

## Chapter One

### Introduction

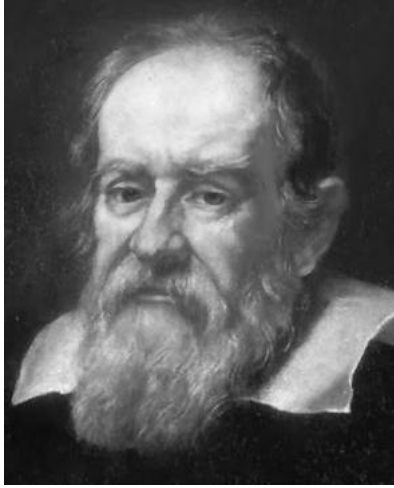


Fig 1. Justus Sustermans, Portrait of Galileo Galileo. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK.

#### I. Brief Biography of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)

Galileo Galilei, son of Vincenzo Galilei and Guilia Ammannati, was born on February 15, 1564 in the countryside near Pisa. His father was a teacher of music and a lutenist (Fahie 3-4). Galileo was home tutored until the age of ten when he was old enough to be sent to a monastery to begin his classical education. The attraction of the order of the monks grew in Galileo and he joined it as a novice. That is when his father pulled him out of the monastery since he wanted Galileo to become a physician instead of a cleric. Galileo resumed his education in another school run by monks but he would not become a candidate of their order anymore (Machamer 27-32).

In 1581, Galileo entered the University of Pisa as a medical student; however, Galileo focused his study on philosophy and mathematics instead on medicine. During his early years in the university, he became famous for doubting the validity of the ancient sciences; one such example would be Aristotle's law on falling bodies,

which assumed that larger objects falling from the same height as smaller objects would arrive to the bottom sooner. Such presumption is contradictory to an actual observation, but the approach to sciences at Galileo's time would hold on to the classic principles and relied on the explanation more than on observations of experiments (Fahie 24-26). In 1583, Galileo studied under the court mathematician Ostilo Ricci, who saw Galileo as a born mathematician and offered to instruct him personally (Fahie 12). In 1584, Galileo almost failed medicine, which angered his father who threatened to withdraw financial support if Galileo could not concentrate his study on medicine. But Galileo made a deal with his father to support him for one more year, and thereafter he would take care of himself. Hence, in 1585 Galileo dropped out of university to tutor private pupils in order to provide a living for himself (Fahie 13).

In 1589, Galileo published a treatise on the center of gravity in solids, which won him the post of mathematic lecture at the University of Pisa. When Galileo's professor relinquished his chair in mathematics, Galileo was selected to replace him. He taught there until the death of his father in 1592 (Fahie 21). The heavy financial burden made him leave there to teach at the University of Padua, which offered him three times the salary he earned in Pisa (Fahie 27).

In the two decades in Padua, in order to support the financial needs of his family and relatives, Galileo had to improve his income by taking private students who took away his time to work on his own researches. A close friend, Giovanfrancesco Sagredo, a Venetian gentleman who was an amateur scientist to have studied with Galileo, financially supported him (Fahie 46).

In the early 1600s, Galileo focused his studies on conducting research based on reasonable observations, which was different to the most common approach of his

days that based research on reasonable agreements, a method that was advocated by Aristotle and Plato. Another progress was the application of the theory of proportion, which enabled a plausible study of measurements, which can be applied when the actual measurement of the subject was not possible (Drake 35-37).

Galileo first heard of an instrument with which to see distant objects as if they were near in 1609. With the information provided by a Frenchman nobleman, Jacques Badovere, Galileo learned of the principle of such instrument and within a few days Galileo successfully built his first telescope. He presented it to the senate of Venice and earned himself a lifetime professorship and a 1000 florins salary per year (Fahie 77).

On January 7, 1610, with an improved telescope, Galileo observed the bright stars around Jupiter and the uneven and mountainous surface of the moon. By January 13, he was able to make out four stars around Jupiter and by keeping the observations until March, he has manifested the four stars as Jupiter's satellites. Galileo published the results in a work called Sidereus Nuncius, generally known as The Starry Messenger (Fahie 85). Galileo christened the satellites "the Medicean stars" to dedicate them to Cosimo II de' Medici in order to apply for a job in the Florentine court. The Starry Messenger fulfilled its purpose and Galileo was appointed chief philosopher and mathematician to the Grand Duke of Tuscany (Fahie 117-21).

