bertold Brecht, other artists such as Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator had influenced this theatrical style as well. These two artists (themselves coming from the German Expressionist style) had stronger political motivations in their works. Many of Brecht's ideas and techniques are derived from the work of Piscator.

The theories of Brecht usually cause some trouble. One of the misconceptions is that Brecht did not want the audience to experience any emotion when they watched the productions. This is not the case in all of his works, but before we delve into detail, let us have a look at the background of this style.

EPIC THEATRE AND BRECHT

German Epic Theatre, and especially the works of Brecht (1898 – 1956) can be divided into two main sections. The first section includes the early works of Brecht, like *Baal* (1923), *A Man's a Man* (1926) and the famous *Threepenny Opera* (1928). Brecht's early thoughts on Epic theatre come from Piscator. Piscator's influence can be seen in the strong political nature of the works. Brecht's later works also have political undercurrents, but moral issues are more important in the later works than that of politics. This is clear in works like *Mother Courage and her children* and *The Good person of Sezuan*.

The issues of social involvement and didacticism as well as the creation of an intrinsic poetic approach, is of more importance in his later works. The expansion of the theatrical frame of reality is one of Reinhardt's influences, as well as other experimental theatre streams of the early 20th century. Other influences on Brecht include the works of Frank Wedekind (*Spring awakening*) and Buchner (*Woyzeck*). The ritualistic aspects of the Elizabethan and the Greek theatre fascinated Brecht, and he often used these texts as inspiration for his own work.

BRECHT'S GENERAL APPROACH TO THE THEATRE

Brecht's approach to the theatre was formed through many years. He constantly worked on his texts, even during the rehearsal process, to ensure that the text lived up to his high standards. According to Brecht, the text was only completed once it has been performed.

We have already spoken of Epic Theatre, but what is Epic Theatre?

Epic theatre is a theatrical stream that developed in the 20th century in Germany. In this stream, the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action is no longer applicable. The Realistic theatrical conventions, such as the 4th wall, were also discarded. One of the main aims of the Epic theatre was to tell the story in a simple fashion so that the audience can be stimulated to think about the consequences of the events that they saw on stage.

This is of course not a complete description of what Epic theatre is, but before we have a closer look at the characteristics of Epic theatre, let us first consider the political and social circumstances that helped in the development of this style.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Just like the end of the Second World War created the atmosphere for the development of the Theatre of the Absurd in France, the First World War's end created a sense of disillusionment in Germany. Germany's demise in the war and the

resulting psychological situation, created the space for German Expressionism to develop. The Expressionists create a new aesthetic space and the time after the First World War also helped in the creation of a strong patriotic spirit in Germany that stimulated the meteoric rise of Nationalism and the Nazi regime in the country. This, in effect, also created the space for the Second World War and the following atrocities in the concentration camps.

Brecht's involvement as a medical officer in the First World War and the situations and events he witnessed, had a strong influence on him as a young man. He could not stand blind patriotism. He could also not stomach the Capitalist structures and the heartless drive for money it entailed. This is why the dialectic of Marxism seemed to be the acceptable political and economic system. This is why the Marxist approach is so clear in his earlier works such as *Man Is Man*.

The Marxist concept that we can see a pattern in history, as well as the class structural conflict and the proletariat that will rise as winner from the battle seemed to be the answers for Brecht. Man could actively change his fate – something that was not the case in Naturalism, Realism or even the Theatre of the Absurd. According to Marxism, all causes, results and relationships are dynamic processes and it can, because it is in a constant state of flux, be changed. It is therefore clear how these types of thoughts were used by Brecht, especially in the historicization techniques in his texts.

Definition: Marxism is a communist political and economic system that was devised by Carl Marx to act as opposition to Capitalism. One of the main components of this system is that all social classes should disappear. In Marxism, society is viewed from different categories. These categories are:

- 1) the relationship to economic and productive processes,
- 2) belief in the development of the community to pass the capitalist phase and
- 3) the revolution of the proletariat to no longer stand for the suppression and extortion of this group on economic and political levels.

Brecht thought communism was the logical solution for the economic and political problems of Europe, as well as the problems that arose from the different class structures of society.

One of the most important concepts of communism is the concept of dialectics (which comes from Hegel). This term implies a duality which are two opposing poles, but they also exist together. This duality forms the basis of the dramatic material that Brecht used in his plays.

The coexistence of opposites, the merging of thesis and antithesis, the fact that order can not be conceived without disorder – in a word, dynamic ambiguity – was for Brecht the ironic essence of drama (Harrap & Epstein, 1982,218)

Brecht used Marxist dialectic to create a unified and integrated structure and form in the text. This is derived from the belief that the content determines the structure of the play. In political terms, it means that the economic structure (such as capitalism) determines the social, political and cultural identity. The political messages of Brecht's theatre are therefore linked to the structure and form of the plays. An art form with Marxist dialectic as the foundation rejects illusion as part of that art form. Brecht saw the Aristotelian theatre as an art form that used illusion and he therefore rejected the structure of Realist theatre, as well as some aspects of Expressionism. The Marxist influence on Brecht's work can also be found in the strong didactic nature of the work.

BRECHT AND DRAMATIC THEORY – THE EPIC THEATRE

Brecht called his new theatre style Epic theatre. This is to separate it from, what he called, the dramatic theatre. Brecht found the dramatic theatre to be of no use anymore. He believed that the dramatic theatre reduced the audience members into passivity. He found the events portrayed in the dramatic theatre, as unchangeable and he wanted to illustrate through the means of Epic theatre, that change can take place.

The dramatic theatre created the ideas that everything was always the same. The representation of events in the dramatic theatre is always 'stable and unchanging'. The style of presentation and representation in the dramatic theatre, made the

audience members fall into a hypnotic trance. This trance makes it impossible for the audience members to critically think about the events that they see on stage. In the Epic theatre, the audience would no longer be passive spectators. The audience would form an important element of the production. The audience was supposed to cause and stimulate change in society. In the description that Brecht gives of Epic theatre, three aspects are of utmost importance. These are historification, alienation and the epic. We'll discuss these terms shortly, but before we can do that, it is a good idea to have a look at this table that Brecht created to distinguish the Epic from the dramatic theatre.

DRAMATIC THEATRE	EPIC THEATRE
Plot	Narrative
Implicates the spectator in a stage situation.	Turns the spectator into an observer, but
Wears down his capacity for action	Arouses his capacity for action
Provides him with sensations	Forces him to take decisions
Experience	Picture of the world
The spectator is involved in something	He is made to face something
Suggestion	Argument
Instinctive feelings are preserved	Brought to the point of recognition
The spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience	The spectator stands outside, studies
The human being is taken for granted	The human being is the object of the inquiry
He is unalterable	He is alterable and able to alter
Eyes on the finish	Eyes on the course
One scene makes another	Each scene for itself
Growth	Montage
Linear development	In curves
Evolutionary determinism	Jumps
Man as a fixed point	Man as a process
Thought determines being	Social being determines thought
Feeling	Reason

This table does not show absolute antitheses but mere shifts of accent. In a communication of fact, for instance, we may choose whether to stress the element of emotional suggestion or that of plain rational argument.

Historification

Events of the past or other times and places which is not close to the contemporary audience are used by Brecht. The “pastness” of the event must be emphasized. The audience must view the events with which they can identify or the situations which corresponds with their situations and they must think that, if they lived under those circumstances, they would try and change it. The audience must also have the feeling that change is possible.

The audience must also be able to see that their situation is different now than in the past. This is to emphasize that change is actually possible and that change has already taken place. The mistakes that are made in the production should not be made by the audience members. The past should be used as a lesson so that society can make a positive change in their communities.

Historification can also be viewed as a means of creating critical distance in the audience. This ‘making strange’ of events that seem familiar, but it is placed in another time, is a way Brecht tries to reduce the emotional reaction in the audience.

Historification is a term that can cause confusion. Just because the text shows something that takes place in the past, doesn’t imply that hisotorification is used.

Alienation

The audience should not be allowed to be swept away with their emotions. They should not identify to strongly with the characters on stage, so that they do not loose their critical distance. The opposite of identification is distance, or alienation, and this is what the production should try and achieve. The theatre makers should use al means to keep the audience apart from the events which is portrayed on stage. These

techniques are known as the alienation techniques. If the audience is kept at an emotional distance and they are not swept up by their emotions, alienation has been achieved. The simplest definition of alienation is when something recognizable is represented, but it has been made strange in some fashion. Brecht believed that if you represent the world in a strange fashion, you will stimulate the desire to change the world. Something common is therefore portrayed as something strange.

The purpose of alienation is to stimulate the audience's critical capacity so that they can become involved in the changing and development of society. The idea that the audience must not be emotionally involved in the production is correct, but only in the earlier works of Brecht. He later discarded these ideas, since it is not possible to stimulate critical thinking without emotional responses.

