

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

**British Epic Theatre and the Influence of Bertolt Brecht on
British Drama**

Tat'ána Činovcová

Bachelor Thesis

2016

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2013/2014

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Taťána Činovcová**
Osobní číslo: **H12700**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**
Název tématu: **British Epic Theatre and the Influence of Bertolt Brecht on
British Drama**
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Práce se zaměří na prvky Brechtova epického divadla ve vybraných dramatických dílech britských autorů (např. The Royal Hunt of the Sun od Petera Shaffera nebo Vinegar Tom od Caryl Churchill - výběr her studentka upřesní v úvodu práce). V první části autorka objasní specifika Brechtova epického divadla a vysvětlí potřebné termíny (např. distancing/ alienation/ estrangement effect). Dále se studentka bude zabývat přijetím nejen divadelní společnosti Berliner Ensemble v Británii, ale rovněž reakcí britské společnosti a kritiky na Brechtovo epické divadlo. Analytická část se pak bude soustředit na vystopování vlivu epického divadla ve vybraných hrách. Srovnávací analýza bude založena na kvalitních sekundárních zdrojích. Práci zakončí přehledné shrnutí daných zjištění.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná**

Jazyk zpracování bakalářské práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury:

- Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1996
- Brustein, Robert S. *The Theatre of Revolt*. Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1991
- Ewen, Frederic. *Bertolt Brecht*. New York: Carol Pub. Group, 1992
- Reinelt, Janelle G. *After Brecht: British Epic Theatre*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997
- Willett, John. *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1978

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Petra Smažilová

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. června 2014**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **30. června 2015**

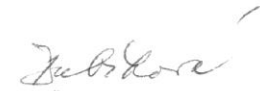


prof. PhDr. Petr Vorel, CSc.
děkan

L.S.



Univerzita Pardubice
Students 194



doc. Sárka Bubíková, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2014

PROHLÁŠENÍ

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byla jsem seznámena s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

V Pardubicích dne 30.11.2016

Činovcová Taťána

ANNOTATION

The bachelor thesis focuses on the topic of British Epic Theatre. It introduces the life of Bertolt Brecht, the establishment of his theatrical group Berliner Ensemble, and continues to trace Brecht's theories and practices in the works of various British playwrights. The thesis attempts to pinpoint the various ways in which the Epic Theatre movement adapted in Britain. The paper further includes the analysis of *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden and *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* by John McGrath. The analysis considers the plot, characters, staging and music, and attempts to find traces of Brecht's legacy in them.

KEYWORDS

Bertolt Brecht, Berliner Ensemble, British Epic Theatre, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*

ANOTACE

Předložená bakalářská práce je zaměřena na problematiku Britského Epického divadla. V první části práce je představen život Bertolta Brechta, založení jeho Berlínského souboru a dále práce popisuje znaky Brechtovi teorie a praxe v dílech různých Britských dramatiků. Cílem této práce je poukázat na různé způsoby, kterými se Epické divadlo adaptovalo v Británii. Analytická část práce zahrnuje rozbor díla *Tanec Seržanta Musgravea* od Johna Ardena a *Ovce, Jeleni a Černočerná Ropa*¹ Johna McGratha. Analýza těchto děl se soustředí převážně na děj, postavy, inscenaci a hudbu, vše v zájmu najít stopy Brechtova odkazu.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Bertolt Brecht, Berlínský soubor, Britské Epické divadlo, *Tanec Seržanta Musgravea*, *Ovce, Jeleni a Černočerná Ropa*

¹ Obě díla jsou přeložena autorem práce, jde o neoficiální překlad

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	7
1. BRECHT AND THE BERLINER ENSEMBLE.....	8
2. BRITISH EPIC THEATRE.....	15
3. ANALYSIS.....	32
3.1 <i>Serjeant Musgrave's Dance</i> by John Arden.....	32
3.2 <i>The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil</i> by John McGrath.....	39
CONCLUSION.....	45
RESUMÉ.....	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	51

INTRODUCTION

The presented thesis deals with the topic of Epic theatre and the influence of Bertolt Brecht on British drama. The primary aim of the thesis is to analyze two plays by British playwrights and find the features and various devices of Epic theatre in them. Furthermore, the paper aims to illustrate the ways in which the British theatre came to emulate Brecht, particularly via presenting a number of important figures, i.e. playwrights and other theatre practitioners, who have incorporated, to at least some extent, Brecht's practices and theories into their works of drama.

Bertolt Brecht was a German poet, playwright and theatre practitioner who developed the titular Epic Theatre. Despite the fact that it is rather unfair to attribute the establishment of the Epic Theatre to Brecht solely, being the figure who developed the vast majority of the theories and practices, and more importantly rendered the movement famous, this paper deals with Brecht and no other figures associated with the Epic theatre establishment.

The presented thesis is divided into two main parts – a theoretical and analytical one. The first part focuses on Brecht's life, his social and political background and the theatrical group he founded – the Berliner Ensemble. Furthermore, the paper describes the visits the Berliner Ensemble paid to London and their effects on the British public. What follows is a description of chosen playwrights who emulated epic techniques and their characterization. To describe *all* the authors who have incorporated epic devices into their works is beyond the scope of this paper, therefore I have chosen to focus on several particular British playwright – Edward Bond, John Arden, Arnold Wesker, John Osborne, Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill, Trevor Griffiths and John McGrath.

The second part of the paper consists of the analysis of the works of two major names in British theatre – John Arden and John McGrath. Both authors owe a great debt to Brecht as it will be discussed in the theoretical part. The chosen plays are *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* and *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*. The analysis focuses on the plot of the chosen plays, characters, settings, music and other devices and techniques, and their similarities and links to Brecht.

The conclusion provides a summary of the findings.

1 BRECHT AND THE BERLINER ENSEMBLE

The first chapter of this paper is dedicated to the man without whom there would be no Epic theatre, and the theatrical group he founded.

Bertolt Brecht was born on February 10, 1898 in Augsburg, Germany. He manifested his interest in literature at a young age, writing poetry and book reviews for local papers before he was 15. His flourishing career was interrupted by WWI in 1914. Brecht was lucky enough not to have been drafted into the war until the last few weeks, and he served there as a medical orderly.² He then moved to Munich to continue his medical studies at the Munich University where he wrote his first well-known play *Baal* at only 20 years of age, years before he developed his signature theory and methodology that would later become known as Epic theatre. *Baal* was written after Brecht attended Artur Kutscher's seminar on literary style and criticism.³ Perhaps here Brecht demonstrated his revolutionary nature, as *Baal* was written in response to Hanns Johst's play *The Lonely One*. Johst attended Kutscher's seminar as did Brecht and after *The Lonely One* became a success Brecht did not hold back with his contempt, criticizing expressionism and Johst's nationalistic political beliefs. Moreover, Brecht went as far as stating that he could write a better play within four days. Brecht perhaps took longer than that to finish the play (Martin Esslin in *Brecht: The choice of evils* states that Brecht did in fact deliver, other authors are more sceptic, pointing out that even if Brecht did meet the deadline, he used most of his previously written poems). Brecht did finish the play nonetheless and *Baal* became Brecht's first significant attempt on drama.⁴ John Fuegi even accurately points out John Willett's observation that *Baal* might act as a work of Brecht's that prompted him to take his "poetic activity to the stage."⁵ Given the fact that Brecht had focused primarily on poetry up until this point, and after *Baal*, his focus shifted to drama, Willett's observation seems accurate.

Brecht's political views always went hand in hand with his writings and strongly influenced his work as a playwright and theatre practitioner. Brecht was a supporter of communism, he, however, never became a member of the communist party in Germany (KPD) as he did not want to be constricted by its rules and restrictions. Moreover, as Brecht wrote in his journal, "I greatly like the proletariat's belief in its final victory. But the proletariat's closely

² Martin Esslin, *Brecht, a Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work and His Opinions* (London: Heinemann, 1965), 6-7.

³ Stephen Parker, *Bertolt Brecht: A Literary Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 99.

⁴ John Fuegi, *Brecht and Company: Sex, Politics, and the Making of the Modern Drama* (New York: Grove Press, 2002), 39.

⁵ Fuegi, *Brecht and Company*, 40.

connected belief in various other things it has been told, I find disturbing.”⁶ By not joining the party, Brecht did not have to limit himself in his political views and did not have to answer for them. Fuegi remarks that Brecht did not want to submit his day-to-day life to the party’s aesthetics and discipline.⁷

Brecht’s political stands were also closely connected to his social views. He was of a deep anti-bourgeoisie attitude, even though he was born into a middle-class family. Regarding the photo taken in 1899, in which Brecht poses in fancy clothes, Fuegi comments, “No hint here of the Brecht who would become the scourge of the bourgeoisie.”⁸ Indeed, Brecht grew to despise bourgeoisie greatly. He even changed his name for sounding too patriotic from Eugene Friedrich Berthold to simply Bertolt.⁹ The disdain for bourgeoisie and disappointment in society invigorated during the war and especially at the end of it, in November 1918, when Brecht’s revolutionary nature surfaced.¹⁰ Brecht is arguably best known for his compilation of drama theory and practice which, as Elin Diamond estimates, took him over 30 years to finish and most of which was done while he was in exile.¹¹ Brecht was forced to flee Germany in 1933 when he started to feel the pressure of the Nazi party gaining power and he spent the upcoming 15 years in countries in Europe and the USA. After Hitler’s overthrow, Brecht returned to Germany and continued his work as a theatre practitioner.¹²

The new theatre Brecht created has influenced many modern theatres, including the British one. The sole existence of British Epic Theatre can be dated from the mid-20 century, more precisely 1956, marked by the visit of Brecht’s theatre company Berliner Ensemble in London. Brecht’s productions of *Mother Courage*, *The Caucasian Circle* and *Drums and Trumpets* were presented to the British audiences and immediately caught the attention with its style. Of course, Brecht’s plays were performed in German so the language barrier presented a problem for most of the British who rarely understood any German. John Willett, who would become Brecht’s chief translator to English, did not publish the translation of Brecht’s seminal theories compiled in *Brecht on Theatre* until 1964¹³, and so the meaning and message of what

⁶ Bertolt Brecht, Hugh Rorrison and John Willett, *Journals, 1934-55* (London: Methuen, 1993), 6.

⁷ Fuegi, *Brecht and Company*, 173.

⁸ John Fuegi, *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.

⁹ Martin Esslin, *Brecht, a Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work and His Opinions* (London: Heinemann, 1965), 4.

¹⁰ Esslin, *A choice of Evils*, 8.

¹¹ Elin Diamond, "Brechtian Theory/ Feminist Theory: Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism," *TDR* (1988-) 32, no. 1 (1988): 83.

¹² David Barnett, *A history of the Berliner Ensemble* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

¹³ Janelle G. Reinelt, *After Brecht: British Epic Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 7-8.

Brecht thought and tried to convey through his dramatic work remained mainly topics for discussions and interpretation. The obscurity and unclearness of what Brecht stood for was even harder to overcome given that Brecht passed a month before the London visit in 1956. However, Brecht seems to have predicted the language barrier issue, as he wrote to the performers of the Ensemble:

For our London season we need to bear two things in mind. First: we shall be offering most of the audience a pure pantomime, a kind of silent film on the stage for they know no German...Second: there is in England a long-standing fear that German art (literature, painting, music) must be terribly heavy, slow, laborious and pedestrian. So out playing needs to be quick, light, strong. This is not a question of hurry, but of speed, not simply of quick playing, but of quick thinking. We must keep the tempo of a run-through and infect it with strength, with our own fun. In the dialogue the exchanges must not be offered reluctantly, as when offering somebody one's last pair of boots, but must be tossed like so many balls. The audience has to see that here are a number of artists working together as a collective (ensemble) in order to convey stories, ideas, virtuoso feats to the spectator by a common effort.¹⁴

Brecht's message suggests that he planned on expanding and touring with the company abroad and spreading his iconic theatre performing style in other countries. In the message Brecht puts the language aside and encourages the group to focus on other aspects of drama. He further offers a number of tips on how to perform, worrying about the misconceptions of the British with regards to the German theatre and encouraging them to work as a group. It may come as a surprise how a piece of theatre can affect a theatre-goer who has no clue what is being said on stage, Brecht's plays, however, offer more than only a story conveyed via language. Martin Esslin, a great author, critic and producer, names three main points that affected British audiences most in Brecht's productions - stage design, lighting and music.¹⁵ It would be definitely wrong to dismiss Brecht's language as something unimportant or not worth mentioning, as he won the Kleist Prize in 1922 for his three plays *Drums in the Night*, *Baal* and *In the Jungle*, for whose language he was praised. In Brecht's *Collected plays* the judge of the award committee comments, "His [Brecht's] language is vivid without being deliberately poetic, symbolical without being over literary. Brecht is a dramatist because his language is felt physically in the round."¹⁶ Brecht's Ensemble therefore came into the public's subconscious as

¹⁴ Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. John Willett (London, Hertford and Harlow: Shenvall Press, 1964 (1957)), 283.

¹⁵ Martin Esslin, *Reflections: Essays on Modern Theatre* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 78.

