

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Commodification of War in Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University,  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
English**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Shiva Pokhrel has completed his thesis entitled **Commodification of War** in Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* under my supervision. He carried out this research from December 2011 to June 2012. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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## Abstract

This research examines the portrayal of war and its relation with human beings. The play, *Mother Courage and Her Children* brings the event of twentieth century German women situations. To uplift their life, the character like Mother Courage deals with problems and hurdles implemented by males. The desertion is the outcome of the norms, values and customs of patriarchy with which the sole duty of women is limited inside the four walls and domestic chores. Mother Courage in this way is thrown in the thirty years war time. She has great challenges for making the way-line. In the case her own sons and familiar soldiers rest in the opponent section. Her role here stands as suppressed but only allowed to move as an inventory seller in course of war. The only solution for her is to utilize it and maintain society, family and her. So, war is commodified in her hands like an object. In the light the playwright protests against unequal distribution, which should be liberated to get rid women from the difficulty chronicle of thirty years war time.

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## Chapter I

### Bertolt Brecht and His Dramatic Works: An Introduction

*Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941) brilliantly illustrates both Brecht's dramatic method and its achievement. It is mainly because of the result of historical background set in numerous locations especially Sweden, Poland and Germany between 1624 and 1636. The play dramatizes the central ironic contradiction between Mother Courage's struggles to provide for and protect her children and business that insures their loss. However, the thirty years war deals where the story of the play goes. The thirty years of war is the name given to the European war that moved over Germany from 1618 to 1648. This war has proved to be the most destructing is Germany before the Second World War. It was more importantly the war between the forces of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism though it did not remain wholly a religious war because some political issues intertwined there. The reformation which had started more than a century earlier shattered Christendom into Catholic and Protestant. Again Protestant itself was unsteadily categorized into Lutheranism and Calvinism.

These obstacles to Catholicism were met by the counter-reformation that started with the foundation of socio-cultural aspects of Jesus as a militant organization of the Catholic Church. Hostility between all these opponent religious elements sprouted in sour taste and turned into violence because it intended secular interest like individual authority, dynastic objective and horizontal gain. Similarly the year 1618 was the era of broad spread political stress or tension. The Habsburgs dynasty was the major power in Europe. It governed most of central Europe comprising kings in Spain and Portugal. The Habsburgs stood uncompromisingly for absolutism and Catholic Church. Next, Catholic power was France, yet the power holders of Spain and France

were in a political rivalry for the past three centuries. In France, a new dynasty had recently emerged. The disguised antagonism between Habsburgs and Bourbon thus became more intense, that was the most important political factor in Europe.

More specifically, Germany was in a conglomerate of independent states understood as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, owed allegiance to the Austrian Habsburgs. In addition, there existed in Germany several smaller principalities and devastated free cities which created tension within the Empire. The Habsburgs wanted to establish the Catholic Empire by unifying Germany first and then Europe under the name of the Counter Reformation. It was the major intention during the Thirty Years War. The war actually began with an intra-quarrel in Germany. The Protestant Electors denied their elective crown to the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II. But he tried to extend his power over the Protestant parts of Germany.

The Protestant leader of Germany, Frederick was unable to hold the full support of all the Protestants, and suffered a greater defeat in 1620. After that it was handed over to Denmark to attempt in 1628 to launch and operate the Protestant resistance to the forces of the Catholic countries. For a time it seemed that the Catholic Emperor's role was in safe, and that his army under General Tilly was unable to fight against Protestant groups. In spite of the Catholic Church was saved by General Wallenstein who raised a special militia to assist Ferdinand under the leadership of General Wallenstein, the Catholics began to dominate the military condition and crushed all resistance by the Protestants. In 1630, King Gustavus of Sweden who was recognized as the 'Lion of the North' intervened with war to support Protestants. At first he could not get side from other nations and he therefore could not save the city of Magdeburg which was attacked and destroyed by General Tilly's troops.



Furthermore, soon king Gustavus got support of some nations and was able to weed out General Tilly in 1631. He was successful to bring about the death of General Tilly at the battle of the Lech in 1632. King Gustavus fought against Wallenstein and he was killed but his forces won decisive victory. King's death was a major disaster for Protestants though his Chancellor Oxenstierna took over command the Swedish troops. Later after Wallenstein was murdered for his personal ambition in 1634, two leaders of Habsburgs joined forces and inflicted a major defeat on the united Protestant troops. It is the symptom of Swedish encroachment in Europe – Germany. Since, the time onward war turned into a Catholic affair. The Swedes, having lost their warrior king, were now principally concerned with the acquisition of area, regardless of religious and mythical investment. Similarly, the German princes, great and small became more desired in securing territory than in the common cause of Protestantism or Roman Catholicism as the cause might be. The devastated and chaotic conflict recurred, though now no definite or bold issue engaged the minds of combatants.

Again, the whole evil business was brought to an ultimate point in 1648 which left several German territories in the hand of Sweden and France and which also brought about a re- categorization of the territories of the German Princes. The greatest suffering in this war was of course Germany which presented a shocking spectacle of death, destruction, devastation as well as great loss when the fighting penultimate. In this scenario the war lasted thirty years and had also so many intermissions of harmony cum peace during this time.

Between the years of 1618 and 1648, the thirty years' war shifted across Central Europe from the original rebellion in Bohemia to its conclusion in Westphalia. Seeing as how this was war so lengthy, it is no surprise that it has left such a lasting mark in

history. It must have also left a lasting impression on Bertolt Brecht since he decided to set his play *Mother Courage and Her Children* during this conflict nearly three hundred years after the event. Perhaps his inspiration for this play came about as he witnessed World War II unfolding across Europe. The political wheels in his head began to turn as he pieced this play together. He did not forget to illustrate the social and economical ramifications that come about in a war, including the changing roles of women and children as well as the practice of religion. Economically, monetary gains and losses occur in every war.

This war, like many others, began over a difference of religious beliefs. In the century leading up to the thirty years' war, Luther's idea had become widespread. The reformation had taken place, making yet another schism in the Catholic religion. This left a very harsh environment as the different electorates of the Holy Roman Empire followed one of two religions, Lutheranism or Catholicism. With feuding religions living in close proximity to each other, an intolerant environment emerged, which began due to the religious prosecutions from both religions. This is seen early in Brecht's play when the commander in the Swedish army, who was helping the German Protestants, called the current war a Holy War (35). Furthermore the willingness of people to hide their faith when faced with persecutions is evident when the Chaplain with the Swedish army dresses himself different as he and mother courage are captured by a Catholic army (Brecht 49). From that scene, one can realize that religion does not just spread from generation to generation; sometimes it can spread through force, which ultimately changes a society's culture. However, as professor Patrouch also stated, despite the fact that the war had started as a religious war, because of its length many people had become apathetic about their religion at the end. This too can be seen in the play as Mother Courage comes across an area that

was under bombardment; some soldiers and Chaplain try to help hurt peasant:  
“Protestant, Catholic, what do they care?” (71). The difference of religions no longer mattered, people needed help.

Because of its length, the thirty years’ war involved many large armies, of which some were mercenary armies. These new, roaming armies required an infrastructure that the current society was unable to provide. As professor Patrouch stated, these armies became new social structures where men, women and children lived, and worked. Women could not just tend to the home; they now had new duties to make up for the loss of their men. As such, women and children had to do extra work to help support the troops. This is where Mother Courage found a niche in which she could survive. Mother Courage is a part of these external, army suppliers that helped feed and keep the army moving. She supplied them with boots, belts and also food. When the Swedish army is holding siege a town in Poland, Mother Courage is seen supplying the commander with fowl as there is no food around the encampment (Brecht 36). Also, she is seen many times feeding and giving drinks to soldiers. In fact she is even capable of setting up a canteen tent (Brecht 73).

These episodes show army infrastructure change from centralized government to a more decentralized, capitalist-inspired infrastructure where everyone, men and women, were trying hard to make money from the war as well. So, not only was Mother Courage part of the new army structure, but also a venture capitalist trying to make enough money from the war to survive. As professor Patrouch noted in his lectures, these wars were too costly for a single figure to be able to successfully wage. The rulers of Germany and other participating territories had better luck outsourcing the job to mercenaries because peasants and constituents were in such a state of flux that taxes and seignurie did not provide a stable income to the nobles and

government figures. They feared that any increase in the taxes or seignurie might make peasants run to better places to join the army. As such, mercenary, capitalistic armies in which anyone could be of service able to make money. Profiting of the war became the norm at the time. The obvious exploitation of such terrible times did not escape Brecht's cynicism. As early as the first scene, we can see that everyone at this time, even Courage and the soldiers, knew the importance of such capitalism, yet at the same time the shameful nature of it as well. As the Sergeant in scene one claims, "you should be ashamed of yourself [...] you admit you live off the war" (29). Even as Mother Courage is providing food for the commander however, she haggles hard over the price of the capon she is trying to sell (34, 35). Being able to keep her supplies, sell, and stay alive is important. In scene 7, she refuses to give some linen to hurt peasants, yet they end up with the linen despite her protests (71). Her altruistic nature usually overrode her capitalistic urges.

Perhaps the one thing that ties the social and economical consequences of war together is death. The death of the young men in a war leaves wives without husbands, mothers and fathers without sons, and children without fathers. In addition to the soldiers, many casualties occurred among women and children as a result of the war. With such an unusual amount of death, a cloud of depression surely overwhelmed the war-torn area. Death can also be financially devastating. Wives have no husband to help support their families, jobs have no workers, and no one has any money to help keep the economy stable. Making a profit from the war was the best way to survive, but perhaps few people realized how difficult it would all be when the dust finally settled.