Alienation techniques

Historification can be seen as an alienation technique, because the portrayal of the events from the past are removed from the direct experiences of the audience. This was not the only alienation technique that Brecht used. Alienation techniques can be found in the representation of the text on stage, the use of music, the text itself, the design and even the approach to acting and characterization. All these elements are combined to constantly remind the audience that they are sitting in a theatre, witnessing the representation of specific events.

In the earlier theoretical works by Brecht, he mentions that the theatre should be used like a lecture hall, but also like a circus. He uses these examples, because the presence of the audience is not ignored in these situations. The enjoyment that the audience should receive from the theatre, should be similar to the enjoyment a scientist has when he has made a breakthrough with his research and found something new.

Presentation and text

Brecht, with the use of the epic structure in his plays, breaks the continual flow of the story as it is found in the dramatic theatre. Brecht creates loose episodes that can function as separate entities. Each of these episodes has a name that can function as a

summary of the episode. In the production, the name of the episode would be projected on a screen or be placed on a placard so that the audience can read it. The audience then knows what would happen in the particular episode. This would result that the building of tension as we find in the dramatic theatre, is not present and the audience is not drawn into the events on stage.

Brecht also does not use the dramatic theatre text convention of gradual introduction of characters or situations. He would directly introduce the characters or situations by projecting the names of the characters or situations on the screens on stage. Another way he would introduce the characters, would be to use a narrator to directly introduce the characters to the situation. The loose episodes would often form a contradiction or contrast with the previous scene. This looser dramatic structure is an element from the Expressionistic theatre that Brecht adopted. The audience's attention is focused on the social implications of the events on stage and not the story, due to the general lack of a central storyline. Brecht breaks the story line by adding subplots to the story. An example of this can be found in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Just as the one story starts to develop and is building towards a climax, Brecht introduces another new story. The use of music is another technique Brecht uses to interrupt the flow of the story and to ensure that the audience is not drawn into the events. Brecht also uses language itself as a means to create alienation. His use of language is simple and direct, but sometimes he uses poetic language to create a contrast with longer, prose like scenes. The characters' use of language often can be 'flat' or banal and the use of regional language is also found.

Brecht also achieves alienation through the use of humor and irony. He uses humor and irony in places where it usually would not be seen as dramatically appropriate. Since we are reading the translations of the texts, many of the finer details of the texts have gone missing. If we read the original German, we would be able to trace the sources of the language and text. This includes the use of Southern German dialects, anti-metaphorical poetry of color and texture, concrete images as found with the works of *Poètes Maudits*-writers such as Verlaine and Rimbaud, jargon, sentence structures from the Bible and other exotic expressions. All these elements help to destroy the use of language as we find it in the Realistic Theatre.

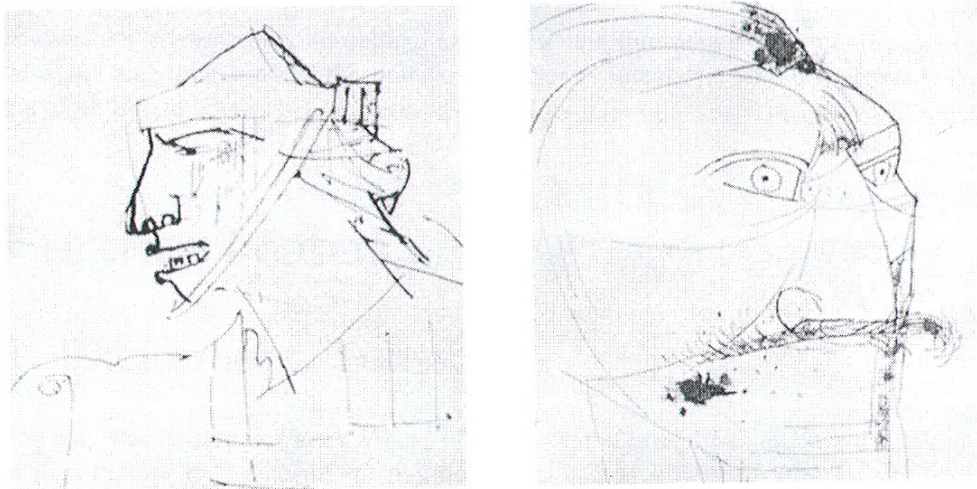
Brecht's characterization also creates alienation. He does not create rounded characters. Many of his characters do not even have names, but they are known by their rank or position in society. These characters are then seen as character types. Since they are portrayed as types in stead of characters, we can see their development through the text.

Design and space

Brecht used projections not just to flash the names of the scenes on the screens, but the projections were also used as a design element and for décor. The background of a scene could be projected on the back of the stage. Otherwise, the projections could be placed on a half-curtain during a scene. The projections were sometimes also intended to give a different perspective on the events that was portrayed on stage. The design on stage was supposed to be an independent contribution to the background of the text. Maps could, as an example, be projected in a performance of *Mother Courage*. The stage design should be used to alienate the other elements of the texts.

Other non-literary elements could also be used to alienate the audience. These elements had to be autonomous. They had to form dialectics with the text – they must form a contrapuntal theme with the text.

Two Grusinian soldiers.



*The original designs for the masks for the soldiers in The Caucasian Chalk Circle.
Mark the distortion of proportion.*



Above: The grotesque costumes from Brecht's earlier plays. Mark the difference and distortion of proportions.

Décor and costumes

The décor should not represent the reality outside the theatre. It must only be a suggestive presentation of a particular time and place. In certain cases the narrator would tell the audience where the characters are. This is not always the case and exceptions can be found. The farmhouse in *Mother Courage* is an example of this. It should be a properly built piece of décor, since Kattrin is to climb on the roof. The décor must also be used to create other spaces in a short time. This is only possible since the décor is not supposed to have too much detail. On the background cloths or cycloramas, two-dimensional figures are painted. No illusion of depth or perspective is necessary. The audience would then not be fooled to think that it is real action that is taking place on stage, or that it is the reality that is represented. Minimal pieces of décor were used and these pieces had to be multi-functional.

Brecht often made the costumes and décor for the shows grotesque. As an example, the masks for the soldiers in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* had large bulging eyes. He

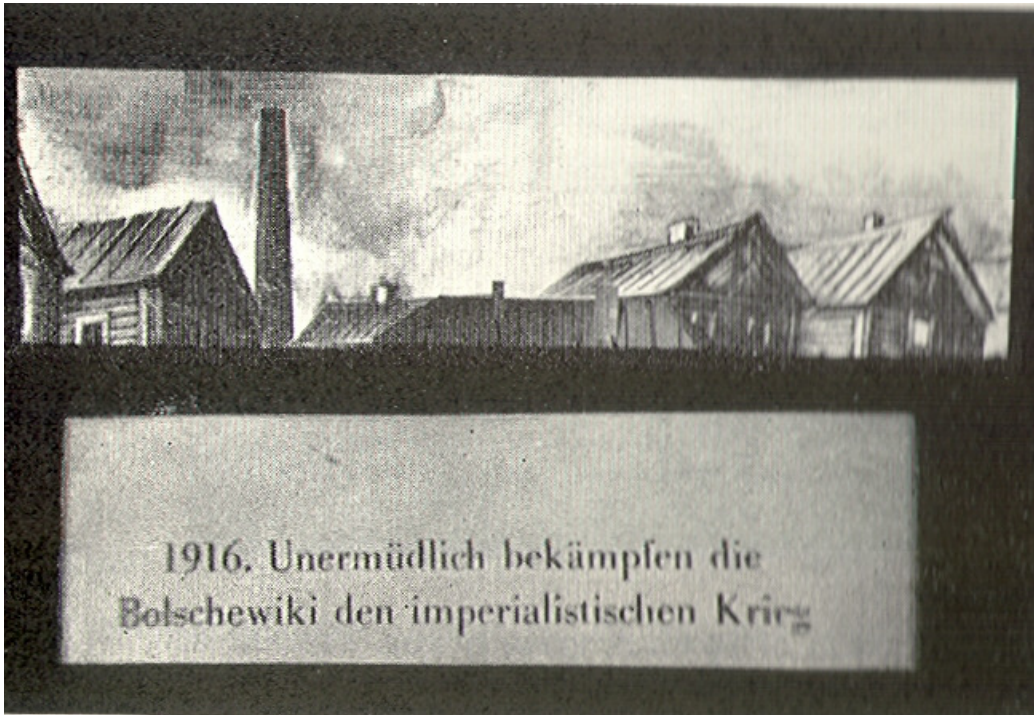
also played around with different proportions on stage to distort the bodies of the actors playing the parts. This included the use of stilts and stuffing various parts of the actors' costume. Makeup was only used to illustrate a specific state of the characters, as was found in his production of *Henry IV*, where the soldiers' faces were painted white to show fear and anxiety.

