

Motherhood in Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children"

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Abstract

The political and social plights that encountered the nations from time to time through the past era of the twentieth-century all over the Globe in general and in Europe in particular were surprisingly destructive and of dramatic changes. The playwrights of that period tried their best to cope with the de facto status of these changes. Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) had tackled deeply the overall changing social and political issues of that era in Europe from a multi-dimension vision. Moreover, at that time the European communities encountered a hard time. A time coloured with shadowy hews reflected from WWI and WWII outcomes. Therefore Brecht and his contemporary dramatists produced dramas and other literary genres that envisaged their up to date dilemmas, yet with a modern perspective.

Mother Courage and Her Children (1941) is arguably regarded Brecht's masterpiece. The play is inspired by the invasion of Poland. It is written in five months during 1939 after Brecht had fled to Sweden. The drama could not be produced in Scandinavia hence the latter faces Nazi occupation. Further, the play is first produced in Zurich in 1941. Brecht unfortunately misses the first performance then he revises the

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*play as he is informed that some critics receive it disappointingly. Brecht makes his own production upon his return to Berlin in 1948 at the Deustches Theater. The drama marks both his home and first produced in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1939. The play is considered by many critics to be Brecht's best dramatic work and one of the most powerful anti-war dramas in history. The play is based on two works by Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen: his 1669 novel, *Simplicissimus* and his 1670 play, *Courage: An Adventuress*. Many critics assert that the play has vividly tackled Brecht's concept of Epic Theater. This dramatic subgenre, is pioneered by Brecht seeks to present theatre that could be viewed with complete detachment.*

Keywords: Motherhood, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Epic Theater, Bertolt Brecht.

1.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) is born to a middle-class family in Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany. After attending the University of Munich, he moves to Berlin, the center of contemporary German cultural life, and finds work as assistant dramaturge at the Deustches Theater in 1924. There, he achieves his first great success in 1928 with the production of his Three penny Opera play. It is regarded as the most famous play of his various collaborative works with composer Kurt Weill. This modern morality tale on gangsters and capitalists wins him massive popularity and would later guarantee his place in both the German and Western cultural arena. Due to his Marxist and anti-fascist beliefs, Brecht is forced to flee Germany with the rise of the Nazis in 1933. He lives in exile in Scandinavia and the United States for the next fifteen years. Though he attempts to establish himself both in Hollywood and on Broadway as numerous German expatriates had done, Brecht achieves little success with American audience. Even, he is brought before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. His encounter with HUAC left him deeply awkward with America, and Brecht moves back to East Berlin in 1948. He lives there until his death.²

Brecht produces his first major play, *Baal*, in 1922, producing it as a critique against the traditional, de-politicizing concepts of the

artist and assures his modernist vision. His conversion to Marxism results in a number of anti-capitalist works, including *The Measures Taken* (1930), a "learning play" aims didactically at the education of its spectator, and *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1932). During this time, Brecht starts to elaborate his theory of the epic theater, an avant-garde form that aimed at unhinging a dramatic establishment Brecht understood as complicit with the oppression of its audiences. In particular the epic theater challenged the notion of spectatorship as grounded in identification, seeing the identification between the viewer and character in the conventional theater as insidiously removing both from their political and historical contexts in the name of the universal human status. The epic theater strives to break the fascinating, trance-like effect of the dramatic spectacle, transforms the spectator into its critical observer, and pushes him to thought and action. Via Epic Theater Technique, Brecht succeeds in erecting a new dramatic genre that places him head way along the most influential dramatists of modernism.³

The epic form primary innovation is the *Verfremdungseffekt*, generally translated as the "alienation" or "distanciation" effect. This effect demanded an alienation of the spectator from the spectacle that would reveal the social relations. However, Brecht dubs the "gestus" or "gist"/"gesture"—asserting the narrative on-stage manner. A particularly well-known method for such alienation is the Brechtian acting technique. In the epic theater, the actor will no longer seamlessly efface themselves in their role and "become" their character, but perform both themselves and the character at once. Brechtian acting would bring the relation between actor and character to light. By then, forcing, in the name of a higher realism, the audience to examine the artifice of the spectacle and the tensions between its constitutive components. Thus, Brecht's staging techniques similarly aim at such alienation. Also, the epic theater makes frequent use of unfamiliar settings. These may include the interruption of action and dialogue, unsettling music, the use of banners to mark scene changes, and playing spaces divided by half-drawn curtains.⁴

