

## THEATER AND POLICY FROM BRECHT'S PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

This study focuses on Brecht's political perspective, and his use of such perspective in theater. An attempt is also made to have a look at the political theater between 1930s and 1960s; An attempt is also made to establish a relationship between Brecht and political theatre, and the effect of world war on his works. Political theater is an idealist theater and extremely humanist, which is willing for establishing for justice and seeks to change the existing situation to a desired situation. Brecht creates a new method in theater history by proposing narrative theater. He does not want to affect audience emotionally made them have sympathy with the characters of play. Brecht aims to make audience active and thoughtful, not attracted to the play and considered not an individual's pain but society's pain constantly. For not restricting audience by play, Brecht forces the audience to think by spacing and cutting off the play, by this method that in this interval or junction, a poem or social song songs to audience.

The method of this research is descriptive – analytical; it focuses on studies and collecting data based on library method. Proposing narrative theater, Brecht provided some suggestions for a novel method of writing plays. Brecht intended to change the attitudes of theater audience, and for this purpose, he tried to question the authenticity of his audience's perception and understanding. This study seeks to illustrate Brecht's intellectual in creating narrative theater. Brecht's intention in establishing political theater was to display man's miserable condition of life and the latter's social relations.

**Keywords:** Brecht, political theater, narrative theater, Narrative theatre

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Identifying Brecht and dissection of his works is adequate dominance on political theater. But what is political theater? What is its purpose? How does it contribute to change societies?

Political theater is an idealist theater and extremely humanist, which is willing for establishing for justice. Political theater is an objecting theater. Political play is a play which seeks to change the existing situation to a

desired situation. Political theater attempts to convert passive interlocutor to active interlocutor. The weapon of political theater is language.

<<we can account dramas from historical past as political theater that can be performed and used today. Political dramas which have dealt with policy nowadays and these dramas are in political dramas of past, can be last with their values until now. History has shown obviously that policy is one of the most important components of theater and this history tells us that policy is as antique as theater. First policy should become human and moral, so can be displayed on the scene>> (Mashingar, 2010:244).

Political theater is strongly and Brecht's contribution and his political perspectives in forming this justice are extremely bold.

Brecht creates a new method in theater history by proposing narrative theater. He does not want to affect audience emotionally made them have sympathy with the characters of play. Brecht aims to make audience active and thoughtful, not attracted to the play and considered not an individual's pain but society's pain constantly. For not restricting audience by play, Brecht forces the audience to think by spacing and cutting off the play, by this method that in this interval or junction, a poem or social song songs to audience. His aim was that audience should know political social courses and express his share actively.

## 2. METHOD

This paper is done by descriptive analysis based on existing documents and sources, collects data by library method and after analyzing data it addresses conclusion.

## 3. THEME OF POLITICAL THEATER

Generally, themes of political theater are:

*In society conflicts or anti-ideology:* in every society, different classes with their different purposes, plans, and political definitions state their needs, provoke their challenges and fight with each other and express their perspectives in all fields including exponential works (workers and middle class's needs are more accurate).

*Effort for achieving social justice:* the objectorartist points to every shortages in achieving his social, individual... rights. He is fighting for justice not equality because never happens in the world, but justly division of facilities is possible, owing to there is no society in which force or forces try for the fulfillment of this concept or even have fought. So, the relation between individual and all cultural, economic and social values of system and his criticism on these policies is one of the usual and serious issues of political theater, because pointing to perversities, deviations and social corruptions are one of the important highest goals in all era.

*Freedom praising:* munificence praising and advocating individuality is one of implicit values inside political theater.

*Modernity:* pointing to all structures, definitions or old forces and lose flexibility ability and adaptation to novel world and has no function anymore, is one of the responsibilities of political theater (Naghizade, 1995:3).

## 4. BRECHT AND POLICY: GENERAL IDEA OF BRECHT

Brecht's purpose from establishing political theater was that by showing conditionality of life and social relations of human make the removed social realities obvious. The necessity of achieving to his thoughts is getting familiar with his life and his created technique.

Brecht's aim was that the audience should pay attention to social-political issues and accomplish their share actively (Roose-Evans, 2002:94).

EugeneBerthold FriedrichBrecht (1898-1956) Whom Zhan Paul Sartrenames as the best contemporary playwright, the poet who affects European theater. An innovative person who changes theater art and opens new ways to writers, actors and audience.

