

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to Bertolt Brecht's Theory

1.1.1 Brecht's Epic Theatre as an Avant Garde Theatre Movement:

German Dramatist Bertolt Brecht was a man of letters, a chiseled scholar, a noteworthy playwright and a Colossal Figure of Germany. He made an ingenious, inimitable, blazing, brilliant, radiant and remarkable invention which he called Epic Drama. The content of this absolutely erudite piece of invention was that he rejected all pressure, strain, force, stress and tension in drama. We cannot be oblivious of the fact that Brecht's influence on theatre is very marked, not only in Germany, but all over the world. Literary scholars and academicians are still fascinated with two words used frequently in Brechtian theory 'Gestus' and 'Verfremdungseffekt' as they do not have English equivalents. These are not jargonistic words or inane phrases which sound overtly bombastic to the readers. Brecht does not use a flowery language to confuse his readers. 'Gestus' and 'Verfremdungseffekt' are the key words of Brechtian theory which would be oft repeated in the thesis. Any research done on Bertolt Brecht is incomplete without his theatrical lexicon.

As Brechtian Scholars, we must note that Epic Theatre is undoubtedly an Avant-Garde theatrical movement, popularized, exemplified, celebrated, made widespread and brought into vogue in the early 20th century. However, after Brecht's sad demise, the influence of Brecht's conceptualization and conception of the theatre is viewed through the lens of Avant-Garde movement and women centric theatre. Brecht eliminated mirages, illusion, delusion, fantasy, myth, chimera, emotional involvement, identification, empathy, catharsis or semblance from the theatre which was a total revolt against Aristotelian concept of drama. Brecht felt that conventional drama was soporific and as dull as ditch water. Thus, he vowed to take

up cudgels against the Aristotelian theory of drama and it is but obvious that he was at loggerheads with Aristotle's theory. Brecht's approach was free - spirited, distinctive, unorthodox, practical and social. He extensively used paraphernalia like choral announcements, recitals, story narrations, symbols and insignia, motion pictures, placards, slide shows, audio visual aids etc. as a means of projecting his imitation. Brecht was absolutely sure of the theatre becoming an instrument of social revolution, tool of social empowerment and a foundry of social change. He aimed at giving electrifying and power loaded social messages and evolve the theatre that was passive, flat, static, non- receptive, unresisting and motionless.

The researcher points to myriad of similarities which can be found in Brechtian vision and the mission of Feminist playwrights. After all, Brecht's vision was a model for future generations who would adopt immediate, corrective measures to the change the world. He wanted to bring a massive Social Metamorphosis and raise awareness of active role play to empower the society. It is therefore almost inevitable and absolutely unavoidable that revolutions of any kind may find the material, strategies and methods in the theatrical framework designed by Brecht. It certainly does not mean that everyone who wishes to present Brecht is committed to struggle against oppression, repression and suppression. Nor does it mean that everyone who uses the epic mode is interested in persuading audience to be productive, exonerated or empowered in anyway. Brecht's notion with Epic Theatre was "Art for life's sake." He wanted the spectators to see a particular scene or circumstances from more than one viewpoint and form their own judgments, discernments, perceptions, critical acumen, prudence and accumulate pearls of wisdom from the happenings on stage. Brecht desperately wished to strike a balance between didacticism and entertainment. Thus, Brechtian theatre deals with socio political, and cultural problems. In facing the dominant social, cultural and political order, Brecht's theatre attempts to empower, transform, enthuse, modify, metamorphose and mutate the society that is immediate to it. One of the major

characteristics or hallmarks of the Epic Theatre is to reduce the aesthetic distance between stage and audience by means of a narrator or a commentator. Brecht wants to over distance, estrange and alienate in order to prevent any sort of empathy, on the part of actors, backstage artists and audience. In Epic Theatre, stage mechanics and setting are not camouflaged; rather, the audience is encouraged to view the technical processes of the theatre. He does not mind furniture being moved right in front of the audience. He does not want the audience to get drawn in the whirlpool or quagmire of emotions. It is absolutely fine to stage a play without drawing the curtains as per the Brechtian stage techniques. Curtain, therefore, is no longer useful in Brecht.

1.1.2 Epic vs Dramatic:

In his explanation about Epic Theatre, Brecht proposes that theatre should strictly provide a process of alienation, estrangement, isolation, detachment, severance and disentanglement from the emotional maelstrom or vortex, and that is necessary to all understanding. Further, Brecht does a comparative study between dramatic theatre's audience reader /spectator and epic theatre's audience reader /spectator as follows:

The dramatic theatre's spectator would exclaim: "Yes, I have exactly thought and felt like the characters – the stage happenings are only natural and obvious – society will never change - it will remain unalterable. The sufferings of the characters appall me, because they are inescapable."

The epic theatre's spectator would play a foil to the dramatic theatre's spectator and would say: "In no uncertain terms would I think that the characters are poor problem solvers and decision makers. The sufferings of the characters appall me, because they are unnecessary. None of the losses are irreparable." Brecht never missed an opportunity to point out the enormous hardships, trials and tribulations, hurdles, obstacles, stumbles, blocks, barriers, impediments, complications and difficulties

which had confronted the Epic Theatre. The cigar or the cigarette became for Brecht a symbol of disengagement, remoteness and objectivity. Brecht never prohibited the audience from puffing a cigar in the theatre and managed to get smoking acceptable in the theatre to assist the spectators in untying themselves emotionally from the action of the play. Brecht's unconventional views were like ordinances and statutes which could not be flouted.

The original plays studied in this thesis conform to the norms of the conventional theatre and portray humanity as ubiquitous, universal or eternally unchanging. But then Brecht in his adaptations shows it as mutable and alterable. Obviously the social, economic and political aspects of life become more prominent and easily juxtaposed in the plays of Brecht; in addition, he changes the form, theme, focus and content of the plays. Instead of the traditional dramatic form, he places an emphasis on demonstrating or showing events on stage through episodic narratives and zany moments. Brecht ensures that the audience get some breathing space to ponder over certain issues. He gives them time to contemplate and formulate their own judgements. He interrupts the action of all the adapted plays from time to time with freakish idiosyncrasies, far - fetched distractions, bits of direct narration and offbeat dances and songs.

The conventional plays of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay studied in this thesis denote, exhibit, manifest and endeavour to create terror and pity in the spectators, purge their emotions, so that they evolve, emerge, feel relieved and refreshed. The playwrights achieve this by conjuring up or hypnotizing before the public's eyes, an illusion of real events, drawing each individual member of the audience into the action and reaction. Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay compel the audience readers to identify themselves with the characters blindly, may be to the point of complete self-oblivion, incurable amnesia, anesthesia and forgetfulness. The magical effect of the stage illusion mesmerizes the audience into

a state of trance, which Brecht regarded as physically disgusting, repellent, revolting, sickening, uninviting, disgusting and downright obscene.

An Aristotelian theatre serves to release the pent - up emotions of the audience, but it left the audience uninstructed, unmotivated, unempowered, unemancipated and unimproved. A theatre that involves empathy is insensible, moronic, shallow, uneducative, unenlightening, uninitiating, unacknowledging and unmindful to Brecht. Such a theatre converts the theatrical art into an object of consumption and limits its scope of becoming a warehouse of social change.

1.1.3 Discountenancing all Emotion:

Through the adapted plays, Brecht aims at transforming society. According to Brecht, as recorded in *A Collection of Essays*, edited by Peter Demetetz,

“We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which the action takes place, but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself”. Peter Demetetz (1922)

The main question that concerns the researcher in the adapted plays studied in the thesis is Brecht’s attitude towards emotion, feeling and sentiment in art and aesthetic experience. Brecht discountenanced, condemned, detested, loathed and disapproved all emotion, and was obliged to explain this explicitly in his *Short Organum for theatre*. The Epic theatre is not averse to emotions; it rises to inspect them, review them and examine them, and is not satisfied just to incite, excite or stimulate them. It is the orthodox theatre which sins unpardonably by dividing reason and emotion.

Through the adapted plays studied in the thesis, Brecht made an effort to destroy theatrical illusion. He hoped to deconstruct, demolish and annihilate not only the audience’s belief that it was watching real events instead of fictitious and imaginary ones, but also the audience’s excessive connectedness and responsiveness with the

characters. Brecht thought of it to be bizarre and abstruse to get carried away by the emotions expressed by the characters on stage. Brecht was very much aware of the absence of the fourth wall in the theatre.

In the conventional theatre of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay, the audience got deeply moved by the plethora of the events portrayed. According to Brecht, the most important thing was that his audience was not at any cost allowed to get emotionally involved. Instead he urged them to be socially involved. In the adapted plays, social involvement is mandatory however, any tendency on the part of the audience to participate vicariously in the fate and the life of character according to Brecht was a red flag. Empathy compelled, coaxed and cajoled the audience to get into an intimate relation with the characters. Everything in the conventional theatre of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay seemed far too natural for anyone to pause and go into it thoroughly. Clearly, naturalness had no place in the adapted plays of Brecht representing the theatre of scientific age.

1.1.4 Brecht on Acting:

Through the adapted plays studied in this thesis, Brecht aimed at disintegrating the spectator's empathy by the vaudeville trick of divorcing and splitting up the actor from the spectator. Standing in a free and direct relationship to it, the actor in Brechtian counter plays studied in this thesis allowed his character to speak, move and present a report. The adapted plays remind us that the text is constrained, planned and rehearsed unlike the original texts that are impromptu, on the spur of the moment and extemporaneous kind of scripts.

To achieve the *Verfremdungseffekt*, each actor in Brechtian counter plays gives up his complete conversion into the stage character. The Central characters Antigone, Kreon, Edward II, Queen Anne, Duchess of Malfi, Polly and Jenny demonstrate the character, quotes their lines and present a report a real-life incident. As audience readers, we do not entirely get carried away, moved, touched or attached. The

Brechtian actor in his adapted plays does not conform psychologically or does not adopt a fatalistic attitude towards fate as portrayed in the original plays. The incidents shown by Brecht are historicized and socially set. An Epic actor does not have to represent himself / herself as the Princess Antigone, the Duchess, Edward the King Queen Anne, Polly and Jenny, but just Princesses, Duchesses, Kings and Queens, Wenches and Prostitutes which means that he or she has to represent the world of reality. Again, Brechtian theatrical bravura teaches us how to pick and choose from a play and pass on the didactic messages to the audience.

Another thing that Brecht talks about the actor's nexus with his audience is that he treats it as a convertible group of people. Unlike the actor in the original plays, a Brechtian actor performing in his adapted versions does not address himself to everybody alike or treat everybody alike. He tries to expand the gap between the stage and the audience and does not try to bridge it. He does not object to the existing divisions within the audience to continue. On the contrary, he widens them. He has friends and foes in the audience; he is friendly and affable to one group and hostile and belligerent to the other. The actor's attitude may alter according to what the character may say at different stages. However, there may be moments at which everything is in balance and the Brechtian actor must withhold judgment, though this again must be visibly shown in his acting prowess.

Brecht adopts towards his plays an attitude of "know-nothingism." The reader or the researcher gets an impression that Brecht is not familiar with his own play, not a single sentence. He is unaware of all the alterations and deletions he has made in the text. He is rather interested in how the adapted text is to be shown by the actor on the stage. Brecht thought of having an offbeat and out of the box acting style.

On stage, the actor presents a character, not represent him / her. Brecht proposed that the actor should not convert, transfigure, mutate or metamorphose into a reel life character. The actors playing various roles in Brechtian remakes only seem to

be demonstrating those roles. In Aristotelian theatre or in the original plays studied in this thesis, the actors transform into characters. Epic actors in the adaptations signify that there is an actor behind the mask. Brecht expected his actors in the counter plays to play their characters with a superlative degree of critical awareness. He wanted them to evolve rather than immerse in the character being played. He also demanded that the actors were constantly aware of how they played their parts.

As he did not wish to put the audience into a trance, haze, hypnotic stage or reverie, he expected the actor in his adaptations to keep himself free from this delirious state. He was expected to be relaxed, learn to keep his emotions in control, not allowing his muscles to strain. Even while playing someone who is possessed, the actor was to refrain from looking possessed. Brecht was opposed to frenetic and convulsive intensity on the stage. He was opposed to pity, fear, melodrama, debased form of Catastrophes that offered gory sights and ghoulish banquets to excite the audience. Brecht was deadly against the bourgeois theatre, the fourth wall and anything that precluded thought or reinforced capitalist values.

“Three devices”, according to Brecht, could contribute to the alienation effect of the words and actions of the actor presenting them.

1. Use of the third person
2. Use of the past tense
3. Comments and gestures

In John Willet’s book, (1964) *Brecht on Epic Theatre*, Bertolt Brecht says,

“In the Brechtian theatre, the actor openly disowns the character, shows both himself and the character. Instead of losing ourselves in the character, we look at it from the outside. In no theatre could there be complete identifications, or spectators would be rushing on stage to save the Desdemonas from the Othellos.” (Brecht, 1964, pg.257)

Brecht was opposed to actor’s association, linkage, connection, relatedness with the characters’ feelings. Brechtian actors and characters are interrelated, interconnected and interdependent on each other for a social purpose.

1.1.5 Brecht on Spectator Reactions:

Through his adapted plays, Brecht did not want the spectator to view reel life passively but to think about real life actively. The Brechtian World refrains from handing its Protagonists over to the world as if it were his inevitable fate, so it would not dream of handing the spectator over to an inspiring or engaging theatrical experience. Through all the adapted plays, Brecht is anxious to teach the spectator a quite definite practical attitude, directed towards changing the world. It must begin by making him adopt in the theatre, a quite different attitude from what he is used to. Brecht wished to unyoke, unchain and unfetter his audience from their antiquated ideas and archaic thinking patterns.

1.1.6 Other Stage Techniques used to Alienate the Audience

Brecht in Toby Cole’s book (1960) *On Playwrights and Playwriting*, once stated:

“Not everything depends on the actor, even though nothing may be done without taking him into account. The “story” is set out, brought forward and shown by the theatre as a whole, by actors, stage designers, mask-makers, costumiers, composers and choreographer. They unite their various arts for the joint operation, without of course sacrificing their independence in the process.” (Toby Cole, *On Playwrights and Playwriting*, 1960, pg.102).

Brecht’s estrangement effect could not be achieved without the laborious efforts put in by stage designers who designed their sets to alienate and without make-up artists who created masks for the character to produce the desired estranging effect. Distantiation effect could not be achieved without the music composers who came up with discordant music that would distance the audience from the action of the play and Choreographers who would work on dances with an admixture of gestus to disengage the audience.

The cast and crew of the play worked jointly for the achievement of that A effect. Brecht was not in favour of making things look real, natural. He believed in the incredible, unthinkable, unimaginable and inconceivable.

1.1.7 On Brecht’s Theatrical Jargon:

Brecht’s special lexicon (theatrical jargon) may be complex. His lexicon included terms as Epic-theatre, non-Aristotelian drama, alienation effect *Verfremdungseffekt* *Gestus* so on. In the adapted plays studied in the thesis, Brecht’s purpose is expressed simply by rejecting the word “imagine” (*einbilden*); and using the word “portray.” (*abbilden*). *Verfremdungseffekt* is mistakenly referred to as an “alienation effect.” It is not possible to translate this word due to linguistic complexities. *Verfremdungseffekt* is the not so up to the mark and not a very succinct translation of the term alienation effect. In actuality, Brecht probably intended to use a word closer to “estrangement”. We can conclude that *Verfremdung* served as an analytic and politically triggered method, a weapon or

a strategy which employed the methods of dialectical materialism. Other translations of “Verfremdungseffekt” are “distancing”, “exotification”, “disaffection”, “isolation” and “estrangement”. Brecht wished to show rehearsed events on stage in the adapted plays and he could make familiar works look strange. He achieved this by handling the text adroitly, deftly and dexterously. In all the adapted plays, Brecht placed an emphasis on disassociation and separation but by no means “withdrawal” or “divorce.” Brecht wanted us to see his theatrical set up dispassionately, neutrally, detachedly, open-mindedly, critically, objectively and scientifically and thus, be distanced. Verfremdungseffekt used in the Brechtian counter plays is to puncture, disempower and deconstruct the blind acceptance of any character, situation, motive, action, incident or resolution, ‘fixed’ and ‘unalterable’, ‘obvious’ and ‘unavoidable’.

Brecht was not a Plagiarist who encroached upon the original plays scripted by Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay, He felt that he could give their plays a “makeover” and this transformation could only be brought about by changing the nature of the traffic between auditorium and stage. In Brecht’s brand - new method of performing art, emotion lost its pivotal role. Instead of “involvement” playing a cardinal role in theatrical experience, alienation effect was introduced. It produced a miraculous theatrical impact. All the adapted plays present a propagation and proliferation of real-life incidents on the stage in such a way that they no longer appear periodic, obsolete or old fashioned.

The Verfremdungseffekt was adapted and adopted by Brecht in Germany for non-aristotelian type of plays in order to discard old, conventional, dated and unintellectual kind of theatre with the very new, unconventional, modern, and intellectual kind of a theatre. The original playwrights Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay made an attempt to make stage incidents appear strange to the public in a primitive form. The gesticulating of jesters embodied an act of alienation.

In Brecht's terms, an object can become invisible either because it is too strange, bizarre, uncanny, atypical and baffling. In calling for a direct impact, the aesthetics of the day call for an impact that flatten out all social and other distinctions between individuals. The original plays studied in this thesis are of the conventional types that still manage to flatten out class conflicts in this way. The same result is achieved even when class conflicts are the subjects of Brechtian counter plays. Antigone has a subaltern status, Marlowe's Edward chooses a partner far below his rank, Duchess chooses a base partner and the Sex Workers in Gay's Beggar's Opera become victims of the males capitalizing on them. All the adapted plays of Brecht create a collective response in the auditorium for the duration of the play, under the umbrella of 'common humanity' shared by all the spectators alike. The Brechtian counter plays representing Non-Aristotelian drama are not interested in generating a collective response in terms of identification with the characters but looking at things objectively and grant social change.

1.1.8 Brecht's Contribution to Socialism-Dialectical Drama:

Brecht was the Skipper of social themes. Brecht's adaptations could be seen as a contribution to socialism; as performing a pedagogic function. For this, Brecht's debt to Marxism is inescapable. For 'The Dialectical Drama,' Brecht lifted stories from the past (out of which four are going to be studied in this thesis) to produce a drama which is appropriate to contemporary subject matter, and which promotes an impartial, unbiased, unprejudiced, equitable, fair and dispassionate attitude on the part of its audience.

Through each adaptation, Brecht makes an effort to educate and inform the audience and then change the function of the theatre. Brechtian theories on the dialectical drama, epic theatre and other essays in the same period reveal that he felt it imperative to grasp and transform the ideological function of the theatre.

By rehistoricizing the plays set in the past, in his adaptations, Brecht was in fact contemplating no less than a form of revolutionary change; his argument being that a change in the attitude of the audience after reading the plays would lead to a change in the theatre's social function and hence in its economic basis, and that this would in turn provoke a change in the entire social order. Brecht has made alterations in his adaptations to suit the exigencies of his theatre. The first thing therefore is to comprehend the new subject-matter in the plays studied in the thesis; the second is to shape the new relations.

All the four adapted plays studied in the thesis do address social change from within a discussion of artistic change that an audience will be enjoined to adopt. As the Brechtian adaptations have powerful heroines, they fulfill feminism's greatest contention that "Personal is political". The key to Brecht's adaptations is changing the world, and the desire to do so is the audience / spectator's task to organize. By this, Brecht meant first of all transforming of social relationships, what he referred to as social overhaul.

Brecht always interacted and communicated with himself while writing his adapted plays. Whenever he wrote something lyrical, dramatic, profound or scholarly he performed it aloud for himself, as if he were saying it to someone else in order to bring that person into a concrete situation: to teach him, encourage him, make him curious, abuse, question and distract him, infuriate him, agitate him, shut him up, surprise him or insult him.

The conventional performances of Sophocles, Marlowe and Webster and are tear jerkers, full of melodrama and artifice. Brecht did not want a weeping audience. He in fact clamored for a peevish, squeamish and petulant audience readers who would react and overreact to see the change happen. He wished to dynamize them and arouse the social reformer in them. He wished to enliven, animate, vitalize and invigorate his audience. An ideal theatre, like Brecht's would in contrast represent

all actions as amendable, all disasters as avoidable, the world as modifiable, social structures portrayed as momentary, sets of historically conditioned circumstances changeable by human action. The theatre of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay continued to turn its audience into motionless, immobile, passive and actionless mass. The scientific theatre, as indicated above, in Brecht's view, could be achieved by inviting its audience to reform, reshape, refashion, revamp and remould what needs changing. But on the other hand, the theatre of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay represented timelessness and eternity of its objects and focused on perpetuity and universality of themes. Even in the historical plays, the conventional theatre had the habit of lifting social structures from past periods, then dismantling and disassembling them so that they appeared more or less like our own.

1.1.9 Brecht's Theatre of Scientific Age:

The new theatre representing the adapted plays of Brecht is simply a theatre of the woman who has begun to seek self- help. The new theatre appeals to the woman because she has helped herself technically, scientifically, psychologically and politically but not socially.

The new theatre representing the adapted plays of Brecht can vitalize and vivify the audience to an inventive and critical attitude by means of estrangement effect. It takes the attitude espoused by its audience in real life and applies it to the theatrical experience. The Brechtian adaptations studied in the thesis are plays in which the spectator is cordially invited to consider the behaviour of human beings, to understand, sometimes to revolt, and always to ask himself how he might have acted in similar circumstances. Brecht's plays are divorced from flippant shocks for shock's sake, amazement, traumatism, stupefaction and breakdown. Horror is not piled on horror such as can occur from time to time in the plays of the Marlowe and Webster nor are there any choruses screeching, raving, ranting and ramming home the "message." Instead, the Brechtian counter plays have essentially a forbearing,

open minded, liberal and humane audience. The audience readers of his adapted plays are tolerant yet insistent on justice, offering comprehension and understanding rather than cajolery and persuasion; ranging in mood from melody and tender lyricism to agony and excruciating pain; from admiration and love for the most tedious, monotonous, dull, mundane, prosaic and wearisome, unexciting, uneventful and unremarkable details of ordinary living to Epicureanism like buffooning zest in wine, ogling at women, from sharp compassion with the sufferings of penurious people or a not wholly unsympathetic portrayal of the pleasures of the affluent.

The means and ends of drama as given by Aristotle (1971, 47-66).represented everything to which Brecht was opposed. Through the adapted plays studied in the thesis, Brecht concluded that drama required well rounded, believable individuals and any effect of verisimilitude, resemblance, semblance or emotional identification with leading actors themselves lost in their role, hampered and thwarted the initiative to welcome the theatre of Scientific Age. To Brecht, the original plays representing Aristotelian effect were dreary, bleak and lusterless. Through the adapted plays, Brecht saw the theatre as a cultural institution which absorbed and neutralized innovative work. Its purpose was to produce the merchandise of an evening's entertainment as it benefited a capitalist society, so at another level the Brechtian counter plays can be seen to reinforce the ideology necessary to this society.

It is impossible to go into the depths of Brechtian counter plays without studying Marxism. Through his remakes, Brecht tries to show that the individual is regarded as a social being only capable of developing a multi - dimensional society in community with others. Through his adaptations, Brecht tries to show the development from a plastic society to a genuine society. Marx was curious to know how characters representing a particular class behaved with each other under different circumstances. He was also intrigued to know how people spoke about

politics, how they reacted to new ideas, how they assessed actions and how they mastered life. In this manner, Brecht developed a high degree of matter of fact ness and level headedness in his adapted plays producing a contradictory, many layered individuality, making it clear that History as Marx said, produced the individual.

The newly admitted aesthetic pleasure applied to the adapted plays is treated as comparable with that of a scientist: it is the pleasure which comes from seeing a beautiful and efficient piece of mechanism, or piece of reasoning, or piece of social analysis. The plays studied in the thesis are analyzed as pieces of reasoning; Science and Art unite on this ground.

Brechtian purpose of reconsidering the plays of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay was to ‘teach us how to survive’ and ‘how not to survive.’ Instead of audiences sobbing, they were to think. Through the adaptations, Brecht wanted to stimulate a reaction rather than encourage the kind of passive acquiescence found in the old theatre. The plays studied in the thesis, thus became ‘encounters’ and ‘experiments’, with the audience / readers functioning both as interpreters and critics.

1.1.10 The Gestus:

Brecht has taught us, trained us, transformed us and given us tips on how to practice, discuss and debate theatre, how to question the old dramatic theories: so well, that people have been known to using Brechtian techniques left, right and centre. Gestus is so rampant and common at rehearsals that it has to be restrained and prevented from degenerating into mere gesticulation.

While viewing the adapted plays of Brecht, one must note that “Gestus” is a Brechtian jargon for expressing basic human attitudes-not merely using gestures but demonstrating social connections. The Brechtian actor cum demonstrator portraying the characters of Antigone, Queen Anne, the Duchess, Polly and Jenny is to work indefatigably and arduously at emoting social attitudes in vivid and explicitly clear

manner and style. In his adapted plays, Brecht uses “Gestus” in dialogue to compel the right stance, pattern, flow, tempo movement and intonation. As Brechtian scholars, we must exult with pride, that Brecht was a stalwart who created a gestic language by subtle and artistic use of rhythm pause, parallelism and counterpointing.

The very first mandate for the achievement of the *Verfremdungseffekt* in the plays of Brecht is that the actor must get thoroughly involved in what he has to show with a definite gest of showing. While reading the adapted plays, it is obligatory to drop the supposition that action is taking place in actuality, without an audience. Through the “gestus” used by the playwright, it is possible for the Brechtian actor cum demonstrator to address the audience directly. This technique adopted by Brecht is quite different from soliloquizing method of conventional dramatist to acquaint the audience with his thoughts.

The songs in Brecht’s counter plays are clearly “gestic” in nature. As street singers demonstrate their attitudes with overt, grand but simple gestures, so, in delivering songs, the Brechtian actor bespeaks, reveals, denotes, signifies and exhibits to clarify, by expressing a basic attitude: such as despair, defiance, confrontation, submission or resignation.

1.2 Survey of Work done by Feminist Critics on Brecht and Their Relation to his Theories:

Two erudite articles in particular, one historical and the other theoretical have attached Brechtian techniques to the feminist theatre proposing a parallelism between Brechtian theory and feminist theatre practice by Karen Laughlin (1990) and Brechtian theory / Feminist Theory: Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism” By Ellin Diamond (1988) focus on how Brechtian techniques and theories have been paramount, crucial, vital, essential and cardinal for feminist theatre.

1.2.1 Caryl Churchill:

Caryl Churchill (1990), an eminent playwright elucidates how she resorts to Epic Theatre as a means of giving voice to her feminist concerns like class repression, oppression, suppression, inequality, discrimination. bias, tyranny, despotic and oppressive nature of violence, conflicts and gender in her play, *Mad Forest*.

The adaptations studied in the thesis discuss the various social problems faced by the female figures and their battle against various social concerns like oppression, repression, suppression, violence, inequality, discrimination. bias, tyranny, totalitarianism and despotism.

1.2.2 Maeve Mckeown:

Maeve Mckeown (1962) in a well - researched, profound and highly lettered study called *Feminists vs Marxists* elaborates on the relation between Politics and Theatre and describes Brecht's theory in explicit detail and devotes rest of her study to the women playwrights Caryl Churchill and Eve Einsler whose plays suit the exigencies of "Political theatre" as Brecht envisaged.

Brechtian versions studied in this thesis elaborate on the relation between Politics and Theatre and the social revolution brought about by a collective response from the audience.

1.2.3 Carol Martin and Ellin Diamond:

Carol Martin (1988) mainly frames her methodology from Bertolt Brecht's Anti-Aristotelian theatrical jargon Verfremdunseffekt, gestus as well as from more contemporary feminist re appropriations of Brechtian techniques, specifically Ellin Diamond's theory of gestic feminist criticism. Diamond has carved a niche for herself as one of the most important feminist theorists of Western theatre. Diamond vividly engages a plethora of theoretical concerns.

For Brechtian adapted plays, Social gestus was a crucial link between Verfremdungseffekt and Historicization because of their ability to demonstrate the gap between what is represented and the historical, social and political realities beyond the representation itself.

Feminist theatre artists have owned, adopted, embraced, researched, exemplified and appropriated Brecht's gestus as a method of revealing class, gender, sexuality and the horizon of portrayal, depiction, delineation, rendition and representation of female characters. Brecht's theories of estranging, distancing, defamiliarizing and verfremdungseffekt, and social gestus have been extremely useful to the feminists in distancing and estranging the audience to empower them socially.

Ellin Diamond (1988) avails of feminist Brechtian theories in her careful analysis and deconstruction of theatrical mimesis, melodrama, hysteria, realism and feminist performance. In *Unmaking Mimesis*, a highly applauded study by Diamond, presents a particularly penetrating, sharp, deep and insightful interpretation of how strange, rather agreeable relationship between feminism and Brechtian theory exists.

The chapters studied in this thesis will explain how Brecht employed "gestus" in each of the adapted plays, thus making his plays look un plagiarized and original.

The term "gestus" is not as simple as it appears to be. One has to indulge in a specialized study to understand the importance of "Gestus" in Brechtian plays.

The plays studied in this thesis allow the readers and spectators to engage dialogically rather than masterfully with the play texts before them. One can perceive the adapted texts as transformative or the possibility of becoming another reality. All the chapters studied in this thesis place an emphasis on the transformation and another reality that needs to be brought in the society by means of Brechtian optimistic mission. A gestic feminist criticism may be an idealistic,

larger than life utopian enterprise. But all things are Utopic and all dreams sound unrealistic unless and until we turn them into reality.

The plays studied in the thesis, studied as per Diamond's gestic feminist criticism, would focus on the roles of the actor and the distanced feminist spectator critic as the most significant modes of communicating, decoding, encoding, receiving and interpreting feminist gestus and gestic feminist performances. The Brechtian counter plays studied in the thesis emphasize the role between the female character and the distanced feminist spectator critic.

1.2.4 Janelle Renelt(1996):

There is a heightened emphasis on feminist and socialist concerns in all the counter plays studied in the thesis. This political theatre of Brecht transports us to the History of the relationship between socialism and feminism.

The plays studied in this thesis do focus on the relationship between Feminism and Socialism by pointing out their social responsibilities, the way society looked at them during their day and age, the way Brecht handles them and eventually, the social change that needs to be brought out by the feminist spectators for healthy gender relations in society.

1.2.5 Kim Solga (2015):

The plays adapted by Brecht also try to revolutionize the way we talk about theatre and how feminists would re radicalize and connect Brecht's theory to feminism.

Solga tells us that Diamond never studied Brecht's plays herself. We need to go beyond Diamond and trace how Brechtian Gestus could be connected to Gestic feminism by a careful examination of his own plays.

Bertolt Brecht's impact on the contemporary vision of theatre is not only widespread and well known but has gone viral amongst American feminist critics. The

researcher has found a new meaning in Brechtian methodology. Playwrights and feminist theatre groups have tied up their work with Brecht's theory in myriad of ways and those playwrights, who are detesters of traditional theatre can be seen in his affinity with early Brecht. Brecht has proved his influence on America, however he is the most influential with regard to British playwriting. Many British playwrights today are influenced and inspired by the Brechtian theatrical flotilla or armada. They imitate Brecht's structural design, his visionary theatrical purpose, political ideology and Epic techniques.

Solga tells us that Diamond endeavours to merge a lot of theories into feminism. The researcher will restrict her remarks, for the most part, to *Antigone*, *Queen Anne*, *The Duchess*, *Polly and Jenny*, her reading of them would throw open the door to new and potentially exciting re-readings of the historicized characters. All the characters would be examined through a feminist lens. Critics have considered *Good Person*, *Mother Courage*, *Mother and Grusha* for feminist analysis, however the powerful women sketched in Brechtian adaptations have been ignored unfortunately. The researcher would be going beyond and against the “conventional” readings of Brecht's female characters.

In feminist terms, the researcher is not so much impelled to imitate what has been seen, or to find familiar image reassuring, but look at alternatives that could be made available. Iconicity exists in all the original plays studied in the thesis and the icons are recreated by Brecht to look into aspects like gender stereotypes and how they consider a feminist spectator's pleasure, a pleasure that will empower her to engage, dispassionately, precisely those gender roles she is trying to abandon.

1.2.6 Sara Lennox:

Brecht has sketched female stereotypes in some plays and offbeat and powerful women in some. The very fact that feminist critics have found some meaning in

Brechtian theories and plays show that Brecht as a male playwright had the ability to create well rounded female figures.

According to Lennox (1978) in her famous research article, *Women in Brecht's work*,

“feminist criticism does not exhaust itself in decrying the maltreatment of women— in demanding in effect, equal rights for women characters. Not content merely to redress inequities, feminism has increasingly emerged as an alternative worldview which advances a more fundamental critique both of capitalism and many varieties of socialism.”(Sara Lennox, *Women in Brecht's work*. 1978, pg.83-87)

The researcher does not restrict her scope of writing to point out the maltreatment of female figures studied in the thesis but in demanding equal rights for their mirror images in society. The thesis would study the female characters in detail and form judgements and conclusions about them. Antigone is definitely not an example of sexual stereotype from feminist perspective. Queen Anne and the Duchess of Malfi (*The Duchess of Malfi*) display their weaknesses in parts, Polly (*The Three penny Opera*) looks flat in the beginning but gets well rounded as the play progresses and Jenny (*The Threepenny Opera*) remains strong and powerful throughout.

Sara Lennox(2002) points out that Brecht often represents women as

“demonstration objects” figures whose flatness is created not so much by the actress' demonstration of the character as by Brecht's appropriation of her to fulfill unquestioned models of natural or “appropriate female behavior” (Sara Lennox, *Women in Brecht's work*. 1978, pg.83–9 6)

The researcher begs to disagree with the Lennox statement. We consider this to be a sweeping remark. We really do not know the Brechtian female figures she exactly refers and mistakenly calls them *“demonstration objects.”* The female figures

studied in this thesis (Antigone, Queen Anne, The Duchess of Malfi, Polly and Jenny) are not represented as stereotypes throughout the play and are definitely not presented as “*demonstration objects*.” The researcher proves this by moving beyond Lennox’s literary criticism available on Brecht.