With the discovery of the Medicean stars, Galileo has proven that it was possible for heavenly bodies to circulate around centers other than the earth and this discovery soon aroused voices of opposition from various sides. One example would be the chief philosopher at Padua who simply refused to look into Galileo's telescope; another example would be the chief philosopher at Pisa who tried to

“argue Galileo’s satellites out of the sky” (Drake 162). In 1610, Galileo made observations of the different phases of Venus, which lead to the conclusion that Venus shone not by itself but by the light from the sun. It finally confirmed for Galileo the correctness of the Copernican solar system.

In 1614, Galileo’s theories, which proved the Copernican star system to be true, were said to be contradictory to certain verses in the Holy Scriptures, for example that the earth was not the center of the universe, and that the sun stood still. In 1616, the church reacted by issuing a decree on banning the books that were connected with the Copernican theory (Fahie 157-58). Galileo, hence, went to Rome to discuss the matter with the Vatican church but he was warned by Cardinal Bellarmine to end his research, and presented him with an admonition that prohibited Galileo to defend and to hold the validity of the Copernican theory, but allowed him to teach and to argue about the subject matter (Fahie 163-65). Galileo stayed away from the controversy for the next several years, but resumed his studies when Cardinal Barberini was elected as the new pope (Pope Urban VIII) in 1623.<sup>1</sup> The new pope was a personal friend and an admirer of Galileo, and he also opposed Galileo’s condemnation back in 1616. Galileo published his new work Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems in 1632, a work that was supposed to give arguments for and against heliocentrism<sup>2</sup>, and the Pope has personally asked Galileo to include his own views on the matter in the book (Koyré 154-75). But when the book came out, the party which defended the Aristotelian viewpoint, called Simplicius, was depicted as a fool, and what made matters worse was that

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<sup>1</sup>Pope Urban VIII, born Maffeo Barberini was elected pope in 1623. He was an admirer of Galileo, and helped him defend on the theory of floating bodies when he was still Cardinal Barberini. Galileo was allowed to publish The Dialogue after he met the Pope for six times. When the work turned out to be a mockery of the church, their relationship took a drastic decline.

<sup>2</sup>Heliocentrism is the theory that has the sun as the center of the universe. In Greek, “helio” stands for sun. The opposite of heliocentrism is geocentrism, the theory that has earth as the center.

Barberini's words were put in the mouth of Simplicius<sup>3</sup> (Drake 35-37). Against the original intention of Barberini, The Dialogue became a book that advocated heliocentrism. The Pope did not take the insult lightly and Galileo was again summoned to Rome (Blackwell 33-38, Fahie 267).

Though the book was formally examined and licensed for publishing by the church, in 1633 Galileo was still ordered to stand trial on suspicion of heresy. During the first hearing on April 12, the inquisitor laid before him an order that he should not have "hold, defend, or teach, in any way whatever, verbally or in writing, the doctrines of Copernicus" (Fahie 295), which was an order that according to the inquisitor, Galileo has failed to obey. Evidently, this command contradicts with Bellarmine's admonition, which allowed Galileo to discuss the Copernican study as a hypothesis (Blackwell 9). Galileo denied any knowledge of the existence of the inquisitor's command, in addition, he denied having defended the Copernican doctrine in his work and stated that he had done the opposite, namely pointing out various mistakes in Copernicus' theory. On April 20, during the second hearing, however, Galileo confessed that he unintentionally broke the command that he had denied the knowledge of eight days before. Galileo furthermore declared that his studies on the sunspots were misleading and inconclusive, and that he was prepared to rewrite the passages and to change the context to fit the standards of the inquisition. Furthermore, Galileo admitted that his work was created out of ignorance and excessive vanity.

The reason why Galileo's attitude drastically changed was found in a letter corresponded between one of the judges and Barberini. In the letter, the judge

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<sup>3</sup>Simplicius of Cilicia (abt. 490-560BC) was a Greek scholar famous for commentating and interpreting the works of Aristotle and Plato.

sought for an outside court settlement with Galileo, which contained a confession by Galileo to admit his guilt in exchange of a slight symbolical punishment in the form of house arrest. After his humiliating confession, Galileo was allowed to rest in the Tuscan embassy to await the verdict (Blackwell 6-18).

On May 10, Galileo was summoned in front of the inquisition for the third time during which he had to write down a full confession of his guilt. On June 16 the verdict was made which consisted of three major parts: 1. Galileo was to recant his heliocentric ideas. The idea that the sun is stationary has been officially declared as heretic. 2. Galileo was to be imprisoned. 3. His work, The Dialogue was banned, and publication of all his work, including of his future work were all forbidden (Blackwell 23).

