

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Brecht as an Anti-Capitalist Dramatist

One of the most prominent figures of the 20th-century theatre, Bertolt Brecht (Eugene Berthold Friedrich Brecht) was born in Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany on February 10, 1898. He drifted towards the literary arts at an early age, writing poetry as a boy and even had a few poems published in 1914. He was an indifferent student, however, and was very nearly expelled from Augsburg Grammar School for taking a dismissive, anti-patriotic tone when was given an assignment to write an essay with the title "It is a sweet and honorable thing to die for one's country."

Many critics have presented their opinion about Brecht in their criticisms. The critic Herbert Ihering also accepts his genius on drama from his saying:

Bertolt Brecht had bought to time a new tone, a new melody, a new vision. He was impregnated with the horror of the age, in his nerves, in his blood, and this accounted for the unparalleled force of his images. His language could be felt on the tongue, in one's ears, in spine. It was the language brutally sensuous and melancholically tender which contained malice and bottomless sadness, grim wit, and plaintive lyricism (36).

Bertolt Brecht identified himself not only as a German revolutionary poet, dramatist and novelist, but also as a theorist of drama and a reformer of stage. Brecht's works can be considered in three stages: The early period, the propaganda plays and the plays of Brecht's maturity. He as a dramatist had a great influence on the western intellectuals. But he was also

indebted to past: Villon Verlaine, Rimbaud and later Kepling; the more over Japanese and Chinese theater became strong influence on him.

Daive Riley adds:

What we identify today as Brecht's dramatic method is an amalgam drawn from the traditional Elizabethan and Asiatic stages, modern German cabaret and the work of his Marxist contemporaries such as the director Erwin Piscator and the theatre of the new Soviet state instigated by Vsevolod Meyerhold and Sergei Tretiakov. Brecht's role - aside from his superb poetic ear and skill as a dramatist - was to develop a form of theatre that transcended mere illusion by committing itself to representing the social world as it was rather than as it appeared to be (177).

He was a medical student when the First World War broke out in 1918. He could really feel the suffocation of the soldier who was dying in the battle field and this pricked his consciousness. At this time, he wrote a poem 'Die ballad Vomtton Soldaten' which told of the medical officer digging up the soldiers, pronouncing him for military service.

Though he was the medical student, he frequently attended seminars of drama at Munich University conducted by Professor Arthur Kutshe but he had different views form the professor, and that separation 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 period, expressionism was in great fashion. This play became his first stage success. That year, Brecht was awarded the Kleist prize as the best young dramatic talent in Germany and appointed as a 'dramaturge' to the Munich Kammerspiele

In his early plays after World War I, Brecht showed a predilection for the rejects of society, victims of the grinding capitalism of the bourgeois world. The “beaten hero” as Walter Benjamin called him, reflected the imbalance of overwhelming economic forces and individual powerlessness. *Baal* showed an asocial hero in an asocial world; *Im Dickicht der Städte* (Jungle of Cities) provided a model of the isolated individual’s struggle for survival in a capitalist structure; and the dismantling and reassembly of the hero in *Mann ist Mann* (Man Equals Man) thematized the manipulation of human beings by exploitative powers. During the period of his systematic study of Marxism after 1926, Brecht evolved from a rebellious to a disciplined supporter of the working-class struggle. The idiosyncratic “learning plays” like *Die Massnahme* (The Measures Taken) and *Die Ausnahme und die Regel* (The Exception and the Rule) are milestones in Brecht’s developing conception of the function of theatre in a social context, offering openly didactic Marxist studies in models of (political) action. Even the apparently innocuous entertainment of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (The Three penny Opera)—audiences have long been captivated by Kurt Weill’s catchy tunes—masked a virulent attack on the bandit morality of bourgeois capitalism.

Lion K. James, in his essay “Brecht and Money “, has discussed his anti-capitalist theme in his early plays:

“In his early works, Brecht had already dramatized a world in which money was the reigning principle. In a fundamental way, he was already preoccupied with the basic questions of Marxism. Given the centrality of money as a theme and its dominant function in the action of these early plays, one perceives that Brecht's encounter with the works of Marx in 1926 was not the sudden conversion of a Saul to a Paul on the road to Damascus, but a logical transition in a continuous

development that led to an ideology which clarified and confirmed what he already half-realized and partially believed (492).

By 1924, expressionism was going out of fashion in Germany and the new realism of 'matter-of-factness' became a tendency. It represented objectively the intensification of realism, that came into literature and the arts as the novelty of expressionism faded. Brecht as writer of social dramas drew upon some of the new realistic characteristics. He was not yet dedicated to 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) which is a comedy. This play marks the turning point in his dramatic career from anarchic nihilism of youth to social awareness and didacticism. It was first of his plays to introduce songs in drama. Brecht always uses these songs at the culminating points of action voicing general reflection and the pointing the moral of the case.

Brecht's didactic plays, written to instruct children, are not attractive to audiences. Their simplicity and didacticism makes them austere to the point of severity. They are interesting as theatrical treatments of ideological questions but are rarely performed now. Brecht was now also becoming interested in political systems and ideologies. In Berlin, from about 1926, he had become involved with Marxist studies, being highly convinced that Marxism offers hope for the solution of social problems. He was also convinced the Marxist analysis of society was scientific. The didactic plays of period 1930 to 1934, his Marxist views are stressed more than later and earlier plays. The plays written in this period are centered on the capitalist and proletarian struggle. In this period, in collaboration with Kurt Weill, he wrote an opera entitled '*Die Dreigroschenoper*' (*The Three penny opera*) that achieved real popularity.

In this period Brecht's political views had also begun to take concrete shape and he tried to put a strong political message into it. He devised a number of the plays intended to impart political ideas. The most important of these directly political play is *The Mother* ( 1932) based on Marxism Gorky's novel of the same name. This reveals his intellectual progress towards proletarian class consciousness. *The Mother* is Brecht's nearest approach to orthodox communist propaganda play that deals with Russian Revolution.

The critic like Irene Oppenheim, states Brecht's anti-capitalist opinion:

From Brecht's perspective, however, capitalism had already proved itself barbarous and dehumanizing; communism, on the other hand, was still in formation and represented a perhaps costly but still desperately needed opportunity to set things right. For Brecht these were the grim alternatives, and a choice had to be made (15).

On the accession to power of the Nazi regime in 1933, Brecht immediately went into exile. This caesura paradoxically signaled the start of his most productive period, an astounding output of major plays, theoretical essays, prose writing, and a stream of poetry from 1933 to 1945. It is symptomatic of Brecht's single-mindedness, perseverance, and vision that at this time, driven as he was from one country to another and almost entirely deprived of a German-speaking public—Denmark, Finland, and the United States were his major staging-posts—he created a handful of plays that were to establish his truly international reputation. Brecht kept working on many dramatic forms such as his attempt at an ' epic opera' *Rise and Fall of Mahagony*, *The Fight of the Lindbergh*, and *St. Joan of the Stockyards* etc which deal with helpless humanity overwhelm by the elemental force of economic crisis. These are the Brecht's final achievements

that project a naïve picture of the working of capitalism. The main theme of the play is the ruthless struggle between capitalism and workers. The same theme can be seen in his latter play ‘*The life of Galileo, Mother Courage and Her Children*’, *The good women of Setzuam*, *Mr. Puntila and His Hired Man*, *The Caucasian Chalk circle*. Together with social criticism, these plays reveal a full-blooded humanism which had been undercurrent in Brecht’s works. His *Mother Courage and Her Children* which tells the story of a travelling merchant who earns her living by following the Swedish and Imperial armies with her covered wagon and selling them supplies: clothing, food, brandy, etc. As the war grows, Mother Courage finds that this profession has put her and her children in danger, but the old woman doggedly refuses to give up her wagon. *Mother Courage and Her Children* was both a triumph and a failure for Brecht. Although the play was a great success, he never managed to achieve in his audience the unemotional, analytical response he desired. Audiences never failed to be moved by the plight of the stubborn old woman.

