



## Brecht's Portrayal of Female Subordination: A Feminist Reading of Mother Courage and Her Children

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### Abstract

This paper examines feminist interpretations of Bertolt Brecht's play called Mother Courage and Her Children (1941) through an analysis of its presentation of patriarchal relationships which subordinate females. Brecht uses his epic theatre techniques to explore the societally enforced oppression of women while exposing how societal norms maintain gender discrimination in society. The analytical framework traces feminist causes by studying the experiences of Mother Courage along with Katrin and Yvette. Research warrants the importance of Brecht's stage work in confronting established gender norms as well as supporting further study of feminism within his complete theatrical output. This research explains resistance Mother Courage to oppression and gender discrimination as well as patriarchal rules which govern women in nineteenth century. This paper uses famous feminists philosophers (Beauvoir S. , 1949) to reject dominant men in order to get freedom from patriarchal society on the other hand (Betty Friedan ,1963 ). She critique women condition after World War II specially in American society because Friedan rejected subjugation of women in the society. Friedan insists that women can success in all career.

**Keywords:** Gender Inequality, Epic Theatre, Female Subordination, Patriarchal Society.

تصوير برخت للتبعية الأنثوية : قراءة نسوية لمسرحية الام شجاعة وأولادها

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### المستخلص

يتناول هذا البحث التحليل النسوي لمسرحية الكاتب الالماني برتولت بريخت بعنوان "الام شجاعة و أولادها" التي كتبت (1941) من خلال تحليل وتقديم السلطة الأبوية التي تهمش النساء من قبل المجتمع. بريخت يستخدم تقنيات المسرح الملحمي لاستكشاف القمع المفروض على النساء في المجتمع. البحث يكشف كيف تحافظ الاعراف الاجتماعية على التميز بين الجنسين في المجتمع. كذلك البحث يستخدم الاطار التحليلي والاسباب لدراسة الحالة النسوية من خلال تجارب الأم شجاعة مع كاترينا وأيفيت. يؤكد البحث على أهمية عمل بريخت المسرحي في مواجهة الأعراف الجندرية الراسخة في المجتمع ، فضلا عن دعم المزيد من الدراسات حول تهميش النساء من خلال إنتاجه المسرحية الكامل. تشرح هذه الورقة



البحثية مقاومة الام شجاعة للقمع والتمييز الجنسي بالإضافة الى القواعد الأبوية في المجتمع التي تحكم النساء في القرن التاسع عشر . هذا البحث يعتمد على استخدام نظريتين نسويتين ، الاولى هي سيمون دي بوفار (1949) التي ترفض سيطرة الرجال من اجل الحصول على الحرية من المجتمع الأبوي .أما الثانية هي بيتي فريدين (1963) تنتقد فردان حالة النساء بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية ،وخاصة في المجتمع الأمريكي . فريان رفضت استعباد النساء في المجتمع وتهميشهن .فريدين تصر على أن النساء يمكنهن أن ينجحن في جميع المهن.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** عدم المساواة بين الجنسين ، المسرح الملحمي ،التبعية النسائية ، السلطة الابوية .

## **Brecht's Portrayal of Female Subordination: A Feminist Reading of Mother Courage and Her Children**

### **Introduction**

Bertolt Brecht created a lasting achievement in Mother Courage and Her Children. From its debut appearance during the early 1940s, this play has sparked wide-ranging scholarly debates. Through this research, this influential theatrical masterpiece will be evaluated from a feminist perspective regarding its depiction of female subordination established by patriarchal standards. The subject is critical because it analyzes Brecht's revolutionary stage methods while investigating relevant feminist challenges from his time that still exist now. Knowledge about Brecht's critique of women's subjugation is essential to study. A better understanding emerges from the analysis for the interpretation of how his work affects gender relations and social frameworks. Mother Courage demonstrates all the difficulties women face when navigating a society where men dominate power structures during wartime in Mother Courage and Her Children. Brecht repeatedly showcased in his work how people cope with oppressive systems, so his work provides important connections to feminist theory. Through his characters and storytelling, Brecht skillfully portrays female experiences in a comprehensive work. Through his work, he exposes how women endure regular marginalization and oppression under patriarchal systems. Mr. Brecht established himself as an epic theatre creator while developing aesthetic methods to urge people to analyze society through revised perspectives. Through his approach, we gain an understanding of how Brecht's critique remains pertinent to present discussions regarding gender equality. According to this paper, Brecht masterfully portrays female subjugation through his storytelling vehicles and dramatic characters to achieve societal change through his epic theatre techniques.