During his imprisonment that Galileo made a summary of his previous work, and called it Two New Sciences (Fahie 346-71). The first of the two 'new sciences' named in the title was according to Drake a science that had never been discussed before, namely the calculation of the structure of matter (83). The second science, the science of natural motions, had been discussed in Galileo's time, but his approach was innovative (85). Although the work was written between 1634 to 1637, it could not be published until 1638 since Galileo could not find a publisher who was not aware of the Church's ruling that no book written or edited by Galileo, past or future, could be printed. Through the help of a Florentine engineer, the book was taken out of Italy, neither in Germany nor in Poland could he find a publisher willing to print it. Finally an old publisher friend of Galileo's printed the work in 1638. According to Drake, the story that Galileo had to smuggle out his work under surveillance of the inquisition was merely made up (82). By the time his final work was printed, Galileo was already completely blind but it

was due to the excellent insight of Two New Sciences that Galileo was later called as the father of modern physics. He died on 9 January 1642, but before his death, Galileo made a statement in a letter to Nicole Fabri, a French scientist who was writing to the authorities at Rome to pardon Galileo, that he believed he was falsely incriminated by professors of philosophy. He believed that the ‘frauds and stratagems’ that were used against him in 1616 were conducted by these professors and that the church and theologians were misled by them (Drake 92-93). Galileo believed to his death that he was not convicted because he supported Copernicus’ theory, but because he was campaigning for scientific research free from church intervention.





Fig. 2. Picture of Bertolt Brecht.

## II. Brief Biography of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956)

Eugen Berthold Brecht was born on August 10, 1898 in Augsburg, Germany. He was born into a middle class family, where his father was first a worker and later a director of a paper factory. In 1913, at the age of fifteen, Brecht established his own student newspaper titled The Harvest (Die Ernte) (Shoeps 7). Although it was founded as a student newspaper, the content, however, was mainly about Brecht's own poems and short stories instead of covering student affairs.

Brecht studied in the Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich from 1917 to 1918 (Hayman 24). Although Brecht was a medical student, he spent most of his time on literary studies. He was a poet and songwriter, and also wrote theater reviews for the local theatre performances in Augsburg. In 1918, he had to break off his study to enlist himself as a sanitary soldier in the military service and it was during this year that he wrote the radical anti-war poem "Legend of the Dead Soldier."<sup>4</sup> In 1921 he gave up medical studies to become a fulltime artist. He

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<sup>4</sup>Bertolt Brecht, "Legende vom Toten Soldaten" [Literaturwelt.com](http://www.literaturwelt.com/werke/brecht/legendesoldat.html) 9 Oct. 2007 <http://www.literaturwelt.com/werke/brecht/legendesoldat.html>. First published in 1918 in German under the titled "Legende vom Toten Soldaten". The poem is about a German soldier who died a heroic death



changed his name to Bertolt and began to work on his own plays. He had his first success in 1922 with the play Drums in the Night, which was also his first play performed in front of a public audience.<sup>5</sup>

Brecht's theatrical techniques were at first influenced by Erwin Piscator (1893-1966), who believed that a theater's purpose lay in "mobilizing the masses" (Esslin 23). By using placards, photographs and lanternslides, he tried to illustrate the current socio-political affairs through his plays. The work of his was politically orientated, and he used the word 'epic', as Piscator made use of before, to describe it. Back in 1797, Friedrich Schiller and Johan Wolfgang von Goethe collaborated on the essay "On Epic and Dramatic Poetry" ("Über Epische und Dramatische Poesie"). The work proposed that the epic style of narration has two valuable functions suitable for ideal writings: First, the epic story is concluded in itself, it is complete and cannot be touched by outer happenings, thus making it timeless. Second, since the epic narrator already knows the whole story, he can remain calm and detached. In conclusion, since the epic style is able to create a state of timelessness, it will enable the audience to regard the work with calmness and detachment, while the dramatic style will only make the reader passionately identify with the events of the story (Gailus 436-74). The word 'epic', that was used by Piscator and Brecht were not used to refer to Greek or Roman heroic poetry but to refer it to plays that

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in WWI. But the war was not over yet and the emperor of Germany decided that he died before his time so he sent down a medical team to try to resurrect the dead soldier. The team dug him out of his grave and used prostitutes and alcohol to revive him but it was all in vain. Then they decide to put him back into his old uniform and carry him to the warfield to embrace his second heroic death while being cheered by the German folk. It was due to this particular poem that Brecht found himself years later on the Nazi's black list.

<sup>5</sup>See Speirs 30-57. Originally published in 1919 in German under the title: Trommeln in der Nacht. The play is about a soldier returning home from the war after four years of imprisonment to find out that everything has changed: His girlfriend is marrying someone else and expecting a child; the social condition is unbearable for most of the people but there are still the ones who have profited from the war. A revolution breaks out and the soldier decides to join the revolution. But in the end he chooses love and together with his girlfriend they escape from the turmoil.

stood contrary to the conventional drama that emphasized aesthetics. Piscator's approach to drama, however, relied heavily on the use of technical instruments to create visual images, whereby Brecht relied on the actor and on the individual to achieve his theatrical effects.