1.2.7 Iris Smith

Iris Smith in her erudite study *Mothers of Epic Theatre* says that

“Despite the growing criticism of Bertolt Brecht’s use of women in the theatre, it cannot be denied that the most prominent and interesting roles in his later plays are female.” (Smith, 1991, pg.491 -505)

Apart of *Mother Courage*, *Grusha*, *Shen Te* and *Mother*, the Brechtian picture gallery also includes the female characters studied in the thesis viz *Antigone*, *Queen Anne*, *the Duchess of Malfi*, *Polly* and *Jenny*.

Iris Smith once again in *Mothers of Epic Theatre* says,

“Not only did he have the incentive of writing the extraordinarily talented Helene Weigel; Brecht probably sensed as well that dilemmas facing women, as estranged and disenfranchised members of society could articulate his own views. It remains for feminists to capitalize on their potential for gender studies concepts crucial to feminist theatre.”(Iris Smith, *Brecht and Mothers of Epic Theatre*, 1991, pg.491 -505)

Brecht does consider the female characters studied in this thesis as estranged and disenfranchised member of society, who did the right thing by articulating their rights. This is exactly what the researcher expects from Brecht’s theatre.

Smith in his study asks,

“What do feminist critics want of Brecht theatre? First, they find useful its techniques for rethinking artistic representations of self and for engaging spectators in that process.” (Iris Smith, 1991, pg.491 -505)

The researcher expects the audience readers to rethink the artistic representation of female characters in his adaptations and engage the social reformers in that process.

The researcher connects Brechtian theory to feminist criticism and adapts Brecht’s ideas instead of just adopting them. Smith is interested in two theoretical moves:

“feminist critics must select carefully from Brecht’s repertoire and, further, must adopt and adapt only those ideas which have the desired theatrical results: to foster a form of spectatorial pleasure that opens up feminist alternatives and works against the replication of sexual stereotypes. To this end, the most useful of Brecht’s ideas is the social gesture (Iris Smith, 1991, pg.491 -505)

The researcher carefully selects the female characters from Brecht’s repertoire and also chooses only those (Antigone) Queen Anne (Edward II) the Duchess of Malfi (*The Duchess of Malfi*) and Polly and Jenny (*The Threepenny Opera*) who have been ignored by the renowned Brechtian scholars and critics.

1.3 Introduction to Brechtian Adaptations Selected For Scrutiny and Survey of Work Done on Them

The anthology of Brecht’s Plays are replete with portrayals of powerful women. The researcher has come to the inference that Brecht’s plays like *Mother Courage*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Good person of Setzuan* and *Mother* have been researched.

1.3.1 Brecht’s Version of Sophocles’ Antigone

Brecht’s version of Sophocles’ *Antigone* is a highly underestimated, unexamined, underrated, underemphasized, underappreciated and undervalued play as compared

to *Mother Courage, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Good Person and Mother*. It was written and directed as an experiment during Brecht's final year of the fifteen - year exile in the playground of Europe, Switzerland. Brecht was trying to recover from the travails and jolts of the World War II. We cannot really say, what Brecht had in mind while conceptualizing *Antigone* in the modern era. But, we have quite a bit of research to show that the play witnessed a few performances. Brecht's Anti Hitlerite play *Antigone* became a milestone in theatrical History. The play cannot be ignored as it is written from Brechtian point of view and thus it has made a distinct contribution to the History of Literature. The chapter on *Antigone* situates Brecht as a researcher of an evergreen Classic and highlights the significance of his version of Sophocles' *Antigone*. It was a challenge for Brecht to produce ancient poetry in a modern period and also alienate the audience from the tragic impact. It was not very difficult for Brecht to estrange the audience as the story of *Antigone* was already familiar to the audience. Brecht made a sincere endeavor to rationalize the Grecian masterpiece. Brecht's purpose was to strip the ancient tragedy off its element of fate, pity, fear and Pathos. Brecht considered Holderlin's (1797) version of the tragedy to remodel and rewrite his play and this was Brecht's most challenging experiment in theatrical practice. By proposing an Antigonemodell, Brecht overcame a million hurdles and obstacles brought about by the dramatic structure of the ancient Sophoclean tragedy. It was a Herculean task to put the traditional, conventional verse into a modern form that would sound intelligible to his audience. This is what Brecht called rehistoricization and defamiliarization of the text in his language. Frank Jones, Judith Malina and Ulrich have worked on the structure, form and content of Brechtian script of *Antigone* and compared it with Sophocles and Holderlin(1806). However, none of them have highlighted the "new woman" that Brecht traces in his version who champions democracy and makes her personal problem into a political problem. Brecht's version of Sophocles' *Antigone* is more brutal and uncouth in its treatment than Sophocles. He traces a New woman

or an “everywoman” in *Antigone*, so his play is a satire of the type of society which had produced the tyrannical Hitler as an ideal figure by some people. The general sphere of interest and concern of the play is not however directly personal but political.

1.3.2 Brecht’s Version of Marlowe’s *Edward II*

Brecht worked on Marlowe’s chronicle play along with Lion Feuchtwanger who tightened the construction, amputated most of the Elizabethan characters and flexed the version. The result was that, the play, while following Marlowe’s plot closely but not so honestly had become an original piece of work in Brecht’s hands through its unusual form and structure. It observed economy in plot and delineation of characters. Brecht himself produced *Edward II* which opened in March, 1924. Brecht selected *Edward II*, a character, not from stock, common, ordinary life or immediate surroundings. The alienation effect consists of turning the object from something ordinary, typical and habitual, familiar and easily accessible into something peculiar, striking, extraordinary, astonishing and unexpected. Before familiarity and acquaintance can turn into awareness, the familiar or known must be stripped off its inconspicuousness. This makes Brecht original and unconventional.

Through a careful scrutiny of Fuegi’s (1987) book *Chaos, Accounting to Plan* and cross-referencing and in-depth study of the recollection of his collaborators, co-workers and observers, we can answer a number of questions about Brecht’s directing style, pre-production, planning, casting attitude, text of the play, use of lighting, sets and style of working with actors, and his use or abuse of ideas volunteered by others. Through John Fuegi’s research we can see how much Brecht’s late directing style is fully implemented, anticipated, foreseen and materialized in the *Edward II* production. The catchwords and theatrical jargons of the later Brechtian theory have been retroactively applied to the *Edward II*

production. However, there is no evidence to show whether Brecht used catchwords like “Verfremdungseffekt”, “Gestus” and “Volk” at that time. Brecht’s originality, his indebtedness to the past, the dictatorial emphasis on art for life’s sake and didacticism compels us to categorize the impact of the play under the general heading of “Verfremdungseffekt.”

Esslin mentions how Brecht faced end number of difficulties with the battle - scene. Brecht compelled his soldiers to participate in the battle with their faces painted chalk-white. According to Esslin, the scene produced an unforgettable and unbelievable estranging effect. It offered Brecht that requisite distance from immediate experience which later he would bring under the heading “Verfremdungseffekt”.

Reich goes on to support this view of the very important *Edward II* rehearsals by citing Brecht’s famous 1930 set of principles of the “Epic theatre.” The soldiers enacting the “realistic” hanging in *Edward II* did it in “whiteface” so as to suggest the make-up worn by clowns in circuses. Fuegi says it is this simultaneous use of non-realistic “whiteface” and the carefully detailed “realism” of the preparation for the hanging scene constituted a typically complex and deliberately contradictory Brechtian statement. Brecht wanted to reduce tension in the theatre by using masks. From the eye-witness accounts of the production, Fuegi mentions one important point in his book, *Chaos, According to Plan* that the modern theatre owes the reintroduction of the presentational mode and the consequent emancipation of the Modern stage to the example first set by Brecht in the 1924 Munich production of *Edward II*. This shows that Brecht’s contribution to the theatrical world is immense and exceptionally brilliant. It is important to trace whether Brecht’s play is a defence of the irrational homosexual document. Esslin brilliantly points out that three out of Brecht’s early plays are concerned with the problem of same sex relationship or homosexuality (*Baal, Im Dickicht and Edward II*) What matters for the

understanding of Brecht's development as a writer and his deeply felt need, political commitment is merely the indisputable fact that his whole work revolves around the problem of the struggle between subconscious impulses and conscious control.

Brecht does away with Marlowe's love of gorgeous ornaments and splendid entertainments, the taste for everything sumptuous, whereby Marlowe stands as the perfect representative of his time. Brecht also amputates the description of the festivities and pastimes, masques and speeches that are to fill Gaveston's mind. (Gaveston does not have other royal friends in Brecht as he is a base creature). Perhaps Marlowe is thinking of the entertainments at the Court of Edward II, the masques and plays at the time of Queen Elizabeth. They suited his age more than Brecht's.

It is the "human comedy" that Brecht seems most of all hell bent on showing in his adapted works. An exaggerating caricaturing of situation in *Edward II* makes it a play that oscillates between emotional uplift and post dinner entertainment. Marlowe's play on the contrary is a conventional tragedy without any substantial admixture of comic elements. It is a chronicle play only with a few deviations from the historical records. In Brecht's play, the King's worth is belittled, brought down from his exalted status. Gaveston, a butcher's son addresses the King as Eddie. Edward too addresses his homosexual partner as Danny. The soldiers address the King by his sobriquet. All this contributes to Brecht's originality.

Thus, it is very clear that John Fuegi, Martin Esslin and Eric Bentley worked on the technical and homosexual aspect of the plays however no one till date has worked on the development of the female character, Queen Anne who suffers for no fault of hers in the play.

1.3.3 Brecht's Version of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*

Brecht's *The Duchess of Malfi* was written in collaboration with H. R. Hays and was born of a tortuous, agonizing, painstaking and tormenting set of drafts, redrafts and recriminations, which led to several confusing versions of the script, including one in which Brecht roped in W.H. Auden.

In 1943, Brecht arrived at New York and toyed with the idea of staging *The Duchess of Malfi* to create a platform for an upcoming actress Elisabeth Bergner, who was carving a niche for herself on Broadway. Brecht and Hays were enamored of the Webster piece and both felt that it lingered on too much for a successful production. The idea was to eliminate the Senecan series of deaths at the end, tighten and roughen up the script and concentrate more on hushed, silenced and the tabooed incest motive of the duke. Mr. Czinner, the producer, announced that the project needed a British verse maker and the poet suggested was Auden, who was a huge success in Britain. This version of the play, written in English by Hays, with Brecht's back seat driving, on story and structure, was in the custody of Hays.

A.R.Braunmuller in his notes on *The Duchess of Malfi* edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim (1964) gives us a brief observation on "how *The Duchess of Malfi* ought to be performed." The model to be followed was Broadway musical which consisted of speculators, popular stars, efficient scene designers, bad composers, witty but B Grade songsters, some not so famous couturiers and truly modern choreographers. Verfremdungseffekt (alienation effect) was to be extensively used by the designers and choreographers, the latter deriving from folklore. The painted backdrops which constitute the main scenery were to reflect the influence of modern painting, including Surrealist ideas.

Brecht's letter to Paul Czinner, written on the 26th September, 1946 mentions a few points and absolutely necessary changes that Brecht wanted to make in his version.

Dear Mr. Czinner,

A few points concerning absolutely necessary changes:

1) The light must be much brighter, since the long speeches in verse are almost impossible to understand.

2) The actor must be regrouped in such a way that they won't have to say speeches which are hard to understand (and which they do not enunciate properly) with their backs to the audience.

3) The adaptation supplied by Auden and myself must absolutely be reinstated. I mean it, no cuts must be made without our consent. Nor should additions from Webster's original play be made without consulting us (since the adaptation consists partly of carefully considered cuts, which were discussed with Elisabeth Bergner and approved by her).

4) Ferdinand is miscast, as Elisabeth agrees. Furthermore, the director misinterprets the role, as you and Elisabeth herself have said; and to such an extent that the meaning of the whole play is drastically obscured and distorted. You must find another Ferdinand.

5) Nearly all the scene must be reworked (from the standpoint of direction) so as to make the story intelligible to the audience. I suggest that you put in a different director. The present director has paid no attention to the adaptation and seems in general to be incapable of directing in such a way that the audience can follow the plot. (The London critics, I hear, also complained of the 'obscure plot', when he directed Webster's original

(Bertolt Brecht. *Bertolt Letters*. Trans. Ralph Manheim, 1946, pg.415)

Brecht sought to resuscitate Webster's classic repertory which was in its obsolescent and moribund state. He tried to grasp the old work by his own method, and

structured his play like an American musical, a form he greatly admired. Brecht's adaptation of Webster's *Duchess* is a presentation on Social problems which need to be discussed in the theatre. There is an emphasis on reason and objectivity rather than emotion. The familiarity with the story of the play (rehistoricization) focuses to distance the Brechtian spectators from the stage and contemplates on the action taking place.

To accomplish this, Brecht focused on bear minimum use of cruel action, underplaying of harsh, brutal, savage, bloodthirsty, ferocious, barbaric and hard hearted scenes. Brecht divides the stage and the audience so that the audience is left with an end that requires social action, revolt, rebellion or insurgency to challenge what is not acceptable.

By 1946, the theatre on Broadway had become quite advanced with the possibility of projections and greater adaptability of stage due to mechanization. James K. Lyon in *Bertolt Brecht in America (1980)*, observed that nobody in America knew about epic theatre and Brecht was all set to startle the audience with his theatrical techniques. Epic acting and staging devices were intended to make Brecht's version of Webster's *Duchess*, visceral and compelling for a specific Broadway audience.

Critics who have worked on Brecht's version of the *Duchess* only touched upon the technical aspects of the play and did not really delve deep into the similarities and dissimilarities between Webster's tragedy and Brecht's epic version. Brecht's version of Webster's *Duchess* provokes us not only to think about the play but reform society by challenging common ideologies.

The chapter on *The Duchess of Malfi* tries to show as to why Brecht's adaptation of the *Duchess* flopped on Broadway. Maybe it failed because the Americans failed to reclaim and re-examine the Jacobean tragedy form Brecht's perspective. It would show that the Americans did not free themselves from their view of his political agendas and ignored his theatrical innovations that are effective in their own right.

In Brecht's *Duchess*, there is no rescue from the heinous crimes. The good perish with the wicked but unlike in Webster's Act V, the Duchess' innate spirit is not made to revive or resurrect to avenge itself upon the oppressors. Thus, Brecht's play carries within it, a sense of desolation and provides absolutely no reprieve from the threats of destruction. The Antagonists, in the Renaissance, plays, Mortimer (*Edward II*) and the Cardinal and Bosola (*The Duchess of Malfi*) are depicted as Machiavellian figures in the original, however, Brecht treats them differently. In fact, the Cardinal and Bosola do not find significant roles to play in Brecht's version because of the lack of relevance of Machiavellianism on Broadway so also in a Modern set-up.

1.3.4 Brecht's Version of Gay's Opera

Bertolt Brecht's 1928 play *The Three penny Opera* was his most sought after and financially successful play that did a roaring business all over the world. It is one of the most popular plays written by Brecht and this is the play with which he is most closely identified. The play gave him recognition all over the world. The play fits into the category of "Epic theater," consisting of several offbeat, grotesque, zany, eccentric, idiosyncratic, hysterically fanny, unorthodox, bizarre, fantastic, extraordinary, unfamiliar, unknown and unheard-of theatrical moments designed to arouse and awaken the audience readers to social awareness, responsibility and change. The Aristotelian drama forced the audience to view a production inertly and indolently without seeking inspiration from it. It was Brecht's intention to restructure and revamp Gay's Opera and other plays to shake his spectators out of their lethargy, complacency and lackadaisical attitude and expect more from them in terms of going beyond entertainment. His theatrical vision and mission deserve a special mention in Modern Age.

Brecht's drama was designed to galvanize the theatregoers into political awareness and action. *The Threepenny Opera*, is that magnum opus Brecht ventured into with

the assistance of his secretary and love interest, Elisabeth Hauptmann and the very talented music composer Kurt Weill. It is a caustic satire (amendment of vices by correction) on the upper middle class society, containing several of the characteristic features of the epic theater: placards, titles and announcements, cacophonous music, and a story that crumbles expectations for romantic reconciliations. Brecht also made end number of stylistic changes, transforming the protagonist or central character of the play Macheath, into an unscrupulous, dissipated man, morally depraved character, highlighting the similarities between Polly and Lucy, and shaping the character of Sheriff Jackie Brown, a bosom friend and confidante of Macheath's. He is the one who protects his friend's criminal activity in exchange for a percentage of his spoils. Sherry Smith points out that Brecht's play places blame on capitalist society for the criminal underworld that Gay presented merely as a mirror-image of eighteenth-century aristocracy.

Weill's outlandish blend of cacophony, jazz, discordant music, “volk” (folk) and avant-garde scores in Brechtian play added to the play's commercial appeal, which was diametrically opposite of what Gay desired and wanted. Brecht designed his version of Gay's Opera to trigger the audience's critical faculty, not its empathy. *The Three penny Opera* has become one of the Landmark plays of musical theater and is highly acclaimed and celebrated for its unique music and engaging characters.

1.4 Female Protagonists as Portrayed in Brecht's Counter Plays:

Except for *The Three penny Opera*, Brechtian adaptations of *Antigone*, *Edward II* and *The Duchess of Malfi* have not been taken seriously. Very little research has been done on the feminist socialist messages of these plays.

In the counter plays Brecht applies his concept of ‘historicizing’ closely related to distancing, which revolves around historical incident that is unique, transitory incident associated with particular periods. This is done by setting the dramatic incidence in the past and constructing the play in the form of story which is known.

As the plays are adapted to suit the exigencies of Brechtian theatrical dramaturgy and as the story of the plays is known, they all fulfill the requirements of what Brecht called 'historicization'. Each adapted play studied in this thesis consists of a woman who struggles against exploitation and oppression, it fulfills the demands of feminism's basic contention that "personal is political". The researcher, in later chapters, will try to show how Brecht's "counter plays" suit the needs of "Political theatre" as Brecht visualized.

As a research scholar of Brechtian studies, the researcher would exhort her feminist readers to distance themselves from the female characters and use Brechtian adaptations as a vehicle for social change.

As Sara Lennox says, (Sara Lennox, *Women in Brecht's works*, 83- 96 1978)

"A cursory examination of Brecht's work suggests that related problems exist in portrayal of women there. What seems necessary then, is close examination of the image of women in Brecht's work to ascertain the degree to which he remained trapped to stereotypes. To understand ourselves and our lives as "changing" and "changeable." (Sara Lennox, 1978, pg. 83- 96)

We must, as a mandatory step in feminist analysis, examine, scrutinize and criticize women figures (Antigone, Anne, The Duchess, Polly, Jenny and Lucy) in the works of Brecht (as a male writer) in the light of what we know to be the real historical capacities of women in their time and our own.

The researcher would try to show how the women or female protagonists in the adapted plays of Brecht are not represented as "demonstration objects" (flat characters) but mostly projected as change makers, well rounded and power packed female figures.

Antigone in *Antigone*: Brecht's version of Sophocles' Antigone comments on political issues like Hitler's despotism, suppression and subjugation of women and

dismal political scenario. Brecht's *Antigone* represents an Anti – despotic, Anti – Hitlerite or an Anti – Nazi figure, who reminds us of great women leaders like *Sophia Magdalena Scholl* who revolted against Hitler's totalitarianism. Scholl was brutally executed by the Nazis and as shown in the Brechtian play, Antigone is severely punished for her act. The chapter on *Antigone* will draw parallels between the women in Nazi Germany and Brecht's non - violent protestor Antigone who does not give into the forces of oppression.

Queen Anne in *Edward II*: Bonnie Kaye's views on "Gay Husbands Straight Wives" is applicable to study Queen Anne's character in Brecht's remake of Marlowe's *Edward II*. The play deals with social issues like homosexuality, domestic violence (physical and verbal), extra marital affairs and patriarchy. The chapter will also make use of relevant passages from Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* to explain Queen Anne's complex character. The play stands up for the Queen and applauds her for her fortitude and endurance.

The Duchess of Malfi in *The Duchess of Malfi*: The anti- pornography theory of Radical feminists like Catherine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin (1988) is applicable to the Duchess' character who is voyeurized by her own brother Ferdinand. The play talks about social issues like incest, widow remarriage, violence against women and pornography.

Polly, Jenny, Lucy in *The Threepenny Opera*: Polly, Jenny, Lucy in *The Threepenny Opera* are gutsy, intrepid, dauntless females. The play directly and indirectly highlights social issues like corruption, class struggles, sex work, pornography and crime. The Feminist Sex Wars split feminists on the issue of sex and sexuality and make a very absorbing and engaging feminist study. Some point of views given by modern feminists are anti-porn and some are sex positive and thus, these two schools of thought disagree on several aspects like sex work, sexuality, pornography, exploitation and other forms of equal representation. A significant

part of this wave of feminism is a sex-positive approach that celebrates sexuality as a positive aspect of life and has a different view of looking at emancipation, oppression, empowerment. Third-wave feminists or sex – positive feminists mostly focus on the social and economic conditions that lead to sex work. They prefer the word “Sex work” to “prostitution”. They view a woman’s decision to engage in sex work as an economically-savvy and business enhancing way of maximizing her own assets. The researcher will analyze Sex Workers portrayed by Brecht in the radical feminist context and sex positive way.

All the female Protagonists as portrayed in Brecht’s “counter plays” will be compared to their portrayals in the existing originals. The researcher would like to show how a sexist society can be transformed through Brechtian adaptations and how Epic drama, with its strong socialist feminist politic, constructs representations of women and men that contest norms of patriarchal gender relations.

CHAPTER 2

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN THROUGH THE CHARACTER OF BRECHT'S ANTIGONE

2.1 Brecht's Version of Sophocles' *Antigone*:

Brecht's German version of Sophocles' *Antigone* is translated in English by Judith Malina, a woman of titanic intellect. It is a gripping, fascinating and intriguing piece of Sophoclean remake. It was just after the acme, apex, apogee, apotheosis and culmination of the Nazi violence, that Brecht created his first version of *Antigone* (in exile period) at the playground of Europe, Switzerland. The Brechtian play was performed for the first time ever in History in the Swiss city of Chur. Brecht converted an archetypal, quintessential and conventional classic like Sophocles' *Antigone* into a futuristic, groundbreaking, trendsetting and an innovative piece of literary masterpiece.

Judith Malina,(1990) an erudite scholar, translated *Antigone* in Passaic County Quod during a month that she spent there for flatly refusing to surrender the Living Theatre on 14th Street to the assault police. The troop was sent in by the government on the basis of serious allegations and charges that, the theatre group owed the I.R.S, a great amount of money. This was totally unjust, as later on, Malina and her group were exonerated as the charges proved to be false. Julian Beck and Judith Malina conducted a trial scene as a theatrical event in which they proved themselves “not guilty.” In the Winter Island, Malina got an access to all the books she needed as she read voraciously and copiously. This bibliophile read Brecht's works in precise detail, including Holderlin, Sophocles in Greek and in several English translations. Being a multi lingual personality, she lay her hands on German, Greek and English dictionaries and other reference works. She stacked all these books below a metal shelf that the prison had provided. Malina had able co - operation of 6 cell mates who agreed to allow her stationery items like writing pads and manuscripts to

occupy half of their common steel table. She had their wealth of encouragement and infinite support. Her cellmates became her translation's first audience. Later on, she worked on the text for several years, put in her painstaking efforts before her team went into rehearsals in 1966 on the stage of the Berlin Akademie der Künste. Jenny Hecht and Malina stood on a triangular stage, invented the first movements of Ismene and Antigone and expressed their indebtedness to Brecht. Thus, the Brechtian counter play cannot be ignored, undermined, underrated or undervalued on any ground.

The Living theatre staged *Antigone* for more than two decades in 16 countries and wherever Malina and her team played it, it seemed to have become the symbol of struggle of that time and place. People could relate to it and expostulate against dictatorship. The play was extremely popular in bleeding Ireland, in Franco's Spain, also in Poland, exactly a month before the Marital Law was passed. It became a blockbuster and turned Malina into a celebrity overnight. The play was received well, wherever people faced the atrocities under totalitarianism and dictatorship. The play was a bumper hit in Prague too as it was uncannily appropriate and relevant to every possible freedom struggle that communicated remonstrance towards fascist leaders, who denied personal liberty. According to Malina, there are myriad forms in which this text can be consummated. Brecht considered theatre to be an instrument of social change and he wanted the public mentality to change with the changing times. He was not interested in historicizing but rehistoricizing Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Malina extends her heartfelt gratitude to many people who enabled the Living Theatre to bring Brecht's *Antigone* to life in English, including Julian Beck, James Spicer, Pierre Biner, Stefan Brecht, Barbara Brecht Schall, Ekkehard Schall, the editors at Suhrkamp Verlag, Glenn Young and hordes of actors who performed the play with Malina and her husband, colleague and bosom friend, Hanon Reznikov.

The Living Theatre was eager to perform this play, because it had always been searching for a next step or a corrective measure that could take the spectators along the trajectory of their commitment, insurgency and insurrection to topple dictatorship. They wished to make it blazingly clear, in the best of Dramatic art form, the meaning of the awe inspiring non - violent anarchist revolution. Brecht's *Antigone* ought to be a clarion call, an obstreperous and rambunctious voice against the Nazis to fulfill such an overtly idealistic and Utopian vision. Interestingly, Brecht was always very vocal about the pacifist implications of the role of Antigone in his version. In his preface to the Modellbuch, Brecht regretted that he could not truly represent or do justice to the spirit of the German partisans who fought tooth and nail against the Nazis. His efforts fell short to have described a tumultuous Anti - Nazi revolution brought by people. Brecht was certainly not oblivious of the fact that the Anti - Nazis always kept their chin up while facing the atrocities heaped upon them by the ruthless Dictator.

Fuegi's (1987) notes on Brecht's alterations in the text throw light on content rather than form and structure. It is important to understand that the adaptor's intentions and alterations in subject matter are necessary or else the adaptation could never be treated as an original piece of work. We are transfixed to see the difference between Holderlin's version of Sophocles' *Antigone* and Brecht's version of Holderlin's *Antigone* as they are like North Pole and South Pole. They are like chalk and cheese and cannot be compared as the objectives of Sophocles and Brecht are totally different. Brecht's *Antigone* cannot be discarded as a duplicate, superficial and insignificant play or treated as an adaptation of an adaptation. Ulrich accuses Brecht of theft, plagiarism and intellectual dishonesty. However, this is a baseless, defamatory, scurrilous, damaging, pejorative, libelous and a disparaging remark. For the researcher, Brecht's *Antigone* is a socio - political critique on the 'rise of dictatorship' imported from Greece. We need to concentrate on the modifications

and amendments made by Brecht in his version of Sophocles' *Antigone* to shut up the squeaky and vexatious critics.

Holderlin freely and guiltlessly emulates the Sophoclean model and uses eccentric images which are not to be found in the original. Brecht follows Holderlin's example but in a truly Sophoclean spirit. The summary of Brecht's Ulrich criticism is that, no matter how much the spectator enjoys an actual performance of the adaptation, he is likely to emerge somewhat bemused, muddled, confounded, befuddled and nonplussed by Brecht's vision and mission. However, the researcher does not find any lacunae or cavity in the Brechtian version as Ulrich does.

The English translator of the play Judith Malina was in Athens, at the start of a protracted Living Theatre tour when she first came across Brecht's *Modellbuch* for *Antigone* – an edition printed on post war paper that was already crumbling in 1961. It was a time of rising belief and ray of hope for the Germans who aimed at the possibility of creating the world in which all wanted to live a life of optimism and vigorous resistance to authoritarian aspects of the social structure, which had left Germany shattered, devastated and ruined.

Brecht's comments, remarks, suggestions and pronouncements in the *Antigonemodell* and their application and implementation in the finished product have generated tremendous interest in the critics all over the world. Frank Jones and Raymond Trousson (1973) have placed an emphasis on Brecht's use of language in his version of the Holderlinian model. Even the famous critics on Brecht like Martin Esslin, Fredrick Even, Marriane Kesting and John Willett have not bothered about writing prolifically about Brecht / Neher *Antigone*. Malina tells us that Brecht was particularly interested in the figure of *Antigone* because he believed that the role would suit Helene Weigel, his love interest and an iconic actress with tremendous acting *savoir faire*. Brecht was no doubt first drawn to *Antigone* as a character: an intrepid woman alone defying the power of the state. The play could work wonders

as a vituperative, defamatory, condemnatory, maligning, vilifying and outrageous piece of satire against the Nazi Government.

2.2 *Antigone* as an Example of the Epic Technique and Theatre of Scientific Age

Brecht suggested that Sophocles' conventional theatre's illusion of reality should be relinquished. Through his version of *Antigone*, Brecht wished to make his audience cognizant of the fact that they were not watching real events but representations of historical events or re - historicized events by trained impersonators, whose art consisted in the clarity and unambiguity of their portrayals.

After studying Brechtian version of Sophocles' *Antigone* at length, we realize that Brechtian character and actor made intellectual, psychological and emotional space for the critical faculty which the playwright wanted to inculcate in his audience. The epic performer watching Brecht's version of Sophocles' *Antigone* was to be engaged in a discussion about social conditions prevalent at a particular time, prompting and compelling the spectator to justify, support or to abolish and deconstruct these conditions. Brecht's purpose behind staging a Greek antiquity was to re - chronicle and re - archive it to suit the exigencies of his theatre.

We cannot invite the spectators watching *Antigone* to fling themselves into the re - historicized version and let themselves be carried vaguely hither and thither. Brecht wanted his spectators watching *Antigone* to be sensible rather than sensitive. Brecht juxtaposed the individual episodes of the play in such a way that the connectors got easily noticed. Brecht's version of Sophocles' *Antigone* is definitely not a circular performance in which everything is completed. It is a play in which the friends and foes are balanced; it is a spiral performance, a tilted circle rising to a new horizon. In the Brechtian play, the uplifted spectator is catapulted to a high position by displaying his social reforming skills. What is important to Brecht, is that the

spectator watching *Antigone* in the theatre simply observes the events on the stage, craving for knowledge, discernment, doctrine, dogma and enlightenment. The spectator watching Brecht's *Antigone* watches the course of a life. As spectators, we draw our conclusions, reject, agree, disagree but for heaven's sake do not identify or sympathize. It is by no means necessary for the spectator watching Brecht's *Antigone* to see the whole play; he can view a fragmentary piece. He can see for himself how the heroine behaves in difficult situations and battles turbulent times, how she fights and rebels against the oppressors, how she changes herself or others, how she relates to the mass or how she learns to swim against the current without getting carried away. Intellectually the audience watching Brecht's *Antigone* can feel invigorated, restored, energized, revitalized and revived. It is even conceivable that his / her opinions can be changed, which would mean passing on the theatrical energy or theatrical vigour to the audience.

Brecht aimed at a "Theater of the Scientific Age" through his version of *Antigone*. Brecht's Theatre believed in creating live representations of historic happenings and offering entertainment with a twist. Theatrical entertainment in Brecht's *Antigone* merges and mingles with the character of the age. As society changes, the theatre and the entertainment it offers ought also to change, according to Brechtian viewpoint. Conventional theatre or the traditional theatre like that of Sophocles according to Brecht was null and void and could not provide entertainment of the type appropriate to the new age. Through his version of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Brecht did not wish to construct memorials or cenotaphs out of theatrical performances by retaining the archaisms.

Brechtian acting in his *Antigone* version is, of course, closely bound up with Brecht's concept of historicization as a related means of distancing the dramatic events and helping the audience to see the specific and changeable conditions shaping the titular heroine's situation. Brecht aimed at writing a political play and

wished to give a brand new dimension to the Sophoclean text by engulfing it with a hammer like thud, a jangle or may be a strident and raucous piece of music. He wished to pull the modern audience watching his version of *Antigone* out of a lamblike and unassertive and complaisant state of mind into a non - compliant, non - submissive and non – acquiescent group of people, who would vow to change the world. It is interesting, engaging and engrossing to read Brecht's *Antigone* that demolishes and crumbles the Aristotelian model in its totality.

Brecht used the very outlandish horse skull shrine, a fundamental device as a part of theatrical technique in the 1948 staging of Sophocles' *Antigone*. He used four wooden sticks with a horrendous looking horse skull placed at the top on each of them. The movement of the characters had to be in accordance with the positioning of the four marks on stage, which very aptly contributed to the alienation effect. Emergence of music and songs had a significant function in Brechtian *Antigone*, like other plays, as they contributed to the *Verfremdungseffekt*. Brecht describes, in a prolix write up, as to how the way his music was composed and executed in his counter play staged at Switzerland. The various musical instruments he desired to use contributed to his Epic genre. Brecht's *Antigone* with epic techniques does not refer to the classical world or antediluvian age but to a world that needed explication and needed to be grappled with and fully comprehended. Brechtian world in his Sophoclean counter play is an epitome of chaos and distortion, muddle and mystery that the Modern society was surrounded with.

2.3: Brecht's *Antigone* vs Sophocles and Holderlin:

There is a wide chasm or a cavity between what *Antigone* meant for Sophocles and what it meant for Brecht. *Antigone* in Greek tragedy involves a lot of killing and the stage choking with corpses as Oedipus's two sons Eteocles and Polynieces ruthlessly murder each other. The two brothers are compelled to share the throne as there is no other alternative. Each one is expected to occupy the throne every

alternate year, until Eteocles vows to usurp the throne at the end of his final turn. Polynieces along with his battalion attacks the city furiously and the brothers mercilessly kill each other. Kreon, their uncle who mounts the throne takes the unfair decision of burying Eteocles as a defender of the city and leave Polynieces unburied, the latter being a traitor. Polynieces' body is thrown to the wolves and treated with tremendous insolentness, incivility and irreverence. Polynieces, after death is not treated as a respectable person, but a despicable dead body. In a nutshell, anybody who is loyal to Polynieces is to be executed or brutally punished. Be it Sophocles' play or Brecht's, the destruction of bodies (death) is common to both. Brecht's play is inspired by a Nazi revolution. During Hitler's time, the dead bodies of the Jews were left unburied. Brecht found the theme of Sophoclean Antigone, extremely relevant to his times. However, he did not want his play to be categorized under the heading of Tragedy or Catastrophe. His version exposes us to the events that occurred at the time of the cataclysmic and terror stricken holocaust. He wished to re - historicize the play and mould it into a political one and change the perspective of the audience.

