

12-1-2015

# Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus and New War Imagery In An Already Highly Active Visual World

Michael J. Despars

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digscholarship.unco.edu/theses>

---

## Recommended Citation

Despars, Michael J., "Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus and New War Imagery In An Already Highly Active Visual World" (2015). *Theses*. Paper 3.

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. For more information, please contact [Jane.Monson@unco.edu](mailto:Jane.Monson@unco.edu).



© 2015

MICHAEL J. DESPARS

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

*MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN:*  
AN EXPLORATION OF THE POWER OF  
GESTUS AND NEW WAR IMAGERY  
IN AN ALREADY HIGHLY ACTIVE  
VISUAL WORLD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

Michael J. Despars

College of Performing and Visual Arts  
School of Theatre Arts and Dance  
Theatre Education

December, 2015

This Thesis by: Michael J. Despars

Entitled: Mother Courage and Her Children: *An Exploration of the Power of Gestus and New War Imagery in an Already Highly Visual World*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Theatre and Dance, Program of  
Theatre Educator Intensive

Accepted by the Thesis Committee:

---

Mary J. Schuttler, Ph. D., Chair, Advisor

---

Gillian McNally, Associate Professor, M.F.A., Committee Member

Accepted by the Graduate School:

---

Linda L. Black, Ed.D.  
Associate Provost and Dean  
Graduate School and International Admissions

## ABSTRACT

Despars, Michael J. *Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus and New War Imagery in an Already Highly Visual World*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2015.

In the epic play, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Bertolt Brecht, translated by David Hare, explores the travesties that befall a society engaged in war, including greed, profiteering, death, and prostitution. Today most war imagery is no longer shocking, and the language of war is deeply embedded in the vernacular of many societies. This thesis explores the desensitization to war that has developed because of the media. It also seeks to use Brecht's theories of gestus and alienation in the process of creating new war images to see if a modern audience can be as affected by the play as Brecht's 1949 audience. Additionally, the process of working on *Mother Courage and Her Children* gave students the opportunity to explore the work, both as actors and technicians, of an important figure in twentieth century theatre: Bertolt Brecht.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis project and accompanying production would not have developed into its full potential without the following:

The helpful guidance at the University of Northern Colorado:

Dr. Mary Schuttler

Dr. Richard Shore

Associate Professor. Gillian McNally

The Administration of Fullerton Joint Union High School District.

My supportive and understanding husband David Renken

My mom and dad who have always believed in my work

The support and unwavering love of Genni Klein

The professional, mental, and soul support of Scott Hedgecock

The Fullerton Academy of the Arts Foundation

The parents of students who supported a rather difficult project

And finally, the students who were involved in this difficult production of Bertolt

Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Goal of Thesis.....	1
Purpose and Significance of Study .....	6
Review of Literature .....	9
Methodology .....	14
CHAPTER II. DRAMATURGICAL PROTOCOL .....	21
Glossed Playscript.....	21
First Responses .....	21
Supplements to the Playscript/Areas of Inquiry .....	27
Source Studies.....	27
The Author and His World .....	41
World of the Play .....	46
Problems Perceived of Otherwise.....	49
Applications .....	60
Visual and Textual Responses to Playscript.....	89
CHAPTER III. PROMPTBOOK.....	100
Given Circumstances .....	100
Dialogue.....	106
Dramatic Action.....	111
Characters .....	115
Idea.....	129
Moods .....	133
Tempo .....	141
CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSION .....	149
WORKS CITED .....	157
APPENDIX A. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTS .....	166
APPENDIX B. PRODUCTION ADJUDICATIONS AND REVIEWS .....	178
APPENDIX C. COMMUNITY RESPONSE .....	220
APPENDIX D. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES .....	222
APPENDIX E. NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS .....	227

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Portrait of Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor.....	28
2. Cassock for Chaplain to His Holiness .....	28
3. Portrait of Johann t'Sercalaes Von Tilly.....	29
4. Thirty Years War Map .....	31
5. Backstage Exposure Including the Onstage Exit Sign.....	61
6. Lighting: Audience Disorientation .....	62
7. Lighting: Red Lighting Emphasizing the Important of the “Silent Scream” .....	63
8. Lighting: Red Wash Amber Foreground .....	63
9. Lighting: White Harsh Exposed Lighting.....	63
10. Lighting: An Example of Shadow Work .....	64
11. Lighting: Ellif’s Execution .....	64
12. Lighting: Dark Background and Lit Foreground .....	64
13. Lighting: Work Lights with Exposed Instrument .....	65
14. Microphone Example.....	66
15. Sound: Concert Style Graveyard .....	66
16. Sound: Spoken Word Sound.....	67
17. Sound: Singing Entrance of Mother Courage.....	67
18. QLab Sound Cues 1-6.5 .....	68
19. QLab Sound Cues 9a-9k .....	68
20. Qlab Sound Cues 10-16.5 .....	69

21. Qlab Sound Cues 17-18 .....	69
22. Qlab Sound Cues 19-25 .....	70
23. Qlab Sound Cues 26-35 .....	70
24. Set: Google SketchUp Preliminary Set Design .....	72
25. Set: Scene Three Fence Formation .....	72
26. Set: Tree Example.....	72
27. Set Tree Example 2 .....	73
28. Set: View of Set from Stage Left.....	73
29. Set: View of Actors on Platforms .....	73
30. Props: Weapons .....	74
31. Props: Axe.....	74
32. Costumes: Chaplain, Mother Courage, and the Cook's Costumes .....	75
33. Costumes: Mixed War .....	76
34. Costumes: Modern Militia .....	76
35. Costumes: Traditional Clothing.....	76
36. Costumes: Scottish War Costume.....	77
37. Makeup and Hair: Design Board .....	78
38. Makeup and Hair: Example of Colored Hair Chalk .....	78
39. Makeup and Hair: Scar .....	79
40. Makeup and Hair: Scar on the Cook.....	79
41. Projections: Prepping the Projection Screen.....	80
42. Projections: Wide Shot .....	80
43. Projections: Close-up Shot.....	80



44. Publicity: Poster .....	81
45. Word College of <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i> Summary .....	89
46. Word College of Thirty Years' War Summary .....	90
47. Abstract War Inspiration .....	90
48. Updated Guernica .....	91
49. Abstract War #2 .....	91
50. Barren Landscape .....	91
51. Photo of Bertolt Brecht .....	92
52. Photo of Meryl Streep as Mother Courage in the Kushner Translation .....	92
53. Robert Breuler (Cook) and Lois Smith (Mother Courage) in Steppenwolf Theatre Company's <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i> Translated by David Hare .....	93
54. Fiona Shaw as Mother Courage in the Hare Translation .....	93
55. <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i> , Translated by David Hare .....	94
56. <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i> , Translated by David Hare, British Book Cover .....	94
57. Publicity Inspiration .....	95
58. Publicity Inspiration #2 .....	96
59. Costume Inspiration: Desert Storm .....	95
60. Costume Inspiration #2: Operation Iraqi Freedom .....	96
61. Costume Inspiration #3: Vietnam War .....	96
62. Costume Inspiration #4: World War II .....	97
63. Costume Inspiration #5: World War I .....	97
64. Costume Inspiration #6: Thirty Years' War .....	97
65. Costume Inspiration #7: Literal .....	98

66. Cart Inspiration #1 .....	98
67. Cart Inspiration #2 .....	98
68. Cart Inspiration #3 .....	99

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Lighting Cues.....	65
-----------------------	----

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Goal of Thesis**

*Now, after the Great War, life goes on in our ruined cities, but it is a different life, a life of different or differently composed groups, guided or thwarted by new surroundings, new because so much has been destroyed (Brecht et al. 277).*

Current high school students have lived through a time enveloped by war. Many were born in the late 1990s, and their earliest memories of war's conflicts, uprisings, and terror, include the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the War in Afghanistan, Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Arab Spring, civil unrest due to racial inequality in the United States, civil war in Syria, attacks on subway stations in England, and most recently, the killing of seventeen journalists in France by Islamic terrorists. The fact remains that war and its effects are commonplace in society. Proof is witnessed regularly on the nightly news, in the newspaper, and on a personal level. Few United States citizens have lived solely through a time of peace, and most importantly, students today cannot recall a time when war, fighting, explosions, gunfire, and death were not prominent aspects of their environment.

The language of war is a part of the American vernacular, which is so infused in the culture that it is often associated with many non-combat related topics. Phrases such as the "*war* on terror," "the *war* on women," and the "*fight* for gay rights," are so prevalent that they make their way into topics unrelated to dropping bombs. Ridiculously, every December many "*fight*" the "*war*" on Christmas, as if gunfire has been exchanged

in the name of the baby Jesus. When one grows up in a society where war is commonplace, ignorance can result since society is largely desensitized by war. Death, fighting, and combat are the ritual of the nightly news. These topics even find a place in video games, the Internet, music, television and movies. The people of Europe, during World War II, had no access to images and media besides what they could hear on the radio and see outside of their windows. In Phyllis Hartnoll's book, *The Theatre a Concise History*, she ascertains that "the Second World War had a profound effect upon the theatre everywhere, though some of the subterranean influences which led to the final upheaval had been apparent before 1939" (255). In both modern times and in previous periods of war, theatre can be a medium for which society can learn about the horrors of war and make change.

The language of war and the over-saturation of shocking images in media, including those on television and viewable on the Internet, present major obstacles when staging a play like Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* because society is imbued with the images of war Brecht was successful in recreating for a 1940's audience. Brecht's audience had a first hand account of war; they lived it, it ended, and they began to heal. Today war is engrained in the culture and is not seen as shocking. According to child and adolescent psychologist, Dr. George Drinka, "many of us have been reared on the media diet in which brutal, perverse and gratuitous violence is the norm, naturally we tolerate high levels of violence in our society" (1). The more desensitized the population is the less likely this play can achieve the goal of intellectual stimulation of the spectator.

Bertolt Brecht, theatre theorist, playwright, director, and practitioner of Epic Theatre or Dialectic Theatre, a "form of didactic drama presenting a series of loosely

connected scenes that avoid illusion and often interrupt the story line to address the audience directly with analysis, argument, or documentation,” as he later called it, wrote *Mother Courage and Her Children* to warn the audience, or what he referred to as the spectator, about the horrors of war (“Epic Theatre”). He believed that the spectator is an important part of the theatre. Epic Theatre, at its foundation is different from theatrical realism, or what is known as “Stanislavskian theatre”—a theatre style dependent on realism and “systematically compels the empathy of the spectator; who is then the ‘victim of hypnotic experience,’” because the spectator cannot “master life when all that happens [on stage] masters him” (Mitter 42). Conversely, Brecht argues that “to think, or write, or produce a play also means: to transform society, to transform the state, to subject ideologies to close scrutiny” (qtd. in Ewen 199). Brecht “viewed theatre as an entity, not the least important element of which was constituted by the spectator,” forcing the spectator to participate as a “producer and its share in the theatre as of great importance” (201). He also believed that “the theatre is the most potent and direct means of strengthening human reason and enlightening the whole nation” (qtd. in Bentley 183). When a spectator is fully engaged in the action on stage, as is the case with realism, he is lost in the drama as opposed to learning a lesson. A spectator, in Brecht’s view, is only empowered to learn through the use epic theoretical techniques, such as alienation and *gestus*, which innately is the antithesis of the theatre of Stanislavsky.

Without the techniques of this theatrical style, the spectator cannot move forward and change. One technique was to alienate the spectator, also known as the alienation effect or *a-effect*, which is a technique that “attempt(s) to make startling what seems obvious” and “curious what seems self-evident” (Mitter 44). This effect was

accomplished by using “. . . captions or illustrations projected on a screen; actors” who “lecture, summarize, or sing songs; and stage designs that do not represent any locality,” and “exposing the lights and ropes, keep the spectators aware of being in a theatre” (“Alienation”). Alienation was a successful technique, evident after the first production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* in war-torn Berlin. When

*Mother Courage and Her Children* opened on January 11, 1949 in Berlin . . . [t]he city itself was eerie as airplanes thundered overhead all night long to land with supplies in the blockaded western zones. It was a city of almost complete darkness after sunset, as energy supplies in the east and the west were so low that they could not be squandered on a mere amenity such as lights. But at the German Theatre the electrical system was strained to the utmost as the play opened with lights on full. In the brightest light we would see the darkest horrors of the insanity of war. A mirror was held before the spectator in which ‘they might see their own ugly mug’. The effect of the play was shattering. . . . The spectator sat in stunned and mesmerized silence broken only by the sound of their own sobbing. After the final half-curtain had slashed across to close off the scene of unbearable horror the spectator sobbed and cheered and clapped themselves to exhaustion. (Fuegi 123)

The spectators, specifically Germans, were already surrounded by the tragic outcome of the Second World War, and if this was not already enough, Brecht used theatre to hold a mirror up to his spectator in a way that forced them, not only to see the result of their behavior, but also to give them the tools needed to make choices regarding how they might handle similar situations. James Roose-Evans, writer of *Experimental Theatre*, states that “for Brecht the purpose of drama was ‘to teach us how to survive,’ and that ‘spectator(s)’ should be void of ‘feeling,’ but that their primary focus is ‘to think’” (84). The spectator does not get lost in the ebb and flow of the dramatic action and characters journey on stage, but by the narrative presented, and they are furthermore moved, to do something about the drama presented on stage. This manifests in the spectator leaving the theatre unconnected with the characters, but enticed to make change.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* examines the premise that “in wartime big business is not conducted by small people” and “war is a continuation of business by other means, making the human virtues fatal even to those who exercise them,” further signifying that, “no sacrifice is too great for the struggle against war” (qtd. in Lee). Brecht believed that both those in charge, and those who follow, have an obligation to stop war before it starts or face wars deadly consequences; much like those experienced in World War II. It is with his epic techniques that he accomplishes a conversation between the actors on stage and the spectators in the audience.

The spectator plays an important role in the Epic Theatre. The relationship between what the spectator is aware of and what could be presented on stage was a major factor in creating and developing this production. Throughout the production process of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, the following question was asked: Since society is saturated with images of war that it is essentially desensitized by its effects, how can a modern production on Bertolt Brecht’s *Mother Courage and Her Children* create the same shock today as it did when it was produced after WWII in Berlin?

The goal of this thesis is to examine and explore Brecht’s Epic Theatre theories of alienation and *gestus* and incorporate new war imagery that mirrors the wars of today. Furthermore, this thesis project is challenged with using *Mother Courage and Her Children* as a vehicle for high school students to produce a piece of theatre where the presentation of these images are as shocking today as they were to the spectators who saw Brecht’s work for the first time.



## Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study serves a variety of purposes, not only for high school actors and technicians, but also for the spectators of high school theatre; the most important of which is to explore a style of theatre not widely represented in the United States, thus allowing students to embed new theatre theory into their own practice. Students learned to apply new theory to technical application like lighting, sound, set, and costume design. Lastly, this study allowed for students to adapt their theatre practice to a new theory, and research the effects of war on society.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* is a play that allows high school students to explore alternative theatre theory. Students were exposed to the theories of Epic Theatre, a style not always covered at the high school level. Brecht's theories include the practice of techniques including the alienation effect where the "spectator is to be induced not to share the reality of the situation presented, but to review it" (Mitter 44). Furthermore, the "object of the A-effect is to alienate the social gest underlying every incident," and "by social gest is meant the mimetic gestural expression of the social relationships prevailing between people in a given period" (Brecht 139). Alienation and gest are techniques that can be further explored when telling a story such as *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

Brecht is very clear about how the spectator should begin to see a show. He states:

Do not seal off the stage  
 Leaning back, let the spectator be aware  
 Of the busy preparations going on  
 Cunningly intended for him. He sees  
 A tin moon floating down, a single roof  
 Brought in. Don't show him too much.  
 But do show him! And, friends, let him be aware that  
 You are not conquerors, but workers. (qtd. in Ewen 225-226)

Other techniques employed by Brecht include projections that have a “brief sentence telling the spectator what the play is about . . . spare furniture,” actors who regularly break the fourth wall, and “exaggeration” (226-227). This is different from the style of theatre students are used to performing and relies heavily on the narration of the drama as opposed to emoting a realistic experience for an audience.

It is necessary for students to be exposed to a plethora of theories, techniques, and world theatre traditions so that they can inform their own practice. When students study new theatre theories, they can pick and choose techniques that help them to develop their own practice of performance. Brecht’s theatrical style is one that has many benefits for students because it introduces new ways of telling theatrical stories based on interaction with the audience.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* is a play that provides a platform for exploration of war and its effects. Themes addressed are several facets of the horrors of war including profiteering, death, the loss of children, and the deplorable behavior of individuals during times of war. All of these themes are accessible topics of research for students.

The play serves as a vehicle for actors to tell stories in new ways, and it provides a platform for student technicians to learn innovative ways to design for the theatre. The technical elements of Epic Theatre serve a major function in communicating the story to the spectator. Costumes and makeup are not “individually identifiable” and at times were “incomplete,” but always “denoted the character’s role or function in society” (Cash). Sets were largely “non-existent or fragmentary” or were “industrial” (Cash). Full exposure of the elements of theatre was also important in order to “prevent” the spectator

from the “unwanted element of illusion” (Huxley 98). This could include the removal of the theatre drapes and the revealing of all the back stage areas. Lighting served a special purpose in Epic Theatre, as it was meant to be harsh, “white” and “fully exposed” to the spectator (Cash). While it may seem like the design of Epic Theatre is simple, in fact, all elements are carefully selected for a production. Since students need to be able to design for all types of theatre, it is imperative that they explore the technical application of Brecht’s work. As stated in the Review of Literature below, in this production, student technicians learned how to use Epic Theatre technical applications including lighting, projects, shadow work, and various costuming techniques.

The play also supports the idea that theatre can hold up a mirror to society. In a world filled with endless conflicts, this play provides an opportunity for students to explore war and educate their spectators. Brecht believed that the epic elements “provide the drama with material for a comprehensive picture of the world” (qtd. in Ewen 212). Students learn that while on stage they have a voice and they can make change.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* is a play with music. The students in this production were already so familiar with musical theatre, but most were not familiar with the song elements of Brecht’s work. Song is used to enhance the alienation effect. It should be noted that “Brecht . . . neither used the songs as discharge of emotions nor any psychological state but either to focus on the theme of the play or to comment upon incidents; either past or anticipates the future incidents” (Saikia et al. 2). Students are used to working with song in the genre of a musical, which at times occurs due to emotions or to identify a feeling at one moment in time, where Brecht uses song to

comment. This gives a student a deeper understanding of song in performance, which can be applied to other situations where song is used to tell a story.

Lastly, by examining the themes of war, students have the chance to see war through a fresh set of eyes, free from the desensitizing nature war has presented. They are free to explore rather than rely on what they already know.

### **Review of Literature**

As stated previously, the goal of this study is to identify how to use Brechtian techniques to create new war images that are shocking to an audience who are heavily desensitized to the horrors of war due to the increased saturation of war related media. In order for this to be accomplished, it is important to understand Brecht's expectations of producers of *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

During the first major production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* in 1949, Brecht created the *Couragemodell*, a pictorial book that captured the moments he deemed important for a director to incorporate into the production. Producing *Mother Courage and Her Children* for a group of high school students is not an easy task, and this model book was a visual way to see Brecht's intentions while serving as a starting point for discussion with student actors on the importance of Brecht's detailed work. Although Brecht was a maverick when it came to theatre theory, he was adamant "against slavish imitation," however, "he argued for 'practical copying,'" which served "as a step toward creating original theatrical art" (Jones 82). By referring to the *Couragemodell*, the director can learn about the specific moments Brecht created and find new ways to present the material.

The *Couragemodell* also clarifies the key theories of Epic Theatre, making it easier to implement. The model serves as a “response to the theoretical disputes about Epic Theatre” (Jones 82). Brecht’s response to the use of the *Couragemodell* as a way into his theory is as follows:

What, [certain artists] will ask, is in any way creative about the use of models? The answer is that today’s division of labour has transformed creation in many important spheres. The act of creation has become a collective creative process, a continuum of a dialectic sort in which the original invention, taken on its own, has lost much of its importance (qtd. in Jones 83)

Utilizing the *Couragemodell* enhances the dialogue between Brecht and the director, which aids with subsequent productions. This is a model for image work. It can be used to see the images Brecht created and find new ways of adjusting the model.

Directing Brecht’s work is a very specific task. It is said that “Brecht’s great talent as a director was his mastery of detail” including the “manipulation of little images or fragments of a sprawling drama, for his attention to what he too called ‘detail’”(Jones 85). Brecht believed that every detail was important and informed the next. In *his Couragemodell* for *Mother Courage and His Children*, of the “103 specific notes” he wrote about the production “more than 10 percent are entitled ‘detail’” (83). For example,

On a brightly lighted stage every detail, even the smallest, must of course be acted out to the full. This is especially true of actions, which on our stage are glossed over almost as a matter of principle, such as paying on conclusion of a sale. (qtd. in Jones 87-88)

The transfer of money in scene one is an important moment. Brecht’s work requires specific attention to detail emphasized within blocking choices. Brecht does not believe in unnecessary movement, so attention is only paid to the important moments. Brecht thought that:

Positions should be retained as long as there is no compelling reason for changing them; and a desire for variety is not a compelling reason. If one gives into the desire for variety, the consequence is a devaluation of all movement on the stage; the spectator ceases to look for a specific meaning behind each movement, he stops taking movement seriously. But especially at the crucial points in the action, the full impact of a change of position must not be weakened. . . . If changes of position are needed to make certain developments clear to the audience, the movement must be utilized to express something significant for the action and for this particular moment; if nothing of the sort can be found, it is advisable to review the whole arrangement up to this point, it will probably be seen to be at fault, because the sole purpose of an arrangement is to express the action, and the action (it is to be hoped) involves a logical development of incidents, which the arrangement need only present. (91)

Blocking on stage is meant to aid in the dialogue between the spectator and the actors. Although Brecht believed that the theatre should be “enjoyable to the senses,” furthering his philosophy that “nothing needs less justification than pleasure,” he also believed that “his theatre should be instructive and progressive and that thinking could be pleasurable” (Jones 94). When directing Brecht’s work, it is important to keep in mind that the theatre is a place for entertainment, yet the work also functions as a place for learning.

In addition to the blocking and the detail work of Brecht’s theories, he encouraged the use of *gestus* and alienation to enhance the production for the spectator. *Gestus* is defined as a “clear character gesture or movement used by the actor that captures a moment or attitude rather than delving into emotion” (“Epic Theatre and Brecht”). The creation of *gest* is an important process because it allows for the actors to communicate important moments of the scene with the spectator without the actors becoming emotionally attached to the characters. The *gest* is a visual moment that gives the impression of what the scene is about without dialogue. *Gest* can also be a comment on social construct. Social *gest* is different than *gesture*. The difference would be that a

“soldier saluting as he marches across the stage is a gesture,” however, a soldier who is “saluting as he marches over a stage strewn with dead bodies” is gestus (“Epic Theatre and Brecht”). Gestus aids in the imagery created on the stage that is communicated to the audience.

Alienation, or *verfremdungseffekt*, is another way Brecht communicates to the audience. Alienation incorporates a series of devices, some of which are found in the text, such as music and projection titles, that “separate the audience from the action” as a way to keep them “interested and engaged” in the action on stage (“Epic Theatre and Brecht”). This technique is different from the techniques of realism because the actor does not ignore that that spectator exists. The use of narration—third person narration—verbalizing the stage directions, directly addressing the audience, and visual projections, or placards that communicate what the scene is about, are several devices of alienation (“Epic Theatre and Brecht”). Technicians, actors, and the director are responsible to create some of the devices of alienation. Brecht also includes moments of alienation in the script for *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Almost every scene contains a song that makes a social commentary to removes the actor from the action in order to simply tell the story, and every scene is titled and projected for the audience to read.

Further research into Brecht’s original production is necessary to comprehend the importance and structure of his work. Bertolt Brecht’s *Mother Courage and Her Children* was originally written in German in 1938, prior to Hitler’s invasion of Europe. According to Klaus Lker, author of the *Brecht Chronicle*, Brecht wrote *Mother Courage and Her Children* in a “white heat” indicating that it took a month to pen (92). Brecht, when addressing the speed with which he wrote this play, said,

As I wrote I imagined that the playwright's warning voice would be heard from the stages of various great cities, proclaiming that he who would sup with the devil must have a long spoon. This may have been naïve of me, but do not consider naïve a disgrace. Such production never materialized. [but] Writers cannot write as rapidly as governments can make war, because writing demands hard thought. (qtd. in Willett et al. xxix)

Theatre has the power to hold a mirror up to society. Furthermore, there is a need to inform the spectator as quickly as possible. In "Brecht's view it came too late to serve as the intended warning" because of how quickly World War II escalated (Willett et al. xxxi). The theatre, as a medium for informing the spectator, cannot possibly be created as fast as the world changes; however, one can look at the events of the past, including World War II, and use them to warn others about the reoccurrence of war in the future.

The response to the first production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* demonstrates the tone that needs to be set in a modern production. One critic from the 1941 production believed that:

With all its cynicism, *Mutter Courage* is a compelling portrait, often with subtle humor, often with diabolical undercurrents of meaning, often with a certain fatalism, but also often with pure human simplicity and tenderness. And what moves us even more than that is the parallel with today's events, the actual recognition that one war is like another, one misery yields nothing to another in gruesomeness. ("Introduction & Overview")

The first performance in Germany in 1949 garnered much of the same praise. Eric Bentley states that the production was "the big Berlin theatrical event of the past few months, if not, of the whole post-war period so far" (qtd. in "Introduction & Overview"). In a country touched by war it is clearly visible that a play about war is something that is provocative and can incite change. It must be noted that the production did not receive the same praise when it was staged in the United States. According to Peter Thompson, author of *Brecht: Mother Courage and Her Children*, the play "received a hostile review



in the *San Francisco Chronicle*” and was “little noticed outside of San Francisco” (106-108). One can decipher that since the United States did not directly live in the path of war that it was hard to comprehend the relevance of this production. A modern production in the United States would most assuredly be mounted under different circumstances because of the abundance of recent exposure to war.

Brecht’s work is important because of how it moved the people of Germany. During the first production “The band struck up ‘You captains, tell the drums to slacken’, and the dusty, tattered family came rolling on with it’s cart” and “suddenly, in this still devastated city hovering between peace and war, the world could see one of the unforgettable images of our time” (Willett xxxvi). This is the challenge a modern production must live up to.

A further analysis of the literature reviewed can be found in Chapter II: Dramaturgical Protocol, Production History.

### **Methodology**

This production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* involved students in all aspects of the production process. Student actors and technicians were involved in dramaturgical research and the creation of all technical elements. Students ranged in age from fourteen through eighteen from a school district in Northern Orange County. Fullerton Union High School has a rich International Baccalaureate Theatre Arts program, that stresses the importance of empowering students to be self-guided learners, and prides itself of providing advance opportunities in the arts for all students.