While Piscator educated Brecht on his dramatic techniques, it was Marxism that became Brecht's philosophy. In 1926 Brecht read The Capital (Das Kapital)<sup>6</sup> and attended classes in economics and Marxism. He also studied under Karl Korsch (1886-1961), one of the most important Marxist thinkers of Brecht's generation (Shoeps 20, Ewen 160). During his communist schooling, Brecht was able to form his ideas of the world around him and to focus on the subject of "changing the world" (Hayman 121) by using theater as his medium. He believed that through theater he could educate the audience and create a new "ideological superstructure for a solid, practical recognition of our way of life" (Hayman 125).

In 1929, Brecht started to work on his didactic drama (Lehrstücke): Plays that concentrated on the explanation and promotion of communist doctrines, such as dialectical materialism (Shoeps 166). The plays were not designed to be performed in front of an audience but were devised for students and workers who are interested in Marxism to act in the plays and to learn about the doctrines while acting. The Exception and the Rule (Die Ausnahme und die Regel), for example discusses the biased bourgeois law-court and the role of a mistreated proletariat (Ewen 255-56).

Brecht approached the performance art from a new perspective with The Threepenny Opera (Die Dreigroschenoper), a musical that he collaborated with Kurt Weill (1900-1950).<sup>7</sup> The work was extremely popular in Germany and it also had

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<sup>6</sup> Das Kapital (Capital), published in 1867, is a study on political economy written by Karl Marx. It analyzes capitalism and attempts to explain the impact and relation of economy to society.

<sup>7</sup> Kurt Julian Weill was a Jewish music composer who worked mainly on stage music. He left Nazi

its Broadway performance.

On February 28, 1933, one day after the burning of the Reichstag (The German Parliament), Brecht left for Prague with his family and friends.<sup>8</sup> The exile extended to Vienna and Zurich, and they finally found a shelter with Karin Michaelis, a writer, in Denmark, where Brecht and family spent the next five years. It was during that period that Brecht wrote some of his greatest plays, such as Life of Galileo<sup>9</sup>, Mother Courage and her Children<sup>10</sup>, The Caucasian Chalk Circle<sup>11</sup> and A Good Woman of Sezuan<sup>12</sup>. They left Denmark in 1939 and moved to Stockholm, then to Helsinki. In 1941 they fled to Moscow where they traveled by train to Vladivostok and boarded a ship to the United States.

Brecht's artistic achievement was very limited in the States, and he was only able to produce his second version of Life of Galileo, with the collaboration with the English actor Charles Laughton (Shoeps 29). In the years of the Cold War, Brecht, along with 41 other Hollywood writers, directors, actors and producers, was subpoenaed to appear before the United States Congress in September 1947. In the beginning, Brecht was one among 11 witnesses, who refused to testify. But during the process of the hearing, Brecht followed the advice of his attorney and testified. During his testimony, Brecht denied that he was a communist party member, but his ideas were actually in accordance with most of the communist principles. The day after the hearing, Brecht was excused as a witness and flew the day after the hearing to Europe. The other ten witnesses who still refused to testify were cited for

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Germany in 1933 and immigrated to the USA.

<sup>8</sup>On February 27, 1933, a Jew communist allegedly set fire on the German parliament. The fire led to Hitler's Nazi party to accelerate the banning of the German Communist Party KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands).

<sup>9</sup>Written in 1938 under the German title Die Erde Bewegt Sich, later renamed to Das Leben des Galilei (Hecht 557).

<sup>10</sup>Written in 1939 under the German title Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder (Hecht 591).

<sup>11</sup>Written in 1944 under the German title Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis (Hecht 598).

<sup>12</sup>Written in 1941 under the German title Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan (Hecht 566).

contempt. Thus Brecht's testimony was later criticized as being an act of betrayal (Esslin 70-74).

Although Brecht's communist sympathies were under taboo in the United States, he was very much welcomed in East Germany. After Brecht returned to Europe, he first settled down in Switzerland, where he produced Antigone and worked on the Short Organum for the Theater<sup>13</sup>, afterwards, he left for East Berlin.

In his last years in Berlin, he wrote only a few plays, but they were far less successful than the ones he wrote during his exile. He died in 1956 of a heart attack at the age of 58.