A breakdown of how Brecht's methods correspond with feminist concerns and his portrayal of women in his dramatic works will be provided in this section. The discussion begins by unraveling the historical together with the social backdrop of the play. Understanding Brecht's dramatic structure requires first analyzing his background. This paper organizes its content through multiple consecutive sections to reach its objective. A feminist evaluation of Brecht's



work development alongside audience reception will be part of this assessment. The paper is based on *Mother Courage and Her Children*, which generally function on the analysis of the representation of female characters. Such analysis is veteran territory and often reveals how *Mother Courage*, her daughter *Katrin* and *Yvette* demonstrate the plight of women in a patriarchal society. It examines their interactions and functions. It also explores how they respond to the constraints imposed upon them. This is an attempt to demystify the complexity of these more complex characters, emphasizing Brecht's subtle understanding of how gender works and how systemic female achieved subordination. Finally, the paper might end with a brief discussion of what Brecht's critique of patriarchal society suggests. This will provide particular references from the play, including relevant excerpts and conversations, to exemplify how Brecht subverts societal views on traditional gender norms and values. Here, the analysis will tend to emphasize the systemic character of the oppression of women and the possibility of resistance and tie this back to the argument of the paper. By exploring Brecht as a feminist playwright, this paper seeks to contribute to an overarching discussion on gender equality, specifically within theatre as a social change instrument. The main work by Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, repeatedly provides critical examinations of women's roles and societal standards that guide women's life paths. According to feminist theorists, the scarcity of authentic, diverse lady representations in literature and theatre stands as a major criticism of modern creative work. Judith Butler, for example, presents her idea of gender as per formative while she asserts that social norms determine chosen roles instead of natural essence. According to this viewpoint, Brecht's characters work to gain control in a society that constrains their potential as they manage the conflicting pressures of gender-based social norms.

Beyond that, the time period in which Brecht was writing *Mother Courage and Her Children* gives us a lot of reason to take on a feminist reading of the play. Written during World War II, the play captures the confusion and devastation of war. To critique the violence of conflict and worsened gender relations in crises, Brecht vividly demonstrates how the female experience is often compounded by the extra burden of caretaking and support, as women are often given these roles during the war. While we are beginning our examination and analysis of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, attention should be paid to how Brecht's experiences influenced his beliefs about gender and vice versa for social issues. Brecht's background in a class-struggling society and pre-fascist political climate prepared him for the awareness of interconnected forms of oppression. Because his work often reveals his commitment to social justice, it is vital to investigate the ways his signature dramatic techniques consistently spotlight and uplift female voices and the systems that traditionally support their subjugation. This is an invitation to the reader to the ongoing relevance of



Brecht's insights. His ideas should be a retrospective point for our era of gender equality. Note that Brecht's ideas are still relevant at present time. Thus, using this introduction as a foundation, a feminist analysis of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* will be a thematic and structural approach to the play. By examining the historical and social context, the representation of female characters and the broader implications of Brecht's critique of patriarchal society, this paper aims to emphasize the significance of Brecht's art in challenging gender roles and promoting feminist awareness in a post-war society. In the course of this, we will expose the nuances in Brecht's representation of the subjugation of women in the light of contemporary theory that could help reveal the way theatre has served as a medium of protest and the sustainability of a counter-discourse to the mainstream patriarchal component.

**Subjugation of Women :** Examining the Works of Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan on the Subordination of Women Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan explore the depths of the character of women's subordination. In this way, both thinkers, writing in two different places, timeframes and philosophical backgrounds, point out the systemic nature of a social force that oppresses women. In her foundational text "The Second Sex", Beauvoir (2014) closely examines both existential and sociocultural frameworks of what femininity has been or is argued to be through history, claiming that women have been treated as "the Other" for centuries. She also says that women should take back their power and shed their labels as dictated by a patriarchal culture. On the other hand, Friedan (1987), in "The Feminine Mystique", examined the post-World War II ideal of domesticity that glorified the role of women as homemakers and the general discontent and unrealized potential of many women ensconced in such a life. Friedan shines a light on the oppression enforced by societal standards, calling for freedom from the home for women. Collectively, they challenge the very foundations of our society and demand a reinvention of the position of women in our world, exposing the very structures that perpetuate their hold over us.