Thus, to view the play *Mother Courage and Her Children*, it is simple and straightforward in which no historical personality has any role in the action of the play

though the action is relatively based on historical chronicle war namely the Thirty Years War. The play conveys us to the spirit of times with which it deals. It obviously reflects the playwright's historical orientation of mind. The historical importance of Brecht's play lies in bringing to our minds, the havoc and the devastation which the thirty years war caused and the profound it had upon the lives of ordinary persons who are in this play represented by Mother Courage and her children, the chaplain, the Cook and some of the peasants. The technique that Brecht uses is observed through history. The dramatic persona are all non-historical but fictitious person. Together with the juxtaposes of the historical personalities like: Oxenstierna, King Gustavus, General Tilly and General Wallenstein in the contemporary historical loom makes the play lively and overshadows everything in story.

### **Bertolt Brecht as a Theorist of Drama**

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1965) is one of the major twentieth century theoreticians of drama. He identified himself not only German revolutionary poet, playwright and a novelist but also as a theorist of drama and a reformer of the stage. Alongside his plays, Brecht wrote many theories on drama and performance. These theories are in the form of statements and polemics as well as theatre poems. Brechtian theory of drama cannot be regarded as a single hegemonic body of doctrine, through out of his life it changed, developed and finally mellowed in accordance with the changes in his stage of writing and stage production. In this way his creations flourished in two periods; the years following the First World War as well as those coming after the second, though his fame was not so extensive internationally in the earlier phase. So, his career is to be calculated in two shreds.

Brecht as a dramatist had a great influence on the western intellectuals cum scholars. But he was also indebted to the past: Villon, Velaine, Rimbaud and later Kipling; furthermore the Japanese and Chinese theatre became strong influence on him from his childhood days; he was interested in art and literature. He was a medical learner when the First World War broke out in 1914. He could really feel the suffocation of the soldiers who were dying in the battle field and that really pinched him inwardly. At the time Brecht wrote a poem *Die Ballad Vomtton Soldaten* which told of military medical officers digging up the soldiers, pronouncing him fit for military service. Though interested in medical sector, he regularly presented seminars of drama at Munich University organized by Professor Arthur Kutsche. But he had different attitude from the professor, and that exclusion was precipitated by his first play *Baal* which he wrote in 1918. In this play, he set out to parody an expressionist drama, *The Loner*. At the turn of the year 1918-1919, soon after the outbreak of the so-called German revolution, he wrote another play entitled *Drums in the Night*. At this phase, expressionism was in the heyday. This play became his first stage success. So, the year he was awarded the Kleist prize as the best young dramatic talent in Germany and appointed as a 'dramaturge' to the Munich Kammerspiele. In 1923, there were two Brecht premises. The first *In the Jungle of the Cities*, which was almost a foreshadowing of 'absurd drama', subtitled as *The Struggle of Men in the Giant City of Chicago* was proved immensely successful. Critics praised this play in glowing terms saying that Brecht has changed the literary landscape of Europe by just one master piece. According to Martin Esslin, this strange play anticipates the plays of Beckett and Ionesco, which it resembles by its insistence on the possibilities of communication.

When Brecht started writing and producing plays as a young playwright, the German theatre was undergoing a point of hectic experimentation. The effect of naturalistic technique was so great in German theatre when Brecht was born. It was naturalistic theatre in the widest sense that had been agreed as the only possible stage convention survived in the form of parody. Expressionism has shown as a reaction against German naturalism after the First World War. Many writers took part in the post war Germanic movement of expressionism and it became the canonical dimension in the theatre. The beginning of the expressionist movement is included with collaboration along with the later plays of Gerald Hauptmann and those of R.J. Sorge. In short the institutional beginning of the expressionist movement may be paved to the 'Stormbuhne Theatre' which noticed that it would produce expressionist drama in expressionist stage. One of the Stormbuhne playwrights was the greatest modernist painter Oskarkokoschka.

The second play *Baal* scandalized the reviewers. Around 1923, the German theatre was at an impasse. On all directions, people were asking about its contextual function. At the same manner Brecht was favored with an unimportant job as stage manager in a pocket theatre in Munich. There he stretched his hand at adapting Marlowe's *Edward II* as a 'panorama style' chronicle play. It was his first directional venture and the first of the series of adaptations that he would borrow from the international repertory with assurance and ever growing liberty throughout his career. In this play Brecht substituted the communicative lyricism for the dreams like discharge of the expressionists. This play was the naïve style of historical paintings that anticipated Brecht's 'Epic Theatre' in many corners. In spite of, it shows his liking for new implementations and criticisms of literary themes.

In 1924 expressionism was closing its door in Germany and the novice realism or matter-of-factness became a tremendous genre. It participated objectively in the identification of realism that came into art and literature and the literatures as the novelty of expressionism faded. Brecht as an author of social plays drew upon some of the new realistic features. He was not yet dedicated Marxism but he was already turning towards didactic plays with social lessons; what he was to call “Lehrstücke.” Brecht’s growing social awareness is evident in *Mann ist Mann* (*Man is Man*); is a comedy. It is a play about the destruction of the individuality of Galy Gay. It signifies Brecht’s awareness of man as a helpless social creature, subject to manipulation and uncannily anticipates political techniques of brain washing.

Brecht categorized didactic plays to be acted by amateur proletarian organizations and school children. The didactic plays include *Das Bedener dehrstic Vom Einverstaendinus* (*The Didactic Play of Baden on Consent; 1928-29*) followed by *Der Jasger* (*He Who Says Yes, 1930*) and its dialectical counterpiece *Der Neinsager* (*He Who Says No, 1930*), *Die Massnahme* (*The Measure Taken; 1930*), *Die Ausnahme and Die Regal* (*The Exception and the Rule, 1930*), and *Die Horatier and die Kuriatier* (*The Horatii and Kuriatil, 1934*). The main objective of these didactic plays was to bring about a radical change in the human conditions and intentions of their environment.

Bertolt Brecht was now also being interested in political systems and its influence since about 1926 had become member with Marxist Studies in Berlin. Being highly motivated from Marxist interpretation of society that were in the bond of scientific the didactic plays of the period 1930-1935 in which his Marxist intentions are focused more than in his later and earlier dramas, are fewer doctrinaires. The plays written in the period (1930-34) are centered on the capitalist proletariat struggle. Shaking the



hands with an amateur music composer Kurt Weill he wrote an opera entitled *Three Penny Opera* in 1928 that grasped tremendous success. Similarly, Brecht's political locomotion had also begun to take concrete shape and he tried to put a strong political message into it. He devised a number of plays intended to impart political ideas. The most important of these directly political plays was *The Mother* based on Marxism; Gorkey's novel of the same name. It exposes his scholastic development towards proletarian class-consciousness. The play *The Mother* is a seminal kind of play that forecasts an orthodox communist propaganda especially with the Russian Revolution. The manufacture of the *Three Penny Opera* signed the initiation of Brecht's collaboration with the theatre of Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin. At this theatre he made up side down to the existing classical theatre by 'epic drama'.

Brecht had inaugurated publishing his current creations in periodical form called 'Versuche' (Experiments) in 1930s. In 1928, his *Three Penny Opera* was filmed in German and French versions. Brecht although wrote a film scrip on plight of the unemployed Kuhle Wample, which was instantly stopped. Anticipating the Nazi threat, he fled in Germany in 1933. Like several German scholars in exile, Brecht moved through European and American cities and shifted temporarily in Denmark in the same year, and then he and Kurt Weill composed a ballet – *The Seven Deadly Sins of the Petite Bourgeoisie* which was produced in Paris.

Meanwhile, the later phase of Brecht's career as a playwright belongs to the period of Second World War and the years following the Second World War. In this time the Nazis burnt his books. Amidst it he wrote a numbers of socio-political dramas like, *The Round Heads and the Long Heads*, *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich* etc. depicting a series of brief scenes lighting the situation of Nazi Germany. While he was passing his life in America he wrote *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. It focuses

mother's true love in blood and labour – ending with a Solomon like judgment. It was his best play during the time of exiled. During the Second World War his most of the life remained in shadow, since Brecht was an outspoken anti-Nazi; the German did not give chance to flourish his plays. Some of his plays were written in Switzerland-based and others were staged in American Broadway theatre based. *The Days of Commune* he wrote in 1948 at Switzerland was the last he actually completed. After arriving back to East Berlin in 1948 he wrote nothing special tasks rather put on and edited some of his old plays. In course of editing and translating the old plays he also gave second life of Shakespeare and Sophocles' *Coriolanus* and *Antigone* respectively.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* is an example of Brecht's epic theatre, a form of play in which events are mediated to the audience via a narrative voice in various guises, in the form of banners strung across the stage summarizing the content of the scene that follows, in the form of rhyming couplets or songs addressed directly to the audience (thus stressing the theatricality rather than the illusory reality of the performance), and in the manner of acting, whereby the actor is required to 'show' the behavior of his or her character. However, Brecht's theatre did not eschew emotion entirely as like traditional Aristotelian theatre. No one can watch *Mother Courage* as she hears her son being executed off-stage, unable to scream lest she betray herself, without identifying with her pain. But for Brecht empathy was not an end itself; it was only useful if it promoted critical reflection and the will to remove the causes of suffering. As a piece of epic theatre *Mother Courage and Her Children* has no truck with unities of action, time and place typical of classical drama. The play is unified not by plot but by argument, each episode contributing to the dialectical demonstration of the lesions the playwright wishes the audience to learn. In many

stances the lesson is left implicit, so that the spectator has to draw conclusions from the juxtaposition of contradiction, as when one scene ends with Mother Courage cursing the war while the very next shows her singing its praises again, seemingly mindless now of her bandaged daughter. When orthodox Communist critics complained that the play seemed to lack a positive message and in particular that Mother Courage fails to learn from experience, Brecht's reply was characteristic: what matter was not whether Mother Courage learned anything but that the audience should learn to see things differently.

Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* has elicited a number of criticisms since its publication. Various critics have commented upon this play from different perspectives. Many critics have professed many aspects of studies, although, the issue of Brecht's attempting to bring the theatricality is the most inclusive world view produced by social reality of our time and to use it in the struggle. His struggle is therefore different from established traditions of presentation; instead it seeks to determine and to fulfill social needs. Max Schroeder adds a further insight to the new technique of Brecht:

The terms which Brecht uses such as 'epic theatre', 'political theatre' etc. are not formalist dogmas, but stages of experimentation, aimed not at abolishing drama but rather a producing a new encounter with the audiences, a more binding encounter than that of the traditional theatre. His stage is arranged artistically that aesthetes attempt to construct a contradiction between this and 'political theatre'. But actually it reaches its artistic mastery by reason of the fact that it brings to light political truth, that it devotes all its

wisdom to clearing army ruins and to building a society proof  
against the catastrophe politicians. (118)

Another matter of concern for the critics has been the structure of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Eric Bentley has spoken of its structure as un-dramatic but highly theatrical. Bentley somewhat modifies the view when he says subsequently that he would speak of it, 'not as un-dramatic' but as 'a parody of the dramatic'. Fuego John has explained its structure as static in given lines: "Brecht's dramatic method eventually ends "in the destruction of the very symmetries he has created." It is the 'asymmetrical structure' of this play which accounts for all its power" (51).

Brecht was guided by left wing theatre of Erwin Piscator names Epic Theatre. Furthermore, he gradually became aware of the limitation of Piscator's theatre. Its aim was to produce reality on the stage and give the spectator an emotional experience and to make propaganda. Brecht wished his major character, Mother Courage to represent social developments. He did not want to reproduce reality but establish it in distanced ways. Brecht further improved Piscator's left wing concept by joining to translate Marxist ideology into drama. Willer further quotes Brecht what he said briefly to Marx: "I wanted to take the principle that it was not just a matter of interpreting the world, but of changing it, and mixing to 'theatre'."(248)

Brecht wrote this play to arouse among people the anti-war feelings though World War II began even before this play came to the pass of people. Ruby Catterji his note to *Mother Courage and Her Children* writes:

Brecht had in mind the vision of the thirty years war which for  
Germans remained the most destructive and futile. Brecht wrote Mother  
Courage before the outbreak of the Second World War to warn the European

nations against starting another world war. Brecht was highly agitated about the turn of events in Europe. Responding to the urgent need of the day denouncing war which was meant to serve as a warning but turned out to be a prophecy. (xxi)

According to Bernard Diebold, this play provides a “horrific picture of war written about with deliberate detachment and seen from below: a frog’s eye-view” (Quoted by Eric Bentley, xi). It means he used to observe the war’s negative as well as bad aspects in broad way. Mostly he was engaged with negative reflection to improve the bad aspects of society which was later named as a frog’s eye-view.

In short, *Mother Courage and Her Children* is an old mixture of tenderness and ruthlessness, of clumsiness and elegance of crankiness and logic, of wild cries and sensitive musicality. Undoubtedly, we can ascribe this invention to his lack of sense of construction. Brecht’s comments and revisions of the play make clear that he was concerned with audiences would overly sympathize with Mother Courage, that her losses, suffering and indomitable spirit would obscure the play’s thesis that war profits no one, least of all the “little folk” and that the pursuit of profit dehumanizes and destroys as inexorably as combat. Ultimately Brecht’s efforts to over-rule empathy in favour of reducing criticism is the vital complexity of the despicable and admirable Mother Courage down to the political and moral assertion, failed. In a sense audiences have continued to perceive an ever greater play than the one Brecht intended by responding to its ambiguous protagonist who is heroic in her endurance and suffering but condemned by her foolish pursuit of profit from the war that has cost her so much. Brecht’s stage innovations make clear both how the theatre can dramatize the most profound and complex human and socio-questions but can never

fully dispense with the power of felt experiences to communicate, modify and expand the message.

### **Mother Courage and Her Business in War**

The title character of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* has been the subject of much critical debate. Critics have arranged that Mother Courage's choices have been hard because of the demands of war-time life. Yet opinions vary widely on the nature of her true character. Some have labeled her a greedy coward; some call her callous, practical businesswoman; still others seem her courageous. In this scenario, Mother Courage is examined in terms of both positive and negative aspects. For every heroic action she takes, she balances it with a negative gesture. For recognition, positive aspect is courageous and noble, distinguished by bravery and admired by others. A negative quality is the exact opposite, someone who wallows in antiheroic evidences. By looking Mother Courage in this bifocal a greater understanding of her motives – specially the choices she makes – will be reached.

Mother Courage has two goals: for her family to survive the seemingly endless Thirty Years' War and to make a profit while doing so. The origin of her nickname "Mother Courage" is telling. During a battle in Riga, the former Anna Fierling drove her canteen wagon through a ferocious bomb attack so she could sell fifty loaves of bread before they went moldy. She claims she needed to sell the bread to feed her children, but by doing so, she put herself and everyone in the wagon at risk. How necessary a risk this was is not stated, but the act is illustrative of Mother Courage's nature as a businesswoman: she is willing to risk death to earn her profit. As a hero, she wants to survive the war and support her children. As an anti-hero, she puts that very intention at risk to earn money.

Mother Courage's canteen fulfills a need in the Thirty Years' War. Armies relied on such canteens to provide food, alcohol and goods, as many such items were not provided for the soldiers. For an unmarried woman with three children and no place to call home, the canteen wagon offers a decent livelihood for Mother Courage's family. With few alternatives, it is definitely more appealing than prostitution. Instead of begging for a living or abandoning her children, Mother Courage is responsible for her family. So, she is food bringer as well as protector in the family for subsistence. Her canteen allows her to take care of her children while fulfilling a basic need for the soldiers. Yet Mother Courage takes advantage of her heroic situation, looking to the war as potential for profit and her children as a means to that end. She charges outrageous prices for her goods and refuses charity to those in need. She is called greedy several times and regularly puts profit before people.

While Mother Courage does take care of her children, keeping them fed and clothed, and tries to protect them from direct participation in the war, she loses each of them in her quest for profit. She spends much of the first scene trying to keep Eilif from being recruited to a Swedish army regiment. He ends up joining when Mother Courage's attention is diverted by two soldiers who represent the potential sale. The officer takes Eilif aside and convinces him to sign up when the sergeant haggles with Mother Courage over the price of a belt buckle. If she had not been so concerned with profit, Eilif would not have been recruited (and subsequently executed for a crime).

Mother Courage's overwhelming concern for money also leads directly to the death of her next son, Swiss Cheese. When he is captured by Catholic soldiers, she haggles over the amount of a ransom that is offered to save him from the firing squad. Her greed prolongs the transaction, and Swiss Cheese is killed before a price is settled. Kattrin suffers a similar fate due to her mother's negligence. The mute

daughter is left with a peasant family overnight while Mother Courage is in a town purchasing goods. When Kattrin learns of a surprise attack on the town, she climbs to a rooftop and drums out a warning. Her selfless act saves her mother and the town, but she is killed by soldiers. Once again Mother Courage's preoccupation with her business (securing materials to sell), has prevented her from properly protecting her offspring. In these situations, Mother Courage's antiheroic nature outweighs her heroic actions.

Yet this is not a black and white issue: Mother Courage does make some sacrifices for her children and others as well. Her outfit has followed the Protestant armies, namely the Swedish, for most of the war. During an attack by the Catholics and a subsequent detention, Mother Courage does her best to hide the Protestant Chaplain who had been visiting her. She makes him take off his cleric's coat and put on a generic beggar's cloak. As the canteen follows the catholic armies around, she shelters the Chaplain's identity, though she insists that he do work to earn his keep (her antiheroic nature again revealing itself). Similarly, when the Swedish army Cook catches up to them and has nowhere to stay, Mother Courage lets him travel with them - though on the same work-for-shelter terms as the Chaplain.

Mother Courage and the Cook share the mutual affection for one another. When the Cook gets an offer to run an inn in Utrecht, he invites Mother Courage to assist him. She declines this opportunity to get away from the war. The cook will not let Kattrin, Mother Courage's only surviving child at this point, accompany them. This act shows the little character taking responsibility for her child, though some have argued that Mother Courage is not interested in working for the Cook and simply needs Kattrin to carry on her independent business.



In scene five, the canteen wagon is located at Magdeburg, where a recent battle has taken place. In a nearby farmhouse, several peasants are suffering from injuries and their home is partially destroyed. The Chaplain begs Mother Courage for some linen to bandage their wounds. Mother Courage says that she has already sold all the bandages she has, and she will not give him officer's shirts, which are made of linen, for this purpose. The Chaplain begs her, but she replies, "They have nothing and they pay nothing!" It is not until Kattrin threatens Mother Courage with a board and the Chaplain bodily moving her from the wagon that he gets the needed linen. This incident is one of the best examples of Mother Courage's antiheroic nature.

Despite such selfish actions there is evidence that Brecht's title character has redeemable qualities which she has imparted of her offspring. Of her three children, two perform heroic acts, which say something positive about how she raised them. After Swiss Cheese is arrested by the Catholics, he protects his mother and sister by denying he is related to them (he tells his captors that he was merely eating a meal at Mother Courage's canteen). This action probably saves their lives.

The mute Kattrin pursues her heroism to much greater length, taking great personal risks to help others. Kattrin tries to warn Swiss Cheese about the spies that are following him before his arrest to no avail. When Kattrin overhears the Cook telling Mother Courage that Kattrin is not part of the offer, Kattrin makes ready to leave so that her mother can have a better life. Mother Courage refuses to abandon her daughter, however, and they move on together. The mute girl care also shows great concern for the wellbeing of those outside her family, forcing her mother to surrender the linen for bandages and risking her life to save children from a fire. At the end of the play, Kattrin does give her life to save a town from a surprise attack. The upbringing of these two children is implicitly heroic for Mother Courage.