The décor was also not used to hide the stage equipment. The workings of the stage mechanisms were visible so that the audience cannot forget that they are seated in the theatre. A gramophone that was used for sound effects and that was visible on stage, was removed by Brecht, since Brecht believed it formed a focus point that took the attention away from the important actions on stage. We can then deduce that the elements were only visible if it did not detract attention from the main message of the play. The scene changes were often done in full view of the audience. The curtains were not drawn to hide it from the audience. When a curtain was used, a half-curtain would have been sufficient.

Lighting

Lighting was not used to create an atmosphere in the Epic theatre. The lights itself was visible for the audience. The source of light was therefore visible. This also emphasized the theatrical aspects of the performance. It is important to note that this was no longer the case in the performance of the Berliner Ensemble. Brecht would use other techniques to illustrate the state of the events on stage. If a scene was to show that it is nighttime, Brecht would use Elizabethan theatrical conventions to point this out. The actor would come on stage carrying a torch and playing the scene in very harsh, strong lighting. The text would also point out the fact that it is night. No illusion of night was created through the use of lights.

In the spirit of the theory of Brecht that the audience should not be ignored, Brecht left the auditorium lights on during the performance. The audience is visible for each other and for the actors. The collective nature of the audience and the performers were emphasized by this. The audience was also encouraged to smoke and drink in the performance that created an atmosphere where they could encourage the actors.



Above: The use of projections on the screens in Brecht's production of Die Mutter.

Music

The use of music in the epic theatre differs from the use of music in other theatre forms such as the opera and the musical. Music is often used to break the flow and/or development of a particular scene or the play in general. This break gives the audience the opportunity to reflect on what they just witnessed. The use of music was also applied to break the emotional involvement of the audience. The music had to create a contrast to the content of the words or the play. The music and lyrics of the song would not correlate.

The songs are also introduced by a narrator or the title of the song would be projected on the screen on stage. A change of lighting could also be found when a song starts. The source of the music should also be visible for the audience. The orchestra of musicians is not placed in the orchestra pit, but is placed on stage in full view of the audience. Just like we found the two columns to illustrate the difference between dramatic and epic theatre, Brecht also created two columns to illustrate the difference between the use of music in dramatic opera and epic theatre. Once again it is

necessary to point out that these two columns are not antitheses. It only indicates a change of emphasis between the two approaches.

DRAMATIC OPERA	EPIC OPERA
The music dishes up	The music communicates
Music which heightens the text	Music which sets for the text
Music which proclaims the text	Music which takes the text for granted
Music which illustrates	Music which takes up a position
Music which paints the psychological situation	Music which gives attitude.

Acting techniques and style

If the audience is not allowed to identify with the characters, the actors should also remain at a critical distance from the characters they have to show. The new theatrical style Brecht created had to develop a new acting style as well.

Brecht did not expect his actors to create a rounded character in the rehearsal process or performance. The psychologically driven depth of the realist theatre's characters or the self-focused emotional world of the Expressionistic theatre was not to be founded in the Epic theatre. The actor only had to show his character to the audience. This does not imply that when the characters gets agitated, the actor should remain detached. It only implies that the characters' and the actors' feelings should not be the same. This would stop the audience from having the same emotions of the characters.

Brecht used different exercises to help and describe these ideas to the actor. One of the images he used was to tell the actor to act like he is demonstrating something to the audience. The character should only be quoted on stage. This quoting should only entail the restricted and most relevant aspects of the character to illustrate the situation. The character and the actor then remain separate entities the whole time. The actor achieves this by staying relaxed the whole time, even though the character is experiencing stress or tension. Brecht states:

Even if playing one possessed, the actor must not appear possessed himself:
how else could the spectators find out what it is that possesses the possessed?

The distance of alienation that is created through the acting would then emphasize the content of the specific scene. This creates the opportunity where the audience can critically think about the cause and effect of the events that they just witnessed.

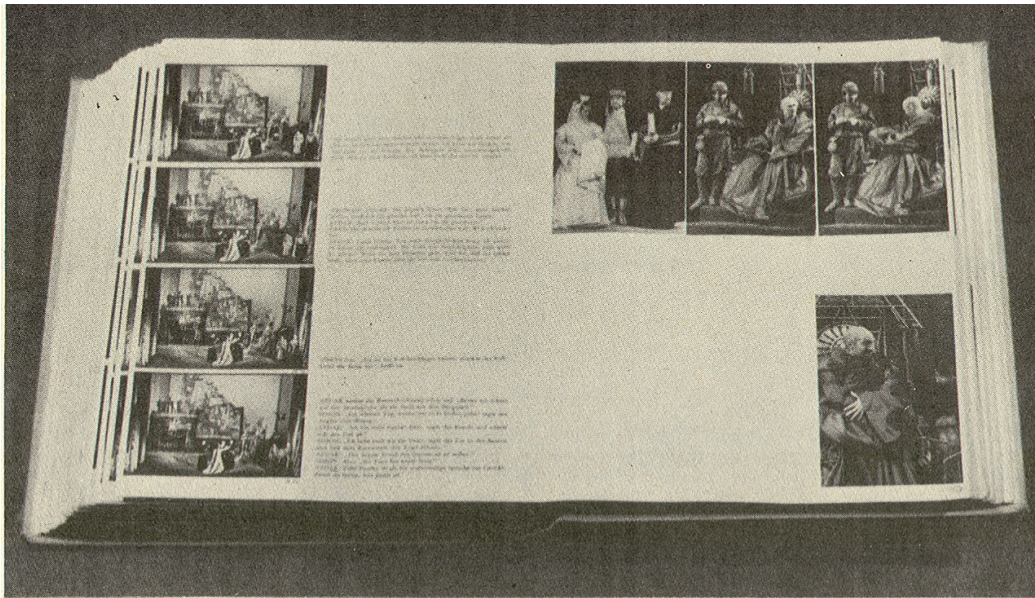
The actor should also suggest in his acting that he already knows what the character is going to do. The actor must remain rational and his decision should be crystal clear and readable for the audience.

Brecht also wrote extensively on the concept of *gestus* that refers to the idea of acting in the Epic theatre. It is a complex concept, but a simple explanation is that *gestus* is an exterior manifestation of the social relationship in connection to the voice and physicality of the actor when performing a part. It is a clear and stylized expression that illustrates the relationship and action between characters as well as the internal landscape of the characters which is then manifested on the exterior of the actor. Each scene will have a basic *gestus* and the actions and reactions of the characters form the basic units of the Epic theatre.

CONCLUSION

All these elements that we have discussed now are only the theory. You must be able to identify these different elements in the text that you will study for the exam. We must remember that Brecht's theory was formed through many years and underwent various changes, and not all the elements are necessarily present in every text. The most important aspects in connection to the theory remain historicization, alienation and the aspects pertaining to the epic structure of the plays. Many of these elements we can only find in the performance of the text itself. When you read your text, make sure that you use your imagination to try and create an image in your mind of the events and how it can possibly be staged. Brecht created "model books" of his productions where every step of the production was documented. The books could be used for staging productions of the texts in other places and times outside the Berliner

Ensemble, the company Brecht and Helene Weigel founded with the funding from the East-German government.



Above: An example of Brecht's Model book. This particular book is of the production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle.

MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN

BACKGROUND

The text “Mother Courage and her children” was written between 1938 and 1939. This play was performed numerous times in Germany and across the world, but it is the iconic performance of Helene Weigel as Mother Courage in the Berliner Ensemble’s performance with Brecht as director, that the character of Mother Courage and the play became internationally known and loved.

DISCUSSION

Scene 1

The opening scene and the discussion between the two soldiers give us the context of the play for the rest of the play. It is a time of war and everything is stripped and barren. It is the people at the bottom of society’s ladder who suffer the most because of the consequences of the war. There is no romanticism involved in the representation of the war or the particular situation. The placards show us the time and the place, but this can be any war during any time and place. Before we as audience member become too emotionally involved in the stories and difficulties of the two soldiers, Mother Courage and her children enter the stage with her wagon singing a song. This song immediately alienates the audience. The text/lyrics of the song bombard us with a different image and message of what we have just witnessed. Mother Courage is advertising her goods in a truly capitalist fashion. The first image we have of Mother Courage is that of a shrewd businesswoman. She is called Courage, not because of the courage, but because of her greed and eagerness to do business. It is this eagerness to make a sale that will cause her and her children’s downfall. The irony, which is a very important aspect in the text, is very evident in this scene.