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<sup>13</sup>Short Organum for the Theater (Kleines Organum für das Theater) is a theoretical work that intends to redefine drama in the age of science. The work opposes the idea of catharsis from Aristotle's Poetics and emphasizes the importance of excluding the bringing up of emotion, which would hinder the rational thinking process of the audience. (TEB 176; BBCAP 104, 184)

### III. Brecht's Dramatic Techniques

“Art is shit” (TEB 14) is a provocative slogan by Dadaism, an art movement that emerged after 1915, flourished during the disillusionment created by WWI to the 1920s. Dadaism supports a new art form that is basically anti-art, or anti aesthetic from the traditional point of view; the movement's motivation is to rebuild the world by first to destroy, to vandalize, and to mock every contemporary issue such as war, tradition and human society. Their attitude is nihilistic, they believe in nothing and their main purpose is to magnify the incoherent world through the effect of shock. It was under such background that the young Bertolt Brecht began to develop his own theatrical views.

Erwin Piscator before Brecht made use of the term 'epic' to describe a school of theater that is political, documental, and anti-artistic. According to Piscator, epic theater is supposed to treat its material raw, in other words, it demands that the current existing political affairs be brought on stage without anything else but the facts alone. The goal is to educate its audience on political and economical matters of that time. In 1931, Brecht stated: “To think, or write, or produce a play also means: to transform society, to transform the state, to subject ideologies to close scrutiny” (Ewen 199), from enlightening the people in order to change the society. Although Brecht held the same notion as Piscator of treating his material raw, and to let the material speak for itself, Brecht further emphasized on the idea of form, and he developed the Epic form since “the old form of drama does not permit us to present the world as we see it today” (TEB 22). Another difference between Brecht and Piscator is that Piscator used his material such as documentaries and pictures directly on stage, which Brecht decided was too direct, and therefore proposed a more poetical way of treating his issues (Lunn 123). According to

Brecht, the happenings of a man of his time could not be presented within the traditional Aristotelian dramatic framework, thus a new form of drama had to be created so that the true world can be correctly presented on stage. Brecht calls for three changes: First, a new dramatic approach that is to treat the raw material. Second, a new style of performance that should not emphasize emotion. Third, a new kind of audience that should remain calm and unaffected emotionally to the on-goings on stage. Brecht stressed that his new approach of anti-Aristotelian form was to treat political subjects with greater emphasis. According to Brecht, the traditional Aristotelian theater plays with the emotions of the audience to make them identify with the created illusion. Brecht used the example of watching a sports event to compare with seeing a show in his own theater. The sports spectators or fans according to Brecht, have accumulated sufficient knowledge of the athletes that they could truly appreciate the skills performed in the event. Thus Brecht concluded the spectator of the sports would be his ideal audience with their calmness, knowledge and objectivity (Benjamin 4, TEB 19).

Another school of drama that influenced Brecht was the expressionists. Brecht's Baal, written in 1924, for example is described by Shoeps as being "permeated with a fascination for vivid colors, sensuality and decay, obscenity and perversion, morbidity, and even brutality" (54). Brecht's Drums in the Night was also regarded as being influenced by expressionism (Kuhns 99). The form of the expressionist drama consists of separated scenes that have little connection with one another, such is the case with Baal, which storyline is not linear but rather shows fragmented scenes that emphasize the atmosphere. And the set design is simple rather than detailed. According to Brecht, the expressionists such as Ernst Barlach and Georg Kaiser are more emotional in their approaches than his own plays.

However, David F. Kuhns noted in German Expressionist Theatre that Brecht has also stated that it was Georg Kaiser who has led the German theatrical development up to the point when Brecht himself created his Epic theater. Brecht regarded Kaiser's technique to be suitable for appealing the masses, thus was optimal to be applied to his own theater. Kaiser's plays were broken up into segments that enabled dialectical approaches. The dialogues of Kaiser's plays were also fragmented into constant interruptions and contradicting images, thus according to Kuhns, Kaiser's technique "would become the heart of Brechtian dramaturgical method" (232).

Walter Benjamin in Understanding Brecht has tried to give a referential definition of Brecht's dramatic approach by listing eight keywords of the epic theater: 1. Relaxed audience 2. Fable 3. Untragic hero 4. Interruptions 5. Quotable gesture 6. Didactic 7. Actors. 8. Theater on public form (15-22).

The relaxed audience according to Benjamin, will be able to react faster to the happenings on stage, since with his relaxed attitude he will be calm enough to digest the matters and form his own opinions. He also mentions that this is the reason why Brecht's plays are well lighted in the audience's seats, so that they may not fall into nonchalance in the darkness.

The fable according to Benjamin, is to perform something unspectacular and unsensational on stage, such as an already known story or a historic event. Instead of presenting to the audience with a tragic hero of the classics, Brecht proposes to make a wise man or a sage as his dramatic hero. The idea is to present a thoughtful character, rather than any legendary hero or celebrity on the stage. Walter Benjamin further notes that the epic plays with the alienation skill sets out to avoid the effect of empathy because empathy could only hinder the process of calm

observation and decision making of one's theater experience.