Brecht's play opens with a powerful exposition where Antigone, the sister to Eteocles and Polynieces, vows to defy Kreon's decree and get her brother a respectable burial. Ismene is reluctant to lend her a helping hand, recalling the brawls, wars and ill fate of the family. Antigone is a defiant who does not give in to the forces of oppression. Antigone all by herself scatters funeral oil over her brother's corpse. She has an unfathomable and unwavering love for her brother and also has an unflinching faith in principles of justice.

In Sophocles' play, the wicked Kreon considers Antigone's act to be blasphemous. In Sophocles' time, annoying the king was like disrespecting the Gods. While, disrespecting the despot was like inviting peril in Brechtian version. Brecht's Kreon is a replica of Adolf Hitler, the Great Dictator of Germany and Antigone, an Anti –

Hitlerite figure. Kreon declares Antigone to be buried alive (Treated like Jews in Anti – Semitism, who were burnt alive.) According to Kreon, she had erred unpardonably and sinned irrevocably. In the modern setting, the story would seem periodic, ambiguous, vague and highly irrelevant. Brecht wanted Antigone to speak with an ancient voice that is heard wherever there is a willingness to speak out against conventional strictures, autocracy, dystopia, totalitarianism and punitive laws. Antigone to Sophocles would be a fierce woman, clamouring for her rights and honour of her brother. Brecht's Antigone would be a relentless and draconian woman who put up with Kreon's savage and brutish Megalomania. Antigone, be it Sophocles' or Brecht's is intrepid, dauntless and fearless. However, Brecht's Antigone is more intense, vehement and deep - seated. Brecht's *Antigone*, is set in Berlin, over which the shadow of the holocaust unavoidably looms and spreads only sorrow and gloom; Kreon is addressed as 'mein fuhrer' rather than King. By constructing a Hitlerian figure of Kreon, Brecht has brought his status down. Antigone, an Anti – Hitlerite figure resists Kreon's dictatorship. In Brecht's version, Kreon announces a Theban Blitzkrieg against Argos. Brecht had already visualized the destruction, obliteration and annihilation planned by Hitler and he knew his country was going to embrace despondency and heartache. This is exactly what he attempted to show in his version of *Antigone*.

Kreon (like Hitler) too looks stubborn, obstinate, obdurate and adamant and does not mind his country being destroyed than surrender. Brecht was deadly against the Nazi forces and wished to see his Germany taking up cudgels against the Dictator. Brecht pined, longed and craved to see the Germans resisting against Hitler.

The way Brecht's *Antigone* is different from Sophocles' Antigone, Brecht's Kreon is also quite different from Sophocles' Kreon. Sophocles' Kreon is not a Fascist Politician or a Nazi Leader but a defender of his nation. The responsible King who

has an unparalleled love for his polis, he who is extremely rule bound and he who desires to champion the claim of the city.

The Holderlinian German version of Sophoclean tragedy was never performed as it was considered to be strange, bizarre and obscure by critics. Brecht refers to Swabia, the place where Holderlin was born and brought up. He also mentions “schwabische Tonfalle” a German word that would accurately and aptly mean intonations or to be more precise, cadences and rhythm. Hegelian element in Holderlin’s version may not be explicit or conspicuous but it cannot be ignored. Hegel, who was a pupil of Holderlin also hailed from Swabia like Brecht. On the whole, the Hegelian tone befittingly complements the Brechtian vision of dialectical materialism and also anticipates the social cause as an heir to Marx and Hegel. In its first version, Brecht’s *Antigone* opens with a Prelude that is set in a Post war situation, April, 1945 in Berlin. The exposition is noteworthy as it presents two sisters, their brother as a deserter and an officer. Brecht made massive changes in the text and also amputated the prologue and replaced it with a brand-new one, in which Tiresias, an ascetic character addresses the audience in a moralistic (didactic) tone. He gives a running commentary and tells us more about the characters standing beside him: Antigone and Kreon, the two ace debators of the play are to be seen narrating the action. Brecht’s *Antigone* is more about a political debate between Kreon and Antigone: the Oppressor and the Oppressed. This opening gives us a fair idea of what one can expect from Brecht’s version of Sophocles’ play. Brecht was least interested in Sophocles’ fidelity to the original text or in Holderlin’s translation. Brecht did not want to pay a tribute to Sophocles or Holderlin. He just used their text as a platform to express his propagandist views.

Brecht revitalized and resuscitated *Antigone* with a density of defamiliarization of a familiar text and handled it adroitly and dexterously. The audience cannot identify themselves with Brecht’s Antigone and Kreon and expect the predictable. The

words of elders in his version are spoken and not sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The actors are instructed to move in certain way (application of *gestus*) and pointers are given to them. The members of the chorus also have strict orders to follow concerning their movements. Brecht's theme is neither too vast nor too overwhelming, but his dramatic rules are stringent, exacting and ironclad.

The relation between Sophoclean tragedy and Brecht's version is socio - political and their connection is inseparable. Brecht dismissed Greek art and culture in his version but despite that, comparisons are likely to happen. There is a difference between Chorus and Brecht's commentary. In a Greek set up, the chorus is a participant and performer while in Brecht, the chorus make announcements. They are Brecht's mouthpieces and spokespersons commenting upon events. Referring to the last chorus of the play, Brecht clarifies its division: it would have to be separated in four parts each spoken by the member of a group.

Brecht did enormous violence to the original texts by inserting, deleting, adding, subtracting, expunging and redistributing its parts, using it largely to his own ends. *Antigone* was not staged as frequently as other plays of Brecht. It was staged in Zurich in March 1948, at Greiz in November, 1951 and received a huge round of applause. This fiercely political Brechtian counter play is conceived as a deliberately invasive adaptation of a vintage form of theatre with the aim of formulating a performing model for future.

The political point of view in Sophocles' play resides in a crisp phrase "*hypsipolis apolis*." He who considers himself to be a monarch of all he surveys and considers himself above the city will find himself without the city avoided by all law abiding men. Brecht, in his version adds a dozen lines which make the castigation for political arrogance more specific. Brecht considers Kreon to be a treacherous monster, a brute, a fiend, a mischief - maker, a menace and an incorrigible villain. In Sophoclean version, Kreon's crime is impiety, as he goes against the justice of

Gods. Brecht stresses Kreon's inhumanity, he who is an enemy of his people. The Dictator's enemies remain belligerent and hostile towards him. That is a major difference. There are massive changes in the next scene like Antigone's confrontation with Kreon. Sophocles accentuates the personal, religious and familial feelings of his heroine. Brecht's *Antigone*, is all about Antigone's distaste, resentment and abomination towards Kreon. It is all about Antigone's pride in her disobedience towards Kreon, reverence for funeral rights and unmitigated love for her brother. Political opinion does not play a major role in Sophoclean version. Sophocles' Antigone affirms that Thebes is on her side but afraid to confess because of Kreon's tyranny. This is to claim personal sympathy and commiseration than appeal to political principle. Brecht transforms his Antigone into a champion of peace, liberty, equality, fraternity and democracy against war and dictatorship. He inserts about four scores of lines pertaining to argument between Antigone and Kreon. Brecht's Antigone does not fight for herself. In fact, she fights for her people and immensely cares about the city and her people. She thinks about the nation and therefore objects to Kreon's war policy. This is a great contrast to Sophoclean tragedy where human laws play a second fiddle to divine superiority.

In case of Brecht's *Antigone*, plot is subservient to character. Brecht observes economy in the delineation of characters. Sophocles' tragedy was foreign to Brecht and his revision of the play is terse, apt, precise and absolutely to the point. He avoided prolixity and kept the descriptions short. Brecht uses the phrase *Nachdichtung* meaning "free adaptation" in German. Brecht compressed the plot and made an awe inspiring female hero out of his play and kept her away from her hamartia and tragic flaws.

Brecht was deadly against Hamartia, Catharsis, tragic heroism and liberal humanist tradition. His vision was hostile to these Aristotelian concepts. He tried to detach Antigone from Catastrophe and rationalized his version under the title

Durchrationalisierung. (rationalization) He modified the content and built a dramaturgy that is neither Sophoclean nor Holderlanian.

The Antigone model had a picture gallery, a collection of photographs to be successfully implemented and for the play to be made artistically and aesthetically satisfactory. One of the reasons why Brecht preferred Holderlin was due to Holderlin's resistance and aversion to the classical model. Brecht tried to work on the political overtones of the play by demythologizing the tragedy based on a myth. Brecht had absolutely no interest in the antiquities and did not wish to ponder over Greek civilization. He was also not attracted to the aesthetic appeal of the classical text.

We have our need focused on the changes made by Brecht in his version rather than the bear minimum similarities that he has retained. Sophocles' vision and mission cannot be compared with Brecht. Brecht's Antigone is quite different from Sophocles' Antigone and Brecht's Kreon cannot be compared with Sophocles' Kreon. Sophocles viewed Kreon as the invincible, valorous, gallant, valiant fighter and the sole defender of the polis. They looked at him as a Saviour or Messiah, particularly in times of danger. Sophocles' Kreon and Brecht's Kreon have one strong similarity. Both are heavily patriotic. Sophocles' *Antigone* is notably different from Brecht's. Antigone is commanding, dominant and influential in Sophocles however, in Brecht's version, she is all the more dynamic, formidable and daunting. In Brechtian version, Antigone is fighting not only for her brother's burial rights but his human rights. She cannot live under subjugation when justice is being denied. Brecht does not turn a Goddess or a Diva out of his Antigone by deifying her. However, he does put her on a pedestal and lauds her for not accepting the Hitlerite rule blindly. Sophocles' Antigone is not wrong but way too candid. For Sophocles, Kreon is not right but willing to change his mind for the better. His guilty conscience pricks him and that compels him to unearth Antigone and bury the corpse of

Polynieces. Sophocles' *Antigone* is the one who would arise, awake and not yield. Brecht's *Antigone* is revolutionary, in the sense, she leaves no stone unturned to right the wrong. Brecht who rewrote *Antigone* in the 20th century saw hubris than her heroism. Brecht's *Antigone* represents the modern view of individual liberty. Aristotle thought of *Oedipus Rex* to be the greatest Sophoclean tragedy. He did not care for *Antigone* and found her bewildering and superficial. Brecht who was opposed to Aristotle, thought of his play to be straightforward, relevant, apposite and appropriate for his day and age.

No citizen in Sophoclean age thought that he belonged just to himself. Rather all the citizens belonged to the polis. Hitler's age was different. Polis or the city was not all that overriding. For him, what was more important was the nation ruled by a Dictator to be liberated from his tyranny. Brecht's *Antigone* is not about moral rules and conduct but about human space. Hitler's age had recast the idea of morality and had given birth to a new kind of society. Brecht's meaning and concept of *Antigone* is not timeless or does not have any kind of universal appeal. It only refers to the time when Hitler dictated terms and terrorized the Germans. Brecht's *Antigone* also reflects the weakening of kinship ties and this was very common in Hitler's Germany. Brecht's modern State was quite different from the Theban polis. Individual experiences and losses were of no concern in Brecht's age; in fact the experiences and losses of the masses were of great concern.

2.4 Feminist Overtones in Brecht's *Antigone*

Brecht's *Antigone* is an eye opener on the sequestered, cocooned and claustrophobic lives that women led during Hitler's reign. Hitler was an Anti – Feminist who treated women as child producing factories, machines and progenitors of soldier boys. Women During Hitler's regime were compelled to play a second fiddle to men. German women were forcibly married off at a young age and were compelled to fulfill their duties and responsibilities by looking after their spouses and children.

Many a times their nuptials would be pronounced without their consent and they were treated like puny little things, scum of the earth.

The very famous 1932 law about marriage passed by Hitler encouraged women to produce as many children as possible. Boys were groomed into gallant soldiers and girls were groomed into being doting mothers. Brecht's *Antigone* was written during this Anti - feminist period, where the role of women was restricted to the four walls of the house; they did not have the right to stand up for themselves. They had no right to emancipate or evolve as individuals. Thus, Brecht could only change the perspective of the viewers looking at his Anti Hitlerite *Antigone*. He could appeal to the masses by writing a feminist play where a German Woman's concerns could be voiced. Brecht wished to portray an intellectually stimulated and rational woman figure, who could come out of her cocooned world and have an independent mind. A woman like *Antigone* represented the voice of Germany as women were totally silenced in Hitler's time and converted into doormats for people to walk all over.

Mothers' lives were controlled too. Women were not supposed to don make up, wear high heels or wear trousers. Dyeing of hair or any kind of aesthetic make over was strictly prohibited. Perming hair was considered blasphemous. Only flat shoes were expected to be worn. Women were discouraged from slimming and smoking as it would pose problems in pregnancies and it was non - German to do so. All these set of statutes, rules and regulations sounded extremely uncanny, queer and freakish to Brecht. Brecht was always surrounded by fashionable coquettes and he absolutely loved their style quotient.

Antigone in no case fits in the Hitler's ideas about the woman's role. She is a family person but has absolutely no right to serve as an armed force or step into a man's shoes.

In Hitler's opinion, women like *Antigone* who reversed gender roles were detrimental to the progress of the nation. Brecht considered theatre to be an

instrument of social change and he wanted to sway the audience and stand by women like Antigone who were not treated with respect. Brecht's *Antigone* does not wish to participate in Kreon's vision of ideal Thebes. Her domineering role is not restricted to accepting the rules thrust upon her. She would react, retaliate when required and refrain from being used for her gullibility and vulnerability. She does not wish to be shallow and discriminating.

Resistance takes myriad of forms and happens at various levels. Resistance can be categorized as individual or collective, global or local. The purpose of resistance can also range from individual to an entire nation. While Germany had a hard time recovering from the aftermath of World War I, not everyone resorted to Hitler to solve Germany's socio - economic problems and dictatorship. There were some non - conformist people like Bertolt Brecht who did not want the extermination of the Jewish people or a government in which they could not voice their opinion.

Hans Scholl, a staunch Feminist during Nazi Germany gets complete credit for the White Rose Resistance while no one mentions his sister Sophie, who was instrumental in setting the wheels in motion. Very few people are aware of Emilie Schindler's contributions to a liberated Germany. Brecht, through his version of *Antigone* tries to point out that while the resistance of German crowd has been documented since World War II, its emphasis has been on the males who resisted the Third Reich. It is said that women who took up cudgels against the Nazis have not been highlighted in history. One of the plausible reasons of this could be the fact that male resistance tactics were more publicly active than those of women. Females did make a sincere endeavor to participate in the resistance movements, however a majority of women had to operate from homes. Women did take part in mental and physical acts of resistance against the Third Reich, trying to bring a metamorphosis in History. Brecht's *Antigone* represents those valiant women fighters who fought tooth and nail to resist against the third Reich. In Hitler's Germany, women were

viewed as a factory of producing children to multiply the Aryan race, which was considered to be the most superior of all races.

The family which was an integral part of the German empire was to be used as a tool to serve the state. This was a personal problem made political in a negative way. According to Hitler, if the parents reinforced Nazi ideals and hammered it into their children, the future of Germany could continue to dazzle, shine and sparkle. Hitler saw family as an ultimate solace to help Germany recover its lost glory. Family's contribution was a means to serve a national purpose and this is what Hitler envisaged. In Hitler's age, women were motivated, pressurized, impelled and goaded into developing an identity in relationship to their family and discard profession or career. Hitler's rule excluded women from equal participation. It denigrated women's voice, belittled their status and silenced their contribution.

Brecht's *Antigone*, as a character, demonstrates her role and inspires the audience readers to act with courage in everyday life. That personal and everyday was understood to be a part of political order; a part of the political agenda. In Hitler's day and age, it was not easy to criticize tyranny, enslavement and oppression openly. *Antigone* as a character of the play could engage in guerilla activity of resistance. Brecht's version of Sophocles' *Antigone* is about the "powerful" and "powerless." *Antigone* wishes to be a unique individual and not a member of a group. As a representative of Nazi women, it is an uphill task for her to pull them out of slavery and bring them back to consciousness. *Antigone* does not wish to make a petty thing out of a woman. In breaking silence, she hopes to raise hell. She hopes to raise a passion for change. Theatrical space is important to Brechtian *Antigone* who is an active participant in action.

Brecht's *Antigone* being punished for her act is like violence being practiced against her in the form of terrorism. *Antigone*, burying her own brother is a matter of choice. She does so without anyone's consent as she knows she is not going to get any, in a

world that is a concentration camp. Kreon wants to show the thrill of his power. The entire situation described in Brecht's *Antigone* produces a relentless critique of the male dominated reality of our life.

Feminism was denounced, berated, condemned and looked down upon as a selfish activity in Hitler's time because it was seen as putting oneself and social status above everyone else, including the state. Thus, despite being a non - Feminist, Brecht sketched the character of Antigone in a Nazi world to awaken the Nazis from their deep slumber and shock them to death as they were afraid to have such radicalism in Germany. Hitler was always terrorized by radical feminism. According to Hitler, if women thought for themselves, controlling them would become a herculean task and they might start questioning governmental decisions. Feminism always agitated Hitler and this is exactly what Antigone does in Brecht's play. She questions and challenges the law and this comes as a thunderbolt to Kreon. Kreon interrogates Antigone for being thick skinned and stubborn and she replies that she has come to grips with Kreon to set an example. Kreon grossly dislikes her answer and replies in an imperious tone. Antigone does not approve of Kreon's overbearingly dictatorial behavior. She exhorts Kreon to lend her a helping hand and uses a far - fetched Simile to describe Kreon's greed and avarice for power. She compares a power - hungry man to a thirsty being who drinks salt water and this desire becomes a perpetual obsession for him.

Antigone's act of resistance infuriates the authority figures. Antigone as the Protagonist of the Brechtian play highlights Kreon's faults and resists him. Such forms of resistances against Hitler were carried out by women like Scholl in Germany then. At their five - hour long trial, Scholl and Hans were sentenced to death by guillotine (a brutal punishment) by reason of high treason. They merged with the elements on February 23, 1943. Scholl paid the ultimate price for her

contribution to the resistance effort. Like Scholl, Antigone too paid the price for her contribution to the resistant effort. She is severely punished by Kreon.

Brecht's Antigone, is forthright and outspoken and puts the blame on Narcissistic Kreon for making people bow down before him. She does not wish to live in a country where she cannot keep her held high and live with dignity.

The researcher quotes from the text to substantiate her claims.

“Antigone: The city threw herself away by bowing down before you.

*Antigone: not a place where I can hold my head up. I claim that's not my country.” (Brecht, Bertolt. *The Antigone of Sophocles*, 2006, pg.32)*

The researcher wants feminists to talk less about women as victims and more about women as autonomous people; women who choose freely and who act. We are all familiar with limitations on women's freedom and women's choices in Hitler's age, but Brecht's Antigone acted freely and willingly and with unbeatable spirit in a world that was Anti - Radicalist, Anti-Feminist and Pro - Nazi.

By giving her brother his human rights, Brecht's Antigone is seen as a perilous figure and her option to take her resistance to the public is a way of putting the idea into people's minds that what the Nazis were doing was absolutely wrong and could not be tolerated one bit. To Kreon, nothing was more powerful than his opinion and the belief in his own ideology. Kreon labels her as someone who does not comply, someone who refuses to conform to the norms of the Nazi Society.

Ismene plays a foil to Antigone who cannot go against the State and oppose Kreon, the Dictator. Ismene, like Antigone cannot support a collectivist movement. Antigone who condemns dictatorship, wants her sister to come to her aid. However, she does not compel her sister to be an accomplice. Ismene is not able to boost her own morale. She is timorous, spineless, faint -hearted, extremely craven and

cowardly. She is not able to overcome the gender barriers set by the society. She infers that women were too feeble to fight against men and that is what made them duteous, resigned, subservient, amenable and docile. She is more than willing to put up with the atrocities heaped upon her by the male chauvinistic society.

Antigone cannot give in to the forces of oppression while Ismene lacks the courage to do so. She is a weakling, who does not have a great opinion about women and is happy being miserable in her pusillanimous role. She languishes in the antiquated ideas and the incorrigible habit of perpetual self-deprecation. The reason behind her behaviour could be watching other women not owning their strengths and living in a subjugated environment. This compels her to shy away from bringing in courage, fortitude and fierceness in her voice.

Brecht's *Antigone* is the kind of a character who sports opinions. She carries independent thoughts. She is self-sufficient, self-supporting, self-sustaining, self-reliant and self-governing. She attains the most precious freedom of all: freedom of the mind. Antigone is a woman who possesses an opinion about what her eyes and ears so keenly observe. She cannot wrap her brain around the idea of apathy. It is bizarre and foreign to her.

Kreon brags and boasts about his victory and revels in self-love and public flattery. Antigone as a character, speaks up for her gender and states that the women too, like men arrived on earth with sharp brains, rational minds, effervescent ideas and functioning voice. So, the Brechtian Protagonist sees no logic in holding back her opinions and being meek and submissive. The meaning of Antigone's positive existence is defined by the positive difference she is able to make in the world. How could she make any sort of impact if she failed to speak up against what she felt was fundamentally right? Hitler was terribly afraid of radical feminists. Brechtian Antigone is that overtly radical girl who is fairly rational, hyper-keyed into her surroundings and deeply empathetic towards the sensitivities of others.

Brecht's Antigone effortlessly calls Kreon a stupid person and does not feel the need to argue with an irresolute and unscrupulous person like him. Kreon blames her and harasses her for the breach of law and calls her a die-hard enemy. He curses her ruthlessly and declares that she would be despised in hell and deprived of everything. He asks her to rot in hell and spread the message of love, for under his rule, she would not have the scope of living life according to her whims and fancies.

Brecht's Antigone attempts to search for a plausible reason behind the Nazi society (Kreon and his followers) having such a relentless belligerence directed towards a woman with opinions. What is the reason for Kreon's crushing avalanche or tornado of hatred towards Antigone? Why this ruthless dictatorship and terror-stricken life? Antigone, who is an exception at least questions authority but Ismene is the most severe perpetrator of this epidemic.

Brecht's Antigone is a multidimensional, fully realized human being just like everyone else residing on this planet. According to the researcher, Antigone is strong enough to have opinions because she has feelings and emotions. She is activated by a trigger and thus, gives an emotional response to what she feels is inappropriate and unjust. Brecht's Antigone does not disrespect Kreon or the King of Thebes. However, if the Dictator Kreon does something she disagrees with or behaves in a fashion that is unjust, unfair, she cannot sit pretty and keep silent on the matter, allowing her opinion to be clouded by social conditioning or sycophancy towards the despot. In fact, by not raising her voice, she would go against the very core of who she is, her identity and her nexus with her inner self.

If Kreon (Like Hitler) is thinking of nothing more than a pleasant face, meek, submissive woman and breeder mother, he is not going to find it in Antigone. Brecht's Antigone cannot turn a blind eye to what is happening around her. Her strength of character and emotional status are certainly not in the resting state of "agreeable" and "blindly approved." Her strength lies in believing herself.

Antigone's difference of opinion causes disruption, it creates conflict and activates heated up discussion between her and the Dictator King. However, she cannot repress her opposing thoughts and cannot allow Kreon to micromanage her reactions.

One thing about opinionated Antigone is while she is sensitive, she is not scared enough of Kreon. This Brechtian female figure does not let the fear of her reaction paralyze us into the death sentence of silence and a "sorry." She is not apologetic for having a unique point of view in a Nazi set up. If Brechtian Antigone apologizes, her apology would not be genuine, as she believes authenticity is everything. This Anti - Nazi and Femi -Nazi figure does not wish to hide behind the window dressing of false modesty in order to make her position less threatening or more attractive to the outer world.

Brecht's Antigone, like Ismene, cannot not take a backseat. She moves out of the house and takes an important decision for her brother. Brecht's *Antigone* creates History. She resists being a slave. She represents women like the ones who showed their prowess at Rosenstrasse protest and Sophie Scholl who fought small battles for what they believed were right.

2.5: Emancipation of Spectator Women through The Character of Antigone through the Slogan "Personal is Political"

In the 21st Century too there are fascist politicians and Nazi leaders in the avatars of male chauvinists. Things have changed but still there are thousands of Kreons and Hitlers who cannot deal with straightforward women like Antigone. Hatred or acrimony is a surface emotion for there is something bigger and larger than what camouflages beneath hatred and that is fear; an acute fear. Kreon (as Hitlerite figure) is scared of women like Antigone who question him. And it cannot be denied that people are still afraid of girls with independent thoughts and opinions. Kreon (Hitler) has a massive, pressing threat from a female who has her own mind. Hitler,

in his day and age, would not have appreciated girls like Antigone, speaking for their rights, violating the code and obtaining confidence to vocalize their thoughts and ideas. Hitler expected women be draped in an invisible garb of bitter, cold emptiness and impassivity.

All the modern girls like Antigone have proved that they are more compelling force in the world. They are reluctant to crumble under the paper weight of their words. By setting a right precedent, Brecht's Antigone creates History. She resists being a slave. Ismene represents the Women in Nazi Germany. Someone who is not at all up front about her animosity, antipathy, hostility, resistance and enmity towards Kreon. The Rosenstrasse protest has archived Aryan women rebelling against the Nazis for the safe return of their Jewish husbands during holocaust in Berlin, while Antigone fought for her brother. Brecht, through Antigone's character wants Germany to produce more women like Sophie Scholl who fought for democracy to be restored to their country. Brecht's Antigone is democratic and she champions this ideal form of government.

In Nazi Germany, some women who resisted in the public sphere were not afraid to let the people know that they were disappointed with their government and wanted peace. By lashing out at dictatorship, some intrepid women were putting themselves and their families in a dangerous position. Brecht's Kreon thinks that by disobeying the order, Antigone was inviting peril to the family and state. Brecht's Antigone, though not represented as Amazonian in appearance, talks like a man and behaves like one as she wished to challenge conventions.

To quote Brecht,

"Antigone: I won't ask you again.

Follow someone who gives orders. And do

What you are ordered. But I am following the custom and burying your

brother.

And if I die for it? So what? I'll rest in peace

Among the peaceful. And I'll have left

Something holy behind me.

(Brecht, Bertolt. *The Antigone of Sophocles*, 2006, pg.18-19)

Antigone is deadly practical. She despises her sister's sentimentality and rebukes her, chides her and reprimands her for being feeble and timid.

Women in Nazi Germany, who opposed in the private sphere had to be much more clandestine in what they were doing to defy their government. The private sphere was particularly one in which the females had more liberty to themselves. This included their home life, and personal relationships. If Antigone would not have fought for her brother's funeral rights, she would have escaped confrontation with Kreon and the brutal punishment inflicted on her. She would have been happily married and settled with Haemon. But she chose to rebel and sacrifice a safe and secure life for the sake of democracy.

In Nazi Germany, when the Women Opponents of Nazi government would get caught, they would be severely punished in ways ranging from work camps to immediate death. No matter how slight the infraction of Brecht's Antigone is and how mild the protest, Kreon would make sure her punishment is swift and stringent ensuring that others would not follow in her footsteps. Kreon orders her banishment and orders her to be buried alive into the cave in the cliffs. Her diet in captivity, would be millet and wine and according to the Dictator Kreon, this kind of meal was fit to be served only to the dead.

Antigone's acts of defiance must have a difference in the resistance effort against the Nazis. Resistance can come in two forms, psychological and physical. Even simply thinking and propagating anti-Nazi thoughts was a resistance in Hitler's

society. For many of the women resisters in Nazi period, a personal connection and selflessness was a driving force to help others and network with them socially. Brecht's *Antigone* is symbolic of every other woman feeling claustrophobic under the Nazi rule.

Hamon represents those husbands who wanted their wives to come out of their shells and lead an independent life without getting strangulated by Hitler's (Kreon's) commandments related to women. Despite this odious and obnoxious sexist behavior, the women in Nazi Germany confined themselves by assuming a "motherly" state and role in society. The suffering of *Antigone* is every woman's suffering who is silenced in a dictatorial world.

Hitler was considered to be Sadomasochistic as he derived sadistic pleasure from acts involving infliction of pain or humiliation. Sadomachism is related to patriarchy and is a model for all social institutions, for all economic structures and for International politics. The Nazi Government was designed to make the women feel powerless and they needed "savior like men" who would protect the damsels in distress. However, one must note that Tyrants never free the slaves. It is a historical truth that the oppressed (*Antigone*) must always rise and free themselves and while freeing themselves, free everyone. This change could only be made by women like *Antigone*. And this is what Brecht as a playwright of social change, wished to portray through his version of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Brecht's *Antigone* has the power, meaning the ability to act, to effect change-outside the system because that is where she truly dwells, politically and psychologically. Unfortunately, men are bound by their privilege and have no flexibility; so they cannot change. When women change, (the way Brecht's *Antigone* brings in the change) everything outside them also changes to accommodate their new way of being in the world. Our tyrants / Dictators are the men around us. Our Dictators are our fathers, uncles, husbands and sons. To be

everything in relation to them is slavery. Through Brechtian version of Sophocles' *Antigone*, we have to learn that resistance and cooperation with the oppressor do not work. Hierarchical structures do not work. They are all copies of the patriarchal family, a paradigm that has failed us and disappointed us utterly. In Brechtian version, Kreon symbolizes unbending patriarchy and Antigone symbolizes dissent, non-compliance, antagonism and objection to patriarchy. Brecht's *Antigone* gives us a social message that it is high time that we deprogram ourselves and stop concentrating on masters, despots, tyrants and dictators of the world. We should stop doing anything that is in relation to them, in reference to them or in reaction to them

2.6 Conclusion:

For women in Nazi Germany, opting to resist even in a miniature way was a daredevilish and courageous act. Certain women were empowered enough to rise above their position in society and act out against the fascist government. Antigone too, like a resistant figure of the Nazi government, rises above her position and acts out against Kreon's tyranny. For most women in Germany, even little acts of resistance like hiding a Jewish friend (to prevent Anti-Semitism) or getting them a respectable burial were just as powerful as the larger and more public acts like protesting against the concentration camp. These acts were as significant as the Rosenstrasse protest of women, where they declared that they would not back out, come hell or high water.

The immense contribution of women to the World War II resistance movement has continually taken a backseat and not given enough weightage. But the researcher comes to the inference that their accomplishments were powerful and monumental. Brecht's *Antigone*, who stands as an embodiment of the World War Resistance stands out amongst all Antigones who wished to raise their voice against Hitler-like Kreon. Brecht's *Antigone*'s accomplishment was powerful and monumental. She

did not wish to allow the Nazi Party to rule her life at any cost. While she was forced to follow the law in the outside world, her private life was her own. The way Nazi ideology focused excessively on influencing the minds of the people in Germany, Kreon's rules and regulations focused excessively on influencing the minds of the Thebans. To oppose that was a great feat. Antigone's contribution helped shape the women's lives in the Nazi era and make History. Antigone should not be overlooked in the picture gallery of Brecht's powerful women. She is definitely not depicted as a demonstration object as per Lennox's observation, as specified in Chapter 1.

False notions and misconceptions regarding women empowerment cause us all to miss out on the full breadth of a woman's personality. The women may have desired autonomy and independence since time immemorial; yet they are frantically searching for a deeper meaning and purpose. They have history, memories, unique experiences yet, they long to have an impact in the world. The way Brecht's Antigone remains etched in our memory by her act of resistance. We cross paths with thousands of people in our lifetime, but hardly ever notice a lot of them. There are few like Brecht's Antigone that affect our outlook in an important way. Nothing but her incandescent spirit keeps her alive as a character even today.

We need more Brechtian women like Antigone, who would take the Patriarchal despots to task and make an impact in this world. Antigone's battle is every woman's battle. Thus, Antigone's personal problem is a political problem

CHAPTER 3

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY THROUGH THE CHARACTER OF QUEEN ANNE

3.1 Brecht Rehistoricizing Marlowe's *Edward II*:

Brecht's *Edward II* rehistoricizes the story that happened in the past at a certain time. Brecht's version of Marlowe's *Edward II* is an epitome, archetype and a paradigm of Epic theatre. An epic theatre, if set in the past is expected to be strictly historical: it constantly reminds the audience that it is merely getting a report of past events. Selecting, going back, rehistoricizing *Edward II* (a chronicle figure) gives the reader a standpoint from where he can look back at it. He may have already read Marlowe's play and is better placed to judge it in accordance with the changing times. According to Brecht, if the actor turns to the audience, it is the most amazing rendezvous with "gestus" rather than the asides and soliloquizing techniques of the old - fashioned theatre. The titles preceding every scene in Brecht's *Edward II* are of historical quality. They bring us to a crucial technical device of historicization. An "epic" actor is expected to play the incidents as historical ones. Historical incidents are unique, transitory and extraordinary incidents associated with particular periods. The conduct of the persons involved in them, (be it Edward, Queen Anne, Gaveston, Mortimer) is not "fixed" or universally human. It includes elements that have been or may be overtaken by the course of history and are subject to criticism from the immediately following period's point of view. It is up to Homolka, Asia Lacis and Eric Faber, the actors of the play to treat the present - day events and modes of behavior with the same detachment as a historian adopts with regard to those of the past.

3.2 Verfremdungseffekt Effects Used in Brecht's Version of Marlowe's *Edward II*

Brecht's *Edward II* is an underprized, underrated, undervalued and underestimated piece of work. Brecht was foretold that the play would not appear at all in English language editions of Brecht's anthologies, since it is a translation from English. No sane person would ever want Marlowe translated back from German. However, with his *Edward II* production, Brecht ventured into a new form of theatrical presentation and instituted a procedure that became a hallmark or patent of his directing style. The term 'epic theatre' was not yet coined at the time of *Edward II* production. However, later the term "Epic Theatre" became Brecht's upscale brand, his trademark, his signature style, his emblem or certification. "Epic theatre" stands for a theatre that is highly complex theoretical and practical ideas. This avant garde theatre took Brecht many years to formulate. We can see that *Edward II* has traces of the 'epic' but it took Brecht at least a decade for all epic aspects to come together.

Edward II can be integrated into Brecht's dramatic purpose in its totality. In other words, to "distance" the play in accordance with Brecht's dramatic theory. The technique of Verfremdungseffekt depends not only on the direct participation of the audience in the happenings on stage that are deliberately acted "out" but reaching out to the audience by helping them remember more forcefully, the true state of things. Brecht's version of Marlowe's *Edward II* brought an electrifying energy to the world of theatre and prompted the audience to bubble with a refreshing bundle of effervescence as they view the audacity with which Brechtian actors perform on stage. The Brechtian counter play manages to arouse in the spectator, the desire to alter the world. Like other plays, in *Edward II* too, the action is interrupted by a song sequence which comments on the play's action. Thus, the thing is changed from a trivial, habitual, predictable ordinary and well-known into something that is particularly striking, distinct, prominent, marked and unexpected. For the actors,

everything that Brecht did was new but often astonishing and perplexing. Brecht's actors were ebullient, exuberant, vivacious and full of verve. Brecht gave bizarre instructions to his actors. There was a scene wherein the King's homosexual partner, Gaveston was to be hanged on stage. The men playing soldiers were to hang the minion by making a few gestures that might have represented hanging. Thus, we can see extensive use of "gestus" even in the making of Brechtian counter play.