¹⁶ Bertolt Brecht, John Willett and Ralph Manheim, introduction to *Collected plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 1994), ix.

a new kind of theatre that differed from all the previously known theatres in Great Britain. Esslin comments on the initial influence on British audiences:

So Brecht became the focal point, the rallying cry of the younger generation of theatrical artists who had realized that the future of the theatre as a serious vehicle for ideas, enlightenment, and beauty depended on the recognition that the commercial system simply was no longer able to provide the basis for viable drama.¹⁷

The British were aghast by the youthful and experimental productions and saw them as a new way to express the disagreements with the social and political situations. The Berliner Ensemble, changing the idea of what a state-subsidized theatre had to be like, started the process of some of today's most significant state-subsidized theatres being established, namely the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1961 and the National Theatre in 1963.¹⁸ The influence of Brecht on these theatres is evident. According to Reinelt, "in each of the four major theaters of this period key leadership figures came to champion and emulate Brechtian theatre."¹⁹ By key figures Reinelt means predominately directors of the companies, namely Peter Hall, William Gaskill and John Dexter. Among the key figures who were also present at the birth of Epic theatre in Britain was a writer and critic Kenneth Tynan. Tynan was a critic of *The Observer* and a person who was to blame for a sudden status that Brecht had gained amongst the theatre community in Britain.²⁰ According to Esslin, Tynan was a rare exception in the critical reception of Brecht's productions in the first years in Britain, as the vast majority of critics were harshly dismissive of Brecht, some even going as far as to calling him a fraud. Tynan saw a few productions of Brecht's plays himself and he was stunned by them, praising Brecht for his directive skills and moreover for the dedication Brecht had for his goals and ideals.²¹ Indeed, Brecht's dedication to his methods was astounding. His goals were to change the theatre from, as Esslin calls it 'an after-dinner entertainment', to a medium that could change the society and provoke them, make them think about what is happening on stage. The audiences were not supposed to empathize with and feel for the characters they see on stage, instead Brecht expected them to see theatre the same way he did; as he explained in *Brecht on Theatre*:

I don't let my feelings intrude in my dramatic work. It'd give a false view of the world. I aim at an extremely classical, cold, highly intellectual style of performance. I'm not writing for the scum who want to have the cockles of their hearts warmed.²²

¹⁷ Esslin, *Reflections*, 77.

¹⁸ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 6.

¹⁹ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 6.

²⁰ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 6.

²¹ Esslin, *Reflections*, 76.

²² Brecht, *Brecht on theatre*, 14.

And to the questioner's following comment suggesting that people who come to the theatre may want their hearts to "flow over", he added:

The one tribute we can pay the audience is to treat it as thoroughly intelligent. It is utterly wrong to treat people as simpletons when they are grown up at seventeen. I appeal to the reason.²³

To achieve this sense of distance, Brecht developed the alienation effect (*verfremdungseffect* originally in German). This theatrical device was developed to achieve the required perception of theatre, and included many different specific methods incorporated within a play to remind the audiences that what they see on stage is in fact only a piece of theatre and not an actual real event, and therefore make the audience rethink the conditions they live in and their social conditions. In contrast to "naturalistic" theatre, in which the goal was to draw the audience into the atmosphere of the play and to make them sympathize with the actors as if the viewer was part of the play, Brecht's productions were filled with actors in sloppy or incomplete costumes, fragmentary sets, lighting equipment present on stage during plays for the audiences to see, open curtains during set rearrangements, or even narrators stepping out of their roles to comment on the events happening.²⁴ John Elson adds that Brecht would also encourage smoking in theatres and would sometimes demand keeping the lights turned on so the audiences are less tempted to be drawn into the action.²⁵ The alienation effect therefore affected directors, stage designers and subsequently also actors. Peter Brook, one of the key figures of British theatre at the time Brecht's Ensemble visited London, was impressed by Brecht and spoke highly of the alienation effect. As mentioned by J.L. Styan, Brook even regarded the alienation effect to be an approach of "quite incredible power".²⁶ Brook worked at the Royal Shakespeare Company as a director and incorporated a lot of Brechtian methods into his productions. Albert Hunt and Geoffrey Reeves mark Brook's shift from his previous work to more Brechtian with two plays that Brook took on to direct in 1957 and in 1964 by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *The Visit* and *The Physicist*. Some Brechtian devices were proved to have been found by critics in the two productions, nonetheless, Brook's interest in Brecht was not all that profound after all. Brook did not understand, or maybe did not care, what the meaning behind

²³ Brecht, *Brecht on theatre*, 14.

²⁴ "Epic Theatre Conventions," *The Drama Teacher*, accessed September 2, 2016, <http://www.thedramateacher.com/epic-theatre-conventions/>

²⁵ John Elson, *Post-war British Theatre* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976), 114.

²⁶ J.L. Styan, *Modern drama in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 184.

the theatre was for Brecht.²⁷ Brook simply adopted the style of Brechtian theatre and was not interested in any philosophy behind it, in contrast to Brecht, for whom philosophy, namely the fact that theatre is a means to educate and prompt people to change, was the essential part. Nonetheless, it would be hard to find anybody who assimilated Brecht's theater practice more seamlessly than Peter Brook, given the general foreknowledge about Brecht's theories, aside from the performances of the Ensemble in German. Brook produced *King Lear* in 1962 at the Royal Shakespeare Company, and Brecht's impact is evident in the play, namely in stage design. J.L. Styan comments on the set of *King Lear* pointing out the typical uniform lighting and the use of only few props and costumes.²⁸ Esslin adds to Brecht's impact on *King Lear* by mentioning acting, which he regards as "unheroic, relaxed, free of ravings and rantings".²⁹

A few other theatre practitioners were attracted to Brecht's work, namely Joan Littlewood, William Gaskill and John Dexter. As the understanding of Brecht in Britain was still very superficial and if the public knew any, it was only a smattering, most of the productions were not successful. Esslin, however, praises Joan Littlewood, as one of a few directors making a notable impact on British theatre in the 1950s, especially with her attempt on Brechtian use of music in her plays, and William Gaskill and his production of *Recruiting Officer* in 1963.³⁰ Although Brechtian devices and experiments were to be found in Littlewood's productions in her Theatre Workshop, her attempt to establish a theatre of working-class values and aesthetics failed.³¹ The Theatre Workshop was not an easy journey. The group developed over the years from the troupe called Theatre Union which Littlewood founded with her husband Ewan MacColl in the 1930s. The group, being led by Littlewood and MacColl, who were both communists, saw theatre as a tool that could be used to fight, teach and provoke. After the transformation into the Theatre Workshop in 1945, the group's repertoire still focused primarily on the working-class audiences. Even though Brecht had not come into many people's subconscious in 1956 yet, the Workshop's productions had started to be visibly 'Brechtian'. Numerous similarities are undeniably to be found, not only concerning the company's interest in the working-class, but also in design, lighting techniques and the use of dance and music in its productions. Zarhy-Levo even names influential figures like

²⁷ Albert Hunt and Geoffrey Reeves, *Peter Brook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27.

²⁸ Styan, *Modern drama in theory and practice*, 184.

²⁹ Esslin, *Reflections*, 80.

³⁰ Esslin, *Reflections*, 78-79.

³¹ Styan, *Modern drama in theory and practice*, 185.

Meyerhold and Piscator, who inspired the productions of the company and who were also great inspirations of Brecht's theoretical writings as well as theatre practices.³²

In the years between the two visits (1956 and 1965), British drama experienced a number of "Brechtian" productions, none of which was particularly successful, or even not necessarily "Brechtian" in the sense Brecht himself intended his theatre to be. Nevertheless, there is a large number of productions that became important, even if only as a springboard thanks to which a lesson could be learned for the future. To name some important figures, a director Joan Littlewood with her production of *The Hostage* in 1959³³, William Gaskill who took on a number of Brecht's plays such as *Mother Courage, Baal* or *Caucasian Chalk Circle*³⁴ or Peter Brook with his production of *King Lear* in 1962³⁵ were a few key figures who stood at the beginning of the British Epic Theatre. Apart from directors, John Arden also proved his understanding of Brecht very early. After seeing Brecht's Ensemble perform in London in 1956, Arden's shift from realistic style to more experimental one became apparent, e.g. in the iconic play *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, one of the most praised Brechtian plays in Britain.³⁶

With the exception of Arden, however, the real understanding of Brecht came with the second visit of the Ensemble.

The Berliner Ensemble paid another visit to London in 1965. Geoffrey Reeves comments:

It wasn't until the Berliner returned in 1965, with five productions at the Old Vic, that they made any impact. By then there was an audience curious to see what Epic really meant on the stage, after having endured various productions either written or directed, according to the critics, in a Brechtian manner.³⁷

Saying that the first visit of the Berliner Ensemble in London had no effect would be unfair and also untrue. Some of today's well known British playwrights saw the performances, e.g. Edward Bond, and those who did not see them personally read articles by Kenneth Tynan about Brecht's productions in *The Observer*. However, the second visit was perhaps more influential in the way the first visit fundamentally could not have been. Upon the first visit, the British had no background knowledge on Brecht and the lack of knowledge of German language

³² Yael Zarhy-Levo, *The Making of Theatrical Reputations: Studies from the Modern London Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008), 64.

³³ Esslin, *Reflections*, 78.

³⁴ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 7.

³⁵ Styan, *Modern drama in theory and practice*, 184.

³⁶ Styan, *Modern drama in theory and practice*, 186.

³⁷ Hunt and Reeves, *Peter Brook*, 28.

left many British authors almost guessing what Brecht was trying to convey, resulting in already mentioned focus on aspects such as design and music. However, in 1964 John Willett's English translation of Brecht's theories compiled in *Brecht on Theatre* came out and the ignorance of Brecht amongst the British was massively eliminated, as not many British authors admitted to have seen Brecht's productions, but many have read Willett's translation.³⁸

Sadly, as Esslin points out, in 1964, Brecht's influential impact on the British theatre community was put on hold, as the critics were angered by the Communist content of Tony Richardson's production of Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyard*, resulting in what appeared to be the end of Brecht in England. A few weeks after the incident, however, the Berliner Ensemble brought *Aurturo Ui*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Days of the Commune*, and excerpts from *Mahagonny* to London.³⁹ The second visit of the Berliner Ensemble perhaps marks the real beginning of the British Epic Theatre, as up until then, the understanding of Brecht was extremely limited and so the works produced by British authors were sometimes hard to label as Brechtian. Upon the second visit the British audiences perhaps simply knew what to expect.

2 BRITISH EPIC THEATRE

The number of playwrights, directors and theatre practitioners that were affected by Brecht are too many to mention. Also, there is no one way or form to measure the effect or the influence. Authors like David Hare would not even admit to being influenced by Brecht's work, but still many parallels of both authors' works are to be found. Perhaps it was inevitable to be completely unaware of what Brecht brought to England and even those who disagreed with his theories and rebelled against them resembled Brecht in that manner – rebels who did not hesitate to express their distaste with other ideologies other than their own. There is no one aspect of Epic theatre that would affect the British independently, instead, they were, as Reinelt quotes William Gaskell's chronicles, "unanimous in [our] admiration for the work, perhaps for different reasons. We believed that it set a standard to be emulated, but we never theorized as to how this was to be achieved."⁴⁰ Indeed, the ways in which Brecht worked his way into the works of such authors as Edward Bond, John Arden, Arnold Wesker, John Osborne, Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill, Trevor Griffiths or John McGrath are various.

³⁸ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 8.

³⁹ Esslin, *Reflections*, 82.

⁴⁰ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 6-7.

The fact that all the playwrights were affected by Brecht to various extents is understandable, as is the fact that not all were plain followers and successors of his, and did not agree with him on *every* ideology of his theories. However, there is perhaps some common ground that could be found in the works of the vast majority, if not all, of the playwrights in England that were considered Brechtian. Reinelt names three aspects that are often present in Brechtian British playwrights' works – gestus, epic structure and historicization. The result of the three concepts is the aforementioned alienation effect.⁴¹ This device, also called distancing or estrangement, affected many, from playwrights to directors and also actors.

The Royal Court theatre under the direction of George Devine (1956-1965) and William Gaskill (1965-1972) became synonymous to a new era of what theatre could mean in Britain. Many of the Brechtian playwrights started out at the Royal Court. Devine would take new playwrights under his wing at the theatre and lead the new wave of the generation of uncompromising playwrights whose works would be thought-provoking and open about the stands on social and political issues.⁴² Devine expressed his admiration for Brecht's style of performing when he said the following about the Berliner Ensemble's performances in 1956 in London:

Although the actors seemed to be like children playing, they gave the impression that they worked because they liked and believed in what they had to portray. Such devotion changes everything that comes off the stage. There was none of the affected, clichéd acting which is current in our theatre.⁴³

Devine's open admiration for Brecht was inflicted on many playwrights that started working at the Royal Court. William Gaskill, a director taking over Devine in 1965, shared the admiration of Brecht and continued with the "Brecht fever". Most notably, perhaps, Gaskill supported the arguably most successful, prolific and undeniably Brechtian author Edward Bond who started working at the Royal Court in 1958. Under Gaskill's direction and after seeing the Brecht's Ensemble perform in London in 1956, Bond's style of writing rapidly shifted from his naturalistic beginnings with two of his initial works *The Pope's Wedding* (1962) and *Saved* (1965)⁴⁴ to the style that in many aspects epitomizes Brechtian theatre.⁴⁵ Bond incorporated a

⁴¹ Reinelt, introduction to *After Brecht*, 8.

⁴² "History - Royal Court," Royal Court, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/about-us/history/>.

⁴³ Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks, *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 265.

⁴⁴ Jenny S. Spencer, *Dramatic Strategies in the Plays of Edward Bond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 14.