Brecht becomes the greatest playwright in German after Nazi war, was born in 1898 in old city of Augsburg in south of German, which is belonged to Bavaria's kingdom. His mother was from black war and his father was a well-known industrialist. When Brecht was born, his family was between the affluent classes of Augsburg. Fate made Brecht to choose another way. His family occasions were not desirable for him; he disagreed against his

family thoughts, imagery, old and time-worn shackles very soon.

In school young Brecht criticized and complained his teachers. They sent him down out of school a few times until he finished elementary school and entered high school. While he was 16 years old his first literary text was published in local newspaper. He finished high school too and in 1917, while he was 18 years old, he went to Munich for studying medicine and started studying medicine in the city university. But after a year they sent him to battle. Because of his familiarity with medical profession, he started working in military hospitals. He has socialist and communist attitudes. He was he was known as the most famous playwright of narrative theater (which is opposite to dramatic theater) and for his popular playwrights.

Brecht not only was a successful and great director, but also was a gifted poet and he composed a meaningful playwright and pleasing poems, songs and melodies. Brecht started composing while he was 15 and before starting playwright, composed his first poems between 1914-1917 and published them in local publications (Nazeri, 1997:57).

In 1918, while he was sent to compulsory service in addition to working in military hospital in back of war, he read his poems by playing the guitar to soldiers and made them attracted to his warm and pleasing tune.

Dramatic poems are known as the most important works of Brecht. These poems are the ones which enter into plays in form of poem, song and melody and for thematic events or enrichment of theme, increasing the effect, changed to prologue, mediastinum, and postscript or used between the texts.

These poems are usually ironic and satirical while are witty had very serious and informative concepts, most of Brecht's plays include one or more poem, melody or song (Nazeri, 1997:59).

## 5. BRECHT'S TECHNIQUE

Dramatic and theater art of Brecht was the most thoughtful; he formed a work and established a method that reveals the meaning of work as clear as possible. First it is epic characteristic then its dialectical characteristic, were adapted to able audience to proceed step by step beside the writer. Despite his theater had misunderstanding, indulgence of enthusiasts has contributed as much as not understanding of people who returned their face from it. In addition to continuous of searches, play by play (Brecht considered them as tests), events and experiences have affected creation and determine steps or that. However Brecht has revealed his will in tearing deception veils for social and psychological battle I German, his pungent denials of irony and expressionism demon in form, in fact he gave square to a sarcasm which became unknown by it. Approaching to Marxist and its study, social necessities of Nazism escalation was essential for Brecht to decide about clearing the base of his educational plays Mother Materialism Dialectic based on Goraki's novel and in general determining political situation of characters (Taavoni, 2010: 18).

His deportation because of Rish Stag's fire, does not banish him from Fascist battle. On the contrary leads him to encircle Hitler's terrorism realities in a documentary method "in big fear and poverty of Third Rish" (1935), and consider his countryman's as mentality evaluation about dictator's character, rejection of disclosure of Hitler's power, he accused individual's humbleness and abnormality to accuse the myth. He modifies its educational aspect. Brecht's theater art is a mean for achieving a purpose this purpose has an artistic aspect as well as social aspect; in Brecht's opinion the goal is to improve both of these purposes: the art of being actor and the art of being viewer.

Fewer playwrights have concerned the second issue. But which play does not need viewer? Besides, always neglect viewer. While an actor's art attains to the extent level of perfection and delicacy, viewer stays in the lowest level of perception, regarding to human value is the base of Brecht's revolutionary theater.

From the beginning, Brecht has disclaimed all Aristotelian values and standards whether in literature or in society and confirmed his role as well as three common factors of theater. In fact in late 1920s, he established the main elements of his theory and he described his tips in several notes about plays and some of his plays in that era like decadence and greatness of Mahagonny's city, Human is human, Dopoli's opera. In the next years, Brecht by several ways in notes on plays and some articles on a dependent opinion-like small organ for theater has returned to these theories and has revised them by purification, annotation, replacement, paraphrase and

description. In about 1930 Brecht wrote in notes on Mahagonny: The Modern Theater is Epic Theater.

Shortly after "epic" word associated with Brecht's name as its innovator. But as long as he stated there was no novel issue in epic theater in style and technique, its educational and descriptive attitudes originated from religious play of Medieval and Old Asian Theater. Most of its characteristics such as reportorial performance, direct addressing to viewer, using chorus and mask, mime and movements and modes, back to plot technique, precious and exaggerated acting style-originate directly from Japan's new theater and even development of this technique and word of "epic" does not start with Brecht in the way that was used in Europe (Brockette, 2011:114).