The irony that we find in the text can also function as an alienation technique, since the irony will take on ridiculous proportions in the text. Courage is making a living from the war, but she does not want to sacrifice anything to the war, especially not her children. Her eagerness to make a sale results in the loss of her first child. With the



Above: Helene Weigel (Brecht's wife) as Mother Courage. Here we see her as a shrewd business woman.

drawing of the crosses on the paper and the drawing of the lots, we already get the idea that Courage is going to lose all her children. Here we have the integral duality of Mother Courage which will form the backbone of the play. We also see Mother

Courage's ability to continue after a setback. She is always on the go and moving forward. This is a characteristic we both admire and pity in the character.

The irony is strengthened in the dialogue of Katrin creates a noise to notify Courage the Eilif is gone.

Mother Courage: All right, Katrin, all right. Sergeant's just paying. (*Bites the half-florin.*) I got no faith in any kind of money. Burnt child, that's me, sergeant. This coin's good, though. And now let's get moving. Where's Eilif.

Although Courage is a "burnt child", she will burn herself time and time again without learning a lesson. Her infatuation with money causes her to lose her first son. This scene functions as a foreshadowing of the events which will still take place in the text. The audience gets an idea of what will follow and they can prepare themselves for it. A distance is created between the audience and the event of the play.

Scene 2

This scene delivers very strong commentary on the actions of war. We do not see any big battles, but we do hear how Eilif stole cattle. This is a very important action, because he is awarded for it. It is the army that awards him for "bravery". The irony is completed later in the text since he is put to death for exactly the same action. He was put to death, because the cattle theft was not during wartime. We are once again confronted with the duality of the characters. Eilif steals food to feed a hungry army, but in the honorable deed, he commits a terrible deed. The farmers and peasants lose their source of food. If it wasn't wartime, this deed would not have been necessary in the first case. The corrupt and rotten nature of the army is portrayed in the character of the general. He is a loud drunkard and not even aware of what is going on around him. Mother Courage's comments on his success as general are quite fitting.

The elements of alienation that we find in this scene, is very clear. The stage is divided in two: the tent of the general and the cook's space on the other side. The two spaces create a juxtaposition when the spaces are compared. It illustrates the two realities; that of the poor and the rich. If we look closer we see that both of these

spaces are corrupt and rotten. Courage cheats the peasants out of a capon, and Eilif steals cattle. In the context of the war, these actions are acceptable. War has its own sets of rules, its own order and systems.

Eilif's song and dance is another alienation technique. We are confronted with grotesque irony. Eilif dances whilst Courage is plucking the feathers from the capon. This is done whilst the lyrics of the song state that war has no winners. Everybody loses in a war.

Another irony that we find in this scene is where Courage slaps Eilif. She doesn't slap him because she does not approve of him stealing the cattle; she slaps him because he endangered himself. If we think how Courage got her name, the slap is ironic, because she did exactly the same type of thing. The honorability of both these actions should be called into question.

Scene 3

This is one of the most important scenes of the play. We once again have strong critique on the nature of war, but it is not as emotionally charged as the scene with the death of Katrin. When the scene begins, the characters are comfortable with their surroundings. The canon is being used as a place to dry laundry. We find different themes in this scene. These themes cannot be studied in isolation because the themes support each other. The most important elements in this scene are:

- 1) the number three
- 2) religious symbolism
- 3) betrayal and denial
- 4) the characters are caught in a situation where they can do nothing, or they don't want to change their surroundings.

The central theme of this scene can be summarized as family versus war. The two spaces, that of war and the family, cannot be separated. Mother Courage's life is so intertwined with that of the war that she hangs her laundry on the canon. She tries to make a living for her and her family in the war, but the war as a supplier for the family becomes the destroyer of the family. We see this when Swiss Cheese loses his life at the end of the scene. Swiss Cheese's death illustrates the main theme of the

text: the little people cannot make a profit in a war that is fought for the prosperity of the authorities. The unimportant people are set in situations where they are caught between two impossible situations. Courage tries to keep the wagon in her negotiations to try and free Swiss Cheese. If she loses the wagon, she and Katrin will die of hunger.

Below: Mother Courage waits for Yvette to return with new of the son.



Scene 4

This short scene creates a contrast with the previous scene. The main theme is once again the war. We see Courage with less fire as in the previous scenes. We almost get the idea that the death of her son changed her, but her complaints are based in capitalistic issues and not from personal grief. The soldiers destroyed her goods that she wanted to sell. It would not be fair to judge Courage. Just like with the death of her son, she and her daughter must survive as well. She must think of their wellbeing as well. It is ironic that she will rather complain about the destruction of her goods than complain about the unjust death of the son.

In the song that she sings to the angry soldier, we hear about her aspirations when she was still young. Her views have changed considerably. She becomes an accomplice in the war. She tells the soldier to stay and complain, but only if he is angry enough. He swears at her and leaves the stage. She also decides not to complain. It is here where the audience's critical distance is of importance. The audience must realize that these circumstances are not acceptable. They must believe that they will be able to change the circumstances if they were caught in a similar situation.

This scene, just like the previous scene, is a short scene. It does not help in the development of the story. The scene functions as a type of parable that is visually presented to the audience. We see Courage where she has no longer the ability or the courage to try and change her situation. The war took her first child and her ability or reason to fight injustice. She becomes one of the group. She realizes that her complaints will have no effect on her situation, so she does not even try to say or do something. This is exactly the opposite of what Brecht wants the audience to do. If the audience's complaints will make a difference, then it is their duty to complain.

Scene 5

We see the effect of the war on the 'little' people. Courage is still doing business and the soldiers are supporting her bar, but they are not always able to pay the bill. The soldiers plundered the town Magdeburg after the particularly bloody battle of Tilly. They are like vultures and they are unhappy because the general didn't allow them to

continue with the plundering. It is perhaps the soldiers that plunder during the time of war, but Courage is just as guilty. She takes the fur coat from the soldier. She stole it and she takes it. She doesn't care what the source of her riches are, she just doesn't want to lose anything.

We also see the effects of the war with the injured peasant family. They were not even part of the battle. They just wanted to protect their possessions – their farm and house – so that they don't die of hunger and that they can look after themselves. The issues of religion are not important here. This is ironic, since religion is the main cause of this particular war. Religion means nothing to them. They just want to survive. They become the collateral damage of an ideology that has nothing to do with them. The irony is very clear: the soldiers drink and the peasants die.

Courage appears to feel nothing for the injured. She will not allow them to make bandages of her shirts. At the end she gives in. Courage's loss cannot be compared to the loss of lives and possessions of the peasants. Her reason for not wanting to assist the peasants was that she will go under on the long run. The irony is that she will lose almost everything, not just financially, but her children will die and she will be spiritually poor. Her drive to survive will become her downfall.

In this scene we see Kattrin's good nature. This forms the foundation for her heroic actions later in the play that cause her death. When Kattrin saves the baby, we see that she is unselfish, and her wish to have a baby of her own. This is important, since Courage has promised her she can marry once the war is over. This becomes a driving force for Kattrin, but we see her surrendering this ambition after her face is maimed in a later scene. Kattrin is so passionate that she is willing to threaten Courage with a plank because Courage does not want to cooperate.

At the end of the scene both Courage and Kattrin has something they both want. Kattrin has the baby and Courage has the fur coat. In the original production of the text, the two characters were placed at opposite sides of the stage and both held their precious objects aloft. This illustrated the contrast between the two characters.

Scene 6

The conversation around the game and the taking stock of Courage focuses on the death of Tilly and the war. The irony of the general's death is illustrated. He was shot by accident. He rode in the wrong direction and ended up at the front of the battle. His death is seen as a tragedy, but all the soldiers that die at the front of the battle do not receive a hero's burial. His death, whether or not you see it as a tragedy, is just as futile as any death in a war.

Courage depends on the war for her survival. She does not want the war to end. With this in mind, it is ironic that she curses the war at the end of the scene. She only wants to get her remaining children through the war, something she will not be able to do.

The physical or bodily aspects are also emphasized in this scene. The Chaplain wants to start a more physical relationship with Courage. The sexual aspects are being hinted at. We can even see it in Katrin. She has to wait for the war to end before she can get a husband. That is why she is so distraught when she hears the war will probably continue for a very long time.

After Katrin comes back from her job to go and fetch goods and she was brutally attacked, Courage tries to console her by giving her Yvette's red shoes. The sexual connotation with the red shoes is clear, especially because Yvette is a prostitute. When Katrin leaves the red shoes, it shows us that she realizes that she will never get a husband because of her scarred face.

Other hints about Katrin's sexuality are made by Courage when she insinuates that Katrin was raped when she was young and another night when she did not come home. Katrin's sexual awakening or drive is not based on pleasure. Her drive lies in the fact that she wants children. The audience's sympathy lies with Katrin – a type of sympathy that Brecht develops quite thoroughly. With Katrin, the audience never has a critical distance.