⁴⁵ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 51.

number of aspects of Brecht's theatre into his work, primarily historicization and the gestus device.⁴⁶ Bond also developed his own device called "aggro-effect", which focused on violence in his plays and for which he was severely criticized.⁴⁷ Stanton B. Garner quotes Bond himself in his book: "In contrast to Brecht, I think it's necessary to disturb an audience emotionally, to involve them emotionally in my plays."⁴⁸ Jenny S. Spencer adds, "Bond's plays immerse actors and audiences in questions involving history in politics that more popular playwrights may prefer not to face."⁴⁹ Bond was, much like Brecht, a socialist and as a political writer he was aware of social and cultural happenings in the world that he would often incorporate in his writings. Controversy is present throughout his works constantly, as he was criticized for his abundant use of violence and difficult social issues. Bond's play *Early Morning* (1968) was banned for a period of time and later reprised and performed. It was the first of Bond's plays that re-wrote actual history and parodied it using a controversial content focusing on a lesbian relationship between the Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale, and the princes George and Arthur portrayed as conjoined twins.⁵⁰ The technique of historicization allows the audience to look at the play from a certain distance and therefore it helps to make links to the present. Readers of Bond must prepare for no light reading as Bond's plays are said to be intellectually demanding and without broad appeal.⁵¹ In the plays, the alienation effect is a major technique used to provoke audiences to think and to "challenge an unexamined habit of attending the theatre."⁵² The resemblance to Brecht in this matter is obvious, as Brecht's intentions always were to put the "art" of the theatre first instead of being just entertainment without any deeper purpose. Edward Bond's work was political and he often used contemporary political and social issues as settings for his plays. *Lear* (1971), the play written as a reaction to William Shakespeare's *King Lear* is, as well as many other Bond's plays, very controversial, primarily due to its abundant use of violence. The overuse of violence made the message of the play, i.e. to make the audience realize the reality in which they live and make them take action against any wrongdoings, heard very loud, which was essentially Bond's goal. Michael Patterson further mentions the infamous scene from *Saved* in which a baby is stoned to death.⁵³ Such

⁴⁶ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 51-53.

⁴⁷ Wagdi Zeid, *Misreading Shakespeare: Modern Playwrights and the Quest for Originality* (Bloomington, IN: IU Universe, 2012), 21.

⁴⁸ Stanton B. Garner, "Post-Brechtian Anatomies: Weiss, Bond, and the Politics of Embodiment," *Theatre Journal* 42, no. 2 (1990): 161.

⁴⁹ Spencer, acknowledgements to *Dramatic Strategies*, xiv.

⁵⁰ Spencer *Dramatic Strategies*, 153.

⁵¹ Spencer, introduction to *Dramatic Strategies*, 3.

⁵² Spencer, introduction to *Dramatic Strategies*, 2.

⁵³ Michael Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre: Post-War British Playwrights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 145.

concrete images of violence simply cannot leave the audiences uninterested and lukewarm. Sameeulhaq Nazki emphasizes what Bond said about his use of violence:

Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future. People who do not want writers to write about violence want to stop them writing about us and our time. It would be immoral not to write about violence.⁵⁴

Bond blames society for the violence hidden in every person, as society alienates the person from their true self, which, according to Bond, is not violent on its own and is, on the contrary, peaceful in nature. The violence is still primarily presented as an act of society rather than an individual in Bond's works. Reinelt cites Bond himself, "I have to show not 'individual' psychology but 'social' psychology – that is, psychology politically determined."⁵⁵ For instance, in *Saved*, the murder committed by the men of the underclass is justified as the act of disapproval of the division of classes, which causes the upper class make the division even more strict and diverse.⁵⁶ A clear debt to Brecht is also evident in the use of juxtaposition via which the author presents a viewer with two contrasting faces of a character. Patterson explains juxtaposition as:

...striking images side by side and offer contradictory information to stimulate our response. An actor may speak of love, and gesture to indicate hatred; a well-fed character may talk of charity, while ignoring a starving beggar at his feet. The total picture of the stage can communicate in ways that are not easily possible with the cinematic close-up.⁵⁷

Bond used this techniques in *Lear* and *Early Morning*, and as Reinelt states, "these staged contradictions graphically embody the multiplicity of subjectivity and its subjection to time."⁵⁸ This is related to a never-ending battle of reason and emotion. A character may say something that is a product of their reasoning and suddenly share a complete opposite opinion that came from their emotional status.

Speaking of the use of music, when comparing Bond to Brecht, Bond's use of music in his plays is considerably less frequent. Music is simply a tool that Bond uses rarely, but with much deliberation and though put in the effect the song will have on the audience and in contrast

⁵⁴ Sameeulhaq Nazki, "The Discourse of Violence and its Causes and Remedies in Edward Bond's Dramaturgy," *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* (2015): 63, accessed September 14, 2016, <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/V4/n4/Nazki.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 53.

⁵⁶ Nazki, "Discourse of Violence," 64.

⁵⁷ Patterson, introduction to *Strategies of political theatre*, 3.

⁵⁸ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 52.

to the most frequent reason for the use of music, Bond does not use songs in order to enhance the emotional experience.⁵⁹ Elizabeth Hale Winkler writes that Bond “tries to use music as a means of conveying a meaning.”⁶⁰ She explains the statement by saying that Bond wanted people to think about why a particular piece of music is used in a particular part of the play, as opposed to the use of music in the background in order to ‘get lost in the moment’.⁶¹

Another significant author of the first generation of the post-Brechtian authors in Britain is John Arden. Arden praised Brecht’s theatre for its disapproval of naturalistic approach to writing. Michael Patterson states that Arden, however, does not admit to Brecht as his model or example, he sees Brecht simply as an author that went the same literary path inspired by the same exotic influences of Japanese and Chinese theatres.⁶² Arden resembles Bond as well as Brecht in his quest to change the structure of society. As John Russell Taylor writes, “Arden brings us face to face with it [dilemma of concepts as heroism and villainy] in its baldest form by writing plays which appear to be about general social, moral and political issues.”⁶³ Similarities to Brecht are evident here, as Arden expects the audience to make a decision about the situation that he presents in his plays on their own. Being a leftish writer, Arden sympathized and often wrote about the working class. Awam Amkpa writes:

Arden articulates his political esthetics allegorically, rather than presenting them as overt expressions of alienation. The ludic tenor of his style stems from its visualization of drama as a dialogical cultural practice rather than a well-made philosophical statement eloquently delivered to the audience.⁶⁴

Theatre, therefore, as Amkpa further explains, should not be only a form of entertainment but primarily for uniting our society.⁶⁵

John Arden started his professional literary career at the Royal Court under the direction of George Devine. Among his early work belong the plays *The Waters of Babylon* (1957), *Live Like Pigs* (1958) and probably his best-known play *Sergeant Musgrave’s Dance* (1959). Arden, today a highly praised and appreciated playwright, received mostly bad reviews at the time of his productions in the 1950s. Critics slammed his early plays because of their difficult themes

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Hale Winkler, *The Function of Song in Contemporary British Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 131-132.

⁶⁰ Winkler, *The Function of Song*, 133.

⁶¹ Winkler, *The Function of Song*, 133.

⁶² Patterson, *Strategies of political theatre*, 45.

⁶³ John Russell Taylor, *Anger and After* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 84.

⁶⁴ Awam Amkpa, *Theatre and Postcolonial Desires* (London: Routledge, 2004), 117.

⁶⁵ Amkpa, *Postcolonial Desires*, 117.

and complex style. Here is what the *Sunday Times* critic Harold Hobson wrote after the production of *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*: "Another frightful ordeal. It is time someone reminded our advanced dramatists that the principal function of the theatre is to give pleasure...It is the duty of the theatre, not to make men better, but to render them harmlessly happy."⁶⁶ Other critics were even more abrasive with their remarks, e.g. Eric Keown saying that the play "could have been written more persuasively by an intelligent child".⁶⁷ It is clear from Hobson's review that people still saw theatre primarily as entertainment, which is what Arden argued against. What added to the idea that Arden's theatre was not pleasurable and casual enough was his complex style. Perhaps the biggest similarity to Brecht could be considered Arden's use of history as a device for prompting people to change. The device of historicization is repeatedly used throughout the author's work and being a political writer, Arden would often use history and apply the real historical stories to present situations.⁶⁸ Apart from the history aspect, Arden used music in his plays, dance numbers and even interrupted the play and addressed the audience.⁶⁹

Arden's style of writing is marked by "a clear separation in our minds between characters and ideas in his plays."⁷⁰ Taylor explains the role of characters in Arden's plays by highlighting their tremendous complexity. The very impossibility to label a character simply 'good' or 'bad' is what makes them real and human. The audiences may understand the problem that the characters have, but still might not approve of the solution or reaction of the character to it.⁷¹ Arden, therefore, does not offer a solution of social or political problems, he simply presents the problems via his signature thought and conscience-provoking plays and lets the spectator make up their mind. Otherwise, by associating a concept and character, a spectator might be led to a wrong conclusion.

Arden's later plays never reached the level of success that came after the recognition of his pure genius for drama in his early plays. After he married Margaretta D'Arcy and a disagreement with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Arden's leftish political view prompted him to stay out of spotlight.⁷² Arden had a dispute with the company because of the staging of

⁶⁶ Amkpa, *Postcolonial Desires*, 122-123.

⁶⁷ Amkpa, *Postcolonial Desires*, 123.

⁶⁸ Mary Luckhurst, *A Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama: 1880 – 2005* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 153.

⁶⁹ Christopher Innes, *Modern British Drama: The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132.

⁷⁰ Taylor, *Anger and after*, 167.

⁷¹ Taylor, *Anger and after*, 85.

⁷² Martin Banham, *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32.

his play *The Island of the Mighty* (1972), which he found dissatisfying and unable to provide the audience with the political message of it, because of distractions in the form of staging and music.⁷³

It was not easy, if not impossible, to not have heard about Brecht in Britain in the 1950s. Esslin brings up an excellent point in his book, mentioning the fact that even realistic playwrights such as John Osborne and Arnold Wesker were unable not to get a taste of Brecht's legacy in their writings. Of course, realistic plays were the opposite of what Brecht tried to achieve, nonetheless, some of Brecht's techniques did manage to imprint themselves in the works of realist writers. Arnold Wesker's work resembles Brecht in his use of storytelling devices that are present in works such as *Chips with Everything* (1962) or *Their Very Own and Golden City* (1966).⁷⁴ Wesker shared the leftish beliefs with Brecht and also used his art to warn about bourgeoisie. When asked whether he lets his feelings influence his work, Wesker answered:

No, it [the pessimistic conclusion of Wesker's plays *Talking about Jerusalem* and *Chips with Everything*] reflects very simply one of the functions of art – to serve as a warning. *Chips* is a warning. It says to the ruling class: you can no longer kid us. We know the way it happens. And to those who are ruled: look, boys, this is the way it happens, and this is the way it will end if you don't recognize that you are very sweetly but very definitely being put in your place.⁷⁵

When further asked about the idea of flash-forward technique, Wesker does not mention Brecht as an inspiration, he simply explains what the technique meant to him and his work, "The form of the flash-forward gave me the opportunity to cheat, to have two endings, [...]. The problem is: is the weight of the reality-stream more depressing than the weight of the innocence-stream is encouraging?"⁷⁶ Despite Wesker's refusal of Brecht as an influence, Esslin does not hesitate to assign the use of epic techniques in Wesker's work to Brecht, as he believes that Brecht became a proper example and an instigator for epic techniques that found their way into works of authors that were seemingly of a completely different art forms.⁷⁷

John Osborne, though primarily a realistic writer as well as Wesker, also incorporated some of the techniques that are considered Brechtian in his plays. His attempt to draw subject

⁷³ Luckhurst, *Modern British and Irish Drama*, 154.

⁷⁴ Esslin, *Reflections*, 84.

⁷⁵ Arnold Wesker, Simon Trussler and Kelly Morris, "His Very Own and Golden City: An Interview with Arnold Wesker." *The Tulane Drama Review* 11, no. 2 (1966): 199.

⁷⁶ Wesker, Trussler and Morris, "Own and Golden City," 200.

⁷⁷ Esslin, *Reflections*, 84.

matter for his plays from history is present in a number of Osborne's works, which Martin Esslin quite judiciously calls a mistake. The main reason for his critical judgement is the fact that Osborne's knowledge of the subject matter was far from profound and therefore the final plays, e.g. *Luther* (1961), were immensely inaccurate from the historical point of view. Esslin further calls *Luther* "anything but epic theatre – it is an attempt to clothe personal psychological problems in the superficial garb of historical drama."⁷⁸ Esslin here criticizes Osborne for attempting to use Brechtian devices without proper knowledge of them. On the other hand, when it comes to the actual subject matter of the plays, Esslin praises Osborne for his eloquence.⁷⁹ All in all, the superficial knowledge of Brecht's techniques resulted in plays that cannot be regarded as epic and may even have harmed the reputation of a gifted playwright like Osborne, because of his unadvised use of them. After all, it is the content, not the form that Esslin criticizes.

As for other realistic writers, it is necessary to mention Shelagh Delaney. The playwright seeped into the theatre-going public's subconscious in 1958 when her first play *A Taste of Honey* was produced in London by the Theatre Workshop.⁸⁰ Delaney is, much like Arnold Wesker and John Osborne, considered a realistic playwright, a kitchen-sink one to be precise. In her plays Delaney often deals with the problematics of working class and everyday issues, often the ones she had to endure herself. The typical style of kitchen-sink drama is evident throughout the whole play, primarily when considering the plot and setting. The play focuses on the relationships in a dysfunctional family and their social issues. Today, the play is considered Delaney's greatest work and is praised by critics for its authenticity and realistic depiction of social issues. The play was an immediate success which is demonstrated by its multiple revivals in the West End and Broadway and even by the fact that the play was made into a movie in 1961.⁸¹ What cannot go unnoticed, however, is the impact of Joan Littlewood, under whose direction was the first production of the play performed. Littlewood is also the reason Delaney is listed here, among authors whose work was influenced by Brecht. *A Taste of Honey* is a great example of how theatrical styles can coincide even within one piece of art, and take inspiration and features from one another. Nadine Holdsworth described how this theory is imprinted in *A Taste of Honey*, saying that Joan Littlewood together with the actors would make several changes and revisions in the original text by Delaney during rehearsals, making

⁷⁸ Esslin, *Reflections*, 84.

