

Conclusion

Generally speaking, all three plays are about three indomitable mothers. They are all single mothers of the proletariat and live in wars and chaos. Brecht's three key devices of historification, epic style and alienation are used to help the audience to understand what happens about them on the stage. By reading more about his plays, his devices become more meaningful to me. According to Brecht, his device of historification is "to draw from other times and places in order to get the audience to reflect upon oppressive social and political problems and events of the present time". Therefore, when I read these plays I also want to examine our nowadays society as the audience in Brecht's time did. For instances, the backgrounds of these three plays are in war time: the Russian Revolution, the Thirty Years War, and a Caucasian civil war in the past. Now we live in a wealthier and more advanced twenty-first century, but in some places the wars, famine, and poverty still exist just like before. Brecht endeavored to make a difference between his past and his present, and we can still improve our world if we try hard enough. Thus, the function of the historification is a truly powerful tool.

In Brecht's epic-staging, the progressive scenes are used to depict the changing time and places. For example, Brecht used twelve scenes to depict a thirteen years period within Mother Courage's lifetime in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, as I have mentioned on page 25 of this dissertation.

The device of alienation is used to distance the actors and the audience in order to make them think and judge in stead of involving completely in the plot. For example, in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, the glockenspiel sound of the dripping of melting snow on page 33 and the knocking sound of Azdak's hammer on the table on page 35; and in *The Mother*, Pavel's utterances are full of "he" and "she" on page 22,

the use of third person approach is meant to address to the audience in stead of using “you” to talk to the actors on the stage. Another alienation technique is used, in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, when the chorus and the singer (the narrator) are singing or speaking lines in the middle of the on-going plot on page 31. All the interruptions on the stage are used to bring the defamiliarization to us audience in order to remind us that we are not merely watching a show.

Above all, these three devices, such as historification for the story, epic style for the stage setting, and alienation for the acting, are for the purpose of demonstrating these three mothers’ indomitable spirits and their strong motherly love for their children in hardship and war. Vlassova has a strong belief in Bolshevik revolution, Grusha the maid strives to be a “de jure” mother for Michael, and Mother Courage’s strong survival instinct helps her to go on with her life.

From epic theatre we learn to see, to understand, and to judge and from these three mothers we can witness the maternal spirits: we see how Vlassova, an ordinary house-mother can, step by step, change into a stout revolutionist by experiencing many social injustices, how Grusha going through a laborious journey before deciding to adopt Michael as her son, and how Mother Courage unwittingly sacrificed her beloved children for her sheer survival at the end. A mother’s strength can be resilient and immeasurable in different ways; therefore, when the audience sees these mother characters struggling on the stage; they inadvertently being touched and enlightened.

Brecht was once a Communist; therefore, his communistic idea can be seen distinctively in the debates on the swamp problem from page 61 to 62 which illustrate how the surplus-value influences the workers’ prospect of daily lives. Also on page 58 and 59, the incidents about the felt, the wagon, and the boy are some examples of

Marx's idea of dialectical materialism. Again throughout these plays, Brecht has promoted the idea of Communism which advocates the community ownership of all property, and the benefits of which are to be shared by all according to the need of each.

Although these mothers possess their own distinguishing characteristics in the daily struggling, they still lack the vantage points in every aspect competing with males because of an inexorable gender disadvantage defined by males—as Beauvoir has described in her *The Second Sex*. As we can see from page 67 to 68, these mothers are marginalized because they have been considered as the illiterate, the poor, and the women as the “Others” in the male-dominated society. Being “Others” as proletariat and as females, they all can stand up for their rights indomitably. Their courageous spirits not only command our admiration and respect, but also for us to emulate.

However, it is in maternity that woman fulfills her physiological destiny; it is her natural “calling”, since her whole organic structure is adapted for the perpetuation of the species (Beauvoir 484). Therefore, the deprivation of Vlassova, Mother Courage, and Grusha on the contrary makes them possess distinctive personalities and great maternal spirits. Through these mothers, we can see the greatness of being a Mother. Therefore, it is important to see how Brecht espouses the social justice with his pen and learn the lessons from these three mothers. Above all, I believe that this playwright has made a great contribution to the world of dramas not only in techniques but also in thoughts.