From 1940 onward, Brecht starts to win the international recognition for his most famous plays, producing the bulk of them with the East German Berliner Ensemble as directed by his wife, Helene Weigel. Briefly he returns back to more traditional dramatic forms in his *Private Life of the Master Race* (1940), an attack on the Nazis, and

then returned to the epic in the *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944), a piece on maternal sacrifice. *Galileo* (1947), a tale of the persecuted intellectual, then followed, along with the *Good Woman of Setzuan* (1948), a parable about a good-hearted prostitute who must live in the guise of her male cousin to survive the world. Brecht tries hard through such techniques as short, self-contained scenes to deliver his message in theater. Such dramatic effects prevent cathartic climax, as songs and card slogans that interrupt and explain forthcoming action. He also uses detached acting that ward off audience identification. These techniques come to be known as "alienation effects". Brecht seeks to present a mental theatrical experience unmarred by emotional judgment. He encourages his audiences to think critically and judge objectively about the message of the play. He intentionally pushes his audience to assess the destructive effects of war from an experimental view point to be part of the event performed.⁵

1.2 Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children" (1941)

The play is written from September to November 1939 in Sweden, the name and some atmosphere coming from Grimmshausen's seventeenth century novel *Die Landstortzerin Courasche*, the figure of an indomitable camp-follower suggested by the poem *Lotta Sviird* by the Swedish author Johan Ludvig Runeberg. The first performance was in Zurich on 19 April 1941 with Therese Giehse as Mother Courage and music by Paul Burkhard. The music now used was written by Paul Dessau, mainly in 1946. On 11 January Brecht and Helene Weigel introduced the play to Berlin, in the *Deutsches Theater*; on 8 October 1950 Brecht produced it in Munich, again with Therese Giehse. In 1960 a film was made of the (by then revised) Berlin production. At the end of his life Brecht wrote a film script under the same title, which is however for all practical purposes a different work.⁶

The play is considered by some critics as the greatest play of the twentieth century and perhaps the greatest- antiwar drama of all time. The action of the play takes place over the course of twelve years during the period of (1624- 1636) performed in twelve scenes. The scenes of the play gives a sense of Mother Courage career during this period but without any assertion for the development of her sentimental feelings and attitudes towards the characters of the play. Mother Courage is not depicted as an utter noble character in the play, but seemingly a changing personality to assert the human nature that

cope with life demands and especially in the hard times. Brecht's style in Epic Theater differs from that of the ancient Greek and even contradicts it in regard to the Greek tragedies in which the heroes are of high status not normal characters. They also speak elegant language that is of great effect on the part of the audience to deliver their sublime message. Brecht uses the alienation effect technique to deliver his message about war in a modernist point of view. Further, the ending of the play is an open ending drama that keeps the room open for the audience to envisage the forthcoming scene for the heroine, Mother Courage.⁷

1.3 Motherhood in Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children"

The play opens in Dalarna, spring 1624, in the midst of the Thirty Years War. A Sergeant and Recruiting Officer are seeking soldiers for the Swedish campaign in Poland. A canteen wagon appears, bearing the infamous Mother Courage, her dumb daughter, Katrin, and her sons, Eilif and Swiss Cheese. The Recruiting Officer attempts to seduce Eilif into the army. Mother Courage demands that he leave her children alone. The Sergeant protests and asks why, since she lives off the war. Due to that she should not ask something of her in return. When Eilif admits that he would like to sign up, Mother Courage foretells the fate of her children: Eilif will die for his bravery, Swiss Cheese for his honesty, and Katrin for her kindness.⁸

Mother Courage states:

MOTHER COURAGE. So they'd desert their old mother, would they, the rascals? They take to war like a cat to cream! Well, there's yours, Eilif, my boy! (As EILIF takes the slip, she snatches it and holds it up.) See? A cross!