⁷⁹ Esslin, *Reflections*, 84-85.

⁸⁰ Maggie B. Gale and John F. Deeney, *Fifty Modern and Contemporary Dramatists* (London: Routledge, 2015), 72.

⁸¹ Nadine Holdsworth, *Joan Littlewood's Theatre* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 185.

the characters more distinctive through the medium of improvisation. Littlewood also adjusted the stage design and costumes, making the characters wear outlandish outfits that underlined their differences.⁸² Apart from changes in apparel, Littlewood embellished the play by directly addressing the audience, incorporating a few music numbers and even by having a band present on stage with the actors during the productions.⁸³ As Holdsworth concludes, “these characters inhabit the same social space, but they inhabit completely different theatrical conventions.”⁸⁴ The inputs and changes Littlewood worked in the play function as alienating devices that serve as reminders that what is happening on stage is only a reenactment of reality, and therefore make *A Taste of Honey* under Littlewood’s direction partially epic.

As for the contemporary British writers who epitomize Brechtian theatre, attention must be paid to Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill and Trevor Griffiths and John McGrath. Each one of these authors enriched their work by theatrical elements that could be defined as epic.

“Did Shakespeare have to be a mass murderer to write *Macbeth*?”⁸⁵, asks Howard Brenton in his book *Brenton Plays: 1: Christie in Love; The Churchill Play; Weapons of Happiness*. Prefacing his book, the question functions as a talking point for those saying that naturalism is the only “right” form of drama. Brenton introduces his style of writing as one of innovations, and exemplifies his claim by mentioning his play *Magnificence* whose settings change significantly throughout the scenes, creating an inconsistently looking play. This is what Brenton said about his use of different styles in *Magnificence*, as Reinelt notes in *After Brecht*: “Coherence within a play is not a matter of choosing to write in one style. That’s just sameness, superficial neatness. Actual coherence means using many different styles, moulding them, a deliberate process of selection, in order to express that whole within a play.”⁸⁶ The inconsistency, innovation and experiment are characteristics that have become Brenton’s trademarks. Brenton is also very clear about his motivation for writing, about his target audience, as he further writes in his book:

The great socialist leaders wake in their cells in South Africa, in South America, as do the cadres in Soweto and Nicaragua, confident that history is moving as surely as the planet moves. But millions do not have that vision, confidence and heroism, and some are traumatized by defeat. It is they whom I want to write about – the young, uneducated workers in *Weapons of Happiness* [...] the innocent prisoners in *The Churchill Play* caught in a national tragedy, the coming of a kind of fascism to Britain, which they don’t

⁸² Holdsworth, *Littlewood’s Theatre*, 191.

⁸³ Gale and Deeney, *Fifty Modern Dramatists*, 73.

⁸⁴ Holdsworth, *Littlewood’s Theatre*, 191.

⁸⁵ Howard Brenton, preface to *Plays, One* (London: Methuen, 1986)

⁸⁶ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 22.

even realize is happening until it hits them [...] For me, people like these are the salt of the earth. I try to dramatize them coming to life, gaining visions, confidence and courage in their own way. If the Left convinces and wins people like them, the British Revolution will be unstoppable.⁸⁷

Reinelt names a slew of reasons why Brenton's theatre bears similarities to Brecht, among which is his use of irony, sneer and a harsh critique of bourgeoisie.⁸⁸ Patterson further assigns one of the greatest influences of Brecht to Brenton's use of *gestus*.⁸⁹ *Gestus* helps actors "speak without speaking", filling the moments in which words could not possibly be enough or as effective as a simple stare or face expression are. The scenes gain intensity as the audiences sit e.g. through the silence of two people staring at each other, and simultaneously lessens the importance of the actual scripted words, as the play can and should be understood even "by a deaf member of the audience".⁹⁰ Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiraghi quote Carl Weber's explanation of what 'gestus' is in their article on Brecht's epic techniques: *Gestus* is "an ensemble of the body and its movements and gestures, the face and its mimetic expressions, the voice and its sounds and inflections, speech with its patterns and rhythms, costume, makeup, props."⁹¹ Brenton's work is similar to Brecht's in its insistence on the importance of *the message*.

Perhaps more than any other, Brenton's technique of involving the audience in the play is the most striking one as for the similarities to Brecht. Brenton's experiments in theatre involved the audience participating in the plays, because audience functions as a valuable part of social structure and therefore helps evoke the social content in the plays. The audience watching Brenton's plays are considered part of the play and expected to react and judge the actions taking place on stage. However, making a clear judgement about characters is often a difficult task in Brenton's plays given their complexity and a difficulty to label them as simply good or bad. Reinelt exemplifies this dilemma on the play *Christie in Love* (1969) in which the main character is a murderer of several women, therefore should clearly be perceived as a villain, nonetheless, Brenton portrays the remaining characters as non-living dolls, hence making the murderer the most human of all the characters. The audience is left uncertain of what to feel and full of inner struggle when realizing they may be sympathizing with a

⁸⁷ Kate Dorney, *The Changing Language of Modern English Drama, 1945-2005* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 173.

⁸⁸ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 18.

⁸⁹ Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre*, 101.

⁹⁰ Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre*, 101.

⁹¹ Behrooz Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Telli Beiraghi, "Brechtian Epic Elements in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*," *OALib* 03, no. 02 (2016): 2, accessed October 10, 2016, doi:10.4236/oalib.1102407.

murderer.⁹² After one of the latest productions of the play, performed at the King's Head Theatre in London in 2016, the young reviewer Connie Stride comments on the play saying:

Taylor [the actor playing the part of Christie/the murderer] gives an unnervingly realistic performance as Christie, speaking softly as he did and at times I was unsure whether I should pity him or not, a feeling that definitely gives Taylor's portrayal an edge. I was uncertain of Curran's rather comic and shouty portrayal as the Inspector. Perhaps it is an issue of script rather than performer, but I felt the depiction was insensitive to the actual events that occurred and the deaths of the women he murdered. The persona that Curran creates does create an interesting rapport between himself and Taylor – making the Inspector seem more of a bad guy than the murderer – Christie – himself.⁹³

As Stride confirmed, simplifying the characters by labeling them as simply heroes or villains is not quite possible as there are times in the play when the audience is torn between sympathizing and despising with/of the characters. Learning to accept the dilemma is what Brenton wants to evoke in his audience. Stride also comments on the stage design of the 2016's production, saying:

Some of the lighting and music choices I felt at times were misplaced and fairly cliché. There were frequent black outs, with flashing lights, and Taylor screaming – I understand the effect they are going for, but I feel it is much overdone. Also the use of circus music I thought was distasteful and seems a mockery of the entire situation; too much obvious spectacle when in reality eight women died.⁹⁴

From Stride's critique is evident that Brenton did take an inspiration from Brecht. The use of music that does not underline the storyline or feelings but rather interrupts the scenes' fluency with non-fitting songs amount to the alienation effect. The murder does not seem to be suitable for the circus music used in the production. What is more, the very *realization* of what music was playing is proof that it was not fitting in the scene and could be considered a tool to detach the spectator from the action. Christopher Innes, however, writing in his book *Modern British Drama: The Twentieth Century*, dismisses any similarities that Brenton shares with Brecht. Primarily concerning the resemblance in staging between the two playwrights, Innes is convinced that the similarities are superficial and should not be linked with one another.⁹⁵ This seems to be an overstatement on Innes's part given that Brenton has used and spoke about using epic techniques not only in the staging of his plays but also, and primarily, using historicization

⁹² Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 21-22.

⁹³ "Review: Christie in Love, Kings Head Theatre - A Younger Theatre," A Younger Theatre, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://www.ayoungert theatre.com/review-christie-in-love-kings-head-theatre/>.

⁹⁴ "Review: Christies in Love."

⁹⁵ Innes, *Modern British Drama*, 206.

and alienation in plenty of his works. What is perhaps more precise is what Reinelt says about Brecht, acknowledging his debt to Brecht and recognizing “the unique ways he surpasses and transforms the legacy.”⁹⁶

Caryl Churchill has proven herself as an epic playwright as well. What she shares with Brecht are her political beliefs and the disdain toward the bourgeoisie against which she often warns the audience through her plays. Churchill further agrees with Brecht’s disapproval of naturalistic style of writing which, as Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiraghi quote Paul Woodruff, “makes you accept what you see as inevitable”⁹⁷, and on the contrary, strives to achieve the opposite by making the audiences realize the reality of life and prompt change for the better.⁹⁸ Apart from the reasons for her writing, Churchill also uses a number of techniques that epitomize Brechtian theatre. She constantly incorporates all three components of the alienation effect, i.e. historicization, epic structure and *gestus*. Churchill fully acknowledges Brecht’s impact on her work, as Reinelt mentions the excerpt from Churchill’s letter:

I don’t know either the plays or the theoretical writings in great detail but I’ve soaked up quite a lot about him [Brecht] over the years. I think for writers, directors and actors working in England in the seventies his ideas have been absorbed into the general pool of shared knowledge and attitudes, so that without constantly thinking of Brecht we nevertheless imagine things in a way we might not have without him.⁹⁹

Churchill not only acknowledges the influence that Brecht had on her, but she believes that his style changed British theatre in general, and made people think about theatre in a different, more critical way.

Churchill utilizes epic techniques to not only express her thoughts on social issues but also on the topic of women’s position in society and gender roles. Linda Fitzsimmons quotes what Churchill said in an interview with John F. O’Malley: “I desperately wanted to see if I could make things happen.”¹⁰⁰ The statement describes Churchill’s overall attitude towards theatre quite well, as “make something happen” is the desired outcome of her plays. To prompt such a change Churchill utilizes the alienation effect via various specific methods in order to appeal to the audiences’ reason. In her play *Vinegar Tom* (1976) Churchill historicizes the incidents of witch-hunting from the 17th century and, through the images of anti-feminism rooted in people at that time, speaks to the audiences. To further alienate the audience from the

⁹⁶ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 25.

⁹⁷ Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiraghi, “Epic Elements in *Top Girls*,” 2.

⁹⁸ Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiraghi, “Epic Elements in *Top Girls*,” 2.

⁹⁹ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 86.

¹⁰⁰ Linda Fitzsimmons, *File on Churchill* (London: Methuen Drama, 1989), 22.

action Churchill interlards the play with contemporary songs that function as counterpoints to the historical topic of the play.¹⁰¹ Apart from historicizing, Churchill abundantly uses the Brechtian device of *gestus* to express social conditions and the way they affect people's behavior. Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiragh mention Tycer's perception of the character Gret in the play *Top Girls* (1981) pointing out the scene in which she eats soup. Tycer took the Brechtian point of view at the scene and pinpointed several observations that the soup-eating Gret scene reveals about the character, e.g. her social class or the lack of food during war.¹⁰² *Top Girls* is also a great example of Churchill's use of epic structure because her use of non-linear storyline reflects Brecht's legacy. Reinelt writes what Brecht said: "one can...take a pair of scissors and cut it into individual pieces, which remain fully capable of life."¹⁰³ *Top Girls* contains several major plotlines that are presented to the audience in a mixed order and therefore alienate the actions from the audience and put emphasis on the development of the story rather than the denouement at the end.¹⁰⁴ To further alienate the audience from the happenings and characters Churchill attempts to deconstruct the conventional identification of roles by casting men actors in women roles, same actors for multiple roles within one play or just downright non-fitting actors, e.g. a white man in the role of a black man. By alienating the characters the social structure is exposed and the audience can be more focused on the characters' social roles. Reinelt explains: "The actor demonstrates the character-as-socially-constructed to the spectator in a very literal way."¹⁰⁵ Churchill said the following about *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976):

The characters are not played by the same actors each time they appear. The audience should not have to worry exactly which character they are seeing. Each scene can be taken as a separate event rather than part of a story [...] When different actors play the parts what comes over is a large event involving many people, whose characters resonate in a way they wouldn't if they were more clearly defined.¹⁰⁶

Churchill therefore chooses to focus more on a social and collective narrative than on individual characters and their lives.

A number of British playwrights were unimpressed by Brecht, or even despised him and his theories. Amongst such authors belong David Hare and, to a certain extent, Trevor Griffiths.

¹⁰¹ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 86-87.

¹⁰² Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiraghi, "Epic Elements in *Top Girls*," 2.

¹⁰³ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 89.

¹⁰⁴ Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Beiraghi, "Epic Elements in *Top Girls*," 3.

¹⁰⁵ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 90.

¹⁰⁶ Caryl Churchill, *Plays* (London: Methuen, 1985), 184.

Griffiths is a realistic writer. However, as Reinelt points out, “Griffiths might be closer to Chekhov, Ibsen, and Strindberg than to Brecht, he is also, as he recognizes, mediated by Brecht in some specific and important ways.”¹⁰⁷ Griffiths acknowledges the influence of Brecht on his work, he still however continues to stay true to realism while some of Brechtian methods only modify his work. What the two writers do share is their view on politics. Like Brecht, Griffiths’ political beliefs are leftist and his work reflects his beliefs. In attempt to reach and incite as many people as possible with his work, Griffiths shifts his writing from theatre to television, which he sees as the medium that is more likely to speak to a larger audience. Patterson quotes Griffiths himself, “One of the reasons I wrote such a short time for the fringe is because I realized how impotent it was as a mouthpiece to the whole of society.”¹⁰⁸ The medium is obviously important to Griffiths, and theatre does not seem like enough to him for its inability to address masses as TV does.