## 6. PISCATOR AND BRECHT

Erwin Piscator, the first theorist of epic theater imported many scientific techniques into epic theater, these techniques re: Film's sequence, cartoon, small scenes and etc, this technique lines between dramatic event and real life situations. Thus this technique originated from Mayerhold method but Piscator imported it into epic theater and later Brecht reminded them as spacing tools.

Brecht used Piscator's political idea and his technical designs in his theater. Piscator is the founder of epic theater but Brecht is the main theorist and dramatist, he is along theater's record and its evolution, growth and thought development.

His first job in theater was director in Munich and finally worked as a dramaturgy on "Dada" and "Expressionism" theater methods. His first plays are affected by these two styles (Behzad, 2009:112).

In 1920s, Piscator with performances like "The Adventures of the Good Soldier Schweik" and Brecht in "Theater-Am-Shif-Bavserdam" with performing "Dopoli's opera" created dramaturgy and new methods for setting by using screen, movable pictures and signs and advertising signals to decrease viewers emotional sensory and increase their thought firmness (Pakbaz, 2007:67).

Acting characteristic in epic theater which was used for differentiation between narrative and educational emotional theaters was declamation of real and non-psychological representations. Epic theater actor should not become unique with the character he plays or loves, but should understand the role and describe and paraphrase that.

Finally Brecht and Piscator created epic theater; Brecht's writing method is really serious and complex. In 1932 he left his country as an expatriate because of German's social condition and existence of Nazi until 1947. He always repeated his social and political philosophy in his job in all periods of life. Brecht as an innovator and creative of epic theater has left a method in his texts and performance and he named that epic theater (Taavoni, 2006: 38).

## 7. CONCLUSION

Political theater is a critical, objecting and informed theater that interferes in issues as clear as possible to change realities and teaches thought and analysis and analyzes human's relation with society and governed system in all levels.

In this belief it is revealed that epic theater was a movement with philosophy and theater which was edited by Brecht and Piscator; this theater rooted from old theater word and was created based on what it had been.

Epic theater is not a movement which is ended. This style has affected several theater details and is concerned as a different theater movement in this country.

What we can point about this theater is that novel ideas are always flown in literature and art field; this is creative artist's mission to search about what was existed and what is existed in a novel way; the work that Brecht coped with by hardworking.

Brecht and Piscator create epic theater by complete involvement of past theater details and literary and artistic art of their era.

The aim of political is modifying internal issues of a country and achieving a better social, cultural, moral

and humanist system.

In political theater we rely on discrimination of thought and classes, so political theater is an internal component and in other words is a family disagreement, in contrast to resistance theater which always stated about society nature, culture and system which is attracted from outside and people masses and relevant military and governmental systems, always resist against this invasion and do not allow to destroy what they made in terms of economic, culture, political and moral.

Brecht wanted to overcome to single character mentality by creating relation between scenic events and effective and great historical powers. His instrument for achieving this aim was: developing personal scenes to historical, political and economic arenas... Piscator was the first who used film as a mean for connecting scene and life in theater. He displayed scenes of documentary films from social and political events. Importing historical factors into individual's life privacy confirmed the dependence of individual's destiny on social conditions. Brecht was affected by Piscator's works in the way that Brecht mentioned documentary theater in 1920s and Vise realized that in 1960s.

Brecht by proposing narrative theater has located a new model against classical theater. In this style he does not want to affect viewers' emotions or sympathize with characters of play, but he wants the viewer to be active and thin, not being attracted by play and do not consider individual's pain but social pain constantly.

In order that the view is not restricted by the play, Brecht invited the reader to think by spacing and cutting which was done by a poem or public song addressing viewers.

Brecht's aim was that viewer should be aware of social-political issues and should express his share actively.

Epic theater originates from traditional and classical theater but it has its own concept and philosophy. Social, political, economic and philosophical way of thinking in 20<sup>th</sup> century provides opportunity for a thinker like Brecht to create this kind of theater, in other words, social conditions of this thinker's time became the generator of this kind of drama. Brecht provided suggestions for modifying traditional structures of playwright. He followed viewer's perspective and for this aim he tried to question interlocutor's perception process and for understanding phenomena displayed obvious issues unknown and amazing.

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