RECRUITING OFFICER. (to EILIF) If you're going to wet your pants, I'll try your kid brother.

MOTHER COURAGE. Take yours, Swiss Cheese. You should be a better bet – you're my good boy

(SWISS CHEESE draws.) Don't tell me it's a cross? Is there no saving you either? Just look,

Sergeant – a black cross!

SERGEANT. What I don't see is why I got one: I always stay well in the rear. (to the OFFICER) It can't be a trick: it gets her own children.

MOTHER COURAGE. (to KATRIN) Now all I have left is you. You're a cross in yourself but you have a kind heart. (She holds the helmet up

but takes the slip herself.) Oh dear, there must be some mistake! Don't be too kind, Kattrin, don't be too kind – there's a black cross in your path! So now you all know: be careful! Be very careful! (MOTHER COURAGE climbs on her wagon preparing to leave.) (Mother Courage and Her Children, II, P.22-23) ⁹

Mother Courage prepares to leave. The Recruiting Officer presses the Sergeant to stop them. While the Sergeant feigns to buy one of Courage's belts, the Recruiting Officer takes Eilif away. Due to that Mother Courage loses Eilif's company for war company. In 1626, Mother Courage appears beside the tent of the Swedish Commander, and argues with the Cook over the sale of a capon. The Commander, a Chaplain, and Eilif enter the tent. The Commander praises his brave soldier for raiding the local peasants. Mother Courage remarks that trouble must be a head. If the campaign was any good, he would not need brave soldiers. Mother Courage is once again reunited with her son. War is a place and time for loss and gain for Mother Courage and her family. Three years later, Mother Courage and Kattrin appear folding washing on a cannon with Swiss Cheese who is now working as a paymaster with the army. Then, Yvette Pottier, the camp prostitute appears and recounts the story of her lost beautiful husband and lover, Peter Piper. The Chaplain and Cook appear and they talk about politics. The Cook remarks ironically that their king is lucky to have his campaign justified by God; otherwise, he could be accused of seeking profit alone. ¹⁰

The Chaplain justifies the cause of war for Cook stating:

CHAPLAIN. My dear Cook, you talk as if dying for one's beliefs were a misfortune – it is the highest privilege! This is not just any war, remember, it is a religious war, and therefore pleasing unto God.

COOK. I see that. In one sense it's a war because of all the cheating, plunder, rape, and so forth, but it's different from all other wars because it's a religious war and therefore pleasing unto God. At that it does make you thirsty.

(Mother Courage and Her Children, III, P.33).

Suddenly cannons explode; and news assert that the Catholics have launched a sudden attack. The Cook departs for the Commander. Swiss Cheese arrives and hides his regiment's cash box in the wagon. Here the plight of Swiss Cheese aggravates and his close end becomes close. Consequently, the audience can feel the high sense of motherhood is once again is asserted within the inner side of Mother Courage. Three days later, the remaining characters sit eating anxiously. When Mother Courage and the Chaplain go to town, Swiss Cheese departs to return the cash box unaware that an enemies are lurking about to arrest him. When Mother Courage and the Chaplain return, two men bring in Swiss Cheese arrested. In order to save themselves Mother and son pretend to not know each other. ¹¹

The Sergeant enters arresting Swiss Cheese asserting if anyone knows him :

(KATTRIN *shakes her head, then shrugs her shoulders. Voices off.*

ONE EYE *and the same*

SERGEANT *bring in SWISS CHEESE.*)

SWISS CHEESE. Let me go! I've nothing on me. You're breaking my shoulder. I am innocent!

SERGEANT. This is where he comes from. These are his friends.

MOTHER COURAGE. Us? Since when?

SWISS CHEESE. I was just getting my lunch here. I paid ten hellers for it. Maybe you saw me on the bench. The food was too salty.

MOTHER COURAGE. That's true. He got his lunch here. And it was too salty.

SERGEANT. Are you pretending you don't know him?