As opposed to Brecht’s claims that realistic techniques are not useful when presenting objective reality of the world, Griffiths perceives realism as exactly that. In particular, Griffiths disagrees with the epic technique that dictates actors not to *become* the role they are playing, and subsequently with the idea of non-sympathizing with the characters. Griffiths does not share Brecht’s beliefs that acting with feeling diminishes the play in any way.¹⁰⁹ He is also quite restrained when promoting his politics in his work. In fact, as Patterson observes, when there is a political dilemma between the two characters in the play, Griffiths does not refrain from discussing other political views than the socialist one, and even depicts them in a better light than socialism. In one of his early plays – *Occupations* – Griffiths, an obdurate socialist, presents capitalism more persuasively than socialism.¹¹⁰ Despite being a political writer and trying to promote his political views, Griffiths depends on the audiences’ intelligence to determine which side is the right one to take. “Writing is always an act of discovery about the world we live in, about ourselves, about the possibilities of change and the needs for change,”¹¹¹ said Griffiths in an interview with Tony Robinson. Griffiths aspires to change the society, and in doing so he often uses the deeply Brechtian technique of historicization. In his book *Trevor Griffiths: Politics, Drama, History* Stanton B. Garner quotes Griffiths, saying, “I think the future has to be made. It has to be made by people who understand the past. That is why history

¹⁰⁷ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 146.

¹⁰⁸ Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre*, 67.

¹⁰⁹ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 144.

¹¹⁰ Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre*, 72.

¹¹¹ [Http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOv6laHcBWbmT_fHI4rc5LQ](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOv6laHcBWbmT_fHI4rc5LQ). YouTube. 2015, accessed November 1, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lumKovBsLc>.

is so important.”¹¹² Indeed, history plays an important role in the author’s work, as he often uses it and links it to the present. Griffiths assures everyone that history is not only in the past, but is as important nowadays as it was before, and most importantly, shapes the present in which we now live. Furthermore, the present moments will become history in the future, hence the importance of decision-making now.¹¹³ Griffiths therefore points at those moments in history that, in his opinion, could have changed the world today, if they had happened differently. Via the method of historicization in *Occupations* (1970), Griffiths presents the events of the 1960s’ unrest in France, which, according to the author himself, affected him deeply.¹¹⁴ Griffith took the revolution very personally, even to the extent of not being able to write directly about it, despite the desire to tell the story.¹¹⁵ The Brechtian technique of historicization presented a way of achieving to narrate history without telling the actual happenings. *Occupations* is about a revolution commenced by Italian workers who try to take over factories but fail in the end.¹¹⁶ The story is obviously a parallel to the happenings that took place in Paris in the 1960s, but through the medium of historicization Griffith distanced his personal involvement in the events in Paris and set them in Italy. The setting of the play may seem realistic at the first sight because although it is a story about a revolution, the plot unravels in one hotel room. Nevertheless, there are screened images of the revolution on the walls which provide a visual context and background to the story that is being told.¹¹⁷ On the first sight the play may seem realistic, upon the closer look, however, Brechtian hints are to be found.

The last author listed here among the authors of British Epic theatre is John McGrath. McGrath is a playwright as well as a director and a founder of his 7:84 Theatre Company. His work bears significant traces of Brecht’s influence, evident in his use of political messages, working-class ethics, audience involvement and music in his plays. Reinelt mentions that McGrath heard about Brecht when his Berliner Ensemble first visited London in 1956, but was not impressed. What did impress him, however, was the second visit in 1965 when there were publications of English translations of Brecht’s theories and, more importantly, Joan Littlewood’s productions through which McGrath learned about Brecht more thoroughly.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Stanton B. Garner, *Trevor Griffiths: Politics, Drama, History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 11.

¹¹³ Garner, *Trevor Griffiths*, 11.

¹¹⁴ Garner, *Trevor Griffiths*, 49.

¹¹⁵ Garner, *Trevor Griffiths*, 49.

¹¹⁶ Alycia Smith Howard, *Studio Shakespeare: The Royal Shakespeare Company at The Other Place* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2006), 19.

¹¹⁷ Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre*, 73.

¹¹⁸ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 179.

McGrath started writing for the Royal Court, later shifted to work in television and by the 1970s returned to theatre work in his company 7:84. The given name of the company reflects the company's disdain of bourgeoisie, as they are the numbers representing the horrifying statistics of capitalistic leaders (7%) in Great Britain who own eighty-four percent of the country's wealth. The anti-capitalist attitude prevailed in the company's productions during its whole existence.¹¹⁹ McGrath compiled his theories in *A Good Night Out*, the compilation of lectures he gave at Cambridge University in 1979. Theatre, for McGrath, tells a story and contributes to the future. Theatre changes people with its message. The author puts emphasis on the *individual*, denying the universality of theatre, as each person, class or even country can differ in understanding certain aspects of it.¹²⁰ McGrath wants to present stories with various outcomes, get various reactions from various people. Furthermore, he sees theatre as a very complex social event, not reducing the play-writing process to only writing words on paper. "There are elements in the language of the theatre beyond the text, even beyond the production, which are often more decisive, more central to one's experience of the event than the text or the production"¹²¹, argues McGrath in *A Good Night Out*. Evidenced by the statement and McGrath's play-writing history, it is obvious that the words are merely one of many equally important elements that create theatre, other elements being e.g. music, settings, audiences, venues etc. Reinelt finds McGrath so similar to Brecht that she seems to think it would be easier to list non-Brechtian devices in McGrath's work than the ones the two authors share.¹²² In *A Good Night Out*, McGrath speaks about Brecht and his list of differences between Epic theatre and, as Brecht called it, Dramatic theatre. McGrath seems amazed by Brecht's almost hostile approach to the spectator with which he disagrees and he reproaches Brecht for his *pedagogics* which, as McGrath believes, create, in a certain sense, a hierarchy between the audience and the author, a relationship that McGrath sees the same way as Stalinism vs collectivism.¹²³ McGrath wants his theatre to be collective and, as a director and playwright, does not want to talk down to people. As also evidenced by the choice of working-class venues for the productions of his 7:84, McGrath's company provided class solidarity, the music that the working-class responded to and the same language the target audience spoke.¹²⁴ McGrath also, as opposed to Brecht, encourages emotion on stage, praising the working-class for being able

¹¹⁹ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 187.

¹²⁰ John McGrath, *A Good Night Out: Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1996), 2.

¹²¹ McGrath, *Good Night Out*, 7.

¹²² Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 178.

¹²³ McGrath, *Good Night Out*, 39-41.

¹²⁴ Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 181-182.

to embrace emotion and not get embarrassed by it.¹²⁵ The legacy Brecht imprinted on McGrath's play *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* will be further discussed in the upcoming chapter. Despite a few differences between the two authors, McGrath fully acknowledges Brecht as an immensely important figure in the establishment of political theatre.

The next chapter focuses on two important plays written by British authors and attempts to find traces of specific Brechtian devices in them.

¹²⁵ Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre*, 114.

3 ANALYSIS

In this part of the paper the analyses of the chosen plays by British authors are conducted. The primary focus of the analyses is to find traces of Brecht's legacy. Arranged according to the plays' release, Arden's play is analyzed first.

3.1 *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden

Perhaps John Arden's best known play, often regarded as a masterpiece (except at the time of the play's publication and its initial reviews) was first produced in 1959 in London. Giving the direction for productions of the play, Arden puts emphasis on the importance of the setting which, as he writes, should not be redundant and only the props actually used in the play are supposed to be on stage in order to help the audience "see a selection from the details from everyday life rather than a generalized impression of the whole of it."¹²⁶ Furthermore, the realist setting has the purpose of allowing the audience to better perceive the story given the rather complicated Arden's storytelling style which includes the combination of prose, verses and songs. The label "realistic" here may be a little misleading, as the play can also be considered Brechtian. The setting is realistic in the sense that the props reflect the time in which the play is set, but Brechtian in its refusal of details of material things and therefore putting stress on the *story*. The story and the message of it is the most important feature in Brecht's plays and in *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* as well. The name of the town in which most of the action takes place is not given, as well as an exact date, all Arden gives away is that "the play is set in a mining town in the north of England eighty years ago. It is winter."¹²⁷ The play has a subtitle *An-Unhistorical Parable*, therefore, taking no account of history, the play is simply a representation of human behavior and repercussions it brings. The moral of the story is what is important.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance tells a story of the Serjeant Musgrave and three soldiers – Attercliffe, Hurst and Sparky – who travel to the mining town in England in winter. Once they approach their destination they stay at the public-house run by Mrs. Hitchcock and her helper Annie. The town is in the middle of a coal-miners' strike and so the arrival of the soldiers is understood as help to quell the rebellion. The authorities of the town speak to Musgrave and offer him money if he recruits as many men as he can, all in the name of suppressing the riots and therefore helping the economy of the town. Musgrave perfunctorily agrees, however, by

¹²⁶ John Arden, introduction to *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance an Un-historical Parable*, 5.

¹²⁷ Arden, introduction to *Musgrave*, 8.

his non-willingness to participate in a further discussion it is becoming more apparent that the true reason the soldiers came to the town is different than recruitment of men or the strike. Further in the story it is revealed that the soldiers are deserters on the run, Musgrave himself for stealing money from the army and Hurst killed a man. The soldiers are then paid a hostile visit by the colliers who automatically, much like the authorities of the town, assume that the soldiers are in town to stop the strike. Musgrave assures them that that is not the case and calms the situation down. Later back in the public-house, Annie and Sparky become closer to each other and promise to run away together, they are, however, overheard by Hurst who rather violently interferes and Sparky ends up dead. Musgrave plans a recruitment meeting for the next morning. In the morning everybody gathers at a market-place. With people surrounding him, Musgrave gives a lecture on the horrible life of soldiers and then presents the public with a few items – a bayonet, a Gatling gun and finally with a skeleton of Billy Hicks who, as Musgrave reveals, was a former comrade of his. In a titular scene, Musgrave dances around the skeleton hoisted up as a flag in the middle of a market-place. Billy was killed and Musgrave threatens the town demanding twenty-five townsmen to be killed and Billy's death avenged. Musgrave's speech is interrupted by the dragoon for whom the authorities of the town sent, they shoot Hurst and arrest Musgrave and Attercliffe. The last scene of the play is set in the prison cell in which both soldiers await their execution. Mrs. Hitchcock comes and offer a last piece of consolidation, saying that their message will be remembered.

The play is written in old English which is often intercut by songs or versified passages. Songs play an important role in the play, much like in Brecht's work. Nevertheless, in Brecht's plays songs' primary aim is to achieve his famous alienation affect. By interrupting the happenings on stage, Brecht reminds the audience that they are not watching the real life and thus destroys the illusion of reality. That is not, however, exclusively the case in *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*. Arden even gives instructions as for the performance of the songs in the introduction of the play saying, "the songs should be sung to folk-song airs,"¹²⁸ in order to add to the realist mode of the play as a whole. Underlining the tone of the play, the songs Arden writes about in the introduction do not seem to be used as Brechtian. The first song heard in the play is sung by Sparky when he and the rest of the crew are in a wharf waiting to board the barge.

One day I was drunk, boys, on the Queen's Highway
When a recruiting party come beating that way.
I was enlisted and arrested before I did know

¹²⁸ Arden, introduction to *Musgrave*, 5.

And to the Royal Barracks they forced me to go.¹²⁹

The song is clearly connected to Sparky's previous cited line, having emerged from the situation and not interrupting it, the song communicates a message to the participants of the conversation, i.e. Attercliffe and Hurst. Sparky simply sings the rhyming passage as a part of conversation between him and his co-soldiers, and after the song he continues to speak. A number of such short songs are incorporated within the play, e.g. Sparky's song in Act Two, Scene Three:

She came to me at midnight
With the moonshine on her arms
And I told her not to make no noise
Nor cause no wild alarms.¹³⁰

The songs incorporated in the text and conversation do not interrupt the happenings, they in fact do quite the opposite. By singing the lines, the characters reflect on the scenes and underline the happenings. The character of Bargee is the only character in the play that features his own signature song that he sings multiple times throughout the play. The song is the famous children's song called *Michael Finnegan* and Bargee mostly whistles it, with the exception of the final part of the climactic scene in Act Three, Scene Two of the play, in which Musgrave and Attercliffe are arrested and Bargee sings the song:

There was an old man called Michael Finnegan
He had whiskers on his chin-egan
The wind came out and blew them in agen
Poor old Michael Finnegan –
Begin agen –¹³¹

The song is designed to repeat itself over and over, and becomes a signature song for Bargee, as it is the first thing the audience is presented with when meeting the character. He whistles the song upon first appearing on the scene in Act One, ready to board the soldiers and take them to the town. The song is extremely catchy and lively, therefore not really fitting in the seriousness of the actions presented in the play. Perhaps that is Arden's goal, to render an escape via presenting the character, who most often also presents himself in a childish manner. When Bargee first steps on the scene, his presentation of himself is far from serious:

¹²⁹ Arden, *Musgrave*, 9.

¹³⁰ Arden, *Musgrave*, 58.

¹³¹ Arden, *Musgrave*, 99.