Scene 7

The first line of this scene is in direct contrast with the last line of the previous scene. The only reason for Courage's joy is the prosperity of her business. The attack on Kattrin, Swiss Cheese's death and Eilif's absence is forgotten. We see Kattrin and Chaplain pulling the wagon. All this show how easily Courage can forget about the terrible things the war has caused if the war looks after her business. She has a necklace of silver coins around her neck and in Brecht's performance; he made her wear rings as well. This image of Courage is in direct contrast with the Courage at the end of the play where we see her pulling her wagon alone.

Scene 8

The contrast between rich and poor and the results of the war on the lower classes of society comes to the front again in this scene. The man and the woman try to sell their beds so that they can pay their tax; tax that will feed the war again. The bells that ring indicate that the war is finished. This implies that Courage's business is finished as well. Although she mentions that she is ruined, her thoughts are with her children. She thinks about Swiss Cheese and she is happy with the thought that she will see Eilif again. With this short section, Brecht creates sympathy with the character. This is necessary so that the irony of Eilif's death later in the scene will be stronger. Even the imminent demise of Courage's business creates some sense of sympathy.

When Cook enters we first think that he is flirting with Courage, but he is broke and has nowhere to go. He immediately causes problems between Chaplain and Courage. In this fight between Courage and Chaplain, we learn about Courage and Chaplain's existence through the war:

Courage: My goods ain't old junk but what I lives by, and you too up to now.

Chaplain: Off war, in other words. Aha.

Eilif's return shows the ridiculous nature of war once again. He is caught for exactly the same type of behavior that gave him military glory. When he stole cattle earlier in the play, he was a hero, but now that he stole cattle in peace time, he is a criminal. The war – especially in connection to misdeeds of peacetime – creates double standards. It should not matter whether it is peace or wartime. These types of actions

should always be condemned. We cannot blame Eilif for his actions. He is victim of the war and the situation that he has to deal with because of the war. Although the Cook says he was stupid to take the cattle, Eilif's reply was that he would have been dead long ago if he didn't steal food.

If the soldiers were paid what they were suppose to get, then it would not have been necessary for the soldiers to plunder and steal. War and peace creates impossible situations for the characters and they will never escape it. When Eilif exits, the war starts up again. The peace was, just as Chaplain had said it would be. With the eruption of the war, we hope that Eilif would not be shot. Cook tries to hide the truth from Courage by not telling her that Eilif will be killed shortly. It is possible that he perhaps had the hope that Eilif would survive. This knowledge becomes dramatic irony when Courage state that the war will not take Eilif away from her.

It was not the war that took Eilif away from her – it was peace. Courage doesn't know that her son is dead. She was busy with her business once again. She will never know of her child's death, so her dependence on the war is therefore not a problem for her.

The only person that profits from the war is Yvette Pottier. She was a prostitute at the beginning of the play, but she is much fatter when we see her in this scene. She married a rich man and is no longer part of the lowest social class. She also yells at the man she was once in love with and says he is a lower class animal. She used her body to get what she has now. Brecht said about Yvette: she sold her body and got a good price for it. Now that she is rich, she can still not get what she wants and that is Cook's love.

Scene 9

The deterioration in Courage and her circumstances are becoming clearer. The state of the wagon gets worse and the winter came early and is particularly harsh. Courage and Cook are dressed in sheepskins. This is a far cry from the jewelry and necklace of the Scene 7. They don't have food and they must beg a pastor's house. Just like the war caused Courage's business prosper, it also caused its downfall. It is under

these harsh circumstances that Cook tells Courage that he inherited a small boarding



Above: Kattrin eavesdropping.

house in Utrecht and that he is going to go back there. Nobody has anything left, including Courage. The war has taken everything and Courage is giving up. She will go with Cook to run the boarding house but Cook doesn't want Kattrin to go with them. If they leave Kattrin, she will die. She can't care for herself. Courage has to make a decision. She chooses to stay with Kattrin. This decision gives the audience a chance to like Courage a bit more. In this scene we learn about the characteristics of Cook, Courage and Kattrin. Kattrin is willing to run away so that Cook and Courage can make a living without her.

It is easy to describe Cook as selfish and brutal. This is not the case, although it may appear to be that way. His actions are not that different from Courage's action earlier in the play. He is also thinking about his own survival even if it means the downfall or detriment of the other characters. Cook's motive to not want to take Kattrin with them is clear. Kattrin is maimed and the clients of a small boarding house would not like to see such a person. That would of course be bad for business and it will hurt his business. Cook's actions are not humane. The wartime and situation is not humane and if you want to be humane in wartime, it might mean your own death.

Courage, who generally would jump at a bargain, acts with a heart and a conscience. It would have been easier to get rid of Kattrin, but she doesn't. She discards Cook's clothes from the wagon. Her love (or acceptance of responsibility for Kattrin) weighs heavier than her own welfare. Still Courage says she came back for the wagon and not for Kattrin, but we know her too well to realize that she will not come back for a dilapidated wagon that is worth nothing in comparison with the luxury of a boarding house.

Kattrin eavesdropped the conversation between Cook and Courage. She is, understandably, upset, but she decides to run away so that Courage can go to Utrecht. Her chance of survival is slim. It is winter, she has very little belongings and she is mute. Her prospects look bleak. Courage says that compassion is her soft spot. It is out of this compassion that she wants to run away so that she doesn't become a burden for Courage. It is also this compassion that she will be killed.

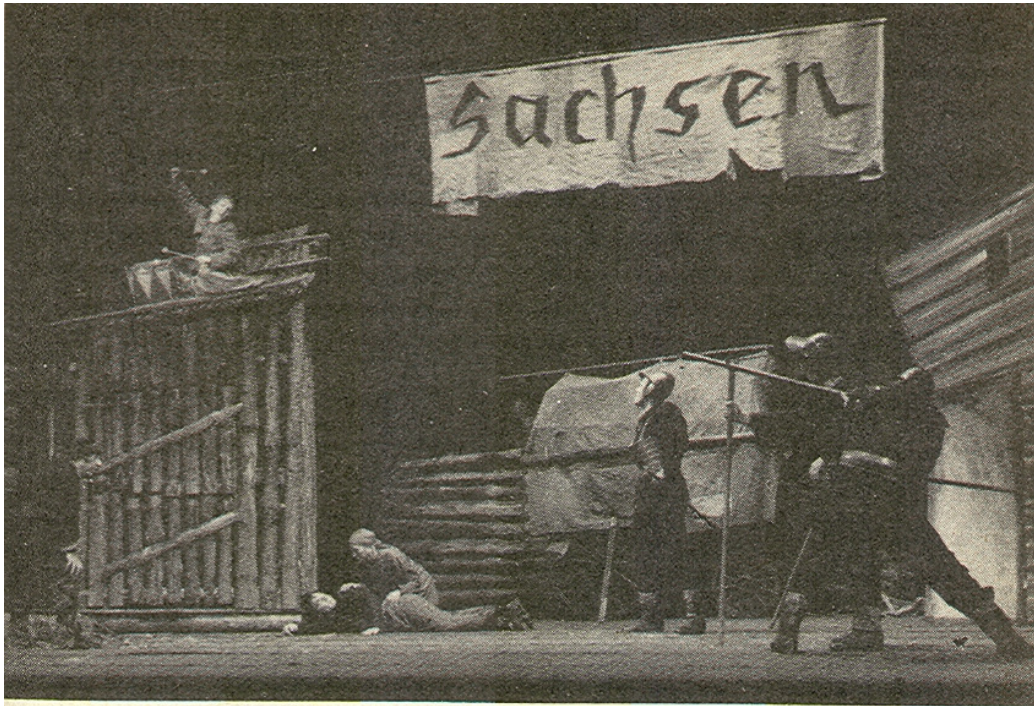
Scene 10

This short scene points to the lack of everything that is sung about in the song. In the first verse, we hear of a rose and a garden. Courage has no garden. She doesn't have a house. The rose also points to the end of winter, but for Courage and Kattrin there is no end to the winter. There are no roses to show for their hard work. She has nothing to show for all her years of toil, except a maimed, mute daughter.

Courage doesn't have a roof over her head to protect her from the winter. She only has a dilapidated wagon as a house. Courage and Kattrin says nothing in this scene. The questions and thoughts in their heads are the main concern of this scene: what if it was different? How am I going to escape this situation?

Scene 11

For the whole play up till now we have only seen the results of the war, but at the beginning of this scene we see the soldiers in action and later on in this scene we also witness brutal violence. The soldiers will be cunning to gather the information that they want. The young farmer is willing to part with his life to protect the information and as an issue of belief, but he is not willing to part with his cattle. The cattle is of



Above: Kattrin trying to wake the city.

more importance, since the cattle will provide for the rest of his family. Without the cattle they might all die as well. Religion and belief does not provide food for a family. Courage is nowhere to be seen. She is busy doing business again.