Yet, in keeping with the duality of the character, Mother Courage's remaining child displays the influence of her darker side. After Eilif is recruited, he becomes a cutthroat soldier. He is lauded by his commander for his skill as a killer and for pillaging a peasant village, including the clever theft of a herd of oxen. Later, he is arrested for the same crime during peacetime. It is implied that he is executed for this. Eilif's actions are antiheroic, directly contributing to the death and destruction of war. His behavior counters his siblings' bravery, balancing the heroic with antiheroic actions.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* was Brecht's masterpiece published in 1941. Since it was multiple performed that excavates his high mark of genius as a creator of realistic play. Though the characters are in general, less idealized than his rest of the works; it highlights the contemporary aspects and problems created by the war. The play gives a glimpse of handling the children by a mother in the absence of her husband. In its course she has to save the life of her three children in the pressure of recruiters. It means they time and again haggle for including Eilif in soldier. But Mother Courage does not want to happen so. Ultimately she loses him for all. Similarly, her next son engages in the rank of paymaster without her recommendation. At last, she is continuing her life with dumb daughter, Katrin in the line of inventory seller. Katrin as a female character shown disable and tussled by outside factors. In course of war, while she wants to save the life of village at midnight, she is shot for all by Catholics. In this point triangular subject matter is connected in the story: engagement of Eilif in army camp, Swiss Cheese in paymaster and finally Mother Courage as a wagon puller with silence daughter. To view it in subaltern, for example Mother Courage as a female character has been given patriarchal duty, but has not

taken seriously in the issue that while she wants to protect her children turned up-side-down. More specifically, she is controlled by dramatic window where Sergeant says: “you pulling my leg? I’ll knock that sauce out of you. S’pose you know you got to have a license.”(3) We can understand from this remark that Mother Courage is controlled by Sergeant. To sell her food items, weapons, and medicines she must be proved with license.

Furthermore, Yvette Pottier is playing the role of camp prostitute who will make her life-road map through war. She has married with a rich person Colonel but had died and she is now alone inheriting his estate of castle to pass her daily praxis. She does neither subject role nor object fascination in the life of Katrin. She seems a showy character and wants to imprint unique impression to others eyes. Her fat but short height can be seen in different expensive dresses. So she is commodified in different looks by different people. Amidst it, the Cook says: “got you into high society more like, far as I can see” (17).

Katrin is Mother Courage’s teenage mute daughter who hopes to be married and have her own children, but dies trying to warn villagers of an impending attack. She distinguishes herself as the character who most obviously suffers from traumas of war. It was happened by the war in her childhood. Throughout most of the play she figures as the war’s helpless witness, unable to save her brother, Eilif’s recruitment or Swiss Cheese from Catholic spies. As Courage continually notes real virtues and goodness are silenced during war. Katrin’s dumbness is highly symbolic in the play. She is psychologically mute because nature abused her in the time of war. Katrin’s kindness manifests itself in particular with regard to children and her maternal impulses perhaps standing against Courage’s relentless dealing and refusing failure to

protect her children. On the other hand Katrin becomes the most dominant figure at the final scene of the play by creating the noise to awake the village-children, her goodness overcoming the impending massacre of the children. Her reward is to be shot and then buried anonymously with her mother harnesses on.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* is a play full of such balances and contradictions. Mother Courage continually curses war at embraces its circumstances for profit and survival. Peace means uncertainty to her, and there is no profit in uncertainty. Of her two goals, preserving her family through the war and turning a profit, she achieves neither by the play's end. All her children are dead, the canteen wagon is nearly empty, and she has little money. She is now resigned to hauling the wagon by herself.

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents brief introduction including the thirty years war and the discussion on the property and significance of topic and its hypothesis. The second chapter deals with the discussion with theoretical tools that is applied to analyze the text. The major tool will be the Marxist Feminism for analyzing the "Commodification of War" in the play. The third chapter will apply the theoretical tool to the text and prove the hypothesis. Finally, the last chapter will be the Brechtian techniques as well as conclusion of the research on the basis of textual analysis.

## Chapter II

### **War as a Commodity in *Mother Courage and Her Children***

Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* is the story of duties and responsibilities in the hand of woman. It depicts the issue of women's roles, their motherly and familial protection upon children as well as doing business during the time of thirty years war for survival. It is the claim of male guided by patriarchal mentality that ultimately leads Mother Courage far from the reality. She is a mere agent of war.

Marxists claim insights into human behavior involve the damaging effects of capitalism on human psychology and those damaging effects often exhibit in our relationship to the commodity. For Marxism, an object's value lies not in what it to do - use value, but in the money or other objects for which it can be traded - exchange value or in the social status it confers on its owner - sign exchange value. An object becomes commodity only when it has exchange value or sign exchange value, and both forms of value are determined by the society in which the object is exchanged. For instance, Mother Courage invests the essential merchandises such as: weapons, medicine, bandage, food and clothes during the time of war and sells them to the soldiers. She does not use those directly but sells them in good amount and uses the money come from the business. So, it has exchange value. In other words, she commodifies the war time when she buys it as a financial investment, that is, with the thinking of selling it for more money, or when she buys it to impress other people with her refined taste. To sell the items in the name of war has exchange value or sign exchange value. So war is commodity for Mother Courage's eyes. To read Mother Courage's activity seems working class character with exchange value. With the

profit of business she is maintaining her domestic problems. Here, she has no relation to conspicuous consumption. She as a seller lies in the category of haves; on the contrary as a worker she depends in war to profit and protect the children and war is a subsistence of life; hence have-nots.

From the beginning of the play war's commodification is like corporation in the economic field. As such, the first appearance of Mother Courage is accompanied by her dumb daughter on her canteen wagon, drawn her two sons, to join the new war. Mother Courage is completely anxious about the safety of her sons. Her fear of war is outstripped by her hope of business prospects. The contradiction remains in the fact that she wants to maintain her family by means of the war while keeping them safely out of it. She is careful on the premature death of soldiers. On finding that recruiting officers and Sergeant are very interested to sign up her sons in the military force, she wants them doing against doing any such other thing. She says to the Sergeant that "a soldier's life is not for sons of mine" (7). Stating to her elder son Eilif, Courage argues that "this one is just a baby. You will die him like a lamb to the slaughter" (8). Mother Courage with these dictions also fortunes with black crosses is a sly manoeuvre to prevent her sons from being recruited, first by putting off the Sergeant and then by conflicting her own children. Despite this, the war takes away Mother Courage's elder son Eilif. The conflict between mother's love and her keen business suggests the patriarchal mentality which contaminated the whole system. It is a disagreement upon female's decision. Eilif as a male character inclines toward patriarchy. So, he does not see any problem with the way things currently are.

Disagreement between feminists and non-feminists can occur with respect of both the normative and descriptive claims as well, e.g., some non-feminists agree with feminists on the ways women ought to be viewed and treated, but do not observe any

hardship with the series the action happens. Others disagree about the background ethic or political views. For the obvious conflict on schematic account of feminism, Susan Edward specifies feminism as:

Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program. (176)

From these lines Edward is presenting the idea of “oppression” and “disadvantage” as polemical form for substantive account of injustice over which feminists disagree.

To view Mother Courage with the wagon as an inventory seller through Marxist feminism is a source of plight at woman in society. It impacts implicitly that males are superior to the females. To look it in another angle; female’s occupation is challenging task because no woman in the war may risk the life in business. It is mainly because she is profiting from war as a stakeholder. In this logic war is commoditized in the hand of Mother Courage. She in this moment is shown constantly in a double perspective as an object both of criticism and of sympathy. She is criticized for her entrepreneurial approach to “war as an opportunity to gain” (2).

In course of time Courage has been travelling for the sake of business through Poland with the Second Finnish Regiment of the Swedish armies. The scene adjusts two concurrent actions which converge briefly at the end. The first is that Courage is looked in hard haggling with the Commander’s Cook over the sale of a capon. She explores how quick profits can be made in war time by seizing the right moment to inflate prices. This scenario also reflects through narrative, how Eilif displayed his

bravery by stealing the cattle of peasants which will serve as food for the Swedish soldiers. The Commander highly felicitates the mighty deeds of Eilif.

For Marxist feminists, gender oppression in class oppression women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression. To analyze women's situation in society understanding of socio-economic context is the prime requisite. Marxist feminism connects the oppression of women to Marxist ideas about exploitation, oppression and labor. It also is the belief that women's situation cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-economic context, and that any meaningful improvement in the lines of women requires that this context of changed. In regards, Althusser opines, "we live in class society that is also structured by gender, which means that men and women experience class in different ways" (258).

The play *Mother Courage and Her Children* mentions Mother Courage's youngest son, Swiss Cheese is now working as a cashier with the Second Finnish Regiment. Scene 2 shows some successes of war, whereas scene 3 reflects its ravages clearly emphasizing the false result of the action. Mother Courage is explaining the backdrop of war in the scene. There is sudden unexpected attack by the Catholic army upon the Second Swedish (Protestant) regiment which being unprepared for battle has to flee. Besides the sudden attack of Catholic soldiers on the Protestant regiment, there is a lot of actions and suspense in scene 3. The endeavor of Swiss Cheese with the regimental cash box, the endeavor of Swiss Cheese to save the cash box of his regiment and prevent it from falling into the hands of enemy, the arrest of Swiss Cheese by Catholic Sergeant, the desperate efforts of Mother Courage to save the life of Swiss Cheese, the active role played by Yvette in the whole affair etc. are the series which greatly excite the attention of audiences.



Marxist feminism is a sub-type of feminist theory which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way of liberating women. Marxist feminism states that the private property which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relation between men and women is the root of women's oppression in the current social context. Marxist feminism's foundation is led by Friedrich Engels in his analysis of gender oppression in *The Origins of The Family, Private Property and the State*. He claims that a woman's subordination is not result of her biologic disposition but of social relations, and that the institution of family as it exists is a complex system in which men command women's service. But, a little different some critics stress the main strain of feminist movement strongly refuses the cultural definition of women which tries to fix women's identity which the male dominated canon, "Marxist feminist criticism the way which literature or other cultural production reinforces or undermines to economic, political, social or psychological oppression to empower the women on the way the male want them to be" (81). The lines by Lois Tyson clarify the multi-aspects of duties and challenges.