After World War II, Brecht eventually made his way back to Europe, settling in East Berlin in 1949. Here he was afforded every facility as the most prized cultural figure in the German Democratic Republic; supported by generous subsidies, he founded the world-renowned Berliner Ensemble with his wife, the actress Helene Weigel. Under Brecht’s direction this theatre company established a wide-ranging repertoire, including Brecht’s own plays as well as his free adaptations of many classics, such as Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* and Moliere’s *Don Juan*. Brecht also had the freedom and complete control of theatrical resources to try out, alter, and refine his ideas on epic writing, acting, and production. It was largely in these years until his death in 1956 that Brecht’s dramatic style and theories were disseminated throughout the world to establish him as the focal point of 20th-century theatre.

In wrapping up, Bertolt Brecht, a German Marxist is an unorthodox intellectual, who supports modernist and non-realistic art. He was considerably influenced by non-Marxist as well as Marxist criticism. Impressed by Marx's works, he becomes interested towards lower class people and attempted to write didactic plays for working class audiences before seizure of power by Nazis in 1933. Although Brecht was influenced by Marxism he was neither a member of communist party nor was in favor of prescribing any rules to the writers as by orthodox Marxist theoreticians which they call 'socialist realism'. He, not only opposed the 'socialist realism', he was against each and every kind of rules that attempted to restrain the freedom of an author. Brecht was influenced both by Marxism and the formalist theory of art and literature developed by Russian writers that advanced the idea of "defamiliarization." His best known theatrical device 'the alienation effect' is partly derived from that very concept of 'defamiliarization'. Bertolt Brecht rejects what he called the Aristotelian concept that a tragic play is an imitation of reality. He opposes the established Aristotelian theory of drama that emphasizes the unity of plot and of each and every situation to truth. Brecht proposes instead that the illusion of reality should be deliberately shattered by an episodic plot, by protagonists who do not attract the audience's sympathy, by a striking theatricality in staging and acting, and by other ways of baring the artifice of drama so as to produce an alienation effect, the facts of real life conditions are to be presented as if they were shockingly unnatural and totally surprising.

## **1.2 Brecht's Epic Theatre**

The very concept of 'epic theatre' is bought in the literature by Erwin Piscator. He brought the epic theatre believing that modern theatre should be scientific in method. It was to be like a 'documentary theater' a kind of objective report of social or political events which appeal

to reason. He suggested that stage should be like a scientific laboratory where different thoughts come into argument and bring out the fact. Brecht picked up the very concept and developed his own theory of drama.

Brecht upheld the view that drama should inform and awaken the sensibilities. In this sense, Brecht's theoretical principle about the drama is anti-thesis to Aristotle. He does not agree with the traditionally existing notion that the function of drama is to entertain an audience. Besides, he is in sharp opposition with Aristotle's view that the function of the art is to evoke pity and fear to purge the audience.

Brecht has developed a number of theories regarding drama. He defined the concept epic theatre as an alternative to the traditional Aristotelian Theory. Brecht wanted his audience to be in a dialectical and sometimes alienated relationship with the drama. He expected his audience to observe critically to draw conclusions and participate in an intellectual argument with the work at hand. The confrontational relationship he intended was design to engage the audience in analyzing what they saw rather than identify themselves with the main or other characters or enjoying a wash of sentimentality or emotions (Jacobus 699).

In this way, in epic theatre, theatre goers are active and alert. The audiences are critical, rational and skeptical.

Raman Seldan further adds his view about the epic theatre:

To avoid lulling the audience into a state of passive acceptance, the illusion of reality must be shattered by the use of alienation effect. The actors must not lose themselves in their roles or seek to promote purely empathetic audience



identification. They must present a role to audience, as both recognizable and unfamiliar, so that a process of critical assessment can be set in motion. The situation, emotions and dilemmas of characters must be understood from the outside and presented on the strange and problematic (32).

While watching an epic drama being enacted on the epic theatre, the audience feels painfully difficult to identify with characters. In Brechtian drama the protagonist doesn't uphold a heroic stature a larger than -life dimension. Brechtian characters don't act the way that audience or Aristotle expected them to act. Hence the Brechtian hero is anti- hero. "In any case Brecht's play, in which heroes are so often ordinary, tough and scrupulous, do not encourage the cult of personality (Seldan 33)". They can't identify with the protagonist the way audience do in illusionist theatre. Here the audience feel alienated from the drama.

The idea of alienation is that audience shouldn't identify themselves with the any character but should observe each character and each event from critical eyes, detaching themselves from the 'Katharsis'. This technique is indeed intended to make the familiar incidents odd in order to stimulate the critical faculty of the audience.

Critic Martin Esslin writes:

The audience must be discouraged from losing its critical detachment by identification with one or more of the characters. The opposite of identification is the maintenance of separate existence by being kept apart, alien or strange, therefore the producers must strive to produce effects which will keep audience separate, estranged alienated from the action. This is the meaning of the famous *Verfremdung* effect (110).

John Willet writes “Catharsis is not the main object of this dramaturgy. It does not make the hero a victim of an inevitable fate, nor does it wish to make spectator the victim, so to speak of hypnotic experience in theatre” (78).

Brecht wants to establish a theatre as a laboratory, where drama develops a critical attitude in his spectator which would be conducive in social transformation. Brecht claims that Epic theatre is the place of intellectual laboratory. Where social thoughts and events are refined and bring forth the truth. So, he said, audience should not be doused by emotions and sensation and reduced to “hypnotized masses”. Brecht instead wanted a critically detached audience, alert, yet relaxed. Brecht criticizes Aristotelian drama saying that it strives to create terror and pity in the spectator, to purge his emotions, so that he emerges relieve and refreshed. But Brecht opines that drama should awake the people and lead them to rebel the social injustices.

Brecht’s concept of plot is totally differs to the Aristotelian concept of the plot; Aristotle defines plot as the soul of the tragedy. It consists of the logical and inevitable sequence of the events. The action must be complete and follow certain structure: beginning, rise of action, climax, fall of action and end. Aristotle emphasized on the artistic wholeness of plot which implies logical link between the incidents. But Brecht presents different idea about plot in *The Notes to Mahogany*: ‘Narrative’ is to replace ‘plot’. Instead of being ‘a part of the whole’, each scene is to ‘an entity in itself’, moving in jerks rather than in the ‘evolutionary’ necessarily by which one follows from the other” (9).

In this way Brecht’s plot in epic theatre are loosely knitted and episodic. Each act has hardly inter connection; instead of mounting to a dynamic climax. The story unfolds in a numbers of separate situations; each rounded and complete in itself. The total effect of the juxtaposition and montage of contrasting episodes are found in the epic theatre while the

Aristotelian drama can be understood as a whole. The plot of epic drama can be cut into slices. Each episode is framed and separated almost play within a play. The episodes are set against the one another on the principle of montage and made to carry a dramatic charge. The knotting of the episodes is made noticeable. Narratives and like narrator, chorus, or commentators are used along with the title and summary of events to directly address the audience. In this regard, Martin Esslin writes:

Just as isolated episodes of the play retain their individual significance, even if taken out of the context of the play as whole, the non-literary elements of the productions—décor, music, and choreography—also retain their independence; instead of serving as mere auxiliaries of the text, reinforcing it by stressing some of its feature and painting in atmosphere, mood or descriptive details, they are raised to the level of autonomous elements. (133)

Brecht precisely attacked the Aristotelian concept of the plot in *The Notes of Mahagonny*, when he pointed out that “certain incidents in the play should be treated as self-contained scenes and raised by means of inscriptions, music and sound effects and the actor’s way of playing – above the level of the every day, the obvious, the expected”(10).