In *Edward II*, the actors viz. Homolka and Asja Lacis refrain from allowing themselves to become completely transformed on the stage into the characters they are portraying. They distance themselves, estrange themselves and alienate themselves from the scene and there is an initial sense of discomfort that we face due to this event. Fuegi, in his book, *Chaos, According to Plan* quotes an incident described by Rudolf Frank, regarding the casting of Homolka and Lacis. The major role of Mortimer was played by an actor called Osker Homolka. Homolka was an incorrigible sot or a sponge who was totally addicted to alcohol. As he drank heavily, Frank strictly ordered that no alcohol was to be carried into the dressing rooms. But Brecht came there right in the middle of the show with a litre of Cognac which Mortimer drank greedily and got heavily intoxicated. Mortimer who was besotted by Cognac did not look like Marlowe's Machiavellian villain. Later he staggered onto the stage and went totally uncontrolled, unfettered, unbound and unconfined. He stammered, stuttered and tottered through the rest of his role until fat Mrs. Lacis appeared in her trouser role. Ms. Lacis was too obese to play the heroine's role, yet Brecht did not object to her enormously sized body. One cannot imagine Marlowe's Isabelle to be plump, stout and podgy. As Brecht had demonstrated to her, she pointed her finger at Mortimer and spoke only one word of which her role consisted of, "Murderer". But her grasp of German was so bad that it sounded not at all like "Murder" but rather like "merde". The drunkenness of Homolka or speech defect of Lacis did not infuriate, agitate or irritate Brecht. Neither did the failure injure Brecht nor Homolka. This is the way Brecht's acting

style was fully anticipated in Brecht's version of Marlowe's *Edward II*. The very principle that the actor appears on the stage in a double role, as Homolka so also as Mortimer, comes to mean that the tangible or matter of fact process is no longer hidden behind a veil; the curtain is superfluous. Brechtian actors were not required to feign or pretend to be what they actually were. They were only expected to denote, exhibit and demonstrate their roles. We cannot imagine a Marlowian Machiavellian figure drinking Cognac or staggering on stage; However, one can imagine Brecht's Mortimer to be a parody of Marlowe's 'Machiavellian hero' and at the same time a 'fascist politician' who talks in a dictatorial tone throughout the play. Brecht may have polluted and corrupted Marlowe's historical play according to Puritans, however he did so in order to suit the exigencies of his theatre. He may have vexed, annoyed, agonized and chagrined the Marlowian lovers. Nobody would want to see Marlowe and Shakespeare tarnished in hollow literary cash grab. However, one should note that Brecht's remakes are not soulless attempts to exploit an established brand of Marlowe's. Even though Brecht's remake led to a fiasco, it still had a positive effect on other aspects of dramatic Literature like the audience's reigniting interest in a fading franchise like Marlowe's historical play.

Thus, Mortimer acting with a litre of Cognac on stage could be condoned as Brecht wanted the actors to make the rehearsal element obvious throughout the play.

Homolka's stuttering and stammering and Mrs. Lacis' mispronunciation of the word "Morder" made the rehearsal element conspicuous, delectable and prominently visible on the stage and they enjoyed complete independence throughout.

In Marlowe, the formal language suits the Chronicle play. His play is thoroughly serious without humour, songs, entertainment and the like. Marlowe's play adheres to the Aristotelian theory and is strictly to be categorized under the category of "Catastrophe."

“Volk”, a German word which means crude, was an important aspect of Brecht’s Epic theatre. “Volk” combined earthy humour and sentiment, grotesque situations and sex. Brecht’s *Edward II* also anticipates “Volk” as one of the most important aspects of *Verfremdungs*. The songs contribute not only to the alienation effect but also satirize the central theme of the play, i.e. The King’s homosexual relationship with Gaveston. Brecht talked openly about fornication, copulation, intercourse and penetration in his age. Thus, the researcher has touched upon the most controversial aspect of Brecht’s play: “explicit homosexuality”. Marlowe’s play also hints at homosexuality in myriad of ways without explicitly stating it, Marlowe introduces us to the possibility of a homosexual subjectivity. If we go back in time and consider the earlier works of Brecht of the same period, we have similar subject matter, i.e. Brecht’s excessive interest in the theme of homosexuality. The fact that Edward would give up his family and throne, renounce the kingdom and abandon his responsibilities in order to maintain his homosexual friendships would have appealed to the Brecht of 1923, who was wearing the heart on his sleeve and flaunting highly controversial and highly ambiguous relationships with Arnolt Bronnen and Casper Neher, the people with whom he worked. In Brecht’s *Edward II*, the king gives up his wife in order to flaunt his homosexual friendship with his minion. Brecht’s play would be an interesting and engaging piece of case study to the LGBT Communities.

3.3: Alterations made by Brecht in his Version of Marlowe’s *Edward II*

In his later career, Brecht did not want to hear about the abundant or overt homosexuality used extensively by him in his early works like *Baal*. Eric Bentley, an important critic on Brecht, informs us that a friend who wrote a book – length memoir of Brecht’s youth refused to discuss with him the possible basis that this preoccupation, addiction and obsession that Brecht might have had in real life. Brecht was not a hypocrite who would conceal the truth from the paparazzi and

steal the limelight. In fact, Brecht's avid interest in Marxism may have overpowered his "sexual orientation" and promiscuous interests. Bentley (1981) further says that Sexuality, which remained marginal and not so significant in Marlowe's play is central and pervasive in Brechtian version. Sex, in the Brechtian version is a 'power-trip'. Brecht's sapphic and homoerotic interests permeate the whole play.

In Marlowe's version, it is mentioned repeatedly by the Queen that due to Gaveston she had been banished from the King's bed. The Edward Gaveston relationship in Marlowe could be interpreted in terms of 'classical friendship.' E. Mortimer, in Marlowe's play, justifies the relationship between the King and the minion by exulting that Colossal personalities had their minions: viz, Alexander was with Haphaeston, Hercules with Hylas, Patroctus with Achilles, Roman Tully with Octavius and Socrates with Alcibiades.

In his age, Brecht could openly talk about Queers and Gays without showing any signs of shame or compunction. However, in Marlowe's age, the topic was to be touched upon artistically, camouflaging the flagrant sexual expressions under the cover of sexual innuendos. Eroticism, amorousness, libidousness, prurience and concupiscence is more prominent in Brecht, but in Eric Bentley's (1985) opinion, Marlowe's play is close to 'Vulgarized Freudianism' which finds sex hidden and camouflaged at the bottom of everything. As modern readers of Brecht's play, we can consider his version of *Edward II* as a social problem play that makes an effort to discuss the homosexual issues through his characters. It also discusses the problems of a homosexual man's wife and the trauma that she is forced to go through.

We cannot say whether Brecht tried to privilege both homosexual and homosexual positions. However, Brecht's play plainly rejects and deconstructs the audience readers' accommodation to the biases of the resisting homosexual reading. Brecht

has made *Edward II*, a play of “a gay love affair”. Brecht promotes his play as an improvement on Marlowe’s *Edward II* in two primary respects. He unqualifiedly displays in the best “Post Modern” manner, homo erotic behaviours that Marlowe allegedly presents in a more qualified, uninhibited and constrained way. In Brecht, there are direct references to naked skin and obscenity. This playwright from Augsburg did not shy away from writing about sex. One can find steamy, arousing and romantic sex writing in the Brechtian version. Brecht discusses subaltern issues in his plays without feeling embarrassed, sheepish, red -faced and unsettled.

Marlowe presents homosexuality subtly. Edward and Gaveston’s love appears to go beyond the physical. Thus, we cannot call Marlowe’s play a case of “gay love affair.” Brecht improves upon Marlowe by substituting a clearly positioned emphasis on gay victimization and empowerment in place of fascination with the power and the powerful. Brecht appears to opine that a homosexual subject even in the guise of a King is always a victimized, marginalized and defamed object of an established heterosexist power structure. Gaveston, being “Edward’s whore” is made prominent throughout the play. Brecht degrades the worth of the King and his partner Gaveston in order to bring them close to the common people. The King’s worth is belittled, brought down from his exalted status as Gaveston, a butcher’s son addresses the King as Eddie. Edward too addresses his homosexual partner as Danny. The soldiers address the King by his nick name. One cannot imagine Marlowe’s characters talking and behaving in such a relaxed, easygoing, uninhibited and carefree manner and addressing the King by his sobriquet or pet name.

In Marlowe’s *Edward*, we witness a particular concatenation of the political and the sexual. Gaveston and Spencer are doubly marginal by virtue of both sexual and social differences. In Brecht’s *Edward*, the sight of Edward and Gaveston on the throne together generates immediate warmongering hatred which is difficult not to

construe as partly based on “homophobia.” This helps the readers of modernist age to easily sympathize with the people clamoring for gay revolution. Brecht managed to normalize the avowedly exceptional acts of the “homosexual subject.” Marlowe dwells complacently upon that unnatural passion, describes it in a congenial manner, and haloes it with the glamour of illustrious precedents. He links it to the vows of friendship – a feeling far more intense in the sixteenth century than now. Marlowe sees “friendship” as the central thing in the play.

“Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts,

Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart.” (Marlowe, Act I, scene I, *The Complete Plays*, 1969)

Brecht tried to force the play into the mould of his own making and not simply restrict the play to the theme of “friendship.” Brecht is in rebellion against the Elizabethan idea of order. This is because Brecht does not try to vindicate the relationship between Edward and Gaveston as sympathetic and reasonable. He tries to demonstrate that the King should have been vocal about his sexual orientation even before his marriage to the Queen. He errs unpardonably and sins irrevocably by declaring his love for his minion after tying the knot with Anne and having a child by her. He uses her only for reproductive purposes and humiliates her throughout the play. The Queen’s condition is dismal, deplorable and pathetic in the play. Marlowe’s Gaveston is seen not only as a sprawling bedfellow, but also as a royal favorite. Marlowe’s Gaveston also has a Princess (The King’s niece) with whom his nuptials would be pronounced. Brecht’s Gaveston does not have a lady love to date and he is nothing more than Edward’s “whore”.

Brecht’s Gaveston operates both within and against contemporary stereotypes of homosexual behaviours. In the first place, he exhibits a good deal more passion and commitment for Edward than Gaveston does in Marlowe’s Play.

3.4: Feminist Overtones in Brecht's Version of Marlowe's *Edward II*

Brecht narrows the focus of his play by concentrating more on the personal aspects of Edward's reign and Queen Anne's misery at the cost of larger political issues. It would be more accurate to say that the play is concerned with the intersection of the personal and the political. Marlowe's Edward confesses with acute candour, honesty, genuineness, truthfulness, forthrightness, straightforwardness and openness that he has absolutely no sense of his responsibility towards his duties and responsibilities as a King. He nonchalantly uses his power of kingship as a personal advantage to be used to adorn, decorate, embellish, enhance and furnish his private life. He suggests that his stature and position as a King intrudes and encroaches upon his private life. Every now and then, he searches for a nook and corner in his palace, to frolic with his sweet Gaveston.

Brecht's Edward is consistent in his love for his gay partner. He feels contented, fulfilled and pleased when he is alone with Gaveston. But while sexting Gaveston, he outwears all men's patience and respect and even the loyalty of his brother. His frenzy is violent enough to harm the queen. Way before the slow accumulation of hostility, he collapses into garrulous self-pity.

Brecht has brilliantly shown the contrast between the obstinate King and his boyfriend. We know for sure that the King is not impotent or incapable of fathering a son. Brecht's Protagonist is a heterosexual before the play begins; becomes a homosexual later. In Brecht's era, Brecht's Mortimer would be a prototype of a Nazi leader like Hitler or a Fascist Politician like Benito Mussolini. Brecht's Edward would be a homosexual King: a victim of despotic rule.

In Marlowe, the Queen's extra marital relations with Mortimer are subtly developed up to the point at which the murder of the King becomes necessary and draws all interests towards him. The Queen becomes a tool in Mortimer's hands; Mortimer loses his impetuosity and becomes a mechanical stage villain.

To quote Marlowe,

“Mortimer: The Prince I rule, The Queen do I command.

And with a lowly conge to the ground

The proudest lords salute me as I pause,

I seale, I cancel, I do what I will, fears am I more than lov'd let me be

Fear'd”. (Marlowe, Act V, scene iv, *The Complete Plays*,1969)

Brecht has also deviated from Marlowe by sexually arousing his Mortimer on many an occasion. He passes pornographic, salacious, crude, vulgar, offensive, indecorous and unwholesome comments. He refers to the orphan nights spent by the Queen. The nights refer to the Queen's empty bed and the word “satisfaction” refers to her lubricious desires. Mortimer's lascivious, lecherous and licentious remarks pertaining to “lubricants” show that Brecht's Mortimer is not only indecent but morally depraved.

The Queen remarks that Mortimer leaps over her in lust. Marlowe's Mortimer does kiss the Queen as Kent mentions but on the whole, his behaviour towards her is quite decent and amiable. Brecht's Mortimer uses an androcentric (male-centered) language for the Queen, rather than a gender neutral or non-sexist one. Sara Lennox, as specified in Chapter 1, accuses Brecht of sketching his female figures as “demonstration objects.” In certain parts, Queen Anne is sketched as a demonstration object. Language used in the play generates stereotypical portrayal of the Queen. Language provides a variety of images that powerfully shape our understanding and attitudes towards gender.

In the following dialogue, Mortimer's remarks are ribald, bawdy, degenerative, debauched, repugnant and hideous.

“Mortimer: With your legs open and your eyelids closed

Snatching at everything. You're insatiable Anne.

Mortimer: Hook up your dress, Anne, do not let your son see your over-ripe flesh."(Brecht, Bertolt. *Edward II; A Chronicle*, 1996, , pg.69)

Mortimer uses a foul invective to portray Queen Anne in a negative light. She is portrayed as immature, incompetent and inescapable. Mortimer, who can be accused of moral turpitude presents himself positively, as competent, capable and mature. Males are linguistically expounded in terms of their virility and sexual prowess while, women are defined as the sexual objects of men's desire. Thus, the androcentric language used by Mortimer cannot escape the negative representation of the Queen.

The male protagonist of the play *Edward II* is a homosexual who is ready to face the social consequences when he is accused of being gay, but his behaviour towards his wife (the Queen) is odious, repellent, nauseating, sickening and abominable. It is very clear that Edward II's marriage is out an out a mixed-orientation marriage and therefore it looks scabrous, broken, dented and scratched. A mixed oriented marriage is a disastrous kind of a marriage, wherein, one person is heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual while the other is of a different sexual orientation.

It is important to show how heterosexual wives of homosexual men feel when their husbands keep their sexual orientation under wraps. The female protagonist of the play *Edward II*, Queen Anne feels deceived and cheated when she learns of her husband's controversial affair with his minion. She is traumatized, crushed, flabbergasted, pained and ravaged after learning the truth. She is not a conservative kind of a woman who struggles with her husband's homosexuality. However, she feels isolated, bereft, desolate and miserable. She battles despondency and disconsolation. Queen Anne's plight, her suffering, oppression and her disordered psychic or behavioral state results from an acute irritability, anxiety, mental or emotional stress. Her trauma and harassment can be compared to that of any other

heterosexual wife of a homosexual husband who is penalized for no fault of hers. Let us now examine how Brecht underlines the Queen's sexual frustration on the one hand and Edward's tempestuous misogyny on the other. Queen Anne appears to be doleful, woebegone, crestfallen and dejected. Bonnie Kaye, a researcher, specialized in aiding the mentally ailing wives of homosexual husbands who underwent the trauma of their fractured marriages and heartbroken relationships. Homosexuality of their husbands became an unanticipated reason for the demise of their marriages. Kaye, who happened to be highly venturesome, ventured into this and was intrigued to know more about such relationships after her own marriage collapsed when her husband turned gay.

Being left in a lurch by a spouse who sounds the death knell of a marriage can be a demoralizing thought. It is not only difficult for the wife to come to terms with the loss but it can also be distressing, depressing and life – wrecking for her. But when the marriage is over, on account of the spouse turning gay, there is an enormous layer of thoughts and emotions to contend with. It is quite an uphill task to realize that the person who married you is not the person you met and entered the wedlock with. This can be quite devastating for a wife whose emotional and physical needs cannot be met anymore. There is often an accompanying sentiment of deceit, hurt, disloyalty and infidelity and perhaps annoyance, vexation and rage at having been cheated and betrayed. The woman feels petrified with the fact that her body was being used to produce children by an unforgivable lifestyle lie.

Kaye reports that when a woman learns the reason for the problems related to her marriage, namely homosexuality of her husband, she goes through a wide range of emotions from devastation, shame, guilt, responsibility, and perhaps even to repulsion. It makes the woman ponder and wonder if her husband was ever really attracted to her sexually. Due to social conditioning, some people find it very difficult to come to terms with their own sexuality or sexual orientation. It is almost

always an intensely personal process, but we expect most people to open up and shed their inhibitions as they come of age. Some may not be successful in gaining acceptance from friends and family. This is even more true when the person is married and has children.

The King in the play is not bisexual either as after getting sexual gratification from his minion, he refuses to satisfy the Queen. (Edward has not been able to keep himself chaste homosexually and heterosexually). Edward is a “hostile oppressor”. The Queen becomes the “oppressed.” The Queen’s struggle against dimensions of power is remarkable in Brecht’s play. It is a culturally developed “male ego” to exert power over the “female ego.” Men’s inability to love and make love can make them seem weak and hopeless to women. It results in a one - way emotional relationship that has no future.

Romance and love making in its acceptable view is clearly a heterosexual narrative which constructs love relationship between men and women as the one and only natural way to find fulfillment. Such beliefs and stereotyped thinking contribute to the predominance of heterosexuality as a compulsory way of life. This has been highlighted as particularly oppressive to women.

Heterosexism is a dictatorial structure that assumes, considers and infers heterosexuality to be the only compulsory form of sexual and emotional expression. This is totally unjust, bigoted, partial and prejudiced way of looking at things. This perceptual screen is provided by our patriarchal culture conditioning. Today also, homosexuals and lesbians are called as the “third sex.” The real “sex” is heterosexual, penile, penetrative and procreating. Sexual maladjustment is seen as the primary cause of marital unhappiness and instability and a threat to the state, family and social order. This will continue to happen unless people feel free to talk about their sexual orientation and sexual preference. It could be argued that striving for a reciprocal romantic relationship; “genuine love,” “true love” is an investment

of emotional energy which women are already too keen to make. Indeed, it may be the fantasy of attaining such an ideal called love. Brecht's Queen Anne lives in a fool's paradise. Her assiduous efforts to turn the distant and brutal husband into a tender and considerate lover, miserably fail. She keeps her chin up while combating hardships, tribulations, misfortunes, vicissitudes and adversities.

Women's lack of contentment with a heterosexual relationship has been documented by Bone Kaye and others. It has been found that women are generally quite disappointed and frustrated with the lack of emotional intimacy in their love life with men. We find that Brecht's Queen is suffering from the epidemic of "love misery."

To quote Brecht,

"Anne: Miserable Edward how low you have brought me that

I can't strike this fellow in the face but must hold my tongue and

Stand there when he leaps at me in lust.

(Aloud): You exploit my misery Mortimer." (Brecht, Bertolt. *Edward II; A Chronicle*, 1996, pg.14)

The King may have rejected heterosexuality as a compulsory way of life, however the Queen cannot deviate from the heterosexist standards. Though she is able to break the boundaries of marriage and accept the adulterous relationship of Mortimer, she is oppressed by both the men and does not find fulfillment in any of her relationships. She tries her best to save her marriage and finally falls to prey to Bonobology.

Of Brecht's Queen, the researcher feels that she will observe fidelity towards her man as far as possible and as long as she can, but when this loyalty is mocked at,

when this loyalty is disrespected, she is bound to drift to another man. Brecht's Mortimer is adept at sexually arousing and subsequently taunting Anne.

We have another scene in Brecht where Queen Anne laughs at the world's emptiness, and Mortimer comments on her.

Mortimer: Hook up your dress, Anne, do not let your son see your over-ripe flesh." (Brecht, Bertolt. *Edward II; A Chronicle*, 1996, pg. 69-70)

It is possible to think of Brecht's Queen as an anti-Sodomite. Her possibility of strong female behavior lies outside marriage and its regularization of gender. Brecht pointedly concludes that her strength as a woman lies in refusing the limits of marriage.

The conventional appraisal of a love-sick Queen, is the representation of a scorned woman who howsoever illicit in her adulterous arrangements, remains firmly committed to the established regimes of the normative if not the normal. Brecht's Queen Anne is nonetheless presented as well - practiced in the protocols of self - regarding mastery and royal control. She is repeatedly placed in the company of the most banal representation of social conformity. Her intelligence and ambition in business, her single mindedness, her love for the King and later on passion for Mortimer are all admirable. She is selfish and scheming but not ignominious as she takes up cudgels against her husband reluctantly. She suffers throughout the play. Her life is a story of anguish and pain. Feminists would find her transgression exciting and not entirely iniquitous. The Queen can be seen as a progressive figure and model for women because of her refusal of all that simpering. Thus, she becomes 'an icon of resistance'. Her oppression by Edward can be regarded as a source of potential strength and power rather than merely a source of weakness.

It was indeed a stroke of genius for Marlowe to make the Queen, the initiator of Gaveston's recall thus marking her a sympathetic figure to the audience, by

demonstrating her wifely forgiveness and love for King Edward at the beginning of the play. Marlowe retains her dignity till the very end. Brecht however makes her a truly pathetic figure. She becomes a scapegoat and a tool in Mortimer's hands. Mortimer loses his impetuosity and becomes a mechanical stage villain.

The Queen's opposition to her King/husband is condemned in both the plays (Marlowe's play in five acts and Brecht's adaptation) by her own son, King Edward III.

Patriarchal ideology ensures the socialization of individuals according to already given stereotyped, hackneyed and cliched lines of sex category. It promotes the false consciousness which works continually to misrepresent women and their lives.

The child (Edward III, the successor to Edward II) understands almost everything that goes on beyond his age and maturity level. He is a sole child of Patriarchy, who fails to understand his mother's sacrifice, frustration and passion for Mortimer out of desperation. He sends his mother to the Tower mercilessly and ruthlessly. The Queen in both the plays is oppressed and exploited not only by her husband and Gaveston but also by Mortimer and her son.

Since time immemorial, men only have one orientation that brings them close to women and that is sexual, while women have two orientations, sexual and erotic towards men and procreative, reproductive and generative towards their young. All these products of patriarchal consciousness are proposed as ideological because they teach, among other things, the acceptance of those sex roles.

Young Edward cannot understand his mother's plight and treats her harshly in Mortimer's presence.

“Young Edward: Remove this third party from your sight.

Anne: We wish to talk to you. Mortimer's your mother's prop and stay, child.

(Brecht , Bertolt. *Edward II; A Chronicle*, 1996, pg.70)

Be it Marlowe's Queen or Brecht's, she becomes an iconic woman who inspires the common lot of women and brings them to their senses and to their meaning in History. Brecht's Queen Anne is defiant to the core who asserts herself and refuses to give in to Edward's oppression:

Brecht's Queen Anne teaches the audience that women need to throw off their oppression for a "real" self to appear. Like a Brechtian actor she demonstrates that they need to deconstruct their socially constructed "feminine" identity. They need to speak out and give their testimony. Queen Anne's identity is built out of pain, suffering and experience. The Queen, be it Marlowe's or Brecht's, battles against "oppression" and "repression." Her desire (what she wants) is repressed or misrepresented in a phallogocentric society. Be it Marlowe's Edward or 'Brecht's, his behavior towards the Queen is totally unforgivable, unjustifiable, indefensible, unpardonable, inexcusable, reprehensible, outrageous, despicable, contemptible and disgraceful. He takes interest in her only in so far as she can help his unnatural passion. Like a patriarchal despot, he rebukes her for being too intimate with Mortimer, so he urges her to use her influence with the latter on his behalf. He threatens to banish her if she does not succeed in keeping Gaveston at court. When she secures the recall of his favourite, he takes her hands as if to ratify their nuptials, which will not prevent him from being as unfaithful as in the past. Brecht's Edward is a man given to outbursts of emotional violence and ungovernable passion, absolutely devoid of intelligence.

3.5 Emancipation of Women through the Character of Queen Anne through the Slogan "Personal is Political"

3.5.1 Bonnie Kaye's Official Gay Husband Checklist (Quote with Kaye)

The most frequently asked question that Kaye receives as a counselor is:

"Is there any way to definitely know if my husband is gay before or during the marriage?" (<http://www.gayhusbands.com/gay-checklist.html>)

She says, there is only one sure way to know that, and that is if the man is honest enough. Edward II is honest enough to confess his love for Gaveston after marriage. He should have been honest enough to do that before marriage. Since, men turning gay after marriage is a rare case, there are certain behavior patterns that identified as evidences, if the husband has resorted to homosexuality.

There is a sudden or a gradual decline of sexual activity early in the marriage that never picks up speed again. The woman's bed is empty and marriage looks like a sheer formality. Edward II, in Brecht's play announces his limitless love for Gaveston and openly humiliates the Queen. He refrains from touching her despite her countless pleadings. Kaye tells us that if a man is gay, he tries his level best to convince his wife that all life partners have a gradual decline in sexual activity even if the couple has been together only for a few years. There are absurd and bizarre changes in his personality. The King in the play finds the Queen's advances towards him odd and obscure. Kaye informs us that a gay husband seems to be suffering from an erectile dysfunctioning of sorts and finds it very difficult to be sexually aroused. He gets turned-off by a normal sexual activity and unsparingly accuses his wife of being sexually frustrated, oversexed and aggressive when she has normal and healthy sexual needs and desires. The gay husband does not look for erotic pleasures in a relationship with the opposite sex. He saves his energy only for his homosexual partner and releases his hormones only after mating with him. His Oxytocin levels get a boost only when he has sex with his gay lover.

The Queen experiences brutal treatment from her husband on many an occasion in the play. In order to perform his duty, the King performs sexual activity with his

wife. Unfortunately, his sex appears to be rehearsed, mechanical rather than passionate union of two souls.

Kaye asserts that a gay husband's activity lacks foreplay and after play which females tend to enjoy a lot. The very fact that the King has a son by the Queen shows that they had some amount of sexual activity only for the sake of reproduction. However, it is very clear that the Queen is neglected and discarded by the King as soon as he discovers his homosexual partner. Kaye says that the husband of a heterosexual wife claims to be "depressed" and blames his depression for his lack of sexual desire for her. The King displays mood swings quite often and refrains from granting attention to his wife. Kaye says that gay partners tend to gulp sexual performance enhancers such as Viagra or Cialis to avoid being labelled as impotent. However, they do not make any effort to excite the women by fondling their breasts or fingering. They shamelessly ask their women to use sex inducers and sex toys on them because they need their prostates stimulated. The King in the play represents a common man who is fighting for gay rights. But in the process, he has no right to be unjust to his female partner by faking her affections towards her or giving her a raw deal.

Kaye points out that the condemnatory behavior of the homoerotic husband compels him to delete all the cookies and erase the computer history on a regular basis. When the wife checks his phone, she is likely to find gay porn and pop ups of gay pornography, while he would claim he never watched all that out of curiosity or interest.

King Edward in the play does not conceal his sexual orientation from the courtiers but his behavior clearly shows that he feels "trapped" in the marriage. Brecht as a playwright, does not refer to the King having homosexual encounters in the past.

Kay states that a wife's gay partner suddenly keeps a password to his phone, becomes beauty conscious, frequently visits gay bars and salons claiming to

frequent those places to meet his guy friends, not necessarily gay. Like King Edward in the play, makes too many gay comments in his conversations. His ego boosts up when he receives compliments from Gaveston.

In Kaye's words,

"Some men have sexual activity with their wives for many years because of their emotional need to prove they are straight and they do love their wives. But some of those men also fantasize about other men in order to perform with their wives." (http://www.gayhusbands.com/gay-checklist.html)

Kaye asks women to believe in their sixth sense and follow their instincts guiltlessly. Women who have straight husbands do not come for counselling thinking that their husbands are gay. Women can sense it immediately when something is wrong in a relationship.

Statistics say that over 50% of gay husbands are never honest with their wives; in fact they run away from reality. They never tell them the truth about why the marriage is not working. They often turn the tables and make the wives think that women tend to imagine things even when they have enough proof to produce. Edward in Brecht's play blames Queen Anne for no fault of hers.

Carolyn Moos, the renowned basketball star who was engaged to Jason Collins had a horrendous experience. Collins announced her misery and dismay on television and Sports Illustrated. Her announcement came as a thunderbolt many people. Carolyn handled the media attention and intrusiveness with grace and maturity.

Carolyn said,

"I had no idea why. We had planned to have children, build a family. Nearly four years later, I got my answer. My former fiancé, Jason Collins, announced last spring in Sports Illustrated that he is gay."

Carolyn Moos, *Cosmopolitan*

(<http://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/celebs/news/a4547/jason-collins-is-my-ex-fiance/>)

3.6 Conclusion

Through his version of Marlowe's *Edward II*, Brecht does not want his audience to be passive and unthinking. Brecht wished to prevent the audience from getting emotionally involved with the Queen's character. Instead he implied that if the King had every right to fulfill his homosexual desires, there was no reason why the Queen should have saved her marriage. She too had every right to satisfy her emotional needs and carnal pleasures.

Feminism, as a liberation struggle, must make a sincere endeavor to eradicate domination and dismantle oppression, repression and suppression in all its forms. Brecht may not have been a feminist, but his "Epic theatre" proved to be useful to feminists all over the world to examine the social conditions which were instrumental in compelling women to take on alternate identities because of oppressive patriarchal structures. Brecht adapted Marlowe's *Edward II* to suit the exigencies of his "Epic theatre". At the end of this chapter, the researcher has come to the inference that, through the Queen's character in the play, we could actually try to eliminate the societal organization that is based upon male supremacy and exploitation of women. This kind of revolutionary change is exactly what Brecht desired to bring through his theatre of revolt, protest and insurgence.

Chapter 4

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY THROUGH THE CHARACTER OF THE DUCHESS

4.1 Brecht Resuscitating Webster's Jacobean tragedy:

Judgements of the Jacobean writer John Webster range from Bernard Shaw's contemptuous, scornful, disdainful and supercilious dismissal of him as 'Tussaud laureate' to Swinburne's glowing praise and encomium that declared him to be the subtlest, the deepest, the most profound and the sublimest of all the tragic poets ever found in English Literature.

Brecht, who borrowed heavily, plagiarized but preserved complete lines from Webster's original version of *The Duchess of Malfi*, unlike his adaptation of *Edward II*, gave it a dramatically appropriate twist. This made it more than a copied, pirated and irrelevant borrowed ornament. As the play is officially an adaptation, Brecht is expected to borrow, but the familiarity with the text makes his play accessible to the Broadway audience. Brecht in fact carried the Jacobean Webster to the United States of America. Brecht has not done away with carnage, butchery, causal slaughter and massacre completely as it aptly summarizes our attitude to bloodbath, gore, pogrom, murder, genocide and mayhem which many modern thrillers share with the revenge play. The Jacobean dramatists were not at all squeamish about portraying violence. However, to a modern theatregoer, reading Brecht's version of Webster's *Duchess* the centre of interest is not so much in the outward display of violent action but in the uses to which the action is put. Crime detective fiction was a popular genre in Brecht's time. In Brecht's version of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, our focus lies in the relationship between the disintegrated, disordered, disgruntled and disrupted world of the play and the larger world of its critics and readers. In Brecht's Play, violence functions as an important purpose outside itself. The violent action in

Brecht's play is emblematic of the moral corruption and degradation of values in modern society. But, Brecht for his Duchess was concerned with a single social elite Broadway audience, so he had to do away with the gruesome horrors and ghoulish banquets. Webster's age revealed in the grisly, grotesque, spine - chilling moments.

4.2 Estrangement Effects Used by the Greek Dramatists:

Webster was definitely not familiar with the theory of 'Verfremdungseffekt' or 'A effect' formulated by Brecht in the 1930s. But one can find estrangement or distantiating effects in Webster's play, used unconsciously. It was very much present in the Greek dramas too as Clifford Leach (1963) in his book, *Webster: The Duchess of Malfi* points out. Leach has pinpointed two instances of the Distancing effect, tellingly, strikingly and prominently used in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. As Ferdinand smuggles himself into the Duchess' bedchamber and is about to leave her, he breaks off his imprecations to tell her how rank, reputation, status, position, love and death came to journey through the world and planned to take separate paths. The audience is thus alienated, estranged and distanced from the general outline of the story. Brecht uses the same instance of estrangement in his version. The Second noteworthy instance of the alienation device in Webster comes at the end of Act III when the Duchess has been mercilessly and ruthlessly arrested by Bosola and his guards. She, like a raconteur par excellence, narrates the story of a salmon and the dogfish. In Brecht's version, the story occurs at the end of Act II, scene VI, when Bosola asks the Duchess to forget the base, lowborn fellow, Antonio.

4.2.1 Difference Between the Alienation Effects Used by Webster and Brecht:

Conventional theatre of Marlowe and Webster attempted to be realistic. It made use of terror - stricken scenes, dreadful incidents, primitive shock effects, horror sequences or hazily defined sentimental moods. It created an impression that the audience had been transported to the scene of the story and was present at a

spontaneous, transitory, authentic, unrehearsed event. In order to destroy the delusion, Brecht in his version of Webster's *Duchess* destroys illusion. And so, in his adaptation, Brecht sought to create art that freely looked like art, used signs that visibly looked like signs and made theatrical representations that looked not realistic, but rehearsed. Through his re portrayal of Webster's *Duchess*, he compels and persuades the audience not to sympathize and feel, not to pity and cower, but to think and change.