The approach taken with this project included an exploration into the recreation of the elements of Epic Theatre with a focus on interacting with a modern spectator. It was

important to pay homage to Brecht and to adjust elements for the modern spectator—one who is different than Brecht’s German post World War II audience member. This, arguably, is a spectator that has seen more than Brecht’s target audience through media saturation rather than direct contact with war. This production allowed students to explore the theoretical work on this theatre practitioner and present *Mother Courage and Her Children* in a style that was not only Brechtian, but also their own. The research process was two-fold. It was important not only to gather research that could be shared with students, but also to assist students in their research of several time periods, including the Thirty Years War, The Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and The War in Afghanistan. The thesis project also aimed to help student actors and technicians embody the Epic Theatre techniques that are necessary for the material being presented.

Prior to choosing a translation of the play, students in the International Baccalaureate Theatre class read it as part of a larger unit on Epic Theatre. They were required to research Epic Theatre and recreate one moment from the play using Epic Theatre techniques, including gestus and alienation. This occurred during the dramaturgical protocol process and allowed for experimentation with the theories of Brecht and the various production processes of this piece. The project also assisted the director with the dramaturgical protocol process. Hearing the play, developing scenes, and having class discussions with a focus group of students helped to identify issues students faced today regarding war. Viewing the students’ interpretations of the techniques and text, and using that information to inform the final staging of the production, was invaluable. Reading and performing parts of the play within a unit on

Epic Theatre was important because *Mother Courage and Her Children* is not widely produced, which makes it challenging to access and research.

After this unit, a decision was made regarding which translation to use. While many older translations exist, there are two particularly interesting modern translations—one by David Hare and the other by Tony Kushner. Both contain words that are familiar to students, making them more appealing to today's youth than a traditional version of the play. Selecting the text led to the discussion of which version would best represent the production concept. This focus led to investigating the David Hare translation and his 1995 Royal National Theatre production as well as the 2014 Arena Stage production starring Kathleen Turner. The Tony Kushner translation led to research on his 2006 Public Theatre production directed by George C. Wolfe and starring Meryl Streep, as well as the 2009 Olivier Theatre production in London starring Fiona Shaw.

Both writers attack the play from a modern perspective by infusing it with accessible language. Kushner "said he wanted to restore the colloquial power of Brecht's original, to find a way to engage a modern American spectator" which includes so much "swearing" that the "F-bombs drop like, well, bombs" (McCarter). This play deals with topics of war so words like "shit," "fuck," and "cunt" became unavoidable. The degree with which the words are used depend on the translation. After serious review of both playscripts, it became evident that, while inspiration could manifest out of the Kushner translation, the Hare translation was best suited for high school students because the language was more appropriate. The word "cunt" appears only in the Kushner translation and proved to be the tipping point in the decision concerning which one to produce.

After choosing Hare's, it was very difficult to find the original compositions of the music used in past productions. Hare was instrumental in translating and updating the lyrics of Brecht's songs, and at the same time, commissioned new compositions. It was important for Fullerton Union to follow the same process.

A composer was brought in to pen new compositions using Hare's adapted lyrics. Since this production was submitted for adjudication, it had to read like a play and not a musical. It was necessary to go through the script and decide which songs should be sung and which could be melodic spoken poetry. Many play competitions, including the California Educational Theatre Associations High School Theatre Festival and the Orange County CAPPIES, indicate that plays cannot be made of more than forty percent music or they are considered a musical. *Mother Courage and Her Children* is a play with music, not a musical, so composing original music allowed for the production to meet the adjudication guidelines. Working with composer, Anthony Lopez, the music was written in an upbeat rock and roll style that contrasted with the serious tone of each episode, which allowed for the creation of a modern alienation effect for the spectator.

Auditions were held in August, and students were already aware of the shows for the season. Actors were first asked to audition with a dramatic contemporary monologue. A panel of theatre educators, community members, and faculty watched every one, and democratically selected who would receive callbacks. Actors were selected who had well prepared pieces and demonstrated outstanding skills, such as projection, articulation and stage presence. Callbacks were posted, and all actors were invited to a three-hour callback session in front of the same panel of judges from the preliminary auditions. During the callbacks, actors read sides with one another and participated in a session

where the theories of gestus and alienation were explored through a series of exercises. Actors were also asked to pair up and create mini devised pieces that demonstrated gestus as they narrated their movements. After two days of auditions, twenty-five student actors were selected to participate.

Technicians received applications for several technical positions, including set, prop, and lighting designer. Students were then selected based on their answers to the application questions and on previously demonstrated work. As a result, forty technicians were selected to participate. After casting was complete, the technicians and cast met with the director to complete several readings of the play, during which they were able to discuss the scenes and ask clarifying questions. At this time the dramaturgical protocol found in this thesis was presented to the entire team.

Other major research was compiled, including some that could be used to design acting specific exercises, warm-ups, and rehearsal techniques to bring Brecht's theories to life. Once such exercise focused on clarity in gest by having actors create and communicate gest through tableaux on contrasting themes (Thomas 1). Since many students had no previous experience with Brecht's work, it was evident that they needed specialized instruction on how to perform his ideas. These workshops explored the a-effect and gestus, as well as an in-depth exploration of the music that was composed for the production.

Technicians were given a link to a Pinterest board that was created for this project as well as the dramaturgical protocol. This information and subsequent images included ideas from previous productions, preliminary ideas from the director, examples of lighting, costumes, set designs and links to the *Couragemodell*. Technicians were tasked

with designing the show by using the research provided, as well as their own dramaturgical research.

The technical elements of this production needed to be well planned and executed even though a minimalistic approach was taken to the design. The performance space is a 190-seat tradition proscenium theatre located on the campus of Fullerton Union High School. The audience enters from the rear of the house and can see the stage immediately when they walk in. Brecht believed in full exposure of the backstage areas to allow the audience to see the all transitions from one scene to another. The creation of this environment was an important part of the production to pay homage to Brecht, and also to teach students how to design using different theories. The spectator entered the space as if the theatre was not prepared for the house to be officially opened, and gave them a visual of what happens backstage before a production begins.

The transformation of the space included the removal all drapes on stage, which gave the audience a direct view of the back stage areas. Those areas were staged to look like a working backstage area. Ladders, flats, paint, and tools are in full view to draw the audience into the reality that a play is being performed. Video cameras were set up in the makeup room areas and projected on the back wall of the performance space so that the audience could see the actors prepare for the show. Care was taken to make sure an illusion was not created, but an experience where the audience knew they were watching a play.

Lighting was placed in “off stage areas” so actors could see backstage; this also gave the spectators a full view of the backstage activity. Lighting was aimed at the upstage wall of the performance space so that actors could perform shadow work from

off stage. This helped with the effect of aiming prop guns at actors' heads to simulate execution. Many of the deaths in this production took place off stage using this technique. Lighting was also used to replicate Brecht's use of puppetry as an alienation technique by incorporating some form of shadow puppetry throughout the production. In addition to the above techniques, lighting was designed to be harsh, so several instruments were pointed at the audience.

The play is written in a series of twelve episodes, each standing on its own. Through collaboration with the cast and crew, devised transitions were created from several stimuli found in script. Creating images to affect the spectator is challenging, so the entire ensemble, including the technicians and the actors, came together to do so through a devising process. Still images that tell a story and are directly connected to the lives of the students were explored and realized.

Students should be exposed to the great works of Brecht, within the context of conceptualizing it through theatre, because they will be affected by the choices that are being made for them in their immediate future. Whether it be a three-year declaration of War against ISIS, an Islamic terror group in the Middle East, or some other battle that the United States must fight, the truth is that

To the generation of today, rousing itself from the torpor and inertia born of the intellectual repressions of recent years, facing threats of extinction made the more vivid through Brecht's . . . *Mother Courage*—aware of unprecedented terrors as well as unprecedented possibilities that lie within their reach. . . It is to this generation that Brecht is speaking of a vision—to paraphrase Hegel—that must be translated from a night of possibility into the day of reality. (Ewen 493)

## CHAPTER II

### DRAMATURGICAL PROTOCOL

#### **Glossed Playscript**

All pages below refer to the Arcade Publishing version of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* translated by David Hare.

#### **First Responses**

Completing a dramaturgical protocol on Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* is impossible without reviewing Brecht's *Couragemodell: 1949* (Jones 78-137). Although this text can be helpful because it aids the director, actor, and designer, in actuality, it also can hinder one's ability to be truly creative with this piece of theatre. The *Couragemodell: 1949* can and should be used as a reference during problematic moments in the execution of the play.

#### *Pluses*

1. Brecht's *Couragemodell* is meant to do the following: reveal the basic gest of a play, demonstrate the scenic arrangements, show the treatment of details, warn against mistakes in the execution, facilitate the division of the plot, e.g., the precise parsing of the plot elements, and give tempo and running times for the production (81).
2. Actors should become familiar with Epic Theatre, since *Mother Courage and Her Children* was written in this style.



3. Students involved in high-level arts courses have the necessary tools and background knowledge to research the theories of Piscator and Brecht during the production process of *Mother Courage*.
4. The themes of war are familiar to society due to past conflicts, including World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, Operation Desert Storm, the Afghanistan War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Any combat and/or terrorist situation that occurred as a result is also important to explore.
5. The theme of greed and profiteering from war is accessible and prevalent today.
6. The theme of morality when engaged in war is addressed in scene one. The Sergeant states, “Without a good war, where do you get your moral standards from” (5)?
7. The play makes several references to religion. The struggle between religious factions is a reoccurring theme throughout history.
8. The translation used is up to date, and includes language that the average high school student understands.
9. Technical elements include a bare stage with minimal set pieces, as is indicative of Epic Theatre. It is not necessary to build a different set for each location.
10. The script offers an opportunity for a director to find interesting ways to block transitions between the twelve episodes of the production. The goal is to keep the scenes isolated and to transition smoothly from one to the next.

11. The production includes a strong female lead, and a secondary female who does not speak yet is important to the plot. Casting is flexible, and many of the secondary roles can be played by either gender.
12. The production provides the opportunity for original musical composition, which gives those with varied arts backgrounds the chance to be involved.

### *Minuses*

1. Brecht provides a *Couragemodell* that is meant to aid in the performance of the text. See *Pluses*.
2. The play takes place in over ten locations, which makes set changes and transitions challenging.
3. The primary set piece is a covered wagon that must move around a stage. An amateur group may have a difficult time constructing a covered wagon or renting one, and the stage must also be large enough to allow the wagon to move in a circle.
4. The set normally includes a revolve, which allows for the cart to look like it is moving even though it is in one place. Building a revolve may be difficult for an amateur group.
5. A large canon is needed for scene three, which presents the same problem mentioned in number three above.
6. Scenes are episodic, and do not transition very well, thus making it difficult to stage.
7. It is necessary to compose original music to accompany Brecht's lyrics that are written throughout the text.

8. Several of the scenes include multiple storylines that occur on different parts of the stage, which might challenge the director.
9. In scene eleven, Kattrín climbs a ladder to stand on the roof of a house, which is problematic if the theatre does not support a two-story set.
10. The characters in the play are much older than high school students. The audience must believe that Anna Fierling (Mother Courage) had three children who are all older than eighteen.
11. The show requires several gunshots that can be produced with live blanks or with sound effects.
12. There are numerous references to alcohol throughout the play.
13. The text moves between verse and prose, much like a Shakespearean play.  
Actors need to understand the beat differences and the tempos of the text.
14. At times, the language can be harsh—“tart,” “bitch,” “fuck,” and “shit” are spoken throughout the entire piece.
15. There are references to sexual activity, including venereal diseases in scene three (25).
16. The script indicates that Kattrín is raped when coming back to the Cart in scene six. This is a serious moment that needs to be addressed with care.

### *Questions*

1. Can the music be composed using tunes of familiar songs? Should it be modern, or reminiscent for the time period for which the play was written?

2. Should the costuming represent the time period of the play or can it be modernized? Is it possible to design costumes to emphasize that war is timeless?
3. How can a cart be built that can be pulled by two males (Eilif and Swiss Cheese), by one male and one female (Swiss Cheese and Kattrin), and then only by Mother Courage.
4. Where in the text can the actress who plays Mother Courage demonstrate Brecht's theory of *gestus*?
5. Although it is never mentioned or described, is the character of Kattrin completely mute, or does she choose not to speak for some reason?
6. How does a costumer or makeup designer indicate the passage of time, especially through the transitions between the episodic scenes?

### *Clues*

1. The play is about war, which is familiar to everyone.
2. The play is about materialism and the need to make money to survive—that can lead to greed—which is a universal theme. This is a way into the characters of the play.
3. Mother Courage loses all of her children even though the title of the play conveys that it is about a mother who takes care of her children.
4. The play includes many songs that convey the mood and tone of the scene. This may be a way into what Brecht wants the audience to focus on. This also could be a way for each of the episodic scenes to transition.

5. The way peasants, soldiers, and vendors interact with one another represents the social class structure of the play.

### *Imagery*

1. One of the strongest images is the cart pulled by Mother Courage and her children. They are all tied to the cart as their only means of survival, and it is the only concrete visual that never changes.
2. Katrin holds the baby in scene five, which provides an image that reflects her desire to be a mother and the sacrifice she has to make to stay with her own mother throughout the war.
3. The reality of death is consistent throughout the play.
4. Mother Courage sells needed items to soldiers as a means of survival.
5. Drinking alcohol is an escape from the tragedy many of the characters face throughout the play.
6. The image of Katrin banging the drum on the roof of the peasant's house to warn the town of the impending attack is an image that reflects her desire to aid in her mother's survival (87).

### *Concretes*

1. The cart is a concrete, and the central piece of the production. It is always on stage except when it makes an initial entrance in scene one.
2. The author wrote the play in an episodic manner, which forces each scene to stand on its own.
3. Mother Courage never reacts formally to the death of her children, which emphasizes her ability to endure even the most disturbing situation.

4. War is a constant in the world of the play.
5. Religion is the cause of the war that is fought.

### **Supplements to the Playscript/Areas of Inquiry**

#### *Source Studies*

Brecht wrote the *Couragemodell*: 1949 to provide direct insight into the world of the *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Further reading of the text is encouraged, however the following source study predominately relies on the reading of the text in isolation from the *Couragemodell* so that a deeper, contemporary evaluation of the production can be achieved.

David Hare's translation of *Mother Courage and her Children* was first performed at the Olivier auditorium of the National Theatre on 3 November 1995. All line numbers and scenes refer to this version of the play. Acts are not divided in the text, so all citations are indicated in scene and line number format (scene.line). In cases where the reference is located in the stage directions, only the scene number is cited (scene).

### **Glossary**

All definitions were extracted from Dictionary.com.

1. *Falernian*: wine (2.85).
2. *Winter Woolies*: protective winter clothing that is made of wool (3.2).
3. *Paymaster*: a person authorized by a company, government, etc., to pay out wages or salaries, especially in the military (3.33).
4. *Kaiser*: a German Emperor (3.162) the Kaiser at the time was Ferdinand the II (see fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Portrait of Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor (1578-1637). “Kunst Historisches Museum Wien.” *bilddatenbank.khm.at*. Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. <<http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=2366>>.

5. *Regiment*: a unit of ground forces, consisting of two or more battalions or battle groups, a headquarters unit, and certain supporting units (2.215).
6. *Cassock*: a long, close-fitting garment worn by members of the clergy or others participating in church services (3.238) (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Cassock for Chaplain to His Holiness. *CM Almy*. CM Almy, 2013. Web. 14 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.almy.com/Category/ChaplainToHisHoliness>>.

7. *Chaplain*: a person who says the prayer, invocation, etc., for an organization or at an assembly (3.238).
8. *Heretics*: a professed believer who maintains religious opinions contrary to those accepted by his or her church or rejects doctrines prescribed by that church (3.363).
9. *Canteen*: a general store and cafeteria at a military base (4).

10. *Sabres*: a stout single-edged cavalry sword, having a curved blade (4.5).
11. *Imperial Commander Tilly*: creator of the Bavarian Army (6) (see fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Portrait of Johann t'Serclaes von Tilly. “*Wikimedia Commons*.” Wikipedia, 6 Sept. 2013. Web. 11 Nov. 2013.

<[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann\\_Tserclaes\\_Tilly.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Tserclaes_Tilly.jpg)>.

12. *Brandy*: a spirit distilled from wine or from the fermented juice of grapes or of apples, peaches, plums, etc. (6.23).
13. *Bohemia*: a region in the W Czech Republic: formerly a kingdom in central Europe; under Hapsburg rule 1526–1918 (6.79).
14. *Oxenstierna Regiment*: Swedish Army infantry regiment that traced its origins back to the 16th century (6.136).
15. *Lutherans*: of or pertaining to Luther, adhering to his doctrines, or belonging to one of the Protestant churches that bear his name (8.20).
16. *Antichrist*: a particular personage or power, variously identified or explained, who is conceived of as appearing in the world as the principal antagonist of Christ (8.40).



17. *Hyena*: a doglike carnivore of the family Hyaenidae, of Africa, southwestern Asia, and south central Asia, having a coarse coat, a sloping back, and large teeth and feeding chiefly on carrion, often in packs (8.137).
18. *Footcloths*: rectangular pieces of cloth that are worn wrapped around the feet to avoid chafing (8.156).
19. *Areshole*: asshole (8.190).
20. *Bandy-legged*: having crooked legs; bowlegged (8.224).
21. *Parsonage*: the residence of a member of the clergy, as provided by the parish or church (9).
22. *Cholera*: an acute, infectious disease, endemic in India and China and occasionally epidemic elsewhere, characterized by profuse diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, etc. (9.13).
23. *Vicarage*: the office or duty of a vicar (9.66).
24. *Vicar*: an ecclesiastic representing the pope or a bishop (9.66).
25. *Bullock*: a castrated bull; steer (11.24).
26. *Riff-raff*: the lowest classes (11.91).
27. *Tarpaulin*: a protective covering of canvas or other material waterproofed with tar, paint, or wax (12).

### **Geographical References and Place Names**

The locations described in the play are referenced in the introduction of each scene or directly stated by the characters.



Fig. 4. Thirty Years War Map. "Europe, History of: Thirty Years' War, 1618–48." Map. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2013. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/1433/The-Thirty-Years-War>>.

1. Dalecarlia, Sweden (1).
2. "This is a road-map of Moravia" (1.62).
3. "I drove my cart through the bombardment of Riga" (1.76-77).
4. "And your from Bamberg in Bavaria" (1.115).
5. Poland, Fortress of Wallhof Battle of 1626 (2).
6. Military Camp, Poland (3).
7. "I tell you, I grew up in Flanders." (3.58).
8. Poland 1629 (4).
9. Magdeburg, Saxony 1631 (5).
10. Inglostadt Bavaria 1632 (6).
11. "He's had half the women in Flanders" (8.220).

12. “In Pomerania they say they’re eating their own children” (9.22-24).
13. “In Wurtemberg I had a bag of salt, . . .” (9.20).
14. “. . . I’m going back to Utrecht.” (9.33).

### Pronunciations

Pronunciations are divided into three parts: words, character names and locations.

Pronunciations and International Phonetic Alphabet pronunciations are included. All pronunciations were extracted from Dictionary.com, using bold face and italics to indicate the stressed and unstressed word parts.

### Word Pronunciations

1. *Shilling*: “**shil**-ing.” IPA: /ʃɪlɪŋ/ (1.235).
2. *Chivalrous*: “**shiv**-uhl-ruhs.” IPA: /ʃɪvəlɹəs/ (2.48).
3. *Regiment*: “**rej**-uh-muhnt.” IPA: rɛdʒəmənt (2.215).
4. *Protestant*: “**prot**-uh-stuhnt.” IPA: /ˈprɒtəstənt (3.298).
5. *Sabres*: “**sey**-ber.” IPA /seɪbər/ (4.5).
6. *Bohemia*: “boh-**hee**-mee-uh.” IPA: /boʊˈhɪmiə/ (6.78).
7. *Martyr*: “**mahr**-ter.” IPA: /ˈmɑrtər/ (7.11).
8. *Lutherans*: “**loo**-ther-uhn.” IPA: /luθərən/ (8.20).
9. *Antichrist*: “**an**-ti-krahyst.” IPA: /ˈæntɪkraɪst/ (8.40).
10. *Hyena*: “hahy-**ee**-nuh.” IPA: /haɪˈɪnə/ (8.137).
11. *Padre*: “**pah**-drey.” IPA: /pɑdreɪ (8.155).
12. *Areshole*: “**ahrs**-hohl.” IPA: / ɑrs hoʊl/ (8.190).
13. *Bandy-legged*: “**ban**-dee-leg-id, -legd.” IPA: /bæn dɪˌlɛɡ ɪd, -ˌlɛɡd/ (8.224).
14. *Vicarage*: “**vik**-er-ij.” IPA: /vɪk ər ɪdʒ/ (9.66).

### Character Name Pronunciations

Character names with scene and line numbers are referenced characters within the scene. They do not necessarily represent the speaking characters in the play.

1. Anna Fierling: “ah-nuh feer-ling.” IPA: /ˈɑnə /fɪərɪŋ/ (xv).
2. Eilif: “el-if.” IPA: /ɛl ɪf/ (xv).
3. *Kattrin*: “kaht-rin.” IPA: /kɑt rɪn/ (xv).
4. *Swiss Cheese*: “swis-cheez.” IPA: /swɪs tʃɪz/ (xv).
5. *Chaplain*: “**chap**-lin.” IPA: /tʃæp lɪn/ (xv).
6. *Sergeant*: “**sahr**-juh nt.” IPA: /sɑr dʒənt/ (xv).
7. *Armourer*: “**ahr**-mer-er.” IPA: /ɑ:mərə/ (xv).
8. *Mercenaries*: “**mur**-suh-ner-ee.” IPA: /mɜr sə,nɛr i/ (xv).
9. *Lieutenant*: “loo-**ten**-uh nt.” IPA: /lu tɛn ənt (xv).
10. *Yvette Pottier*: “ee-**vet**- **pot**-ee.” IPA: /ɪvɛt/ pɒt i/ (xv).
11. *Pieter*: “**pee**-ter.” IPA: /pi tər/ (xv).
12. *Colonel*: “**kur**-nl IPA: /kɜr nl/ (xv).
13. *Caesar*: “**see**-zer.” IPA: /sizər/ (2.136).
14. *Kaiser*: “**kahy**-zer.” IPA: /kaɪzər/ (3.162).
15. *Solomon*: “sol-uh-muhn.” IPA: /sɒləmən/ (9.25).
16. *Socrates*: “sok-ruh-teez.” IPA: sɒkrə,tɪz/ (9.94).

### Location Pronunciations

Locations are meant to be displayed on cue cards or through visual projections during the production. It is imperative that the audience can comprehend the

pronunciation the names of locations.

1. *Sweden*: “**sweed**-n.” IPA: /ˈswɪdn/ (1).
2. *Poland*: “**poh**-luhnd.” IPA: /ˈpoʊlənd/ (2).
3. *Saxony*: “**sak**-suh-nee.” IPA: /ˈsæksəni/ (3).
4. *Magdeburg*: “**mag**-duh-burg.” IPA: /ˈmæɡdəˌbɜrg (5).
5. *Ingolstadt*: “**ing**-guh-shtaht.” IPA: /ˈɪŋɡəlʃtɑt/ (6).
6. *Bavaria*: “buh-**vair**-ee-uh.” IPA: /bəˈvaɪəriə/ (6).
7. *Flanders*: “**flan**-derz.” IPA: /ˈflæn dərz/ (8.220).
8. *Fichtel*: “**fikh**-tuhl.” IPA: /ˈfɪxtəl/ (9).
9. *Wurtemberg*: “**vYR**-tuh m-berk.” IPA: ˈvʊr təmˌbɛrk/ (9.20).
10. *Pomerania*: “**pom**-uh-rey-nee-uh.” IPA: /ˌpɒməˈreɪniə (9.23).
11. *Utrecht*: “yoo-**trekt**.” IPA: /ˈyutrɛkt (9.31).
12. *Halle*: “halə.” IPA: /ˈhæli (11).
13. *Moravia*: “moh-**vair**-ee-uh.” (11).

### Literary Allusions

1. “. . . pages of the Bible” (1.61).
2. “I put a big black cross on one of these slips” (1.176).
3. “You are a young Caesar” (2.136).
4. “oh I won't spoil the kid” (3.128-29).
5. “He's doing it all for God” (3.176).
6. At the first hour our good Lord stood  
And prayed and watched by Pilate's side  
And Pontius said he is not mine

Let Herod have him tried  
 He is not guilty Pontius said  
 But I refuse to say  
 Let him be tried by someone else  
 And then he turned away  
 At the third hour they took their whips  
 They scourged his side, the blood ran red  
 And then they took a crown of thorn  
 And placed it on his head. . . (3.397-436).

7. "It is written: the Lord will provide" (3.558).
8. "flock of sheep" (6.170).
9. "Well, stone me!" (8.44).
10. "He who sups with the devil needs a long spoon" (8.173-74).
11. ". . . then the Lord God will surely reward me in heaven" (8.236-37).
12. "The mills of God grind exceedingly slowly" (8.238-39).
13. "We shall perform for you the Song of Solomon" (9.70-71).
14. "Et tu Brute" (9.89).
15. "Our Father which art in Heaven, . . ." (11.65).
16. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us"  
 (11.80-81).

### **References to the Natural World**

Italicized lines are references in the stage directions listed at the beginning of each act.

1. The Spring is here.  
The snows are melting,  
The dead are gone.  
They're all at peace (1.39-40).
2. "It's like with trees. You know. It's the tall straight ones, they're the ones  
that get chopped down and turned into planks. The crooked ones nobody  
bothers with" (6.226-29).
3. "*A summer morning*" (8).
4. "Do we really have to do this at the crack of dawn" (8.1-2)?
5. "We walked all through the night to get here" (8.3-4).
6. "You call me a hyena . . ." (8.137).
7. "Our natural elements are fire and the sword. I'd give anything to be back  
with my general, chasing a big fat chicken, yellow with fat, putting it on  
the fire with mustard and carrot . . ." (8.247-50).
8. "It is autumn. There is famine and plague" (9).
9. "I heard a dog bark" (9.6-7).
10. "I don't like making decisions in the cold or when I'm hungry" (9.35).
11. "You're already covered with lice" (9.44).
12. You plant a rose in March  
You see it grow  
A garden blooms  
It's what a home is for  
The seed become the bud

Becomes the flower  
 The blossom fades  
 In time you plant some more  
 The seasons change  
 The roof you made in June  
 Come November  
 Protects you from the snows  
 You're safe  
 You watch the blizzards  
 Through the winter.  
 Home is where the heart is  
 Home is where the heart is  
 Goodness knows (10.1-18).

13. Spring is here.

The snow is melting  
 The dead are gone.  
 They're all at peace  
 And what remains must now continue.  
 That's us. Let's go. We're all that's left (12.47-50).