**Historical and Social Context :** *Mother Courage and Her Children* is one of the most important works of 20th-century theatre. Not only for its narrative, it also introduced an innovative method, epic theatre, developed by playwright Bertolt Brecht. This form is based more than anything on the alienation effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*). Brecht utilized it in order to prevent the audience from feeling a strong emotional connection to the characters. Instead, he sought to stimulate critical distance, which opened the door to consideration of things such as female subordination however, at the same time, Brecht does emphasize the use of epic theatre as part of a practice of social critique and, more importantly, social change. The beginning of the 20th century comes with lots of huge changes going on socially and politically, causing the feminist



movement to gain momentum. Brecht, again, critiques the social conventions where women are typically kept at the bottom of the chart. His audiences of the past would certainly have agreed that his plays are rooted in their context. His works can often be seen as a rallying cry to audiences to observe and challenge the systemic injustices that nearly always serve to disenfranchise women Goswami (2020) refers to Kattrin's disgusted silence of defiance and ultimate sacrificial death as ultimately acts of resistance from both the war as well as the patriarchal systems that uphold the war. Brecht's treatment of female characters who challenge and ciphers through their oppression offers a complex representation of women's agency in repressive orders. Feminist critics note that Brecht's works, such as *Mother Courage and Her Children*, state that they challenge gender binary assumptions. With the feminist reception of his plays, the historical and social context of Brecht's work becomes even richer. Feminist scholars have pointed out that though female characters take the central role in his plays with the sorrows they carry, Brecht merely sometimes fails to give female characters a liberating destiny (Coşkun, 2015). However, Brecht's intention of revealing systemic oppression is not terribly far from feminism's goal of dismantling these systems. Yet even Brecht, in his written work, depicted women as victims and non-victims alike and equally as active and passive participants. It compels audiences to interrogate and disrupt the patriarchies that oppress them.

The narrative structure of Brecht also helps him with his critique of social conventions. Its episodic structure reveals how fragmented women's lives are in patriarchal societies, where women's roles and identities are not so many choices but rather foisted upon them, leaving them unable to choose from a list of options. They say this framework reflects not only the fragmented, solipsistic lives of the characters but also illuminates the systemic forces at work that subordinate them. The disconnected sequence of events in *Mother Courage and Her Children* is an episodic form which makes the narrative fragmented, echoing the discordant, brutal properties of war that impede the linear flow of storytelling. This seems to uniquely convey the chaotic nature of conflict. Several scholarly studies illustrate the feminist reception of Brecht's work. According to Worthen (2021), Brecht's representation of *Mother Courage*, depicting a woman who exploits war for gain to feed her children, reflects how women were economically exploited within capitalism. This perspective aligns with feminist critiques that argue that women's function in a capitalist system is inherently subordinated, as they are repeatedly relegated to roles that work to support a patriarchal economy. Analyzing Brecht in relation to his historical and social context allows his techniques to intersect with feminist concerns, foregrounding and interrogating the social forces that perpetuate patriarchy. Brecht's epic theatre is characterized by its alienation effect, narrative form and structure. All of these elements are indispensable for his criticism of female



subjugation in a patriarchal society. Brecht critiques the larger systems that control women that create a struggle against actual female characters with behaviors arising to support systemic changes, allowing readers and audiences to grapple critically with the issues he raises during the shattering of the modes of entertainment we find in his plays. Feminist issues tend to connect with Brechtian techniques. They highlight that the oppression of women is based on patriarchal systems. The alienation effect, for example, is applied in a way that provides female characters with a representation that, at the same time, reinforces and questions the subordination of women. The female characters in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, like Mother Courage, Katrin, and Yvette, show the limitations of female characters by social norms in a patriarchal world. The political landscape of the early 20th century molded Brecht's epic theatre, which emerged during a period of social agitation. As a Marxist, Brecht ascribed to the objective of making clear the injustices and power relations inherent in the capitalist system through his theatre. *Mother Courage and Her Children*, written in 1939, is commonly set during the Thirty Years' War, illustrating the sometimes calamitous impact of war on both individuals and societies. In this historical context, Brecht critiques social norms that serve to sustain patriarchy, specifically the subordination of women.