4.3 *The Duchess of Malfi* as an Example of Brecht's Epic Theatre:

Due to the fact that the audience is only an observer and change maker according to Brecht, the viewer maintains an emotional distance from the action of the play and refrains from considering the Duchess as a tragic heroine. As an observer, the viewer completely deconstructs the concept of relating to the Duchess' affliction, setback, tribulation, vicissitude, misadventure, mishap or adversity. Brecht expects the audience to look at her as an emancipated widow who never gave in to the forces of oppression. Unlike Webster's play, Brecht's *Duchess* does not play with the audience's feelings but appeals and influences his reason/mind. Brecht's version of Webster's *Duchess* encourages the audience to have a more critical attitude to what is happening on stage. Brecht, as a change maker himself wanted the audience to take up roles as change makers themselves and thus change the perspective and point of view of conventional and conservative people living in the society.

Brecht desired to reach the ultimate level of objectivity, impartiality, neutrality and detachment from the audience's side instead of identification with the colossal heroine. He refused to treat her as a woman of high rank, stature or position. He refused to assume that the audience could only be reached through their emotion, sentiment and tears. In his version of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, he reaches the minds of the audience and inspires action. He does not want the audience to relate to the Duchess, engage in her grievances and domestic problems, put

themselves in her shoes and become emotionally involved with her. Brecht felt that empathy with the characters hindered, obstructed and thwarted audience's objectivity and reasoning. In order to understand Brecht's *Duchess*, one must note that feelings, sentiments and sensations alone are not enough for transformation and change; rational thought and reason are the keys.

In order to create a socially relevant reading of renaissance texts in Modern era, the Epic actors of the *Duchess* engage the audience directly in a critical dialogue. The Epic theatre of Brecht, as shown in his version, fuses didacticism and entertainment. This amalgamation is made possible by means of a fable that studies the event or character as obvious, known, evident and produces surprise and curiosity out of it. Alienation is the process of 'historicizing' and 'rehistoricizing' so it presents The *Duchess*' events in the past period as 'historical', thereafter ephemeral and makes it relevant to the Modern and Post - Modern age.

An Elizabethan or a Jacobean spectator watching *The Duchess of Malfi* would say: I have exactly felt like the Duchess too – her sufferings are so natural – the grievances of the Duchess appeal to me because they are unavoidable, inevitable and inescapable. While, an Epic spectator would say: The catastrophic life of the Duchess appeals to me because they are superfluous and unnecessary, that's art, nothing is so obvious in it.

Though Brecht was against the very concept of "Catharsis", in his epilogue of *The Duchess of Malfi* he says:

"May these deaths enacted here Purge by pity and by fear"

According to the researcher, Brecht's *The Duchess of Malfi* is not permitted to exert a cathartic effect upon the readers or the audience. The story of the play is familiar to us. Brecht has rehistoricized it in order to make it a specimen of a documentary

theatre that gives a kind of an objective report on the social and political issues concerning the life of *The Duchess of Malfi*.

In his version of Webster's *Duchess*, Brecht has made frequent use of songs, technological advancements, announced scenes, titles etc., all of which comment on the action and move the play away from the trance-inducing, calmative, somnolent, hypnotic and mesmeric effect of the more realistic dramaturgy to which he strongly objected. The songs of *The Duchess of Malfi* function as interruptive devices in a dialectical relation to the dramatic action immediately preceding or following. Songs used by Shakespeare in his plays elaborated more on the theme of the play and philosophy. However, in Brecht, they are used for several dramatic purposes. They expound the *Duchess*' major themes, comment upon important incidents and interpret the action of the play. The songs in Brecht's *Edward* and *The Duchess* do not contribute to the cathartic effect but to the *Verfremdungseffekt*. In his view, the rehearsals (rehearsed songs) should make their effect felt on the stage. Delio's epilogue towards the end of Brecht's *Duchess* narrates past events and sums up the action.

In Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, we do have 'The dance of madmen' – the dance of discord that intensifies and accelerates the pace and mood of the tragedy. The song of madmen is directed towards the degeneration of characters, promotion of tragic action and of course the gross entertainment which Elizabethan and Jacobean revelled in. Some critics criticized Webster for creating a melodramatic impact through the madmen's dance. Melodrama, which is considered to be a debased form of a tragedy is not a compliment given to the playwright. In Brecht's *Duchess*, there is no rescue from the heinous crimes. The good perish with the wicked but unlike Webster's Act V, the *Duchess*' innate spirit is not made to revive or resurrect to avenge itself upon the oppressors. Thus, Brecht's play carries within it, a sense of desolation, loneliness, aloofness and provides absolutely no reprieve and comfort

from the threats of destruction. The Antagonists, in the Renaissance plays, Mortimer Edward II, the Cardinal and Bosola, The Duchess of Malfi are depicted as Machiavellian figures in the original, however, Brecht treats them differently. In fact, the Cardinal and Bosola do not find significant roles to play in Brecht's version because of the lack of relevance of Machiavellianism on Broadway so also in a Modern set-up. If Brecht retains Machiavellianism in the modern set up, there would be no difference between the Jacobean Webster and the German Wizard.

In his version of Brecht's *Duchess*, he does not touch upon the Renaissance imagery like the geometrical hinges, Astrology and other collocation of images which give a diseased richness to the Elizabethan picture gallery or fulfil the function of declaring cosmic anarchy. Brecht does not draw his imagery from the charnel house or Slaughter house because of his lack of belief in the supernatural. Brecht believed in supernaturalizing the natural in the best possible way. Moreover, Brecht wanted to make the events credible and believable to the audience, so he had to underplay the atrocities ordered by the Elizabethan stage directions. One does find animal imagery in Brecht to present the characters as they really are. The 'war' imagery frequently used in Brecht is meant to explain the long time gap (more than two years) between Bosola's discovery of the Duchess' Pregnancy and the Duke's return to Malfi.

Brecht knew how to handle the Jacobean characters in their specific style, making them relevant in his age. The choice of Webster allowed Brecht to develop the concept of the Epic within the Jacobean context.

Brecht made the first mention of the term 'Epic' in 1926. He began to use the phrase *Verfremdungseffekt* after his visit to Moscow in 1935 where he met the Chinese actor Mei-Lan-Fang. Brecht worked upon Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, along with his collaborators H.R.Hays and W.H. Auden. (1946). Brecht's concept of 'epic theatre' was well known. His stage terms like 'Gestus', 'Lehrstucke' and

‘Verfremdungseffekt’ became quite established even before the *Little Organum for the theatre* could be fully integrated in the year 1948. Thus this Brechtian counter play should not be dumped as a hackneyed remake of Jacobean literary art.

4.4 Brechtian Historicization of Webster’s *Duchess* and its Influence on the American Feminist Theatre:

The book *Reinterpreting Brecht His influences on Contemporary drama and film*, 147, 148) edited by Pia Kleber and Colin Visser, has an interesting essay on Brechtian theory and American feminist theatre by Karen Laughlin (1996), who says that the structuring devices, alienating, estranging, distancing and narrative methods of “epic theatre” as developed by Brecht were beneficial to hard core feminists who wished to change the perception of the audience viewers. Brecht’s theatre was more relevant to women and feminist theatre practitioners, who extensively borrowed and adapted his theories to suit the unique innovations, objective, demands and exigencies of feminist dramaturgy.

Brecht’s version of Webster’s *Duchess* must have been of great appeal and interest to the American women audience because as per Laughlin, who read Brecht’s plays with rapt attention, showed great appreciation for his theatrical class. In her book *Reinterpreting Brecht His influences on Contemporary drama and film*, Laughlin mentions that American women have discovered the specialities and three principal aspects of Brecht’s evolving theatre; dramatics and aesthetics particularly beneficial in the development of a women - oriented theatre that privileged the experiences of women by illustrating their oppression, repression and suppression. Brecht’s rules for the audience would show opportunities for liberation. Laughlin informs us that Brecht’s valuable comments and suggestions on acting and the actor - audience relationship, his innovations in dramatic theories have been incorporated and deeply ingrained in the search for a feminist acting style, especially to highlight the oppressive nature of gender distinctions and bias.

“The argument for the “historicizing” of dramatic events has aided women eager to reclaim and re- examine History from a woman’s perspective simultaneously revealing the socio- political forces at work in shaping her destinies.” (Ibid, 1996, pg. 147)

As the story of Webster’s *Duchess* is familiar to the audience, the heroine playing Duchess in remake of Brecht distances the actor - character from the role she adopts in order to survive in the given society. The Brechtian audience is thus invited not only to recognize these roles as pure inventions, but also examine the social conditions which have caused the character to take on these alternative identities.

Brecht in his version, shows the Duchess discarding and disapproving of the roles patriarchy has imposed on her. He expects the readers to maintain a historical distance from the events shaping her life. As Brecht dramatizes many of the events in her life, he reveals all the historical conditions and attitudes that shaped the Jacobean psyche at that time. Brechtian play leads to conclusions about the entire structure of a society at a particular time. Through the character of the Duchess, he wants to point out historically, the significant forces and relationships at work in the past. Brechtian historicization is of course intended to suggest the continued impact of the dramatized conditions in other historical periods. The historical perspective of the Duchess has an additional motive as well, one that illustrates significant modification of Brechtian historicization to suit the aims and exigencies of feminist theatre without Brecht consciously aiming at it or being aware of it,.

To the researcher, Brecht’s version of Webster’s *Duchess* represents a sincere attempt to rewrite History by making the attitudes and experiences of the Duchess it features, a part of the historical landscape. It also reveals the workings of oppressive Patriarchical structures by examining them through a ‘historian’s eye.’ Brechtian counter play compels us to reclaim and reinterpret the past from a feminist or a feminazi perspective. Brecht has regularly attracted the attention of critics for

his out of the box, lively, offbeat and unconventional representation of many women as strong, manipulative and self-willed. His portrait gallery consists of The Mother, Shen Te, Grusha, Mother Courage and also the Duchess of Malfi. The masculine strength of Mother Courage and the defiance of Dumb Katrin have won acclaim of numerous critics for his insight into the women's characters. What John Ruskin said of Shakespeare may safely be applied to him: Brecht has no heroes, he has only heroines. By analyzing the character of Brecht's Duchess in contrast to Webster's, the researcher would now endeavour to show the play embodying feminism's basic contention that "the personal is political", and thus reorient the content of political theatre as Brecht conceptualized and defined. For a woman, the internal reality is filled with oppression of society and suppression of womanhood. The Duchess' most intimate and often domestic scenes and settings tend to reflect the tight links between the Duchess' public and private life, the intensely personal terms in which they may see what Brecht calls social relationships. Very frequently the family, marriage and the traditional framework of women is a basic part of any political structure.

Laughlin in her book *Reinterpreting Brecht His influences on Contemporary drama and film* says that the advancing feminist theatre may well be expanding and maturing in a direction Brecht might never even have underpinned, supported or reinforced. However, the state and understanding of revolutionary methods and political struggles, in Modern society have been changing for more than three decades after Brecht's death."

Brecht pays a tribute to one of the historical figures, the Duchess of Malfi who can be our role model and torch bearer in the modern age. We admire her strength and fortitude even as we are angered by our recognition of the social forces at work against her, spectators may be invited to see the historical conditions shaping her life, judge her character and actions.

4.5 Feminist Overtones in Brecht's *The Duchess of Malfi*:

Let us begin by trying to identify some of the feminist criticism. It is nothing but civilization and social conditioning that produces this creature which is described as feminine. The feminine has come to be widely identified as “coy”, “shy”, “timid” “meek”, “submissive”, “sentimental”, “emotional” and “conventional.” The Duchess, be it Webster's or Brecht's, does not have any of these feminine qualities. Her heroic qualities such as resistance, opposition, non-compliance, disobedience, insubordination, recalcitrance, rebelliousness, mutinousness, provocation, daring, boldness, audacity, passion, courage, defiance and ambition add up to the forcefulness and spirited independence that generation of critics have been compelled to accept as a part of a consistent and believable heroic persona. The Duchess, be it Webster's or Brecht's, is constantly under a microscope. Her boldness and her defiance is taken to be a violation of norm by the forces of oppression. The audience readers are astonished by the amount of domination and violence she is subjected to. The relationship between the observers (Her brothers) and the observed (The Duchess) becomes a basis of the historical story of *The Duchess of Malfi*. The Duchess, be it Webster's or Brecht's, enters into an atmosphere fraught with an explicitly offensive sexual innuendo, in which she is illustrated, exemplified and implicated as a “lusty widow”. In fact, the widowhood of the Duchess is made prominent in both the plays.

Feminist thought has long seen the domestic set up, family as a major obstacle to most women's ability to have “power over themselves”. Family is the source of all discontent for women. Even today, the women are victims of character biopsy. In both the plays, Webster's *Duchess* and Brecht's, we have the family acting as a devastating power, enemy of love and freedom. Like Montagues and Capulets in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the Duchess' brothers in Brecht's play are against her marriage. Webster's play is an epitome and symbol of moral indictment of the

codes and norms that governed the English psyche in those days. We cannot analyze the character of Brecht's Duchess by removing things from their historical context.

Clifford Leech, in his critical study mentions the rules for widows or individual chastity as described by Jeremy Taylor in *Holy Living*. There, though marriage is said no longer to be held 'infamous', as anciently it was, the widow's state is described as one where the practice of religion and the avoidance of casual delights are especially appropriate and to be stringently followed. As per Taylor's views, Almighty Lord, after widowhood has restrained the former license, shut the widow's eyes and enlisted hordes of restrictions and social constraints. Lord has fastened her heart to a narrow compass and has bestowed on her numerous sorrows and engaged her desires. The Lord has clipped her wings, disabled her from flying and carving a niche for herself. A widow is expected to bereave her man's loss, lament, sob, be a mourner. She is not allowed to be financially independent and it would be blasphemous or insult to public honesty if she remarried despite bearing a child by her deceased husband. It would be inappropriate and sinful to marry within the year of mourning and dress up as a bride. A widow is to restrain her memory, suddenly catch a disease called short term memory loss or Amnesia, not allow any sort of love life to tickle her fancy and refrain from recalling or recounting her former permissions and freer licenses with any present delight and blissful times. A Widow should silently submit herself to the will of God, must spend her valuable time as a devoted Virgin or a Nun who is considered to be the bride of Jesus Christ. A widow should spend her entire life in fasting, prayers and charitable work. A widow must forbid herself from all the pleasures and temporal solaces which in her former state were innocent, but now were terribly dangerous to her reputation and social health. It is against these sentiments that Webster's Duchess goes. Brecht has rehistoricized the same figure. The predominance of individual chastity and abiding by Taylor's

views as a compulsory way of life has been highlighted as particularly oppressive to women in the twentieth century.

Sexuality, sexual choices and sexual orientation are tremendously important considerations in analyzing the status of women in culture. This is not only because sex and sexuality are so basic to being human, but also because the western culture has defined women in terms of sex. Women are often defined as sex objects, in the sense their bodies are objectified. Their bodies are considered useful for their ability to entice the opposite sex and satisfy male sexual desire, but lacking in their own agency and subjectivity. Culture also defines the kinds of relationships that are “acceptable, “normal” and “healthy” as well as those that are considered to be “inappropriate” “deviant” and “unacceptable.” Women’s sexuality has been defined in very narrow ways which ignore and reject women, who do not conform to the normative standards. Such women are frequently stereotyped and labelled as deviant or insanelly modernized.

Male defined attitudes and sexist opinions about women are reflected in stereotypes that contribute to creating distorted and sometimes conflicting expectation of women’s sexuality, for example that women will be heterosexual, both “chaste” and “willing”, “virginal” and “yet experienced”, “compliant” but not “passive”. These images of women are a part of the cultural tradition of stereotyping women as either “virgins” or “whores.” All women are viewed as falling into one category or the other, either virginally pure and chaste, devoted selfless mothers or else sexually available and impassioned temptresses of men. The Duchess is not treated with respect in either of the two stories narrated and renarrated. Foul invective is used to describe her act and she is made to suffer ceaselessly.

Brecht’s Duchess, like Webster’s, amply demonstrates her driving sensuality by defying her state and marrying below her rank. This shows that she is not ultra - ambitious or status conscious in pronouncing her love. She manages to assert her

sexual self and takes up cudgels against the social system and ritualistic practices prevalent in those times. Be it Webster's *Duchess* or Brecht's, she resolutely identifies her elevated fiscal position (as a young widow) to a large estate and heiress in her own right. She does not give in to the continued subservience and domination by men. She shows how sexuality can be a source of liberation and not only constraint. She throws off her oppression for a 'real' self to appear. She has to deconstruct her socially constructed 'feminine' identity, speak out and give testimony. Her identity is built out of pain, torment, trauma, suffering and experience.

Now, the researcher would come to a problem that concerns the character of Brecht's *Duchess*. Webster's *Duchess* asserts "I am Duchess of Malfi still", while Brecht's *Duchess* goes on to become "The Duchess of Malfi once more!" Brecht reduces his *Duchess* to the level of a commoner by making her death anti-climactic; when Brecht rehistoricizes the *Duchess*' character, he does not speak of the great woman but a common woman in her incandescent spirit and inevitable struggle against the conventional man. Brecht rehistoricizes a powerful woman, who gives a reality check to bring other women to their senses.

The indomitable strength of Webster's *Duchess* lies in her fortitude in the face of a doom her brothers have brought upon her. This heroic endurance makes her an astonishingly powerful dramatic character and aesthetically appealing. Brecht would never portray a larger than life kind of character and deify her. To Brecht, Webster's *Duchess* would not be an unrealistic saint-like figure, who cannot identify herself with a commoner. Webster's *Duchess* manages to keep her dignity unassailable even in a crisis, when the normalcy of a situation gets distorted by events and happenings beyond her control. She keeps her equanimity even when the situation exacerbates and throws systems out of place. She draws on her inner reserves of pragmatism, composure, and stoical calm to deal with the challenges that come her way. In this way, she develops her mental strength, emotional

sturdiness and sanity in earth shattering circumstances of her life. The spirit of greatness reigns the most in her but she certainly does not relate to a ‘typical’ woman or a “common” woman.

Brecht’s Duchess does appear to be a strong woman, challenging conventional attitudes but does not have the ability to stand the insufferable strain and a benumbing effect of poison.

Brecht’s Duchess can scarcely stand and one question lingers constantly in her poor head for which she gets no satisfactory answer. She tries to investigate as to why her brother indulged in bloodshed. She tells Cariola, maybe he did it because he insulted and robbed her. She weakens, trembles and shivers like a commoner. She specifies that her mind is full of shadows. There are a volley of questions from early times and half forgot, left unanswered, which do concern her brother Ferdinand and his mental health. Like a weakling, she says that her sickness is mortal. She perceives the cause of this enforcing of her chastity and innumerable atrocities heaped upon her. She calls it a feverish law, put over her that forbade her from marrying. She objects to being spied upon and tearing off her sheets. She is horrified to receive a dreadful present and is dismayed at the unexpected slaughter of his brother who bared her woes in public. She plainly elaborates on the fury, his cruelty and his despair and the venom given to her to punish her as she had shared her bed. She metaphorically compares her love to a fever, unknown to a brother. She goes on to say that it is a fever only a lover would be familiar with.

Webster uses spectacular stage effects but Brecht on the contrary does away with the absurd improbabilities and gross excesses, keeping in mind the change of taste and attitudes. Brecht had to keep his audience aloof from the passion and Gothic horror of Webster, the ritualistic images, myths and the dreadful apparatus with which the Duchess’ death is ushered in Webster. The fiendish machinations directed against the Duchess’ peace would have been out of place on the Broadway.

This means Webster would not have been able to make clear to us, the resignation, valiance and fortitude of the Duchess without the Witchcraft scenes and the dance of madmen. The prison in which the two Arragonian brothers confine the Duchess is made hideous by the clamour of howling lunatics and the figures designed by Vincentio Cariola. The avowed object of Webster's dramatic art was to glorify virtue, morality and justice and condemn the vicious courses of life. Undoubtedly, he was inspired by Seneca, who made the hero of the tragedy stand up in arms against all sorts of physical, psychological, social and mental difficulties, to endure all sorts of conceivable tortures in order to maintain the ideal of stoic philosophy. The Duchess of Malfi, be it Webster's or Brecht's cannot end on a note of reconciliation. The scourge and affliction that the Webster's tragic heroine is subjected to, is the most heart rending, harrowing, agonizing and heartbreaking. When the raving lunatics are let loose in the palace of imprisonment, she remarks to Cariola that only noise, pandemonium, clangour, tumult, uproar and commotion could keep her in her right wits. Webster's Duchess bears the rabid ways and appears to be deeply at peace. She is still the same woman, proud, instinctive and intelligent. When Bosola tells the Duchess that she will be killed by strangling, she does not feel afraid in the least, on the contrary, she tells Bosola that the cord does not terrify her at all.

“Duchess: Not a whit Pull, and pull strongly for your able strength

*Must pull down heaven upon me.” (Webster, Act IV, Scene ii, John Webster;
The Duchess of Malfi.2004)*

Webster's Duchess attains heroic dignity towards the end. The horror is intended to bring out the inner aspects of the Duchess, who is made to react to those horrors. She dies a noble death, without betraying any kind of cowardice or fear. Each new horror seems but to strengthen her anguished soul. The horrible tortures inflicted by her brother serve but to save her mind already half crazed with grief. Even when life

has truly become for her, the most horrible curse that one can give her, her spirit remains unconquered, unassailable and unbroken. She does not wince or complain even once.

The line “I am the Duchess of Malfi still” signifies an affirmation of reason and an assertion of a super human spirit. It is a constant declaration of human independence which proclaims the unique value of a particular human existence in the face of unavoidable and eternal triumph of death. What makes it unusually memorable is however, its capacity to sum up Webster’s tragic vision and the influence of Seneca. Brecht’s philosophy was different from that of Webster and Seneca. He wanted to resuscitate *The Duchess of Malfi* as an instrument to educate the public, not by rousing their emotions but by appealing to their reason and judgment. Being a Communist sympathizer, he wanted the audience watching his Duchess play, not to forsake the faculty of thinking in the theatre. He felt that the action on the stage should stimulate their minds and not their feelings.

He does not make the audience feel the emotional consequences of a valueless world. Probably this is the reason why Brecht amputated the terror- striking effects, which could be relevant only in the world of Jacobean ethos. Brecht makes his Duchess murmur and fumble in her dying moments like any other common woman. Brecht’s Duchess whines, complains and moans by saying that she grows grow sicker. She finds a confidante in Cariola. She cannot stand on her feet and wants to be be seated. She is pessimistic and negativistic. She think she would die shortly as her legs grow numb.

Tis not pain I feel. Yet my foot seems to be sleeping My oath! (Brecht, Act III, Scene v, *Brecht Bertolt Bertolt Brecht Letters*, 1990)

Brecht’s Duchess is led into self - disdain by the great arm of fraternal phallocentrism. We are never told the Duchess’ name in Webster’s play for she is very much the great woman, acutely conscious of her status even in love. Antonio

too addresses her as ‘Madam’. Even at the shrine of the ‘Lady of Loretto’, the Cardinal announces her banishment from Ancona and humiliates her in public, but does not utter her name even once. Webster’s pilgrims too sympathize with the Duchess and point out a very important issue.

Contrary to this, Brecht names his Duchess Angelica Teresa by stripping her off the title and colossal status. The Cardinal makes her feel as if she erred unpardonably and sinned irrevocably. Brecht’s Cardinal excommunicates the Duchess in the most derogatory words. He curses each and every part of her body.

“Cardinal: I curse her head and the hairs of her head, her eyes, her mouth, her nose, her tongue, her teeth, her neck, her breasts, her heart, her arms, her legs, her back, her stomach, her womb, and every part of her body from the top of her head to the soles of her feet.” (Brecht, Act ii Scene iv, *Brecht Bertolt Bertolt Brecht Letters*, 1990)

When the Cardinal excommunicates her, the Duchess in this version cries

Duchess: A rape! A rape! Yes, you have ‘ravished’ justice. ” (Brecht, Act ii Scene iv, *Brecht Bertolt Bertolt Brecht Letters*, 1990)

Brecht as a dramatist, does not evade explanation of the motives of his characters. As a matter of fact, he puts across to his reader, his viewpoint. He explains the motives of his characters but they do not really help us fully decipher the true meaning of the text. Brecht gives both the Cardinal and Ferdinand, an economic motive (possession of the Duchess’ estates) and there are frequent references to the mercenary incentive in the text. However, this cannot be called a ‘revenge tragedy’ as the Duchess does absolutely nothing to harm the Arragonian brothers nor does she harm their legitimate interests.

Like Webster, Brecht has shown his Ferdinand fuming and fretting over the Duchess’ pregnancy. The birth of the child would not have endangered his rights

over his wealth as an “illegitimate” child poses no threats at all. So, Brecht gives his Ferdinand a strong sexual motive, and it is made explicit in the prologue introduced partly from John Ford’s *It is pity she’s a Whore* which also shows a brother’s incest with his sister. If we take this to be a revenge motive, the questions that keep lingering in our mind are: Why didn’t he object to her first marriage? Or did he develop a strange fascination for her only after her husband’s death?

Brecht has made Ferdinand’s incestuous jealousy for his sister flagrant and explicit. Nowhere in Webster’s play do we find a direct reference to Ferdinand’s passion for his sister. Though he has the most perverse of all sexual urges within him, he does not declare it openly as he is himself not aware of the blasphemous act he is indulging in. This suggests that the desire that is present in Webster’s Ferdinand is unconscious. Although we often find him harping on the Duchess’ body, we know that he is not aware of his voyeuristic tendencies. However, Brecht’s Ferdinand, in a conversation with an anonymous Friar, in the prologue, openly declares his repressed and frustrated sexual desire for his twin sister. Thus, the incest theme is made more protuberant in Brecht

Brecht’s Ferdinand pretends to be the Duchess’ chivalrous lover. He knows that the world would never approve of a sibling sexual relationship, but he is deeply concerned about the protection of his widowed sister in his absence at the wars. He does not want her to marry again at any cost. He is completely aware of the fact that he cannot make advances to his sister directly, so he is compelled to use an offensive language fraught in sexual metaphors and innuendos.

As Brecht’s Ferdinand consciously perceives the Duchess as a sex object, the anti-pornography activist, Andrea Dworkin’s theory of Pornography can be suitably applied to him. According to *Andrea Dworkin, Pornography and Male Supremacy*, Pornography could be termed as an unendurable or abominable act presented in Art or Literature. It usually depicts unequal power relationships, involving duress,

coercion, harassment or violence, with men in position of domination and women in compromising postures and positions of submission and subordination. “Pornographic” and objectification of women’s bodies portray images of women as saleable commodities with males pouncing on them, seducing them or stripping them due to their vast and insatiable sexual appetites.

Pornography that is incorporated in Ferdinand’s language results in the degradation and sexual abuse of the Duchess. In one of the speeches written as a part of a debate on pornography with civil liberties lawyer and Harvard Professor, Alan Dershowitz, Andrea Dworkin illustrates, The word pornography owes its origin to the ancient Greek word “porne” and “graphos”: it means “the graphic depiction of midnight fairies, sex workers”, Porne signifies a “whore”, specifically the basest of all creatures. The word owes its origin to an ancient brothel in Greece where sluts and lowborn women were made available to all male citizens. Graphos signifies writing, etching, carving, sculpting or drawing.

Dworkin, in one of her articles, *Why Pornography matters to Feminism: Andrea Dworkin, Why Pornography matters to feminists* mentions that the society considers women as objects and commodities to be used and discarded by men. In pornography, force is applied against women. Pornography turns women into products, materials, objects of merchandise and artefacts kept in the museum for public consumption.

In yet another article *Pornography’s part in sexual violence*, Dworkin says that in Pornography, we literally see the desire, inclination, power, act of women as men want to perceive it and consider it to be their right or prerogative to be able to use the women’s bodies for pleasure and domination. People who support and advocate Pornography, do it especially on the ground of freedom of speech. They insist that women who themselves participate in the act for the sake of money and consider sex to be a power trip, are doing it by their own will. So they allow people to exploit

them. However, Dworkin says that Pornography is an idea, concept, thought, voyeuristic fantasy and a complex situation inside the physical brain, a psychologically complex thing in the mind of the consumer. In her famous book *Pornography: men Possessing women*, Dworkin propounds her theory and expresses her views on Pornography.

Ferdinand, in *The Duchess of Malfi* is too weak to destroy the Duchess' body, but he can display his supremacy over her in the substance and production of pornography. He can never openly acknowledge his carnal pleasures and he resorts to deviant ways. Ferdinand visualizes her laughing like an excellent hyena, the weirdest Simile a character has ever used. He is desperate to talk to her, mate with her and his imagination runs riot as he fantasizes her in the shameful act of sin with everyone. Ferdinand's voyeuristic tendencies compel him to see his sister making love to a strong thighed bargeman. His libido levels are way too high.

To quote Brecht,

Or one o'er the woodyard that can quit the sledge

Or toss the bar, or else some lowly squire

That carries coal up to her private lodging!" (Brecht, Act II, Scene iv, *Brecht Bertolt Bertolt Brecht Letters*, 1990)

Mackinnon in his work *In Only Words* (1988) says that

"Pornography makes the work a pornographic place through its images of women as existing for, Perceived for and treated as objects of male sexual pleasure." (Mackinnon *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day for Women's Equality* 1988)

In Ferdinand's case, pornography is a form of sex - discrimination against the Duchess. It is a form of a violence against her, a method he uses to subordinate her.

It is highly objectionable and completely unforgivable. The strains of male power are embodied in Ferdinand's language and content. Ferdinand's passion for his sister is violent and self - obsessed. Ferdinand visualizes his sister lactating and calls it "Whore's milk" that would quench his insatiably wild desire. He wants to suck on her breasts and uses defamative, degrading, disparaging, belittling, calumnious, censorious, contumelious and injurious words that damage and scar her reputation

Andrea Dworkin, in her book *Pornography's part in Sexual Violence* says that

"Male Power in degrading women, is first concerned with itself, its perpetuation, expansion, intensification and elevation." (Andrea Dworkin *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day for Women's Equality* 1988)

Ferdinand raves and rants like a mad man while talking to the Cardinal and imagines himself destroying the Duchess and her husband. Ferdinand is violent and vilifying. He imagines the bodies of his sister and her husband burning in a coal pit and wishes that their smoke refrains from ascending heavenwards. He is a devil incarnate who expresses a desire to dip the bedsheets and comforters they lie on in the pitch of Sulphur, wrap the lovers in it, light a match and burn them alive. He uses abusive words and calls his nieces and nephews "bastards" whom he would want to boil, kill them mercilessly and hand over their corpses to their lecherous father.

Dworkin observes, that the ideology of male sexual domination, that males are superior to females by virtue of their genitals i.e penises; that physical possession of the female is a natural sight of the male, that sex is, in fact the triumph, victory, conquest and possession of the female, that the use of the female body for reproductive purposes is a natural right of men and that the sexual will of sexual men properly, naturally and clearly defines the yardstick and parameters of a woman's sexual being, which is her whole identity. Ferdinand loses his sanity completely at the end of Act II, Scene iv and says that he will go to sleep, dream

about his sister and visualize who leaps her in lust. He wants to fix her in a general eclipse. This shows he is pitiless, bestial, perverted, fiendish and cold blooded.

Ferdinand reviews the whole career of his mad rage in its true light. His fury blazes forth even when Bosola announces the birth of the Duchess' first child. This makes Bosola insanely baffled. In fact he is too flabbergasted to discover as to what makes the Calabrian Duke fume and fret over the Duchess' pregnancy.

Ferdinand is so very possessive about his sister that he cannot bear to see his brother denouncing her in public. He talks about her physical beauty and refers to taverns and baths and lusts to see her naked. He wishes to investigate if her breasts are large or small.

According to the researcher, Webster's Ferdinand is psychologically more credible. Had he been saner, he might have foreseen that the natural reaction of the madmen's frantic antics upon the Duchess' mind would result not in wrecking but in the preserving of her reason. He is unable to cope with the complexities of the real world; Webster's Ferdinand is stark mad and it is the Duchess' mind he wants to destroy. That is the reason why he subjects her to numerous horrors and the grotesque 'Dance of Madmen.' (This part is amputated By Brecht) But when he finds that he has not been able to destroy her mind, but he has destroyed her incomparable beauty, he says:

"Cover her face, mine eyes dazzle: She died young. (Webster, Act IV, Scene II, John Webster; The Duchess of Malfi.2004)

It is this bestial abnormality which leads to Lycanthropia in him at the beginning of Act V, when he imagines himself as a prowling wolf. This completes the process of his madness. Webster is careful to trace the insidious and surreptitious advance of his mental disease. In Brecht, Ferdinand's incest for his sister is conscious, so he does not care to elaborate Ferdinand's mental complexities and abnormalities.

Brecht's Ferdinand does not want to destroy the Duchess' mind, it is her body he wants to possess. In his paranoid fascination for her physical beauty, his conscious but never to be satisfied desire to have her body and the realization that it is the very beauty which he wanted to preserve had died, makes him say:

“Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle: she died young.”(Brecht, Act III, Scene V *John Webster; The Duchess of Malfi*.2004)

In Brecht's *Duchess*, the female Protagonist bears the brunt of her brother's sexual frustrations and innuendos aimed at her, abrasive temperament, discourteous and sickening behaviour. Ferdinand's wish appears futile when the Duchess marries Antonio and this adds to his sense of alienation.

Bosola fails to understand the reason behind his frenzied behavior. He doesn't get to know what the matter is with him. He just cannot understand why the Duchess should not bear a son. He specifies that her brother has stolen enough land for five sons. He finds the enmity baseless, groundless, foundationless, unsubstantiated, unproven, uncorroborated, untested, unconfirmed, unverified and totally unjustified.

“Yet the Duke's eyes did start from his head to hear it.

Twas as if a Calabrian knight in Turkey should hear his betrothed lies with another and be denied a furlough.” (Brecht, Act II, Scene I, *John Webster; The Duchess of Malfi*.2004)

Being a medical student, Brecht has a considerable physiological, pharmaceutical and psychiatric learning. So, he intentionally chose not to touch upon Ferdinand's Lycanthropy, which would give his play a different turn. Brecht wanted his Ferdinand to keep the 'incest motif' alive, which remains debatable in Webster. Brecht's Ferdinand goes insane only after murdering his brother Cardinal, as Delio says,

“Delio: On the morrow of his brother, the Cardinal’s strange and sudden death , this boy found him All in a cold sweat and altered much in face And language.