Brecht's technique achieves by presenting mother courage's stoical manner that she fully engaged in her work, as such she endures the death of body of Swiss Cheese without flinching. In this point she is indebted toward war and seems different while reading the play. "The capitalists take double advantages by domestic exploitation and depending on their wages as well" (73). In terms of Marxist theory Heidi Hartmann in the essay *Women's Oppression Today* forwards women's significant appearance; they sit on the sidelines of the grand struggle between capital and labors. Marxist claims capitalism in relation to exploitation of matter, which in turn are woman. In capitalistic background one takes advantages on double ground, domestic exploitation

that is condition of Swiss Cheese and also having debate of war vis-à-vis to sell their wages.

Marxist feminist has extended traditional Marxist analysis by looking at domestic labor as well as wage work in order to support their position. Marxist feminists agree that domination of women by men is in timely connected with patriarchal capitalism because patriarchy and capitalism are mutually supportive. Within the household chores, women produce labor power in the sense of bearing children and caring their husband who are workers, which supports men but the women do not get benefits of their domestic works. Commenting on the operation of patriarchy Sheila Ruth writes:

Patriarchy is probably the oldest forms of exploitation of one part of population by another. It probably has also served as the model for all other forms of relation, by then on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion of class, such system is established, those in the high caste positions in this case males develop a vested interests in the maintenance of the basic structure and their own advantaged status [...] the short run interest of males as males, and perhaps more importantly, as traders of political, economic, cultural institutions are best served by maintaining and reinforcing their traditional gender roles. (115)

Marxist feminism tries to find similarities between male and female in the family or bourgeoisie and proletariat in society. Husband, father or male member is like bourgeoisie in the society and wife in a family is like a proletariat in society. It does not mean that women are suffering with in family but family itself is initiating unit for woman domination.

Marxist feminists base their argument on moral rights and wrong in reference to the corruption of wage labor that is in itself an expression of oppression, that the workers are inevitably enslaved under a system of production where deprived of knowledge and skill, they are reduced practically to nothing. Following the doctrine, Gayle Rubin writes in the essay *The Traffic in Woman: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex* argues:

The exchange between capital and labor which produces surplus value, and hence capital is highly specific. The worker gets a wage; the capitalist gets the things the worker has made during his or her time of employment. If the total value of the things the worker has made exceeds the value of his or her wage, the aim of capitalism has been achieved. (229)

This can occur because the wage is determined not by the value of what the laborer makes, but by the value of what it makes to him or her going – to reproduce him or her from day to day, and to reproduce the entire work force from one generation to next.

Women's exploitation is everywhere. Before and after marriage women become the victim of sexual and other physical exploitation. Marxist feminist compares sex to work. Capital to men and work to women and whatever business is done by women assumed weightless and wage-less. There is no desire for women's joy and rights. Engels sees such desire, marriage and exploitation as a form of prostitution. It should not be limited to sexual services sold by the prostitute wife. Friedrich Engels needs some room in the system:

The pairing family, itself too weak and unstable to make an independent household necessary or even desirable, in no wise destroys the communistic household inherited from earlier times. Communistic housekeeping, however, means the supremacy of women in the house, just as the exclusive recognition of the female parent, owing to the impossibility of recognizing the male parent with certainty, means that the women – the mothers, should be in high respect. (89)

From the above quote women's confined field in between of four walls should be edited from tradition to present. If such happens only then society becomes educated. Thus, Marxism needs equal respect male and female having their categorical doings outside or inside the house.

When a society moves through the lesson plan of male, at such, females' jobs are taken outside the plan. Sex in relation to females and their outdoor business put in the backdrop of males. As the workers in the factory, females also put in the same balance for the purpose of children, husbands and other domestic chores as voluntary agent. "Workers work very hard for the production of the factory and produce a large quantity but none of them get name or any other mark of their individual contribution" (Tyson 58). So, the workers are alienated from the production. They find the work unpleasant but they are bound to do their work. "Workers' humanization becomes the actual source of his or her dehumanization; the worker is bound to undergo a major psychological crisis" (Tong 44). Therefore workers are alienated from the human beings as well, because they see around them their co-workers as competition for job and promotion as the capitalist system encourages. This sense of competition for job and promotion alienate workers from co-workers. In

this system, finally workers are alienated from the nature itself, “because the kind of work they do and condition under which they do, it make them see nature as an obstacle to their survival” (Tong 44). So, they are alienated from natural itself also because of capitalistic economic system. Therefore the most important aspect for elimination of alienation is the eradication of capitalism.

Mother Courage while dealing with her intention of business, she is far from societal harmony, celebration and other cultural aspects. Along with this the weather of time has also the same. Winter season needs people to make cool and cool but other characters go against it. The Chaplain while discussing with Courage about time converts as patriarchal mentality:

The Chaplain:                      Courage I have often thought that your dry way  
of talking conceals more than just a warm heart.  
You too are human and need warmth.

Mother Courage:                      Best way for us to get this tent warm is plenty of  
firewood. (11)

From the dialogue there is a gap in perspectives where the Chaplain wants to talk climate of physical warm but it is not understood by Courage. It shows that in capitalist market how the women are deepened in busy life. There is devoid of basic entertainment and ritual motives. So, it is exploitation.

Along with the hot bargaining in her business, the side of army once has deprived to buy the essential items from Courage. The environment in the scene features another extended scene is that of exchange: the pawing of the canteen. The camp prostitute, Yvette exchanging her body with the money to buy the canteen from Mother Courage

seems her status that how she falls in capitalism. The strategy adds mother Courage to buy her son's life. In the *Model Book*, Brecht presents Yvette's Colonel as a "negative entity", a lustful whose primary function is to demonstrate, somewhat violently, and the price Yvette pays for her work:

Yvette:                    Yes my friend thinks I should clinch it, but I'm not sure. If its only a pledge ... so you agree we ought to buy outright?

Colonel:                 I agree, pet.

Mother Courage:       Best look and see if you can find anything for sale then; maybe you will if you don't rush it, take your friend along with you, say a week or fortnight, might find something suits you.

Yvette:                    Then lets go looking. I adore going around looking for things, I adore going around with you, Poldi, isn't such fun; isn't it? No matter if it takes a fortnight. How soon would you pay the money back if you got it? (13)

In Marxist society women are regarded as a step ahead than men, where there is women work or action becomes a sample option. Sample option takes good market for business. That is why in the section of parlor, visiting room, and reception their face can be seen in large number. It is good omen in the steps of men. The character Yvette in the case of pawing of the canteen has appeared uniquely. Her role in such a

case seems a little different. As a prostitute she can earn money and fulfill her physical needs. Prostitution on another perspective is a labor:

In fact, her own sexual activity would probably have passed unnoticed in a man (she married twice and had two other recorded affairs) and she certainly never advocated promiscuity. She did however hold the view, then through shocking in woman, that sex was neither sinful nor shameful, but that it could be a high form of human activity, and she showed sympathetic tolerance for the sexual experimentation that characterized the chaotic post-revolutionary years, in which rejection of bourgeoisie values was equated by some with rejection of all sexual restraint. (Bryson 139)

The above mentioned lines get rid out the message that in society some rules are applied for woman and men categorically, but a few women do not care them and surpass them easily in the name of pleasure and rights. They think that pleasure (sex) is neither sinful nor shameful. In the manner of sex they become sympathetic and submissive. At such remark women as proletariat go against bourgeoisie values that are equated by some despite of social restrains.

Another issue related to Mother Courage regards the war as indispensable (because is source of livelihood) yet, she knows herself a bitter foe of the war. She wants the war to continue because she is earning her livelihood from it, and yet she knows of the great damage the war has done to her personally. Mother Courage then goes to say, "I'll not see Swiss Cheese again and where my Eilif is Good Lord knows. Curse the war!"(25). Mother Courage asserts that her need of war destroys the weak people. She communicates to the Cook that the peace has broken her neck. She whole-heartedly

admires it and speaks, “I want let you spoil war for me. If war does destroy the weak, peace does nothing better than that war in fact feeds the people better than peace does” (25).

Mother Courage supports that the war brings prosperity even though it employs arms and ammunitions which cause great devastation. War needs fighters and they may be killed during the war, and so, meet premature deaths. Yet, war is a ‘business proposition.’ Here, again we realize the two fold nature of war. Mother Courage is aware of both these aspects of war.

Brecht tries to glance women differently. Being categorized Courage behaves like same; like a hyena of the battle field. She shows her insensitivity towards the wounded persons when she refuses to give away her costly shorts to be torn into bandages for the wounded Protestants of the city which had been attacked and plundered by the catholic forces of General Tilly. Here we find her lacking almost completely inhuman feelings. When the Chaplain insists on getting the shirts from her, she says to him, “ I can’t give you any, with all I have to pay taxes, duties, bribes [...] ” (46).

Mother Courage supports song in the scene 7, reflects her desire for the continuity of war. Here, Mother Courage pronounces of a war as a ‘business proposition’ which involves not the purchase and sale of cheese but the firing of guns. She says:

War is a business proposition

Not with cream cheese but steel and lead

Hurries to dig themselves grave. (26)



Furthermore, Mother Courage is not communicated any ethical lesson for herself from this destructiveness of war. It is a song; Brecht uses new technique that adds spice in *Mother Courage and Her Children*. By the way of song Courage becomes full awareness of the fact that a war kills people prematurely and that the soldiers, who dig a trench to be safe against the enemy attack. It draws the lesson for herself and earns her livelihood by selling merchandise to them. She welcomes the continuance or prolongation of war.