Hooroar, my jolly buckos! It's only old Joe Bludgeon, the Captain of the Lugger.
Crooked old Joe. Heh he. And what's the news with you? Are we ready yet, are we?¹³²

The contrast of the character's silliness is striking when compared to the response he gets from the soldiers, as Attercliffe utters a plain "No" in response. Arden, however, not only incorporates music that underlines and highlights the story, he also takes after Brecht in his use of music as a distancing device. *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* features a few songs that are presented directly to the audience and therefore function as a summary or even a comment on what has happened in the story. The most obvious example would be the song Attercliffe sings in the cell awaiting his execution with Musgrave at the very end of the play:

I plucked a blood-red rose-flower down
And gave it to my dear.
I set my foot out across the sea
And she never wept a tear.

I came back home as gay as a bird
I sought her out and in:
And I found her at last in a little attic room
With a napkin round her chin.
[...]
Your blood-red rose is withered and gone
And fallen on the floor:
And he who brought the apple down
Shall be my darling dear.
For the apple holds a seed will grow
In live and lengthy joy
To raise a flourishing tree of fruit
For ever and a day.
With fal-la-la-the-dee, toor-a-ley.
For ever and a day.¹³³

Brecht's use of music in drama differs significantly from realistic drama, most importantly in its function in relation to the audience. Epic use of music functions as a means of distancing the audience from the action and is often sung directly to the audience, when the actors step out of their role and through the song comment on the events happening on stage. In Attercliffe's last song, meant to be sung in a melancholic and quiet voice, he is delivering his last lines primarily to the audience, to all, as the last piece of a macabre message of what a pointless journey soldiers' lives are.

¹³² Arden, *Musgrave*, 11.

¹³³ Arden, *Musgrave*, 103-104.

Evident from the examples of the songs, play is written in old dated colloquial English, often harsh and realistically reflecting the difficult situations the soldiers find themselves in. Halfway through the Scene Three, Act Two, the discussion between the childish Sparky and quick-tempered Hurst escalates as the latter discovers Annie and Sparky's plan to escape together and seizes Sparky's trousers in attempt to prevent that from happening:

Sparky: What's the goddamn – give 'em back, you dirty –

Hurst: Come and get 'em, Sparky! Heh, you'll be the grand deserter, won't you. Running bare-arsed over the moor in six-foot drifts of snow!

Sparky: Give me them!

Hurst: A man and a soldier! Jump, natter, twitch, like a clockwork puppet for three parts of the night, but the last night of all, you *run!* You little closhy coward.¹³⁴

The soldiers often speak foul language amongst each other, they, however, do not dare speak in such a tone to their Serjeant, whom they consider almost a god-like figure. Despite the fact that there are a few instances where the soldiers have a disagreement with the great Serjeant, they do obey his orders without retorting. In the climax of the play, when Musgrave reveals the true extent of his plan, i.e. killing twenty-five townsmen as a retaliation for Billy, Attercliffe refuses to participate in the killings and resigns. Throughout the play, the soldiers are unconditionally obedient to the Serjeant, Attercliffe being the only one to oppose him, after finding no escape from the pointless situation as he feels guilt and recognizes that the situation has gone too far. Moreover, as opposed to being initially seen as help that came to stop the riot, the soldiers are now not only the ones rioting, but also threatening the innocent people. "I'm going to start shooting!"¹³⁵, screams Hurst as he spits at Musgrave in rage. The situation is very tense and the soldiers are at the point where they no longer obey the orders, as they are disappointed with the Serjeant for not sharing the plan of revenge all along. The story is narrated gradually, the spectator does not know any more of the Serjeant's plans than the soldiers. Also, because Arden does not reveal much of the characters' backstory to the reader, we cannot fully predict the reactions and behavior of anybody. Arden briefly describes the characters in the introduction; Musgrave is a tall and commanding man, highly respected by his men, Hurst is a proud young soldier who often speaks before he thinks, Sparky is not very serious and not goal-oriented, and Attercliffe is the oldest of the group, embittered and indignant.¹³⁶ Secondary characters in the play are often not named. With the exception for Mrs. Hitchcock and Annie, the authorities' names are not mentioned in the play, as well as the real names of colliers. The

¹³⁴ Arden, *Musgrave*, 67-68.

¹³⁵ Arden, *Musgrave*, 96.

¹³⁶ Arden, introduction to *Musgrave*, 6.

authorities are referred to by their work positions, i.e. the Mayor, Parson and the Constable. The colliers are assigned modifiers to their positions, dependent on their personalities and traits, i.e. a Slow Collier, Pugnacious Collier and an Earnest Collier. By not assigning the names to characters, Arden lessens the relationship between them and the audience, as the spectator is presented simply by figures that are characterized only by one adjective. The secondary characters are one-dimensional and not layered.

Because there is not much known about the characters, the spectator learns their true self through their actions. E.g. the Mayor is generally viewed as a prominent figure who should not be easily bribed. As the spectator learns, however, the Mayor in the story seizes the opportunity of the arrival of Musgrave in order to avert the crisis of the colliers threatening to go on strike for his own good. Musgrave is presented as a religious man, as he often says himself. He is convinced of the fact that the plan he has to for the town is a God's plan and that he is destined to avenge Billy. In his prayer he utters:

I'm in this town to change all soldiers' duties. My prayer is: keep my mind clear so I can weigh Judgement against the Mercy and Judgement against the Blood, and make this Dance as terrible as You have put into my brain. The Word alone is terrible: the Deed must be worse. But I know it is Your Logic, and You will provide.¹³⁷

As the true extent of the Serjeant's plan is revealed to the soldiers and simultaneously to the audience by the end of Act Three, Scene Two, it is obvious that Musgrave projects his own issues onto the innocent townsmen, all in the name of revenge. What is more, abiding by his own rules and claiming that the death of Billy equals the death of twenty-five people cannot be justified even by God. Provided the spectator sympathized with the cold, religious and commanding Serjeant, the moment he threatens the town by shooting is inexcusable, especially when it is coming from the army man whose job it is to protect people. The horror and intensity of the moment is strengthened by the refusal of the soldiers to participate in the killings, the soldiers who are trained to do whatever they are told without asking any questions.

In the introduction Arden writes that the play was greeted with the obvious puzzlement. He also clarifies that it does not advocate revolution.¹³⁸ The puzzlement amongst the people is understandable, upon the first look, i.e. the central character going to the town to execute the revenge he desires. Upon a deeper examination, however, the true message becomes clear. Musgrave desires violence and revenge to bring justice to the world but his views on justice are

¹³⁷ Arden, *Musgrave*, 37.

¹³⁸ Arden, introduction to *Musgrave*, 7.

corrupted. The argument between Mrs. Hitchcock, Musgrave and Attercliffe from towards the end of the play provides a great insight on Musgrave's beliefs:

Musgrave: Don't tell me there was life or love in this town.

Mrs. Hitchcock: There was. There was hungry men, too – fighting for their food. But *you* brought in a different war.

Musgrave: I brought it in to end it.

Attercliffe: To end it by its own rules: no bloody good. She's right, you're wrong. You can't cure the pox by further whoring. Sparky died of those damned rules. And so did the other one.¹³⁹

Clearly, the play is of pacifist nature. Although its main figure is God-driven and obsessed-with-justice Musgrave, there are plenty of characters to oppose his mangled views on justice. Annie presents hers in the versified passage on the life of soldiers which is undeniably of anti-war attitude, as we learn later in the story that she is heartbroken because her lover Billy was recruited and killed in war:

I'll tell you for what a soldier's good:
To march behind his roaring drum,
Shout to us all: 'Here I come
I've killed as many as I could –
I'm stamping into your fat town
From the war and to the war
And every girl can be my whore
Just watch me lay the squealing down.
And that's what he does and so do we.
Because we know he'll soon be dead
We strap our arms round the scarlet red
Then send him weeping over the sea.
Oh he will go and a long long way.
Before he goes we'll make him pay
Between the night and the next cold day –
By God there's a whole lot more I could say –¹⁴⁰

Arden pays a great tribute to Brecht with his use of involvement of the audience in the play. In *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, particularly during the climax of the story where Musgrave lectures the people on the life of soldiers and presents the guns and the skeleton of Billy, the directions for the character Attercliffe read “swivels the gun to face out into the audience.”¹⁴¹ In the scene, the public who is present on the market place is substituted with the

¹³⁹ Arden, *Musgrave*, 102.

¹⁴⁰ Arden, *Musgrave*, 18.

¹⁴¹ Arden, *Musgrave*, 82.

real people in the theatre. Clearly a method adopted from Brecht, the inclusion of the audience creates a horrifically terrifying atmosphere, as the spectators with a gun pointed at them are both drawn into the action and also forced to get more critically involved in it, criticize and evaluate Attercliffe and Musgrave's actions. Furthermore, the story is plot-oriented and also, as the title suggests, a parable, therefore the evaluation and recognition of good and bad decisions made by characters are desired.

Although Arden describes the play as realistic, the setting with which is the audience presented in Act Two, Scene Three suggests otherwise. The stage is divided into two parts, each representing a different location – a stable and a bedroom. The downstage is further divided into three more rooms, each representing a room for each soldier. Arden even writes that the division between the rooms can be created by mattresses, a non-realistic theatrical property. Up until this scene, the audience were seeing realist props on stage only, from realist costumes to settings. Such a divided stage is perhaps *inevitable* more than anything else, as the Scene Three features the characters in their rooms getting ready to sleep, with Annie moseying from one room to another. Musgrave, as the great Serjeant, does not sleep in the stable but in the bedroom (upstage). Creating such a setting for the potential to stage a rather complicated storyline using only one setting, Arden does not shun use of non-realistic devices in a realistic play.

3.2 *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* by John McGrath

John McGrath's *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (later only *The Cheviot*) was first produced in 1973, and is a prime example of the embodiment of popular theatre McGrath was trying to construct. In the initial part of the book, the author acquaints the reader with the fascination background of the process of writing, rehearsing and even how the idea to write about the topic so relevant to Scotland came about. *The Cheviot* tells the story of the Scottish history, from the infamous Highland Clearances to the booming oil industry in the 1970s.

The process of writing was a fascinating one. As the play was meant to be performed for people of Scotland, the topic of the Clearances and oil was understandably very personal to them. McGrath took that premise and decided to involve the audience in the forming of the play. Respecting people and wanting to write a play that would voice what the Scottish wanted to say about the issues themselves, with McGrath's dedication, the company managed to produce a powerful play that spoke to people for whom the topic was highly relevant. At the first, and needless to say unusual production, the audience, comprised of the people all around Scotland, were asked and encouraged to share their ideas, suggestions and advice in the name

of improving the play and making it more accurate and true to history, given the fact that many of the members of the audience lived through the events and therefore were able to provide perhaps more accurate or even undocumented information that was unavailable in books.

The play is, by its very nature, anti-capitalist; in the first part where the capitalist leaders realized that cheviot sheep and deer are more profitable than people and subsequently made people leave the country or move, and later when oil was discovered in Scotland and Highland people's land was taken over by companies that planned on building oil-rigs and huge factories. The play has very rightfully earned its status of *popular* theatre. As Reinelt quotes Brecht in *After Brecht*:

Our conception of the "popular" refers to the people who are not only fully involved in the process of development but are actually taking over, forcing it, deciding it. We have in mind a people that is making history and altering the world and itself. We have in mind a fighting people also a fighting conception of "popularity."¹⁴²

The "popularity" of *The Cheviot* lies in its relatability, approachability and usefulness to people. The aspect of relatability is quite self-explanatory in the case of *The Cheviot* as the audience were the people living in Scotland and therefore being or having been directly affected by the issue. As for the approachability of the play, McGrath's theatre company was not performing in any official theatre venues, it, in contrast, toured Scotland and performed in working-class establishments such as pubs, dance halls and schools. What is more, the language in which the play is written is the language the target audience speak or spoke. The form of the play is typical of working-class culture, as it is a mixture of spoken language – English and Gaelic, songs, dances and actual documented passages from history. The play's usefulness is also evident, as it points at several particular moments in history and teaches and lectures the audience about the exploitation of the working-class for profit. In order to stay true to the aesthetics of the Highland people, McGrath adapted the style of the play to the *ceilidh*, a popular form of entertainment among the locals. McGrath comments on the style:

I wanted to keep this form – an assembly of songs, stories, scenes, talk, music and general entertainment – and to tell through it the story of what had happened and is now happening to the people. And to end the evening with a dance, for people to get a chance to talk and have a good time.¹⁴³

The play depends heavily on the audience. Apart from being actually included in the making of the play, the audience is also an important component in the play's productions.

¹⁴² Reinelt, *After Brecht*, 177.

¹⁴³ John McGrath, introduction to *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981), x.

McGrath blurs the line between the audience and actors as evidenced by the setting with which is the audience greeted as they are coming in the premise before the play starts. McGrath sets the scene, “The stage is a platform on the floor of the hall, with four chairs on either side of it, on the floor, the same chairs that the audience are sitting on.”¹⁴⁴ The actors perform on stage equally leveled with the audience, they interact with them and often encourage them to sing along. The stage features one main prop – an oversized book – whose pages are turned over as the location of the happenings changes, e.g. from the mountains to an Indian setting. Apart from the book, the actors have all their props and music instruments at their disposal on stage, nothing is hidden from the audience. Moreover, during the whole performance all the actors are present on stage, the ones not performing at the moment included. In the first part of the play, after the Gent has recited a poem, the instructions read “At the end of the poem, the Company applaud politely.” Suppressing the division between the audience and the actors, the actors *become* the audience when they are not acting.