The remaining members of the farmer family do nothing to alert the city dwellers that the soldiers are on their way. Kattrin's compassion for the young children forces her into action. She is mute, but she makes a noise to wake the city. She realizes that her action will cause her death. It is funny that she does not start to beat the drum until the farmers mention the young children. Her mother is in the city but it is only the thought of the children that force her to do something. This is a strong antithesis to the farmer family. They pray, but she actually does something useful.

When the soldiers return, the farmer family turns on Kattrin. Their own necks are more important than the lives of the people of a whole city. Even the young farmer, that was willing to die for his religious beliefs, joins his religious enemies to try and get Kattrin to stop making the noise. They start to destroy Courage's wagon to get Kattrin to stop. This is not effective. The young farmer then changes his mind again and this causes his death. This death is a hero's death because he died for the greater

good of the community. Katrin's death is also an honorable and hero's death. One thing that we can deduce from this scene is, it doesn't matter how honorable your intentions are. Action is important.

This scene is often classified as the emotional highlight of the play. Courage loses her last child. Even the comic reaction of the soldiers and the farmer family to try and shut Katrin up cannot act as enough alienation to reduce the emotional impact of Katrin's death.



Above: Mother Courage at the end of the play. Alone and with nothing left, but still she carries on.

Scene 12

This scene also has the potential to be emotionally charged, especially when Courage sings the lullaby to the corpse of Kattrin. Just when we start to develop sympathy for Courage and her situation, we hear that she does not want to accept the death of Kattrin. Her line: “better if you’d not told her now’t about your brother-in-law’s kids” is an echo from her prophetic word that stated that Kattrin’s compassion will be her downfall.

Even in this emotionally charged situation, Courage is doing business again. She pays for her daughter’s funeral. There is an irony present again. Kattrin’s actions saved a whole city and caused her own death. Still, even though she can be seen as a hero, she will be buried like a pauper. There are no pomp and ceremonies for her funeral. Her own mother will not even attend her funeral.

Courage must leave to go and do business again. She’ll go and search for her other child, Eilif. The dramatic irony that Eilif is already dead and Courage doesn’t know about it, has the potential to create sympathy for her character, but it is balanced with Courage’s motive and force to go on living. Although it might seem harsh that Courage goes on without being at Kattrin’s funeral, nothing can be done to the situation. Kattrin and dead and Courage is alive. She must go on. She will pull her dilapidated wagon. She will try and make a living.

THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRLE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The *Caucasian Chalk Circle* is seen of one of Brecht's masterpieces. It is also the last of his major works. Apart from the strange structure of the play, the audience gets to know some of the funniest and touching characters that created. The text is also strange in comparison to Brecht's other works in the sense that this play has a happy ending. Gruscha's problems are solved, including the marriage to Jussup that is dissolved and she gets to keep the child.

The communist political philosophy is very clear in the text. We can see this in the prologue already. The group that can work in the most productive way with the piece of land, will receive it. This is the group that will word effectively with the land so that the other groups can also benefit from it. The issue is dealt with in an almost impersonal fashion, with no or little regard for the history of the country. The best option for the biggest amount of people will determine the outcome.

The secularized version of the Jesus Christ history can also be found in the text, as well as other religious matters, even although it is twisted and adapted. The communist morale allows the secularized versions of Bible stories. The story of the Chalk Circle, although it is a Chinese story, is very similar to the story of Solomon that wanted to cut a child in half to see who the real mother of the child is. The mother would rather surrender her child than see someone hurt the child. It is also typical of Brecht to adapt a well known story to fit his own agenda. In this case the agenda that Brecht had was the communist agenda. Gruscha is not the biological mother of the child, but she deserves to get the child.

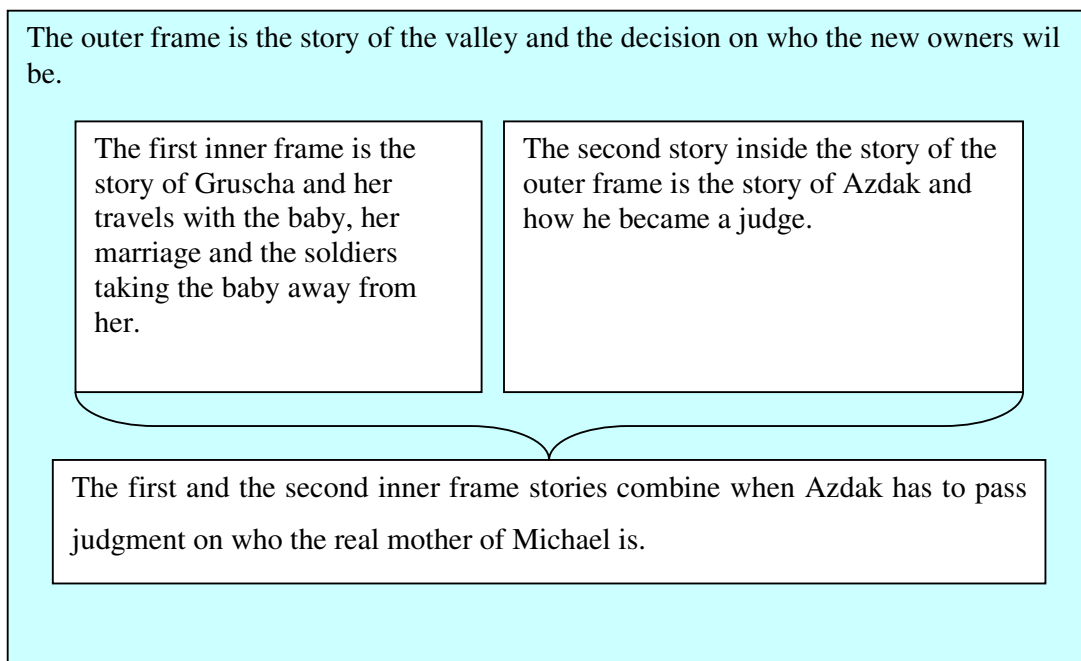
STRUCTURE

With the first reading of the play it is already clear that the structure of the play does not fit into the original concept of the structure of Realist theatre. The structure is already being used as an alienation technique. The play can be divided into three

different sections. The first story is the story of the valley and the allocation of the new owners of the valley. This issue is then debated in the prologue of the play. At the end of the prologue, when a quick and peaceful decision has been made, the entertainment for the evening in the form of a singer that will tell the story of the chalk circle, presents the second part of the story. This forms the second part and the biggest bulk of the play.

When the story of Michael and Gruscha develops toward a climax, it is disrupted by the inclusion of a new story. This new story also brings in a new character, Azdak. We then see how Azdak became a judge. At the end of the play all three stories are tied together with the song of the singer.

We are dealing here with metatheatrical aspects. The simplest definition of metatheatre is to say it is a show inside a show. If we then have to give a graphic example of the structure of the play, we will notice that one story is lying inside another story.



Usually the metatheatrical aspects in a performance only constitute a reasonably small part of the performance. In the case of Chalk Circle it is not the case, since the metatheatrical aspect takes up most of the performance.

The metatheatrical aspects that Brecht uses in the text can also be seen as an alienation technique. In the first instance we can say that the story of the valley is driven to a climax in the prologue. The prologue, which is traditionally used to give the time and context of the play, and the events of the prologue become a side affair. Brecht uses the narrator as a link between the events of the prologue and the stories being told in the inner frame of the narration. The narrator is then communicating the story of Gruscha and Azdak not just to the audience which is on stage, he tells the story to the audience in the auditorium as well. The use of a prologue and a narrator is also a metatheatrical technique, but it constantly reminds us that we are watching a play.

Other metatheatrical aspects that Brecht apply in this play, is the games that the children play. In this case we see an already familiar story being played out again. It also gives Brecht the opportunity to show a different perspective on the same events. The irony that we find in this scene, because Michael is the son of the governor, is quite telling.

When the story of Gruscha and Michael speeds toward a climax, the story is suspended. The new story is that of Azdak, and this story becomes the new main focus of the production. It is only later when Gruscha appears before Azdak that the two stories combine. The suspension of the story of Gruscha prohibits the audience from falling into a hypnotic state with the story of Gruscha. The critical distance of the audience should remain intact during the whole production.

The events which follow the prologue is divided into separate episodes or scenes that can function independently. This is no strange thing for Brecht and it functions in the same way as all the other independent scenes of other plays function. The looser structure of the scenes through the use of the narrator means that each scene has its own significance. They are not just there to form a part of the whole.