MOTHER COURAGE. I can't know all of them.

(Mother Courage and Her Children,III,P.37).

Brecht highlights the hard times of war when a mother is obliged to reject knowing her son so as to keep herself alive and to further protect her dump daughter for being arrested and mistreated by enemy soldiers. ¹²

That evening, Katrin and the Chaplain appear rinsing glasses. An excited Mother Courage enters, declaring that they can buy Swiss' freedom. Yvette has befriended an old Colonel who will buy the canteen. However, Mother Courage only plans to maneuver and reclaim it after two weeks with the money from the cash box. Thanking God for corruption, Mother Courage sends Yvette to bribe One Eye Soldier with the 200 guilders. Yvette reports that the enemy has agreed. Swiss

Cheese, however, has thrown the cash box into the river. Mother Courage hesitates, thinking that she will not be able to reclaim the wagon. Herewith a deep sense of corruption inside Mother Courage can be felt by the spectator hence she lives a jungle- like world she transformed into a hyena so she can keep body and soul together.¹³

YVETTE. (*entering*) They'll do it for two hundred if you make it snappy. He confessed he'd had the cash-box, they put the thumb screws on him, but he threw it in the river when he saw them coming at him. Shall I go get the money from my Colonel?

MOTHER COURAGE. The cash-box in the river? How'll I ever get my two hundred back?

YVETTE. You were expecting to get it from the cash-box? *I would* have been sunk. Mother Courage, if you want your Swiss Cheese, you'll have to pay. Or shall I let the whole thing drop – so you can keep your wagon?

MOTHER COURAGE. Now I *can't* pay two hundred. I must hold on to something. Go say I'll pay one hundred twenty or the deal's off. Even at that I lose the wagon.

(Mother Courage and Her Children, III, P.39).

Mother Courage proposes a new offer, 120 guilders. Yvette returns, saying that they rejected it, and Swiss' execution is imminent. Drums roll in the distance. Two men enter with a stretcher, asking Mother Courage if she can identify Swiss Cheese's body. Mother Courage shakes her head, consigning the body to the carrion pit. Unintentionally, Mother Courage takes part in killing her son, Swiss Cheese alluding to the Marxist vision on war time. She thinks that she may come up with something fruitful from bargaining with the enemies through Yvette. Nonetheless, Courage once again loses another member of her family out of war and its shocking outcomes.¹⁴

Mother Courage then appears outside an officer's tent, planning to file a complaint over the destruction of her merchandise. A Young Soldier enters, threatening the captain's murder. Apparently he has stolen his reward for rescuing the Colonel's horse. Mother Courage tells him to quiet down, since his rage will not last. Defeated, the soldier leaves, and Mother Courage follows. After that, two years pass, and the wagon stands in a war-ravaged village. The Chaplain staggers in; there is another wounded family of peasants in the farmhouse. He needs linen. Mother Courage refuses, as she will not sacrifice her officers' shirts. The Chaplain lifts her off the wagon and takes the shirts.¹⁵

(The CHAPLAIN lifts her bodily off the wagon steps, then brings the shirts from the wagon, and tears the in strips.)

My shirts! My officer's shirts!

(From the house, the cry of a child in pain.

PEASANT. The child's still in the house.

(KATTRIN runs into the house.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Hey, grab Kattrin, the roof may fall in!

CHAPLAIN. I'm not going back in there.

MOTHER COURAGE. My officer's shirts, half a guilder apiece. I'm ruined!

(KATTRIN comes out with a baby in her arms. To her.)

Never happy till you're dragging babies around! Give it to its mother at once!

(KATTRIN is humming a lullaby to the child.)

CHAPLAIN. *(bandaging)* The blood comes through.

MOTHER COURAGE. And, in all this, she's happy as a lark! Stop that music! I don't need music to tell me what victory's like.

(Mother Courage and Her Children, V, P.47).