In terms of feminist politics, this implies a liquidity which identifies the historical specificity of any situation and the possibilities to which it gives rise; socialist and modern Marxist priorities and tactics are not therefore to be written in tablets of stone, but must be based on a realistic appraisal of existing circumstances. Nevertheless an agreed key area is the struggle over conditions of production, for here Marxist feminists are working demands on both as women and as workers. In similar background Engels says, "When women workers achieve a living ways, they are not just workers winning a concession from capitalism, they are also women winning economic independence from men" (90). This struggle must however be extended to include conditions of social reproduction and the sexual division of labor; this may include demands for sexual autonomy, reproductive rights and new forms of family organization. These may in turn involve conflicts with both the state and individual men within the home; such political or personal struggles are not however to be understood in isolation, for gains made at these levels are seen to acquire meaning only in a wider social and economic context, with favoring it Rubin tells, "a kinship system is an imposition of social ends upon a part of the natural world" (233). This means that many modern Marxist feminists, legal gains and mainstream political are not to be written off as mere formalities that conceal the unchanging realities of

patriarchal oppression, like: the family and workplace, the law and state institutions are ‘arenas of struggle’ in which battles may be fought and real gains won; in line with modern Marxist thought many also see the struggle over ideology as of critical importance. In all of these areas women may find themselves working with men or class issues or supported by men in their feminists demands; many are however prepared to see men as potential enemies in some areas of sex as well as allies in others and therefore advocate autonomous women’s organizations along with participation in existing structure.

To analyze that, why women fall in the exploitation of men is mainly because the established socio-political and cultural practices. In case of *Mother Courage and Her Children* the scenario of 1920s women situation was loose because it was the post war era whereas the environment was in reconstruction process. The impact of war was over women. Who was in bold in manner that person would rule over women through society as well as common people. “The marriage of Marxism and feminism has been like the marriage of husband and wife and depicted in this common law, Marxism and feminism are the one that is Marxism” (607). To go these lines of Heidi Hartmann, it is the husband (man) who represents power – Marxism and wife represents feminism in the situated culture.

The Peasant’s wife (weeps): Please spare our cattle, captain; it’d be  
starving us to death.

The ensign: They’re dead if he goes on being  
obstinate.

First Soldier: I’m taking the ox first.

The Young Peasant (to his father): Have I got to? (The wife nods.)  
Right.

The Peasant's wife: And thank you kindly, caption,  
for sparing us, forever and ever,  
Amen. (36)

When the war was moving in one night in January 1636, a Catholic Lieutenant and three soldiers entered into the Peasant's village with full armor, the villagers were fully frightened. The Old Peasant by its cause climbs on the roof and spies a Catholic regiment, which has killed the watchman and readies for a surprise attack on the town. The soldiers demand to God for peace but it is not the demand of Courage. Peasant's Wife and Ensign want to save their life and castles. They are starving and under the roof of death by the cause of war's devastation.

From the analysis of Marxist feminism that the oppression of women in capitalist society must be situated within the oppression of women throughout the world, and that male domination elongates far beyond this context. Again socialist revolution is not of itself achieve women's liberation and freedom. Michele Barrett stresses also the intimate networks between economic oppression and the "role of familial and domestic ideology," as well as the changing form of the family organization during and since the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The most significant elements, then, of the oppression of women under capitalism are "the economic organization of households and its accompanying familial ideology, the division of labor and relations of productions, the educational system and the operations of the state," as well as the processes of creations and recreations of gender subjects.

Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* depicts male female dichotomy in various sect. Alongside with war Mother Courage wants to be far from community's periphery. She in this manner moving confidently through different battle fields despite the war's trouble. In course of this trip she has devoid of male company to save the children and her coming days. To observe it from the next eye it or seems questionable that the business is in horizontal slope. Furthermore, there comes the appraisal of real motif. From the canteen wagon one can not support the four members in a roof. But modern Marxism claims that she as a responsible mother being subverting the parochial thinking on male female dichotomy. Here, Simon the Beauvior explores her argument from the book *The Second Sex* (1949). Male ideology makes women the second sex. Women are made inferior by society and culture. That is why she goes like this: women are not born as women, but made women" (995). The book by Beauvior is an overall account of the then made women and their aspects in the eyes of males.

In Marxist analysis one class presses on another, for all the aiming to procure respect on account of their property; and property once gained will procure the respect due only to talents and virtue. Men neglect the duties incumbent on woman, yet are treated like demigods. Faith is also excluded from morality by an opportunistic veil yet men wonder that the world is almost, literally speaking, and a den of oppressors.

Brechtian technique of singing the song is an indomitable feature to the play. While the scene moves ahead women's condition is smoothly exhibiting through war. But the song of Courage it can care and make easy of all lives, so long as guns and swords are available. Courage sings:

War can care for all its people  
 So long as there is steel and lead  
 Though steel and lead are stout supporters  
 A war needs human beings too  
 Report today to your head quarters!  
 If it's to last, this war needs you! (26)

Once again we find that financial optimism in Mother Courage's mind. She tells the Cook that the end of war has broken her neck. It is a song in praise of war and handling it too through her line. This song also invites people to sign up from the military force.

After the song, ideology can be seen in haggling policy in the play frequently. Ideology moves through language which is equated to songs that works as a weapon for the ruling class and perpetuates the same imposed thought upon them. Courage as a wagon seller known as haves and whoever jumbles around this sect are have-nots. That is why it is a relation of bourgeoisie and proletariat. She as a Marxist feminist is on the summit and rescuing the base. At another axis she is a meat bringer in the family. If Courage does not run the business as a worker there comes more problems in the whole system. Despite where she belongs, the function of such relation can be seen through her interest of particular class, product of the position and sustainable legitimacy. In this regard the revisionist Marxist thinker Louis Althusser argues:

Ideology manifests itself in different ways in the discourse of each of the semi autonomous institutions of an era, including a literature, and

also the ideology operated to form the position the users of language as the “subjects” in a discourse, in a way that in fact subjects them - that is subordinates them to the interests of the ruling classes.” (183)

An ideology is the product of position and interest of a particular class that is male in our society. In any historical period, the dominant ideology embodies and serves to prove the continuance interests of the dominant social class that is female.

So, by the continuation of war, as the play moves ahead, amidst its scene 7 describes the death of the Swedish king Gustavus in 1632. The Swedish king Gustavus has been killed in the battle of Lutzen, but the war is not over. This only brings about the temporary ‘outbreak of peace’ which has ironic consequences.

Brecht, then, includes the concluding point of where the imperial army plans to cover more and more territories. It also presents the effects of the war. The war has lasted sixteen years and is still continuing. Germany has suffered heavy losses in terms of both human and material resources. The country is going through very hard times. The hunger-raging town has burnt down, and famine staring the people in their faces. Half of the citizens have been killed while the rest is by plague. The once-paradise country now appears the desert area.

Women are, in common with man, rendered weak and luxurious by the relaxing pleasures which wealth procures; but added to this they are made slaves to their persons, and must render them alluring that man may lend them his reason to guide their tottering steps aright. Or should they be ambitious, they must govern their tyrants by sinister tricks, for without rights there cannot be any incumbent duties. The laws respecting woman make an absurd unit of a man and his wife; and then, by the

easy transition of only considering him as responsible, she is reduced to a mere cipher.

The last remaining part reconfigurates the history faithfully in reflecting both the scene of unclarity cum despair. Scene 11 describes the fact the war is continuing. It is now the month of January in 1636. The Catholic troops has been having the upper hand, and the time, they pose a grave threat to the Protestant town of Halle. They are launching a surprise attack on it in darkness of the night in order to destroy the town and its inhabitants including the innocent children. Thus, there seems to be no end of war yet.

Gender is a socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality. Kinship systems rest upon marriage. They therefore transform males and females into “men” and “women”, each an incomplete half which can only find wholeness when united with the other. To envision the play the main character Mother Courage and other secondary characters like Yvette and Kattrin are not with male company. Because in Marxist reading women assume capital is equal to the male partner. Furthermore, they that is why far from the husband, relative and other nearer. Men and women therefore are different. But they are not as different as day and night, earth and sky, material and spiritual. In fact, from the stand point of nature men and women are closure to each other than either is to anything else-for instance mountains, kangaroos, or coconut palms. In specific terms that are men and women are more different from one another than either is from anything else must come from somewhere other than nature. There will always be some women who are higher than some men, for instance, even though men are on the average higher than women. But the idea that men and women are two mutually exclusive categories must rise out of something other than a nonexistent natural position.

In the play, the historic personalities like King Gustavus, Tilly and Oxensterna are in the play's surroundings. The historical events are distanced by a mere passing, mentioned in the synopsis of scenes or displayed in placards where the narrative voice is that of the impersonal chronicles. Against this as background, the repercussions of events on the lines of little people are fully acted out on the stage creating a dialectical tension between reportage and dramatic action. While historians of thirty years war have given sufficient importance to its religious fanaticism, Brecht underrates this aspect for the sake of attributing economic and political motivation to the warmongers. It was Brecht's strategy that capitalism was a system of economic exploitation which perpetrated wars; that was the continuation of big business of other means. In his note to the play *Mother Courage and Her Children* Brecht mentions:

The thirty years war was one of the large scale wars waged by capitalism over Europe in the name of war of religion and that war was the continuation of big business by other means. It portrays the essentiality of life and future gleans of happy enrollment. (87)

The conditions of Europe in 1938 when Brecht wrote this play seemed to indicate to him that capitalism was about to launch another large scale war with the same motif, manifesting itself in the rise of Nazism under the claptrap of Hitler. The spread of the thirty years war all over the continent of Europe seemed to indicate to Brecht that this time too if a war did break out, it would spread to all the countries of Europe. The destruction of Magdeburg was only one example of the kind of brutality which a war perpetrated. He wanted to convey his audiences the lesson that, "capitalism shouldn't only be curbed but destroyed so that the economic, social and political welfare of the people could be ensured" (100). He also wants to express the idea that the defeats and victories in a war affect only the chaps at the top and not the chaps at the bottom. The



plight of Mother Courage is the plight of poor classes under a capitalist form of the society. The fate of the three children symbolizes the fate of proletariat under the roof of capitalist system. Moreover, in the song of great capitulation, Mother Courage urges a common soldier to surrender to his captain in a mood of helplessness “of a proud man who joined the army and quickly came to submit to its discipline and ultimate capitulation” (19). This symbolizes the predicament of the common people under a capitalist design.