**References to Social/Political/Ideological  
 World of the Play**

1. "Without a good war, where do you get your moral standards from?  
 Everything goes pot in peacetime. People eat what they like. You see them  
 wandering about with cheese on their bread and then a great smear of



- bacon fat on top! . . . its obvious. No war. No order" (1.11-22).
2. "Here we are, every paper I've got. Look, some pages of the Bible. Great for wrapping Gherkins in" (1.60-61).
  3. "Blessed are the peacemakers . . ." (3.205).
  4. " . . . King who invaded their country" (3.156).
  5. " . . . Kaiser who enslaved them" (3.162).
  6. "First he had to introduce the Salt Tax in Sweden to pay for the war" (3.167-68).
  7. "And now I'm going to take the Chaplain off to buy a catholic flag" (3.292-93).
  8. "I'm told they now detect Protestants by smelling their excrement" (3.198-99).
  9. "Are you a heretic" (3.364)?
  10. "You're going to have to pay if you want Swiss Cheese" (3.537-38).
  11. "Well, you got what you wanted. You keep your cart. Eleven bullets he got, that's all. I don't know why I've come back. I don't know why I still bother with you. But they're convinced the cash box isn't in the river. They think you've got it. They think you're his mother. They're bringing the body here If you show you know him they'll kill you" (3.567-572).
  12. "The girl is twenty-five and she has no husband. I've got to think of her" (3.549).
  13. "Throw him on the fire" (3.583-584).
  14. "And they demanded five-shilling fine. For nothing" (4.5-6).

15. "I can't afford it. I've got taxes, I've duties, I've bribes, I've interest to pay"  
(5.30-31).
16. "You have to feel sorry for them, don't you? I mean all these commanders  
and emperors, trying to do something marvelous which will make them  
remembered for hundreds of years" (6.29-32).
17. "Even emperors can't do it by themselves. They have to depend on these  
hopelessly inadequate things called people to carry out all their wonderful  
plans" (6.36-39).
18. "These men won't stop, if need be, for two hundred years" (6.43-44).
19. "The world's run by popes and emperors. And they need people to fight  
their wars for them" (6.123).
20. "All I want is me and my children through this war" (6.197).
21. "It's not their fault. I don't blame them. Back at home they don't rape. It's  
the war. It's the people who run the war. It's anyone who starts a war"  
(6.212-14).
22. "The only peace you'll find is in the grave" (7.14).
23. The war goes on. The war is raging.  
  
The men are here. They must be fed  
  
And what remains must now start trading  
  
That's us. Let's go. It's going well (7.15-18).
24. "You thrive on war. You actually prefer it" (8.171-72).
25. "You live off war" (8.144).
26. "I tell you, this peace is a non-starter. It's not how we're meant to live.

Man is born in sin. Our natural elements are fire and the sword” (8.246-48).

27. “Looted. Pillaged a farm. And then he murdered the farmer’s wife” (8.265-67).

28. “The war’s now lasted thirteen years or so/ So work it out! It hardly needs explaining/ With luck we’ve still got twenty years to go” (8.355-57).

29. “*There is famine and plague. The war is sixteen years old and half of Germany is wiped out*” (9).

30. “In Pomerania they say they’re eating their own children. Someone saw a nun looting” (9.22-25).

31. “. . . we, too, are law-abiding people suffering grievously in this terrible winter of plague and famine” (9.72-74).

32. “I don’t help Catholics” (11.19).

33. “Back to business” (12.36).

34. Nobody stays at all unless they have to  
 At the end you see the war has robbed us blind  
 Have you noticed? The war itself is endless  
 The money’s being made by those who stay behind  
 Nobody wants to give us decent clothing  
 Shit is what we eat, and we’ve no pay  
 Yet who knows? Let’s face it! Miracles may happen  
 Let’s give this thing a spin for one more day (12.39-46).

*The Author and His World*

Bertolt Brecht's writing was influenced by World War II and the effects of mass genocide. In general, the existentialist environment created between warring nations and the after effects is the perfect backdrop for theatrical exploration. Phyllis Hartnoll, author of *The Theatre*, contends that the Second World War led to major changes in the European theatre that were caused by,

[the] dispersal of talents under Hitler, the growing dissatisfaction of theatre workers with the limitations imposed by the proscenium arch, the desire to enlarge the bounds of experience, the inadequacy of most of the new plays, creating an unstable situation which needed only a sudden jolt to set off theatre in a new direction. (255)

Theatre, at its very foundation, will always mirror society. It is often said that art imitates life, and when life is clearly destructive, there is a need for this imitation. In a society where war is the foundation, theatre becomes one means of expression, thus war is an ideal backdrop for the creation of a new theatre.

Bertolt Brecht wrote *Mother Courage and Her Children* to emphasize the parallels between the war in the play and the war being fought in Europe during the German occupation, or World War II. The backdrop of *Mother Courage* is the Thirty Years' War during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The play "chronicles the encounters of a canteen woman Anna Fierling, nicknamed Mother Courage, as she tried to make her living selling her wares from her cart to soldiers" (Burt 102). There is a direct link between the world Brecht creates of the Thirty Years' War and the world Brecht lived in during World War II. According to Robert Crowley, author of *The Readers Companion to Military History*, the Thirty Years' War was one fought largely because disagreements between Protestants and Catholics where "perhaps 20 percent of Germany's total population perished during"

the conflict making it the “worst catastrophe to afflict Germany until World War II” (Crowley). Both World War II and the Thirty Year’s War directly parallel one another in the areas of religious persecution, Catholics vs. Protestants, Nazi’s vs. Jews, and with the complete destruction that war causes.

Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht was born on February 10, 1898, in Ausburg, Germany, to a Catholic father who worked in a paper mill, and a protestant Mother. Brecht excelled as a writer and had his “first poems and reviews” published by a newspaper when he was a teenager (Burt 103). In 1928, he collaborated with Kurt Weill who wrote the lyrics to *The Threepenny Opera*, which “illustrated his [Brecht’s] growing belief in Marxism” (Simkin). Marxism is defined as “a theory and practice of socialism including the labor theory of value, dialectical materialism, the class struggle, and dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a classless society” (Merriam). The belief and practice of Marxism forced Brecht to flee with his family from Germany when Adolf Hitler came into power. He later lost his German citizenship. After fleeing to Denmark in 1933, he found himself in Sweden in 1939, Finland in 1940, and California in 1941. It is apparent that his movement through Europe put him one step ahead of the Nazi occupation (Simkin).

Brecht’s complete hatred for the Nazi occupation is apparent in his work. During this time “he wrote several plays as direct contributions to the fight against Hitler, including the epic *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (1938)” (Kennedy 183). He later wrote some of his most prominent plays while in exile. In Scandinavia, on the “eve of World War Two” Brecht premiered *Mother Courage and Her Children*, a play that is considered “one of the most powerful antiwar dramas ever written” (Burt 102). In David

Hare's introduction of the play, he contends that, "Brecht had originally hoped to see the play presented as a warning to Scandinavia not to be drawn into the Second World War, events overtook him, and the play was not staged until 19 April 1941 in Zurich" (Hare). War had consumed a continent and Brecht used his craft to construct a warning to all people about the horrors of war; however, Brecht was not sure that "humanity was going to learn anything from the tragedy" (Brecht 229). He believed that through the creation of this text, that even if Mother "Courage learns nothing else at least the audience can . . . learn something by observing her" (Brecht 229). Mother Courage is not the typical dramatic hero, but a product of the war.

Brecht was able to direct and stage the production in 1949 for the Berliner Ensemble after the end of World War II. The Berliner Ensemble was created when Brecht returned to Germany at the request of the "Soviet officials and the Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands (Cultural League for the Democratic Renewal of Germany)," from whom he was given subsidies to restage *Mother Courage* (Gange). The Nazi war machine had been defeated less than five years prior to his staging of the production but it was still staged "amidst the ruins of Berlin," which was considered a "horrifyingly appropriate setting reflecting the consequences of ignoring Brecht's jeremiad on the all-consuming destructiveness of war" (Burt 102). The staging of the play in the war-ravaged city of Berlin provided a stark link between the German's blood thirst for war and the effects of such desires.

Brecht is now considered not only a playwright and a poet, but a theatre theorist for his contributions to the theatrical style that was inspired by "Piscator's Epic Theatre and his own theory of alienation" (Hartnoll 255). Both created a platform where the

audience is alienated from the actors thus quelling “theatrical illusion, and so preventing the spectators from becoming emotionally involved in the action” (255). The lack of emotional connection to the characters allows the audience to see “the stage as a stage, actors as actors, and not the traditional make-believe of the theatre” as a way to get the audience to think critically about the content and not to live in the moment with the characters (Simkin). Brecht believed that “as soon as one realizes that the modern world is no longer reconcilable with the drama then the drama can no longer be reconciled with the world” (Carlson 382-383). *Mother Courage* is about war and would not have had the same effect on the audience if it was presented in traditional dramatic theatre style. The alienation of the audience exemplifies Brecht’s desire to engage them in conversation about the actions of human beings—a community who just participated in a war must be exposed to wars’ direct effects.

An understanding of the difference between traditional drama and Epic Theatre is necessary to understand the world Brecht was trying to create within the text. The difference between dramatic and epic form is “the former encourages the spectator to become engulfed in the plot, to accept it as an unalterable linear development of experience” whereas “the later distances the spectator, presents its action as alterable, and forces the spectator to consider other possibilities and to judge between them” (383). The audience in dramatic form, or what can be considered Stanislavsky-based theatre, are like voyeurs that get lost in the production by forgetting their lives for a moment for the sake of entertainment. In epic drama, the audience is more active than passive, and is allowed to make decisions about the possible impacts and resonances that the play inspires.

Brecht's commentary on the production in *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic*, provides deeper insight into the play and includes his production notes.

Brecht states, “after the great war, life still goes on in our ruined cities, but it is a different life, the life of different or differently composed circles” (215). This changed world is evident in the text of the play when Mother Courage adapts regardless of who is winning the war. Brecht gives specific commentary on what a production of this play is meant to show an audience. He states “that in wartime big business is not conducted by small people . . . that war is a continuation of business by other means, making the human viruses fatal even to those who exercise them” and that “no sacrifice is too great for the struggle against war” (220). The monumental endeavor of mounting this production comes with great responsibility—not only for the director, actors, and technicians, but also for the audience who must come away from the theatre with a vision of the horrors of war.

In the introduction of David Hare's translation of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, he describes the meaning behind the intent of the production:

Suppose you went into a war, and you happen to be one of the cleverest people in the world, and you had developed the most sophisticated possible strategy for protecting yourself against the hurt that war might do to you- if, in fact, you were clear-eyed about the purpose and meaning of that war, and how to survive in it- what good would your lucidity be to you? And the answer is: none. (viii)

Researching the world of the artist provides deeper insight into the world created in a production. In *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Brecht conveys his wartime experiences to an audience with the evolution of a new theatrical style through a play whose clear purpose is to educate.



## *World of the Play*

### **Connections**

The first play I read as an undergraduate was *Mother Courage and Her Children*. September 11<sup>th</sup> had just occurred, and I finished the play just as America entered into war with Afghanistan. Although I am reluctant to try to make a direct connection with 9-11 because of how cliché this connection has become, I cannot ignore the comparisons between the attack in September and the senseless war within *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Every American has a connection to the infamous attacks, and Brecht would applaud using his play to create a dialogue about the materialism and travesty of war.

*Mother Courage and Her Children* illustrates a never-ending war in a deceptive atmosphere where no man or thing can be trusted. The war depicted in the play can be compared to my recent fascination with zombies due to an unavoidable influx of television shows and movies on the topic. The television show *Walking Dead* parallels *Mother Courage and her Children*. In the *Walking Dead*, humans are in a constant struggle against uncontrollable forces including zombie attacks, influenza, the need for material things, and the fear that someone living will kill another human being in order to stay alive. This show is the ultimate conflict within the narrative of man versus man, man versus nature, and man versus self. Although *Mother Courage and Her Children* is not about zombies, it is about the infinite battle located within a barren, war-torn wasteland where one needs to think twice before trusting another.

Many modern television shows negate the tradition of episodic stories. Several are about “reality,” or are filmed as continuous one-hour movie snippets that do not stand on their own, but rather rely on the previous episode to move the story forward. Before

today, early episodes of *Will and Grace* and *Seinfeld*, for example, presented scenarios that incorporated a beginning, middle, and end within a thirty-minute period. Episodic television is difficult to create today because the audience must invest in one episode rather than an entire series. The episodic nature of *Mother Courage and Her Children* also requires each scene to function within itself rather than rely on other scenes, which could be challenging for the audience.

### **Relevance of this Work to a Contemporary Audience**

*Mother Courage and Her Children* occurs during the Thirty Years War, which was fought between two religious factions, the Protestants and the Catholics, in an effort to prove religious dominance. The contemporary audience is familiar with religious fanaticism, especially as it pertains to contemporary religious wars; for example, the one hypothetically fought between Christians and non-believers during what the right wing media has dubbed the “War on Christmas” (the conflict between the Palestinians and the Jews in Israel, the persecution of the Jews during World War II, and the religious conflict between sects of the Muslim religion). To a modern audience, the play holds a mirror up to the impact of religious radicalism. Although some audience members may not be directly affected, they are constantly saturated with the effects of religious warfare through the media.

Americans know the consequences of war. Counting the war with Afghanistan, the United States has been in direct and indirect combat in the Middle East for the last twelve years. Currently, there is no concise date for the completion of American operations in the Middle East. *Mother Courage and Her Children* shares a similar story,

since it is about a war that lasted a lifetime for many, and for some within the current Middle East conflicts, this war, too, is never-ending.

Materialism is a major theme *Mother Courage*. Consumers, whether willingly or not, attach importance to the possession of material objects. During “Black Friday,” some people go to great lengths for a flat screen television, which may include fist fighting and trampling another. Materialism is important to the survival of *Mother Courage*, which is easily understood in modern society.

### **Production Updates**

*Mother Courage* can be easily updated because the problem Brecht was trying to solve is still prevalent today. Holding a mirror up to a contemporary audience is very doable within the context of this play. In the New York production, starring Meryl Streep, the actors wore army uniforms from various wars and drove motorized vehicles from World War II and the Vietnam War (*Theatre and War*). This thesis production included uniforms from more recent wars including Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Afghanistan War, and a mix of other wars throughout the last two hundred years. By making the war ageless, the contemporary audience is able to experience the story from a modern perspective.

Although the conflict of Catholic versus Protestant is consistent within the work, today there are many other religious factions also in opposition. Embedding a wide range of religious overtones through design—whether through costuming, sets, makeup and/or hair—allows the production to be updated and familiar to the audience. Additionally, no musical compositions are provided with the script beyond song lyrics, so the music can be updated as well to provide a modern connection.

### Other Explorations

Many translations of *Mother Courage and Her Children* exist, therefore, reviewing them is necessary to make sure that all relevant questions are answered. The exploration of translations conveys insight into the time period in which each author translated the work. The Kushner and Hare translation uses modern language and vocabulary to essentially convey Brecht's words for today's audience.

Although *Mother Courage* is not categorized as an existential drama, exploring films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *What Dreams May Come* (1998), and *The Quiet Earth* (1985) may give insight to other artists' interpretation of war in a Godless environment. These films paint a picture of the travesty of war and the transition between heaven and hell. Viewing them not only provides a visual from which to acquire inspiration, but it also reveals the apocalyptic world that is the backdrop for the production. Additionally, an exploration of the music that was composed for the original production might be further explored to attain more insight into the author's intent.

*Problems Perceived or Otherwise*

### Problematic Moments or Scenes

All references below are listed by the page numbers they are found on from David Hare's translation of *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

1. The entrance of the cart drawn by Eilif and Swiss Cheese at the top scene one poses a problem because the cart must be large enough to house Mother Courage's goods, and allow Mother Courage and Katrin to ride in it (5-15).

2. In scene two, the stage is split between the kitchen and the Lieutenants' eating quarters, which creates a staging issue (15-23).
3. In scene three, the war front surprisingly reaches Mother Courage and must be technically and physically played as if the cannon and gunshots occur on stage. The scene also ends in frantically with people running in and out of the scene (23-46).
4. Swiss Cheese is executed in scene three, and is brought to Mother Courage for identification (46). This is problematic because his body must be carried back on stage.
5. The transition between scenes four and five includes a complete change in location and should represent the "aftermath of a battle" (51). There are several other transitions that present the same problem, however, this is one of the most drastic changes in the show.
6. In scene five, Katrin is seen rocking a baby that belongs to a peasant (53). Having a real infant on stage would be problematic.
7. In scene six, Katrin returns to the cart with a wound over her eye, and it appears that she has been raped. The Chaplain justifies the responsible soldier's actions when he says, ". . . it's not their fault . . . I don't blame them . . . back at home they don't rape . . . it's the war" (61). This is completely ignored by Mother Courage as merely part of the reality of war. Handling the scene tastefully is difficult.

8. In scene eleven, Kattrin climbs a house and bangs a drum to warn the town that the invading army is coming. This is problematic if a two-story set is not possible (86-91).
9. Throughout the scene, the cart is pushed and pulled from one scene to another. The lack of space on stage may pose a problem.
10. In scene twelve, Mother Courage pulls the cart by herself (92). Although it should look like a struggle, the actress playing her must be prepared to complete the action.

### **Problematic Actions**

1. The entrance of the cart in scene one needs to begin offstage, and must be pulled by Eilif and Swiss Cheese.
2. In scene three a soldier attempts to move a large cannon.
3. In scene three an impending battle happens off stage and makes its way into the action of the scene. This must be realistic enough for the audience to believe it is happening (30).
4. Gestus must be created through out the play through the singing of songs that are loosely connected to the action.
5. Creating transitions between each of the twelve episodes.
6. In scene three Mother Courage displays a “silent reaction” when the body of Swiss Cheese is produced so that the soldiers do not know that she is his mother (46).

### **Problematic Character Interpretations**

As previously stated, it is a mistake for the director or actors to imply that the characters in this play are actual people. The audience should realize that they are watching a play. Epic actors are meant to be “narrators and demonstrators” and should remember that they are “portraying another’s emotions, feelings and experiences” rather than experiencing the emotions themselves (“Brecht’s Epic”). This is in direct contrast to modern acting theory—especially the Stanislavski system—where actors are to believe they are their character. It is a mistake to play the characters realistically.

### **Problematic Character Interpretations Caused by Actors Who Have Previously Done the Role**

It is highly unlikely that students or even adult actors, have played any of these roles previously, or viewed many productions of this play.

### **Problems Posed by Casting Difficulties**

The cast of *Mother Courage* requires a strong female lead, however, it is predominantly a male heavy show. The following is the cast required in the David Hare translation, which includes gender preference:

- |    |                                      |        |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Anna Fierling, Mother Courage        | Female |
| 2. | Katrin, <i>her dumb daughter</i>     | Female |
| 3. | Eilif, <i>her elder son</i>          | Male   |
| 4. | Swiss Cheese, <i>her younger son</i> | Male   |
| 5. | The Cook                             | Male   |
| 6. | The Chaplain                         | Male   |
| 7. | Yvette Pottier                       | Female |
| 8. | The Recruiting Officer               | Male   |

9.	The Sergeant	Male
10.	The Commander-in-Chief	Male
11.	The Armourer	Male
12.	A Soldier	Male
13.	A Second Sergeant	Male
14.	A Man with a Patch	Male
15.	A Very Old Colonel	Male
16.	Two Mercenaries	Male
17.	The Regimental Clerk	Male
18.	Young Soldier	Male
19.	Older Soldier	Male
20.	Soldier in Fur Coat	Male
21.	Second Soldier	Male
22.	Farmer's Wife	Female
23.	A Peasant	Male
24.	The Soldier in the Bar	Male
25.	Young Man	Male
26.	Old Woman	Female
27.	Eilif's Guards	Male
28.	The Singer	Male
29.	Lieutenant	Male
30.	First Soldier	Male
31.	Second Soldier	Male



32.	Third Soldier	Male
33.	Peasant in Halle	Male
34.	Peasants's Son	Male
35.	Peasant's Wife	Female

After examining the text, there is a possibility that the show could be cast as follows:

1.	Anna Fierling, Mother Courage	Female
2.	Katrin, <i>her dumb daughter</i>	Female
3.	Eilif, <i>her elder son</i>	Male
4.	Swiss Cheese, <i>her younger son</i>	Male
5.	The Cook	Male
6.	The Chaplain	Male
7.	Yvette Pottier	Female
8.	The Recruiting Officer	Male or Female
9.	The Sergeant	Male or Female
10.	The Commander-in-Chief	Male
11.	The Armourer	Male or Female
12.	A Soldier	Male
13.	A Second Sergeant	Male or Female
14.	A Man with a Patch	Male
15.	A Very Old Colonel	Male
16.	Two Mercenaries	Male or Female
17.	The Regimental Clerk	Male or Female
18.	Young Soldier	Male

19.	Older Soldier	Male
20.	Soldier in Fur Coat	Male or Female
21.	Second Soldier	Male or Female
22.	Farmer's Wife	Female
23.	A Peasant	Male
24.	The Soldier in the Bar	Male
25.	Young Man	Male
26.	Old Woman	Female
27.	Eilif's Guards	Male or Female
28.	The Singer	Male or Female
29.	Lieutenant	Male or Female
30.	First Soldier	Male or Female
31.	Second Soldier	Male or Female
32.	Third Soldier	Male or Female
33.	Peasant in Halle	Male
34.	Peasant's Son	Male
35.	Peasant's Wife	Female

Upon examination, it is clear that the number of females could be increased. The possible male to female ratio could be seventeen males and twenty-two females. *Mother Courage and Her Children* is episodic which allows the director to double many of the non-lead roles.

Body type is a factor in the casting of this production. In scene one, the character of Swiss Cheese and Eilif are called "Ox brothers" because they are strong enough to pull

the cart (9). When casting the play the actor's personal physique must be taken into consideration.

### **Problematic Representations of Race, Gender, Religion**

While race is not an important factor within *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Many* broad statements are made regarding gender and religion within the play. Mother Courage and Katrin are referred to as "tarts" during their first entrance in scene one (6). This indicates that during war the only people on the battlefield are prostitutes and soldiers. Women in the play are treated as harsh and untouchable or as objects meant only for sexual gratification. Reference is made that Katrin is raped in scene six when she was on her way back to the cart after a shopping trip. The Chaplain justifies the rape when he declares, "It's not their fault" (61). There is a division between what men and women can do throughout the play.

Mother Courage has no allegiance to any one religion. She easily switches allegiance to the Christians or the Protestants depending on who is winning the war. Mother Courage even indicates that the "pages of the Bible" are "great for wrapping gherkins in," this indicates that Mother Courage lives by the laws of the land and not by the laws of religion (7).

The proclamation of "God" or "Jesus" as an expletive is consistent throughout the play. Brecht does not hide the fact that this is a religious war without a religion. His disgust for war, including those based on religious principals is most prominently displayed in scene three when the Protestant Chaplain changes his religious garments and displays the Catholic flag on the cart so that he will not be killed by the advancing army (35-37). This is Brecht's way of saying that religions are all the same and interchangeable.

### **Problems Posed by the Theme of the Text**

Religion representing the downfall of society is a theme within the text that can be offensive to some audience members. Brecht's thematic commentary on of the travesty of war could be offensive to some actors or audience members who have family or friends currently in combat.

### **Problems Posed by Genre**

The genre of Epic Theatre is not familiar to many actors, directors and technicians, and needs to be fully explained prior to the start of rehearsals in order for the text's message to be communicated correctly.

### **Problems Posed by the Status of the Text**

The text, translated by Hare, is a straightforward translation of the play with updated language. It would be interesting to supply the cast with an original Brecht translation and the translation by Kushner so that they can explore the original and the translations.

### **Problems Posed by Pronunciation**

Although some of the words in the text will require pronunciation assistance, including the pronunciation of Mother Courage's eldest son Eilif, the text is written in modern English.

### **Problems Posed by Need for Adaptation**

Epic Theatre foundations can be easily adapted for any stage and time. Sets, costumes, lighting and other technical elements work best when they are visible and the audience is aware that they are watching a play.

Dialogue within the play may need to be adapted for a high school audience. Many translations of the text are available. By looking at other translations one can see how other authors have adapted the language.

### **Problems Posed by Dialects**

The world of the play occurs in several countries over a twelve-year period including:

1.     Scene One     Sweden (5-15)
2.     Scene Two     Poland (15-23)
3.     Scene Three    Poland (23-46)
4.     Scene Four     Poland (46-51)
5.     Scene Five     Magdeburg, Saxony (51-54)
6.     Scene Six     Ingolstadt, Bavaria (54-62)
7.     Scene Seven    On the Road (undisclosed location) (62-53)
8.     Scene Eight    Saxony (63-77)
9.     Scene Nine     Fichtel Mountains, Saxony (77-83)
10.    Scene Ten     On the Road (undisclosed location) (83-84)
11.    Scene Eleven   Halle, Saxony (84-91)
12.    Scene Twelve   Saxony (91-93)

Although many of the locations are in close proximity, there are different linguistic dialects between each region. Some of the dialects may even be different within the same country as is the case when looking at the dialects within the United States. A decision needs to be made about who speak what dialect.

When looking at the larger context of the play the regional dialects may not make a difference. The location of each scene and other pertinent information is projected and displayed on a board for the audience to read at the beginning of each scene. According to the guidelines of Epic Theatre, the audience should understand that they are watching is a play rather getting lost in the action. A lack of dialects removes the audience from getting tied down to the action of the scene.

### **Problems Posed by Unusual Linguistic or Rhetorical Styles**

This modern translation of Brecht's original play is written in a linguistic and rhetorical style that is easily understandable.

### **Problems Posed by Music or Need for Musical Score**

There are no musical compositions that exist for the text. All of the musical compositions, roughly one to two per scene, need to be created specifically for the actors who sing them. It is necessary to know the vocal range of every actor who is cast. The style of music is not indicated. One needs to make a decision as to whether the music could be modernized or whether it should represent the time period of the play.

The last song is a lullaby sung by Mother Courage. This is the only song where the musical genre is indicated.

### **Problems Posed by Scenic Requirements**

As stated previously, the play takes place in several locations. Ten of the twelve scenes represents a new locale and scenically must be displayed differently.

### **Problems Posed by Special Effects**

The only special effects within the piece are live gunshots that require blanks. Guns need to be purchased and training must occur for all actors and technicians.

### **Problems Posed by the World of the Play**

Many people are not familiar with the Thirty Year's War nor the world of 17<sup>th</sup> century northern Europe. Brecht's intention is to draw attention to the underlying themes of greed and the devastating effect of war, therefore, It is not important to have a strong connection between the war being presented in the time period of the play and wars encountered today.

### *Applications*

This production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* was designed based on the research completed for the dramaturgical protocol and with the input from student designers. These students were able to take the production's concept and execute the designs under the supervision of the director.