Page: Since when he hath grown worse and worse

And yet, at times, he seems himself again.” (Brecht, Act III, Scene v, John Webster; The Duchess of Malfi.2004)

The Doctor’s account on Webster enables us to identify a significant feature in Ferdinand’s madness, which has long been foreshadowed by his references to wolves: a desire to reveal the Duchess’ murder symbolized by his digging up a corpse.

Brecht’s Ferdinand lapses into madness and imagines himself as a wolf even before he can destroy the Duchess’ body. This could probably be because of his inability to win over the Duchess and his realization that he would be left alone.

Taking Ferdinand’s plight into account, the questions that come to my mind are:

- Why should the Duchess remain locked in widowhood and inculcate blind submission to her brothers?
- If the relationship between the Duchess and Antonio is completely legal, why should she give in to the forces of oppression?
- Moreover, why should she accept her brother’s inordinate desire for her which seems deplorable?
- Why should the Duchess be reduced to a sheer sex-object by the audience by inciting their voyeuristic tendencies?

4.6: Emancipation of Women in Society through the Character of the Duchess through the Title “Personal is Political”:

Brecht’s historicization of Webster’s Duchess makes it a story of an emancipated widow. Widowhood left many women with a feeling of insecurity and purposelessness. Remarriage could provide definition, a renewed sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging that were absent from their lives in the widowed state.

Though Brecht historicizes the heroine of the Renaissance, he concentrates more on her commonality. To conclude, Brecht’s Duchess demonstrates how Literature can mirror everyday life and issues like gender roles and expectations, familial pressures, social mobility, sexual desire, and legal responsibility. Brecht’s historicized female figure studied in this chapter sheds even more light on the life of actual women and their relationship to both in and outside the confines of marriage. Though Webster explored these issues four hundred year ago, they are not entirely alien to Modern age.

4.7: Conclusion

Through his remake of Websterian tragedy, Brecht desired to arrive at a practical attitude. He was opposed to empathy and imitation of Webster’s age because they were the chief characteristics of an illusionistic theatre, which was Aristotle’s concept and brainchild. Brecht deviated from Aristotelian Mode of theatre or the conventional theatre that Elizabethan and Jacobean age saw. Brecht observed that, it induced a casual passivity which could only serve the ends of social and political conformism or reaction. In a nutshell, Brecht was opposed to their ideological effect or ‘social function’. Brecht, rehistoricized the Malfi story with an educative and politicizing function. In short, Brecht’s Malfi version gives the feminists, social reformers and spectators the chance to criticize human behaviour from a social point of view. He demonstrates the scenes as snippets of History. This means that the actor’s social “gest” becomes particularly important in Brecht’s play.

Webster, in Jacobean era, designed his work to grip the audience emotionally, excite them deliberately and to hurry on from scene to scene towards the climax, leaving the audience no time to interpose its own judgement of the characters, their deeds or misdeeds. By this sort of a dramatic plot construction, he prevented his audience from viewing the social condition critically. Brecht, in modern era, designed his work to grip the audience intellectually, inform them deliberately and compel them to contemplate towards the climax, conclusion and even after that. Brecht wished to leave a lot of time for the audience to interpose its own judgement of the characters, their calculations and miscalculations. By this sort of a dramatic method, he inspired his audience to look at the social condition critically.

Actors who played their parts in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* allowed the audience to identify with the characters of the play by means of elaborate psychological techniques. They could do so by putting both actor and audience into trances. With these techniques, both the actor and the audience could relive the inevitable fate of the characters in the play, without self-awareness or detachment, without questioning, without even accurately portraying the world and thus according to Brecht, without any entertainment proper to the theatre of scientific age. Through his version of Webster's *Duchess*, Brecht changed the "eternally human" concept from the conventional theatre and made it suitable for theatre of scientific age.

Chapter 5

EMANCIPATION OF SEX WORKERS IN BRECHT'S *THE THREE PENNY OPERA*

5.1 Brecht's Version of Gay's Opera

The Threepenny Opera is a marvellous piece of an adaptation of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), a waspish, venomous, aggressive, caustic, pungent and unsparring social satire by British poet (reportedly with the wealth of encouragement or assistance of Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope both of whom were satirists).

Brecht aspired and perspired for a theatre where the audience was never oblivious of the fact that it was in an auditorium watching a re-enactment of the past. So, the half-social, half - aesthetic position of Brecht's theatre is followed by a compromise between empathy and detachment which can be called theatre for social empowerment. Brecht's theatre was like a mending slash or a healing skewer that would address the society and improve upon it.

Through his version of *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht aimed at a living, thinking, pondering and feeling audience to engage with certain issues that he felt very strongly about in the play. He wanted his audience, unlike Gay's, to go home thinking deeply about the questions that *The Threepenny Opera* brought to the fore.

Brecht in his version expects a lot from the audience by respecting their level of understanding as high as possible. He finds it hard to believe in the naivete of people and that is the reason why he appeals to the brain. Brecht provides naked events in his version so that the public may think for themselves. That is why he needs an audience with sharp senses, who know how to observe, and who enjoy using their own intellects. Gay never expected his audience to be psychologists penetrating themselves in the material he offered them. He never guaranteed solely the absolute reality and correctness of what happens in his play. But Brecht in his version, leaves

the widest scope for interpretation. The meaning is inherent in his play; it has to be extracted to do justice to it. Brecht's material is comprehensible and therefore he does not have to make it comprehensible.

The meaning of Gay's play cannot be blurred by the fact that the actor plays his way into the heart of the spectator. In Brecht, the actor plays his way into the mind of the spectator. Brecht in his version, places the events before the audience coldly, objectively and non - classically.

In *The Threepenny Opera*, instead of the smooth, coherent, consistent, uninterrupted and seamless continuity of the conventional theatre, Brecht wishes to break up the story and all that appears in a particular scene is designed to signify the basic "Gestus". Each scene in *The Threepenny Opera*, like other plays written by him, is prefaced by a caption enlightening the audience and elucidating the significance of that event. In this way he exhorts the audience to adopt a critical attitude in the theatre.

The Threepenny Opera occupied a landmark position in the late twenties and set Brecht's career in motion. It was an important phase in Brecht's life: a judicious shift to Marxism. Brecht's outstanding artistry, *The Threepenny Opera* is seen as a transitional work, not only in terms of Brecht's politics, but also as regards his Anti - Aristotelian theory and practice of epic theatre.

This was the proclamation offered by the German composer Kurt Weill in a candid letter to his publisher. Weill in partnership with the revolutionary dramatist Bertolt Brecht, worked on *The Threepenny Opera* and that proved to be the most successful play of Weill's career and one of the most supreme, key, major, dominant and inimitable works in the history of musical theatre: *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Three Penny Opera*). In addition to running successfully for more than four hundred solid performances in its original German production, Brecht and Weill's masterpiece was translated into eighteen languages. Brecht and his collaborator friend Elizabeth

Hauptmann thoroughly reworked, revamped, reconsidered and resuscitated Gay's script. They transferred the action to London in the 1920s and this was complemented by the musical genius of Kurt Weill, a musical maestro, who did a stupendous job and received a standing ovation from the spectators.

The premiere of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928 came exactly two centuries after the premiere of the smashing, runaway hit on which it was based. (John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.) In Gay's pungent and vituperative satire, the thieves, pickpockets, criminals and Sex Workers of London's Newgate Prison competed for control, authority, wealth, luxury, supremacy, power and position in the manners of the English upper classes. It was Bertolt Brecht's idea to adapt *The Beggar's Opera* into a brand-new piece of art that would serve as a caustic and venomous political critique of capitalism. To a great extent, the reputation of *the Threepenny Opera* rests on Brecht's experimental and avant garde dramaturgical techniques such as crumbling and demolishing "the fourth wall" between audience and actors.

Brecht deliberately customized Gay's play as per the tastes of his day and age. For both Brecht and Weill, *The Threepenny Opera* meant a great attempt to revolutionize the world of theatre and opera. For both Brecht and Weill, *The Threepenny Opera* represented a sincere endeavour to modify, reshape, remodel, remould and reorder the world of theatre and opera. It was a classic response to what they deprecatingly called "culinary" opera, i.e., light entertainment operettas whose purpose was not didactic. This played a foil to the monumental productions epitomized by the work of Richard Wagner, which appealed heavily to the audience's emotions and drew them to the fantasy world of idealized images and sensations. At the same time, *The Threepenny Opera* revitalized the social satire contained in the Gay original. Gay's purpose was to strike out at the hypocrisy and moral degradation of bourgeois society and point fingers at the society with its follies and foibles. Brecht, through this play aimed to entertain, amuse and

simultaneously provoke the audience into looking more critically at Capitalist society and its own social preconceptions in myriad of ways. *The Threepenny Opera* remains an outstanding example of the realization of Brechtian ambition, vision and mission.

Gay in his play, deliberately pointed fingers at the society in order to correct it. However, like Brecht, his philosophy was not to shake the audience out of their passive existence. When we see a revival of Gay's play, we feel a sense of déjà vu, a nexus, a connection. It is not just that we have seen or heard it before, it is that we see and hear it all the time in our society and cultural life. The themes like problems of the poor, the struggles of the homeless, class divide, corruption, crime, prostitution were a part of our life in the eighteenth century and even now. Thus, the adaptation does not cease to be relevant to our time and age. Much of Gay's original is to be found in Brechtian version, however, Brecht had to make his play accessible and suitable for the modern audience so he amputated several of Gay's figures and also condensed Gay's plot immensely. Gay's play has sixty - nine songs while Brecht's play has fifteen. Gay's play is quite prolix as compared to Gay. Gay has 28 men and 24 women.

Gay's early eighteenth century social and political satire, using English traditional songs in parody of Italian grand opera inspired Brecht as a tool of theatre he could handle to create modes he was experimenting with. Gay's subject was engorged aristocracy; his anti-hero a highway man. Gay was highlighting the corruption of those times. The inversion of contemporary morals was exactly what Brecht was thrusting in the face of the audience with the *Threepenny Opera* two centuries later, a people exploited by different forms of authority in a chaotic industrial time and ethos. Hauptman translated Gay's anti opera and Brecht reconceived, refashioned and restyled the theme that was already within him. *The Threepenny's* Macheath is a skilled city crime operator as well as a highwayman. The cast of other characters,

with minor changes, is quite similar to that of Gay's play. Like all other plays of Brecht, it has montage embracing elements. Reading and researching this dazzling, accusatory, audacious play is strangely exhilarating and is doubtlessly, Brecht's triumph. The swift rhythms, wit jolt, corruption as a gospel of life, bribing the cop, deception raised to infinity, glorying of crime and sex trade is all a part of the Brechtian remake. Ours is a twenty first century when the class divide between rich and the poor has created a major disparity. Despite our humanistic euphemisms, Jenny the whore becomes a sex worker, penury leads to underdevelopment, globalization is the term used for sharing out human kind's resources among the most powerful nations and exploitation becomes all pervasive.

5.2 *The Threepenny Opera* as an example of Brecht's epic theatre

There are certain features, strict criteria, stringent rules for set design in Brecht's Epic Theatre, which present themselves most notably and explicitly in *The Threepenny Opera*. The stage is stripped of anything credible, magical or elements considered identifiable, representative or symbolic. *The Threepenny Opera* becomes brand new in the hands of Brecht.

In *Threepenny Opera*, The fourth wall of the stage is dispensed with, Brecht's *Threepenny* stage, like other plays written by him, comprises of four walls, the fourth wall being the "audience evolving" instead of involving itself. The remake of Gay's masterpiece allows actor – spectator interaction and strong messages are given in full view of the audience. Props used are very few and those that are used are always functional. In his counter play, Brecht also makes use of a half curtain to dispel the illusions of the theatre and compel the audience not to relate or identify themselves with the characters. On the contrary they are motivated to uplift themselves and bring positive changes in their lives.

Epic lighting used by Brecht in *Threepenny Opera* gives the impression that the spectators are watching a play and not an actual story. The hackneyed, oft repeated

and clichéd theatrical experience of being transported to another place or time does not appear logical to Brecht. The stage lamps sift a harsh white light, once again alienating the audience and decreasing their entanglement and emotional participation in the action of the play.

One of the key aspects of a Brechtian performance is the power of now. Brecht takes this rule to the extreme and makes the audience unite with the performers. The convention of being transported is too superficial and convenient and allows the audience to sit lazily, passively. Brecht totally detests an audience that remains unengaged and unmoved.

Brecht was deeply concerned that the spectators should not be kept under a wrong impression what they saw on stage was an episode of real life, and so he does away with the conventional dramatic techniques. The play does not remind us of the evolutionary methods of dramatic writing but introduces us to the revolutionary methods of dramatic writing in which there is no link between one scene and the next. The flow is interrupted by the admixture of songs and the connection between scenes is disrupted because of montage embracing elements. Most importantly, the Threepenny spectator's awareness of the text's epic structure is reinforced by *Verfremdungseffekt*. *The Threepenny Opera* is a three-act play like other modern plays. Each act has three scenes and but the convention is broken by the addition of a Prologue and an Interlude played right in front of the curtain as Brecht, the dramatist disapproved of the curtain. *The Threepenny Opera's* most audacious and unusual piece of defamiliarization and disengagement occurs when she performs the 'Pirate Jenny' song [scene 2, pp.19-20].

5.3 Gay's *Beggar's Opera* vs *The Threepenny Opera*:

Gay's opera chiefly satirizes the Whigs and their aristocratic manners and morals. Both Gay and Brecht provide the highwayman Macheath with the dash, style,

flamboyance, flair and verve of a courtier and Sex Workers with the grace, finesse, charm and elegance of ladies. Brecht adopts Gay's ironic inversion of high and low life but aims to substitute the not so relevant aristocracy by Germany's triumphant, smug, snooty, snobbish, elitist, supercilious, ritzy, presumptuous and powerful bourgeoisie. The Protagonist as well as Antagonist of the play is a criminal highwayman, Macheath who is called "Mac the Knife" (Mackie Messer), and he is a multi-faceted and multi splendoured personality. He woos English women with panache. While he is a thief, robber, arsonist, rapist, extortionist and murderer, he also has the qualities of a middle-class entrepreneur, keeping books and insisting on business ethics by his gang. He picks up a battle on the eve of Queen's coronation with the King of beggars. His team of thieves is in competition with big business magnates, tycoons and creditors. They are defeated by the more predatory, shrewder, better-financed and the very unscrupulous and shameless, rascal and a scoundrel, Jonathan Peachum. As he is about to mount the scaffold, what seems to be his farewell address, Macheath laments, grumbles and complains that he is a small fish about to be swallowed by a bigger one: Ladies and Gentlemen.

Peachum is a proprietor of a rather special outfitting shop; the couture displayed at this shop is exceptional as the eye catching outfits can make mendicants of various kinds and touch the hearts and pockets of the public. Peachum and his wife have a beautiful daughter Polly, whom they lovingly cherish and dote upon. However, they turn her into a scapegoat by making a sexual alliance with a wealthy man for her. At this point, the audience readers feel that marriage is a social institution which can be labelled as legal prostitution. She discards conventional morality and falls in love with Macheath and marries him in a clandestine manner.

Mrs. Peachum berates her daughter when the marriage is discovered. Peachum is distracted by his own illicit dealings and anti – social behaviour. The solution to their daughter's betrayal is Macheath's death by hanging. Mac the Knife is betrayed,

by Jenny, his favourite midnight fairy in his brothel haunt and the Casanova is deeply hurt and taken aback by the sex worker's behavior. his occupation of a prison cell is further complicated by his multiple entanglements with women who turn up at the prison. This must be one of the wittiest, savage and subtlest exchanges of words in the history of satire. The two women want to save him, each for her vested interests.

5.4 Feminist Overtones in *The Threepenny Opera*:

In Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, the females have to tackle fiery roles. According to Willow White,

"These vivacious characters are largely responsible for the rapid action of the play: Polly unwittingly gives pertinent information to anyone listening, Lucy has a secret her father wouldn't be happy to hear about, and Jenny's acquisitive side may send someone to the gallows." (Brecht, Bertolt. *The Threepenny Opera* 1994)

Brecht has always sketched interesting, audacious and powerful female characters like Mother Courage, Grusha, Mother, The Duchess of Malfi, Antigone and many more. However, the way he has portrayed the Sex Workers in *The Threepenny Opera* deserves a special mention. Brecht's purpose may be a Marxist and not a feminist one, but one cannot ignore the complexity and vigour with which he has sketched female figures, considering his dramatic oeuvre. Martin Swales (2000) considers Brecht's female roles as one of the greatest in twentieth century European theatre. Brecht's Sex Workers are vivacious, ebullient, exuberant, full of buoyancy and sparkle.

According to Martin and Erika Swales,

“There are two main factors that set Brecht’s women apart. In an effort to create cognitive independence in his actors, Brecht was determined that his female characters should mentally overcome the social barriers that reduced female autonomy German Life & Letters 53.3 (2000): 387-393.)

Brecht was certainly not a feminist however his portrayal of powerful women in his plays and woman - oriented drama suggests that he wanted the Patriarchal despotism to be replaced with a feminist one.

Secondly,

“Brecht seeks to place female characters into a “tactile universe” (388) where they may explore the human experience to their full potential. This is not to say that Brecht does not, at times, fall into stereotypical, or even anti-feminist, depictions of women. However, his female characters are never lacking in animation or vibrancy. Brecht, not always known for his gentlemanly treatment of women, nonetheless flourishes a bouquet of female characters in Threepenny Opera that are dynamic, bold, and unforgettable.”(Swales, Martin, and Erika Swales. “Metonymic Cohabitation:On Women Figures In Brecht.” (Swales, Martin, and Erika Swales On Women Figures In Brecht. German Life & Letters 53.3 2000, 387-393).

While, on many an occasion, Polly, the female protagonist of the play appears to be innocent, babyish, immature, possessive and incorrigibly romantic. However, in most parts, she comes across as a hard-boiled business woman. She is definitely not a flat character or a superficial one. Her tears do not symbolize her weakness but her strength to put up with the ordeals. She is a split personality who surprises us with each moment of the play. She is not just a hardcore business woman but also a performing artist. Since none of the gang members can provide befitting entertainment, Polly gets up and tosses off "Pirate Jenny," showing a surprisingly

tough side of herself. She gives a sensational performance and keeps the audience awestruck, dumbstruck and thunderstruck. She is versatile and multi - talented. In this, she displays an element of duplicity and deceit in her behavior that proves that she is definitely not a stereotype. She does not care about the derogatory remarks passed by her husband. Later in act two, Macheath treats her very badly by discarding her.

“Don’t sit on my lap. I’m not in the mood right now.” (Brecht, Brecht, Bertolt. The Threepenny Opera 1994, 37)

Like a crybaby, Polly never cribs and complains about her husband’s unpleasant and erratic behavior. The powerful representation of Polly cannot be ignored by the audience as she takes up cudgels against Patriarchy.

Macheath arranges his wedding in a stable and raves about Polly who “followed him in love.” Polly is horrified to learn that her married life has started with her husband’s countless criminal records and burglary. All the crude embellishments and adornments of the marriage are assembled pieces of stolen material. Polly is in tears but she is still worried for Macheath as he is likely to be sent to the gallows by the old sheriff. She warns her husband for being vulgar but is quite deferential towards him on the whole. Her life is a bed of thorns, yet she maintains her equilibrium in vitally serious situations of life. She is accommodative and adaptive and does not mind befriending bandits if it would mean being a dedicated wife. *Steve Giles, in his book, Rewriting Brecht, states that 30 -1989, 249-79.)*

“As far as Polly is concerned, in 1931 she is presented as far more autonomous and self- confident in her dealings with Macheath, who had been much more dominating and domineering in the 1928 version. Polly’s increased autonomy and self-control is also bound up with the new emphasis on her economic rationality, indicated in her business-like exchanges with Macheath” in scene 9 12” (Giles, Steve, ‘Rewriting Brecht 1989, 249-79.)

Polly's parents are indignant that their daughter is bedding an infamous criminal, and vow to send their son - in - law to the winter island. Like the Duchess of Malfi, it is entirely Polly's decision to marry Macheath. In the *Malfi* play, the Duchess marries far below her rank and in *The Threepenny Opera* Polly decides to marry a nefarious criminal, a lawbreaker, offender, delinquent, wrongdoer, fraudulent and felonious person. Polly's parents find Macheath absolutely repulsive, odious and obnoxious. Polly's counter revolt against the inversion of conventional morality is quite explicit in Brecht's play. Polly is independent enough to marry without her parents' consent and defies authority. She does not give in to the forces of oppression. She is definitely not a damsel in distress.

Peachum's attitude towards his daughter is overbearingly dictatorial. It is really absurd that in Gay's play, Peachum asks his daughter to embrace widowhood, while in Brecht's version she is expected to divorce him. In Brechtian version, Polly is made to change into widow's weeds later on and also listen to her mother's caustic comments. Polly's destiny is designed by others. Like the *Duchess of Malfi*, Polly shows defiance. Like Antigone, the Anti Hitlerite figure, Polly refuses to pay any heed to the baseless demands put forth by her parents.

Polly's love for Mac in both the versions however is unwavering, immeasurable and unfathomable. She does not fear punishments or horrors inflicted upon her by her selfish parents. Polly's strength as a woman lies in fighting against the grimmest of the grim circumstances, defying authority and also facing the consequences. Polly's husband uses her services and rudely tells her that she would be handling his business temporarily. Polly takes care of her husband's business in his absence and shuts the mouths of the boys underestimate her. She accepts the brutality and bestiality all around her and makes Macheath's thieves accept her as their new boss after Macheath informs them about his departure. Polly is terrified by the overbearingly dictatorial behaviour of her husband but later on she accepts the

circumstances as they are, musters up courage and develops a strong personality. She proves that she has a mind of her own and thus she is able to violate the traditional code of conduct between sexes. She displays toughness, positive approach and confidence. She proves that she cannot be an easy doormat for men to walk over. The situation here, as portrayed by Brecht, is not as simple as male female gender divide. The issue is more about fields of control rather than men finding it difficult to accept women (Polly) in power. Women in power are accused of encroaching upon male territory. Males find it very difficult to play subordinate roles to females. Brecht puts some power packed dialogues in Polly's mouth. Power is not just a man's territory and this is what Brecht tries to show through Polly's character.

“Polly: Of course you are not saying anything against me! If you were, these gentlemen would have ripped your pants off long ago and tanned your arse for you. Wouldn't you gentlemen?” (Brecht, Brecht, Bertolt. The Threepenny Opera 1994, 39)

Polly's words are powerful and strong. Men most of the time assume that a woman cannot do a man's job as efficiently and responsibly as he can. Polly proves that she can take excellent care of Macheath's business. In parts, she reminds us of Lady Macbeth who becomes an accomplice and wholeheartedly participates in the wrongdoings of her husband.

Traditionally, the concept of male superiority and masculinity has come from “protector – provider” image since time immemorial. (men: physical power) and (women: domestic power) Thus a woman playing a protector –provider is likely to make men feel inadequate, deficient, castrated, debilitated, insecure, emasculated and redundant. Thus, in order to validate his own worth, a man expects a woman to lead a life of dependence, vulnerability, defenselessness and incompetence. Macheath ignores Polly unless he is dependent on her for business. He hands over

the business to her as he has no other alternative. Otherwise he would never give Polly a chance to supersede him.

Right to Education gave both the genders an equal opportunity to contribute to society. Industrial revolution resulted in gender friendly relations as the need for males to work in fields, factories began to diminish. In Brecht's age equalizing of genders is what women rightly demanded.

There is yet another anti - feminist issue that needs to be discussed in this chapter based on Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. It is pertaining to the make-up that women are supposed to don in order to camouflage their flaws.

“Mac: And nor farewell, my heart. Look after your complexion, and don't forget to make up every day, exactly if I were here. That's very important, Polly”. (Brecht, Brecht, Bertolt. *The Threepenny Opera*, 1994)

Even in the 21st Century, it seems that women are expected to look alluring and attractive. Women are asked by men to smile, to the implied expectation that the women dress to kill, don make-up, shave their bodies and have hair that looks normal and not disheveled, for heaven's sake.

Girls are taught very early on in life, the power of being pretty, delicate, elegant, gorgeous and graceful. They are supposed to have long hair, slim bodies, startling eyes and make up to hide the flaws and scars. Girls get lauded and complimented for their looks and beauty far more often than they are complimented for their intelligence or bravery. The society teaches girls to be quiet, meek, and submissive, to listen, to be careful and to be neat and tidy. No one appreciates a woman who is gutsy or the one who raises her voice against the innumerable atrocities heaped upon her by the male dominated society. No one likes a woman who stands up and shouts slogans about issues. The dialogues actually highlight that Polly can be worthy of Mac's attention only if she wears make up (even while heading the gang) She has

no right to look “manly”, “Amazonian” or natural or else Mac is most likely to frequent the brothel where he has the scope to cling to women who are much more attractive than Polly. Mac’s callousness knows no bounds when he sees Lucy and Polly together. Lucy accuses Mac for going around Polly and threatens to scratch his eyes out. Mac asks Lucy not to feel insecure or jealous because of Polly. He denies being married to Polly. This shows what a loose character Mac can be. Polly asks Mac to stay away from the brothel women who could harm him and also tells Lucy that her duty obliged her to stay with her husband.

The jealousy song is replete with obscenity as Lucy refers to Polly’s rumps being sexually appealing.

“Lucy: And I’d love to see such a complete tart,

They tell me that Mac says your behind is so provoking.” (Brecht, Brecht, Bertolt. The Threepenny Opera 1994)

Polly refers to Lucy splitting sides while making love to Mac.

Polly is called “The Rose of Old Soho” and Mac tells her that her behind is most provoking. “Most” as a superlative degree conveys that Polly’s behind is much more provoking than others (Other Sex Workers) and he makes her split her sides. In Act II, Scene viii, Polly and Lucy confess that men are certainly not worth their affection and love. The statement itself has feminist overtones.

It is dismal and pathetic to learn how the Sex worker Jenny is denied her share in the play. Jenny expresses her unpleasantness towards Mrs. Peachum for not giving her the due share for turning Macheath in.

Mac is flabbergasted to know that Jenny turned him in for the sake of money. If Sex Workers are not professional, if they get attached to men off and on, their profession

is likely to suffer. They have to prioritize mercenary pursuits. That is where we see a stronger Jenny Diver.

5.4.1 Gay's Portrayal of Female Characters vs Brecht's:

One can observe that women are labelled as sluts and whores in both the plays: Gay's *Beggar's Opera* as well as Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. The plays compel us to re-examine the term 'slut' and the voicing of different meanings around it. Peachum has absolutely no respect towards his wife and daughter. The father does not show any sign of shame or compunction while passing derogatory comments on his own child. Gay's Peachum addresses his daughter as a wench which in archaic sense meant a "prostitute" but in the modern sense refers to a young girl. Polly's mother (in both Gay and Brecht) has no problems with her daughter having multiple sex partners however she cannot allow her to make the family business suffer. Peachum trusts no one, not even his wife and daughter. When he learns that his daughter, Polly, has married Macheath, he is sure that his new son-in-law will hurt his business. Macheath, (in Gay as well as Brecht) an incorrigible philanderer, is not only involved with Brown's daughter, Lucy, but also entices Polly, the daughter of "Beggar Boss" Peachum, into matrimony. Mac is not only a downright criminal but he is an exploiter of women. Matthew plays a foil to Mac who respects his lady love. He condemns casual and exploitative attitude towards women.

To quote Brecht:

Matthew: Here, I don't like that. Calling Kitty a slut.

Mac: Oh, so you don't like that? (Brecht, Brecht, Bertolt. The Threepenny Opera 1994)

Mac the Knife, (in Gay and Brecht) has casual sex with the Sex Workers and with Polly too. He does not seem to be serious about his relationship with her. He cannot

stop himself from addressing any woman as a slut. Mac frequents the Turnbridge area to ogle at the Sex Workers. In both Gay's play as well as Brecht, the word slut has been used often for women.

Jessica Valenti (2009) in her brilliant book *He's a Stud, she's a slut*, points out that when she did a frantic google search for male sluts, the result was *She Male Sluts* DVD. She was petrified to know that even a word like "male slut" or a concept did not exist in the dictionary. Valenti asserts that the very purpose of the word "slut" is to control women through discomfort, degradation, mortification, chagrin, ignominy, embarrassment, indignity, shame, abashment and humiliation. Female bodies are always the ones that are being vied over for control; whether its bride burning, battering, rape, reproductive rights, violence against women. It's the female body that is the battleground or the target, not man's.

Lucy labels Polly as a slut. Macheath labels Kitty as a slut. Polly's parents call her "a lump of sexuality". Macheath is sleeping around the tarts of Turnbridge and he verbally exploits their bodies.

Valenti adds,

"Outside of the feminist implications of the sexual double standard, the slut /stud conundrum has always been my favorite because it just makes no sense logically. Why is a woman less of a person, or "dirty," because she has sex? Does a penis have some bizarre dirty making power that I'm unaware of? Every time I have sex, do I lose a bit of my moral compass?" (Valenti 2009)

Brecht's play aims at social awakening. The society consisting of male chauvinists should stop calling women sluts. If Mac has casual sex with the Sex Workers, he becomes a "slut,". The Sex Workers' vaginas don't become "loose". Lucy refers to Mac being a dog. When Polly enters, Lucy is flabbergasted and irked by Polly's words. A woman ends up calling her rival a slut. Both the women feel cheated,

tricked, duped and hoodwinked by Mac who should be labelled as a “slut” or a “whore” as he is the one who has thrown dust in the eyes of both the women by giving them false hopes.

Let us examine Gay’s picture gallery of Sex Workers and see how Gay portrays Sex Workers in his time and age.

Gay’s intention is to keep the audience entertained, captivated and spellbound. The dialogues in *Beggar’s Opera* are illustrative and indicative of sex trade that produced lucrative career opportunities for women dwelling in Georgian England.

According to *The Secret History of Georgian London: How the Wages of Sin Shaped the Capital* reports

“As many as one in five young women were prostitutes in 18th-century London. The Covent Garden that tourists frequent today was the centre for a vast sex trade strewn across hundreds of brothels and so-called coffee houses.”(Jessica Valenti, 2010)

Gay’s Sex Workers are definitely quite seductive, desirable, lustful, tempting, tantalizing and provocative however, they are not brazen, brash, immodest, unabashed, insolent, impudent and audacious like those portrayed by Brecht.

The scenes in Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera* are eye catching though disgusting at times when the word “slut” is repeated off and on. Macheath seems to share an excellent rapport with a bunch of Sex Workers who are amorous and who steal his heart never to part with. He calls Mrs. Vixen a woman of wit and spirit, which is a satire on women who have brains but have chosen sex work as it gives them a lot of attention and opportunity to be a part of the entertainment industry. The women who had an unfailing sense of wit and irrepressible sense of humour also took Sex Work as a mood lift profession. Macheath’s mistresses get drunk and bubble with a refreshing bundle of effervescence. They are vivacious, exuberant and ebullient. Jenny Diver

is introduced as a woman with a sanctified look. She is modest, unassuming and high bred. Sex work is an art and she seems to have a mischievous heart. Gay's presentation of the brothel world is very English as he describes the colourful life of 18th Century London.

Gay's dialogues are replete with sexual innuendos and debauchery. There are no direct references to underwears, lingerie and nudity, as in Brecht. Brecht in his day and age could liberally talk about sexuality unlike Gay in eighteenth century. And society, culture and attitude towards sex underwent drastic changes in Brecht's time.

According to *The Secret History of Georgian London: How the Wages of Sin Shaped the Capital* reports:

“English society expected, even encouraged, men to pay for sex. Prejudice barred women from all but menial jobs. Prostitution at least offered financial independence: a typical harlot could earn in a month what a tradesman or clerk would earn in a year. For a few beautiful and savvy women, the gamble paid off. Lavinia Fenton, a child prostitute, married a duke. But most prostitutes were destined for disease, despair and early death.” (Jessica Valenti, 2010)

Gay has given a vibrant replica of his age. The female Sex Workers in his play are happy to take up Sex Work as it is a well - paying job which makes the women stand up on their own feet financially.

“The sex trade transformed Georgian London. Rich brothel-keepers fed a construction boom that spawned thousands of elegant villas in Soho and Marylebone to house up-market courtesans.” (Jessica Valenti 2010)

Gay refers to sex in a very subtle manner. Undressing and kissing is mentioned however it is ultra - fine, understated, toned down and low key. Suky Tawdry lying on her back refers to the various back positions in sex that a man is attracted to.

“Free hearted wench” refers to a woman who is not frigid, the one who is open to fulfill all the desires and sexual fantasies of a man. Suky is probably the most affluent of them all as she can afford to keep a dozen tallymen maintaining her accounts. Molly Brazen is free spirited and Macheath appreciates her for her smoking hot gesture.

Gay does not intend to launch a liberation movement for freedom and equality of Sex Workers and normalize their profession. He is only a true representative of his era who gives us a brief account of a sex worker's economic and social participation or a standard requirement for a brothel goer. His purpose was not to rethink feminism. The new challenges in feminist studies and new potential allies did not even exist in Gay's era.

The exponential growth and the fiscal boom of the sex trade was a threat to the dignity and survival of women and girls in eighteenth century England however, Gay aimed at lampooning the social situation by giving it a humorous twist. Sex trafficking was a form of slavery for many girls then, especially those who were poor, deprived and uneducated. Gay's satire meant to correct the vices present in society but his vision, like Brecht, was not to transform the society or audience reader's perception of looking at Sex Workers. Gay considered theatre as a mirror of society and not a laboratory of social change.

Drinking wine, Ginn was considered modern, trend setting. A rich person's drink. Mrs. Coaxer in the play seems to be coaxing and cajoling her clients and selling sex as a commodity. She has achieved great success in her erotic endeavours.

Mrs. Coaxer refers to “interlopers” (people who are unpleasant and unwanted), unfortunately, the Sex Workers have to deal with them. The coquette brags about her royal, silky fabric, her Padesoy piece and luxurious lifestyle. Mrs. Vixen rivetted a linen draper's eye and got stripped. Cambric and laces refer to lingerie; Gay's style of describing carnality is extremely refined. Brecht did not have to talk in a

roundabout way like Brecht. Gay refers to Mrs. Vixen's "deluding tongue" that most probably refers to the blow jobs done by Sex Workers to appease their clients.