The goal of the interruptions in events is to make the events strange, thus the curiosity of the audience will lead to a thinking process of desiring to know what is really going on in the world. When it comes to 'quotable gestures', according to Benjamin, the quoting of sentences, which means to use the same sentence over and over again, can also serve the purpose of interruption, which is again vital for the process of thinking and understanding. The 'quotable gesture' (the repetition of the same gestures used previously) on the other hand, is another important epic attribute. For example, in Happy End, the actress sings the same song in the church that she sang before in a tavern. The actress's quotation of her own gesture will create the effect of interruption.<sup>14</sup>

The epic theater, according to Benjamin, is designed to be didactic. Both actor and audience should learn something from the stage. And since to play the role, or to imitate the gestures of the role enables learning, the roles in an epic play should be more down to earth, for example, to "play a teacher is of course easier than to play a hero" (20). In epic theater, when an actor plays a role, sometimes he can switch himself to play the part of a narrator, which can create a distance between the audience and the actor, and a distance between the actor from his own role in order to avoid any empathy or to become the character he is playing.<sup>15</sup>

The last characteristic of the epic theater is becoming a public platform. The epic theater is trying to close the gap between the actor and the audience, unlike the opera or the orchestra where the performers stands high and above the audience.

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<sup>14</sup>Happy End was written in 1929 by Brecht and Kurt Weill. It is the sequel to their successful musical The Threepenny Opera (Shoeps 133).

<sup>15</sup>Constantin Stavinlavsky, An Actor Prepares (New York: Methuen, 1995). The actors of the Epic theater are acting contrary to the acting method taught by the Russian dramatist Constantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938). The Stanislavskian actor needs to practice both body and mind to fit into their roles, and to literally become the characters they portray.



Although the stage is still elevated, the didactic play with its themes and its methods have closed up the gap and put itself on the public platform (22).

The main goal of Brecht's dramatic techniques was to achieve the alienation effect, or 'Verfremdungs Effekt' in German. According to Brecht, it is a method to open the eyes for the audience, to make them watch, rather than listen. The goal of alienation or estrangement effect was "to shatter illusion and stop the reader or spectator from getting swept away by the story, the characters, the actors who represented them on stage" (Willett 219). It was first introduced to him by the Chinese actor Mei Lan-fang (1894-1961), whom Brecht saw during a Moscow performance in 1935 but later on Brecht created his theory of alienation.<sup>16</sup> During the performance, Brecht observed the Chinese actors and concluded that their style of performance would make the ordinary look strange. The Chinese opera applies many symbols as Brecht noted, for example a stick with feathers attached to it represents a horse, differently colored patches on the cloth would represent poverty and the chewing of one's own hair represents anger (BoT 91-93). Brecht also notes that the Chinese actor never pretends there to be a fourth wall besides the three walls surrounding him to shield him off the audience. Without this fourth wall, the Chinese actor is acting while aware of being observed. Thus the audience can no longer pretend to be watching an event unseen (BoT 92). In order to create the alienation effect, one method Brecht used, was to apply a narrator to tell the audience in advance what was going to happen in the play, or commenting on the happenings on the stage. Through the use of the alienation effect, the audience could better regard the play with a critical mind, and reflect the story on reality. Brecht tried to prevent any form of identification of the audience with the characters

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<sup>16</sup>Mei Lang-fang is a Chinese opera actor famous for imitating female roles.

in the play. When he staged Mother Courage in Switzerland, Brecht even rewrote part of the play to prevent any identification (Büdel 75). This dramatic device, made the play more didactic, and was later on, criticized as turning the theatre into “an institution for the presentation of painless, spoon-fed, and “guided” historical, . . . ideological, information . . . .” (Büdel 76)

However, in BBCAP, John Fuegi points out that Brecht, like Galileo, has undergone similar changes in his thinking, and that he intentionally wanted to create an emotional Galileo. According to Fuegi, Brecht’s dramatic theory has given in to dramatic practice, and Brecht himself has changed from the anti-Aristotelian who composed Short Organum for the Theatre to the director of the Berlin Version of Galileo, in which the protagonist was “a figure cut with one eye fixed upon a most ancient and tragic pattern” (BBCAP 184). Fuegi implied that the Galileo play, despite being created by the anti-traditional Brecht still holds on to traditional features, with the organic structure and classical roundness. Fuegi even claims that it is not necessary for the audience to feel that they would be misinterpreting Brecht’s Galileo if they are moved by the characters just as they are supposed to be moved by the 16th century Elizabethan and ancient Greek dramas (BBCAP 184).