### **Technical Preparation: Limits and Advantages of Venue**

This production took place in a 190-seat proscenium theatre with stage dimensions of thirty-one feet wide by twenty-seven feet deep. Although the playing space is large, and allowed for many moving set pieces, it was not large enough for the canteen cart to complete a full circle without a three point turn in order to make sufficient exits and entrances. The play traditionally is performed on a revolve—a stage built with a moving circular platform—which is not a permanent aspect of the space used and is not cost-effective to build. Maneuvering the cart was an important task because it is central to the story, and at times, took on a character unto itself. Space became even more limited

when the decision to build a series of platforms, which decreased the area, was needed to move the cart.

The theatre space is traditionally treated as a workshop space, which allows for the theatre to change completely throughout the theatrical process. Student designers are able to experiment throughout the production process. Drapes can be removed for backstage exposure and the stage floor can be painted. The space can be transformed into any configuration needed for production.



Fig. 5. Backstage Exposure Including the Onstage Exit Sign. Image by Catherine Terry.

### **Lighting**

The lighting for this production created the “alienation effect” that is prevalent in Brecht’s plays. The lighting instruments were exposed and no effort was made to hide them from the audience. Lighting was also pointed at the audience and used to emphasize explosions, disorient the audience, and highlight specific moments of the play. The concept for the lighting was the same as it was for all of the technical designs, which was to incorporate Brechtian inspirations while at the same time paying homage to the audience of today. This was executed by not only created a design that used white light, but also reds and ambers that enhanced specific moments in the play, including the



transitions between the episodes. Colors such as red and amber helped to convey the theatrical concept that was developed by the director and the student lighting designer.

Lighting was also designed for the moments when actors sing in each episode. The student lighting designer was directed to transform the stage into a mini rock concert and use spotlights to highlight the actors on stage.

Lighting trees—stands that hold lighting instruments—were erected both on and off stage. The trees located on stage were point at the audience, whereas the trees located in the wings, stage left and right, were pointed at the upstage wall where a cyclorama was se were pointed at the audience. These lighting trees were used to project the shadows of actors while off stage. During moments where war breaks out, the lights helped to give the impression that there were more soldiers than were actually in the cast. The shadow work was also used to project the fistfight between Ellif and the Recruiting Officer in scene one, and Ellif's execution in scene seven.

The lighting designer wanted to further the concept of the audience knowing they were seeing a play when he intentionally decided to leave the theatre work lights on as the audience entered. This effect exposed the theatre to the audience.



Fig. 6. Lighting: Audience Disorientation. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 7. Lighting: Red lighting Emphasizing the Importance of the “Silent Scream.” Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 8. Lighting: Red Wash Amber Foreground. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 9. Lighting: White Harsh Exposed Lighting. Image by Jennifer Williams.



Fig. 10. Lighting: An Example of Shadow Work. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 11. Lighting. Ellif's Execution. Image by Michael Despars.



Fig. 12. Lighting: Dark Background and Lit Foreground. Image by Catherine Terry



Fig. 13. Lighting: Work Lights with Exposed Instruments. Image by Michael Despars.

Table 1  
Light Cues

Cue Number	Page	Cue Begin	Cue End	Lighting
				Fight Light. Off stage right. Cyc
6.1	14	Swiss Cheese: "He went with. . ."	Mother Courage: "Kattrin Pull the. . ."	
6.3	15	Mother Courage and Kattrin pull cart.	Sergeant ends singing	All
Spot	15	Mother Courage and Kattrin pull cart.	Sergeant ends singing	All
7	15	Sergeant End Singing	Scene Set	All
8	15	Scene Set	End of Projection Commander, Chaplain, Ellif	Blackout
9	15	End of Projection	Enter	All

### Sound

Sound served several purposes during this production. Original compositions were written and recorded so that they could be sung live on stage. Recording was necessary because there was not space for a live orchestra on stage or in the house. In true Brechtian style, live microphones were placed on the set to create a concert feel while the songs were sung. This also aligned with the moments that resulted in alienation for the audience. Microphones were hung throughout so that the actors could be amplified especially during intimate moments. Ambient sound was designed to mimic the sounds of

battle during heightened moments. Designing and implementing both the live and recorded sounds was executed utilizing QLab—a computer program that allows for the editing and executing of all sound cues. Below are several screen shots of cues executed with the use of QLab and images of actors using microphones.



Fig. 14. Sound: Microphone Example. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig 15. Sound: Concert in the Graveyard. Image by Catherine Terry.





Fig. 16. Sound: Spoken Word Sound. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 17. Sound: Singing Entrance of Mother Courage. Image by Jennifer Williams.

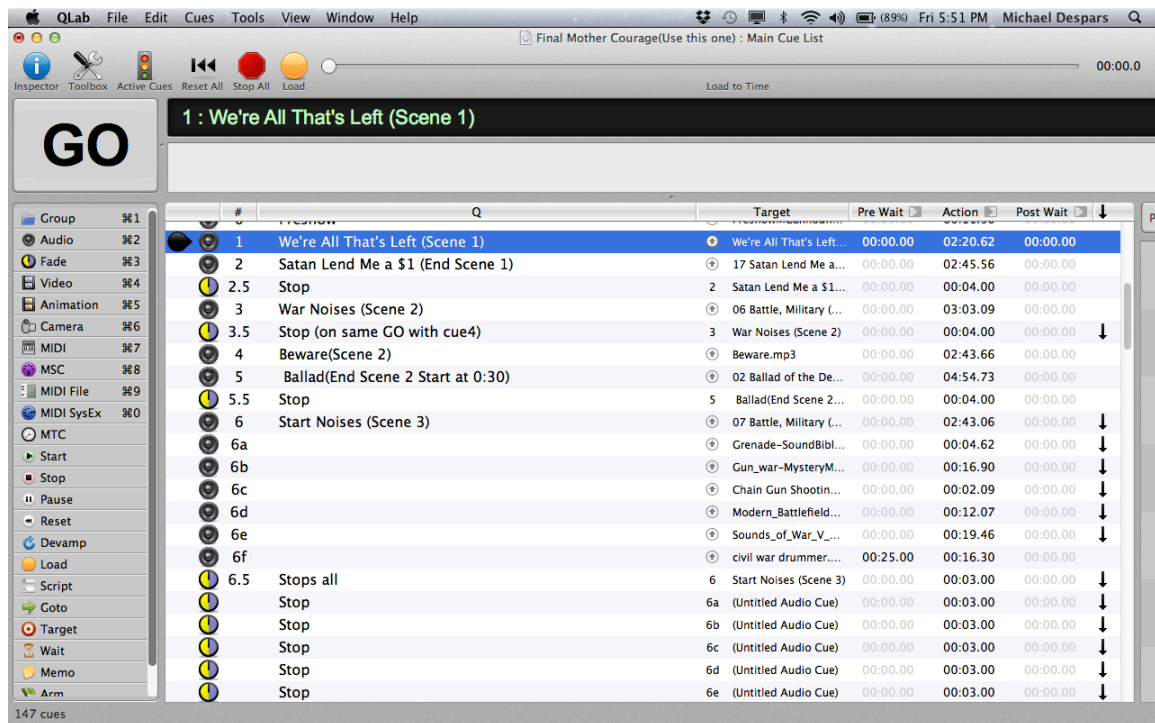


Fig 18. Sound: QLab Sound Cues 1-6.5.

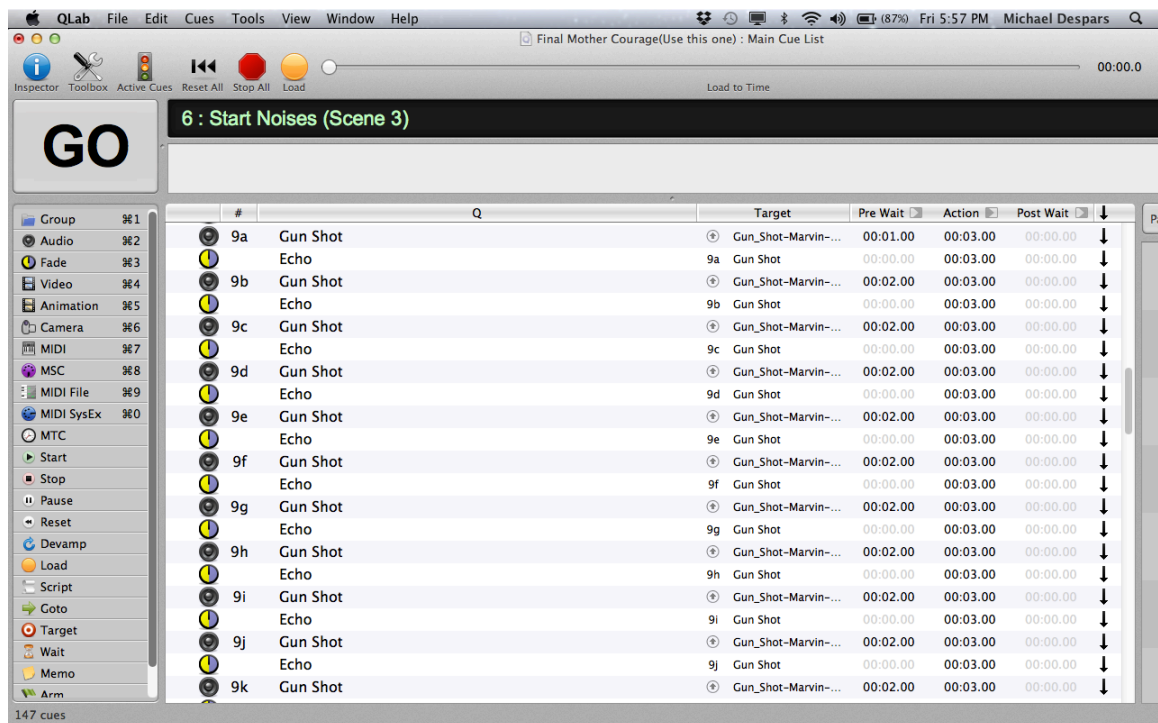


Fig 19. Sound: QLab Sound Cues 9a-9k.

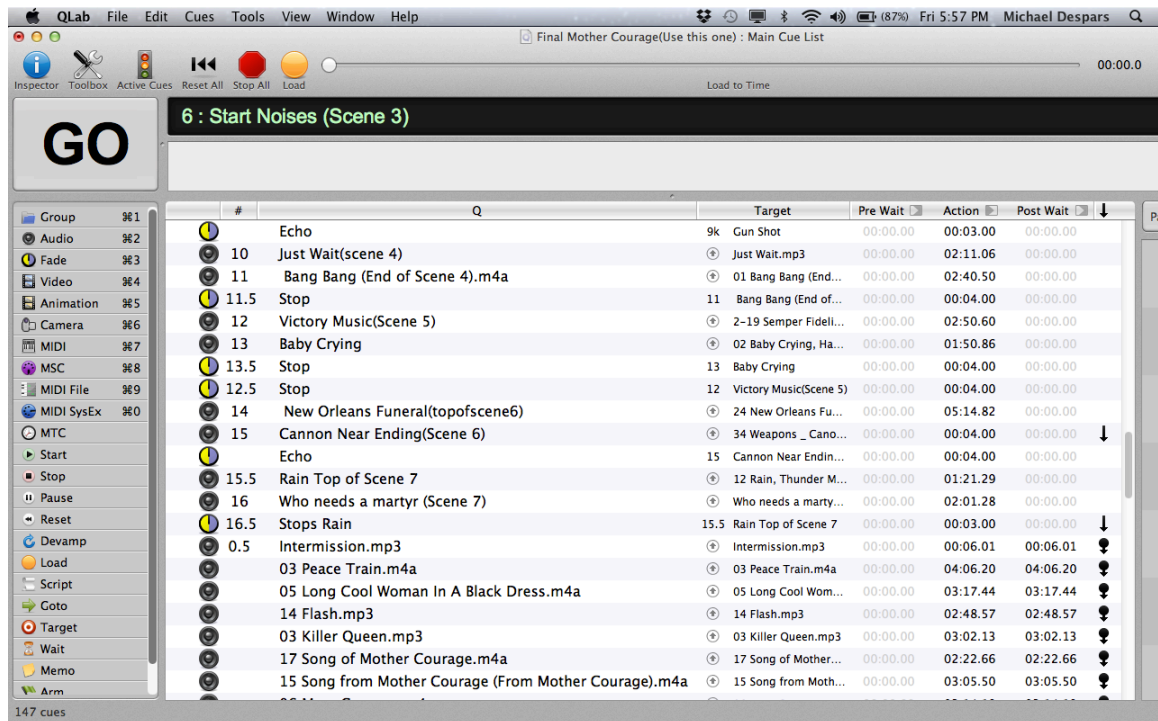


Fig 20. Sound: QLab Sound Cues 10-16.5.

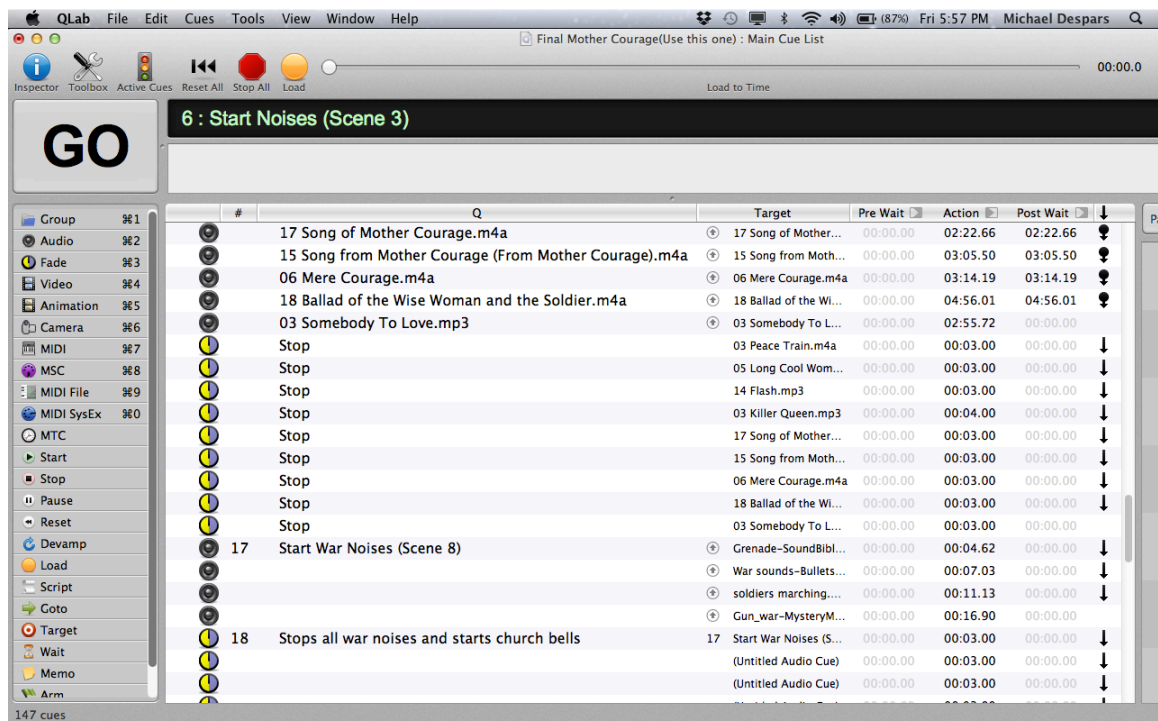


Fig 21. Sound: QLab Sound Cues 17-18.



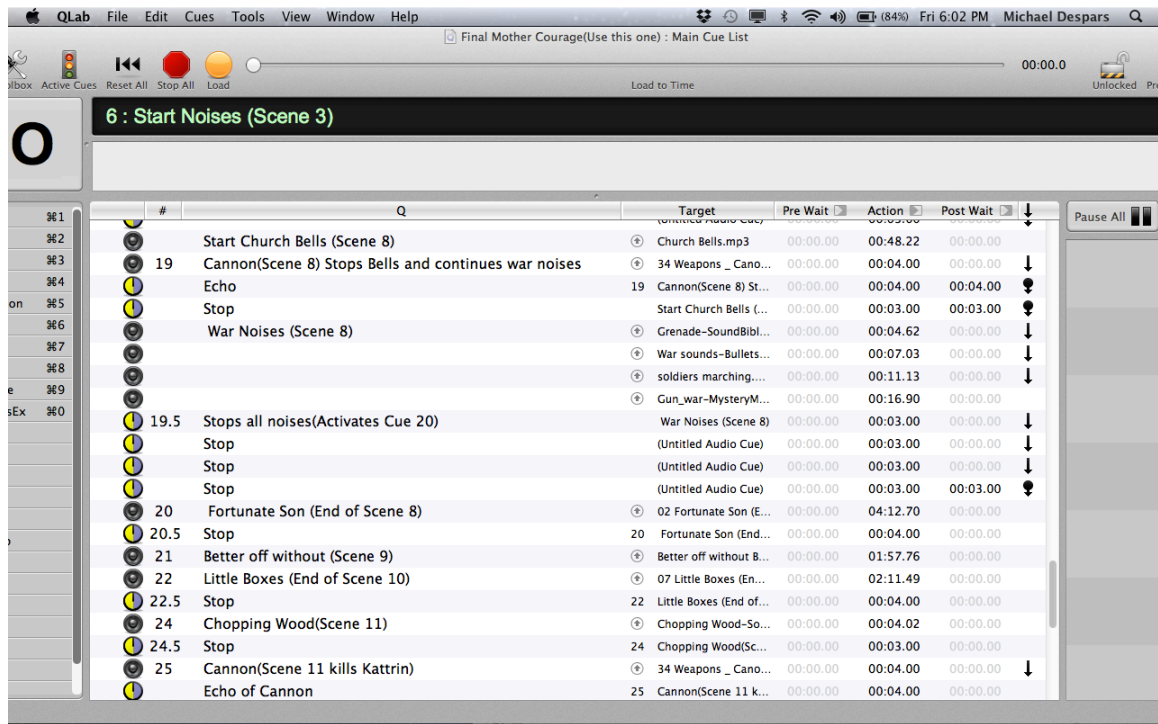


Fig. 22: Sound: QLab Sound Cues 19-25.

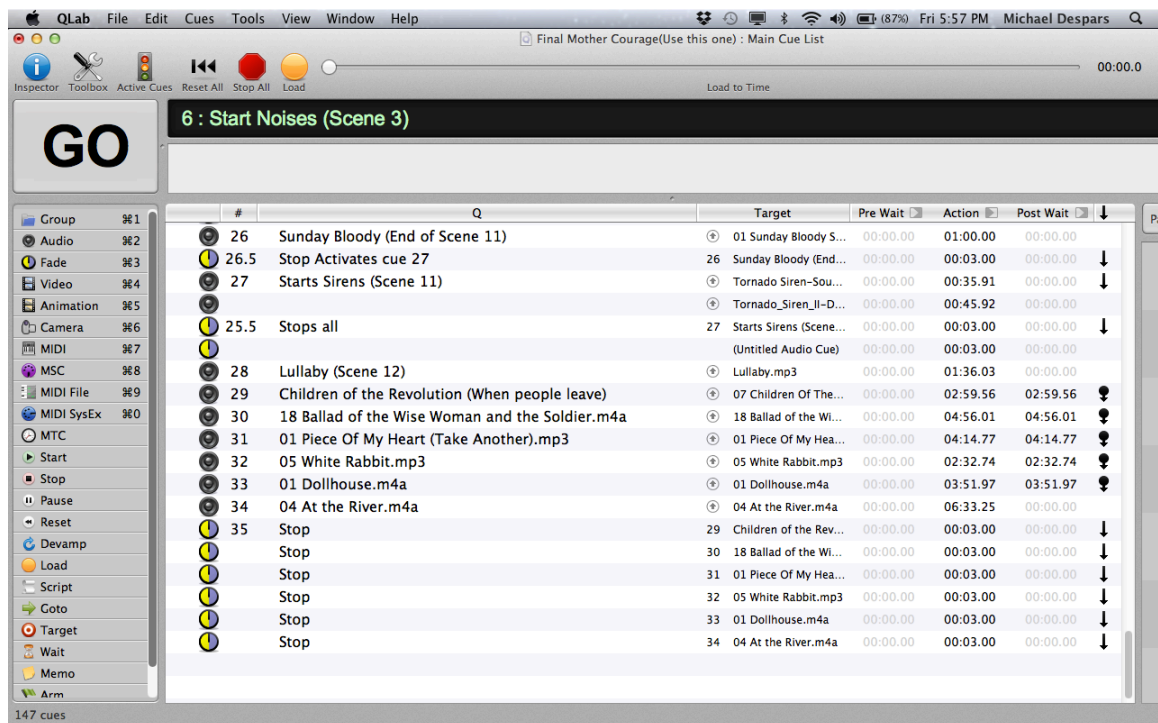


Fig. 23. Sound: QLab Sound Cues 26-35.

### **Special Effects**

In Brecht's world, special effects are considered spectacle, which creates realism on stage. Other than utilizing the mechanics of the theatre, such as the lighting instruments and the projector screen, there were no special effects used during this production. All gunshots were part of the sound design.

### **The Set**

The set took on many forms. The original design idea was developed using thumbnail sketches that came after reading the play several times. These were sketched directly into the glossed play script. Google Sketchup 3D models were created from these thumbnail sketches. The original design included several moving walls. Two of the units were to be chain link and the other two were made out of slats of wood. These were the primary pieces that indicated all of the locations within the twelve episodes of the play. Throughout the rehearsal process it was apparent that enough levels were not created on stage to assist with creating dynamic blocking. A series of six-foot tall platforms were created and placed against the upstage cyclorama. This set of platforms ran the width of the stage and provided a playing space on top and below.

In addition, two barren trees that were stripped to make them look war torn, were erected and mounted on wagons so that they could be moved around the stage to assist with the changing of multiple locations.

A canteen cart and cannon were rented from a prop rental house, and were used several times throughout the piece as indicated in the script. The overall design was meant to give the audience the dramatic feeling of the true locations, and not a realistic portrayal of their actual look.

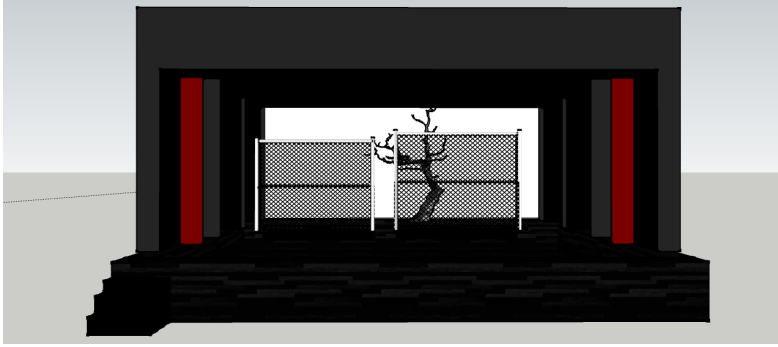


Fig. 24. Set: Google Sketchup Preliminary Set Design. Image by Michael Despars.



Fig. 25. Set: Scene Three Fence Formation. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 26. Set: Tree Example. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 27. Set: Tree Example. Image by Michael Despars.



Fig. 28. Set: View of Set from Stage Left. Image By Michael Despars



Fig 29. Set: View of Actors on Platforms. Image By Michael Despars

## The Props

The properties' design incorporated the use of modern props with items from the various wars. All weapons used, from the spears in scene eleven to the machine and handguns utilized throughout the production, were designed to give the audience a sense that the story could have occurred at anytime, and that it was not limited to the Thirty Years War. The wares on Mother Courage's canteen cart included practical items like food and alcohol, but also several items that could have been found on her travels during a modern war. These items included Apple iPads, laptops, and Keyboards, which was meant to further the concept of incorporating the time period of the play while at the same time adapting it for the modern audience. When working with Brecht, props should not be used to create a realistic environment, yet can be used in a limited way.



Fig 30. Props: Weapons. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 31. Props: Axe. Image by Catherine Terry.

## The Costumes

The costumes incorporated mixed war pieces to give the audience the idea of timelessness. Much like the dramatic feeling influenced by the implied set design, the costumes were also meant to provide the audience with a sense of where they were in the play. Designers were directed to give the costumes a rock and roll flair that was supported by the moments when the actors sang. A secondary concept for the costume design was to mix uniforms—almost as if a soldier was taking the clothing off of other soldiers as the war moved forward. This created several opportunities for creating pieces that were not only military uniforms, but also mismatched combinations of the garments—or what is referred to as mixed media. One such opportunity allowed for several guards in scene twelve to wear tunic tops from the 1700s while at the same time wearing military fatigues from the Vietnam War.



Fig 32. Costumes: Chaplain, Mother Courage and the Cook's Costumes. Image by Catherine Terry.





Fig 33. Costumes: Mixed War. Image by Jennifer Williams.



Fig 34. Costumes: Modern Militia. Image by Sonia Mendez.



Fig. 35. Costumes: Traditional Clothing. Image by Sonia Mendez.



Fig. 36. Costumes: Scottish War Costume. Image by Sonia Mendez.

### **The Makeup**

The makeup and hair designs were influenced by several time periods, which created unity with the costume designs, and incorporated a timeless quality that coincided with the directorial concept. The designers wanted to create a feeling that war is timeless and so embedded within society that the action of the play could have taken place at any time in history.

In an effort to remind the audience that they were watching a play, a makeup table was erected off stage in front of a video camera. The camera was fed into a projector that broadcast the image on the upstage wall. The audience was able to see the actors preparing for the production.

Hair color also became an important part of the design. Color-coding hair connected related characters. Red hair chalk was used to unify character units and also assist the actors with a rock and roll look—the same conceptual look in the other design elements.



The designers wanted to create makeup designs that did not change for each of the named characters. The cook, for example, was given scars on the side of his face to indicate an oil burn he may have received while cooking for a regiment. These designs helped the audience to follow the actors journey even through the twelve scenes are largely unrelated.



Fig. 37. Makeup and Hair: Design Board. Image by Mykaela Sterris.



Fig. 38. Makeup and Hair: Example of Colored Hair Chalk. Image by Mykaela Sterris.



Fig. 39. Makeup and Hair: Scar. Image by Mykaela Sterris.



Fig. 40. Makeup and Hair: Scar on the Cook. Image by Mykaela Sterris.

### **Projections**

Projected images were used throughout this production, similar to Brecht's original. Each scene began with a projection that explained what the scene was about and its location. The goal was to not surprise the audience by what was happening in the scene. Telling them before it started allowed them to view the context of the story as opposed to getting lost in the action. Projections in scene three differed. All stage and blocking directions were projected throughout this scene, which forced the audience to,

not only see the blocking as it happened, but also to read what was happening to further the idea of alienation.



Fig 41. Projections: Prepping the Projection Screen. Image by Catherine Terry.



Fig. 42. Projections: Wide Shot. Image by Michael Despars.



Fig. 43. Projections: Example Two. Image by Jennifer Williams.

## Publicity

The publicity images were inspired by war propaganda posters and were meant to shock the viewer while at the same time interest the public in seeing the production. Two hundred fifty 11x17 posters and 2500 postcards were distributed throughout the city and to all members of the mailing list. Banners were created and set up outside of the performance venue three weeks prior to the production.