According to Bertolt Brecht, the structure is innovative and radical enactment in epic theatre, must deal with past events. Drama pertaining epic theatre must not deal with the imaginary present, rather past events are re-enacted. Brecht expected to see the action as something that has happened in the past. The events, which are given the form of expression, assumed narrative rather than dramatic form. Each events in the epic theatre assumes important

on the basis not of how much contribution it adds to whole but of its autonomous status and significant.

Brecht made major transformation in the role and function of the actor. Instead of identifying himself with the audience and seeking empathy from them as in the 'Stanislavski method', the actor must destroy illusion by putting himself at a distance both from the character he portrayed and the situation in which he was involved. He must try to 'play from memory' and 'demonstration' 'what happened making clear to the audience his own particular gestus or social attitudes towards events and character. Further the actor should derive his character from the action of the person he depicted; not as in traditional drama, the actions from the fixed.

About the role of the actor, Martin Esslin adds, "...he never forgets that he is not the one whose action is being demonstrated but the one who demonstrates" (155).

In this sense the actor of epic theatre, the actor has to perform the task far wider and far more complex as he not only the mimicking the character. He has to act in such manner that one can see the alternative course of action, so that acting allows audience to think rather than empathy the character.

Brecht says, to enhance the alienation effect in epic theatre, while staging play in epic theatre, the light in the auditorium must remain lit. If the light is kept lit, the audience would remain fully conscious and intellectually alert. The audience would better able to judge what goes on the stage, rather than merely accepting passively. It uses the boards and streamers across the stage to indicate the time and place of the action, to give the summaries of the action which is to follow to contrast the action on the stage and forcing the audience to think for himself. Statistics, maps film, cartoons and stills are used simultaneously with the action so that the

documentary effect might be achieved. The dramatic action is suddenly and illogically interrupted by songs, very often irrelevant to the plot. The mechanic of stage remains visible and functions as play outside the play. These all techniques epitomize the alienation effect in epic drama. Music portrays the psychological state or the subjective interpretation of the situation, and that its purpose is not to pass out emotions or even illustrate the text. In epic theatre music possesses the special value, it communicates attitudes and shows social gestures, acting as an alienating device. Brecht uses songs as interruptive device to interrupt the smooth flow of the plot. So that audience gets an opportunity to reflect and to interpose the judgment on the events presented episodically.

Marc Silberman presents why alienation is necessary on the representation of reality in his essay "The Politics of Representation: Brecht and the Media" while discussing about Brecht's 'Radio theory':

To return to Brecht's realist epistemology, one might once again cite his remark concerning the photographic image that the simple "reproduction of reality" says nothing about that reality. Brecht aims to deconstruct the image in order to make visible a reality whose referent it no longer reveals. He achieves this by creating a subject position outside that reality, at a distance (459-60).

Brecht's another tool to bring alienation effect is 'historicizing' the story. He set the dramatic event in the past, or by constructing the play in the form of a story which had already happened, hence 'epic'. Thus historicizing was thus a means of making the present look strange and thereby suggesting the need for social change.

Brecht has presented this contrast between Dramatic theatre and epic theatre:

**Dramatic Theatre**

**Epic 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 feelings are preserved.

The spectator is in the thick of it,

Shares the experience.

The human being is taken for granted.

He is unalterable

Eyes on the finish

One scene makes another

Growth

Linear development

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 the enquiry

He is alterable and able to alter

Eyes on the course

Each scene for itself

Montage

In curves

Evolutionary determinism

Jumps

Man as a fixed point

Man as a process

Thought determines being

Social being determines thought

Feeling

Reason (Willet 37).

In simple words, Brecht was an inventor both regards to subject matter and technique of drama. He rebelled against the theatre found in Germany around 1920. He developed a new concept of drama 'epic theatre' initiated by Erwin Picastor. His purpose was to raise certain social issue and to encourage and stimulate his audience to discuss among themselves the issue which he presented though play on the stage.

## Chapter II

### 2.1 Capitalism and Exploitation of Working Class People

Human beings are social beings and they make their community based on common interests. Similarly, a social class is formed on the basis of common interest and their approach to different things like property, policy making, education, and other social facilities. There are many classes of people within a society. Therefore, a social class is not only a social unit which is always in conflict with other units. Marx has enlisted so far found in history – freeman and slaves, lords and serfs, master and servant, feudal lords and vassals. In all above case one group acts as oppressor and another group as oppressed. They are always in opposition. They are always struggling –one trying to conquer another. They are all the time fighting openly or hidden. The result of this clash is abolishment of the weak class and rise of powerful. Marx, in very first line of Communist Manifesto, mentions, a social class or unit as a participant of the class struggle: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” (21).

Socialists use the term “class” in different way: referring to culture identity, or common way of life, or possession of authority or level of education as the content of class different. Unlike other, Marx takes class as the account of the movement and the changes in history instead of just describing the way things are. Marx describes the dialectical nature of the theory on the basis of material possession. Ownership and non- ownership of the means of production separates the owner from the exploited class. As the history moves dialectically, the class of the wage workers cannot be understood without defining its opposites- the capitalist. And there is the no way of knowing what the bourgeoisie is without understanding the 'proletarian and its role.

Cliff slaughter defines the proletarians as well as the capitalists:



By a 'proletarian, we mean precisely a man whose lack of property in the means of production forces him to sell only commodities he possesses, his labour power to someone who owns capital, since all means of production are in the hand of capitalist and take the form of capital. In capitalist societies, production takes place everyday only when the condition exists for capital to make a profit as well as reproduce itself. The capitalist is one of class of man who invests their wealth in raw materials, tools and labour power in order to increase their capital (23).

In this sense, the capital is nothing but the accumulated value of the past labour of the proletarians. It lasts as long as it can make profit from capital and reproduce it. And the working class has the relationship of exploitation with capitalist. They are deprived from the property.

The history shows that the modern "capitalism" is itself the product of long course of exchange. It has emerged from the ruins of feudal society. The feudal system of industry was displaced by the bourgeois capitalist society. When the growing demand of market couldn't be fulfilled by feudal system, the middle class manufacturing system of products took control over the production. Later it developed into the modern capitalist system by the help of modern industrial revolution. They established the modern market and expanded industry, commerce, navigation, railways and many other things and this business class pushed all the class behind and held the political power.

Alfredo Saad Filho says about the capitalism:

In advanced capitalism, the labour process and its outcomes are determined primarily by the monopoly of the means of production by the capitalist class, the transformation of labour power into a commodity, and the commodity form of the products of labour. In these circumstances, the products of labour generally take the value form, and

economic exploitation is based upon the extraction of surplus value. Wage labour is normalized in production, through mechanization and direct authority, in order to maximize the surplus value extracted and the capitalist control (1).

In this sense, capitalism has double in nature; on the one hand, it is a relation of production in which labour power, the product of labour and the services more generally, tend to become commodities, and on the other hand, capitalism is a class relation of exploitation defined by the ability of the capitalist to compell the working class to produce more than it consumes or controls, and by the capitalist command of the surplus value.

On 'the nature of capitalism', Marx and Engels write:

...the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature; it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps into two great classes directly face each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletarians (21).

The continuous development of capitalistic system has created two types of social classes till now, viz one that is powerful and the other having no power and access. It can be clearly felt that there are two different classes even within the countries or societies. There are the different field of interests for the social indulgement among the rich and poor within the society. The access above the education, health, and employment etc. of these different classes has separated one from another. The people with high social and economic status have more access and privileges compared to the people of low class

Marx and Engels further say:

It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization ,

independent , or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interest , laws governments and system of taxation , became lumped together in one nation, with one government , one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier and one custom tariff( 24).

To know about the capitalism it would be better to analyze from the global perspective to the extent which is a consequences of globalization of capitalist culture. Many people have already been benefited from the spread of capitalist trade. Some people has been enjoying lives as unthinkable since many years ago. But it is clear that not all people are benefitted from the development and expansion of trade, like farmers and peasants, and wage workers.