Although Brecht claims to be different than expressionists in that he is less emotional, he agrees with them by using separated and standing-on-its-own scenes and handling primarily political and social themes. Brecht is advocating the effect of distancing and alienation which he assimilated from the Chinese opera, and also the word ‘Verfremdung’, has been adopted by Brecht from the Russian word ‘ostranie’. His literary technique and the term epic theater were adopted from Erwin Piscator. In Fuegi’s TEB, the critic quotes a statement made by Ulrich Weisstein, who states in his From the Dramatic Novel to the Epic Theater: A Study

on the Contemporary Background of Brecht's Theory and Practice that "daring experimentalist and thinker that he was, Brecht merely succeeded in fusing the many overt and latent trends in the German and European theater of the twenties into a whole" (TEB 21). Still, Brecht is original, since he has blended all these elements together brilliantly to create his own unique school of art—a blending together of art and propaganda. Brecht stressed the importance of learning through theater, and yet he has stated that theater should remain theater, even if it is didactic, it should be entertaining (BoT 180-81).



#### IV. Marxism's Influence on Brecht

Brecht became a strong advocator of Marxism in the 1920's. Before that time he was much influenced by the expressionists and Dadaists, showing a nihilistic and meaningless worldview in his work. However, Brecht's work remained cold and detached, which are two characteristics that differed him from the often overtly egocentric expressionists (Lunn 101). Through Marxism, Brecht was able to infuse scientific and economic elements into his plays to express his opinion on the modern aesthetic form for the new century (Lunn 75).

Marxism stressed a material point of view towards the world. The term material stands for everything that exists independently outside the human mind, for example the sun, the moon, or an automobile. The opposite of materials are ideals, such as thoughts, beliefs and emotions. Marxism, like any other philosophy is a science that thrives to understand the world around us, in other words, to get to know the nature of our world. In the Marxist point of view, the world exists only materially and not idealistically. The former holds the view that matter has always existed, and the human conscious has been shaped by the 'historical development of matter' (Krapivin 22). The idealists hold a different view in that the outer world has been shaped by the conscious. They believe it is the conscious that helps creating and changing the material world. According to Marxism, the two schools differ in that materialism can be studied scientifically, and it is able to render a view of the world as it really is; Marxists believe that by studying the matter, they will be able to get a deeper comprehension of the world around them and be able to use the knowledge to invoke changes. Idealism, on the other hand, deals with the consciousness of the mind; it is used to create ideas and thoughts, which help shaping the world. They believe that the outer world cannot be comprehended by

scientific analysis; therefore it promotes the study of one's own conscious and mind.

According to Krapivin, there are two approaches to understand what is happening around us: The dialectical and the metaphysical. The dialectical approach, which Marxism proposes, first defines the world as interrelated; everything that happens is in some way related to everything else. Second, it holds the view everything is in constant motion and development. The dialecticians hold the view that the source of that motion and development is the constant and ever contradiction of every object and phenomenon. Metaphysics on the other hand sees the world as not changeable, objects and phenomena are isolated instead of related. Change and development according to metaphysics are “mere increase and decrease” (Krapivin 27) of the things that already existed.

Georg Hegel (1770-1831) defined dialectics as ideas that “develop progressively, from lower to higher forms”, and he believed that such development would be “the transformation of quantity into quality, and that internal contradictions are the source of development” (Krapivin 88). Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) is a materialist, who holds the view that philosophy should be the study of nature and man alone, since man's conscious is only the reflection of nature it is regarded as irrelevant of study. Marx and Engels stripped away Hegel's idealism in his dialectics and removed Feuerbach's metaphysics in his materialism to combine the two ideas to form the philosophy of dialectical materialism. While Ideology helps to shape a false consciousness for a society's members to accept their conditions as being the normality, dialectical materialism, can be used as an ideology to help explain the plight of the working class, and be the weapon to help them out of their slavery.

”The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point,

however, is to change it” (Brooks 27). Brecht has quoted this sentence from Marx’s writing on Feuerbach, and it is due to such notion that Brecht’s theater sets out to change the world, unlike the popular naturalistic approach to theater at Brecht’s time that simply reflected reality on the stage. The didactic plays (Lehrstücke) are obviously indebted to Marxism since the content is the instruction of Marxist doctrines to the working class. But according to Esslin, Brecht, who was influenced by the nihilistic and destructive attitude due to the post-war trauma, Marxism was a positive influence to Brecht. Esslin quotes the lines from Brecht’s The Mother: ”Communism is not madness, but the end of madness. It is not chaos. But Order” (155).