Taking the voice of marginalized class, the Young Man in the play there is no existence in war’s time. “Mother, its peace. What’s the matter?” (30). When the town was driven by the lot of Lutherans, no one does better solution as if there were the security of armies. At such a point Courage and those peasants and workers are own business. To go through Marxist line they should raise up for freedom as well as against oppression.

According to Marxist interpretation economic infrastructure is linked in day to day activities. In spite of war’s impact has shown in the characters like Mother Courage, Cook and Chaplain share regarded nationalist intention about the war that the king only received to liberate the Poles and Germans from the tyrannical Kaiser and had to retaliate when so unreasonably attacked by these nations. As Courage notes that the Cook is no Swede. The war, as the play suggests throughout, is about profit. Thus, the economic metaphor is very appropriate, because the king got nothing but trouble for his outlays and goodness, forcing him to taxes back home. On the contrary of king’s side war includes warriors and they have given their life for the country. It is faith that leads courage in battlefield.

The Cook: Very true. It's a war all right in one sense that requisitioning, murder looting and the odd bit of rape thrown in, but different from all other wars because it's a war of faith stands to reason. But its thirsty work at that, you must admit. (10)

War is a faith despite it has the features of looting, rape and losing the life. One should with faith behind it only then it can be true in the capitalistic circle.

Women consume economic goods. What economic products do they give in exchange for what they consume? The claim that marriage is a partnership, in which the two persons married produced wealth which neither of them, separately, could produce, will not bear examination. A man happy and comfortable can produce more than one unhappy and uncomfortable, but this is as true of a son or father as of a husband. To take from a man any of the conditions which make him happy and strong is to cripple his industry, generally speaking. But those relatives who make him happy are not therefore his business partners, and entitled to share his economic income.

Marxist only deal with family relation, prostitution and life problem but also raise the voice, how to solve them in patriarchal context but males do not raise the issues on problems, shortcomings and their labor. They always take support by female without any money. It means females are supporting materials of males. In this point, prostitution comes in the mind of males. Before marriage if a women puts her relations with a man is illegal; it's patriarchal norm. Parents also want to set their children in good house. Mother courage as a guardian says, "I promised her she would get a husband soon as peace came" (50). The dumb Kattrin in her marriage age has affected by male's society. She has desire to sex and pleasure but none is near to her.

Money does everything in male's life but not for females. Lack of money is the curse for the females of some participation. Women are that's why compelled to adopt profession of red light job, "when a man took women, he came to live in her household activities" (Tong 47). Men exploit women in the home and pay less than sufficient survival. So, to survive in the society women are compelled to sleep with the next person who gives extra money.

Wage earning is a form of oppression that the workers are inevitably enslaved under a system of production where, deprived of knowledge and skill, they are reduced practically to nothing. Following the doctrine, Marxists are opposed to any social or political action that perpetuates the enslavement and oppression of members of the work force. "Prostitution is a form of labor and therefore has been specifically noted as falling under the designation of corruption of wage labor" (302). Sheila Ruth borrowing the words from Marxism and takes advantages to proof the problems imposed upon females. The word 'prostitution' is a plural word that according to her all kinds of inequalities; which seem in various forms: marriage, rape, assist, speaking and language too. Men do mistakes upon females, thinking they are doing well. But for Marxist feminists it is always partial and negation. In Brecht's play – *Mother Courage and Her Children*, all the characters in the stage are working class people, they are in the command of politicians or leaders or kings. At such a moment their intention seems to seize the day of war in various strategy. In this location war is appeared like a commodity.

The epic form of play gives the new trend to the story. Whatever challenges and problems have shown in different levels, they are helping tools to read the play from Marxist feminism. Marxist feminists raise their voice from the margin and more specifically from suppression and labor. So, epic theatre adds more stress in the path

of Mother Courage and other female characters in the play; hence novelty. In this venue, there is collaboration between these two issues.

There are two songs in scene 12, the concluding section. One is lullaby sung by Mother Courage to Kattri. Mother Courage has realized that Kattrin has fallen asleep. Fancising the girl to be asleep is only the loving mother's fond illusion. She, here, builds up a false but pleasing image of her daughter's good fortune as compared to the neighbor's children who are dressed in dirty clothes and are starving. This lullaby demonstrates Mother Courage's anxiety to please her daughter with illusory joys. She also remembers the tragedy which had befallen her in the death of her younger son Swiss Cheese, and she is also aware of her misfortune in not knowing what has happened to her next son.

Furthermore, next song in the final scene ends with all those soldiers collectively. The soldiers here echo the song which we heard in the very opening scene from Mother Courage. The soldiers are fully aware of the surprises, dangers and devastations brought about by the war. They are also aware of the fact that the war is interminable; "the war takes hold and will not quite" (41). At the same time, the soldiers know that they themselves are going to get nothing out of war and that they may not even be paid their wages. The war may last in three generations. They would most probably die in the course of the war but get nothing out of it. They sing:

Only a miracle can save us / And miracles have had their day. (41)

It serves to increase the gloom and hopelessness resulted by the war which still in run. The song is also closely related to the theme of the play.

Having lost the children one after another Mother Courage equally seems bold into her policy for haggling and initially negating her daughter's death, she quickly disposes her dead body to the march: "I must get back into business" (42). Thus, she explores her motif and takes up the wagon, drawing it across an empty stage and she moves in circular wave. Recalling all the gone subjects she seems with a damned soul who works endlessly at the business of war.

Therefore, in this play war is related to business in capitalistic purpose. It sets freedom but does not experience reality. War is encroached through Mother Courage's activities in particular and others in general. In family and outside, their voices do not get any place where their children, husband, relatives and male members and ultimately the hindrances in their way. That is why those figure for women are dictators. Therefore females feel alienated from community. Mother Courage Yvette, Katrin all these women are forced to suffer because they are not economically independent.

To weed out this tendency, women should get freedom from economic dependency. Women should first understand their outside system of how they have been exploited. Brecht, here, by making them awareness in class consciousness from the false consciousness made by males, only then they can raise their voice against that false consciousness. Economic independency is not easy task to go forward through such obstacles. They need to do hard struggle regularly for their rights as talked the pioneers above, such as, Rosemarie tong, Gayle Rubin, Friedrich Engels, Heidi Hartmann and Sheila Ruth etc. As long as women do not get economic independence from men this situation does not go high up.

To nutshell, *Mother Courage and Her Children* commodifies the nature of war and takes an agent to Mother Courage for fulfilling the mundane needs in her ways. But she as a mere mediator because at last she is penniless, falls in the trap of patriarchal pit. The male guided path is always upper position which admits women, peasants, and common people in the battle field in the name of nationality as well as personal benefit. It is a mere one sided ideology that does not give a chance to improve women's status. In the name of war the high class persons claim to be doing for female but it is the nature of their to exploit women. Amidst it Mother Courage is an example character who ultimately becomes tragic heroine. Her characteristics are sold in the name of inventory seller. As, such she seems a success woman to handle the context of thirty years war as an object, so is the claim of Marxist feminists.

### **Chapter III: Brechtian Dramaturgy in *Mother Courage and Her Children***

The theatrical conventions developed by Brecht are surrounded by much confusion. Although he wrote extensively on the dramatic theory behind his work, some aspects are vague. To understand it, we must evaluate his theatrical conceptions and how they relate to both his writings and productions, whilst keeping in mind that Brecht's techniques were a byproduct of his environment (influences on Brecht section ). His theatre is best described as a dramatic vessel of rational didacticism, influenced by his Marxist beliefs.

In order to incorporate Marxist theory in his works, Brecht devised various dramatic techniques to convey his message. Techniques such as the *verfremdungseffekt*/alienation effect, didacticism, breaking the fourth wall, *gestus*, narration and use of song all encompass the Brechtian theorization of Epic Theatre - a convention first founded by Irwin Piscator:  
*Verfrumdungseffekt/ Alienation Technique, Didacticism, Breaking the fourth wall, Acting Techniques, Gestus, Narration and Song.*

#### **Epic Theatre**

'Epic' is a term that the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, in the 1920s applied to his plays. By the word 'epic' Brecht signified primarily his attempt to emulate on the stage the objectivity of the narration in Homeric epic by employing a detached narrator and other devices to achieve *verfremdungseffekt* (Alienation effects). Brecht aimed to subvert sympathy of the audience with the actors and the identification of the actor with his role, that were features of the theatre of bourgeois realism. His intention was to motivate his audience to criticize and oppose, rather than easily accept, the social conditions and modes of behavior that the plays spotlight. Brecht's dramatic

works continue to be played frequently, and his epic theatre has had an important influence on such playwrights, such as Tony Kushner in America and Caryl Churchill and Edward Bond in England.