The expansion and emphasis on trade has affected the various groups especially farmers, children and women. It has increased the gap between rich and poor where these poor people have to fall down lowest of moral activities. Children have to work in factories for their food in very miserable condition. Women have to indulge in prostitution.

Similarly Marx and Engels, in his Communist Manifesto write:

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labour, then by the work of a factory, then by the operatives of trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeoisie who directly exploits them (26).

In above citation, Marx shows the fate of proletarians who have to go on struggle from its birth against the exploitation in different levels.

The few people who are on the top of the rank have been enjoying the power, money, food, security and luxury. They own the means of production, machinery, factory buildings. Their main source of income is profit. Likewise they occupy larger acres of land. Therefore they receive income from the rent too. Thinking that the proletarians have nothing of their own, the capitalist society establishes its domination over society and over the wage workers. They inherit the habit of exploitation from the old feudalist. With surplus value, the generation of bourgeoisie grows and matures as a class. " They accumulate not only money- capital", Cliff Slaughter says," But they had their own towns and architecture , their own academies, their own patronage of arts, their own newspapers, and literary representatives ,their school of philosophy, law and social, political and religious criticism. (46)"

On the other hand, the proletarians are at the bottom of social rank. They just own their labour and sell it as a wage as a means of hand to mouth. They have common misery of poverty, rotten housing, disease, ignorance, politically unimportance, and despair. They are left nothing more than hatred. Moreover, they are exploited and forced to work more hours with low paid. They feel double alienation; alienation from their labour and alienation from family or home and co- workers. They do work from the early morning to late evening but the capitalist enjoy in the taste of profit. Therefore there is no other way than revolution.

Marx and Engels in The communist manifesto illustrate.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjections the society at large to their conditions of appropriations. The proletariat cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure

to fortify; this mission is to destroy all previous securities for and insurance of private property (28).

## **2.2 Commoditization of social life and alienation.**

According to the Marxists, commodification is treating something as goods. If any human values like culture, love, family etc. are measured in terms of price or economy, it is known as the commodification. Not only it dismantles human values, it treats every human as a commodity. Commodification plays vital role in capitalism. It helps to capitalist to accumulate capital destroying all default values. It results the alienation workers alienation.

Alvin W. Gouldner quotes Marx's idea of alienation:

Essentially, alienation of the working class is the other side of the domination of the ruling, capitalist class. The most fundamental implication of the working class's alienation is that it entails the loss of their autonomy and capacity for self-realization. The self control of any class is, by definition, at variance with its being dominated by any other class, or any other force. A class system, in general, and the capitalist-working class relationship in particular, necessarily implies a domination by the ruling class that undermines the lower class's capacity for autonomy (192).

As bourgeoisie have control over every part of society, all human relations have been changed into "cash payment". It has used all human values like religion, culture all are substituted by trade relations. "The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation" (Marx 23). There is all kind of dealing by brute exploitation. All kinds of people in profession have been turned into paid wage laborers.

Alfredo S. Filho further says about the capitalism:

Capital is a social relation between two classes, capitalists and workers that takes the form of things. This social relation is established when the means of production are monopolized by the capitalist class, which employs wage workers in production for profit. The workers must sell their labour power regularly because they do not own means of production, cannot produce independently, and need money in order to purchase the use values that they covet. Once this class relation is posited, capital exists in and through the commodities, money and other assets employed in the self-expansion of value, that Marx called 'valorization'(3)

In this sense, the capital controls the workers in three ways. First, capital owns the means of production, whereas the workers must seek paid employment in order to survive. Second, having purchased labor power, capital claims the right to control the labour process in its entirety, and machinery helps management to dictate the structure and pace of the labour process. Third, ownership of the means of production and control of the labour process allow capital to influence the state, economic policy, the legislature, interpretation and enforcement of law, and other social institutions.

As commodification is maximum profit centered, and laborers are very much exploited for the expansion of capital. The laborers cannot fulfill their basic needs with amount of wage and they are obliged to work long hour. As a result, health condition of these laborers became fragile a, which tend to frustration and they are ultimately forced to be involved into immoral and unhealthy activities like criminals, robbery, prostitution etc.

With the development of industrialism, institutions which helped to blind individuals into their society – extended families, local communities, and all traditional ways of life and traditional values

were awakened. For Marx, their inadequate substitute was the 'cash- nexus' under capitalism the links between people was an impersonal cash tie. The social worth was replaced by economic standing and performance; and one's relationship in social to the market became the predominant relationship in social life.

According to Marxist, capitalists can perceive their social world only through the decorating prism of the monetary system. Goods can be distributed if there is money to pay for them; workers can only be employed if there is a market for the goods; they produce; business can be organized and run only if there are profit to be gained; slumps are caused by the impersonal and "national' and "inevitable" mechanism of the market force: demand and supply, and are therefore outside human control. Instead of using ideas and social inventions like money as tools or means to control the world they become themselves the tools which serve to operate an impersonal system of the their own invention. Such impersonal forces like the price mechanism, market mechanism , demand and supply, the profit and loss , the general law of wages are " forces nothing than commoditization ." in this way, humanity can be seen to be controlled by outside , impersonal forces , that is to be alienated from its own social world.

Encyclopedia the Britannica writes "

Alienated labour is seen as the consequence of market product, the division of labour, and the division of society into antagonistic classes. As producers in society, men create goods only by their labour. These goods are exchangeable. Their value is the average amount of social labour spent to produce them. The alienation of the worker takes on its full dimension in that system of market production in which part of the value of the

goods produced by the worker is taken away from him and transformed into surplus value, which the capitalist privately appropriates.

Marx argues that market labor itself becomes a commodity – a thing bought and sold like any other objects and the paradox is that the more the laborers produces the cheaper his or her labor becomes; with increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion the development of the world of men.

Encyclopedia the Britannica further writes “

Living in a capitalist society, however, man is not truly free. He is an alienated being; he is not at home in his world. The alienation of labor is seen to spring from the fact that the more the worker produces the less he has to consume, and the more values he creates the more he devalues himself, because his product and his labour are estranged from him. The life of the worker depends on things that he has created but that are not his, so that, instead of finding his rightful existence through his labour, he loses it in this world of things that are external to him: no work, no pay. Under these conditions, labour denies the fullness of concrete man.

The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes object an external existence, but that it exists outside him as something alien to him , and that becomes a power which confronts him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien.

Marx elaborated the concept of alienation as proposed by his predecessors, Hegel and Feuerbach. For Marx, alienation was not rooted in religion or the subjective mind but in the material world. The “alienation of labour” theory, as Marx explained, is composed of four objective forms of



alienation. The worker is alienated from the process of production, the product of production, fellow human beings, and finally, the worker is alienated from his or her own humanity or nature.

The worker is alienated from the product of their labour. The product that is the result of the workers creative abilities and effort is taken from the worker and consequently, does not further the worker's quality of life. The worker's manufactured product becomes the property of the capitalist upon its conception. The worker is also alienated from the labour process, in that the workers do not determine when to work, the tools to use, or how the work is organized and carried out. The workers are powerless over a process of labour that affects them physically and mentally. Furthermore, this labour process that is imposed upon the working class is hostile towards them.

The capitalists, who are driven by profits, implement cost reducing policies to drive workers to toil harder, faster, for longer periods of time, and often under inhumane or unsafe conditions. With the increased fragmentation of tasks associated with the division of labour, the worker is reduced to a part of the mechanized process in subordination to the machinery and hierarchical bureaucratic management.