The Cheviot is not formally divided into scenes or acts, as it follows the pattern of the ceilidh, and perhaps also for its fluency and simple unnecessary to make any physical changes in settings, as they are provided by the aforementioned book-prop. The story evolves fluently and in accordance with history, starting with the Cheviot sheep, which, as authorities realized, make more money occupying the same land than people did:

Sellar: The highlands of Scotland may sell £200,000 worth of lean cattle this year. The same ground, under the Cheviot, may produce as much as £900,000 worth of fine wool. The effects of such arrangements in advancing this estate in wealth, civilization, comfort, industry, virtue and happiness are palpable.¹⁴⁵

The passage about the Cheviot sheep ends on a positive note as the company sings a song *The Battle of the Braes* and the M.C. comes on stage to explain, “A victory had been won.”¹⁴⁶ He, however, continues to present the second part of the play without wavering – the Stag hunting, a sport the gentry were beginning to enjoy and which again resulted in exploitation of people living in the Highlands. Lord Crask and Lady Phosphate sing a duet:

Oh it’s awfully, frightfully, ni-i-ice,
Shooting stags, my dear, and grice –
And there’s nothing quite so righ-it-it
As a fortnight catching trite:

And if the locals should complain,

¹⁴⁴ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 1.

¹⁴⁵ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 7.

¹⁴⁶ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 37.

Well we can clear them off again.

Lady Ph: We'll clear the straths

Lord Crask: We'll clear the paths

Lady Ph: We'll clear the bens

Lord Crask: We'll clear the glens

Both: We'll show them we're the ruling class.¹⁴⁷

The last issue McGrath took on is the oil discovered off-shore in the North Sea. Texas

Jim is introduced to the audience as he sings:

Take your oil-rigs by the score,
Drill a little well just a little off-shore,
Pipe that oil in from the sea,
Pipe those profits – home to me.

I'll bring work that's hard and good –
A little oil costs a lot of blood.

Your union men just cut no ice
You work for me – I name the price.

So leave your fishing, and leave your soil,
Come work for me, I want your oil.

Screw your landscape, screw your bays
I'll screw you in a hundred ways –

Take your partner by the hand
Tiptoe through the oily sand

Honour your partner, bow real low
You'll be honouring me in a year or so

I'm going to grab a pile of dough
When that there oil begins to flow
I got millions, I want more
I don't give a damn for your fancy shore¹⁴⁸

In the play there are plenty of characters and McGrath lists only nine actors that worked for 7:84 at the time of the production. Inevitably, the actors had to switch from one role to another and portray multiple characters, e.g. Bill Paterson played the role of the M.C., Loch, Sturdy Highlander, Texas Jim and more. The character of M.C. is the host of the event, often comes on stage and explains what happened, will happen or simply comments or adds to the scene/song the audience just saw/heard:

¹⁴⁷ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 41.

¹⁴⁸ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 59-60.

It begins, I suppose, with 1746 – Culloden and all that. The Highlands were in a bit of a mess. Speaking – or singing – the Gaelic language was forbidden. Wearing the plaid was forbidden. Things we all set for a change.¹⁴⁹

M.C. is, however, not the only character that provides a commentary or helps to put the happenings in perspective. Other characters often step out of their roles during scenes as well and, speaking directly to the audience, comment on the tone, true meaning or background of what they just said when in character. Bill Paterson and one of the characters he portrayed – Loch – argues with Sellar about the Highlands productivity. During the delivery of his lines, Loch takes off his hat and turns to the audience and, no longer in character, comments on what Loch had just said. He then puts the hat back on and continues as Loch:

The coast of Sutherland abounds with many different kinds of fish. (*LOCH takes off his hat, and speaks directly to the audience.*) Believe it or not, Loch and Sellar actually used these words. (*Puts hat on again.*) Not only white fish, but herring too.¹⁵⁰

With the elements clearly borrowed from Brecht, McGrath epitomizes Brechtian theatre in his use of alienation. There is certainly no hiding the fact that what the audience watches is a play, but they are, as opposed to Brecht's audience, encouraged to empathize with the actors and the characters they are playing. Evidenced e.g. by encouraging the audience to join in with songs, McGrath's theatre is true entertainment, he, however, as a political writer, does not neglect the educational part of the play either. Balancing between a simple enjoyment in dancing and singing, McGrath interlards the play with passages from actual history. What is more there are multiple choices of passages to be read depending on where the production takes place. That way, the message of the play becomes even more relevant to the audience. McGrath comments on the *message* of the play:

I, and the others, threw in ideas, made sure one part related well to all the other parts, that the political meaning didn't get lost in the gagging or the singing – in fact, that they were part of the political meaning – and generally stood back from it all a bit, to provide the necessary objective perspective.¹⁵¹

McGrath's use of music in the play is very frequent. Many of them are sung in the Highlanders' native Gaelic which adds to the personal approach of the play to the issue of exploitation. McGrath comments on the reception of the music in *The Cheviot in A Good Night Out*:

¹⁴⁹ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 2-3.

¹⁵⁰ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 7.

¹⁵¹ McGrath, introduction to *The Cheviot*, xi.

They [audience] responded to the Gaelic folk-singing and the fiddle playing and the folk tunes with no problem, in fact with great pleasure. There is, and has been for some time, a massive boom in music loosely termed 'folk', particularly in Scotland. This contributes a tremendous amount of music from the history of the people to the generally available pool of cultural experience, music with all kinds of beauty, expressiveness, meaning, and, above all, potential.¹⁵²

The audiences responded well to the Gaelic songs. McGrath incorporated a passage about the language in the play:

M.C.1: In the 18th century speaking the Gaelic language was forbidden by law.

M.C.2: In the 19th century children caught speaking Gaelic in the playground were flogged.

M.C.1: In the 20th century the children were taught to deride their own language.

Because English is the language of the ruling class.

Because English is the language of the people who own the highlands and control the highlands and invest in the highlands – ¹⁵³

Gaelic enhances the intensity of the scenes and involves the audience emotionally in the play. McGrath does involve the audience in the play and, unlike Brecht, does not distance them from the happening but on the contrary, aims for an emotional response.

Both McGrath and Arden have incorporated epic techniques in their works of drama which has been exemplified by the analyses of their plays. Epic techniques have been found in both plays, evidenced by the use of devices such as music, setting, characters, and in the relation to the audience.

¹⁵² McGrath, *A Good Night Out*, 70.

¹⁵³ McGrath, *The Cheviot*, 52.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the ways in which Brecht's Epic theatre affected British drama, and to exemplify the findings by analyzing two plays by British authors in terms of the epic devices developed by Brecht, and other similarities and links to the great German playwright.

The initial part of the paper focuses on Brecht, his political and social background and most importantly, on the theatrical group he founded – the Berliner Ensemble. The group comprised socialist actors and under Brecht's direction toured Europe during the 1950s. The paper describes both visits the Ensemble paid to London, the reception of its productions the group brought, as well as the effects on particular British playwrights. The German language was not quite known amongst the British audiences in the 1950s, therefore the first visit did not make a significant impact. A great deal of gratitude for the fact that Brecht became known in Britain goes to John Willett whose translation of Brecht's theories and practices allowed the British public to read about the Brechtian drama. Upon the second visit, the reception was much warmer, as the ignorance of Brecht's theories was eliminated.

Many British authors sympathized with Brecht, primarily on the basis of his political beliefs and sympathizing with the working-class. Hardly ever did the authors agree with *every* aspect of Brecht's theories and practices, but there was always some common ground that they shared. Most notably, British playwrights take after Brecht in their use of theatre as a device for expressing their political stands and prompting a change in the theatre-going public. The authors share their opinions on theatre as something more than only entertainment. In order to achieve the sense of seriousness of theatre and the sense of responsibility theatre brings, the playwrights used a number of techniques, namely historicization, *gestus* and epic structure. Creating parallels between historical and contemporary events is Brecht's technique amply used by British playwrights, e.g. in the work of Trevor Griffiths. A number of playwrights who established themselves as realists have also been proven to have borrowed a few methods from Brecht's style of drama, e.g. John Osborne with his use of the historicization technique.

The second part of the paper is devoted to the analyses of *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden and *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* by John McGrath. Both plays are analyzed on the basis of the resemblance to Brecht's theories, epic music, setting and characters. *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* is said to be a realist play, as the author says himself. Nonetheless, the use of music in the play was proven to be dual, as Arden uses music both as a realist device incorporated within the play that functions as part of dialogue, and also as an epic

device functioning as a commentary addressed directly to the audience. Arden puts emphasis on the storyline rather than the characters' individuality, creating a plot-driven parallel to the present. Regarding the setting of the play, Arden is loyal to realism, with the exception of the third act in which he shifts to an epic setting in order to convey the meaning and, again, puts the story first. The convention of sticking to one performing style does not stop Arden from experimenting with epic techniques which function as alienating devices that remind the audience of the illusion of theatre and keep them critically involved in the story.

John McGrath paid a great tribute to Brecht with *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*. The play is filled with devices typical of Brecht, as evidenced e.g. by actors' interaction with the audience on a regular basis throughout the play, especially during the singing parts when the audience is welcome and even encouraged to join in. The setting is heavily unrealistic, as it is only depicted by one giant book that functions as a reminder of where the action is taking place. McGrath certainly does not try to lure the audience in the story with realist settings, on the contrary the audience is drawn in the action because of the relevance of the topic which is very personal to the Scottish audience. McGrath here distances himself from Brecht with his desire to have a relationship with the audience, who is the essential part of McGrath's play. The play is structured in accordance with the ceilidh, a type of social gathering typical for Scotland, and therefore very familiar and popular with the Scottish public. McGrath admits to Brecht as an impact on his work which is evident in *The Cheviot*.

RESUMÉ

Předmětem předložené bakalářské práce je analýza dvou her od Britských autorů, které byly ovlivněny Epickým divadlem a jeho hlavním představitelem Bertoldem Brechtem. Epické divadlo vzniklo v Německu v 30. letech 20. století a je typické pro svůj pohled na divadlo jako takové. Divák na představení epické hry nemá soucítit s postavami ani herci, naopak je vyžadováno, aby si divák uvědomil rozdíl mezi realitou a pouhým vyobrazením příběhu, které divadlo představuje. Aby nedocházelo k onomu soucítění a vžití se do děje, Brecht vynalezl takzvaný zcizovací efekt. Tento efekt je prostředek hojně využívaný v epickém divadle, a může nést spoustu podob, vždy je ale v zájmu potlačení jakékoliv iluze reality. Zcizovací efekt může nést podobu např. neúplných kostýmů, divadelních pomůcek přítomných na jevišti i přesto že nejsou momentálně používány, nebo otevřené opony zatímco se přestavuje scéna. Brecht využíval zcizovací efekt v jeho hrách, např. tak že herci vystupovali ze svých rolí a poskytovali tak komentář o okolnostech mimo ně. Brecht také hojně využívá hudbu, ale na rozdíl od naturalistických a realistických her, jeho využití hudby v divadle nesouvisí s podkreslením příběhu a emočním zážitkem, naopak je dalším ze zcizovacích efektů, jehož cílem je distancovat realitu od iluze; hudba v Brechtových hrách se proto může zdát poněkud nesourodá s tónem příběhu.

V úvodní části práce je představen život Bertolta Brechta s ohledem na jeho divadelní tvorbu, která vždy souvisela s jeho politickým cítěním. Brechtova náklonnost ke komunismu ho před začátkem druhé světové války donutila opustit jeho rodné Německo a strávit 15 let v exilu, kde sepsal většinu svých teorií o divadle. Po skončení války se Brecht vrátil do Německa a pokračoval ve své tvorbě jako spisovatel a režisér ve svém Berlínském souboru. Berlínský soubor se poprvé představil v Londýně v září roku 1956 s představením tří Brechtových her - *Matka Kuráž a její děti*, *Kavkazský křídový kruh* a *Bubny a trumpety*. Londýnské představení Berlínského souboru vzbudilo jisté pozdvižení, převážně díky svému stylu hraní. Herci Berlínského souboru hráli, podle učení Brechta, s odstupem ke svým rolím, hry byly představeny v němčině, a kvůli neznalosti jazyka mělo Britské publikum problémy rozumět významu her. Brecht si byl vědom jazykové bariéry, a proto kladl hercům na srdce důležitost ostatních divadelních aspektů, např. gestikulace a hudby. Představení Brechtových her mělo za následek několik pokusů o napodobení jeho stylu, které se soustředily zejména na divadelní prvky jiné než jazyk, žádné však nebyli obzvlášť úspěšné. V roce 1964 představil John Willett překlad Brechtových teorií dramatu shrnuté v knize *Brecht o Divadle*¹⁵⁴ a

¹⁵⁴ Jde o autorský překlad Brechtovi knihy Brecht on Theatre

Brechtovo učení se dostalo do podvědomí Britské veřejnosti. Berlínský soubor přijel do Londýna podruhé v roce 1965. Jelikož tato návštěva proběhla po představení překladu Brechtových teorií, jeho znalost byla mezi Brity znatelně vyšší. Porozumění Brechtova stylu pomohlo přijetí Berlínského souboru v Londýně a druhá návštěva s sebou proto přinesla jakýsi nepsaný začátek Epického divadla v Británii. Mezi autory, kteří shlédli Londýnské představení v roce 1965, patří např. Edward Bond.