Fig. 44. Publicity: Poster. Designed by Jasmine Lee and David Renken.

## Rehearsal Schedule

The rehearsal period lasted nine weeks. Students rehearsed from 5:45 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. early on, and from 4:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. during tech week and performances. Rehearsals occurred Monday through Thursday with technical work on Friday and Saturday. Virtual Stage Manager ([www.stagemangement.com](http://www.stagemangement.com)) was used to schedule rehearsals and contact actors and technicians about important notices during the rehearsal process. This program notifies the actor, technician and parents with a daily text

message and email if a rehearsal is scheduled. The system also maintains an up-to-date rehearsal calendar that is specific to the rehearsals each actor and technician must attend. This program also allows the user to add any rehearsal conflicts.

### **Audition Process**

A month prior to auditions, students were given a copy of the David Hare translation of the play, and were also provided with the research completed during the dramaturgical protocol process. Auditions packets were handed to the students, which included information about the various parts of the show and the show contracts. Students were to prepare a one to two minute monologue dramatic monologue for the first round of auditions, which took place over two days.

A total of fifty-six auditioned, and twenty-five were selected to participate in the callbacks. To create an environment of fairness, the final casting of all named characters was decided by a panel of theatre educators, the performing arts department head, theatre professionals and other professionals who work with students throughout the production. This process allows for the democratic casting of students and solves the issue of only favorites receiving lead roles.

At callbacks, students were presented with an acting side from the show. After they read through their sides, a series of group exercises were led to see how they interpreted Brecht's use of gestus. By watching and evaluating prepared material and a series of exercises to see how they would act on their feet, final casting became clear to the panel. After the callbacks, the panel went through the students' headshots and democratically voted on who would receive each part.

The final cast was decided based on the callbacks. Ensemble members of the company were selected from the actors who did not make callbacks and the actors who were not cast in lead roles after callbacks.

### **Rehearsal Process**

The rehearsal process lasted nine weeks. Blocking and acting rehearsals ran Monday through Thursday from 5:45 .m. until 8:30 p.m. There was a weekly production meeting with all of the technicians and designers on Friday's from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Technical build days occurred throughout the week, however a major build day was planned weekly on Saturday's from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

#### *Week 1 August 18-22*

After the casting process, there were two rehearsals set aside for the first reads. All actors and technicians attended the first readings. The purpose of this time together was so that designers and technicians could begin their preliminary exploration of the script, and so actors could begin exploring their characters. It was also helpful to hear the script read out loud to check for nuances that are often not found when reading the play silently.

During the first read, the actors were asked to merely read the script out loud so that they could develop an idea for the flow of the show. During the second read, students were asked to take risks and begin creating characters that they wanted to explore during the rehearsal process. During the time set aside for read-through presentations, both actors and designers were given the directorial concepts to work from in visual PowerPoint form.

The first week of rehearsal ended with an exploration of warm-ups that were used throughout the process and several workshops that explored the work of Brecht. Much of this work dealt with the exploration of gestus or attitude. Actors were also trained on how to use Brecht's work to "tell" a story rather than "be" the story.

*Week 2 August 25-29*

Blocking rehearsals began in week two. Since the play is divided into twelve scenes, it became apparent that the rehearsals should be divided into twelve sections. During this week, the focus was on the first three episodes—episode one and two were short, while three was the longest; therefore, two rehearsals were spent on the preliminary blocking. By the end of the week, a blocking review was needed.

Props were then introduced to the actors. After the first rehearsal, it became apparent that storage was needed for the weapons so they could not be removed from the theatre. A special lock box was built, and the stage managers in conjunction with the prop manager and director developed a policy for checking out and returning weapons during rehearsals.

Final designs were soon approved and set construction began. The prop house was contacted to see if the cart and the canon could be delivered early in the rehearsal process since they are central to the flow of the scenes.

*Week 3 September 1-5*

Blocking of scenes four through seven occurred this week. Foundational elements of the set were constructed and put in place. Actors began working with hand props and the lighting designer began experimenting with the shadow effect that was created on the

upstage wall. The costume designer began taking measurements and fitting actors in costumes.

*Week 4 September 8-12*

Scenes one through six were reviewed and scenes eight through twelve were blocked. The cart was delivered. Actors worked on maneuvering the cart across the stage. The stage was not big enough to turn the cart around without a three-point turn. It was necessary for the set designer to create a lip at the downstage edge of the stage so that the cart did not roll off the stage and into the audience.

*Week 5 September 15-19*

Until this week, only lead actors were called to rehearsals. Beginning the rehearsal process with only leads allows time for the actors to participate in one-on-one discussions, ask questions, and play. Once the blocking for the leads is set, it becomes much easier to insert the ensemble. The week was spent embedding the ensemble into Acts I and II. Since many of the actors had not been in rehearsals since the read-through, it was important to bring them up to date on the work to this point, and also take them technically through the show. A series of stage tours were given to the ensemble, including how to enter and exit from the six-foot platforms and the theatre's prop weapons policy.

*Week 6 September 22-26*

After the initial blocking stage, several transitions were created between each episode. Some of the transitions included the actors and other transition were stage by the technicians. Students were led through exercises in image work and many discussions led



to some interesting choices, including one transition with goose-stepping, gasmask-wearing soldiers.

The set design was adjusted to include a six-foot platform level that was not in the original design. Several of the scenes had to be re-blocked to accommodate the new levels. This led to many new and interesting staging choices and helped to create levels.

*Week 7 September 29- October 3*

In preparation for final performances, a decision had to be made regarding bows. After a full cast discussion with the director, curtain bows were excluded. In the final moment of the play, Mother Courage exits the loading dock doors at the rear of the stage with the cart. It seemed unnecessary to close the doors after her exit and reopen them so the entire cast could bow. The decision to eliminate the bows also follows the alienation concept. The audience expects the bows yet they did not occur. Instead, the final projection was a screen that read “The End,” and all of the work lights in the theatre were illuminated.

*Week 8 October 6-10*

This week was used to clean up acts one and two. It was apparent that a few of the transitions were not working. This process included the actors moving many of the pieces of the set, which was difficult to execute while staying in focus during a planned transition. One day was spent just running the transitions with the sound designer so that each was as complete as possible. A few of the transitions were not working and needed to be soon edited.

*Week 9 October 13-17*

This week, all of the technical components of the show came together. The biggest struggle was making sure the sound cues were timed accurately. Since there was no orchestra, the sound cues needed to be timed so that they did not sound like recordings.

*Week 10 October 20-24*

After opening weekend, a speed through was scheduled prior to the second weekend's shows. This was a chance for the actors to perform the entire show at a much faster speed than it would have been performed for an audience. In the speed through, actors were able to discover some additional tempo changes and were able to find new moments that had been previously unknown to them. Actors were allowed to read the reviews and adjudications up until this point, and some minor changes were made. Notes from the director were also incorporated.

**Performances**

There was a total of six performances of *Mother Courage and Her Children* over a period of two weeks. A series of teaser performances occurred the day prior to opening night, which allowed over 1200 students to see a portion of the show. The teaser was fruitful, and the reception to the performance was overwhelming. Many audience members were excited to see a piece of theatre they have never seen before, while others were excited that the style of the play was new and innovative.

The California Educational Theatre Association, in conjunction with their High School Theatre Festival, adjudicated this production. The reviews from the adjudicators were mostly positive and included several ways that the production could have been enhanced. The constructive criticism was taken into account as it was received, and some

basic changes were made including the sound volume, projection, and basic blocking issues.

The Orange County CAPPIES Critics Program also adjudicated this production. This program allows student writers who attend high school productions the possibility of having their reviews published in *The Orange County Register*. The response from the students and mentors of this program was largely positive and some very in-depth reviews were written.

On the first performance night when Mother Courage exited and all the lights came on, the audience just sat there. They did not realize that a bow would not occur, and this left them confused and wanting more. Immediately following the ending, grips rushed the stage who began cleaning up the theatre to prepare for the next night's show. The audience clapped realizing that there would be no bow. It is not clear whether or not this was the best choice, but it served its purpose within the context of Brecht's work.

The actors did a wonderful job moving from the rehearsal process to final performance, however, there was a moment during a performance where actors were so invested in what they were saying that they began to yell most of their lines during intense moments. Since the play is a series of unrelated scenes, each has an arc and a climax. This was discussed with the actors so that they could realize that the purpose of the work was about the images it creates and not about them getting lost in the action and developing an emotional connection to the character. They are to tell the story and not live it. After a few changes, the show continued as well as it did in rehearsals.

Overall, this production was successful because student actors had a chance to work on something they did not know existed. Students worked with Brecht's theories in







Fig. 48. Updated Guernica. English, Ron. *Graveyard Guernica*. Artsy, 2011. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://artsy.net/artwork/ron-english-1-graveyard-guernica>>.

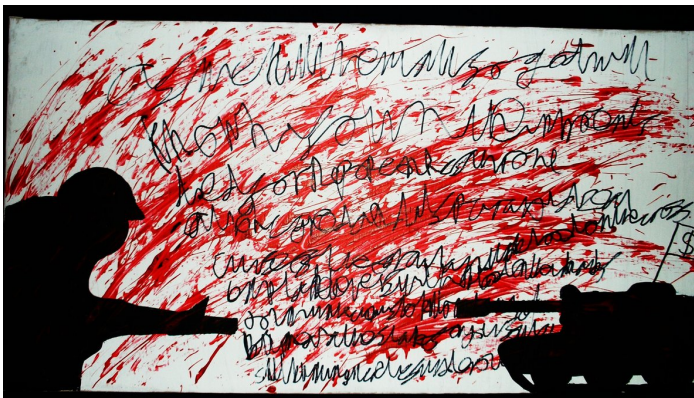


Fig. 49. Abstract War Art #2. *Abstract War 2006*. deviantart.com. deviantART, Sept. 2006. Web. 4 Dec. 2013. <<http://heavy-metal-manga.deviantart.com/art/Abstract-War-2006-70077425>>.



Fig. 50. Barren Landscape. *ChickenSmoothie.com*. Chicken Smoothie, 2013. Web. 4 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.chickensmoothie.com/Forum/viewtopic.php?f=65&t=1705075>>.



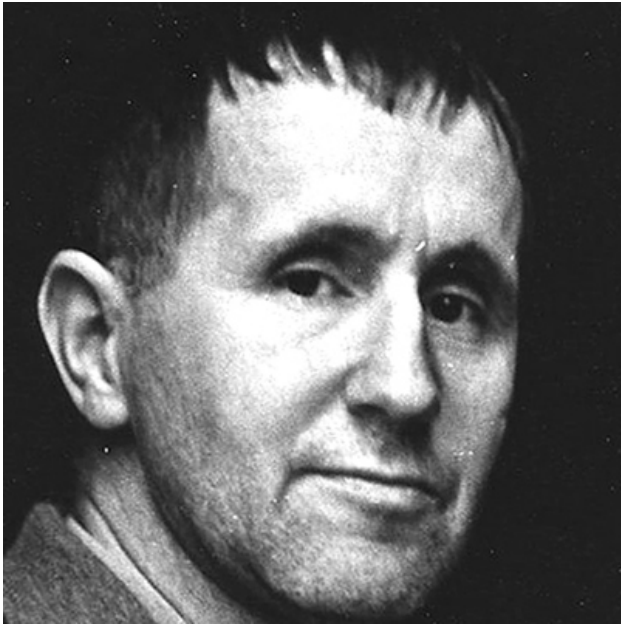
**Literal**

Fig. 51. Photo of Bertolt Brecht. *Biography.com*. A+E Networks, 2013 Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.biography.com/people/bertolt-brecht-9225028>>.



Fig. 52. Photo of Meryl Streep as Mother Courage in the Kushner Translation. *Newyorktimes.com*. The New York Times Company, 22 August 2006. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/22/theater/reviews/22moth.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/22/theater/reviews/22moth.html?_r=0)>.



Fig. 53. Robert Breuler (Cook) and Lois Smith (Mother Courage) in Steppenwolf Theatre Company's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Translated by David Hare. *Artscope.net*. Artscope.net, 2001. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.artscope.net/PAREVIEWS/mothercourage101801.shtml>>.



Fig 54. Fiona Shaw as Mother Courage in the Hare's Translation. *Telegraph.uk.co*. The Telegraph, 28 Sept. 2009. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/6239491/Mother-Courage-And-Her-Children-at-the-National-Theatre-review.html>>.



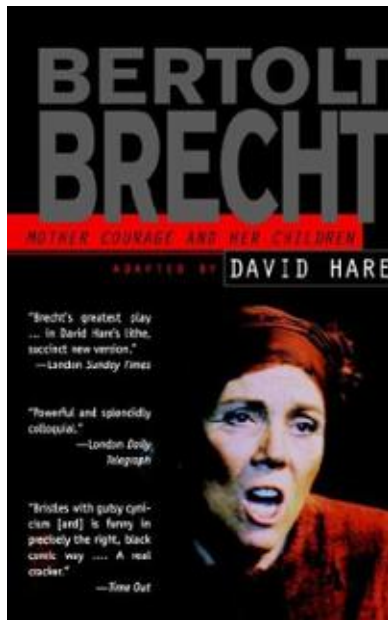


Fig. 55. *Mother Courage and Her Children* Book Cover, Translated by David Hare, Book Cover. *Bookdepository.com*. The Book Depository International Limited (Guernsey), 7 Oct. 1996. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bookdepository.com/Mother-Courage-Her-Children-Bertolt-Brecht/9781559703611>>.

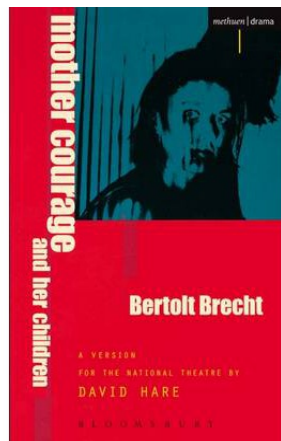


Fig. 56. *Mother Courage and Her Children* Book Cover, Translated by David Hare, British Book Cover. *Bookdepository.com*. The Book Depository International Limited (Guernsey), 1 Dec. 2010. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bookdepository.com/Mother-Courage-Her-Children-Bertolt-Brecht/9781559703611>>.

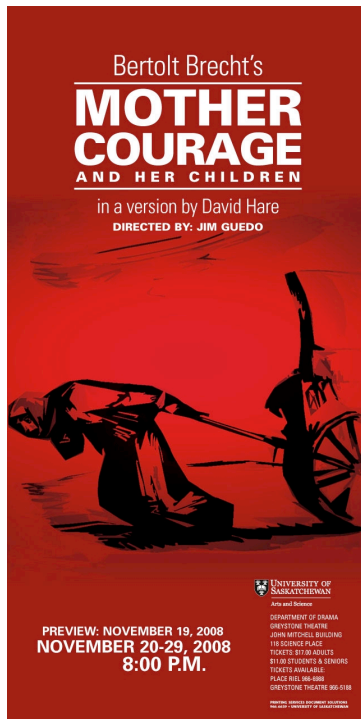


Fig. 57. Publicity Inspiration. *Artandscience.usask.ca*. College of Arts & Science, 2008. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bookdepository.com/Mother-Courage-Her-Children-Bertolt-Brecht/9781559703611>>.



Fig. 58. Publicity Inspiration #2. *Magnoliabox.com*. Artily Group, 1 Dec. 2010. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.magnoliabox.com/tag/Deborah%20Warner>>.



Fig. 59. Costume Inspiration: Desert Storm. *Debramcarthur.com*, n.d. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <[http://debramcarthur.com/?page\\_id=24](http://debramcarthur.com/?page_id=24)>.



Fig. 60. Costume Inspiration #2: Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Armchairgeneral.com*. *Weider History Group*, 4 Apr. 2008. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.armchairgeneral.com/forums/showthread.php?p=1110580>>.



Fig. 61. Costume Inspiration #3: Vietnam War. *Britannica.com*, 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/73026/US-soldiers-on-a-search-and-destroy-patrol-in-Phuoc>>.



Fig. 62. Costume Inspiration #4: World War II. *Britannica.com*, 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/108377/US-Marines-moving-supplies-and-weapons-during-the-battle-for>>.



Fig. 63. Costume Inspiration #5: World War I. *Elist10.com*. Elist10, 3 Jul. 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.elist10.com/top-10-amazing-facts-about-world-war-i/>>.



Fig. 64. Costume Inspiration #6: Thirty Years' War. *Battle of Breitenfeld. Wikipedia.com*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 26 Dec. 2005. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Breitenfeld\\_\(1631\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Breitenfeld_(1631))>.





Fig. 65. Costume Inspiration #7: Literal. *Theatre.ubc.ca*. University of British Columbia, 2007. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <[http://www.theatre.ubc.ca/mother\\_courage/portfolio.shtml](http://www.theatre.ubc.ca/mother_courage/portfolio.shtml)>.



Fig. 66. Cart Inspiration #1. *Marauding Soldiers*. *Wikipedia.com*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 30 October 2012. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1647\\_Vrancx\\_Marauding\\_soldiers\\_anagoria.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1647_Vrancx_Marauding_soldiers_anagoria.JPG)>.



Fig. 67. Cart Inspiration #2. *C. Masterman & Son Framingham Market*. *Artscope.net*, 2001. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.artscope.net/PAREVIEWS/mothercourage101801.shtml>>.



Fig. 68. Cart Inspiration #3: Literal 1949 Brecht Production. *Mordecai Gorelik Collection*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/3747/>>.

## CHAPTER III

### PROMPTBOOK

#### **Given Circumstances**

##### *Environmental Facts*

#### **Geographical Location**

*Mother Courage and Her Children* is the story of Anna Fierling (Mother Courage) and her three children as they make their way through the battlefields of the Thirty Years' War in Europe. Each scene represents one episode of the story, and each is unconnected to the previous episode. That being said, each has its own, setting, situation, and climatic moment. Although some scenes take place in the same country each physical location is different, the only exception is scene eleven and twelve, which occur in the same physical location.

All pages below refer to the Arcade Publishing version of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, translated by David Hare.

1. Scene One. Sweden "A country road near a town in Dalecaria" (5-15).
2. Scene Two. Poland "The Commander-in-Chief's Tent, a kitchen beside it" (15-23).
3. Scene Three. Poland "A military camp in Poland" (23-46).
4. Scene Four. Poland "Mother Courage is waiting outside an officer's tent" (46-51).

5. Scene Five. Magdeburg, Saxony “The cart is standing in the middle of a village which has been shot to pieces” (51-54).
6. Scene Six. Ingolstadt, Bavaria “The funeral of the Imperial Commanders Tilly is going on outside a canteen tent” (54-62).
7. Scene Seven. On the Road (undisclosed location) (62-53).
8. Scene Eight. Saxony “The cart is parked in a military camp” (63-77).
9. Scene Nine. Fichtel Mountains, Saxony “. . . in front of a half-ruined parsonage” (77-83).
10. Scene Ten. On the Road “Pulling the cart down a country road” (83-84).
11. Scene Eleven. Halle, Saxony “it [the cart] is standing near a Peasant’s house which has a huge thatched roof which backs onto a wall of rock” (84-91).
12. Scene Twelve, Saxony “Later the same night, towards dawn” (91-93).

**Date: Year/Season/Time of Day**

*Mother Courage and Her Children* chronicles the events of the Thirty Years’ War, between 1618 and 1648. The action of the play begins in 1624 in Sweden six years after the start of the war, and ends in 1636, just prior to the war’s end. Each scene occurs during a different season and time of day as indicated in the text. The most notable are in scene one, which begins with two officers “shivering in the freezing cold,” scene ten where a voice sings about the coming Spring, and at the end of the play where soldiers sing, “spring is here” (Hare 5-93).



### **Economic Environment**

The economic environment changes throughout the play. Anna Fierling is a businesswoman who is driven by money as a means of survival. She makes her living traipsing throughout the battlefields of Europe selling and trading goods, and represents both the supply and demand of the war. When times are bad she is successful because of high demand, however, during moments of peace, the demand for her goods decreases.

This also shifts when demands for goods increase, yet the ability to pay is low.

Economically speaking, the war is the cause of the economic downfall of this society, and is best described in the final lines of the play:

Nobody stays at war unless they have to  
 At the end you see the war has robed us blind  
 Have you noticed? The war itself is endless  
 The money's being made by those who stay behind  
 Nobody wants to give us decent clothing  
 Shit is what we eat, and we've no pay  
 Yet who knows? Let's face it! Miracles may happen  
 Let's give this thing a spin for one more day.  
 Spring is here. The snow is melting  
 The dead are gone. They're all at peace  
 And what remains must now continue.  
 That's us. Let's go. We're all that's left. (93)

As with any major war, the economic climate is diminished to financially back the war effort. The characters in the play are also affected the economic environment that occurs during times of war, plagued with including higher taxes, weakened finances, and famine.

### **Political Environment**

The Thirty Years' War had devastating effects on the play's political environment. The war began when the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II, proposed converting his people from Protestantism to Catholicism. The war involved many countries in Europe,

and as one might expect, prompted a strong connection in *Mother Courage* between the politics of running a country and the religious environment.

Commanders of the armies and the emperors who call for war control the political environment, while the common people are the ones on the battlefield trying to survive. The political environment is directly connected to the economic situation in the play. The Chaplain makes an observation of the political religious environment when he states:

Oh, it's been a nightmare for the poor bloody King, no question. First he had to introduce the salt tax in Sweden to pay for the war. So he's bankrupted all his subjects. Not that he let's that get him down, of course. Then he comes to Poland to give them their freedom. Then he moves on and tries to give the Germans their freedom, there's a whole lot of them who's rather not have it, thank you, so he has to string them up and cut their stomachs out and so on. So here he is getting nothing for all his efforts and kindness. But he does have one thing in his favour. He's doing it all for God, which is a mercy, because otherwise people might say he was doing it for the money. (29)

### **Social Environment**

War also shapes the social environment, as those involved must change their daily lives depending on who is in power. The play takes place on the battlefields of the Thirty Years' War, and many of the social interactions occur between those who live in battle zones. Even though many of the locations are not in direct conflict, they are still affected, as war breeds and hinders the social environment. During a brief game of cards in scene six, the Chaplain notes,

. . . there's peace in war, remember. It has its little islands of peace. War satisfies all needs, that's the whole secret of it appeal. Even in war, you can always stop for a crap. Between battles you can always have a beer. On a march, you can always have a snooze. It's possible. Of course you can't get a full game of cards during an invasion, but frankly nor can you at harvest time. (57)

### **Religious Environment**

As stated above, the religious environment is connected to the politics of the day, and religion is prevalent throughout the piece. The Protestant Chaplain spends most of the play behind the lines of the Catholic army, and even changes his attire so he will not be discovered. Mother Courage also changes the flags on her canteen cart depending on who is in power. In the world of the play, without religion, war does not exist.

#### *Previous Action*

The previous action of the play is indicated in scene one through the conversation of the Recruiting Officer and the Sergeant. The dialogue establishes the length of the war and the trouble the armies are having attaining and keeping soldiers. There is also evidence that potential soldiers are less than desirable because of their ailments caused by years of malnutrition and improper medical care. The Recruiting Officer states:

How can anyone raise an army in a place like this? Sweden! I'm seriously thinking of killing myself. By the twelfth of next month I've got to get four units together. God knows how. When I do finally get hold of a possible, and sort of ignore the pigeon chest and the varicose veins, I've no sooner got him blind drunk and signing on the dotted line than I turn to pay for the brandy, and wham! he's out the lavatory window. I tell you, there's no such thing as honour any more. Pride. Duty. What do they mean? I'm losing my faith in the human race. (Hare, *Mother Courage* 5)

In the same moment, the Sergeant summarizes the status of the overall human condition during the war:

Well, that's the problem, isn't it? They haven't had a war here for such a long time. Without a good war, where do you get your moral standards from? Everything goes to pot in peacetime. People eat what they like. You see them wandering about with cheese on their bread and then a great smear of bacon fat on top! How many men are in that town down the road? How many horse? Nobody knows. They've never been counted. I've been in places where they haven't had a war for seventy years. People can't even remember their own names. They can't tell each other apart. It's only when war comes you get proper lists. Everything

numbered and with a label round its neck. It's obvious. No war. No order. (Hare, *Mother Courage* 5)

### *Polar Attitudes*

*Mother Courage and Her Children* paints a portrait of the lengths people will go to survive in a landscape ravaged by war. Mother Courage thrives off the war. She wants to see it continue because it gives her a sense of power. Kattrin, conversely, is seeking an end to the war with the hope of starting a new life. The war is seen as a hindrance to her need to settle down, find a husband, and have children of her own. Mother Courage can speak to get what she wants, whereas Kattrin is mute and must express herself through her physical body language and grunting sounds.

### **Mother Courage**

At the beginning of the play Mother Courage is confident and headstrong. She has all of her children and she is extremely successful. Mother Courage maintains this confidence throughout the play.

The play ends with Mother Courage losing all of her children to the war yet she straddles herself into the reigns of her cart and states “back to business” as she heads directly into the next battle (92). Mother Courage is driven by the war; she thrives off of it regardless of which side is winning. She is optimistic and hopeful about her own future. This determination is conveyed as a positive trait throughout, however it materializes as a major character flaw when all of her children die by the end of the play. Although it appears that Mother Courage is a strong maternal force, when it comes to the protection of her children, it is apparent that she is her own top priority and the survival of her children is an indication of whether or not she will be able to survive.

## **Katrin**

At the beginning of the play, the audience learns that Katrin is mute, however she is incredibly visual and kinesthetic when it comes to her dissatisfaction with her situation and insight into what she would like to attain in life. In scene three, Katrin steals a pair of shoes from the local prostitute Yvette. Those shoes are described as red high-heeled boots. She even sacrifices her life during the on stage battle to try and hide the shoes from her mother. The shoes represent her desire to be wanted and to be attractive so that she might find a husband, and settle down in one place, a luxury she has not been able to experience. Katrin, like Mother Courage, has a maternal instinct, however, it can be argued, that unlike Mother Courage, this instinct is about the survival of others and not herself. Katrin represents the true embodiment of what a mother should be.

At the end of the play, Katrin dies and never gets to experience the life she had always desired.

## **Dialogue**

### *Choice of Words*

Brecht's dialogue is structured to enhance the play's narrative. The words, and how each character speaks their message, are more important than the emotional impact of the actors' lines. The audience must be guided to focus more on the words than the play's action, which is accomplished through expressions that, often times, are very harsh and pointed (ie. "fuck," "shit," and "arsehole"). The spectator is Brecht's major target, therefore the choice of words throughout the text are both simple in structure but complex in their ability to cause thought provoking dialogue.