Mother Courage makes use of war even in hard times. She seeks profits when there is no time for bargain. Brecht wants to assert that the capitalism knows no limits of time and place. The canteen sits before the funeral of Commander Tilly in 1632. Mother Courage and Kattrin take inventory inside the canteen tent. Mother Courage asks the Chaplain if the war will end—she needs to know if she should buy more supplies. The Chaplain responds that war always finds a way.¹⁶

Mother Courage resolves to buy new supplies, and sends Kattrin to town. Kattrin returns with a wound across her eye and forehead, as she was attacked in a route. Counting the scattered merchandise, Mother Courage curses the war for all the troubles brings to people and their lives.¹⁷ She states:

(MOTHER COURAGE stands up. KATTRIN enters with a nasty wound above her eye. She is letting everything fall, parcels, leather goods, a drum, etc.)

What happened? Were you attacked? On the way back? It's not serious, only a flesh wound. I'll bandage it up, and you'll be better within a week. Didn't the clerk walk you back? That's because you're a good girl, he thought they'd leave you alone. The wound isn't deep. It will never show.

There! *(She has finished the bandage.)* Now I have a little present for you. *(She fishes Yvette's red boots out of a bag.)* See? You always wanted them – now you have them. Put them on before I

change my mind. It will never show. Look, the boots have kept well, I cleaned them good before I put them away.

(But KATTRIN leaves the boots alone, and creeps into the wagon.)

CHAPLAIN. I hope she won't be disfigured.

MOTHER COURAGE. There'll be quite a scar. She needn't wait for peace now.

CHAPLAIN. She didn't let them get any of the things.

MOTHER COURAGE. I wish I knew what goes on inside her head. She stayed out all night once –once in all the years. I never did get out of her what happened. (She picks up the things that KATTRIN spilled and angrily sorts them out.) And this is war! A nice source of income, I must say!

CHAPLAIN. They're lowering the Commander in his grave. A historic moment!

MOTHER COURAGE. It's historic to me all right. She's finished. How would she ever get a husband now? And she's crazy for children. Even her dumbness comes from the war. A soldier stuck something in her mouth when she was little. I'll never see Swiss Cheese again, and where my Eilif is the Good Lord knows. Curse the war!

(Mother Courage and Her Children, VI, P.53).

War causes Mother Courage to lose her son, Swiss Cheese and she laments her death out of spontaneous motherhood feelings. Brecht blends the tears with memory alongside the daily events of loss and gain in wartime. Then, she feels sad for her daughter Katrin whom longs to be married and have children to feel her feminine being. Still, war kills feminism as Brecht asserts via this scene. Further, Eilif who is recruited nearby his mother is a way from her. Mother Courage yearns for his advent deeply. Once again motherhood emotions overflow the speeches and gestures of Mother Courage. She no longer can hide these super flowing waves of love for her children despite the dark setting of war. ¹⁸

Afterwards Mother Courage appears at the height of prosperity, dragging her new wares along a highway. She celebrates war as her breadwinner. Mother Courage walks side by side with war that is why sometimes she feels happy from time to time when she gets profited out of war and mostly she loses a great deal. Brecht wants to show the changing atmospheres of crisis times when one may lose his dears and perhaps he might accomplish something profitable for him. ¹⁹ Though, war proves its effect on life, Mother Courage sings the song of Mother Courage to assert her indulgence in her craft:

(A highway. The CHAPLAIN and KATTRIN are pulling the wagon. It is dirty and neglected, though new goods are hung around it.)
MOTHER COURAGE. (walking beside the wagon, a flask at her waist)
I won't have my war all spoiled for me! Destroys the weak, does it?
Well, what does peace do for 'em? Huh?
(She sings The Song of Mother Courage.)
SO CHEER UP, BOYS, THE ROSE IS FADING!
WHEN VICTORY COMES YOU MAY BE DEAD!
A WAR IS JUST THE SAME AS TRADING:
BUT NOT WITH CHEESE – WITH STEEL AND LEAD!
CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! THE WINTER'S GONE!
THE SNOWS DEPART, THE DEAD SLEEP ON.
AND THOUGH YOU MAY NOT LONG SURVIVE
GET OUT OF BED AND LOOK ALIVE!
(Mother Courage and Her Children, VII, P.55).