Mezi vybrané autory, kteří byli ovlivněni Brechtovým stylem, a zároveň autory zmíněné v této práci, patří dramatici Edward Bond, John Arden, Arnold Wesker, John Osborne, Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill, Trevor Griffiths a John McGrath. Tato práce také zmiňuje několik Britských režisérů a jejich inscenace, např. Joan Littlewood. Janelle Reinelt rozděluje Brechtův vliv na Britské autory do tří skupin – epická struktura, gestikulace a historizace. Všichni autoři zmíněné v této práci zabudovali do svých děl alespoň některé z těchto aspektů. Edward Bond ve svých hrách často čerpá z historie, aby varoval diváky před následky lidských rozhodnutí. Stejně jako Brecht, Bond spoléhá na inteligenci diváků v pohledu na různé problematiky. Bondovi hry jsou plné násilí, které ve své grafičnosti nenechávají diváka klidným a nutí ho ke kritickému myšlení. Bond také prezentuje dvě tváře lidské povahy a přenechává na divákovi rozhodnutí o tom, jaké je správné řešení, primárním cílem jeho her je tedy zprostředkovat význam, jisté ponaučení. Autor dále klade důraz na důležitost divadla jako instituce, což se projevuje právě v jeho stylu psaní a často nelehce stravitelných tématech podtržených velmi grafickými obrazy násilí. Jeho nesouhlas s hlasy, které tvrdí, že divadlo je pouze zábavné představení, se projevuje převážně v tématech, kterými se ve svých hrách zabývá. Mezi epické prvky Bondových her patří také hudba, které autor nepoužívá nadměru, ale pouze za účelem zprostředkovat význam a sdělení díla. Dalším z autorů, jehož cílem psaní je v první řadě podnítit společnost ke změně je John Arden. Stejně jako Edward Bond, Arden spoléhá na rozum diváků v jejich rozhodnutí a posouzení situace, která se odehrává na jevišti. K onomu podnětu ke změně společnosti Arden využívá historizace. Jeho hra *Tanec Seržanta Musgravea* vypráví příběh z konce 19. století, přesto je však hra velmi významná i v dnešní době, díky své problematice a relevanci, hlavně svým protiválečným postojem. *Tanec Seržanta Musgravea* je jedno z nejznámějších Britských děl současnosti. Autor v úvodu popisuje hru jako dílo realistické, avšak po bližším zkoumání jsou v díle patrné epické znaky. Arden využívá Brechtovi techniky historizace tím, že příběh je zasazen do 19. století a je tedy vyprávěn s jistým odstupem od přítomnosti a tím umožňuje divákům sledovat a analyzovat příběh s více kritickým přístupem. Dále Arden využívá epického využití hudby, což se promítá v písních adresovaných přímo publiku. V díle je však použita i hudba realismu, tzn. hudba zabudovaná

do děje jako součást dialogu. V díle se autor soustředí především na vývoj děje, vývoj postav je pro Ardena až vedlejší záležitostí, charaktery postav divák poznává až skrz jejich činy. Poslední aspekt, kterým se práce v díle *Tanec Seržanta Musgravea* věnovala, je inscenace. Arden hru popisuje jako realistickou, což se na prostředí a kostýmech promítlo. Kostýmy herců jsou realistické a odpovídají době, v které je příběh zasazený, stejně tak je tomu i s divadelními pomůckami. Výjimku tvoří třetí dějství hry, kdy se všichni vojáci chystají spát a Annie vede krátké rozhovory s každým z nich ve svých ložnicích. Arden zde dává přednost příběhu před striktním dodržováním jednoho dramatického žánru (realismu), a tvoří dějství ovlivněné epickými prvky, které potlačují iluzi reality silně nerealistickými pomůckami, např. matracemi místo zdí.

. Epické divadlo se často staví do opozice k divadlu realistickému a naturalistickému, je ovšem několik autorů, kteří i přes svůj status „realistů“ využili Brechtových metod ve svých dílech. Mezi tyto autory můžeme zařadit Arnolda Weskera a Johna Osbourn. Oba realisté spodobňují Brechta ve svém levicovém politickém cítění a s tím spojenou touhou varovat společnost před vládoucí třídou, která ovládá a manipuluje třídou dělnickou. V této práci je také zmíněna Shelagh Delaney jejíž dílo *Chuť medu*¹⁵⁵ lze považovat za částečně epické. Epický status dílu získala Joan Littlewood pod jejíž režii byla hra uváděna. Littlewood zabudovala do produkce hry epické prvky, jako např. hudební doprovod, který se nacházel přímo na jevišti zorném poli diváků. Hry Howarda Brentona nesou znaky Brechtova divadla v mnoha aspektech. Stejně jako Brecht, Brenton kritizuje buržoazii a používá svá díla jako varování proti ní. Brechtovy metody v Brentonových dílech jsou zřejmé, např. jeho použití gestikulace nebo zaangażovanost diváků, kteří jsou podporováni v jejich kritických reakcích a zpětné vazbě. Jako jediná ženská zastupitelka epických dramatiků v Británii, Caryl Churchill symbolizuje Britské Epické divadlo svým stylem psaní, které využívá Brechtových metod. Churchill využívá Brechtova zcizovacího efektu, např. historizace a gestikulace. Obě metody mají za úkol distancovat diváky od příběhu a tím v nich vyvolat kritickou odezvu. Pro Churchill je důležitá společnost, proto neklade velký důraz na rozvoj jednotlivých postav, ale spíše rolí, které hrají ve společnosti. Trevor Griffiths je dalším z autorů, který je v první řadě považován za realistu, ale přesto se v jeho tvorbě najdou prvky, které lze považovat za epické. Griffiths považuje za velmi důležité, aby oslovil co nejvíce diváků, a proto svou tvorbu přesunul z divadla do televize, jako nového masového média. Griffiths není obdivovatelem Brechta, zejména nesouhlasí s jeho zcizovacím efektem a jeho významem. Co Griffiths s Brechtem sdílí je jeho pohled na

¹⁵⁵ Jde o autorský překlad

společnost. Oba autoři jsou socialisté a věří v prosazování svých politických názorů v hrách. Griffiths, stejně jako Brecht, nechává na divácích, aby si utvořili názor na příběh, který se na jevišti odehrává. Spoléhá tedy na inteligenci diváků a pouze prezentuje příběh, ze kterého si každý vezme poučení dle svého uvážení. Griffiths také hojně využívá historie, na kterou klade velký důraz a poukazuje na její důležitost z pohledu přítomnosti, a zároveň odkazuje na důležitost přítomnosti, která formuje naši budoucnost. Co se týče posledního autora o kterém je zmínka v této práci, hry Johna McGratha jsou protkány Brechtovým odkazem velmi zřetelně, jak i autor sám několikrát přiznal. Stejně jako Brecht, McGrath věří v důležitost příběhu v divadle, stejně jako jistého poselství, které by tento příběh měl nést, a tím tak formovat lepší budoucnost pro společnost. Stejně jako Brecht, hry McGratha často nemají jasný a uzavřený konec, autor očekává, aby si divák udělal vlastní názor a závěr. V čem se tvorba McGratha liší od Brechtových her, je přístup k divákům. Brechtův zcizující efekt způsobuje jistý odstup od diváků, což McGrath popisuje jako shazování a jakési „kázání“ z pohledu někoho výše postaveného. McGrath toto mluvení svrchu na diváky považuje za nepřijatelné a naopak se snaží o navázání vztahu s nimi, což je vidět na jeho tvorbě. Představení jeho hry *Ovce, Jeleni a Černočerná Ropa* poukazuje na McGrathovu velkou sympatii s dělnickou třídou a vztahu k divákům. McGrath představil hru na několika místech ve Skotsku, vždy šlo o neoficiální zařízení, např. kluby, a svým, pro Skoty velmi osobním tématem, si hra získala velké oblíbenosti. Hra je napsaná po vzoru večerní zábavy typické pro Skoty, tzv. ceilidh, kdy se pije, zpívá, tancuje a baví celou noc. *Ovce, Jeleni a Černočerná Ropa* odpovídá svou strukturou tomuto typu zábavy, protože hra se skládá z citovaných pasáží, zpívaných pasáží, čtených úryvků z historie, tance a scének. Diváci na představení jsou plně zapojeni do děje, často jsou přímo adresováni herci, a jsou povzbuzováni k tanci i zpěvu. Diváci byli také důležitou součástí při samotné tvorbě hry, kdy poskytovali důležité informace o problematice, kterou se hra zabývá, převážně pak svými znalostmi nebo dokonce vzpomínkami o době vykořisťování dělnické třídy kapitalistickým systémem.

Cílem této práce bylo analyzovat odkaz Brechtova Epického divadla v Británii na vybraných autorech a dále poukázat na specifické Brechtovy techniky v dílech Britských autorů. Všichni autoři zmínění v této práci nesou jisté znaky Epického divadla, a to i autoři zdánlivě opačného dramatického žánru – realismu. Brecht se svým Berlínským souborem představil Británii nový styl dramatu, který se promítnul do několika dnes celosvětově známých děl, a začal tak v polovině 20. století nové hnutí, Britské Epické divadlo.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

- Amkpa, Awam. *Theatre and Postcolonial Desires*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Arden, John. *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance an Un-historical Parable*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1960.
- Banham, Martin. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Barnett, David. *A History of the Berliner Ensemble*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. Trans. John Willett. London, Hertford and Harlow: Shenvall Press, 1964 (1957).
- Brecht, Bertolt, Hugh Rorrison, and John Willett. *Journals, 1934-55*. London: Methuen, 1993.
- Brecht, Bertolt, John Willett, and Ralph Manheim. *Collected Plays*. London: Methuen Drama, 1994.
- Brenton, Howard. *Plays, One*. London: Methuen, 1986.
- Dorney, Kate. *The Changing Language of Modern English Drama, 1945-2005*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Elsom, John. *Post-war British Theatre*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976.
- Esslin, Martin. *Brecht, a Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work and His Opinions*. London: Heinemann, 1965.
- Esslin, Martin. *Reflections: Essays on Modern Theatre*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969.
- Fitzsimmons, Linda. *File on Churchill*. London: Methuen Drama, 1989.
- Fuegi, John. *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Fuegi, John. *Brecht and Company: Sex, Politics, and the Making of the Modern Drama*. New York: Grove Press, 2002.
- Gale, Maggie B., and John F. Deeney. *Fifty Modern and Contemporary Dramatists*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Garner, Stanton B. *Trevor Griffiths: Politics, Drama, History*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Holdsworth, Nadine. *Joan Littlewood's Theatre*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Howard, Alycia Smith. *Studio Shakespeare: The Royal Shakespeare Company at the Other Place*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2006.
- Hunt, Albert, and Geoffrey Reeves. *Peter Brook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Churchill, Caryl. *Plays*. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Innes, Christopher. *Modern British Drama: The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Luckhurst, Mary. *A Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama, 1880-2005*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006.
- McGrath, John. *A Good Night Out: Popular Theatre: Audience, Class, and Form*. London: Nick Hern Books, 1996.
- McGrath, John. *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1981.
- Parker, Stephen. *Bertolt Brecht: A Literary Life*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Patterson, Michael. *Strategies of Political Theatre: Post-War British Playwrights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Reinelt, Janelle G. *After Brecht: British Epic Theater*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Spencer, Jenny S. *Dramatic Strategies in the Plays of Edward Bond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Styan, J. L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- Taylor, John Russell. *Anger and after*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015.
- Thomson, Peter, and Glendyr Sacks. *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Willett, John. *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*. London: Hertford and Harlow, 1959.
- Winkler, Elizabeth Hale. *The Function of Song in Contemporary British Drama*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990.
- Zarhy-Levo, Yael. *The Making of Theatrical Reputations: Studies from the Modern London Theatre*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008.
- Zeid, Wagdi. *Misreading Shakespeare: Modern Playwrights and the Quest for Originality*. Bloomington, IN: IUiverse, 2012.

Journals:

- Diamond, Elin. "Brechtian Theory/ Feminist Theory: Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism." *TDR (1988-)* 32, no. 1 (1988): 82-94. doi:10.2307/1145871.
- Garner, Stanton B. "Post-Brechtian Anatomies: Weiss, Bond, and the Politics of Embodiment." *Theatre Journal* 42, no. 2 (1990): 145-64. doi:10.2307/3207752.
- Nazki, Sameeulhaq. "The Discourse of Violence and Its Causes and Remedies in Edward Bond's Dramaturgy." *Galaxy International Multidisciplinary Research Journal ISSN 2278 9529*. <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/>.

Wesker, Arnold, Simon Trussler, and Kelly Morris. "His Very Own and Golden City: An Interview with Arnold Wesker." *The Tulane Drama Review* 11, no. 2 (1966): 192-202. doi:10.2307/1125198.

Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari, Behrooz, and Telli Beiraghi. "Brechtian Epic Elements in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*." *OALib* 03, no. 02 (2016): 1-7. Accessed October 10, 2016. doi:10.4236/oalib.1102407.

Internet sources:

Cash, Justin. "Epic Theatre Conventions." *The Drama Teacher*. 2016. Accessed September 2, 2016. <http://www.thedramateacher.com/epic-theatre-conventions/>.

"History - Royal Court." *Royal Court*. Accessed September 5, 2016. <https://royalcourttheatre.com/about/history/>.

Stride, Connie. "Review: *Christie in Love*, Kings Head Theatre - A Younger Theatre." *A Younger Theatre*. June 06, 2016. Accessed September 28, 2016. <http://www.ayoungertheatre.com/review-christie-in-love-kings-head-theatre/>.

Http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOv6laHcBWbmT_fHI4rc5LQ. YouTube. 2015, accessed November 1, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lumKovBsLc>.