Gay's age was not an age of sexual revolution though most of the plays produced during his time were strong, robust and replete with licentiousness. During Gay's regime, the sexual revolution benefited women in some ways and fueled sexual liberalism to some extent, but it did not result in the normalization of prostitution.

Mrs. Coaxer compliments Jenny for mastering the art of seducing men despite her clients being unappealing and not so agreeable. She can treacherously swindle money from him and get rid of him. Jenny says that she does not accompany her clients to taverns unless it means business. She considers a few men worthy of her pleasure and categorizes them differently.

Macheath complains that Jenny does not treat him the way she used to and calls her a slut. The usage of the word "slut" was as common as common cold in Gay's era.

There is a pun upon the word "pistol" that refers to the weapon and sexual organ "penis" that a Prostitute touches to excite him. Tawdry says the pistol is fitter for his hand. Mac heath seems to be useless to them as he has lost his money and Sex Workers do not wish to sleep with a pauper. Gambling has alienated him from women. Macheath refers to them as "wanton hussies." Jenny desperately needs a kiss to give her wine her zest. This shows she is debauched.

Let us look at the sex work scenes in Brecht that are explicitly carnal. What the researcher observes about the Threepenny Opera is the often amusing, audacious but always relevant,empowering, feminist messages that lace The Three Penny Opera, including sex work, abortion, crime and domestic violence. Polly,the female protagonistand Macheath's mistreated new bride, fights back against a room full of bawdy, sexist men with a performance of Pirate Jenny.The song Ballad of Immoral

earnings is absent in Gay. It is one of the highlights in Brecht's version. Let us look at the sex work scenes in Brecht that are explicitly carnal.

The third line needs explanation. Macheath considers himself to be intelligent enough to win the lady who rewards him by supplying her breast. The nature of a sex worker's duty is described very well in this song where she is expected to give up on her sleep and treat her client with hospitality and go tipsy to satisfy his lust. When she gets paid for her work, it's obligatory to address him as "Sir." On bed, it's a relationship of equals however, when the commercials are to be discussed, her client becomes her boss and she acquires an inferior status. Macheath mentions that he would do just anything to visit the Whorehouse and make memories there.

"The time's long past, but what would I not give

To see that whorehouse where we used to live?" (Kurt Weill Elisabeth Hauptmann, *John Gay's The Beggar's Opera. English 1954*)

Jenny recalls a time when Macheath would seduce her and make love to her, it hurt her beyond measure. When he would run out of cash, he would still look at her skirt and say that the skirt was nicer but he preferred to see her without it. Jenny refers to the violence that Macheath resorted to. He would lash out at her mercilessly and knock her headlong down the stairs. She got wounded and took years to recover.

Mac mentions that Jenny was a Busy sex worker whose appointments were mostly booked. Once she got pregnant, Mac and Jenny reversed their positions in bed.

"Jenny: Once I was pregnant, so the doctor said

Mac: So, we reversed positions on the bed." (Kurt Weill Elisabeth Hauptmann, *John Gay's The Beggar's Opera. English 1954*)

He thought his weight would make it premature but Mac shamelessly mentions that they flushed the foetus down the sewer.

It's the ultimate feminist fantasy, the tale of a sex worker or a down-trodden barmaid leading a mutiny against patriarchy or taking up cudgels against male chauvinism where the men end up against the wall and Jenny, the enchantress runs off to command her pirate ship. Martin and Erica Swales and Kelly Rogers have pointed out the strong feminist messages in the play. Brecht's opera gives social commentaries on social issues like Domestic violence and abuse, with an honest depiction of abused women experiencing conflicting emotions, and continuing to experience attachment and devotion to their abuser or oscillating between passionate love and downright hatred. Polly and Macheath's other lover, Lucy, learn to admit who the real enemy is, in the midst of a bitter and jealous feud. Brecht here focuses the shift of the play from men to women. The Opera is home to a powerful suave, seductive but impoverished gang of Sex Workers, wanton women, wenches and whores. The apparent leader of the Sex Workers' gang ends up exacting revenge against Macheath. Her name is Jenny, the real-life echo of the vengeful barmaid later sings that women "end up as a wife or a chambermaid."

In *Berlin Coquette*, Jill Susanne Smith presents an interesting, engaging and fascinating study of the images of the Prostitute during the Weimar period. Smith does not treat Prostitution as a symbol of decadence and immorality. Brecht, through *The Threepenny Opera* posthumously appeals to the readers not to get biased and intolerant against Sex Workers but treat them with respect. Smith in her scholarly piece of work shows how literary figures, politicians, artists linked Sex Workers to Consumer Culture. Surprisingly, she does not directly mention Bertolt Brecht, however, her theory explains how Brecht introduced his brand-new way of looking at Sex Workers through his musical opera. Smith discusses how ideas about sex work gradually changed before the outbreak of the First World war. The Weimar writers including Brecht crafted some out of the world images of prostitutes who were street smart, entrepreneurial and matter of fact about sexuality. Smith does not

refer to Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* however she does talk about the debates about prostitute that were linked to concerns about the working women in Berlin.

"Smith contends if working women could be seen as prostitutes, then prostitutes could also be viewed as working women." (Brecht *Brecht and the Mothers of Epic Theater Theatre* 1991 pg.491-505)

Smith's work in relation to Brechtian opera, to a great extent helps the prejudiced minds to awaken and change their thinking pattern and view sex work as a respectable profession. Brecht's work calls into question stereotypes that divide prostitutes into two groups: victims or sexual monsters. Brecht normalizes sex work to a great extent by portraying them as female lead figures. Brecht, as a playwright did consider the precarious economic condition in which they lived. She describes the way Sex Workers decked up, presented and conducted themselves in marketplace and how fashionably they lived their lives. Brecht's female Sex Workers in the play are bold and coquettish. Brecht's play also gets along perfectly with Gayle Rubin's theory of sex that speaks volumes of the decriminalization and destigmatization of Sex Workers and their individual freedom. *The Threepenny Opera*, if studied in Smith's context, we can have an accurate understanding of the social climate that Brecht discusses in his play. Gay's Sex Workers would not have been appropriate in a sexually empowered age in which Brecht lived. Smith's "prostitution studies" is an eye opener for gender roles and independence. Brecht, in *The Threepenny Opera* does not describe his Sex Workers as sexual predators or sexual monsters.

One needs to notice that Mack's downfall is brought upon him by the prostitutes. In the play, of course the Sex Workers and Mrs. Peachum are instrumental in punishing Mac. Jenny is one of the most important characters in Brecht's morally depraved world. Jenny makes good business out of capturing her criminal customer. Jenny is once again a very dauntless, fearless and audacious female character. The boldest

of dialogues are put in her mouth. Jenny's dialogues are followed by a series of obscene dialogues which are likely to arouse the male readers even while reading the play. Here Radical feminists like Dworkin can accuse Brecht of presenting males in dominating positions and females in compromising positions. However, the third wave feminists would have contrary views.

Mac the Knife at Turnbridge is betrayed by the Sex Workers. No one pays any attention to him. Here the highwayman, Macheath plays a second fiddle to females.

Mac: Nice underwear you've got there.” (Kurt Weill Elisabeth Hauptmann
,John Gay's The Beggar's Opera.English 1954)

A man particularly finds lingerie appealing, beguiling, prepossessing and alluring. He feels turned on and ready to release his stress levels. He does not want the woman to feel robotically stiff. The Sex Workers and enchantresses in the above dialogues have the ability to take charge of Mac and seduce him. Women find power in their ability to dress and undress and get playful. Even in Gay's age, like Brecht's, men have been attracted to women in lingerie. Gay, however in his age, subdued the male - female desire for mystery, exhilaration and allure. The Sex Workers in *The Threepenny Opera* have complete control of Mac as they highlight and flatter the sensual areas of their body. Their underwear (lingerie) arouses and intrigues Macheath in ways that Polly's regular clothing does not.

Men look for suspense, excitement, mystery and strip tease. With the act of donning tantalizing, glamorous and erotic lingerie, women gain a sense of pride, enchantment, confidence, power and attractiveness. Women feel sensual while revealing something intimate about themselves. This allows the males to feel weaker and feel stronger for women who are confident and wild in their sensuality.

Andrea Dworkin is totally against the liberalist view of looking at Sex Workers. If we study *The Threepenny Opera*, in her context, she would accuse Brecht of writing

and sketching pornographic images in the play. If her theory is applied to the play, Brecht's pornographic play shapes what sexuality is. For instance, she writes:

Dworkin would accuse Brecht for objectifying, exploiting and depicting the characters of Sex Workers in compromising positions. Thereafter, she would consider Brecht to be openly endorsing patriarchy by encouraging obscenity. Dworkin would look at Brecht as an oppressor dramatist who makes a bold attempt to excite the spectators, compelling them to participate in a patriarchal function. She would hold Brecht responsible for endorsing sex and capitalizing on Pornography. This is blasphemous to Dworkin. Dworkin asserts in no uncertain terms, pornography's connection to patriarchy and she proves this by exemplifying relations between women and men in violent, aggressive, brutal, bloodthirsty and sexist terms. Brecht, as per Dworkin's radical feminist view, in *The Threepenny Opera* constructs sexual desire and encourages pornography. According to Dworkin, Brecht's product (the play) leads to consumer orientation and satisfaction. Thus, Brecht as a playwright is the secret police of male supremacy by giving a wealth of encouragement and infinite support to pornography.

5.5 Emancipation of Sex Workers in *The Threepenny Opera* through the Personal is Political:

There is a lot of difference of opinion among feminists and however, there are some basic goals, agendas and questions that they all have in common. These can be applied to the Brechtian opera.

1. Do Polly, Jenny become victims of patriarchal oppression or liberate themselves from it?
2. How do we validate and make known the experiences of the female characters in Brecht and give them voice?
3. Should sex work be eliminated or encouraged?

Sex Work is recognized as a female occupation all over the world. It is considered as a social stigma portraying females as aggressive, confident, scantily clad woman. Some feminists state that they are sexually liberated and some opine that they are socially stigmatized. Through Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, many feminist theories on prostitution can be examined. The perception of Sex Work till Third Wave feminism is based on the notion that it oppresses, exploits and undervalues women. The Third Wave feminists feel that Sex Work empowers them because it allows them to charge men for what they expect to receive for free. Sex Work as an industry is driven by Wealth Management customers and Business Economics.

5.5.1 Marxist feminist's view

If *The Threepenny Opera* is to be interpreted as per the Marxist perspective, it would examine sex work as a result of capitalism. In a society where class structure exists, there will be a ruling class and a labouring class. In Brecht's play too, we have a ruling class and labouring class, the former exploiting the latter. Brecht had an unwavering faith in Marxism. According to Marxist theory, those who are exploited, traumatized, maltreated are at the bottom of social order: proletariats. As a result, the labouring class is marginalized and victimized. In *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht has reversed the roles by showing the profit of hers (Jenny's) not going to the ruling class i.e. Macheath. Jenny's or other female Sex Workers' labour in the play is sex work. Their bodies become commodified and sex becomes their commodity. The Sex Workers are exploited by the ruling class, Macheath. Sex work for Marxist feminists is a Metaphor for the oppression of the wage labourer in the capitalist system. Brecht in the end shows that Jenny is successful in teaching her ruling class (Macheath) a lesson.

5.5.2 Domination theorist's view

If Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* is to be understood as per Domination theory, it will try to highlight that the root cause of women's oppression rests in sexuality. It

clarifies that sex work is not an industry but a state in which Mrs. Peachum, Polly and Jenny find themselves. Domination theory feminists would say that Jenny and other Sex Workers do not aspire to pursue Sex work out of choice because in their view, Sex work is oppressive. The radical feminists like Dworkin assert that prostitution enforces male dominance and power over women. Macheath has been exploiting the Prostitutes and they are reliant upon him as client.

5.5.3 Liberal feminist's view

According to this view, the Sex Workers in *The Threepenny Opera* are in control of their bodies. They consider Sex Work to be the same as any other labour that women perform. They would in fact be helpful to Brecht's view, who considered theatre to be an instrument of social change. As per this theory, Brecht would bring in the decriminalization of prostitution and regularize it. The liberal feminists irrefutably argue that there is absolutely no difference between Sex and other types of labour in exchange for a wage.

5.5.4 Radical sexual pluralist's view

Gayle Rubin (1992) is one of the radical sexual pluralist theorist and if *The Threepenny Opera* is to be examined through her eye, she would say that sexuality must not be divided into categories like good and bad, normal and deviant. Rubin suggests that Sex Workers should not be treated as subaltern. The Sex Workers in the play have made a conscious decision to take up Sex Work as their profession. The Sex Workers could have carved a niche for themselves in other fields and are very much aware of other work options but they find sex work lucrative.

As Brecht considered theatre to be a laboratory of social change, repositioning the institution and its main players outside the confines of Sex work would offer an innovative perspective on Sex Work. One cannot ignore the fact that Sex Workers are alienated and not included in the mainstream society. Sex Workers, inside or

outside the play still occupy a precarious place since their profession identifies them as outsiders, legally and morally.

Some Feminist theorists on sex work feel that the occupation is degrading and sexually exploitative and therefore the Sex worker is depicted as a victim. While the Third Wave theorists feel that Sex work is a valid choice for women and that it is empowering for them to decide what they want to do with the bodies depicting them as agents of desire. Although a lot of feminist perspectives on sex work exist, the feminist movement as a whole claims to be aiming at social equality of women. However, it has not addressed the issue of Sex Workers.

The Brechtian play presents contradictory perspectives on female prostitution to illustrate the diversity of views which may be held by audience readers. Brecht has tried to shift the discourse surrounding Sex work from legal debates about deviance, towards a discourse of legally recognized work choice that safeguards a Sex worker's human and civil rights. Sex work offers a service to society by reducing the extent of rape and sexual abuse of other women.

5.5.5 The Social dilemma

As far as sex work is concerned, undoubtedly, there ought to be a lot of resistance in society. It is difficult for some people to accept that women can actually have sex without love. It is in the recent times that women have asserted their right to pursue sexual pleasure without getting emotionally involved. Apart from female economic need and male sexual demand, feminist interest in women becoming more and more involved in Sex work has drawn attention to the Brechtian opera. It offers several approaches to understanding how and why audience readers, spectators and feminist critics react to commercial sex.

5.6 Conclusion: *The Threepenny Opera*

The researcher has come to the inference that the strong female characters (Sex Workers) are meant to pull the readers out of a passive and unconscious state of mind into a heightened and empowered condition of awareness that leads to an alternative way of thinking and acting in the present world. Brecht's play is likely to make the audience readers stay awake, think and look at Sex work in a sex positive way. Some Sex Workers, in real life, are no doubt surrounded with sordid, morbid facts of rampant abuse, exploitation and broken lives. In addition to this, forced sex work (Sex Workers dragged into this profession by force) and sex trafficking are rampant and need to be eliminated. Sex work is not without peril to life, and the sex industry has witnessed a great amount of coercion and violence. When Sex Workers get molested, or even murdered, they are not treated with the same empathy and respect as other female victims of assault.

The Threepenny Opera raises a lot of questions about Sex work. The questions are as follows:

Has Brecht depicted the Sex Workers as hyper-sexualized objects for Macheath's consumption?

Has he tried to produce a deceptive or a realistic view of the sex industry?

Do Lucy and Jenny join the sex industry under the guise of empowerment?

Should Sex work be accepted and regularized and normalized in society?

What is Brecht trying to project?

In actuality, can the Sex Workers be protected and granted the same rights as any other labourers?

Can sex work be beneficial to women?

Through *The Threepenny Opera*, is Brecht attempting to de-stigmatize the role of a sex worker in society?

What is wrong in women being sexually assertive?

Brecht, indirectly tells us that human beings are sexual. When we are allowed to express and explore our sexuality, accept our sexual orientation and sexual desires, sex work will begin to be treated with respect in society. Brecht as a Marxist does not believe in God or Puritan views. Through his powerful portrayal of Sex Workers, he opines that Sex Work must first cease to endanger women. Not all Sex Workers are dragged into Sex work; some women consciously decide to engage in Sex work. We must respect their decision to do so. This is a significant moral of Brecht's story. The audience readers and spectators must release their critical faculties, conceive their existence in an unbiased way and finally intervene to change the world that we have constructed because of social conditioning. Sex work has long been criticized, dehumanized, criminalized and stigmatized in our society. While many audience readers of society would view Lucy and Jenny as being immoral and degrading to society, some feminists among the audience would argue that Sex work is their primary occupation. The boldness with which Brecht portrays Sex Workers in the play is likely to lead to existence of open and available commercial sex. This would allow the spectators to express and explore their sexuality and sexual desires fully and uninhibitedly. Andrea Dworkin and Carole Pateman feel that Sex Work allows men, control of women. However, the researcher argues that it is not Sex Work itself that allows men control of women, but prostitution laws. Sex Workers in real life could be a wealth of encouragement and support for each other and benefit from working in an industry which is predominantly populated by females. The Chapter does not endorse Sex Work as a stupendous career option. However, it is being supportive of those women who find themselves comfortable in it, revel in it and enjoy being a part of it.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1: About Bertolt Brecht as a Writer of Adapted plays:

Brecht's works are eulogized by a lot of Scholars and Critics who have written panegyrics on him. They have heaped encomiums on his plays like *Mother Courage, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Mother and Good Person of Schezwan* but very few have identified his prowess as a resuscitator of adapted plays. His indefatigable efforts can be seen in the remakes. Brecht as a dramatist and theorist is not subject to our doubts and questions. He remains as elusive as the highest pinnacle of knowledge and his grandeur is not restricted to Germany alone. He is like the loftiest hill, revealing his magnificence to the stars and the sunbeams. This majesty of loft heights, its sublime peaks are invisible to us. Sometimes, we can only see the cloudy border of their base and not the altitudes. So, to sound the depth of this great mind is a fruitless attempt. It baffles all analysis and understanding. Brecht deserves a standing ovation for rebuilding the past and reminiscing History by reconsidering the plays written in other periods to suit the exigencies of his theatre.

6.2 The original plays vs Brecht's adaptations: Similarities and Differences

Brecht's adapted works studied in this thesis not only exemplify struggle, but they offer lessons on how to struggle. Epic theatre is truly avant garde, atypical, undistinctive, realistic and unconventional in a broad sense of the term and also a radical departure from the established, conventional, orthodox, stock and other familiar types of drama.

Brecht had an unflinching faith in the possibility and necessity of combining literary creativity, dramatic oeuvre with political agendas and commitment. He hung notices round the theatre halls advising his audiences to stop being dunce like melodramatic, doltish, half-witted, imbecile and ignorant.

The conventional theatre of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay deluded the audience into thinking that the events witnessed were real, genuine and absolute. They were labelled as true representatives of their age. All the four original plays studied here, lead to audience reader's empathetic identification with the characters. Both delusion and empathy with the characters in *Antigone*, *Edward II*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Threepenny Opera* prevent calm detachment and critical reflection that Brecht would have liked to see in the audience. The psycho- technique practiced by the conventional dramatists like Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay infected the audience due to which the audience could not dissociate themselves from the characters. Through his adaptations, Brecht wants his spectators to judge the characters dispassionately, critically and scientifically. Brecht does not expect the audience of his adapted plays to go in a trance, stupor or reverie. The feeling of getting carried away and hypnotized, like half -wits, could not possibly be called entertainment meet for rational beings in Brecht's words. He knows that his playgoers and audience readers are not intellectually challenged souls. Through the adaptations studied in the thesis, Brecht replaces the entranced and mesmerized audience of the conventional theatre by a rational, clear -sighted and sagacious audience. Brecht's anti – emotionalism, anti - sentimentalism as depicted in each of the plays examined here, is a way to create an observant, clear eyed and common sensical audience, to encourage social criticism and entertain in a modern way. To understand the connection between Brechtian adaptations and the originals, one must understand first his perception of the theatre of his day.

By re - examining, Sophocles, Marlowe Webster and Gay, Brecht had absolutely no desire to reproduce or revitalize the classics as antique pieces. He set forth the concept of *aneignung* (appropriation) whereby the classic works of great repute studied in this thesis could convey social meaning to the contemporary audience. As shown in the chapters, he made massive changes in the established texts, amputated the scenes, made them less unwieldy, rewrote, reorganized and

rearranged the acts and also added extra-textual material in the form of power house dialogues, unharmonious music and eloquent speeches.

Brecht's plays, *Antigone*, *Edward II*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Three penny Opera* discuss a number of social problems. *Antigone* revolves around issues like Patriarchy, Political turmoil, Dictatorship, Human rights and Politics of power. *Edward II* deals with Gay rights, Misogyny, Extra marital relations, Male Chauvinism and Class bias. *The Duchess of Malfi* highlights social problems like Widow remarriage, Pornography, Incest, Patriarchy and Bestiality. *The Three penny Opera* talks about Corruption, Prostitution, Bribery, Evils of Capitalism and Prison Systems. In his adapted plays, Brecht's business was to compress the very prolix narrative and reduce the original cumbrousness along with the superfluous, uncouth and irrelevant characteristics. The researcher finds her interest focused more, not in the original lines, but the newly added ones. Brecht, however, accomplished the task of making his adapted versions compact, pithy, succinct, terse, crisp and elliptical in a less exasperating way.

Most of the minor and flat characters are eliminated in *Antigone*, *Edward II*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Three penny Opera* to concentrate on the main figures. In Brecht's day and age, plays hardly had a stage teeming with characters like the Elizabethan picture gallery. Brecht often advocated, proclaimed and asserted that the classics had suffered great harm from having naturalistic staging techniques, literally overloaded, forced, foisted and dumped upon them. In this thesis, the researcher has analyzed the wide chasm between the Sophoclean, Elizabethan, Jacobean and Augustan theatricality and Brechtian stage techniques. Brecht's age had moved far ahead of the Sophoclean, Elizabethan, Jacobean and Augustan world picture with the calamitous, catastrophic, disastrous, devastating and cataclysmic events of the 20th Century – two World Wars, the destructive and annihilative use of atomic power, atheism and loss of faith in God, evils of Industrial revolution, the

wide disparity between Marxism and Capitalism and the disintegration and fragmentation of family and community life. In the thesis, the researcher has drawn attention to the upfront female characters sketched by Brecht. He demonstrates them as the product of the conditions in which they lived, and capable of change through the circumstances which they experience, as representatives of the social issues they are engulfed with.

Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay in short, considered the ideological effect of the plays while, Brecht considered his kind of revolutionary, rebellious, insurgent and seditious theatre to adopt a 'social function'. His adaptations show that he wanted his plays to be accessible, digestible, comprehensible and intelligible to his audience. In all the four adaptations, Brecht attempted to master from many sides, the dialectic of the male and female individuals and the social aspects. Intellectually the audience readers can feel stimulated, challenged and enlightened after studying the Brechtian remakes. Brecht wanted the opinion, stance, point of view, standpoint and perspective of his audience to change which would mean passing on the theatrical energy to the audience. The world that the female protagonists dwell in, would change and not remain unalterable even after Brecht's death. This is exactly what the researcher has proved in this thesis.

6.3 Brechtian Rehistoricization of the Plays:

The researcher has shown how Brecht's depictions of Antigone (*Antigone*) Anne (*Edward II*) and the Duchess (*The Duchess of Malfi*) and Polly and Jenny (*The Three penny Opera*) compare with each other. The female Protagonists of Brechtian adaptations altercate, squabble, dispute and wrangle against forces that are beyond their control. Antigone battles against the grimmest of the grim circumstances, defies authority and also accepts the inevitable retribution. Anne suffers her husband's wrath and hatred, bears all the atrocities heaped upon her by the three men in her life and becomes a victim of exploitation at the hands of Mortimer. The

Duchess of Malfi displays mental strength and fortitude despite living in the world no less than a concentration camp, where terrorism is unavoidable. Polly is made to marry by force and compelled to put up with her husband's infidelity, criminal records and take over his business that involves a million risks. Antigone suffers Kreon's sexist attitude, while Anne, Duchess and Polly are perceived as sheer 'sex objects' and objectified as they are surrounded with men who exploit them and keep ogling at them nonchalantly.

Thus, Brecht's recitation of 'old stories' set in the Classical period, Renaissance and Restoration speak of his desire to retrieve the historically significant forces and relationship at work in the past and reconstruct it by concentrating entirely on what is remarkable, particular, pertinent and applicable in the present world. The social, political and ideological insights produced by the adaptations would prove powerful incentives for the audience to press for radical changes to the society on an urgent basis.

Historical perspective has an additional motive as well, one that illustrates a significant modification of Brechtian historicization to discuss the social problems that are all pervasive till date and to suit the aims of Women Studies and feminist theatre. The feminist or femi nazi world was never foreseen or supported by Brecht. But the situations, conditions, circumstances, political struggles, entanglements and scuffles outside the theatre have drastically changed after Brecht's demise. And, given these changes, it seems appropriate that we utilize and borrow techniques of Brecht and adapt them to the needs of today's unconventional theatre. Both Brechtian theory and theatre appear to have been enriched, augmented and upgraded by this progress. Brecht will continue to play an active part in our present life, for this brilliant playwright from Augsburg still sets standards for many of us more than sixty - two years after his death. Brecht died of heart attack in the year 1956 but continues to be alive through his prolific writing. The term "Epic theatre" was not

coined at the time of *Edward II* production. However, we can see that *Edward II* and the *Three penny Opera* have traces of the epic. It took at least a decade for all the aspects of Brechtian theatre to formulate. By 1946, the year in which *The Duchess of Malfi* was staged and by 1948, the year in which *Antigone* was staged, terms like *Verfremdungseffekt* and *Gestus* had become very well known. Surprisingly, the Americans were not familiar with the Epic techniques used by Brecht and the Malfi production flopped, collapsed and sank on Broadway. The American audience failed to re-examine and reclaim Websterian tragedy from Brechtian perspective and could not decipher his political agendas. Thus, they blindly ignored his theatrical innovations. *The Threepenny Opera* was the most financially successful play of Brecht and that made him the William Shakespeare of Germany.

6.4 Brechtian Counter plays represent the theatre of Scientific age:

Humankind in Brecht's age dominated naturalistic methods by use of the scientific method, thus, his adaptations ought to apply scientific method to their portrayals of human social interaction. They ought to adopt a "critical attitude" and clear sightedness like Science. Brecht's adapted plays studied in this thesis to suppress emotion and view its subject matter dispassionately and curiously, taking nothing for granted, observing all, debating all, contesting all, weighing all, surveying all, inspecting all, questioning all. The adapted plays of Brecht appropriate the requirements of the new age. The goal of Science for Brecht was not merely to observe, review and examine, but to alter nature in the interests of human comfort. His adapted plays representing the scientific theatre never treat their subject matter or society, as flippant, insouciant and immutable. He said in an early interview, that one tribute we can pay the audience is to treat it as thoroughly quick witted, canny, astute, insightful, discerning and perspicacious. Brecht took up the challenge of making his adapted plays worthy of the scientific age. Like John Gay, Brecht's

theatrical mission and vision was not simply to wrap social criticism in an entertaining and pleasurable package. Brecht expected theatre to make social criticism itself entertaining and fascinating.

Brecht adapted the four plays, transformed them and brought Science into the theatre, not to make them scientific but in order to provide new theatrical pleasures for the modern man, who used science to change society. Through his remakes, Brecht as a playwright, endeavours to be progressive, forward – looking, intensifying, escalating and allows his scientific theatre to reinforce the old pleasures with new ones. He makes the audience receptive to a better and meaningful entertainment. Brecht cannot allow the plays of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay to come to a halt when faced with the complicated process of the new social developments and withdraw into the category of the stagnant, inert, unchangeable and unalterable.

Through the adapted plays, Brecht has become a towering figure in Literature who aims at changing the society in the sense of socialism. For future developments in theatrical world and theoretical world, his adapted works would be consulted over and over again, which would lead to new paths and pose new questions. The researcher infers and argues cogently that Brecht would never go outdated, outmoded or out of fashion for his theatrical oeuvre. By going backwards and reconsidering the plays of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay, Brecht showed the way for the modern theatre to breakthrough. Through the adapted versions, Brecht gained the widest acceptance and accolades for mixed mimetic style in the modern theatre. No other dramatist in the world could dare to draft an Anti – Aristotelian theory of drama as he did. The adapted plays are a class apart due to their Anti – Aristotelian quality.

6.5 Brecht's work with the actors of the adapted plays:

In order to produce A-effects, the actors playing Antigone, Duchess of Malfi, Edward II, Anne and Mac the Knife, Polly and Jenny discard by whatever means

they have learnt of getting the audience to identify themselves with the characters they portray. They show the character, demonstrate their character or rather do more than just get involved into it. Brecht's characters Antigone, Edward II, Anne Duchess of Malfi, Mac the Knife, Polly and Jenny act in quotation marks as they are compelled to remain detached and alert and are made to liberate from the hypnotic trance. This is what the researcher observed while watching the adapted plays *Edward II* and *Three penny Opera* and at Berliner Ensemble, Germany, a theatre company founded by Brecht and his lady love, Helene Weigel in 1949.

6.6 Brecht's rules for the Spectators:

It is also true that Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay in their respective ages aimed simply at greater "intimacy" between actor and audience. In his adaptations, Brecht devised several 'Epic' techniques (as discussed in the chapters) through which he could achieve a high level of estrangement. This technique decreased anticipation, emotion, tension, and it rendered the plot as dispensable play. After viewing the performances in the adapted plays, the spectator is changed, or rather the seeds of change get planted in him, seeds which must sprout as flowers outside the limits of a performance.

6.7 Common Aspects of all the Adapted plays:

All the adapted plays question the codes and norms that governed the public psyche in the day and age when they were staged. The plays also bring the historical class angles into focus and as researchers, we re-read and re-examine the faults and distortions of behavior in the female characters that are impulsive. Antigone, Anne, the Duchess of Malfi, Polly and Jenny take decisions entirely on their own judgement. Antigone, as an anti - Hitlerite figure, takes up cudgels against dictatorship of Kreon and fights for the human rights due to her brother. Queen Anne leaves no stone unturned to seek attention from her husband, walks out of her marriage and is compelled to have an extra marital affair with Mortimer. This affair

can be condoned in her case as she suffers enormously due to her husband's recalcitrant behaviour. The Duchess refrains from giving in to the forces of oppression, rebels against incest and marries a person far below her rank. Polly does not wish to be a meek, submissive daughter to her parents who want her to enter the wedlock by force. She bravely faces up to the challenges of life, Macheath's business and his string of affairs with the nightfairies. The way Anne in *Edward II* puts up with her husband's affair with Gaveston, Polly tolerates disloyalty, infidelity licentious and highly promiscuous behaviour of her husband.

Brecht has witnessed the reaction of the spectators who viewed the originals and now wants the modern spectators to review the plays and bring in the necessary change. The original plays are about females who protest against the characters within the play. However, Brecht's heroines in the adapted plays protest against the society. Their defiance is seen by their opponents as not merely a challenge to their authority and inflated ego but also an act that has hit them hard and made it imperative for them to teach a lesson. Particularly in times of social crises, "revenge" becomes the reason for what is considered the "right conduct". Though the situation is different in each play, the fight between the two camps is particularly unequal since one side comprises of powerful and antagonizing opponents. Antigone has invited trouble by opposing the King. Queen Anne is made to struggle against three powerful men who treat her disrespectfully. The Duchess is made to rebel against the evils of patriarchal despotism. Polly is made to suffer at the hands of Mac the Knife and later forced to deal with the gangsters who underestimate her potential. Needless to say, all the female characters in the adapted plays violate willfully the sexually ethical codes which the World would expect them to observe by transcending earthly temptations and carnal desires.

Sophocles' purpose of sketching Antigone is way different from Brecht's Antigone Brecht's Antigone is an Anti - Hitlerite figure and questions the King's tyranny and

totalitarianism. Questioning the King was blasphemy in Sophocles' era and opposing the Dictator (Hitler) was like inviting peril in Brechtian era. Marlowe's Isabelle suffers the King's detestation, distaste, abhorrence and loathing. She annoys, vexes and antagonizes the King who is domineering, bullying and terrorizing. The Duchess, in the Websterian original and so also in Brecht is misused and treated unfairly at the hands of her brother; the incest theme being flagrant in Brecht. Her oppressors, her brothers are power hungry figures who wish to traumatize her and make her dance to their tunes. The female figures in *The Three penny Opera* fall prey to the evils of tradition. Polly is expected to be obsequious towards her parents and marry with their consent. The Sex Workers in Gay's play defy the generally accepted code. All of them search for love and listen mainly to their secret urges. In Gay's play, they are consumed by Mac, sex work being a woman's occupation. The Sex Workers sketched by Brecht are like Berlin Coquettes whose portrayals are audacious, bold and tempestuous. If these enchantresses of the night are analyzed by radical feminists like Andrea Dworkin, they become pawns in the hands of patriarchy. However, if they are examined from the point of view of sex liberal or third wave feminists, the male characters in the play would play subservient roles to the Sex Workers as they are totally dependent on them to release their hormones. This view is more relevant to the Brechtian age than Gay's.

All the female characters studied in the thesis Antigone, Anne, The Duchess and Polly are sufficiently warned against their will. All the female figures become victims of desire and clamor for liberatedness. They lie at the heart of all the action and are warm hearted, self-willed and impulsive, and take decisions entirely on their own judgement. They are not emblematic of right or wrong behavior, but they cling to their assertion and that is what inspires and empowers the audience readers. This, gives us a sense of play's issues and also of the fact that personal desires are often set against social and political restrictions. By rehistoricizing these female

characters in the twentieth century, Brecht endeavors to show what happens when people are forced to live in a world where they cannot act freely or honestly and where appearances are deceptive. Brecht wants the audience to contemplate over the issues seriously and alter the situations.

All the spectacular speeches are put in the mouths of the female characters sketched by Brecht. Antigone may have challenged the King's judgement, the Queen may have committed adultery, the Duchess may have broken away from traditions by demolishing class angles and the Sex Workers may have chosen a profession that is not respected till date and not legalized in many countries. However, even if they have violated or overturned a social code or deviated from the so called moral standards, the spectators are placed in conflicting position, between the cultural and societal standards that condemn them and responses that condone them. All the plays revolve around "personal problem made political." This is what the researcher has shown through the various chapters in the thesis.