A year later, voices announce that peace has been declared. Suddenly the Cook arrives, tired and penniless. Mother Courage and the Cook flirt as they recount their respective past. The Chaplain emerges, and the men begin to argue, fighting for the feedbag. When Mother Courage defends the Cook, the Chaplain calls her a "hyena of the battlefield." Mother Courage suggests they depart as a company. Suddenly Yvette enters the scene with her fatter, and heavily powdered shape. Now, she is the widow of a colonel, she has come to visit Mother Courage. When she sees the Cook, she unmasks him as the Peter Piper that ruined her years ago. Mother Courage calms her and takes her to town.²⁰

Eilif then enters in fetters accompanied by soldiers. He faces execution for another of his raids and has come to see his mother for the last time.

(EILIF enters followed by two soldiers with halberds. His hands are fettered. He is white as chalk.) What happened?
EILIF. Where's my mother?
CHAPLAIN. Gone to the town.
EILIF. They said she was here. I was allowed a last visit.
COOK. (to the soldiers) Where are you taking him?
SOLDIER. For a ride.
(The OTHER SOLDIER makes the gesture of throat cutting.)
CHAPLAIN. What has he done?
SOLDIER. He broke in on a peasant. The wife is dead.
CHAPLAIN. Eilif, how could you?
EILIF. It's no different. It's what I did before.

COOK. That was in wartime.

EILIF. Shut your mouth. Can I sit down till she comes?

SOLDIER. No

(Mother Courage and Her Children,VIII,P.61).

The soldiers take him away and seemingly he has not seen his mother. Mother Courage appears, breathless. The war resumed three days ago and they must flee with the wagon. She invites the Cook to join her, hoping that she will see Eilif soon.

Cannon. Re-enter MOTHER COURAGE, breathless, still carrying her goods.)

MOTHER COURAGE. The peace is over! The war 's on again – has been for three days! I didn't get rid of this stuff after all, thank God! The shooting has started in the town already. We must get away. Pack, Katrin! What's on your mind?

COOK. Nothing.

MOTHER COURAGE. But there is. I see it in your face.

COOK. Eilif was here. Only he had to go away again.

MOTHER COURAGE. He was here? Then we'll see him on the march. I'll be with our side this time. How'd he look?

COOK. The same. (Mother Courage and Her Children,VIII,P.62).

It is war and it is the sole reason behind the overall demolishing of humanity from a Brechtian point of view. Mother Courage is breathless and on a hurry to leave the area to run after war's benefits. Still, she is unaware that she is about to lose her second son, Eilif due to war outcomes. Eilif raids on the peasants and their farms something that he learns from war. He kills a peasant's wife and steals their cattle despite the fact it is peace time. Therefore he is going to be hanged for his evil act.²¹

It is autumn of 1634. A hard winter has come early. Mother Courage and the Cook appear in rags before a parsonage. Abruptly the Cook tells her that he has received a letter from Utrecht saying that his mother has died and left him the family inn. He invites her to join him there. However, they must leave Katrin behind. Katrin overhears their conversation. Calling to the parsonage, the Cook then sings "The Song of the Great Souls of the Earth" for food. It recounts how the great souls meet their dark fates on account of their respective virtues, wisdom, bravery, honesty, and kindness. Mother Courage decides she cannot leave her daughter.²²

Kattrin climbs out of the wagon, planning to flee, but Mother Courage stops her.

(The COOK and MOTHER COURAGE enter the parsonage. KATTRIN climbs out of the wagon with a bundle. Making sure the others have gone, she lays out on a wagon wheel a skirt of her mother's and a pair of the COOK's pants. She has just finished, and picked her bundle up, when MOTHER COURAGE comes down with soup for her.) MOTHER COURAGE. Kattrin! Where do you think you're going? (She examines the bundle.) Ah! So you were listening? I told him: nothing doing – he can have his lousy inn. (Now she sees the skirt and pants.) Oh, you stupid girl! Now what if I'd seen that, and you'd been gone! (KATTRIN tries to leave. Her mother holds her.) And don't imagine I sent him packing on your account. It was the wagon. They can't part me from my wagon. Now we'll put the cook's things here where he'll find 'em, that silly man. You and I are leaving. (She climbs upon the wagon and throws the rest of the COOK's few things down on to the pants.) There! He's fired! The last man I'll ever take into this business! Get into harness, Kattrin. This winter will pass like all the others. (Mother Courage and Her Children, IX, P.66).