In addition to the spoken words, almost every scene includes a song that serves the purpose of framing the story, and sometimes giving the audience further insight into the lives and the situations the characters face in a particular scene. Mother Courage enters in scene one, singing,

Nobody goes to war without good shoes to wear  
 Mother Courage comes with boots to fit your feet  
 Take off those slabs of dirty cardboard  
 Untie those filthy, ragged strips of sheet  
 Your commanders want you springing into action  
 They hardly want you limping into town  
 Come on, they want to see you fit and smiling  
 As you march towards the guns that mow you down,  
 Spring is here. The snows are melting  
 The Dead are gone. They're all at peace  
 And what remains must now continue  
 That's us. Let's go. We're all that's left. (6)

This example not only demonstrates the simplistic word choice employed by the playwright, but also the deeper meaning conveyed by word choice.

#### *Choices of Phrases and Sentence Structures*

The dialogue throughout the play is constructed of short and, at times, irregular sentences that serve to make a direct point about the situation in the scene. Since the audience is a major factor in the narrative, the dialogue is to the point without making the structure too complex. An example occurs in scene six, when Mother Courage responds to the Chaplain's desire to get closer to her:

Chaplain, come on, be sensible. I like you. The last thing I want is to have to be angry with you. All I want is to get me and my children through this war. And this cart as well, which isn't just mine. I've no wish for a life of my own. Right now I'm taking a terrible risk by buying in when the Commander has just died and all the talk is of peace. That's a risk. Where will you go if I'm ruined? You don't know, do you? (Hare, *Mother Courage* 60)

The sentences are simple, and often include incomplete thoughts and incorrect grammar.

### *Choice of Images*

Since materialism is a major theme of the play, many images of material objects enhance the narrative, which include items such as the canteen cart pulled throughout the play and the red boots Kattrin steals from Yvette. Both images represent the commodities of the war, yet each means something quite different to the individual characters.

Images are also created through the *gestus* of the characters. In scene three, Mother Courage's son, Swiss Cheese, is caught behind the lines of the Catholic army while serving as the paymaster to the retreating Protestant army. He intends to fulfill his job and return the cash box to the Protestant military, yet he decides to hide it while behind enemy lines. He is caught and placed in front of a firing squad before his body is brought to Mother Courage's camp. The stage directions indicate that, "two Mercenaries come in with a stretcher," and they "pull back the sheet" (46). In this famous image, Mother Courage denies her affiliation with the dead Swiss Cheese, and when the mercenaries turn, she silently screams. This moment of *gestus* indicates her fear of being caught and her emotional disconnect from her children. Therefore, character created images are driven by the *gestus* of that particular character.

Another striking image occurs at the end of scene twelve after her last child has died, when Mother Courage stands on stage alone before a group of soldiers and marches across to the next battle. She picks up the reins of the cart and trudges into battle to continue life. This image is striking because it represents Mother Courage as economically harnessed to the war, although it appears that she is strong and will never concede.

*Choice of Peculiar Characteristics*

1. Dialect. Although the action of the play occurs in Northern Europe, there is no indication that a dialect is necessary, No phonetic structural pronunciations are written in the script.
2. Dialogue within the Dialogue. The structure of the lines can be described as dialogue within dialogue, which is meant to enhance the narrative structure of the play. During many of the scenes, characters use quotations to enhance the narrative. In scene three, Swiss Cheese states:  

I'm going to put it in that rat hole by the river. Then tonight I'll take it to the regiment. It can't take that long to catch up. It'll really shock the Sergeant. He'll say 'Swiss Cheese, I'm pleasantly disappointed. I put you in charge of the cash box, and all you do is bring it back' (36).

The structure of including quotations within lines of dialogue lends to the narrative effect necessary of Epic Theatre plays. This effect gives the story its narrative nature.

3. Foreign Language. In scene four, the in French phrase, “boque de la madonne,” is repeated, which roughly translates to “fuck the Virgin Mary” (47).
4. Song as Dialogue. Song breaks up the action of each scene. The following is a breakdown of each scene and the working title of the song located within the scene.
  - a. Scene One, “We’re all that’s left” (6).
  - b. Scene Two. “Beware, Beware, Beware” (21-22).
  - c. Scene Three. “The Heavenly Power of Love” (26-27) and “The Passion” (39-40).



- d. Scene Four. “It’s What God Wants from You” (49-50).
  - e. Scene Seven. “The War Goes On” (63).
  - f. Scene Eight. “Nobody Thinks the War Has Yet Been Glutted” (77).
  - g. Scene Nine. “But No Question You’re Better Without” (80-81).
  - h. Scene Ten. “Home is Where the Heart is” (83-84).
  - i. Scene Twelve. “Lullaby” (91).
  - j. Scene Thirteen. “We’re all that’s Left (reprise)” (93).
5. Occupations as Names. Many of the minor characters are named after their jobs (ie. the Armourer, Old Woman, Young Soldier, Soldier in Fur Coat) to prevent the audience from connecting with them and further Brecht’s intent to alienate the audience.

### *The Sound of the Dialogue*

As noted previously, the dialogue throughout the play is choppy and direct. With little complexity to the sentence structure, the play could read like a series of lines with pauses after each period. It is also important that the actors do not dive into the emotional qualities of the lines, since narration is their primary responsibility. With this approach, the dialogue can easily become emotional and jarring.

### *Structure of Lines and Speeches*

The lines are structured in short and informative bursts of information. There are also moments of swift back and forth dialogue and broad speeches. Much like musical theatre, lines often lead into song rather than large monologues.

## **Dramatic Action**

### *Units and Summary of Action*

Unit 1: “Search for Recruits” (5).

1. Recruiting Officer: to recruit new soldiers.
2. Sergeant: to regulate the organization of the war.

Unit 2: “We’re all That’s Left” (6-11).

1. Ellif: to seek approval to join the army.
2. Katrin: to force Ellif and Swiss Cheese to help set up the cart.
3. Mother Courage: to entice others to buy my goods.
4. Recruiting Officer: to enlist new soldiers.
5. Sergeant: to justify why all who can, should go to war.
6. Swiss Cheese: to break free from Mother Courage, just like Ellif.

Unit 3: “The Prophecy” (pages 11-14)

1. Ellif: to impress Mother Courage.
2. Katrin: to confirm my belief in Mother Courage’s power.
3. Mother Courage: to trick the Sergeant and Recruiting officer into believing that the war will kill them.
4. Recruiting Officer: to investigate if Mother Courage is psychic.
5. Sergeant: to deny that death is inevitable.
6. Swiss Cheese: to finalize Mother Courage’s psychic ability.

Unit 4: “A Fight” (pages 14-15)

1. Katrin: to warn Mother Courage of Ellif’s disappearance.
2. Mother Courage: to intrigue a customer to buy a belt buckle.

3. Recruiting Officer: to cajole Ellif into joining the army.
4. Sergeant: to distract Mother Courage.
5. Swiss Cheese: to escape.

Unit 5: “Miserable Bird” (pages 15-23)

1. Chaplain: to encourage dissatisfaction with war crimes.
2. Cook: to defend the necessity of the war.
3. Ellif: to brag of my successes in killing.
4. Mother Courage: to entice the Cook to buy a chicken.

Unit 6: “Piet the Pipe” (pages 23-27)

1. Kattrin: to confirm settling down and getting married.
2. Mother Courage: to try to make my camp appealing so people will buy my goods.
3. Swiss Cheese: to establish myself as a worthy member of the military.
4. Yvette: to reveal my issue with men during the war.

Unit 7: “Impending Conflict” (pages 27-32)

1. Chaplain: to interfere with the relationship between Mother Courage and the Cook.
2. Cook: to flirt with Mother Courage.
3. Kattrin: to discern how to be attractive so that I can find a husband.
4. Mother Courage: to please who ever arrives to be served.
5. Yvette: to prepare for the takeover of the Catholics.

Unit 8: “Catholic Takeover” (pages 33-39)

1. Chaplain: to hide from being killed for my religious beliefs.

2. Kattrin: to assert my desire to escape from the war.
3. Mother Courage: to adjust to the changing political climate.
4. Swiss Cheese: to object to conforming and return to my military unit.

Unit 9: “The Negotiation” (pages 39-46)

1. Chaplain: to propagate my belief in God.
2. Mother Courage: to hide my identity to save my own life.
3. Yvette: to profit from the war as a way to escape prostitution.

Unit 10: “The World Breathes” (pages 46-51)

1. Mother Courage: to demonstrate the importance of acting only when one can follow through.
2. Young Soldier: to collect the money I am owed.

Unit 11: “Those are my Fucking Shirts” (pages 51-54)

1. Chaplain: to aid others when they are in need.
2. Mother Courage: to protect my goods from being stolen or used.
3. Kattrin: to seek love.

Unit 12: “The Funeral” (pages 54-58)

1. Chaplain: to communicate the value of war.
2. Kattrin: to perform my job.
3. Mother Courage: to tend to the needs of soldiers.
4. Soldier: to exercise my right to do whatever I want.

Unit 13: “The Proposal” (pages 58-61)

1. Chaplain: to propose a joint venture with Mother Courage.
2. Mother Courage: to avoid settling down.

Unit 14: “The Rape” (pages 61-62)

1. Chaplain: to seek a better life.
2. Katrin: to confront the fact that my life has been wasted by war.
3. Mother Courage: to inspect my goods.

Unit 15 “The War is Raging” (pages 62-63)

1. Mother Courage: to take pleasure in the material successes I have had throughout the war.

Unit 16 “The Bells of Peace” (pages 63-70)

1. Chaplain: to revel in the hope that peace may finally come.
2. Cook: to obtain a new direction in life without war.
3. Mother Courage: to sell all my goods so that I do not lose money.

Unit 17 “The Return of Yvette” (pages 70-73)

1. Chaplain: to instigate the romantic downfall of the cook.
2. Cook: to avoid the embarrassment of my past.
3. Mother Courage: to discover the truth about the Cook.
4. Yvette: to confront the Cook for destroying my life.

Unit 18: “The Return of Ellif” (pages 73-77)

1. Chaplain: to protect Ellif from being killed.
2. Cook: to focus on my own survival.
3. Ellif: to resist conformity.

Unit 19: “No Question You’re Better Without” (pages 77-82)

1. Cook: to protest the existence of God during war.
2. Katrin: to escape this lifestyle.

3. Mother Courage: to protect my materialistic livelihood.

Unit 20: “Soup” (pages 82-83)

1. Kattrin: to surrender to my inevitable existence.
2. Mother Courage: to express the need for help.

Unit 21: “Home is Where the Heart is” (pages 83-84)

1. Kattrin: to give up.
2. Mother Courage: to endure the storm.
3. Voice: to display the feeling of somber hope when all is lost.

Unit 22: “Banging the Drum” (pages 84-91)

1. Kattrin: to alert innocent people of their impending death.
2. Lieutenant: to annihilate those who are protecting the village.
3. Peasant: to protect my family from being killed.
4. Peasant’s Son: distract the soldiers from killing my parents.
5. Peasant’s Wife: to implicate others so that my family will survive.

Unit 23: “Back to Business” (pages 91-93)

1. Mother Courage: to penetrate the armies during the next battle.
2. Peasant: to preside over the burial of Kattrin.
3. Peasant’s Wife: to reject those who trespass on my property.
4. Soldiers: to crusade into the next battle.

### **Characters**

Many characters change drastically throughout the play. Each scene is meant to stand on its own, which makes discerning definitive character traits difficult. Characters

continuously contradict their own beliefs; therefore it is problematic to specifically pigeon hole each character.

### *Chaplain*

1.     Desire. Throughout the play, the Chaplain desires to serve not only as the moral guide of the people, but also as the figure that justifies the war. However, there are many instances where he justifies the need for war. Despite being behind enemy lines for most of the play, the Chaplain still maintains his Protestant sensibilities and beliefs.
2.     Will. The Chaplain possesses the will to survive and to preach about the religious justifications of the war. He will do anything he can to save his own life, yet at the same time, he is determined to hold onto his beliefs. Even though he is strong in his religious beliefs, he is weak when it comes to standing up for himself otherwise.
3.     Moral Stance. Morally, the Chaplain follows the word of the Bible, however, he is not willing to die for his beliefs; he even removes his cassock so that he can safely live behind enemy lines.
4.     Decorum. At the beginning of the play, the Chaplain remains steadfast in his beliefs; he even refuses to drink wine in scene two. He is levelheaded, yet as the play moves forward, he becomes erratic and unreasonable.
5.     Summary of Adjectives
  - a.     Advantageous
  - b.     Compassionate
  - c.     Zealous

- d. Contemptuous
  - e. Composed
6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity.
- a. Heartbeat—The Chaplain enters the play during scene two as a secondary figure to the Commander of the Protestant army. The Commander is chiding the Chaplain for his religious beliefs. During this moment, the Chaplain's heart is rapidly beating because he is upset about what the commander is saying about him. The Chaplain is able to control his heartbeat throughout most of the play, until scene six when his is upset with Mother Courage because she turns down his advances. This action sends him into a feverish, preaching rant about the importance of sticking together.
  - b. Perspiration—The Chaplain remains calm for the majority of the play because he is the one that others come to for help. Although there are moments when he is stressed, he never allows sweat to bead on his brow.
  - c. Stomach—Throughout most of the play, the Chaplain maintains a fairly strong appetite. Mother Courage references this on numerous occasions when she alludes to the fact that he is using her for her goods. In scene two, the Chaplain's stomach is affected by nerves because he does not want to upset the Commander with his religious beliefs. Later in the play, his stomach is in knots when the Catholics overrun his camp in scene three.



- d. Muscles—The composed nature of the Chaplain does not allow for his muscles to be tense. Throughout his introduction, he remains very relaxed, yet alert, which allows him to stand up for his religion. In scene six, however, Mother Courage makes him chop wood; a task she has had him do for several years. During this exchange, the Chaplain becomes angry and tense.
- e. Breathing—The Chaplain must remain ready to preach and deal with the problems around him. Despite his charge, he maintains a fairly steady breathing pattern, as he does not want others to know when he is upset.

### *Cook*

- 1. Desire. The cook desires to maintain the status quo. He is the male incarnation of Mother Courage, however, he does not always have the drive to accomplish tasks on his own. During scene eleven, he asks Mother Courage to go with him to run an inn that he has received in a will. His desire stems from his need to survive despite the consequences.
- 2. Will. The Cook has a strong will, and is able to take care of himself throughout the play. This includes taking direction when needed from both his superiors and Mother Courage.
- 3. Moral Stance. The Cook demonstrates a severe lack of morals, and clearly operates with his own interests in mind. He is also unfaithful to his female companions. Yvette indicates that the Cook was her intended until she found out that he had “half the women in Flanders” (72).

4. Decorum. The Cook carries himself in a way that indicates his station in life. However, he does try to be the voice of reason during heightened moments of the play, which makes him likeable.
5. Summary of Adjectives
  - a. Ill-bred
  - b. Conformer
  - c. Unbending
  - d. Unethical
  - e. Fatalist
6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity
  - a. Heartbeat—The Cook’s heartbeat stays constant throughout the play. Even in his first interaction with Mother Courage—when they fight over the price of a dead bird—he maintains a calmness. This reaction indicates that he understands his position and chooses not to stress.
  - b. Perspiration—While the Cook does not demonstrate visual perspiration during his entrance in scene two, it is apparent that when Yvette confronts him about his infidelity, he begins to perspire. He knows that Yvette’s information may affect his position with Mother Courage.
  - c. Stomach—The irony of the Cook being a cook is that he is not always in a position to eat. The opportunity to eat during wartime is limited, yet when one is able, the food is often undesirable.

Although the Cook can usually control his heartbeat and perspiration, in the moment stated above, the Cook's stomach is in knots.

- d. Muscles—The Cook, like most people on the battlefield, maintains an ever-ready body position. In cases when a battle occurs, he can count on his fight or flight response.
- e. Breathing—The Cook's breathing is normal and steady throughout the play. To elevate his breathing would be an indication that he has no control.

### *Ellif*

1. Desire. Ellif yearns to break away from his family and join the war. He desires to emerge from the shadows of his mother. He yearns to be praised for accomplishing something on his own. He is quick to accept the Recruiting Officer's proposal to join the army even though Mother Courage tries to keep him from serving. This desire to impress and trail-blaze, ultimately leads to his death. He also has the desire to kill because he believes that killing gives him status.
2. Will. Ellif has a strong will to break free from his situation. He wants to be released from his Mother's control. Ellif also has a strong will to please those in charge to prove that he is a man.
3. Moral Stance. Ellif does not possess morals. He has the same moral compass as his mother. Ellif slaughters farmers so that he can take their cattle. Although he was rewarded the first time he did this during the war,

he is captured and put to death the second time. He cannot see difference between the war and peace. He believes that the rules of war apply in times of peace.

4. Decorum. Ellif is a soldier and he maintains the decorum necessary to present himself as a member of the army. This decorum is lost when he is arrested. At this moment he appears combative and trapped.

5. Summary of Adjectives

- a. Burly
- b. Destroyer
- c. Contented
- d. Confident
- e. Boorish

6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity.

- a. Heartbeat—Ellif's heartbeat is connected to his passion. In scene one, he wants to join the army and he is upset when his mother will not allow him to. He relies on his adrenaline.
- b. Perspiration—Ellif remains dry for most of the production. In scene eight, before he is executed, he does not sweat.
- c. Stomach—Ellif is cocky and this allows him to maintain a calm stomach. He is void of feeling nervous and this makes him a good soldier on the battlefield.

- d. Muscles—The Sergeant describes Ellif and his brother as individuals who are “built like Gods” (9). He is muscular due to the many years he has spent pulling the canteen cart.
- e. Breathing—Ellif breathes heavily when he is angry.

### *Katrin*

1. Desire. Katrin desires to settle down, be loved and start a family. Since Mother Courage is an anti-hero it can be argued that Katrin, while not necessarily the antagonist, is her foil.
2. Will. Katrin has a strong will to leave, however she is weak and cannot survive on her own. A soldier attacks her in scene six and she realizes that she cannot go out on her own without Mother Courage.
3. Moral Stance. Katrin has high morals. She consistently takes care of the soldiers, serves them, and even saves a baby in scene five. She is a true mother.
4. Decorum. Katrin remains unnoticed throughout the play. Katrin is dumb and does not speak except for noises that she makes in order to warn others or to let others know what she wants.
5. Summary of Adjectives
  - a. Maternal
  - b. Simple
  - c. Pure
  - d. Sympathetic
  - e. Vital

6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity.
  - a. Heartbeat—Kattrin thinks with her heart and not with her head. Her heart drives her core intentions. While she tries to remain unnoticed, her heart is steady; however, when she gets worked up, her hearts beats quickly.
  - b. Perspiration—Kattrin is constantly wet with perspiration. She is anxious being on the battlefield because she does not know what will happen next.
  - c. Stomach—Kattrin’s stomach remains in knots despite her outward demeanor. She worries about herself and others.
  - d. Muscles—Kattrin is not as strong as her brothers. Her function is to serve people and not pull the cart. Unlike her brothers, she does not have to pull the cart. Her muscles become tense when she tries to communicate because she cannot speak.
  - e. Breathing—Kattrin’s breathing is heavy in scene one. She is scared of the interaction her family has with the Sergeant and the Recruiting Officer.

### *Mother Courage*

1. Desire. Mother Courage is the anti-hero, and she is passionate about her job. She desires to make money during the war. She indicates would be upset if the war were to end because it would affect her livelihood.

2. Will. Mother Courage has strong a will to make a profit during the war. She experiences several instances of financial and emotional collapse, yet she manages to survive in a war torn environment.
3. Moral Stance. Mother Courage's morals are loose. She expects quality and fairness from those around her, yet she is determined to break her own moral code if it benefits her position. She is as moral as those who started the war.
4. Decorum. Mother Courage a strong, independent woman. Her primary concern is herself, even though she says she cares for her children. She is brash and masculine. Although she is protective of her children, there are many times when this protection serves her interest more. When her son Swiss Cheese dies, she silently screams about his death, but she does not let anyone see the emotion she is feeling on the inside. She does this so that she is not killed for lying.
5. Summary of Adjectives
  - a. Arrogant
  - b. Auspicious
  - c. Jagged
  - d. Protective
  - e. Masculine
6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity.
  - a. Heartbeat—Mother courage maintains an unruffled disposition throughout most of the play even when she is trying to sell her

goods or when she is negotiating. In scene one, she rides her canteen cart proclaiming the need for the soldiers to go into battle—an action that ensures her livelihood. If her heart does, in fact, beat, it does so because of the adrenaline she feels to make the next sale. Throughout the heightened moments of the play her heart beats faster, yet she is able to quickly control the beating. A rapidly beating heart would give the indication that she is afraid or that she has lost control.

- b. Perspiration—Mother Courage does not sweat unless she is losing money. She does not give anyone the satisfaction that something is wrong..
- c. Stomach—Mother Courage lives on the edge and does not have time to worry about whether or not her stomach is being affected by any situation.
- d. Muscles—Mother Courage’s muscles are always ready for action. In scene one, she quickly pulls a knife on the Recruiting Officer when he tries to enlist her sons. She appears to be relaxed but her muscles can easily engage when she is confronted.
- e. Breathing—Breathing is one way that Mother Courage exerts her control over her children and her situation. She maintains a steady breathing pattern so that her feelings are not exposed. She controls her breath to give the impression that she is in charge. She manages all the work that must be done in order to run the canteen



cart. By being a strong-headed individual she ensures that she will not have to work hard.

### *Swiss Cheese*

1. Desire. Swiss Cheese is often void of desire. He chooses to join the army when he knows that his brother is going, but he decides to take on a position that would not put him in direct combat. As a Regimental Paymaster, his desire is to please his superiors and to make sure that that cash box he is in charge of is used to only pay the members of his regiment.
2. Will. Swiss Cheese has a will to please others. Overall, his will is weak.
3. Moral Stance. Swiss Cheese knows the difference between right and wrong. In scene three, he is adamant to get the cash box past the conquering enemy lines so that he can give it back to his regiment. He has high morals because he knows he has an obligation to his regiment.
4. Decorum. Swiss Cheese presents himself as a young boy in a man's body. He has a hard time making smart decisions and is aloof in his mannerisms.
5. Summary of Adjectives
  - a. Dense
  - b. Lost
  - c. Bewildered
  - d. Doer
  - e. Pleaser

6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity

- a. Heartbeat—Swiss Cheese’s heartbeat mimics the heartbeat of those around him. When others panic, so does he. His heart beats the fastest in scene three when a soldier is holding a knife to his throat.
- b. Perspiration—Swiss Cheese perspires because he is worried about correctly performing his job and because he has a hard time making the right decisions. Although, he is relatively dry in scene one, in scene three he constantly sweats because he is worried about getting the regimental cashbox back to his regiment.
- c. Stomach—Swiss Cheese stomach knots throughout the play. In scene one, he is worried about his brother joining the army.
- d. Muscles—As previously stated, Swiss Cheese, like his brother, is described as being “built like god . . .” (9). His demeanor as a people pleaser makes it apparent that his built physique is useless to him.
- e. Breathing—Swiss Cheese’s breathing is elevated in scene one.

*Yvette*

1. Desire. Yvette has a desire to settle down, however, she desires to find a husband that has strong financial means. Her intention to marry is not for love. Her true desire is to be taken care of.
2. Will. Yvette is strong willed and not afraid to ask for the things she wants. She will do anything to get her way.

3. Moral Stance. Being a prostitute is considered an immoral occupation, however for Yvette, she does not have a choice. People in this play represent buyers, sellers, or fighters in this war. Yvette does try to save Swiss Cheese in scene three. This proves that she does have high morals.
4. Decorum. Yvette presents herself in a very put together way. She appears to be attractive, desirable and in control of her situation. She carries herself with confidence and uses her body to get her way.
5. Summary of Adjectives
  - a. Surly
  - b. Ambitious
  - c. Playful
  - d. Cunning
  - e. Wounded
6. Initial Character-Mood-Intensity
  - a. Heartbeat—Yvette’s heartbeat is stable in scene three except when she discusses the soldier who left her to fight the war.
  - b. Perspiration—Yvette perspire but she hides it with powder. In scene three, she is excited that the Catholics are winning the war because no one in the Catholic army knows her. This allows her to “offer” her services to new clientele. During this moment perspires because she is excited. She applies powder to her chest and worries about whether or not she has used enough.

- c. Stomach—Yvette’s stomach is in knots because she is upset about the soldier who left her. Her stomach aches for this soldier. In scene nine, she sees “Piet the Pipe,” also known as The Cook, and her stomach drops with anticipation because she can finally tell him what she thinks of him.
- d. Muscles—Yvette is dainty and does not have muscle structure. She can work the right muscles in any situation.
- e. Breathing—Yvette’s breathing becomes elevated when she is excited about the conquering Catholic Army.

## **Idea**

### *Literal Meaning of the Play’s Title*

Although the line is never uttered, *Mother Courage and Her Children* is an apt title for this play because it is about a courageous mother who travels into battle with her children. During scene one, Mother Courage states the reason they call her Courage:

I was once so scared of going bust I drove my cart right through the bombardment of Riga—right through the heart of it—with fifty loaves of bread in the back. That’s why they call me Courage. Mind you, the bread was going mouldy, I didn’t have much choice. (7)

### *Symbolic Meaning of the Play’s Title*

The word courage means selflessness, yet it is soon discovered that Mother Courage is selfish. The word mother is a symbol of love, honor, and the ability to nurture, yet Mother Courage is not a mother to her children in the true sense of the word, but rather a mother to her own intentions, desires and conquests. The symbolism of both mother and courage do not fit within the context of the play as they equate to false irony.

### *What is the Play Literally About?*

This play is literally about a mother who leads her children into the thirty years war so she can profit from selling goods to people affected by war. The production plays out in a series of twelve episodes, and each meant to stand on its own. Each includes a climax, and does not necessarily connect to the previous or preceding episode.

Throughout the twelve episodes, Mother Courage loses each of her three children to the war. Swiss Cheese is shot by firing squad, Ellif is killed after he commits a war crime during peace, and Kattrin is shot by a canon. In the end, the only person who deserves to die, Mother Courage, survives, and heads back into battle.

*What is the Moment of Climax in the Play? Why Does the Character Make this Climatic Choice? What is the Result of the Climatic Choice on the Other Characters?*

The play does not have a single moment of climax, but is structured as a series of climatic moments that occur in each episode.

### **Scene One**

The climatic moment occurs after Ellif is convinced to join a regiment and participate in a fistfight with a Recruiting Officer. At this moment, he proves himself as a soldier. He makes this choice in order to free himself from the reigns of his mother. The result of his choice affects Kattrin, who must take his place pulling the cart with Swiss Cheese.

### **Scene Two**

The climatic moment occurs when Mother Courage sees Ellif for the first time in two years since he joined the army. Mother Courage hits Ellif because she finds out that he does not surrender when he is confronted. She is upset because she fears he will get

himself killed, so she strikes Ellif and scolds him. There is no affect on the other characters as the episode ends with Ellif continuing to put himself in danger.

### **Scene Three**

Scene three is longest in the play, and therefore, there are a series of climatic moments. The first climax occurs when the Catholic Army attacks and over takes the Protestant stronghold, causing Mother Courage and her train to hide within the confines of the canteen cart. The second climax of the scene occurs when Swiss Cheese is killed by the Catholics for hiding the regimental cashbox.