In the context of some of the "cost efficient" inhumane working conditions associated with the early industrial revolution, Marx described the transformation of the worker from a human into a "crippled monstrosity. Thirdly, the worker faces alienation from other human beings. Workers in a capitalist society are driven to compete with fellow workers for jobs. Many workers often see the capitalists as hostile masters that dictate the labour process and treat them poorly. The inevitable class structure of capitalist society arises in response to such antagonistic relations. Workers are no longer fellow human beings with equal rights but rather superiors and subordinates. Many workers also work in isolation from one another as well as family and friends. Finally, the workers are alienated from

themselves. In the labour process the worker is separated from his or her own nature or humanity. They are driven to exist as expressionless machines with no spontaneous or creative freedom. The job often provides little satisfaction and is primarily a means to sustain their continued physical survival. The workers do not have authority over their own being while they are employed and are only free to be themselves outside their place of work.

Gavin M. Edis. says about the condition of workers in capitalist society:

The wage earning proletariat (working class) is essentially very similar to a slave. Neither the slave nor the proletariat own the means of production. Unlike the slave, the proletariat is said to own their labour power. However, the working class is exploited under the coercive structure and consequences of capitalism to accept alienating employment or face misery and hunger. This is much the same as the slave who is forced to work under brutal and barbaric conditions of coercion. Both the proletariat and the slave are dependent on the wealth and rule of their masters for their continued existence. The slave is said to be owned by one master while the worker has the choice to pick from a selection of masters; however, the proletariat is essentially owned by one master: the capitalist class.

In short, Marx realizes that, people are alienated from one another, they are alienated from their products, material and ideal, and they are also alienated from their society. The root cause of these forms of alienation is to be found in the way social relations are structured by a social system which is organized around the sanctity of the private ownership of the means of production. In industrial capitalist society, such a system dehumanizes people into a mere commodity. It is the proletarians who

develop the capital but they live as long as their labor increases capital. They are treated as mere “commodity” like every article of commerce which results the “workers alienation.”

In summing up, the capitalist society, originated from the feudal class, split up in to two hostile camp haves and have not class directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and proletarians. Marx said as bourgeoisie has abolished the feudal class, in turn, is going to be abolished by proletarians through their revolution. But it is not so easy, as there is still ongoing struggle between them. Proletarians are struggling for wages, working time, liberty, human rights and bourgeois are still gripping the control over them. They like themselves to be called democratic and they have taken control over the government and all part of society: production, market, media, literature and so on. They suppress the poor people for their selfish interest. Those who are dependent on them are obliged to accept their command passively. They hadn't left any option for the poor peoples. Capitalism has taken over every aspect of society to such a degree that existence is no longer possible except live within the system or die.

## Chapter III

### Brecht's *The Three-Penny Opera* as a Critique of Capitalism

Brecht's *The Three-Penny Opera* deviates from the theater base goal of entertainment to turn the audience to judge the human condition of betrayal and moral corruption it depicts. *The Three-Penny Opera* runs its story against the background of lower-class street life in mid-18th century London, filled with beggars, thieves and prostitutes and some petty bourgeoisie. Those situations actually visualize the two classes of the society i.e. bourgeoisie and the working class people. Brecht indirectly challenges that the society is not running as it is hoped to run according to the theory of Marxism. *The Three-Penny Opera* hovers around the theme of working class people who do not have any job to exist in the society and they are unwillingly involved in the beggar's Co. Ltd as Macheath involves in underworld.

Brecht provides picture of middle class bourgeoisie society. The society has in turn, produced a bourgeois structure of the world where even surviving requires trampling others, no one can be truly good at heart, and only the wealthy have the luxury of talking about morality. Thereby, a specific view of the world where capitalism has taken over every aspect of society to such a degree that existence is no longer possible except within the system or die. This shows the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class people throughout which the play runs.

#### **3.1 Business Transcends Family in the *The Three-Penny Opera***

As capitalist society has stood on the basis of commodification, *The Three-Penny Opera* presents the concept that business is more important than the family and own life. The theme appears here when characters running after the financial benefits ignoring the family values, morality. Characters use morality, law, religion and charity for financial achievement and

deceiving others. This theme can be apparently seen in the characters like Mr. and Mrs. Peachum, and their business enemy Macheath, and Mr. Brown.

In the drama, Peachum is the proprietor of “Beggar’s friend” a beggar’s entrepreneurship. He is the shrewd and hypocritical. He outfits poor men panhandlers to evoke extra sympathy and demands a percentage of their profit.

PEACHUM: You ramshackle Christian, awake!

Get on with your with sinful employment

Show what a good crook you could make.

The Lord will cut short your enjoyment.

Betray your own brother, you rogue

And sell your old woman, you rat.

You think the lord God’s just a joke?

He will give you his judgment on that. (5)

In modern sense, he is the middle class bourgeoisie, a union leader of beggars. He trusts no one, not even his wife and daughter. For him money is most important thing of life. He believes that deceiving is an art of survival. When he learns that his daughter, Polly, has married Macheath, he argues with his wife, not because his daughter eloped without informing them, rather he is furious on the fact that she ran away with his business contender. He is sure that his son-in law will hurt his business. Besides, he takes his daughter as his property and used for business purpose. In his mind, Macheath is a competitor trying to take away one of his key assets, his daughter. Peachum’s argument forces his daughter to use economic terms to make her case. So he is angry with Macheath.

PEACHUM: the worst. The very worst. A lump of sensuality, that's what she is.

MRS. PEACHUM: if so, she did not get it from you.

PEACHUM: Marriage! I expect my daughter to be me as bread to the hungry. *He leafs in the book.* It even says so in the bible somewhere. Anyway marriage is disgusting. I will teach her to get married (10).

Peachum takes his daughter for his business purpose. He had rejected several marriage proposals for her daughter due to fact that she is afraid if the daughter marries with any one, no one comes to his shop. The next thing is that most of people come to purpose their daughter thinking that they are rich. So,, he says he says her daughter doesn't have to marry rather to be married by rich man. From the above dialogue we can notice the concept of usefulness of children in accumulation of money. Which usually happens in the capitalist society? In this type of society, most of parents spend a lot of money in the sense of invest, so that they can get a lot from them as a return. The same theme appears here, where Peachum chooses to work with the beggars in spite of the crisis of Polly getting married.

Similarly when Polly returns home, she is greeted by her very irate parents. Mr. Peachum remarks that after having paid a fortune to raise her, she threw herself away into the garbage. Being unsatisfied with their daughter marriage, Peachum tells her that she should do what normal people who get married do, namely get divorced: " It's quite simple. You're married. What does a girl do when they married? Use your head. Well, she gets divorced, see. Is that so hard to figure out? (30)."

In this way love is made fun by them. Normally, parents would support the children's love and wish their happy married, but here Mr. Peachum advocates for divorce for her. When she insists on her true love, she blames books for her foolishness.

POLLY: I don't know what you are talking about.

MRS. Peachum: divorce.

POLLY: but I love him. How can I think of divorce?

MRS. Peachum: Really, have you no shame?

POLLY: Mother, if you've ever been in love...

MRS. Peachum: in love! Those damn books you've been reading have turned your head. Why, Polly, everybody's doing it (30).

“When Polly argues “love is the finest thing in the world” (30). Mrs. Peachum states that Macheath has several other women who can claim to be his wife. She mentions hanging him. After Polly leaves, Peachum realizes that he can get Macheath hanged plus earn a good bounty in the process. In this way, Polly quickly becomes secondary to the financial prospect of arresting Macheath: “Hanged, what mode you think of that, that's a good idea. ... Quite right. That'll earn us forty pounds”(31), says Peachum. When Polly listens that she realizes that it doesn't happen so as Macheath has close relationship with Tiger Brown, a constable and tell her mother no to waste her time. She tries to convince her parents what she is really good in business point of view too. Peachum decides to take on Macheath and get him hanged. “Just let me attend to that. Money rules the world (Peachum 31).” He sends Mrs. Peachum to the brothel while he and Polly go to see Tiger Brown.