6.8 Conclusions made from Chapter II: Emancipation of women through the character of Antigone through the slogan "Personal is Political"

6.8.1 Deviation from the original:

We live in an age of remakes. Brecht's adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* was performed first in Chur, Switzerland. It is beautiful amalgamation of ancient and contemporary elements. The playwright has done complete justice to the material and handled it brilliantly and dexterously. Brecht's version follows Sophocles' Play, as translated into German by Holderlin. Brechtian play does not look like an antique piece at all. In fact modernity appears in changes made by Brecht. In Brechtian version, Kreon wages a war. He kills Polynieces for having deserted the Theban army and thus the tyrant forbids Polynieces' murder. Antigone, the hurricane figure in Brecht ignores Kreon's warning, learning the decree against her brother. She does not fear death penalty and persuades her sister Ismene to sprinkle dust over

Polynieces' body. She motivates her sister to be her chaperone and join her in the funeral ritual, however, Ismene is reluctant to help Antigone. The guard makes an announcement, complaining of someone making an attempt to bury Polynieces' body.

In Sophocles' play Kreon's crime is profanity, irreverence to Gods and flouting of divine justice. Brecht places an emphasis on Kreon's cruelty, sadism, callousness and bestiality. Brecht pens a lot of additional lines to show Kreon's political arrogance. Political opinions play a minor role in the Sophoclean version. However, Brecht's play is thoroughly political and thus Brecht turns Antigone into a champion of democracy. She detests Kreon's policies and objects to them strongly. Brecht's Antigone does not refer to divine laws but human laws which need to be safeguarded. Antigone invites unsparing criticism from the chorus, however, she remains firm, unbending and obdurate till the end. Antigone is a pacifier who clamors for peace and liberty. Brecht adds eighty lines of heated up conversation between Antigone and Kreon.

Kreon feels that some people are hatching a conspiracy against him but still he supports autocracy. Hamon tells Kreon in no uncertain terms that public supports Antigone and this leads to a verbal war between the father and son. Hamon stands by Antigone through thick and thin. Tiresias accuses Kreon of counting his chickens before they are hatched as he celebrates a victory which is not won yet. At this point chorus takes Polynieces' side.

Kreon stands for imperialism, autocracy, tyranny, totalitarianism and absolutism. Sophocles is not concerned with policy but polis. Brecht is not interested in showing Kreon's piety but lack of propriety. That is the reason why Polynieces, Antigone, Tiresias and even elders disapprove of Kreon's policy.

For a person who is avidly interested in continuing the Greek tradition in drama is likely to find the play grotesque due to Brechtian distortions. However, Brecht is

certainly not interested in retaining the Greek tradition. Brecht in his version, exhorts the audience to understand the situation in which the people are governed by a passion driven man like Kreon. In Brecht's play, there is no tragic vision. Brecht does not consider drama having Cathartic or therapeutic properties. In Sophocles' case, Antigone disobeys Kreon to honour her brother. In the Brechtian version, Antigone annoys Kreon for the honour of her people. That is a major difference.

In Sophocles, Kreon flouts religion and the family: in Brecht he flouts justice and the people; in both, he is paid back in his own coins. Sophocles' Kreon having hurt a family, loses his own; Brecht's Kreon, having hurt his city, loses that too. What Brecht retains of Sophocles' is the nemesis: victory of good over evil. Victory of Antigone (the commoner) over Kreon (the despot).

It might also be argued that Brecht compensates for the reduction of personal factors in his reworking of Sophocles' tragedy by imparting a personality to the people of Thebes. It is interesting to note the way he presents Polynieces, Hamon and Antigone on one side; Eteocles, Margereus and Ismene on the other and the Theban elders on both. One gets a vivid and flagrant picture of a community in turmoil, which not only reminds the audience readers of Germany under Hitler, but shows how a group of people can learn from suffering, just as the individual tragic heroine does. This was a clear picture of people who supported Hitler under pressure and some who gathered guts to oppose him. The reenactment of Brecht's *Antigone* is more relatable to the audience as compared to Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Class angles: Class angles do not play prominent roles in *Antigone*. Yet one should note that Antigone is debating with the ruler, the King. She is far below his rank.

6.8.2 Feminist Overtones in the play and social reforms:

Patriarchy, as a form of oppression has convinced us that that things will continue to be the way they are, that there are no alternatives and that things will never

change. Antigone, as Brecht's mouth piece stands for social change. She is a change maker who questions the authority. As a character, Antigone inspires us to be lionhearted, intrepid, dauntless and dare devilish. As social reformers and as impassive spectators, we all have to integrate her actions into all of our organizing efforts. As Brecht makes an Anti – Hitlerite figure out of Antigone, she represents all those women who resisted against Patriarchy in Nazi Germany. She also represents all the common women living under subjugation due to patriarchal despotism.

Domestic engineering, compassion, and ability to nurture were the examples of subordination in the Nazi patriarchal systems. Brecht's Antigone takes up cudgels against dictatorship by stepping into a man's shoes. She is against gendered thinking. She cannot accept men and women having their own specific roles (e.g. men leading, and women following). Even though this view may appear to be fading in modern times, it is still very relevant. As Antigone challenges patriarchy and despotism, the patriarchal response from Kreon is to increase control. In particular, he tends to increase control over her as an oppressed or marginalized group.

However, there is an important point to remember. Patriarchy is not a product of Nazism. "Men will be men", this typical idea is endorsed by Ismene that men are biologically "programmed" to behave in a certain way. This is how many women still feel. Women do not raise their voice and thus the society often promotes violent and controlling aspects of male culture. This is one of the most insidious characteristics of patriarchy: it seeks to protect traditional male traits and actions. When Kreon warns someone, one has to obey without getting into an argument. And if a woman tries to oppose or attack the traditional role, she is labelled as a deviant. This is totally inequitable, discriminatory, unfair and unjust. The Nazi set up is like many current societies, where men are the "leaders" and women are the "nurturers."

This is still incredibly prevalent. This translates into male figure as the “authority” (Kreon Like) on all important decisions.

Antigone was not the only woman who challenged patriarchy. It will take many more Antigones to finally eliminate patriarchy. Brecht went one step ahead to create an all the more powerful Antigone. It is our job to emulate her example as spectators and push for a gender friendly culture and make positive influences on the world. We need to change every Kreon among the members of the audience to look empathetically at women.

We need to train Kreons all over the world and foster the attitude that they should be proactive in addressing patriarchy. Empowered Kreons need to challenge unempowered Kreons on their patriarchal and sexist ideas and actions. To conclude, Antigone’s problem should be every woman’s problem and women should make an effort to combat patriarchy and other forms of oppression. Brecht’s Antigone creates a platform for spectators to start with the resistance and put an end to patriarchy.

Love and family cannot exist in any relationship that is based on domination and coercion. This is what Brecht’s Antigone teaches us. Brecht, as a playwright wants men to embrace feminist thinking and practice. He wants to liberate women from the bondage. This is how the emotional well-being of men - women relationships will be enhanced. It is high time that the world pulls up its socks and stops producing overbearingly dictatorial men like Kreon. Antigones of the future will bring in a gender revolution.

6.9 Conclusions made from Chapter III: *Edward II*

6.9.1 Deviation from the original:

Brecht’s *Edward II* is a Modernist reinterpretation of the Renaissance tragedy and reflects his own interests and preoccupations. A major critical problem concerning

Brecht's *Edward II* is whether it can be regarded as a tragedy in the remake. Brecht's play is a remake of a Catastrophe with an admixture of comic elements. In other words, it is ludicrous mingled with the serious. Brecht uses comic and ironic devices in *Edward II* to reinforce what is essentially a tragic vision. Brecht has nothing to do with the Aristotelian concept of Hamartia and Tragedy. Brecht parodies the chronicle figures to correct their follies and foibles. In *Edward II*, Brecht succeeded well in his dogged determination to make a tragi - comedy or to be more apt, a social problem play to convey serious thought as well as serious laughter. He thereby achieves a harmonious fusion of "profit" and "delight", through the Homolka-Lacis episode, through the extremely causal treatment of Edward - Gaveston relationship and through the unforgettable songs that contribute to the alienation effect.

Thus, in his efforts to break away from the tradition, Brecht produces something like a caricature of Marlowe's work. Brecht's work is quintessential in its own way and thus, we should not put the original piece on the pedestal and deride, mock or ridicule Brecht's remake. The events in Brecht's version are stripped off their historical grandeur. Brecht made a major deviation by not rewriting a historical play but a story of a King who lowers his status by having an affair with a base character (representing labour class) and comments on the effects and after effects of this relationship for the spectators to think of. As compared to Marlowe's, in Brecht's play, the classical imagery refers mostly to 'lovers' as Brecht solely concentrates on the eroticism, lasciviousness and lecherousness of the homosexual lovers.

6.9.2 Class angles:

Edward has the power of inspiring an underlying affection in a person who is far below his rank. He chooses a 'base' partner and his 'baseness' is incessantly reiterated in the play. His disregard for 'degree' and 'rank' especially in Marlowe is regarded as endangering order. However, in Brecht, it stands for maverick German Marxism. Brecht was out and out a Marxist and this requires no proof.

Brecht's *Gaveston*, a butcher's son exerts a dominant influence upon the king and achieves power and Lordship. In modern set-up, the king and Courtiers (nobles) would serve as parallels to the Capitalistic society. Marxism presents 'man' in positive light as compared to 'Nihilism'. Brecht's *Gaveston* is conscious of his low status and position. This is Brecht's major deviation from Marlowe.

6.9.3 Homosexual overtones

Brecht reconstructed *Edward II* in the 90s, where homosexuals were fighting for their rights. Brecht's Marxist world is devoid of God and no Biblical force could have stopped him from making a play revolving around gay controversy. As described in the earlier chapters, Brecht's early plays like *Baal* and *Im Dickicht* do raise homosexual issues and critics do talk about his sexual involvement with firm friends, Arnolt Bronnen and Casper Neher.

Brecht also improves upon Marlowe by substituting a clearly positioned emphasis on gay victimization and empowerment in place of Marlowe's unpositioned fascination with power and the powerful. *Gaveston* as "Edward's whore" is made prominent throughout the play. Brecht degrades the worth of the King and his partner *Gaveston* in order to bring them close to the common man. Through *Edward II*, Brecht offers a rich version of gay love, aesthetics and community affirming it as a vision worth fighting for. He recontextualizes Edward's love for *Gaveston* to show us what is at stake, is not merely a King's 'private' right to a same – sex relationship but rights of a broad-based community with similar desires.

As Brecht makes homosexuality explicit in his play, it is clear that he marries Anne, but declares his sexual orientation towards *Gaveston* only after the birth of their son, Edward III. The news is devastating to Anne and creates a lasting anger and hatred in her. Thus the play has a strong feminist message for women (like Queen Anne) who suffer when their husbands turn gay after marriage.

6.9.4 Feminist overtones and social reforms:

Anne suffers enormously and sheds tears for Edward as they relate the pain of discovering that she could no longer be attractive to her husband and the horrible fact undermines her very identity as a woman.

Queen Anne breaks her wedlock only when she struggles against her husband's homosexual nature and when her husband breaks the holy covenant of marriage. Sexuality and sexual satisfaction are fundamental aspects of marriage and the Edward-Anne marriage is most destined to fail and in the first place should never have begun. After all, surviving an unhappy marriage and begetting progeny are not the only sacred duties to be performed by Anne. Her strength as a woman and sense of independence lie in breaking the confines of her marriage. Though her will is exploited by Mortimer, she remains the "she wolf of France": a woman in a masculine appearance who takes a vow to punish her husband to safeguard the political scenario. Her struggle against her husband, her lover and her son show a typical woman's rebellion against the Patriarchal social set-up and male culture.

His depiction of Anne pinpoints and highlights the plight of a wife who is caught in the crossfire between her homosexual husband and warring leaders (one of them is Mortimer.) Rulers are themselves subject to a 'wheel' of violence beyond rational control. At this moment, after a century in which liberation struggles have all too often given way to new forms of oppression and other kinds of antagonisms continue to produce their own retaliatory cycles, perhaps through *Edward II*, Brecht in divergent ways can help us understand the misrecognitions of violent desire and the entanglement of resistance movements in a politics of revenge and reversal.

6.10 Conclusions made from Chapter IV: *The Duchess of Malfi*

6.10.1 Deviations from the original:

In his version of Brecht's *Duchess*, he does not touch upon the Renaissance imagery like the geometrical hinges, Astrology and other collocation of images which give a diseased richness to the picture or fulfil the function of declaring cosmic anarchy. Brecht does not draw his imagery from the charnel house because of his lack of belief in the supernatural.

Brecht wanted to make the events credible to the audience, so he had to underplay the atrocities ordered by the Elizabethan stage directions. One does find animal imagery in Brecht to present the characters as they really are. The 'war' imagery frequently used in Brecht is meant to explain the long time gap (more than two years) between Bosola's discovery of the Duchess' Pregnancy and the Duke's return to Malfi.

Webster used a lot of wanton, fleshy, voluptuous, venereal, bestial and animalistic images and words in order to refer to sexuality in his play. However, Brecht could supersede Webster and be absolutely unrestrained, uninhibited and reckless in his use of words expressing carnality. Brecht in his age could do away with the repressive nature of impositions on the body by virtue of this disciplining. The explicitly scandalous expressions regarding the human body are lacerating in Brecht's *Duchess of Malfi* given the period in which he wrote it. He is more open in his presentation of the sexuality of Ferdinand in his incestuous feeling towards his sister.

6.10.2 Incest issue:

Once when asked by a magazine to name the strongest literary influence in his life, Brecht replied in a single sentence: "You will laugh: The Bible!" And in fact the vigorous outspoken language of Luther's Bible pervades the writings of the atheist

and blasphemer Brecht. Like a good Marxist, Brecht plainly refused to accept and opposed what was stated in the Bible. Brecht touches upon the theme of sexual perversion and ‘incest taboo’ in *The Duchess of Malfi*, completely despised by the Bible.

While Webster’s Ferdinand is unaware of the ‘incest motif’, he is not morally responsible for his actions. In theological terms, the responsibility for sinful acts rests upon the rational consent to commit the sin and there is adequate evidence in Webster’s play to contend that Ferdinand lacks this willingness. The Masque of Madmen describes his degenerative mental state. It may be argued that Ferdinand is ‘distracted of (his) wits. and is shown suffering from a disease called Lycanthropia and is not morally responsible for the death of Cardinal and his complicity in the murder of his sister and her children is less obvious, as he is insane and does not know what he has done. On the contrary, Brecht’s Ferdinand is acutely conscious of his inhibited desire for his sister. The Friar in Brecht’s version of *Duchess* warns Ferdinand of committing the blasphemous act. Brecht in his version thus condones the incest theme and deviates from the teaching of Bible, as his aim is not to concentrate on what is morally or religiously ethical or the personal fate of the individuals (Ferdinand and the Duchess) but discussion of social issues through audience participation. Brecht made every possible effort to translate Marxist ideology into drama.

6.10.3 Marxist Leanings:

In the *Duchess of Malfi*, Antonio does not belong to the Proletariat or the wage-earning class. Still, Antonio is much lower than the Duchess; he represents the lower section of the ‘gentry’. His main role in Brecht is to be the mouthpiece of Brecht’s own judgement. Brecht wanted to depict a stronger Antonio ready to take up cudgels against the Duchess’ noble brothers. However, in Brecht’s version Antonio’s baseness cannot go unnoticed in some of the dialogues put in the mouth of Bosola.

The Calabrian Duke represents the Feudal order which has its modern counterpart in the Capitalistic order.

The superlative 'mightiest' probably stands for the Feudal society here. The clash between the powerless and basely born, Antonio and the all-powerful noble brothers reveals Marxist overtones in Brecht's *Duchess*. From his Marxist standpoint, Antonio's plight resembles that of the petit bourgeoisie. As a small lowborn creature, he marries the Duchess, makes quick profit in love but concludes towards the end that little people like him are 'too small to live with greatness'. His capitulation to circumstances and his compromises are attributed less to his person than to his class.

In the article, '*Brecht's Marxist aesthetic*', Douglas Kellner opines that Brecht's relationship to Marxism is extremely important and highly complex from the 1920s until his death in 1956. Yet, from the beginning of his literary career, Brecht was an enemy of the established bourgeoisie society.

Brecht became a maverick German Marxist probably because of Erwin Piscator, the leading author of the Proletarian theatre. Piscator proposed a drama which would use the stage as a platform for public discussion of social and political issues. This was exactly what Brecht required.

6.10.4 Feminist overtones:

In Brecht's *Duchess*, the female Protagonist bears the brunt of her brother's sexual frustrations and innuendos aimed at her, abrasive temperament, discourteous and sickening behaviour. Ferdinand's wish appears futile when the Duchess marries Antonio and this adds to his sense of alienation.

Being a medical student, Brecht had a considerable physiological, pharmaceutical and psychiatric learning. So he intentionally chose not to touch upon Ferdinand's

Lycanthropy, which would give his play a different turn. Brecht wanted his Ferdinand to keep the ‘incest motif’ alive, which remains debatable in Webster.

The Doctor’s account on Webster enables us to identify a significant feature in Ferdinand’s madness, which has long been foreshadowed by his references to wolves: a desire to reveal the Duchess’ murder symbolized by his digging up a corpse. Brecht’s Ferdinand lapses into madness and imagines himself as a wolf even before he can destroy the Duchess’ body. This could probably be because of his inability to win over the Duchess and his realization that he would be left alone.

Taking Ferdinand’s plight in Brecht into account, the questions that come to the researcher’s mind are: why should the Duchess remain locked in widowhood and inculcate blind submission to her brothers? Moreover, why should she accept her brother’s inordinate desire for her which seems deplorable? Why should the Duchess be reduced to a sheer sex-object by her brother? Brecht compels us to raise all these questions by pointing out that male dominated culture has always deeply influenced the subordinate status of women.

Brecht’s historicization of Webster’s *Duchess* makes it a story of an emancipated widow. Remarriage could provide definition, a renewed sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging that were absent from their lives in the widowed state.

6.10.5 Social reforms

In the *Duchess of Malfi*, Brecht nevertheless leaves a part of his legacy, a provocative questioning of the dangers that arise when a social reform movement like ‘widow remarriage’ remains in bed with pre-existing structures of domination. He extends our awareness of these dangers. In Brecht’s play, Ferdinand’s deep seated incestuous desire for his twin sister is horrendously unethical. However, there is no modern consensus on whether society/law has the right to ban consensual sex between siblings unless the victim is led into it by force or rape. Had Ferdinand been

successful in assaulting the Duchess, he would have been severely punished by law. However, he is conscious of the fact that there are general sex restrictions on kinship, so he derives voyeuristic pleasures by drawing carnal word pictures that are offending and coercive.

Brecht's Ferdinand does both. He hides in the Duchess' bedchamber to see her sexual activities and also derives sadistic pleasure in presenting her the chest containing the dead bodies of Antonio and her children.

'Pornography' continues to be a controversial issue even today. Many radical feminists and activists like Anfrea Dworkin and Catherine Mackinnon have criticized this social problem and participated in anti-porn movements. Dworkin's anti-porn theory claims that porn, with its allegedly degrading view of women is responsible for the attitudes and actions of men towards women. It also objectifies women. Brecht, as a playwright on Broadway, must not have taken specific interest in women's issues.

Brecht's recitation of an 'old story' set in the Renaissance *The Duchess of Malfi* speaks of his desire to retrieve the historically significant forces and relationship at work in the past and reconstruct it by concentrating entirely on what is remarkable, particular and demanding inquiry in the present world

6.11 Conclusions made from Chapter V: *The Threepenny Opera*

6.11.1 Deviation from the original:

The stage is stripped of anything credible, magical or elements considered identifiable, representative or symbolic. *The Threepenny Opera* becomes brand new in the hands of Brecht.

Brecht's Threepenny stage, like other plays written by him, comprises of four walls, the fourth wall being the "audience evolving" instead of involving itself. The

remake of Gay's masterpiece allows actor – spectator interaction and strong messages are given in full view of the audience. Brecht also makes use of a half curtain to dispel the illusions of the theatre and compel the audience not to relate or identify themselves with the characters. On the contrary they are motivated to uplift themselves and bring positive changes in their lives.

Epic lighting and refulgent sets used by Brecht give the impression that the spectators are watching a play and not an actual story. The hackneyed, oft repeated and cliched theatrical experience of being transported to another place or time does not appear logical to Brecht. The stage lamps sift a harsh white light, once again alienating the audience and decreasing their entanglement and emotional participation in the action of the play.

One of the key aspects of a Brechtian performance is the power of now. Brecht takes this rule to the extreme and makes the audience unite with the performers. The convention of being transported is too superficial and convenient and allows the audience to sit lazily, passively. Brecht totally detests an audience that remains unengaged.

Brecht was deeply concerned that the spectators should not be kept under a wrong impression. What they saw on stage was not an episode of real life; so he does away with traditional dramatic devices. In technical terms, *The Threepenny Opera* is a classic piece of epic composition. It does not remind us of the evolutionary methods of dramatic writing but introduces us to the revolutionary methods of dramatic writing in which there is no link between one scene and the next. The flow is interrupted by the admixture of songs and the connection between scenes is disrupted because of montage embracing elements. Most importantly, the spectator's awareness of the text's epic structure is reinforced by Verfremdungseffekt.

6.11.2 Marxist Overtones:

The most important similarity between Gay's and Brecht's work is that both plays censure, castigate and disapprove of the hypocrisy of the upper class and have a degrading, condescending and ignominious attitude towards the elite class. Brecht looked down upon the capitalist society and labelled it as hypocritical and corrupt. Although set in Victorian England, the mood, quality, feel and tone of *The Threepenny Opera* reflects the climate of Germany at the time of Brecht. He wrote it, a few years before Germany's signing of the humiliating treaty of Versailles and Hitler's rise as a Nazi Leader. His Marxist view motivated him to use *The Threepenny Opera* as an instrument of social change.

The Threepenny Opera was subjected to a gut - wrenching, distressing, vituperative and devastating attack in the communist daily *The Red Flag*, according to which it contained not only a trace of political satire but reflected badly on the author for his inability to delineate the revolutionary working class.

Although Peachum's agency, the Sex Workers' financial boom and a burglar's easy money emphasize the profit orientation, mercenary enterprises and commercialization of all interpersonal relationships under capitalism, especially bourgeoisie, marriage and sex work. Macheath's behaviour is determined by his sexual urge, drive and testosterone levels. This is amply confirmed by his frequency of visiting brothels and string of sexual affairs. Just as Peachum's relationship to his employees designate an economic motive, Macheath's relationship to women designates a sexual motive. Macheath shares a homoerotic friendship with Brown and this denotes a rise of marginalized communities, disapproved by society. The gender identity of women in particular, as wives, lovers or Sex Workers, is presented as deriving from financial dependency on men and the gender identity of men as husbands, lovers and brothelgoers, is presented as deriving from sexual dependency on women. The text's exhaustive and comprehensive attention to

human sexuality is complemented by its recognition of material needs. The gratification of sexual needs is subordinate to the fulfilment of material needs. Macheath should be in a position to pay the Sex Workers before satisfying his bodily needs. The Sex Workers aim at earning before seeking pleasure. Prostitution during Gay's age was used to be seen as an integral part of patriarchal despotism. Prostitution involves sexual labour in exchange for money. Sex Worker is an owner of property who contracts out part of that property in market. A woman does not sell herself but contracts out use of sexual services. Sex Worker does not indulge in Sex Work for her own pleasure but to satisfy the needs of her client the way he wants. To see Sex Workers as encouraging exploitation under capitalism comes under the heading of Marxist Feminism. Patriarchal capitalism is pictured as a system of universal sex work; a problem that sees man as a master and sex worker as a slave. Sex is considered to be a patriarchal right. However, the chapter on, *The Threepenny Opera* has already shown how the Third Wave Feminists look at this issue and the Sexual revolution brought by neo-liberal feminists.

Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* shares affinities with Freud's in *Civilisation and its Discontents*, emphasising the indispensable nature and dominance of biological needs. However, in addition to this, the play modifies Brecht's orthodox Marxist contention that the human essence is no more than a sum total, unit, body or an ensemble of societal relationships. it also means that *The Threepenny Opera's* approach to material needs involves a straightforward critique on biological reductionism.

While *The Threepenny Opera* provides an accurate account of commercialization and commodification, from a Marxist point of view we need to empathize with the wage earning class or Proletariats who are exploited beyond measure. Sex Workers in the play, who do not get paid have to beg for their own rights. The play compels us to undertake some action against Corruption and embark on a deconstruction of

social, political, legal and religious superstructures. *The Threepenny Opera* presents a fascinating picture of the world: and from a didactic or Marxist point of view, we come to the inference that the world needs to be altered and changed.

6.11.3 Feminist overtones:

Though Brecht historicizes the heroines of the eighteenth century, he concentrates more on their commonality. They serve not only as role models but also as tragic reminders of the world in which they had to function. To conclude, Brecht's Polly, Lucy and Jenny demonstrate how Literature can mirror everyday life. Brecht's historicized female figures studied in the thesis shed light on the life of actual women and their relationship to both in and outside the confines of marriage, promiscuous relationships etc. Though Gay explored these issues two hundred year ago, they are not entirely alien to Modern age.

It has always been assumed that Sex Work presents women in a compromising situation. Feminists before the 1980's felt that Prostitution was a sign and example of women's subordination which would cease to exist when women gained equality.

In the 21st Century, the defenders and supporters of sex work admit that some reforms are necessary in the industry, only then sound sex work is possible. Sex Work is a gigantic Industry where Sex Workers from affluent countries are hired by Sex Workers from poor countries. According to a famous book entitled *Industrial Vagina*, the sex business has now been catapulted to a high position by giving it a status of an industry. It has rapidly monopolized trade and boosted employment. This has led to a great economic revolution. The 1970's Radical feminist view of Universal condemnation metamorphosed into the neo - liberal 1980's and the hardcore business began in which pimps were transformed into respectable business people. Now we are familiar with the term "Calendar Girls," who are working sex professionals and do not like to be underestimated, marginalized or victimized. The

business of brothel sex work was legalized in many countries and turned into a “market sector”. Stripping or Strip tease became a regular part of the “leisure,” amusement. Entertainment industry and Pornography became acceptable and respectable. Girls who are into this profession are satisfied with their income, are happy to flaunt their bodies in public and do not consider Sex Work as a profession that is looked down upon by society. Sex work and Pornography involve a lofty payment to the girls and they do not wish to take up alternate jobs. The book *Industrial Vagina* shows that in recent decades, Sex Work has been industrialized and globalized. Brecht’s female Sex Workers in *The Threepenny Opera* represent the modern era, wherein Sex Work become concentrated, normalized and part of the mainstream corporate sphere. In Brecht’s evolving theatre, sex work has transformed from an illegal, small scale, cheap, local and socially despised form of abuse of women into a hugely profitable and or tolerated international industry. The feminist ideas and politics of power emerging out of Brecht’s *The Threepenny Opera* depend on how our society divides sex into cultural, economic, political spheres. Feminist overtones in the play can consciously and collectively change the mindsets of people if taken seriously.

6.12 Pedagogical implications of all the adapted Plays:

The thesis will definitely be helpful to those researchers who wish to delve deep into Brechtian theatrical techniques, their relevance today and their affinities with feminism and feminist theatre. As Brecht wanted theatre to be an instrument of social change, his theories can never go obsolete. The thesis will prove to be useful to those who wish to study Brechtian adaptations of Sophocles, Marlowe, Webster and Gay in precise detail.

As this erudite work on Brechtian “counter plays” examines the female protagonists and compares them to the existing originals, it will be of great help to Women Study

Circles all over the world as the thesis brings all the female characters into focus and delves deep into their problems and sufferings and suggests need for reforms.

Through the Character of Antigone in Brecht's play, the teachers can have a power packed discussion on a landmark Theban Play and do a comparative analysis of Sophocles' Antigone with that of Brecht's. The teachers could combine History and Literature and enlighten the students on aspects like The Rise of Adolf Hitler, Women in Nazi Germany and Germany's need to produce more Anti – Hitlerite figures like Antigone to take up cudgels against the evils of Dictatorship.

Through Brecht's version of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, students can have power packed group discussions on topics like Widow Remarriage, Pornography, Incest and Domestic Violence. Intellectually the students and research scholars can feel stimulated, challenged and enlightened. It is even conceivable that their opinions can be changed. While studying the character of the Duchess, the teachers could read out the rules for widows from Jeremy Taylor's Holy living, then the Duchess' marriage to Antonio (in the Jacobean tragedy) vs Brechtian rehistoricization of Webster's towering personality. The students could analyze both the ages and see if the widows are actually emancipated in the present world or the situation continues to be the same.

Through the character of Ferdinand with voyeuristic tendencies, (In Brecht) the students could have a healthy debate on Radical feminists views (Dworkin and Mackinnon) on Pornography vs the third wave feminists views on liberal sex. Dworkin and other radical feminists stated that Pornography encouraged exploitation and male domination. However, the third wave feminists who expand the boundaries of "feminism" are pro pornography. As intelligent feminist readers, we need to actually look at the situation and see if pornography is "degrading", "oppressive" and "exploitative" to the Duchess or it prevents her "rape" as Ferdinand mostly visualizes her in a compromising position. The teachers have a

great responsibility of changing the perception of students and society towards Sex Work as Sex Workers play promising roles in *The Threepenny Opera*. The question is, if Sex Work is to be respected as a profession, are we ready to turn our daughters into Sex Workers? The teachers should accompany their students to the Women Studies' Circle and take a look at the feminist world that has undergone drastic change. The Prostitutes in *Threepenny Opera* seem to enjoy their profession and revel in it unlike some who are dragged into it. The Teachers need to familiarize the students with the various feminist theories on Prostitution and conduct a debate on topics such as: Can Sex Work be defended as a trade fit for everyone to enter? Does Sex Work function in exactly the same way as any other employment? If we discuss these matters in the 21st century, there has been an astounding revolution in economic ideology. The new trend is called "neo liberalism", in which the tolerance and celebration of "sexual freedom" has been merged with a free market ideology to deconstruct Prostitution as a taboo, address it respectably as Sex Work and reconstruct it as legitimate work which can form the basis of national and international sex industries. This revolution has only happened in a few countries though. If this topic is boldly discussed in Schools and Colleges all over the World, the student community could change the mindset of the prejudiced and biased people who consider Sex Work as a disparaging profession.

6.13 Limitations of the thesis:

The researcher could not include *Don Juan* and *Trumpets and Drums*, an adaptation of Farquhar's 18th century Restoration comedy "*The Recruiting Officer*," According to the suitability of my topic and area of research, the researcher only included plays that brought the female figures into focus.

6.14 Summing Up:

Through the plays studied in the thesis and powerful female representations in his adaptations, Brecht has been instrumental in turning spectators into observers. He

has rehistoricized the females, made them alterable. All the plays studied in the thesis lead themselves to reactionary interpretations. It must not be forgotten that neither Brecht nor the feminist critics are interested in addressing or describing audiences who wish to be anesthetized or hypnotized in the theatre.

In this thesis, a lot of attention has been paid to Brechtian female figures and the function allotted to them in his adaptations. We can effortlessly say that Brecht has not sketched stereotypes in his adaptations and has also managed to modify them by wider political concerns. They are able to identify what the feminist's basic contention: personal is political. The researcher has studied the complete role of women in Brecht. Feminist reutilization of Brecht is the most important theme of this thesis.

The relationship between mother and son is central to Brecht's early works. But in his adaptations, Brecht does not sketch stereotypes. He strengthens their characterization and depicts their resistance in socially meaningful ways. The development of Brechtian female figures studied in this thesis proves the Brechtian critic, Sara Lennox wrong. She passed a sweeping remark saying, Brecht depicted his women as "demonstration objects." Unfortunately, Lennox does not touch upon Antigone, The Duchess of Malfi Polly, Jenny in *Threepenny Opera*. She only studied Anne in the *Life of Edward II* of England.

If the men of these plays (Kreon, Ferdinand, Edward II, Mortimer and Macheath) are depicted as largely at the mercy of irrational forces, the women (Antigone, The Duchess of Malfi, Polly, Jenny) are faced in double jeopardy. They are at the mercy of same forces and also of their men.

Brecht considered theatre to be an instrument of social change. We need to see the Brechtian women and the portrayal of their relevance in our times. Brecht as an author may not be alive but the audience readers' response will be alive at all times. We need to use Brechtian theatre as a means to instructing our feminist

audience (comprising of males and females) and give them messages to contemplate upon.

Lennox in *The Threepenny Opera* observes that Mrs. Peachum as the partner employee of her husband, the merchant of misery, is an entrepreneur and an unmotherly mother for her daughter, Polly. Lennox does accept that Jenny, the Prostitute is more rebellious than her predecessors.

Two of out of the four plays studied in the thesis have a woman as central (titular) figure (Antigone and The Duchess of Malfi) and they show strength and resourcefulness.

“Lennox observes reviewing the 1930’s, how Brecht developed a number of memorable woman figures.” (Bertolt. The Antigone of Sophocles)

The researcher’s point of view looking at female characters in Brecht’s dramatic oeuvre is that there is guarantee for the improvement of mankind. Brecht as a writer sees the emancipation of women as a means to challenge the existing conditions to fight against exploitation.

Brecht’s theory shares an affinity with socialism and feminism. The relationship between social, cultural, economic and sexual conditions in society are explained phenomenally and Brechtian elements have proven to be integral to dramatization of these complex issues.

The central woman character in each of the adaptations studied in the thesis, has her consciousness raised and undertakes direct political action because of her experience of injustice. Brecht writes and rewrites Historical incidents associated with particular periods. Re conceptualizing, reformulating, reconsidering and revitalizing a woman’s place in History has been a fertile ground for feminist struggle. Many traditional and sexist attitudes towards women are historical

precedents. The readers / spectators view the situation in the present to perceive how gender and other factors inter relate.

Brecht never wrote the plays from the feminist perspective but whatever his attitudes towards women may have been, his female characters serve the central purpose of epic theatre much better than he intended. The plight of women in the plays studied in the thesis is significant if looked at from a contemporary feminist perspective because the role assigned to them by society is always strategically designed to harmonize the ideologically disharmonious and to conceal the ruptures between those ideologies and the real conditions they attempt to justify.

By historicizing the known incidents, Brecht as a playwright causes the audience to become conscious of certain habitual perceptions which have been entrenched in and established by the historical tradition. That is the reason why they so determine the present. It may also involve making explicit the relationship between past and present, in order to show human History as an open subject to constant change.

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