Marxism offered Brecht a clear worldview, and a dogma which Brecht could cling himself to; it provided Brecht with a “great and simple pattern and purpose in history” (Esslin 151), a philosophy that pulled Brecht out of the sense of isolation.

According to Eugene Lunn, the Galileo plays portray the sole solution for ending social suffering, which is through science and criticism. The scientific method, in Brecht’s opinion, was to apply Hegel’s theory of thesis- antithesis- synthesis and Marx’s dialecticism in his plays. The many contradictions and paradoxes and arguments, in for example scene seven of the Berlin Version of the Galileo play:

BARBERINI. “The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.” So says Solomon, and what does Galileo say?

GALILEO. When I was this big (*He shows with his had*), Your Eminence, I was on a ship, and I cried out: The shore’s moving away. Today I know that the shore stood still and the ship was

moving.

BARBERINI. Clever, clever. What we see, Bellarmine, to wit that the stars in heaven are turning, need not be so, witness ship and shore. And what is true, to wit, that the earth turns, cannot be observed! Very clever. (G3 49)

In this scene Galileo enters into fierce debate with Cardinal Bellarmine and Cardinal Barberini about the Bible versus astronomy, they both offer arguments for and against the correctness of their belief by citing verses of the Bible. Through the debate, Brecht intends to urge the audience to notice the thesis, the antithesis and finally to realize a synthesis of their argumentation (Shoeps 41).

Brecht sought for blending his dramatic techniques with Marxist thinking to create a dialectical theater. His plays were directed at discussing social and economical problems in contemporary society. The usages of alienation effect, the montage, the independent and fragmented scenes are his appliance of modernist method. His characters were mainly wise sages, such as Galileo or man of the masses like Galy Gay.<sup>17</sup> Lunn quoted a critic by Brecht on Georg Lukács<sup>18</sup>, “There is no way back. It’s a matter not of the good old, but the bad new. . . .” (Lunn 145) The sentence echoes the line spoken by his Galileo: “If it [the new age] needs to look like a blood-spattered whore, than so it must be. The dawning of the new age comes after the darkest night” (G1 118). Brecht further adds that, “We will not be human again by leaving the masses, but only through going into them”

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<sup>17</sup>Galy Gay is the protagonist of Brecht’s *A Man is a Man* (original German title: *Mann ist Mann*). The character is Brecht’s vision of the modern man, one that has lost his individuality to join the collective society. According to Shoeps, Gay is the product of Brecht’s study on Marxism (106).

<sup>18</sup>As a Marxist thinker, Georg Lukács (1885-1971) proposed to apply nineteenth century realism as the basis for his Marxist aesthetics, while Brecht proposed to use twentieth century modernism. He believed that the realist point of view was able to render a complete perspective of the transformation of the individual (Lunn 78).

(Lunn 145). Which means that he sets out to turn his back on expressionistic and Dadaist literary approaches that have turned their backs on humanity, and decides to create a drama that reaches out to the people. This is the basic idea of Brecht's dramatic philosophy, to go into the masses, reach the folk and provoke changes through his plays.

Although Brecht saw himself as a writer who based his plays on Marxist doctrines and disciplines, other members of the Communist party openly criticized him when he put the play The Measure (Die Massnahme) on stage in the 1930's. This didactic play asked for each actor to perform the role of the soft-hearted young comrade, who helped the poor while the party's highest interest lay in ignoring them. The young actor was to be killed by his fellow Communists. Brecht wanted to send out the message that the party's best interest should come before everything else, and that disobeying it would have drastic consequences. The scenario of killing the young comrade was attacked by all fronts: The German Communist press argued that such drastic method would not happen in reality and that it would give anti-Communists the opportunity to portray the act as a typical "murderous practice of the Communist party" (Esslin 142). Brecht was criticized for lacking the experience of participating in the actual movement of the revolution, and that he only gained his knowledge from a false interpretation of Marx's and Lenin's work (Esslin 143). According to Esslin, the hardest criticism came from Moscow's International Association of Revolutionary Writers, which condemned The Measure as a "typically petty-bourgeois, intellectual piece of work" (143) since it deals with the conflict between reason and emotion which topic would lead to idealism.

Although Brecht was heavily criticized with The Measure, he continued to work on plays that promoted communism and its cause. His later work, The



Mother was praised by the Communist party for its exhibition of the October Revolution, and the presentation of the revolutionary behavior. Brecht' was described as a fighter for the "revolutionary working class" (Esslin 146), and the soviet dramatist Sergei Tretyakov though referring to Brecht as a typical German intellectual who is more concerned with the abstract problems, he still recognizes The Mother as Brecht's gradual step of entering the proletariat way of thinking and that he is starting to "free himself from the bourgeois attitude" (Esslin 146).