Epic Theatre is the term used generally to describe Brecht's Theory and technique. His plays were 'epic' in that the dramatic action was episodic - a disconnected montage of scenes, non representational staging, and the 'alienation effect'. All elements contribute to Brecht's overall purpose which was to comment on the political, social and economic elements that affected the lives of his characters. In *Brecht on Theatre* John Willet outlines the differences between Epic and Dramatic Theatre as follows:

**Dramatic Theatre**

Plot

Implicates the spectator in a stage situation

Wears down his capacity for action

Provides him with sensations

Experience

The spectator is involved in something

Suggestion

Instinctive feeling are preserved

The spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience

The human being is taken for granted

He is unalterable

**Epic Theatre**

Narrative

Turns the spectator into an observer

Arouses his capacity for action

Forces him to take decisions

Picture of the world

He is made to face something

Argument

Brought to the point of recognition

The spectator stands outside, studies

The human being is the object of

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
	(John Willet 37)

### **Verfrumdungseffekt/Alienation Technique**

Verfrumdungseffekt can be most accurately translated as the ‘making strange effect’, and it seeks to do precisely that; to make the familiar strange, to give every day events the status of something grand or epic. The ‘Alienation Effect’ was developed by Brecht in the 1920s and 30s. It is a technique which ‘estranges’ the audience and forces them to question the social realities of the situations being presented in the play. Brecht achieved this by breaking the illusion created by conventional plays of the time. He believed that the ‘suspension of disbelief’ created by realistic drama was a shallow spectacle, with manipulative plots and heightened emotion. This theatre is a form of ‘escapism’ and did not challenge the audience at all. Rather than feel a deep connection to the characters Brecht believed that an emotional distance should be maintained. It is only when this happens, that the audience can effectively critique and evaluate the struggle between the characters and understand the social realities of the narrative. This evident in *Mother Courage and Her Children* when we see mother Courage singing a lullaby to her daughter Katrin

and then later paying for her funeral without any emotion. The ambivalence and irony of the characters, particularly Mother Courage is what is so alienating about the play. We find ourselves constantly questioning the role of Mother Courage. What kind of Mother is she? Why is she called courage? How is she courageous? The audience questions the presentation they see before them, which is exactly what Brecht wanted his audience to do.

### **Didacticism**

Didacticism is the instruction of teaching of a moral lesson. Brecht plays are didactic in that they all serve to teach the audience or send a message about certain aspects of society, politics or economy. They are plays which are designed to educate the performers and audience. It stems from Brecht's Marxist beliefs and the plays generally show the bourgeois society negatively and the rightness of Marxist morality. In *Mother Courage and Her Children*, specifically, the didacticism lies in the contradiction of the characters and how their choices have affected their lives and the value of it. The idea that Mother Courage is driven by making money and not taking care of her children is shocking to the audience. Whenever her children need her she is making a business deal. Her actions make the audience question: how much is life really worth? How much am I like Mother Courage? What do I change or do differently? The play teaches a lesson about society, economy and politics and wrestles with these throughout the play.

### **Breaking the Fourth Wall**

'The Fourth Wall' is an imaginary wall separating the audience from the action on the stage. In realistic productions the remains intact and the performers do not acknowledge that they are being watched. The audiences are observers who are

continued to believe that the world of the play is 'real'. It is a suspension of disbelief. Like most theories of realism, Brecht wanted to disrupt the notion of the fourth wall. 'Breaking the fourth wall' involves the character directly addressing and acknowledging the audience, whether they break character or perform with an awareness of being watched. It is made clear that the characters and the actions are not real and the audiences are aware that they are witnessing fiction. The theory behind this technique links back to his definition of epic theatre. By taking away the fourth wall the audience must face the action, make decisions and have the opportunity to be aroused to action.

### **Acting Techniques**

Brecht believed that an actor should present a character in a way that was not an impersonation, rather, a narration of the actions of the character. He did this because he wanted to constantly remind his audience that they were watching a play. He also believed that if the audience developed an emotional attachment to the characters, then they could not evaluate the social realities of the play. Stanislavski thought that if an actor believed he was a character, then the audience would believe this as well, and feel the emotions that the character was feeling. Brecht did not want this to happen; he wanted the audience to question, make comment and interpret what was on the stage. The Brechtian theatre does not show the human nature of an individual but reveals collective human relations. The story is the point of interest, not the characters. The story is the sequence of events that is the social experiment, allowing the interplay of the social forces, from which the play's lesson emerges. If the audience does not maintain a distance between the characters and themselves then this cannot be achieved. Acting in epic theatre means that an actor is required to play

characters believably without convincing either the audience or themselves that they are, indeed, the characters. There is an audible and visual distance between the actor and the character and the actors will often 'break the fourth wall' and address the audience, play multiple characters and use exaggerated or repetitive actions to make their distance and social commentary known.

### **Gestus**

Gestus is a theatrical technique that helps define the emotion within a character and the context they are in. It is the combination of a gesture and a social meaning into one movement, stance or vocal display. It can be alienating and jar the audience, as it is an unusual and non realistic way of forcing them to see the bigger picture of a situation. It is sometimes referred to as the 'social gest', as it is an action that allows the audience to understand something specific about the social circumstances presented on stage. For example if a man was eating sandwich and a dog suddenly attacked him and tried to take his food while the man tried to push the dog away, this would not be gestus. The act of pushing the dog away becomes gestus when social meaning is added to the picture. For example the man is a servant in a castle and the dog belongs to the guards at the gate and they have let the dog out knowing that he will attack the man, and they are standing off to the side laughing at him. Now the action of pushing the dog away has become gestus as it is an action that holds social meaning. The audience knows that this is not just any man; this is working class man who is being picked on by people with a little more power over him.

The most famous example of gestus is in mother courage and her children. Mother Courage shows her inner emotional turmoil not through words, but through a

physical presentation. She looks at the audience and delivers a silent scream. Again, it is not the action alone that makes it gestus, but rather the combination of this action and the social meaning. Mother Courage has just lost the son, but if she makes any sound of recognition towards him she will put her life and the life of her daughter in danger. Now she represents any person who has had to keep quiet in order to save somebody else. She has been forced into a terrible situation and the audience gets to see this through her gestus of a silent scream.

### **Narration and Song**

Not only was Brecht a writer, director and producer but he was also a great poet. He wrote many songs for his productions, mostly with collaboration with Kurt Weill. The purpose of song in his plays is not to heighten the emotion of the scenes but as a means to commentate or narrate what is going on. It is also a form of alienating the audience, for example, in *Mother Courage and Her Children*; the songs' content may be serious and forewarning of hardships, while the music is happy and light. It shows a lighter side to a deeply serious situation and the dichotomy and ambiguity of it ultimately alienates the audience and makes them question the social realities that are being presented. The music and the action should serve to make each other seem strange. The music composed for USQ's production by Lauren O'Rourke has a very broad style. It is electric and each song is composed in a way that questions what the moment and characters are seeking to achieve. Lauren is also acting in the production, and because she has such a close relationship to the process and the story, it has made the music so much more fitting to the production.

#### **IV. Conclusion: Mother Courage as a Victorious Figure**

After critically examining the subject matter, this research comes to a conclusion that how the war is objectified in the name of securing duties and responsibilities. Mother Courage is the figure who is in search of identity, status, and a part of life in course of thirty years duration. On the other side war is the backdrop of every human beings and it does not care any other element. But Courage maintains it as her wish. At such remark war is an object in her hand. Along with war, she also needs profit, identity, status and social values. She has two motives: to fulfill desires and to rear and balance her children and environment respectively. If such chance goes upside down there remains trouble in her life. Thus, to make it positive she appears with a strategic business that ultimately makes her successor.

Though the thirty years of war moves ahead, Mother Courage for her willingness risks the life for the sake of her business; an opportunistic camp follower who sets out to living for herself and her children by selling wares to whichever army is willing to buy them is the play begins, Courage's wagon pulled by her two sons, is stopped by two recruiting officers on the lookout for new men. While Mother Courage is distracted by the chance of selling belt-buckle, her eldest son Eilif is blackmailed away to join the soldiers. The scene ends with an explicit lesson which will be repeated and varied throughout the play: 'if from the war you would live to the war you must give'. Mother Courage is shown constantly in a double ideology. When she faces other characters that also are indeed of profit, so, her voice becomes mild. On the other her role in the manner of business she solves all the hardships on the way to war. Ultimately she is bold in the line of business but to look it patriarchal base she is suppressed by her own sons and male characters.

Mother Courage herself lives off the war by selling goods to soldiers. She and her children haul their wagon across the battlefields with no concern for who is winning, who is losing, or even where they are. Her only ambition is to stock her wagon, sell her goods, and make sure she does not get stuck with any useless inventory. When the Chaplain tells her that peace has broken out, she laments their condition because without war the family has no livelihood.

As mother Courage continues to pull her wagon across field after field, she learns how to survive. But she also loses her children, one by one, to the war. Eilif, seduced into joining the army by a recruitment officer, is led into battle thinking that war is a heroic adventure. Swiss Cheese thinks he found a good deal in a paymaster's uniform. Both are wrong: there is no security in war, and they eventually perish.

Katrin, the daughter, is likewise a victim of the violence of war. Having been violated by a Swedish soldier, she becomes mute. Near the end of the play she is treated violently again, and the terrible scar on her face leaves her unmarriageable. At the end Katrin dies while sounding an alarm to give the sleeping town warning of an imminent attack.

Finally, Mother Courage is left alone. She picks up her wagon and finds that she can maneuver it herself. The play ends as she circles the stage, with everything around her consumed by war.

To sum up, the significant aspect of this play is how women are engaged in outdoor sector in the early twentieth century, German society. The role of women in male guided society is woven throughout the play. Mother Courage in this manner is an example figure. Depending on their social status, each female character within the play provides audience's with a distinct perspective of woman's role among the men

during the thirty years war period of German. In addition to their roles, the playwright includes the trials and tribulations these people have to face as well. As a whole, the importance of these female characters is based upon their responsibility to fulfill the ego of males and as being provides of support to both family and order in society. The society where the norms, values and customs of patriarchy is in upper hand they get the sole authority of property. In such community, women have been dominated, suppressed, confined and are not allowed any sort of freedom. Freedom is possible when the distribution of economic system is parallel. Furthermore, women can feel free when the policies of males are not in pragmatic level and decadence of patriarchal ideology.



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