A closer look at the structure sees the play as consisting of a prologue and five acts. Brecht did not call the acts, but I will call them acts, to refer to the bigger division of the play, since the acts are divided into smaller scenes. The text consists for the greater part of prose. There is also a narrating choir of 4 to 5 singers. The songs

comprises of non-rhyming, irregular verse. There are 12 songs of which 4 are sung by singers. The acts can be divided into smaller logical units of scenes that summarize the events of the play.

DISCUSSION OF THE EVENTS AND CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

One of the best ways to analyze the characters is to look at their actions in the play. With Brecht's characters, their actions and the results of their actions are so closely linked that it is sometimes difficult to divide them. The characters will therefore be discussed by pointing to the events of the play.

Brecht uses a mixture of different characters in the text. Some of the characters are more character types than real characters therefore not all the characters go through a process of development during the play. They have dramatic functions as character types, so it does not mean that they are not important. By using character types Brecht creates the opportunity to deliver social commentary.

Prologue

The prologue is sometimes cut in the performance of the text. It is not a particularly satisfying scene. Many of the characters do not have names at all. From an analytical perspective, and as we have already discussed, the prologue forms a frame and motive for the presentation of the story of Gruscha.

The prologue is also a good example of how communism should function according to Brecht: everybody receives the opportunity to state their cases and a decision is made in a peaceful manner. The decision is made to benefit the majority of people. The goat farmers lived in the valley before the war. They want it back. According to the capitalist system, they should receive the valley. The fruit farmers can cultivate the land in a more productive way. In the communist order and sense of morality, as it happens in the prologue, the fruit farmers receive the valley. This scene is close to the Social Realism which was of major importance in the USSR. With the following scenes, the Social Realism is no longer present.

In the prologue the audience is already confronted with the moral of the story. The story of Gruscha is then told as a parable or a mirror image of the moral of the prologue.



Above: Discussion the issue of the valley.

Act 1

Irony plays an important part in this act. One example of irony could be found in the character of the Fat Prince. He says that the baby Michael already looks like a governor. The irony lies in the fact that the Fat Prince is planning the coup d'état and he therefore knows that Michael will probably not survive the day. Another case of irony can be found in the governor's actions. It is clear that he does not care very much for the affairs of state. If he was more interested in his job, he would have listened to the messengers. That would have saved his neck. His arrogance and misrule of his district caused his death.

We meet Gruscha and Simon in this act. We witness the flirtation between the two characters and Gruscha's red-faced exit after Simon told her he looked at her legs while she was at the river.

The coup takes place and the governor is taken away in shackles. Chaos erupts. Natella, the governor's wife pitches up with boxes and suitcases full of clothes. In her haste to save as much of her earthly possessions, her child is left behind as she makes her hasty escape. Gruscha remains behind with the child. Different people suggest that she should leave the child there, but her motherly instinct and her sense of humanity kicks in. We are dealing with humanity during inhumane circumstances. Gruscha's humanity forms a stark contrast with the inhumane actions of Natella that leaves her child due to her materialism and greed, and the bloody and violent events of the coup.

We are not surprised to hear that Natella is jealous of her own son. She is jealous because her husband will only do renovations and alterations to their palace for the sake of the boy.

Gruscha's good character is already being drawn in this scene. The 'good' characters in Brecht's plays represent the type of character that we must all strive to be like. What usually happens with these characters is that they get lost due to the cruelty and injustice of the world. Gruscha's humanity is her strongest characteristic, but almost her downfall as well. She can't bear the thought to leave the child behind, since she knows if the soldiers find him, they will surely kill the innocent child. She takes the child with her. This deed is not just a good deed, it is a bad deed as well, since, in all honesty, she is stealing the child. The moment she surrenders to the impulse to take the child can be described as the moment of surrender to temptation. This duality is important. The audience must then decide if Gruscha is a thief, a hero, or both at the same time.

One of the strongest ironies and social commentaries that we find in the scene is that the fate of the two most sympathetic characters is decided by events beyond their control or doing. Gruscha then takes on the responsibility of looking after a child of the man whose deeds and mismanagement of the country landed them in that particular situation.

Act 2

Gruscha is tempted further. She buys extremely expensive milk from a farmer for Michael – an extremely unselfish deed. The actions of the farmer cannot be judged in a simple manner. It is a time of war and the farmer must also look after himself. Still, we can frown at the seemingly inhumane price the farmer asks for milk to feed a hungry baby. Gruscha pays two piastres for the milk. This is equivalent of one week's pay. This amount is important, because later in the play we will see someone is willing to pay 100 000 piastres for one night's lodging. These amounts are extremely different and it shows the difference between the rich and the poor in the country.

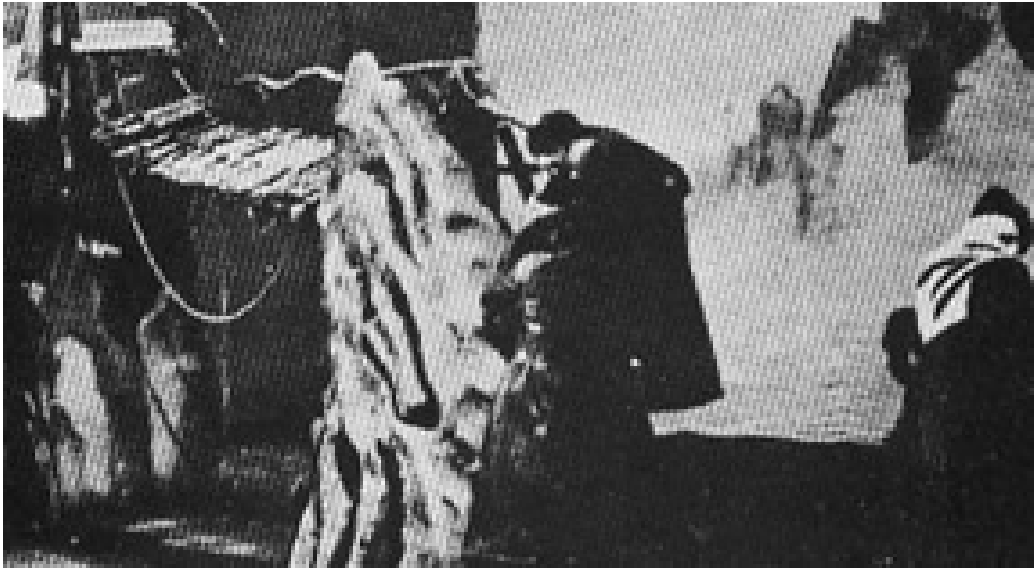
Gruscha's decision to leave the child on the doorstep of the farmhouse might seem unkind, but her motive and the following actions have merit. She saw that there was milk for the baby on the farm, so Michael would have shelter and food – something she cannot offer him. She, furthermore, stayed behind to make sure that the baby is taken into the house. When she is confronted by the soldiers, she panics and she runs back to go and help the child and out of concern for his safety. It is the farmer's wife whose actions, at first unselfish, can be called into question when she discloses the child's origin. Gruscha then turns to violence and inhumane actions to do something good. She saves the child again and runs away. The attack on the soldier is not what we would call good conduct, but the audience member must now think what they would have done under these circumstances.

Gruscha's growth can be summarized:

- 1) She buys expensive milk for the baby. (Financial sacrifice)
- 2) She goes back to go and fetch Michael.
- 3) She attacks the soldier to protect the child. (Sacrifices own safety and moral codes)
- 4) She adopts the child. (Sacrifices her independence.)
- 5) She does not surrender the child to cross the bridge.
- 6) She risks her and the child's life to cross the bridge.

We once again are confronted with sets of dualities. Was it right of her to risk the child's life? The audience must decide.

With all these events Gruscha deserves the right to keep the child. We don't see all of Gruscha's emotions and thoughts, but the Narrator tells us. We are therefore not experiencing her emotions, but witnessing it. The audience is therefore alienated from the character.



Above: Crossing the rotten bridge.

Act 3

Secularized images of religion and the parody of belief systems are very strong elements of this act. Jussup points towards the biblical figure of Joseph that married Mary whilst she was already pregnant out of wedlock. Typically of Brecht's usual treatment of religious matters, Jussup turns out to be a character that tried to dodge the drafting to war. He is miraculously healed once he hears the war is over. This is a very comic scene, especially with the presence of the combination of mourners and weddings guests which is lead by a cheap, drunk monk.

The game the children play later in the act is a metatheatrical technique to foreshadow the death of the Fat Prince and the change of government. We must remember that, chronologically, the Fat Prince is already dead, but we only learn this later in the play.