### **Representation of Female Characters**

Bertolt Brecht in *Mother Courage and Her Children* showed these female characters as columns of a patriarchal society. While the characters embody this stereotype, Mother Courage, Katrin and Yvette stand against the very limitations of this societal structure. This story challenges gender disparity with the struggles of the women, which weaves narratives with all the complexity of their experience and the dynamics of patriarchy. These characters and the very nature of their journeys are what Brecht sets about deconstructing in the play. This demonstrates his ideas about women as well as the expectations and constraints of women within that period through his characterization of female characters. She seems resilient, but she, too, is a victim of the all-encompassing system that dehumanizes both her and her children. Mother Courage appears, at first glance, to be a portrait of the strong, independent woman, bucking the system of male-dominated norms of behavior by doing a job that is associated with men, keeping the tradition of men with their tasks as soldiers, and selling food and guns among enemy lines. Through *Mother Courage*, Brecht depicts how women can self-determine their own futures and become victims of an overarching system. The irony in *Mother Courage's* character is that it reflects the sad realities in a patriarchal world where women are always torn between caring for their families and fulfilling social obligations. When she chooses her business over the safety of her conscripted son Eilif, it begs the question of the choices she's made and the sacrifices she's endured. Over the course of the play,



she is depicted as highly protective, and her desire to keep her children from the atrocities of the war is always sullied somewhat by her ambition. At times, it seems like she cares more about her goals than their welfare. The relationship with her children reveals Mother Courage's hardships. This struggle signifies the tension between maternal instincts and the economic pressures of women during wartime. Katrin, Mother Courage's mute daughter, represents the unspoken yet widespread pain of women during wartime. The fact that Katrin has never been allowed to speak further illustrates the silencing of women. She has never learned to speak her mind, to share her wants and needs, or even to raise her voice in the face of injustice. Her character consistently highlights women often being sidelined in literature and society as a whole. But in this silence, Katrin represents resistance. She brings the audience into the story, allowing them to be invested and immersed in the world through her presence. Her purposeful act of self-sacrifice near the end of the play, where she courageously fights to protect a group of people from being bombed by the invading army, gives her agency in a world where she is generally not permitted a voice. This courageous act then changes our perspective of female folk. They are not mere victims; they can be courageous and sacrificial, even when the going gets tough Yvette is first characterized as a camp follower, looking to exploit the war however she can. Yvette's choices also reflect the limited options available for women like her. Her character serves as an indictment of the rest of the world, where women must fill certain roles in order to exist, facing the harsh reality of a world where women are little more than objects and products. Her main use here is often to wade into her relationships with men and proceed through her sexuality to solidify her seat and survive. Another key female character is Yvette. In a patriarchal society, she depicts the struggles of female power. Its narrative structure (the alienation effect) forces the viewer to engage with the characters' lives instead of seeing the character's life played out in front of their eyes. To stimulate reflection, Brecht frequently foregrounds struggles and triumphs, leading viewers to page through the possible systemic nature of female subordination. Brecht depicts these female characters from a broader feminist perspective. He questions previous concepts of femininity and female positions. So, when Mother Courage's business efforts frequently account for the deaths of her kids, it usually underscores the costs women pay and the often-oppressive forces pulling their strings. In that respect, Brecht's method moves the focus of the audience to understand the broader effects of gender discrimination. The relationships between Mother Courage, Katrin and Yvette are not separate because these women, in their representations, are defined by the patriarchal female roles they play. As this female representation is so complex, the elements of the episodic storytelling and a non-linear narrative device that Brecht deploys also embody this complexity. Each character's journey is interrelated. In other words, their fates mirror the structures of society around them. Through the means of dialogue and song,