This theme is further reinforced by the arrival of the five beggars. The scene could easily exist without their appearance, but Brecht inserts them for several reasons. They primarily serve to show how focuses Peachum is on running his business. Second, Brecht introduces one of the most ironic moments in the play by having Peachum fire a beggar. The reader or observer does a double-take at this moment; after all, how can you become an out of work beggar except in a

world where capitalism has taken over every aspect of society to such a degree that existence is no longer possible except within the system. Brecht subtly criticizes the excesses of capitalism by showing a world where even begging is a profession.

The same theme can be seen in the protagonist Macheath's activities and his saying. When Peachum plots to jail Macheath, Polly warns him to escape safe place. At first Macheath denied to go away leaving his business. But at last Polly succeeds to convince him. But Macheath put his one condition. That is: "All right, if I've got to go away, you'll have to run the business (Mac 36)." In spite of her tears, he sits down and goes over the ledger books with her. This replacement of love with business is a direct attack on capitalist society in which emotions are subordinated to fiscal transactions.

The reduction of love to mere business is furthered by Polly in her dream. She remarks that she dreamt about the moon, a symbol of her and Mac's love. The moon is equated to a "worn-down penny." This gives love two meanings and references, the first being that it equates love with capitalism. Second, love is compared to something old and not worth very much. This belief that love is worthless is held by all of the characters except for Polly who seems to be the only character struggling to achieve worthwhile emotions. At the end of the chapter indicates, even she readily capitulates to the capitalist ideal and gives up on her love.

In final scene of drama, the theme of business superseding sentimentality is again introduced. When Brown finally enters the cell, Macheath chooses to settle up their business first. He even explicitly states, "No sentimentality". When Brown agrees, Mac yells at him for only caring about money. Mac then reads his own epilogue, infuriating Brown in the process by reminding his former friend that he has killed him

BROWN: Yes...yes...but really, Mac, I don't think we ought to spend our last...



MAC: kindly stop sniveling. Thirty pounds. And for the job in Dover eight pounds.

BROWN: why only eight pounds, there was...six months comes to thirty eight pounds.

MAC: Do you believe me or don't you believe me? Your share in transactions of the last. (74)

Brecht expresses the ideas that come to dominate his later plays- namely that in a capitalist society, the right to enjoy life depends on how much money one possess.

Mac's final speech of drama is quite important. In the speech he accuses big business of doing exactly what he does, namely being a thief. The only difference is that the big companies do it with more money and legally. Notice that this is what he was planning to do: Mac wanted Polly to take the money and set up a bank with it, thereby getting rid of his men and entering a more reliable business

### **3.2 Themes of Corruption, Crime and Law**

*The Three-Penny Opera* draws a relationship between crime and capitalism, and place of law. It represents essentially a Marxist view of capitalist economic structures. Brecht constructs a mythical version of the cut-throat world of Victorian London in order to critique capitalism. Capitalism and crime are understood to be inseparable. The play is set in the criminal underworld of London. Brecht concedes that criminals are brutal, but makes the point that they are merely an extension of a brutal world. Brecht is giving the audience their fantasy of the criminal world, but, at specific moments, he gives them a dose of harsh reality.

Brecht presents the underworld where people are living the poor of the poorest there lives as capitalism has taken every aspect of life. It has created such a gap between poor and rich that rich are living their luxurious life whereas poor are brought down to begging and criminal activities. The irony is that even the life of the poor and their activities are designed by those rich people. Rich capitalist use them for their financial achievement. Poor have to do activities as capitalist told. If they do not follow them, they will be even fired from that. In this way, bourgeoisie class exploits poor proletarians each way they can. They take credits of it if they did something good, but they scold them and blame them for it. They use law and religion for exploitation on the poor. They play with religion, law and charity for their personal benefits. Brecht expresses the ideas that the right to enjoy life depends on how much money one possesses in a capitalist society.

we can find many incidents the drama that shows bourgeoisie's domination to poor people, and their hypocrisy with their fellow beings. The languages that they use show how they hate the poor and how crooks they are. They are the criminals who have disguised themselves as fine gentleman. Their crime is hidden under the luxuries bourgeoisie articles they use. The characters like Mr. and Mrs. Peachum and Macheath shows these bourgeoisie attitudes.

In the prologue of drama, Brecht gives first assault on capitalist system by comparing its world and activities with the shark.

See the shark with teeth like razors.

All can read his open face.

And Macheath has gat a knife, but

Not in such an obvious place.

See the shark, how red his fins are

As he slashes at his prey.  
Mac the knife wears white kid gloves which  
Give the minimum away.  
By the Thames turbid waters  
Men abruptly tumble down.  
Is it a plague or cholera?  
Or a sign Macheath's in town (3)?

Here, the introduction of Mac the Knife immediately sets him up in contradictory terms. He is represented as a shark with bloody fins and hidden teeth, but at the same time he is described in terms of "white kid gloves". Brecht compares Macheath with shark who survives by swallowing small fish or aquatic animals like bourgeoisie people survive on exploiting poor worker and alienating them with the family, labor and their surplus values. Shark not only exploits other beings as well as his own fellow beings. Here in drama Macheath and Peachum are trying to destroy one another's business. But Brecht find a difference between Macheath and shark: "all can read his [shark's] open face" and it's natural instinct but no one can read Macheath's criminal activity and his duplicitous character as his criminal hand is covered by "white kid gloves" which symbolizes the bourgeoisie articles or its super structure. These white gloves, signs of pure hands, serve as a symbol of bourgeois society. Brecht is basically saying that Macheath covers his crimes by pretending to be bourgeois. Alternatively, this can also be interpreted as implying that bourgeois society commits the crimes and then pretends that nothing ever happened. We can note that Macheath does not deny his crimes; instead, he acts as if nothing is wrong.

Shark kills animals for survival but this murderer kill for his financial appetite. The present of him in the society is compared with dangerous disease like plague and cholera.

Capitalism is such a dangerous system which gives a place for criminals, or result crime in the society. The introduction of Mac the Knife immediately sets him up in contradictory terms. Any way capitalism needs money without caring source. Brecht says, Mac the knife acquired his cash box./God alone knows how(3).

We can see how much the world of capitalism is full of the criminal activities in act I scene II, when Macheath's gang changed the stable into the luxurious room where Mac and his innocent wife Polly spend a night. In the heart of Soho, Macheath and his gang have taken over a stable. Polly enters in a wedding dress and complains about the fact that it is stable rather than a fine building. Mac tells her that she will have everything she needs. A van pulls up outside the stable and the gang enters with lots of furniture, dishes and carpets. They transform the room and congratulate Polly and Mac on the pending marriage even while they describe the people they had to kill in order to steal the stuff. Mac insults them all, calling them cannibals for having killed people in order to get the stuff.

POLLY: But you can't be meaning to have our wedding here? Why it is a common stable. You can't ask the vicar to a place like this. Besides, it isn't even ours. We really oughtn't to start our life with a burglary Mac. Why, this is the biggest day of our life.

MAC: Dear Child, everything shall be done as you wish. We can't have you embarrassed in any way. The trimming will be here in a moment.

Mathew: That'll be the furniture.

(Large vans are heard driving up. Half a dozen men come in, carrying carpets, furniture, dishes, etc., with which they transform the stable into an exaggeratedly luxurious room).(13)

By transforming the stable into an exaggerated luxurious room, Brecht again is using bourgeois articles to hide the murders and thefts. The use of furniture is parallel by the gang in the suits, a comic image they do not have the right manner. Thus, bloody deeds and bloody people parading around as if they were common, normal members of the successful society. In above dialogue, we can see Macheath's unwillingness to accept his crime. When Polly denies spending their wedding night in burglary place, Macheath portends not to understand Polly's saying and he promised to change the stable. But irony is that the stable is totally changed in exaggerated luxurious room, but with stolen things. Polly is pacified with what she doesn't want. The sophisticated language they use shows there is no different between the criminals and capitalist who attend fancy party wearing fancy dress: "Dear Madam, if any items of furniture should be lacking, we'll be only too glad to go back and... (Walter 14)." Mac further addresses his gang members in such a aristocratic way that he is very well manner: "May I know the gentlemen to take of those filthy rags and put on some decent clothes?"