Gruscha goes through more development in this act. She denies the fact that she is cold, just so that Michael can have a place to stay. She then marries Jussup for the same reason. This wedding is another sacrifice, because in marrying Jussup for the good of Michael, she breaks her promise to marry Simon. She eventually sacrifices her virginity when she gives in to Jussup when he demands sex from her. Her last step of development is when the soldiers try to take Michael away from her. She tells a lie which means that she will lose Simon as well. She loses everything in this act and the danger is there that she might lose the child – the reason she has surrendered and sacrificed so much. This is of course irony at work.

Gruscha accepts her fate through the whole act. She expects that she will be the victim of the circumstances, but still she tries to make the best of a hopeless case. Where Michael is concerned, she is ruthless and she goes into action and will not give up. It is here, at the height of the story, that Brecht breaks the line of tension and starts with a new act.

Act 4

This act does not follow chronologically after Act 3. In some publications, this act is called Part 2, act 1. One of the reasons for this is that the action jumps back two years into the past. This act starts on the same Easter Sunday as the Easter Sunday of Act 1. We are introduced to a new character – Azdak. He meets an old man that is looking for shelter. The old man offers him a ridiculous amount of money for one night's of shelter.

Shauwa, the policeman, pitches up and arrests Azdak, because Azdak killed a rabbit for food. Azdak's mouth saves him for the first time. Shauwa leaves the scene without the rabbit or the criminal. It is very important to notice that Azdak did not surrender the man in his care. The fact that the man turn out to be the Grand Duke is not enough reason for him to give he man up. There are no clear motives for Azdak not to hand over the Grand Duke. Perhaps he despises the police to such an extent that he will try to make their lives as difficult as possible. It may well be that he pities the old man. With a guilty conscious, Azdak goes and hands himself over to the police but with the judge that is hanged, there is no-one to pass judgment on Azdak.



Above: Azdak and Gruscha.

His fast mouth gets him out of trouble for the second time and the soldiers appoint him as the new judge.

Azdak's judgments might look absurd. He does not use the normal route of logic to work out his judgments. His judgments are based on humanity and not necessarily judicially sound. The example of the rich man and the poor old lady is a prime

example. The old lady believes that it is miracles that put the food on her table. The rich man believes that he is robbed. Azdak verbally attacks the rich man and releases the old lady. The justice of this judgment lies in the fact that the old lady should not have to wait for a miracle to get food. The man is rich enough to be able to care for her as well. This is of course based on the communist ideas of social responsibility. Humanity then forms the basis of all his judgments. He becomes a type of Robin Hood-figure.

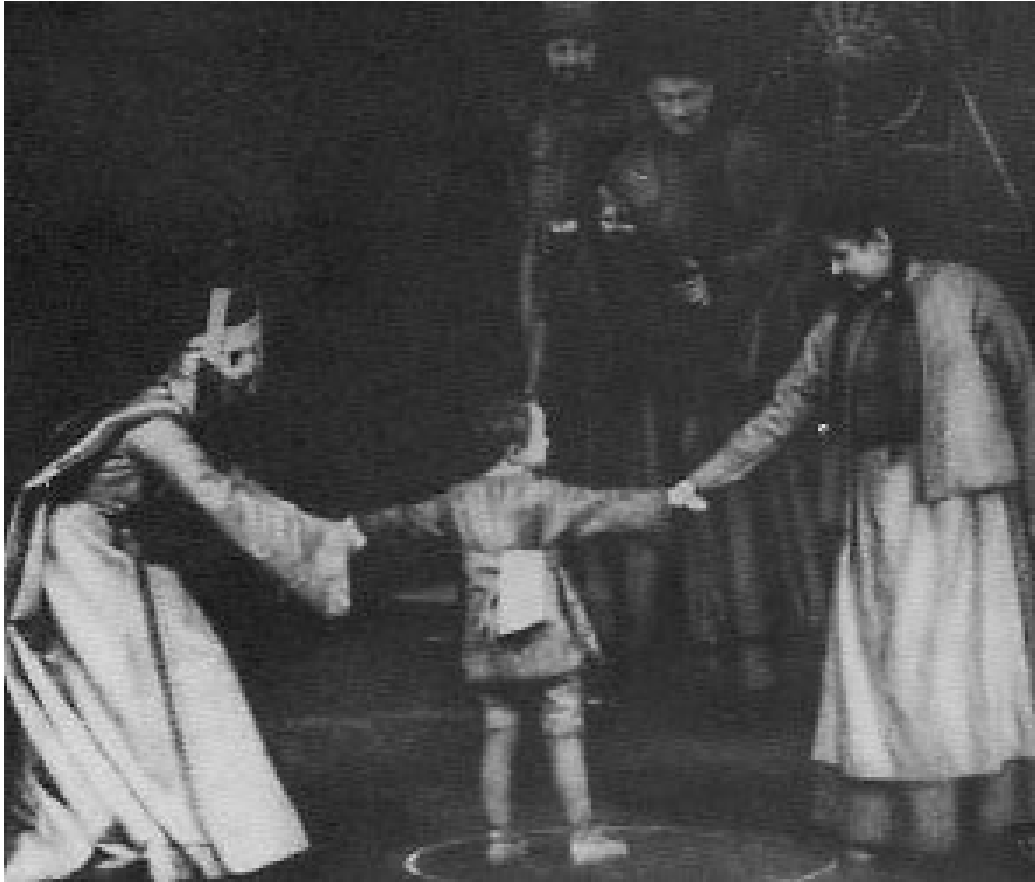
Azdak has a particular way of telling the truth. These truths are sometimes a risk for his safety. Examples of this can be found when he says he has the Grand Duke in his care and another time he blames the Fat Prince directly for the war. In the last instance, he is not punished, but promoted.

When the political winds change, we see Azdak is filled with fear. He knows that his type of justice has come to an end. With the visit of Natella and her lawyers, the audience gets the idea that he might give in to the new government. This creates some tension, since Azdak's type of judgment is the only type of judgment where the good characters such as Gruscha might stand a chance. We are confronted with justice, but not in the sense of judicial justice which functions according to laws and not the laws of humanity.

Azdak develops as a character:

- 1) He protects the Grand Duke.
- 2) He surrenders to the police because he hid the Grand Duke, so he accepts responsibility for his actions.
- 3) His sense for the truth results in him becoming a judge.
- 4) Each judgment he passes can be seen as a step in his development – the judgment of the doctor and the invalid.
- 5) The judgment on the blackmailer.
- 6) The judgment on the hotel owner.
- 7) The judgment of the rich man and the old lady.

Other steps of development follow in the last act.



Above: The Chalk circle

Act 5

Azdak still goes through 3 steps of development. The next step is the reappointment of Azdak as a judge. This is the direct result of him hiding the Grand Duke two years ago. The Grand Duke is back on the throne and he is the one who reappointed Azdak as a judge. His next step is the judgment he passes on Gruscha to give her the child and divorce her. His final step of development is his disappearance.

Apart from the final judgment of Azdak, this act also refers to the prologue at the beginning of the play. This is a somewhat weak reference of the narrator to try and tie the stories of Azdak, Gruscha and the valley together with a couple of lines at the end of the play. These lines are used to affirm the communist view of the play. Gruscha's happiness is a result of her sacrifices and her humanity. People like Gruscha will deserve the good things that come their way in the new political (communist) system. We as audience members should keep this in our minds and our critical thoughts

should analyze it to come to a conclusion that will prompt us to make positive changes in our society.

STRUCTURAL SYNOPSIS

Below is a table with the events of the play in the order of which it is written. You can add another column where you can note all the different alienation techniques Brecht uses in the different scenes.

ACT	SMALLER UNITS OR SCENES
PROLOGUE	The debate around the valley.
I. THE NOBLE CHILD	The noble child
	Simon teases Gruscha
	Fat Prince exits the church
	Governor exits the church
	Architects.
	Governor arrested.
	Panic under the servants.
	Servants make their escape.
	Governor's severed head.
	The tempting voice of Goodness.
II. THE FLIGHT INTO THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS.	Gruscha on the road
	Gruscha and the old farmer – buying milk.
	Gruscha and the merchant lady.
	Corporal and the soldier.
	Gruscha leaves Michael.
	Gruscha meets the Corporal.
	Gruscha attacks the Corporal.
	Gruscha adopts Michael.
Gruscha and Michael cross the bridge.	
III. IN THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS.	Gruscha with her brother.
	Gruscha marries Jussup.

	The wedding.
	The wedding celebration.
	Jussup bathes.
	The children at play.
	Simon returns.
	Michael is taken away.
IV. THE STORY OF THE JUDGE.	Azdak and the Grand Duke.
	Azdak surrenders.
	A judge is chosen.
	First court case.
	Ludowika's rape.
	The procession.
	St. Banditus.
	Song of the Chaos.
	Azdak meets the Governor's wife.
V. THE CHALK CIRCLE.	Gruscha's judgment.
	The governor's wife and her lawyers.
	The Chalk Circle.

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