War keeps shaping the lives of people based onto its course of action. It is January 1636 and the wagon stands near a farmhouse outside Halle. Kattrin is inside; her mother has gone to town to buy supplies. Out of the woods come a Catholic Lieutenant and three soldiers, seeking a guide to the town. The Catholic regiment readies for a surprise attack. Convinced there is nothing they can do, the peasants begin to pray. Quietly Kattrin climbs on the roof and begins to beat a drum to warn out the people. The soldiers shoot Kattrin. Her final drumbeats mingle with the thunder of a cannon.²³

She has saved the town, but sacrifices herself for the sake of the people of the town.

(The soldiers fire. KATTRIN is hit. She gives the drum another feeble beat or two, then collapses.)

LIEUTENANT. So that ends the noise.

(But the last beats of the drum are lost in the din of cannon from the town. Mingled with the thunder of cannon, alarm-bells are heard in the distance.)

FIRST SOLDIER. She made it.

(Mother Courage and Her Children, XI, P.73).

Toward morning, Mother Courage sits by Kattrín's body in front of the wagon. Mother Courage sings Kattrín a lullaby. The lullaby is a song usually sung to the child so he can sleep. The contradiction lies in Kattrín's death; therefore she is metaphorically compared to a sleeping child to denote her innocence and purity. ²⁴

Once again, Brecht sheds light on motherhood tie in the play to solidify his will- netted drama.

MOTHER COURAGE. Maybe she's asleep. (She sings.)

LULLAY, LULLAY, WHAT'S THAT IN THE HAY?

THE NEIGHBOR'S KIDS CRY BUT MINE ARE GAY.

THE NEIGHBOR'S KIDS ARE DRESSED IN DIRT:

YOUR SILKS WERE CUT FROM AN ANGEL'S SKIRT.

THEY ARE ALL STARVING. YOU HAVE A CAKE

IF IT'S TOO STALE, YOU NEED BUT SPEAK.

LULLAY, LULLAY, WHAT'S RUSTLING THERE?

ONE LAD FELL IN POLAND. THE OTHER IS – WHERE?

MOTHER COURAGE. You shouldn't have told her about the children
(Mother Courage and Her Children, XII,P.75).

The peasants bring Mother Courage to her senses and offer to bury her daughter. Mother Courage pays them and harnesses herself to the wagon. She states that she must go back to business; she resolves and moves after the regiment:

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm glad she can sleep.

PEASANT WOMAN. She's not asleep, it's time you realized, she's through.

OLD PEASANT. You must get away. There are wolves in these parts. And the bandits are worse.

MOTHER COURAGE. (*stands up*) That's right.

OLD PEASANT. Have you no one left?

MOTHER COURAGE. Yes, my son Eilif.

OLD PEASANT. Find him then, leave *her* to us.

PEASANT WOMAN; We'll give her a proper burial, you needn't worry.

MOTHER COURAGE. Here's a little money for the expenses. (*She harnesses herself to the wagon.*) I hope I can pull the wagon by myself.

Yes, I'll manage. There's not much in it now. (*The last regiment is heard passing.*) Hey! Take me with you!

(Mother Courage and Her Children, XII,P.75).