At same conversation we see Macheath's double face character when he scolds his gang for not stealing decent furniture that pleases the Polly. "What incompetence! That's the work of apprentices, not experience men! Haven't you any sense of style?"

This attitude of Macheath shows that Mac is very adamant about taking credit for mistakes, especially those committed by his men. This is a power struggle. The man who can take credit for mistakes can also takes credit for successes; Macheath is playing the part of a capitalist owner reaping the benefits of his ownership. As the master criminal of London, he commits murders and robberies with aplomb. He is dissatisfied, though, with the small-time criminal life and aspires to middle-class legitimacy. At the opening of the play, he is two weeks away from moving all of his holdings into a bank and turning his gang over to the cops. In this

way Macheath is hypocrite capitalist who cares about just own interest, not of the fellow workers.

Mac: You [Polly] will go on sending the profits to the Jack People's banking house in the Manchester. Between us it's only the matter of weeks before I go to banking altogether. It's safer and it's more profitable. In two weeks at the most the money will have to be taken out of this business, then of you go to Brown and give the list to the police. Within four weeks all that human scum will be safely in the cells at the Old Bailey [Prison] (37).

He believes that the banking is the one of the best way to change black money into white money. He is an incurable criminal. Who stills things from other, he even betrays his own wife for his self-interest. Not only that he also sleeps his business partner's daughter Lucy even betrays his own wife for his self-interest. Not only has that he also slept his business partner's daughter - Lucy.

Macheath's concept about his business becomes clearer when he delivers his last lines; he announces that the small thieves are being swallowed up by the corporations backed by banks: "We lower middle class artisans who toil with our humble homiest on small shopkeepers' cash registers are being swallowed up by a big corporations backed by the banks...." (76). His last words are to say goodbye to those present and to state, "So be it - I fall." From his above expression we can take meaning that the big business companies run by great capitalist would swallow the small business house run by small petty capitalist or proletarians. They never give them chance to rise to their status by playing politics of money and power.

The same theme of capitalism and crime has relationship of brother and sister in the other characters' activities too. The most surprising thing is that not only Macheath is criminal but also police

chief Tiger Brown who worships the goodness of law and its power. He is such a corrupted that he misuses the power to dominate the poor people and for income generating saving Macheath from the punishment. They have a business deal they both profit from. Brown is torn between feelings of responsibility for his position and allegiance to his friend, so he comes across as weak willed and greedy.

Further his junior assistant Smith takes bribe from Macheath for removing handcuff from his hand so he can escape from the prison.

MAC: well, Mr. Warder, I suppose these are the harvest you have got? With kind permission I should like to apply for a more comfortable pair. *He takes out his cheque book.*

SMITH: Of course, captain, we have got them here at every price. It all depends how much you want to spend. From one guinea to ten.

MAC: how much would none at all be?

SMITH: Fifty. (46)

By the help of this smith and his girl friend Lucy, Macheath succeeded to escape from the jail. But Macheath caught second time by the betrayal of Jenny again. Smith this time to try to take the bribe from the Macheath, but he demanded a thousand pound. So he couldn't collect that money and he couldn't escape from there. From the activities of Brown and Smith, anyone can assume that what is the place of rule of law in capitalist society.

The same concept law is reinforced in the statement of Mr. Peachum's dialogue.

PEACHUM: .... We are all law abiding people. The law was made for one thing alone, for exploitation of those who don't understand it, or are prevented by naked misery

from obeying it. And anyone who wants a crumb of this exploitation for himself must obey the law strictly (61).

Here Peachum mean to say that the law is only for the poor people who are ignorant to play with it and use it in their favor. It is just the mean of the exploitation and controlling the poor people under their system for rich people who knows how to manipulate the law.

The final scene where Macheath is ready to be hanged, his business partner Tiger Brown comes there with the royal message that Queen has Issued the royal reprieve. In addition, Macheath is made a hereditary knight and given a castle." I bring a special order from our beloved Queen to have Captain Macheath set at liberty forthwith as it's the coronation, and rose to the hereditary peerage." (Brown 79)

The message of queen and Macheath's set free to liberty is similar to activities of political leaders who make the order to judge to leave the great business men's criminals sons or daughter on the bail. Here, even in the moment of death punishment, Mac the Knife, the protagonist, is saved by money or capital breaking the laws of the state. Money is everything in the capitalist society which can do everything; and for everyone cans it create justice, harmony and social order. He is the one who should be punished by law but he I s not punished because he belongs to bourgeoisie form birth.

The setting of the play amidst prostitutes, beggars, and thieves emphasizes the competitiveness of the capitalist system. In *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht argues that a capitalist system drives people to do anything to make money. They steal, kill, and sell their bodies, and none of these actions is out of the ordinary. These activities will arise naturally because the characters live in a system that rewards ruthless competition. For example, Macheath plans to steal the money he owes his friends so he can be successful in banking. He clearly wants to get ahead in the world and does not care who he leaves



behind in the process. Jenny lets Macheath sleep with her even though he physically abused her in the past; she gives her body to Macheath in exchange for money. Another example is Peachum, who creates fake beggars that are better than the real thing to draw income from the guilty middle and upper classes. Essentially, he sells pity, and he steals from the public by allowing fake beggars to roam the streets. As an entrepreneur who sells an emotion, Peachum makes the competitiveness of the capitalist system more concrete.

By making his characters the prostitutes and thieves of London, Brecht wants to blur the line between criminality and honesty. Macheath aspires to be middle class, with his fancy dress and his attempts at elegant speech. Peachum, the most hypocritical character in the play, presents himself as an honest small businessman. Brecht argues that the only difference between a criminal and a businessperson is that society lets the business people get away with stealing. This motif helps to call into question traditional moral positions that would condemn those who are supposedly criminals. Peachum is the implied criminal in the story because he is a businessman stealing money from the rich. He draws income from the guilty middle and upper classes because they fall prey to fake beggars

The characters make decisions throughout the play that display their brutality toward one another. According to the play, in a capitalist society, exploitation is not a byproduct of the system but a natural part of it. People like Peachum who know how to use the rules of society to their advantage are rewarded for their cruelty. Macheath demonstrates this brutality that underlies society. Macheath is a vicious criminal, but rather than reprimand him or make him guilt-ridden over his crimes, Brecht puts Macheath's criminality in context by comparing his crimes to those of banks and businesses. Those institutions do far more harm than Macheath does because they exploit the poor and workers. Macheath's decision to pursue banking is ironic because in this industry he will be crueler and more evil than he was as a criminal. From this perspective, Macheath is not such a menace to society but just part

of it like everyone else. Brecht emphasizes that if capitalism is society's guiding principle, then even criminals should be accepted.

The play demonstrates the arbitrariness of values in capitalism. Peachum uses traditional moral stances; such making the characters quote the Bible, to justify exploitation and cruelty. Peachum takes biblical quotes and uses them for his own purposes, as in Act I, scene I, when he demands that Filch pay him because he will be given something in return. Peachum offers Filch a job in exchange for payment, but this job involves preying on people's sympathies by pretending to be a beggar. Peachum is not charitable towards anyone if said charity does not involve making money. But by reciting lines from the Bible, he appears as though he is helping others. Although biblical proverbs are associated with morality, it is clear that the characters are only interested in enriching themselves and not others when they quote the Bible. Peachum makes the same point about the law in Act III, scene I. Peachum proclaims his absolute devotion to obeying the law, but only because he knows that it is a useful tool for helping him exploit those weaker than him. In each of these situations, a traditional moral value (religiosity, obeying the law) is shown to be a mask for exploitation. Brecht's point is that the foundations of society's supposedly rigid moral values are in fact made of nothing and appear less noble beneath the surface.