Brecht speaks of women's struggle alongside the stories of the characters. This play often conveys the emotional depth of the characters, revealing little bits of their inner battles. As when Mother Courage sings about her losses these moments yield catharsis that allow the audience to experience her grief. These moments of music humanize the characters and expose the social systems that create their suffering. Brecht emphasizes the importance of storytelling in challenging the status quo by telling the stories of struggles. Brecht has a more nuanced attitude, frequently portraying mothers as complicated figures. He talks about the lost opportunities women make because they have to sacrifice to do their duty, but he also explains the systems that force women into this. Often, her role as a mother is fraught with tension because the protectiveness that a mother experiences toward her children is in direct opposition to her urge for economic survival. This contradictory nature often mirrors the expectations imposed on women to mainly take on both caretaking and financial roles. It is also a play that grapples with the notion of motherhood in a patriarchal society, challenging ideas of the burden of expectation of women as nurturers. This story implies that ideal motherhood, a rugged construct, has difficulty holding in a war-torn and dislocated economy. Brecht always critiques the patriarchal norms that are shaping the lives of women in this play. He frequently utilizes tactics of drama like the alienation effect and epics of storytelling. By doing so, it encourages the viewer to engage critically with the characters' narratives. It often subverts traditional ideas of femininity and limits women. Here, we examine whether or how the roles and relationships of Mother Courage, Katrin, and Yvette reflect the complexities of women's experiences in a patriarchal world. The struggles and autonomy of the characters serve as reflections of the broader world issues but still persist in upholding the gender gap. Brecht foregrounds these etherized figures in his plays, illustrating the difficulties women undergo and the possibility of agency and resistance. While manipulating female representation, Brecht's work remains important today within scholarly discussions focusing on gender roles, contemporary notions of societal expectations, and the historiographic powers of women's voices. However, these characters' complexities seem to remind us that part of the reason people usually get behind the fight against gender inequality is that it is a more contemporary issue than a timeless struggle, even in the present day. Mother Courage's resilience, Katrin's silence strength, and Yvette's coping mechanisms all portray the complexity that makes up the female situation under a patriarchal dictum planned by war, oppression, and calamity

### **Brecht's Critique of Patriarchal Society**

Bertolt Brecht is one of the 20th century's most influential theatre practitioners and is particularly known for his style of drama, particularly his idea of an Epic theatre. He wanted to entertain, but he also wanted to make people think and



create change. *Mother Courage and Her Children* offer a critique of the patriarchal world in which women lived when the play was written. It is still a relevant exploration of the definition of motherhood, which is still relevant today. This part examines Brecht's critique of patriarchal society, often through examples from the play, which show how it can question traditional gender roles and ideologies. Examining key scenes and speeches allows us to uncover the systematic nature of female subordination and the possibilities for resistance which are opened up by Brecht's characters. Historically, in such societies, women have often been placed in subordinate identities as well as positions, defined predominantly by their relationships with a man or men, and their roles in society are often very diminished. Before we go any further, we must know the definition of a patriarchal society. By definition, a patriarchal society is a social system in which men hold primary power, leading roles in political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. In this play, he mused about the challenges for women. This depiction echoes the struggles that women have faced throughout history, and it is an evergreen trope. Not only this, but she, in the role of protagonist, truly represents all the struggles women go through in the world, especially when men dominate it. Her character represents the struggle of the caretaker and the provider, which a lot of women go through. One of the most critical features of Brecht's critique can often be discovered in the *Mother Courage* character. But throughout the course of the story, it is clear that her attempt to juggle those roles is challenged, illustrating the oppression that a patriarchal culture inflicts on her.

For example, the roles played by the sergeant can be seen through his condescending treatment towards *Mother Courage*, which reinforces her male-dominated environment. The implication is that despite her entrepreneurial status, *Mother Courage* is still limited by a system which truly subjugates her. But she is doing the best she can right now to deal with that. Their interactions are symbolic of larger cultural expectations placed upon womanhood. For example, in Act One, *Mother Courage* comes across a variety of male characters, including the sergeant and the chaplain. This moment is essential because it establishes the dynamic which governs the power structure for the entire play. Systemic oppression presents women with all sorts of impossible decisions, and here, the dilemma between survival and morality is emblematic of their plight. His relationships with *Mother Courage* depict the ethical conflicts she faces, trying to both protect her children and, at the same time, stay economically afloat in a war-ravaged world. The chaplain is a spiritual figure who, while appearing to offer comfort and wisdom, actually enforces the status quo. Moreover, this discussion between *Mother Courage* and the chaplain plays upon the ironies of her character, as well as the separate expectations society has for her. The other major component of Brecht's analysis of a patriarchal society is *Katrin*, *Mother Courage*'s daughter. One of the most touching is when