Generally speaking, Mother Courage is a pathetic victim of war. She sacrifices her three children to war and the latter offers very little to

her in return. However, she is not seen as a passive sufferer, still, she is presented by Brecht as an active agent in wartime despite her own loss. In the closing scene of the play, she is left alone to highlight her dilemma as a woman in war time. She is suspended between her maternal and commercial instincts. Accordingly, she may curse the war as a mother, but as a businesswoman, she is identified with it, as A "hyena of the battlefield,". She speculates on the lives of men. From a feminist perspective she is a kind mother for her children. She cares for their choices in life. She knows well their good and bad aspects in their characters. Due to that, from the very beginning of the play she declares the close end of every member of her children. ²⁵

Conclusion

Motherhood is clearly stated in Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*. It is read in the title and envisaged in the play course of events among the well -decorated characters. Brecht uses a woman and her children to present the evils of war with a modernist vision. Also, Brecht uses the epic theater technique alongside the estrangement dramatic component to highlight his message in the play. Mother Courage is shown as a camp follower about forty years old woman who sells supplies from a canteen wagon to both sides in the Thirty Years' War. She tries to support herself and her children with her canteen wagon. Despite her great loss, she succeeds to deliver a comprehensive idea. War is a falsified national cause that sweeps a way all life aspects. People are killed like cattle during war time. There is no winner in war, all are losers. By the end, if there is a victorious side, then it should be the people who survive out of destruction. Brecht from a post-colonial point of view addresses the evils of war and its dark-side results on the part of the nations. He wants to say that countries and people are destroyed altogether in war. Thus, Brecht keeps his audience aware of this notion during the whole drama scenes. Then, from a feminist point of view, Brecht confirms that women are tender creatures in life who need support and care. Nonetheless, he uses a single woman to deliver an everlasting message about the ills that encounter men and women in war. Further, he sheds light on virtue as sublime feature for people. Furthermore, virtues in wartime become fatal to their possessors. Mother Courage is a multi- dimensional character who copes with the changing events of life. Brecht presents her as a mother who cares for

her children and they accompany her in her journey. She is also presented as a woman who suffers from the ills of war. Furthermore, as a mother she is deeply influenced by the loss of her children. As a business woman she adjusts herself to war life style and gets benefits from it. Finally, at the death scene of her son Swiss Cheese, she refuses to recognize the corpse of her executed son, consigning it to the carrion pit. Seemingly, she feels afraid on her daughter Katrin more than herself and wants to protect her from the soldiers of the enemy. Also, Katrin's death does not urge her to revolt. Instead, she continues her journey with the wagon, to solidify her status as a strong-willed mother despite her great loss.

NOTES

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² David Galens, *Drama for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Dramas* (New York: The Gale Group: 1999), 180-199.

³ Stephen Parker, *Bertolt Brecht A literary Life* , (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc Press, 2014), 20-100.

⁴ David Galens, *Drama for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Dramas* (New York: The Gale Group: 1999), 180-199.

⁵ Stephen Parker, *Bertolt Brecht A literary Life* , (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc Press, 2014), 502-527.

⁶ Alfred D. White, *Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays*, (London: The Macmillan LTD Press, 1978), 85-107.

⁷ John J. White, *Bertolt Brecht's Dramatic Theory*, (New York: Camden House Press, 2004), 26-132.

⁸ Stephen Unwin, *A guide to the plays of Bertolt Brecht*, (Methuen: Methuen Publishing Limited Press 2005), 207-215.

⁹ Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, (New York: Darius Milhaud Press, 2010), 16. Further quotations from the play appear parenthetically in the text with Page number.

¹⁰ Stephen Unwin, *A guide to the plays of Bertolt Brecht*, (Methuen: Methuen Publishing Limited Press 2005), 207-215.

¹¹ Raymond Williams, *Drama From Ibsen to Brecht*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 277-290.

¹² Peter Thomason and Glendyr Sacks, *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 132-142

¹³ David Galens, *Drama for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Dramas* (New York: The Gale Group: 1999), 180-199.

¹⁴ Alfred D. White, *Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays*, (London: The Macmillan LTD Press, 1978), 85-107

¹⁵ David Galens, *Drama for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Dramas* (New York: The Gale Group: 1999), 180-199.

¹⁶ Ibid, 180-199.

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²⁰ David Galens, *Drama for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Dramas* (New York: The Gale Group: 1999), 180-199.

²¹ Ibid, 180-199.

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²³ Peter Thomason and Glendyr Sacks, *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 132-142

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