In climax one, Mother Courage and the others hide in the cart so they will not be killed or captured. She chooses not to save them because she does not want to give the money that the Catholics demand. Mother Courage, The Chaplain, and Yvette, however, survive the battle. In climax two, Swiss Cheese is killed.

### **Scene Four**

The climax in this scene occurs when Mother Courage sings a song about making sure that one should be truly angry before s/he acts. This song becomes increasingly biting towards the end when she sings:

Just wait  
 You'll bend  
 In time  
 You'll find  
 The vows you make you'll break  
 To live  
 Just give  
 In doubt  
 Sell out  
 It's what God wants from you. (50)

Mother Courage sings this song to warn an angry soldier to only act when he is truly mad. She decides that her reason for being there is not important.

### **Scene Five**

The climax begins at the top of this scene when the Chaplain and Katrin are doing their best to help those who were attacked during battle. They assist until the end of the scene when Mother Courage screams at Katrin to give a baby she saved back to its mother. The Chaplain and Katrin continue to help save the lives of those who were attacked throughout the scene. Mother Courage is upset because her shirts are ripped up to help stop a soldier's bleeding.

### **Scene Six**

The climax occurs when Katrin returns from being attacked on the road and Mother Courage proclaims, "damn this fucking war" (62)! She is distraught that her daughter is attacked and realizes that war only causes pain. Even though the climatic moment ends the scene, it does give hope to Katrin that Mother Courage is finished with the war.

### **Scene Seven**

The climax occurs when Mother Courage sings about her desire for the war to continue raging. She is holding several pieces of gold jewelry and is at the height of her career. This indicates that the war will never end for Katrin.

### **Scene Eight**

The climax occurs when Ellif returns in handcuffs after he attacks a farmer during a time of peace. Ellif is placed under arrest and is killed for murdering the farmer. Mother Courage loses another one of her children.

### Scene Nine

The climax occurs when Mother Courage attacks Katrin. Katrin attempts to leave after Mother Courage and the Cook make plans to abandon her. Mother Courage needs Katrin in order to pull the cart, and decides to leave the Cook and take Katrin back onto the battlefield.

### Scene Ten

The climax occurs when the Voice sings, “home is where the heart is” (84). The Peasant is singing about hope. Mother Courage and Katrin realize that they do not have a home to which they can go.

### Scene Eleven

The climax occurs when Katrin climbs unto the thatched roof of the Peasants’ house and bangs the drum to warn the town of the impending attack. At this moment, a soldier is ordered to shoot Katrin down with a cannon. Katrin dies in this moment but her death saves the Peasants.

### Scene Twelve

The climax occurs when Mother Courage heads back onto the battlefield. She declares that she is “back to business!” (92). She now has to fend for herself.

### Moods

#### *Mood Senses and Mood Image*

Unit 1: “Search for Recruits” (5).

1. Sight—a Recruiting Officer and a Sergeant sit outside in the dark.
2. Sound—quiet sounds of a cold morning.
3. Taste—cigarettes.



4. Touch—cold steel of a gun.
5. Smell—the sweet smell of the morning.
6. Image—like two lost souls trying to find a way.

Unit 2: “We’re all That’s Left” (6-11).

1. Sight—Mother Courage riding a top her canteen cart in triumph.
2. Sound—the noise of the cart and the grunts of Ellif and Swiss Cheese pulling it.
3. Taste—sweet taste of metal coins.
4. Touch—crumpled papers.
5. Smell—leather belts.
6. Image—like a king sitting on their throne.

Unit 3: “The Prophecy” (11-14).

1. Sight—passing out of black cross-infested papers.
2. Sound—silence of reality.
3. Taste—impending death.
4. Touch—crumpled paper.
5. Smell—of mortality.
6. Image—like a person realizing that death is around the corner.

Unit 4: “A Fight” (14-15).

1. Sight—Ellif and the Recruiting officer are punching each other in the face.
2. Sound—moans and grunts.
3. Taste—blood.
4. Touch—cold metal of belt buckles.

5. Smell—dead fields.
6. Image—like two people fighting over who has a bigger truck.

Unit 5: “Miserable Bird” (15-23).

1. Sight—a rotten skinny chicken.
2. Sound—knife cutting root vegetables.
3. Taste—good wine.
4. Touch—dead chicken feathers.
5. Smell—smoke from a fire.
6. Image—like a child selling bad lemonade.

Unit 6: “Piet the Pipe” (23-27).

1. Sight—gossiping at the canteen cart.
2. Sound—laundry flapping in the wind.
3. Taste—alcohol in metal cups.
4. Touch—the thighs of a prostitute.
5. Smell—hours’ old breakfast.
6. Image—like a woman being left behind during war.

Unit 7: “Impending Conflict” (27-32).

1. Sight—Kattrin imitating Yvette’s walk.
2. Sound—of an approaching battle.
3. Taste—cheap alcohol.
4. Touch—the leather of red high heeled boots.
5. Smell—Pipe smoke.
6. Image—like a peacock prancing.

## Unit 8: “Catholic Takeover” (33-39).

1. Sight—soldiers battling in the field
2. Sound—explosions.
3. Taste—smoke and tears.
4. Touch—the wood of the canteen cart.
5. Smell—fire and destruction.
6. Image—like a country being taken hostage.

## Unit 9: “The Negotiation” (39-46).

1. Sight—Yvette running back and forth negotiating.
2. Sound—feet hitting the ground.
3. Taste—sour coffee.
4. Touch—scratching skin with worry.
5. Smell—excrement.
6. Image—like making a deal with the devil.

## Unit 10: “The World Breathes” (46-51).

1. Sight—A man is holding another man back from entering the Captain’s tent.
2. Sound—yelling.
3. Taste—defeat.
4. Touch—a wrinkled military shirt.
5. Smell—lunch from the Captain’s tent.
6. Image—like a fight in a schoolyard.

Unit 11: “Those are my Fucking Shirts” (51-54).

1. Sight—Mother Courage sitting atop her canteen amongst a burning village.
2. Sound—crackling fire and screaming.
3. Taste—smoke.
4. Touch—the torn flesh of survivors.
5. Smell—burning embers.
6. Image—like the Holy Grail in hell.

Unit 12: “The Funeral” (54-58).

1. Sight—people drinking and playing cards.
2. Sound—the music of a funeral in the distance.
3. Taste—the burning sensation of alcohol.
4. Touch—cards and drink glasses.
5. Smell—the musk of a cemetery.
6. Image—like dogs playing poker.

Unit 13: “The Proposal” (58-61).

1. Sight—The Chaplain wielding an axe.
2. Sound—wood being chopped.
3. Taste—wood chips.
4. Touch—the rough handle of an axe.
5. Smell—fresh cut wood.
6. Image—like an axe murderer.

## Unit 14: “The Rape” (61-62).

1. Sight—Kattrin’s slashed across the face.
2. Sound—a scream.
3. Taste—blood and tear.
4. Touch—burlap bags filled with items.
5. Smell—fear.
6. Image—like a poor orphan.

## Unit 15 “The War is Raging” (62-63).

1. Sight—Mother Courage singing into battle.
2. Sound—guns blasting on the battlefield.
3. Taste—the metallic taste of gold.
4. Touch—crisp, clean shirts.
5. Smell—profit.
6. Image—Like a soldier heading into the battlefield to conquer.

## Unit 16 “The Bells of Peace” (63-70).

1. Sight—Peasants trying to sell old blankets.
2. Sound—bells pealing in the distance.
3. Taste—morning breath
4. Touch—rubbing of the face to wake up.
5. Smell—brandy.
6. Image—like people begging before a king.

## Unit 17 “The Return of Yvette” (70-73).

1. Sight—Yvette in black mourning garments.

2. Sound—gasp.
3. Taste—of yellow chicken fat.
4. Touch—rough edges of a wood pipe.
5. Smell—a campfire.
6. Image—like being caught with a hand in a cookie jar.

Unit 18: “The Return of Ellif” (73-77).

1. Sight—Ellif with his hands tied behind his back.
2. Sound—grunts of aggression.
3. Taste—blood and sweat.
4. Touch—rough hands.
5. Smell—body odor and sweat.
6. Image—like a captured soldier.

Unit 19: “No Question You’re Better Without” (77-82).

1. Sight—three broken down people looking for food.
2. Sound—a light breeze.
3. Taste—morning breath and dry mouth.
4. Touch—the feeling of worn and torn clothing.
5. Smell—of stale air.
6. Image—like children looking up at heaven.

Unit 20: “Soup” (82-83).

1. Sight—a physical fight between Katrin and Mother Courage.
2. Sound—the rattle of a soup bowl.
3. Taste—bland boiled water.

4. Touch—a dirty crusty face.
5. Smell—old laundry.
6. Image—like a mother forcing their child to eat brussel sprouts.

Unit 21: “Home is Where the Heart is” (83-84).

1. Sight—Mother Courage and Katrin pull the cart by themselves.
2. Sound—a voice singing.
3. Taste—sweat.
4. Touch—the leather straps digging into skin.
5. Smell—dirt from the road.
6. Image—like Atlas holding the world on his back.

Unit 22: “Banging the Drum” (84-91).

1. Sight—Katrin on the thatched roof, banging the drums and tense standoff.
2. Sound—drum banging
3. Taste—bile.
4. Touch—rough touch of the wood ladle used to bang the drum.
5. Smell—canon smoke.
6. Image—like Superman saving the day.

Unit 23: “Back to Business” (91-93).

1. Sight—Mother Courage straps herself into the cart.
2. Sound—wheels hitting the dirt.
3. Taste—sweet taste of success.
4. Touch—the leather straps of the harness and the weight of the canteen cart.
5. Smell—death.

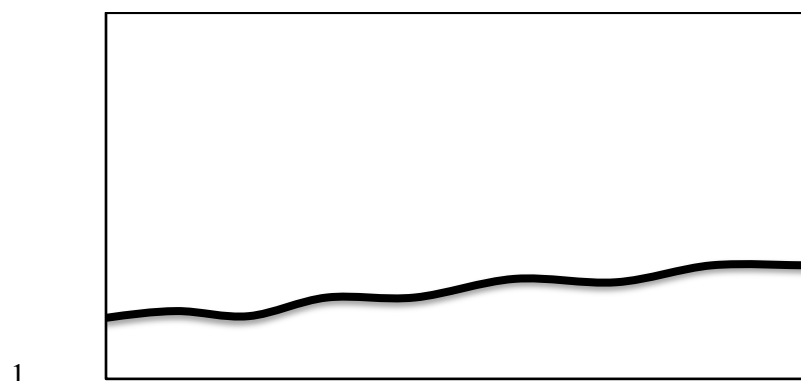
6. Image—like a lone soldier heading into battle.

## Tempo

### *Tempo Charts and Descriptions*

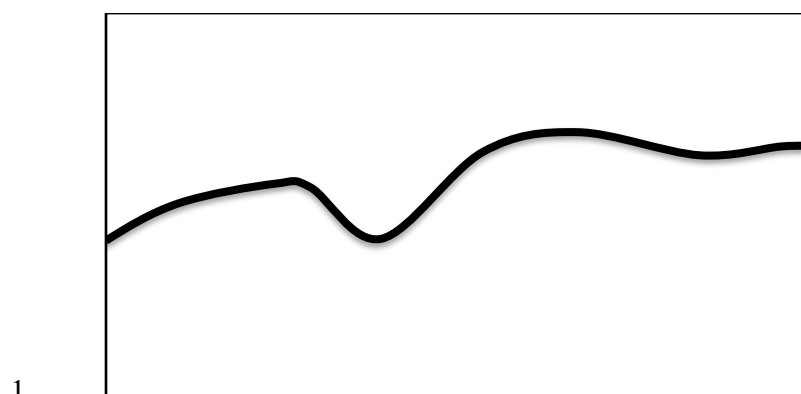
Every episode of the play stands on its own, meaning that there is a rising action and climax in every scene. Because of this, the tempo for each scene is very similar, with the exception of scene three, the longest scene in the play, where the climatic moments occur more than once.

Unit 1: “Search for Recruits” (5).



2. Slow and informative to enhanced and informative.

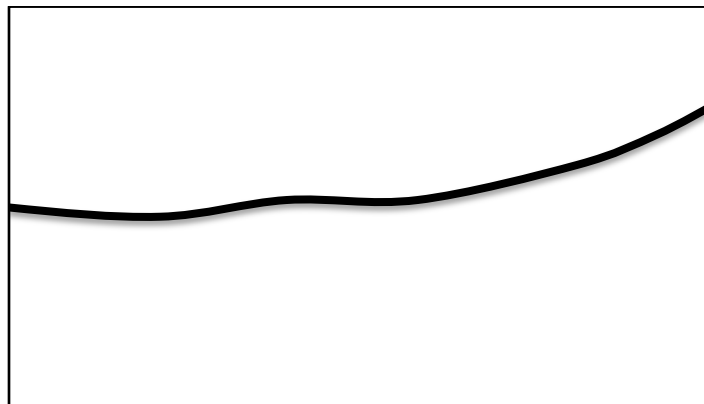
Unit 2: “We’re all That’s Left” (6-11).



2. Quick and lively to sharp and poignant.

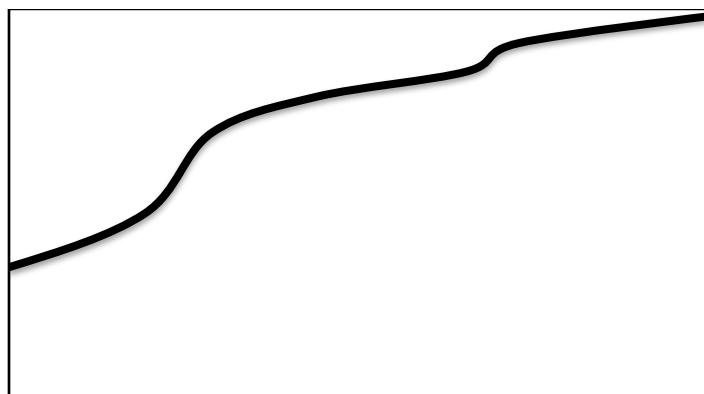


Unit 3: “The Prophecy” (11-14).



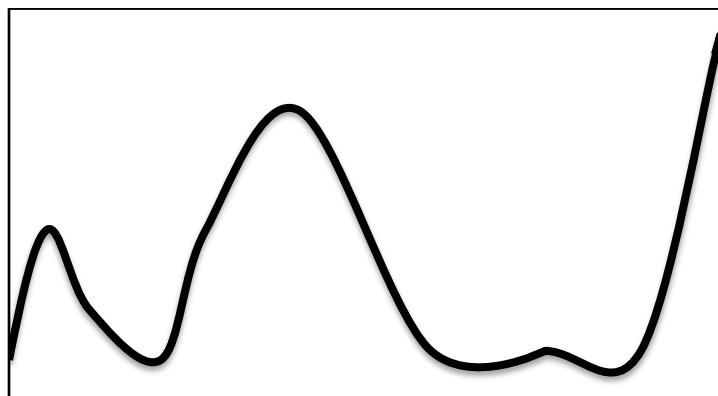
- 1.
2. Medium and tense to increased and revealing.

Unit 4: “A Fight” (14-15).



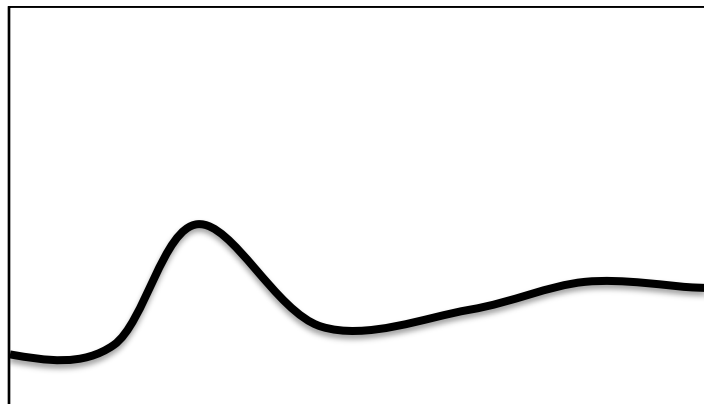
- 1.
2. Steady and foreshadowing to quick and enticing.

Unit 5: “Miserable Bird” (15-23).



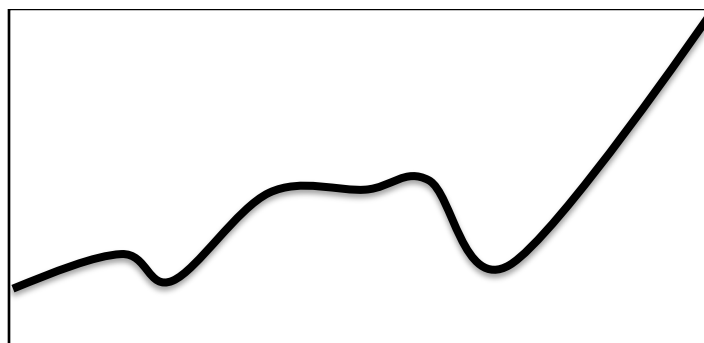
- 1.
2. Medium and lifted to broad and intense.

Unit 6: “Piet the Pipe” (23-27).



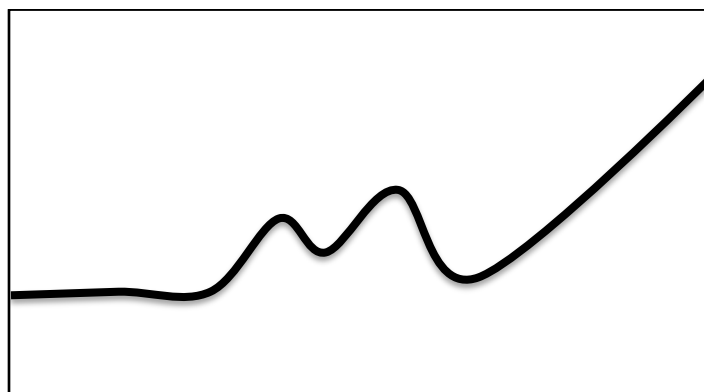
- 1.
2. Slow and revealing to level and decelerated.

Unit 7: “Impending Conflict” (27-32).



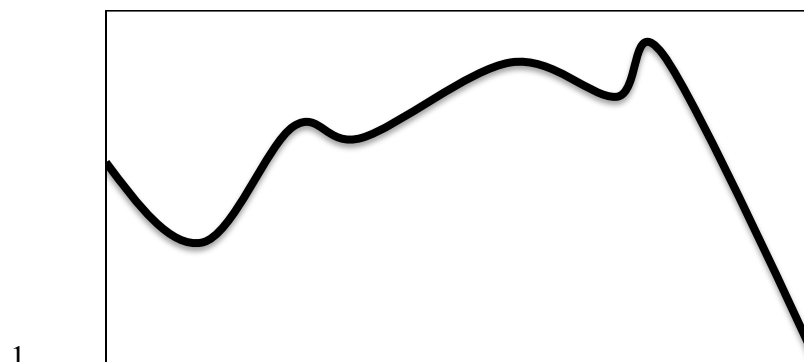
- 1.
2. Slow and restrained to fast and sudden.

Unit 8: “Catholic Takeover” (33-39).



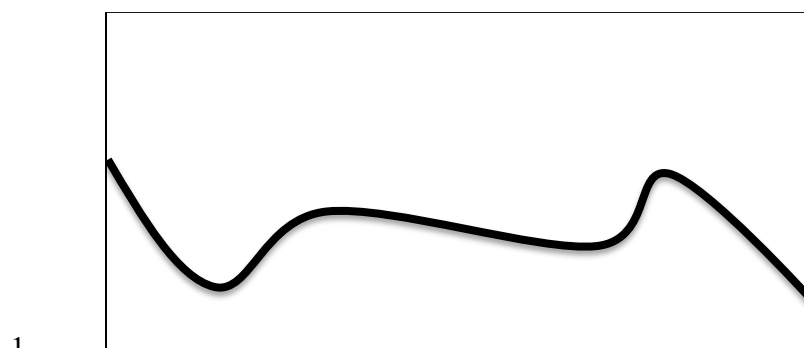
- 1.
2. Very slow and sluggish to amplified and swift.

Unit 9: “The Negotiation” (39-46).



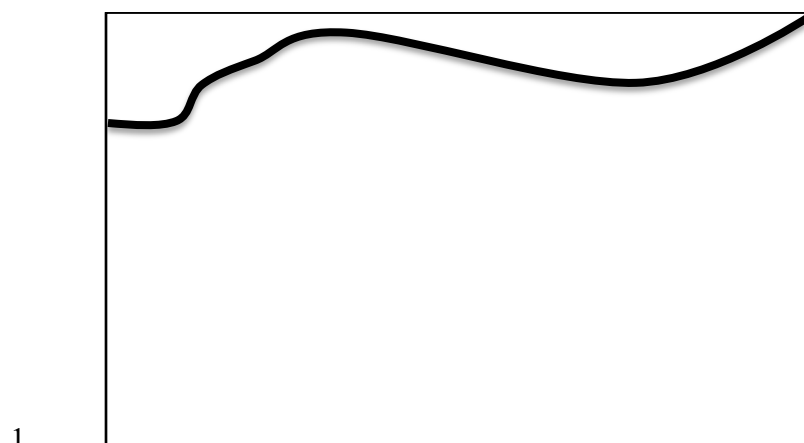
- 1.
2. Lively and energetic to slow and dawdling.

Unit 10: “The World Breathes” (46-51).



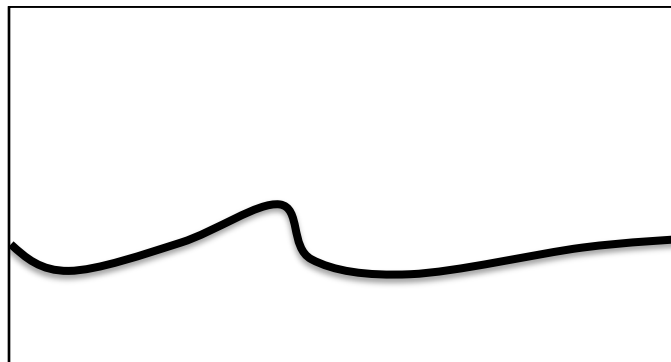
- 1.
2. Fast movement and swift to slow and heavy.

Unit 11: “Those are my Fucking Shirts” (51-54).



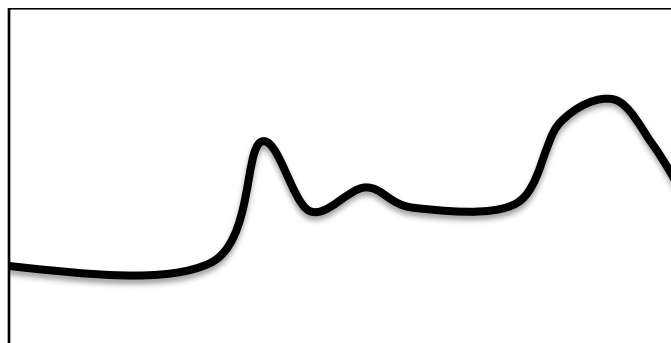
- 1.
2. Quick and lively to fast and sudden.

## Unit 12: “The Funeral” (54-58).



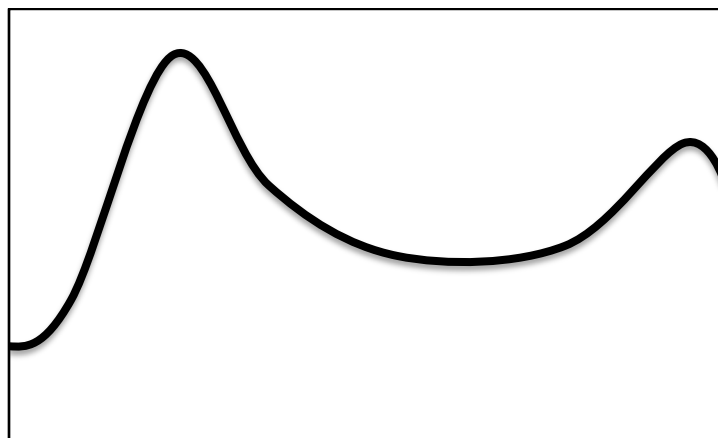
- 1.
2. Moderate and temperate to slow and pronounced.

## Unit 13: “The Proposal” (58-61).



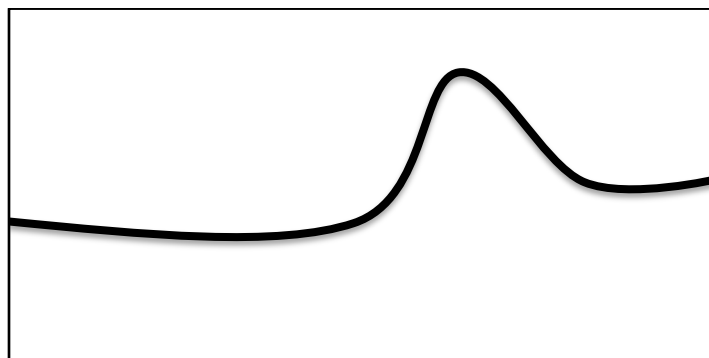
- 1.
2. Lentamente and leisurely to allegro and dynamic.

## Unit 14: “The Rape” (61-62).



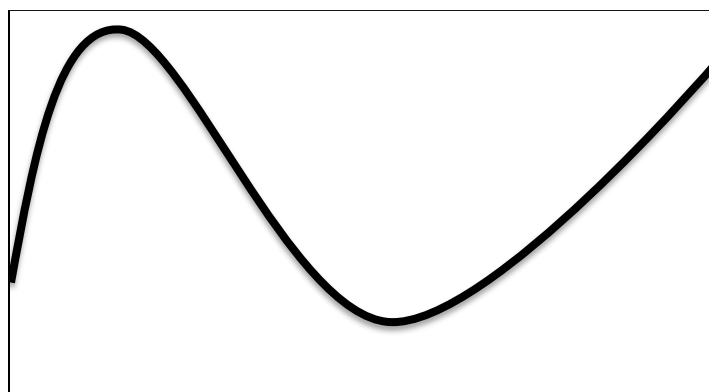
- 1.
2. Fast and heightened to level and accepting.

Unit 15 “The War is Raging” (62-63).



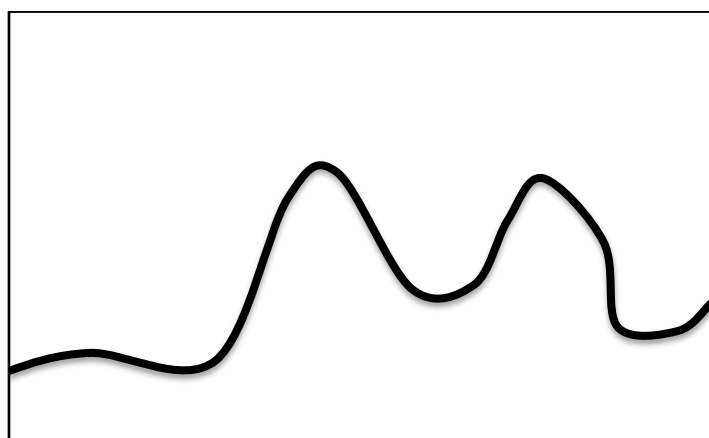
- 1.
2. Broad and steady to upbeat and excited.