Katrin climbs onto a roof and, beating a drum attempts to sound the alarm of an imminent attack on the townspeople. Katrin communicates only through the visual medium of her actions in the play (bravely, she offers a protest against war at great cost to herself) but, in so doing, brings powerful lessons on resistance and the desire for agency. Her muteness, an indication of her lacking voice, trumps in the patriarchal society. Although she may not have a voice in the traditional sense, her actions are a testament to finding a need for change and resisting oppression. Although Katrin is not saying anything, her presence is the hope for rebellion within a male-dominated society. Katrin's tragic sacrifice starkly illustrates the patriarchal backlash that follows female defiance. Her death is a tragic reminder of the reality facing women who dare to stand up to the patriarchal power structures that seek to dominate them. If they do not receive the tools, this moment has them resisting subjugation. The audience often finds themselves forced to face the fact of female subordination, acknowledging that the plight of Mother Courage and Her Children is often not a matter of fiction but rather a function of reality as well as more general aspects of society. That is one of the reasons for the moment that ties Mother Courage when the three children are taken from her. This illustrates how the agency of women can be heavily dependent on men. This is how the audience stays critically awake due to the alienation effect. It stops them from getting absorbed in the emotional storyline. Besides these character studies, Brecht's employment of stage techniques, most notably the alienation effect, also plays an effective role in enabling Brecht to reinforce his critique of patriarchal society. This is especially successful in showing ridiculousness and inequity in patriarchal norms. The character of Yvette serves to critique traditional gender roles, as she embodies the struggles women must overcome in a male-dominated society. Yvette became the embodiment of accepting limitation, known as a woman trying to elbow herself into a confined space, content to play a role that seems to fly in the face of feminist principles. Yvette initially appears to be the opposite of Mother Courage, instead offering up a much less idealistic model of survival. She has relationships with men that give her some sort of perks, but her choices also represent the often hard compromises women have to make regarding how much power or privilege they want to sacrifice. While she seems to win in this system, her spirit is such that her success rings hollow. In Yvette, Brecht demonstrates the various methods that women adopt to survive patriarchal oppression, which tend to be difficult and nuanced. Yvette's journeys serve as a cautionary tale that the female path often comes at a very high cost, even when it includes attaining a degree of power or autonomy. This stylistic choice begs the question is really female empowerment on Brecht's part. His characterization of Yvette indicates that true agency is elusive even for women because of a patriarchal system. Brecht's decision to use war as the context for the play's events accentuates the systemic nature of female subordination. Comparing war to more abstract concepts, it usually serves as a



metaphor for the social structures that dictate the oppression and exploitation of the lives of those less powerful, who, in this case, are women. Their lives are out of their hands and into the hands of men – soldiers, politicians, religious heads. The sub context of war employs its violence to underscore the liabilities of women and the opportunity patriarchal systems take advantage of. Brecht's choice was very deliberate as it shows the intersection of gender inequality and class oppression. It exemplifies the reality that low-class women have the worst end in the struggle. Moreover, Brecht does not limit his critique to the misogyny of any individual character, in which he criticizes the very social system which renders women subordinate. The play tends to take potshots at the economic system, usually, the ones that prevent women from getting ahead, as Mother Courage tries to profit from war in a way that seems a little desperate to keep a foothold in her family. There is a broader critique of capitalism both in the economic dependency on war and also in the way that capitalism consistently ignores women and continues to uphold their lower status. This portrait of Mother Courage, a businesswoman in an economy infused with war, points to the paradox of Brecht's mother figure. Even as she pretends to ground herself in her labour, she ends up caught in a repetitive flow of brutality and bereavement , which highlights her impotence. By examining Brecht's criticism of patriarchal society, we realize the play's appropriateness to modern conversations about gender equality. That link was important at the time and it is still today. The insights Brecht put towards the exhibition of patriarchy provide a firm foundation for feminist conversation that insists audiences involve themselves in the norms and values that are still around today. The female subordination, the resistance to patriarchy, and the ambiguity of women's status seem relatable to modern audiences. However, they still encounter issues like gender-based violence, economic inequality, and oppression from institutions. The play often explores the connections between gender, war, and economic systems, highlighting the ongoing importance of Brecht's work in current conversations about gender equality. Brecht showcases the systemic nature of female subordination through the struggles of characters like Mother Courage, Katrin and Yvette. These characters illustrate the potential for resistance in a male-dominated world, highlighting their experiences as they navigate their harsh realities. In summary, Mother Courage and Her Children by Bertolt Brecht critiques patriarchal society. Through innovative theatrical techniques and complex characters, the play challenges traditional gender roles and ideologies. By highlighting the complexities of women's lives, Brecht encourages audiences to think about their own societal norms and the potential for change, making this play not just an important theatrical piece but also a key part of feminist discussion.