Macheath's actions present this theme from a different angle. Macheath's middle-class aspirations embody another set of values: the belief in upward mobility and economic progress. Traditionally, these values are associated with a progression toward power and responsibility. Macheath wants to leave his life of crime, put his money into a bank, and acquire the trappings of middle-class life like quality furniture, tableware, and manners. Despite wanting to leave crime, Macheath has no intention, though, of changing his values. He steals the domestic niceties he desires, continues to visit the whorehouse even though he is married, and plans to betray his friends to make it easier to stay on the right path. By showing Macheath's desire for economic legitimacy as completely unconnected to any

change, Brecht reveals that although Macheath may plan to leave his life of crime for a safer profession, his values will remain unchanged.

When Macheath and Jenny sing the song "Second Threepenny-Final" in the Act II, moral values are emphasized. In the song, they sing that before moralists go preaching about personal behavior, they should make sure that everyone should have food to eat. Morality is a tool of the rich and powerful to maintain their positions. For the lower-class citizens, survival has to come before morals. Brecht's point, therefore, is not to replace one set of hollow moral values with another. Instead, he emphasizes the focus on the wellbeing of societies poorest.

## Chapter IV

### Degradation of human being in Capitalist society

A Marxist poet and playwright, Brecht was evolving a notion of “epic drama’ that would appeal to the masses rather than to elite, reflects the reality of existence than idealism, and promotes didacticism and reflection over emotion. *The Three-Penny Opera* seems an ideal vehicle to condemn bourgeois convention and agitate for social change however change is not easy to come.

Brecht’s work *The Three-Penny Opera* represents the capitalist society with its underworld characters. The world of *The Three-Penny Opera* is occupied by beggars, prostitutes, criminals and poor women. The world is poor and full of criminals and immoralities as the capitalism has centered the power and money into few hands. Exploitation of poor people is prevailed throughout the society. The world is poor, so the people are corrupted. They are obliged to do immoral or criminal activities for their survival. Jenny indulges into prostitution as there is not any option left for her except indulging into immoral activities. Filch, a real beggar becomes a fake beggar as he is made to be so by the system of Beggar’s Company. The protagonist Macheath is middle class capitalist who is himself victim of capitalism dominates his co-workers and Jenny. He tortures Jenny and insults his workers for not doing work properly. He takes advantage of their helpless condition. Similarly; the world of Peachum also shows the degenerated condition of human in capitalism. Peachum outfits poor men as panhandlers to evoke extra sympathy. Self-interest motivates Peachum throughout *The Three-Penny Opera*. His only concern is making a profit with his business then demands a percentage of their profits. He trusts no one, not even his wife and daughter. He obeys the law, reads the Bible, and wants his daughter to respect them. He reads the Bible and obeys the law only because he thinks these activities will aid his business, not because he desires to be a noble citizen. Peachum’s use of traditional morality to justify his

cruelty is a powerful way to emphasize both the arbitrariness of values and hypocrisy of religion. The world of capitalism is full of crime, corruption, immoralities along with exploitation. The condition of women like Jenny, Mrs. Peachum and Polly is very deplorable. They have nothing of themselves. They have to live their life designed by their male who is the rich capitalist. They are behaved as second sex.

.Here, Brecht intended to denounce the hypocrisy of bourgeoisie and protest the crime, corruption immoralities and exploitation which are prevailed in the society. The events of *The Three-Penny Opera* show that the capitalism has brought every human being in alienated condition. Man remains at war with man. In friendship, love and pity, one finds only fleeting truce. He has to save skin, and nothing is secured to him any longer except his life. He will betray his wife, his friends and his children for capital. One becomes indifferent to other. Brecht indirectly conveying the message that capitalism is a system where man can survive only if he 'tortures unceasingly', loots, and attacks, slit the throat of devourer and neighbors. The talent of man is on his capacity of exploiting their fellow man. People only succeed by exploiting others.

The question arises. Are capitalist, the gods of capitalism are happy? No they are not because the system from which they gain profit alienates them from life too. They all live in temporary quarters without rest, pleasure or comfort. They possess nothing. They operate in the abstract. They make money in the wind, playing on weakness, directing the force of others so that they will profit from it.

To denounce this degenerated condition of human beings in capitalist society where every human value are commodified and turn every human being into machines who are struggling for financial benefits. Hence, Brecht used the epic theatre in his *The Three-Penny Opera* to compell the audience to be thoughtful on deplorable condition of human being where money ruled every aspect of life. He wanted the audience to be able to view the character and their activities critically. Brecht, in

other words, intended his plays to serve an incentive to his readers and audience to think about the prevailing social condition and to urge them to bring needful changes in those conditions.

The play is an apt example of epic theatre as Brecht has used every element to make audience feel estrangement and make them think critically. He has used the elements like narration of events rather than act upon. In drama there are so many important incident that we know through the narration of characters. By using narrative element, Brecht aims us to reveal the real condition and make us to be thoughtful in that condition without losing emotions.

The next element that Brecht used in the drama which distances the audiences from losing control over emotion is his anti hero Macheath, the master criminal of London; he commits murders and robberies with aplomb. He is dissatisfied, though, with the small-time criminal life and aspires to middle-class legitimacy. At the opening of the play, he is two weeks away from moving all of his holdings into a bank and turning his gang over to the cops. He kills and steals because he is good at it. If he can make money more easily as an honest man, he will do it. Macheath does not change during the course of the play. At the end he remains a ruthless criminal who cannot see beyond his own self-interest. He never expresses remorse for his crimes, nor does he consider whether he should have done something differently. He always narrowly focuses on his immediate desires and needs. He is a thief, a murderer, and an adulterer.

By making Macheath such an inexcusable monstrous character, Brecht has intended to make the audience alienated from hero. So, they can view him critically. Here Brecht prevents audience from identifying themselves with hero or any of characters. Here audience behaves with character as spate beings. They feel they are alienated from the characters while watching the drama. All the characters are brought into the court of audiences' critical judgment. Macheath is the protagonist of drama, he is anti- hero. He do not posses any virtue that ancient heroes of Greek posses. All the characters are

presented as normal human who have greed, hate, sensuality and snobbery. Because of these characters, readers detached themselves and notice their action from critical eyes. Similarly Brecht has used many songs in play. In fact there are many songs in the play. Brecht intended the song to serve as an interrupting and alienating device. He included the songs to function as a means of diluting the plays realism with their lyrical quality; however the songs in the plays strike us being an integral part of dramatic action.

*The Three-Penny Opera* has got a just few events where exploited characters protest against their exploiter. The beggar's denial to Peachum to work with him can be taken as a kind of protest though it is simple protest. It can be taken as initial phase of revolution. Though *The Three-Penny Opera* doesn't have straightforward protest against the capitalism, the opera serves as critique of capitalism as it has presented the degenerated condition of human life where even begging has become profession and crime has been a kind of business. Though, Brecht's character does not protest directly to overcome the deplorable condition caused by capitalist. By the use of epic theatre, Brecht has indirectly urged the audience to be critical on the condition of human being and appeal to do something in their life bring apt change in condition. In this regard Brecht's *The Three-Penny Opera* is an anti-capitalistic drama which was designed in epic theatre following theory of Marxism. The drama resists the dominant ideology of religion and moralities and law which was shaped by capitalist for their financial benefits. The drama presents the fantasy of London underworld which is full of criminal, prostitutes and beggar. As Marxism says, the drama presents the reality from distance that audience can judge them using their critical mind. The drama presents contradiction between reality and appearance. The characters seem to do something in surface but when the audience think them critically they find their actions are guided by their inner desires. In single sentence *The Three-Penny Opera* indirectly protests the status quo and reflects a Marxist interpretation of society

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