Conclusion : The title of our thesis has previously signaled our central idea: that the way Brecht attends to the systemic nature of gender inequality brings the



algorithmic structures into sharp relief via his own theatrical methods and character portrayals. Brecht's epic theatre serves to expose the plight of women in a patriarchal world. He also calls into question societal expectations that allow for this oppression. In this first post, we looked at the context of the play and, importantly, the significance of Brecht's epic theatre. Such a form of theatre is marked by techniques such as the alienation effect and non-linear narrative structure. It aims for the audience to engage with the play critically instead of emotionally. It was a time of great social unrest as the realities of World War I took hold, and totalitarian regimes began to sweep through Europe when Brecht's work was born. These contexts were shaped by historical events and expectations of different social structures, such as gender, that influenced Brecht. This makes it possible to understand Brecht's critiques of both wars as well as how patriarchal systems affect the way societies are structured in terms of interaction. We thoroughly examined the representation of female characters in the play in the second section of our findings, with a specific focus on Mother Courage, Katrin, and Yvette. Her final sacrifice is a powerful reminder of the violence women experience and the way their voices are often ignored in a world that values men's opinions more. Katrin, on the other hand, shows the tragic results of a society that ignores its people and the limits of a woman's ability to act. Each character typically represents distinct facets of the female experience within a patriarchal society. Yvette, a character who actively explores her sexuality for survival, embodies another aspect of women's experiences, showcasing the different strategies women use to manage their oppression. We also talked about Brecht's critique of patriarchal society using specific examples from the text, like key scenes and dialogues that highlight the systemic nature of female subordination. The interactions between men and women often show the power imbalance. Women are often pushed to the edges of their own stories. Brecht often aimed to make the audience aware of social structures. He wanted to inspire them to reflect on their own roles within these systems. The importance of Brecht's work exceeds the play. Through both the embrace of feminist theory and a reimagining of gender, Brecht's theatre becomes an arena for social change. Through his works, he provides the audiences an opportunity to challenge the uncomfortable truths of their own realities and opens up room for dialogue and perhaps change. There are surely many more feminist readings of Brecht to be done, especially of his other plays. His thoughts on gender and power can be gleaned from them. Plays such as "The Good Person of Szechwan" or "The Threepenny Opera" bring us to characters and situations that question society and the complications of human relations in a male middle-class world. By using strategies that make the audience think and reflect, modern theatre can create awareness and motivate action for gender equality. The role of theatre as a tool for social change is often important in today's discussions. Brecht's focus on the audience's critical involvement with the performance often serves as a model for how theatre can



typically be used to tackle important social issues. Today, feminist theatre artists still use Brecht's techniques for challenging traditional narratives and highlighting the experiences of voices that are marginalized. In conclusion, Brecht's representation of female subservience in *Mother Courage and Her Children* proves to be the trenchant vehicle for his critique of patriarchal society. The way that he created theatrical techniques, combined with the complexity of his female characters, provide direct critiques of institutionalized misogyny. His plays often provoke timely and relevant conversations, compelling us to examine our part in the continuous fight for gender equality and just how powerful the theatre can be in opening our eyes and hearts. Brecht's play serves as a reminder that we cannot allow the world as it is to dictate the possibilities of a better reality as we continue to traverse the complexities of modern life. Reading Brechtian texts and ideas, however, often reframes how we process through complexities of gender, power, and resistance, and I think this ultimately plays a role in contributing to the greater narrative around such critical issues. Through this work, we often pay tribute to the voices and lived experiences of women through the ages and generally recommit ourselves to a more fair and just world. That is why Brecht's criticism remains valid to this day. It calls on us to be vigilant in challenging the structures that keep women subservient.

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