Unit 16 “The Bells of Peace” (63-70).



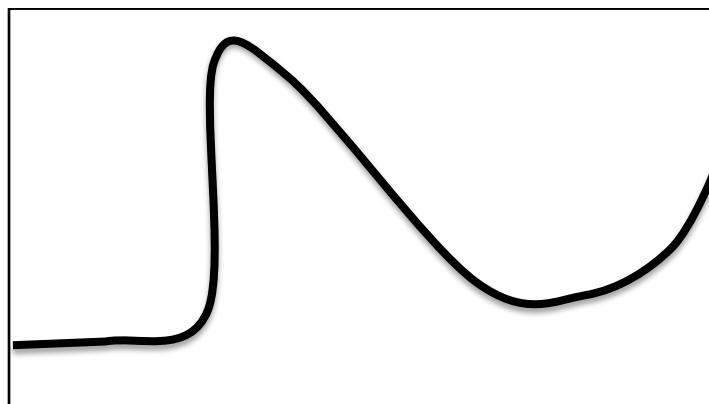
- 1.
2. Quick and celebratory to quick and hurried.

Unit 17 “The Return of Yvette” (70-73).



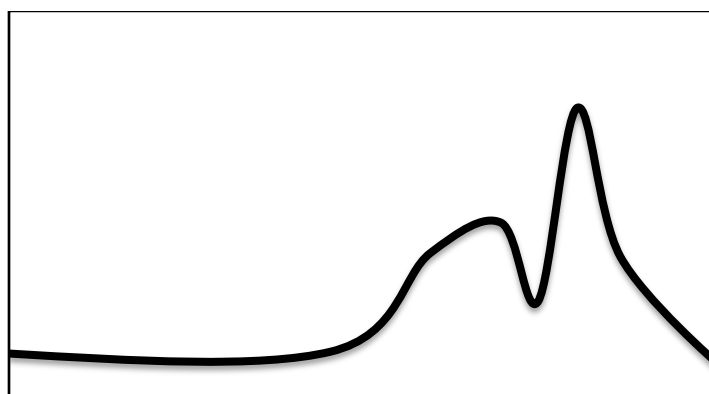
- 1.
2. Lively and prompt to enhanced and unsteady.

Unit 18: “The Return of Ellif” (73-77).



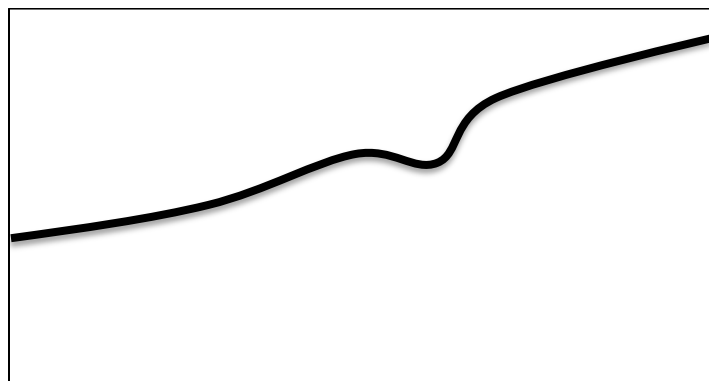
- 1.
2. Slow and even to very quick and troubled.

Unit 19: “No Question You’re Better Without” (77-82).



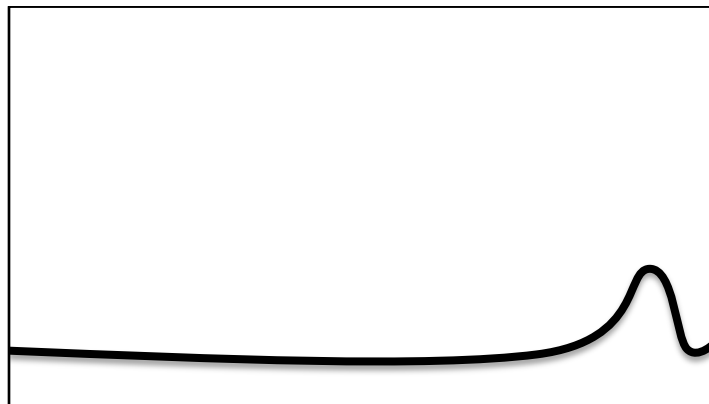
- 1.
2. Extremely slow and consistent to medium paced and desperate.

Unit 20: “Soup” (82-83).



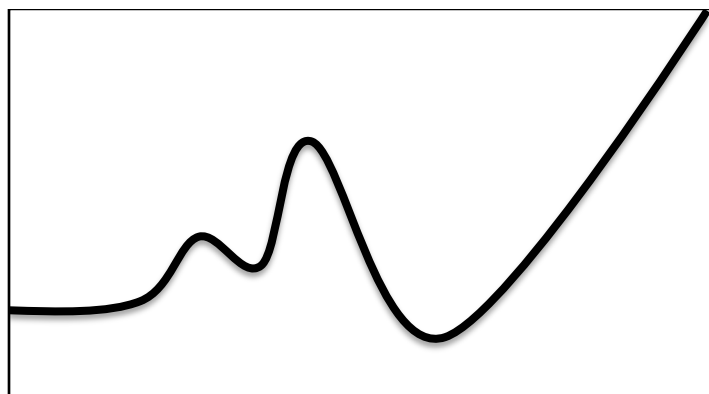
- 1.
2. Moderate and steady to fairly quick and heightened.

Unit 21: “Home is Where the Heart is” (83-84).



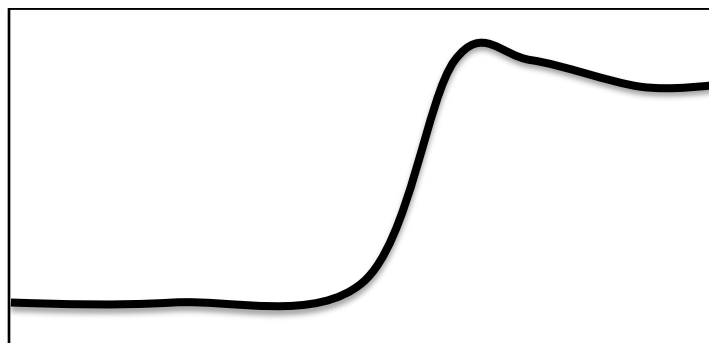
- 1.
2. Extremely slow and solemn to moderate and aching.

Unit 22: “Banging the Drum” (84-91),



- 1.
2. Slow and broad to consistent to quick and lively.

Unit 23: “Back to Business” (91-93).



- 1.
2. Slow and steady to quick and elevated.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

A play about war, death, rape, and greed is not typical high school fare. Yet, society is faced with these overarching themes on a daily basis through television, print and entertainment media. *Mother Courage and Her Children* is really about questioning the choices made by society; either to live in a world where people lift one another up or one where we they each other apart. It can be argued that war is no longer seen for what it is—a horrible action where no one wins. War is a predominate fact of life that plays in the background of people's minds because it saturates society's psyche.

Through the implementation of the project, several questions emerged, including: How does one simulate shock value to war imagery in 2015? Can a modern audience be affected by the world Brecht was warning about? What can students add to the conversation regarding war and the world? These questions were the basis for the exploration of the final product.

It was a pleasure working with a group of actors who were open and interested in the journey that this production presented. War's affect on the generation became apparent through the rehearsal process because each contributing member represented a different generation's perspective of war. I am finally at a point in my teaching career where the age difference between my students and it places me outside of their generation. This gap allowed me to see war through their eyes and gave me a chance to share war



from my perspective. I was an undergrad during the events of 9/11 and I remember vividly how that event unraveled into a legitimate hysteria and eventual war.

The goal of this thesis, again, was to examine whether the use of *gestus*, alienation and the creation of war imagery has an impact on the audiences of today when compared to the effect both had on the 1949 audience when the production was mounted in Berlin immediately following World War II. The final product would be a new interpretation of Brecht's work, inspired by Brecht's original work, and new war imagery that could make *Mother Courage and Her Children* relevant today.

The selection of *Mother Courage and Her Children* was one that was not taken lightly. The content of the play is difficult to understand and requires students to take both physical and emotional risks. The final product created an environment where student actors, the director and the audience could have a dialogue through theatre about the effects of war. It could be assumed that students would enjoy producing a play with harsh language and content, however, these elements were difficult for them because of their lack of understanding. During cast dialogues we were able to come to terms with the realities Brecht was envisioning and those dialogues led to a better comprehension of the project as a whole. Their input into the process created a product that was fresh and harsh in terms of reality.

During rehearsals, it was apparent that more could be discovered about the play with the integration of the actors' and director's experiences embedded within the performances. The oldest actors involved in this production were born in 1997, and many were born in 2000. 9/11 occurred at a time when they could not possibly recollect what they were doing on the day the planes hit the building. The students involved, though

well versed in war history and imagery as portrayed by the media, had yet to see a war at its inception. What they were aware of, however, was that war is constant. There were several moments during the rehearsal process when the actors could not grasp, or even contemplate, the severity of the situation that occurred in a particular scene. If they could not imagine the reality Brecht was writing about, how would they be able to convince an audience? This led way to several discussions about the effects of war and decisions about how this story could be told.

The technical process for mounting this production included heavy execution of scenic and design elements that aid in the furthering of the Epic style. Student designers and technicians were charged with creating the atmosphere of the play under the direction of the director utilizing the overall production concept established during several production meetings. The task of exposing all production elements including the lighting and the backstage areas was a difficult task because most plays require the production elements to be masked as a means envelop the audience in the world of the play. Students were challenged to create a world where nothing was hidden from the audience. Students embraced the concept of the production and demonstrated stellar understanding of the requirements of the play.

It was important to not only follow the guidelines set by Brecht through the utilization of his Epic theory, but also to examine what effect Epic Theatre might have on the actors, audience and directors of today. To simply restage the production as Brecht intended would not have allowed for the discovery of where this style could go in a world vastly different from Brecht's. The material itself was a challenge for all involved, however, the theories of Epic Theatre proved to be more challenging than the content of

the piece. Despite all of the research, several questions resulted from the rehearsal process, including: How does an actor stray away from over emotionalizing the point of view of the character and just tell the story (alienation)? Can the audience tell the difference between the feeling of emotional connection with the character and the process of learning the story and wanting to do something about it? The process, which included thorough workshops, did not prepare the cast to easily see the solutions to the questions surrounding final product of the *Mother Courage and Her Children*. It was eventually apparent that the conventions of Epic Theatre became less and less evident during rehearsals. The longer the actors lived with the piece, the less obvious the Epic work became.

The very nature of this production prompts incredible emotional highs and lows. Students had a difficult time alienating themselves from the emotions of their characters, and often found themselves forgetting who they were because they were so enveloped in their characters' lives and emotional journey. The unintentional transition from Brecht's Epic to Stanislavsky's Method would be detrimental to the piece because the elements that are singular to the epic style would be lost if the actors over emotionalized the characters. This would run counter to the goals of the project. When playing the emotions of the characters within the drama of each scene, the tension became very elevated, thus forcing the audience to lose themselves in the action. As a result, the actors had to constantly refocus on telling the story.

In the beginning, no reference from the *Couragemodall* was utilized because it was seen as a hindrance to the creation of a new version of *Mother Courage*. During the rehearsal process it became increasingly clear that the *Couragemodall* would be helpful

to effectively tell the story. Although this is a modern staging of the play, one cannot ignore what Brecht was trying to convey to his audience. Brecht was very specific about the visual moments he wanted to expose the audience to, and it is evident that those moments still are important to demonstrate the Epic, even in a modern production.

Despite some trouble with the Epic style during rehearsals, it was imperative to obtain an audiences' perspective of the work in order to examine whether the production goals were attained. The use of adjudications from both adult theatre professionals and student critics made the outcomes clear as to whether or not the goal had been accomplished. The adult adjudicators were able to grasp the difficulty of the piece and were able to comment on the whole production including the direction. Those adjudications can be found in Appendix B.

This production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* was adjudicated as part of the California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) in conjunction with its 2015 High School Theatre Festival. The organization sends out three adjudicators with backgrounds in theatre to evaluate the production through four different criteria including acting, directing, technical theatre and overall impact. Not only do adjudicators evaluate each with a superior, excellent, good and fair rating, but they also are required to write a narrative explaining their choices. These narratives were beneficial to evaluating whether or not the goals of this project were successful. One adjudicator realized the difficulty of staging the production and commented that,

The direction of *Mother Courage and Her Children* took a difficult play to stage and brought it to life. The idea of war and what war is like can be very difficult for someone to understand. However, it is clear the director incorporated that within the production. For example, many of the characters portray the hardships that come with war. It was apparent the director had a clear vision for the play and

executed it properly. Even combining elements of Epic Theatre with dramatic theatre can be a challenge within itself.

She goes on to state that “this play has tough message that can be difficult for an audience to be receptive to” and that “the direction helped foster the vision as well as bring the technical elements together.” Another adjudicator focused on the entirety of the production compared to Brecht’s intentions:

As a whole, the Epic Theatre style was well thought out and executed. The director did a great job conveying the style to both performers and audience. He was consistent and effective throughout the piece and I believe constructed a production in which the playwright would have intended.

Most importantly, the adjudicators recognized the difficulty a director might have with a production of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. An adjudicator stated, “The fact that a high school director had the confidence and skill to bring such a thought provoking piece of theatre as *Mother Courage* to his students, truly speaks volumes to him not only being a great director, but also a great teacher.” According to the adjudicators, the message of war and the difficulty of conveying that message on stage was apparent throughout.

While it was clear that CETA adjudicators could see that the direction aimed to incorporate Brechtian structure, it was even more interesting to read the Orange County Cappies Critics reviews completed by student critics about the production. The Orange County Cappies is made up of high school students who watch high school theatre productions and write reviews that are then published in the *Orange County Register*, a local newspaper. One critic stated, “Fullerton Union High School's production is a provocative piece that punctuates the sentiments of war, brilliantly blending powerful performances with masterful design to create profound political commentary that is still relevant today.” This review recapitulated the goals of the thesis. Another critic was able

to see the technical elements that coincided with the directorial concept to further the goals of the project. This critic stated,

The twist in this production is that it incorporates uniforms and weapons from an array of time periods. . . The mix of modern day attire and war uniforms from as early as the 17th century accentuates the message of the show; war is war and it affects us all.

One of the most succinct reviews came from a critic who stated that,

With a radiant, lyrical projection throughout the course of the story, the stage directions follow the journey of a strong-headed mother's battle between profiting off the war and caring for her children. A couple blinding lights and gun shots later, the production teaches us the unsettling result of alienating the illusion of a play from reality . . .

The student critics were able to comprehend, not only the style of Epic Theatre including alienation and gestus, but also its uses within this production.

Although the goal of producing theatre at this level is to provide an educational opportunity for students to learn, not only about the theatre, but also to develop social skills and educational depth and breadth, it is extremely humbling when the production is recognized for several awards. Through the CETA High School Theatre Festival, the production won the Artistic Merit award, which recognizes a production that takes a risk and incorporates high artistic qualities. The Orange County Cappies recognized two of the actors in the production. The actor who played Katrin received the Cappie for Supporting Actress of the Year, an award that is particularly incredible because her role was largely a silent yet important one. The actor playing Mother Courage received the Cappie for Lead Actress of the Year. These awards aid in solidifying the work that both students put into the production, yet most importantly, they celebrate the entire ensemble who supported the efforts of a dedicated cast and crew.

The final product was one that could not be conceived at the beginning stages of the planning and rehearsal process. Despite all of the awards, positive reviews, and numerous adjudications, what was presented represented the work of a creative ensemble. This ensemble cared for one another, and believed in what they were doing. In support of the ensemble a member of the community so eloquently summarized the production as a whole when he stated:

You will certainly receive negative feed for courageously taking on this production of *Mother Courage* at FUHS because of its adult themes, obscenities, criticisms of religion, and maybe even its Marxist undertones. I hope you also hear from others like myself who applaud you for providing a space for thoughtfulness and reflection on the horrors war and our relationship to it in a time when we try to avoid thinking about our complicity. How valuable it is for our youth to explore these themes in a safe, thoughtful, and creative environment! I know that this production was emotionally, physically and ever spiritually draining for the cast and crew, but the statement was extremely powerful.

Brecht used the theatre as a creative outlet to convey a message of what could be improved in the world. His use of the theatre as this vehicle has forever changed the lives of these students and hopefully the audiences they also hoped to change.

## Works Cited

- Abstract War 2006*. *deviantart.com*. deviantART, Sept. 2006. Web. 4 Dec. 2013. <<http://heavy-metal-manga.deviantart.com/art/Abstract-War-2006-70077425>>.
- Abstract 'War' Scrap*. *deviantart.com*. deviantART, 2007. Web. 4 Dec. 2013. <<http://vinh291.deviantart.com/art/abstract-war-scrap-46572667>>.
- Adams, John Paul. *Aristotle, the Poetics*. *www.csun.edu*. Cal State University Northridge, 26 Jan. 2010. Web. 15 Oct. 2013. <<http://www.csun.edu/~hcfl004/poetics.html>>.
- "Alienation Effect". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015. Web. 14 Feb. 2015 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/15423/alienation-effect>>.
- Armchairgeneral.com*. *Weider History Group*, 4 Apr. 2008. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.armchairgeneral.com/forums/showthread.php?p=1110580>>.
- Artandscience.usask.ca*. College of Arts & Science, 2008. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bookdepository.com/Mother-Courage-Her-Children-Bertolt-Brecht/9781559703611>>.
- Artscope.net*. Artscope.net, 2001. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.artscope.net/PAREVIEWS/mothercourage101801.shtml>>.
- Ayers, Jessica. "Brechtian Acting." *VUTs Good Person of Setzuan*. Vanderbilt University. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/goodperson/brechtian-acting/>>.



*Battle of Breitenfeld*. *Wikipedia.com*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 26 Dec. 2005. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Breitenfeld\\_\(1631\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Breitenfeld_(1631))>.

Bentley, Eric. *Theatre of War*. New York: Viking, 1970. Print.

*Bookdepository.com*. The Book Depository International Limited (Guernsey), 7 Oct.

1996. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bookdepository.com/Mother-Courage-Her-Children-Bertolt-Brecht/9781559703611>>.

*Bookdepository.com*. The Book Depository International Limited (Guernsey), 1 Dec.

2010. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bookdepository.com/Mother-Courage-Her-Children-Bertolt-Brecht/9781559703611>>.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht: Collected Plays: Five*. Trans. John Willett. London: Methuen World Classics, 1995. Print.

—. *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic*. Trans. John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print.

—. *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Trans. David Hare. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996. Print.

—. *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Trans. Tony Kushner. New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2010. Print.

Berlin, Susan. "Mother Courage and Her Children." *Talkingbroadway.com*. Talking Broadway, n.d. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.talkinbroadway.com/regional/dc/dc692.html>>.

"Bertolt Brecht." *The Biography Channel Website*. A+E Networks, 2013. Web. 17 Oct 2013. <<http://www.biography.com/people/bertolt-brecht-9225028>>.

- Billington, Michael. "Mother Courage and Her Children." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media Limited, 27 Sept. 2009. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/sep/27/mother-courage-and-her-children-review>>.
- Biography.com*. A+E Networks, 2013 Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.biography.com/people/bertolt-brecht-9225028>>.
- Boll, Julia. *The New War Plays: From Kane to Harris*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- "Brecht's Epic Theatre." *USQ Artsworx*. University of Southern Queensland, 19 Jul 2009. Web. 3 Nov 2013. <<http://www.usq.edu.au/artsworxold/schoolresources/goodwomanofsechwan/epictheatre>>.
- Brestoff, Richard. *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods*. New Hampshire: Smith and Kraus, 1995. Print.
- Britannica.com*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/73026/US-soldiers-on-a-search-and-destroy-patrol-in-Phuoc>>.
- Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <[http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/108377/U S-Marines-moving-supplies-and-weapons-during-the-battle-for](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/108377/U-S-Marines-moving-supplies-and-weapons-during-the-battle-for)>.
- Burt, Daniel S. *The Drama 100: A Ranking of the Greatest Plays of all Time*. New York: Checkmark Books, 2008. Print.
- Callow, Simon. *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 26 Mar. 2004. Web. 2 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/simon-callow-the-purpose-of-theatre-is-to-melt-the-ice-within-6169179.html>>.

Carlson, Marvin. *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1984. Print.

Cash, Justin. "Epic Theatre Conventions." *The Drama Teacher*. The Drama Teacher, 17 Mar. 2014. Web. 9 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.thedramateacher.com/epic-theatre-conventions/>>.

"CM Almy." CM Almy, 2013. Web. 14 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.almy.com/Category/ChaplainToHisHoliness>>.

Crowley, Robert and Parker, Geoffrey. *The Readers Companion to Military History*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1996. Web. 20 Oct. 2013. <<http://www.history.com/topics/thirty-years-war>>.

*Debramcarthur.com*. Debramcarthur, n.d. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <[http://debramcarthur.com/?page\\_id=24](http://debramcarthur.com/?page_id=24)>.

Drinka, Dr. George. "Mean World, Violent World: Are We Desensitized to Violence? Reflections on the Newtown Massacre." *SheKnows*. Sheknows Media, LLC, 17 Jan. 2013. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/981997/are-we-desensitized-to-real-violence>>.

*Elist10.com*. Elist10, 3 Jul. 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.elist10.com/top-10-amazing-facts-about-world-war-i/>>.

"Epic Theatre." *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015. Web. 27 Apr. 2015 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/189683/epic-theatre>>.

"Epic Theatre and Brecht." *BBC News*. BBC, 1 Jan 2015. Web. 29 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zwmvd2p/revision/t>>.

- "Europe, History of: Thirty Years' War, 1618–48." Map. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2013. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/1433/The-Thirty-Years-War>>.
- Evans, James. *Experimental Theatre: From Stanislavsky to Today; [an Invaluable Guide To a Century of Major Experiments in Theatre]*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Avon, 1973. Print.
- Ewen, Frederic. *Bertolt Brecht: His Life, His Art, and His times*. New York: Carol Pub. Group, 1992. Print.
- Fuegi, John. *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. Print.
- "Falernian, et al." *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc., 2013. Web. 15 Nov. 2013. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/>>.
- Goodrich, Frances, Albert Hackett, and Anne Frank. *The Diary of Anne Frank*. New York: Random House, 1956. Print.
- Gange, William. "Berliner Ensemble." *Historical Dictionary of German Theatre*. Academic Wordpress, 2006. Web. 25 Oct. 2013. <[http://german\\_theatre.enacademic.com/49/Berliner\\_Ensemble](http://german_theatre.enacademic.com/49/Berliner_Ensemble)>.
- Graveyard Guernica*. Artsy, 2011. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://artsy.net/artwork/ron-english-1-graveyard-guernica>>.
- Hanks, Robert. "Theatre / Mother Courage - Royal National Theatre, London." *The Independent* 16 Nov. 1995. Independent.co.uk. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre--mother-courage---royal-national-theatre-london-1582140.html>>.

Hartnoll, Phyllis. *The Theatre a Concise History*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1968. Print.

Huxley, Michael. *The Twentieth-century Performance Reader*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

"Introduction & Overview of Mother Courage and Her Children." *BookRags*. BookRags, 1 Jan. 2005. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguidemothercourage/#gsc.tab=0>>.

Jones, David Richard. *Great Directors at Work*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986. Print.

Kennedy, Dennis. "Bertolt Brecht." *Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre & Performance*. Oxford: University Press, 2003. 182-185. Print.

"Kunst Historisches Museum Wien." *bilddatenbank.khm.at*. Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. <<http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=2366>>.

Kwint, Marius. "The Theatre of War." *History Today* 53.6. *Historytoday.com*. History Today, 2003. Web. 28 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.historytoday.com/marius-kwint/theatre-war>>.

Lauro, Shirley. *A Piece of My Heart: A Play in Two Acts*. New York: Samuel French, 1992. Print.

Leach, Robert. "Mother Courage and Her Children." *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. Ed. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Print.

Lee, Sandra Marie. "ArtScope.net: Mother Courage and Her Children." *ArtScope.net*:

*Mother Courage and Her Children*. Artscope.net, 1 Jan. 2001. Web. 2 Feb. 2015.

<<http://www.artscope.net/PAREVIEWS/mothercourage101801.shtml>>.

Lester, Gideon. *A Model of Courage*. *americanrepertorytheater.org*. American Repertory

Theatre, 9 Feb. 2001. Web. 25 Oct. 2013. <<http://americanrepertorytheater.org/inside/articles/model-courage>>.

*Lighting. Ellif's Execution*, et al. Fullerton. Personal photograph by author. 2014.

Fullerton.

Lker, Klaus. *Brecht Chronicle*. New York: Seabury, 1975. Print.

*Magnoliabox.com*. Artily Group, 1 Dec. 2010. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.magnoliabox.com/tag/Deborah%20Warner>>.

"Marxism." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2013. Web. 19 Oct. 2013. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Marxism>>.

McCarter, Jeremy. "The Courage of Their Convictions." *NYMag.com*. New York Media, LLC., n.d. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://nymag.com/arts/theater/reviews/19669/>>.

Mendez, Sonia. *Costumes: Modern Militia*, et al. 2014. Photograph. Fullerton.

Mitter, Shomit. *Systems of Rehearsal: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook*. New York: Routledge. 1992. Print.

*Mordecai Gorelik Collection*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2013. Web. 8 Dec. 2013.

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/3747/>>.

*Newyorktimes.com*. The New York Times Company, 22 August 2006. Web. 3 Dec. 2013.

<[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/22/theater/reviews/22moth.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/22/theater/reviews/22moth.html?_r=0)>.

Patterson, Michael. *The Oxford Dictionary of Plays*. City: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Saika, Gitmeemoni, and Somali Raha. "Bertolt Brecht and the Songs in His Dramas: With Special Reference to Mother Courage and Her Three Children."

*International Journal of Scientific Footprints* 2.1 (2014): 22-27. Web 6 Jul 2015.

Samachson, Dorothy. Samachson, Joseph. *The DRAMATIC Story of the THEATRE*. New York: Abelurd-Schuman Limited, 1955. Print.

Simkin, John. "Bertolt Brecht." *Spartacus Educational*. Spartacus Educational, June 2013. Web. 18 Oct 2013. <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAbrecht.htm>>.

Spencer, Andy. *International Brecht Society*. Ohio State University, 2010. Web. 15 September 2013. <[http://www.brechtsociety.org/about\\_ibs/about\\_ibs.html](http://www.brechtsociety.org/about_ibs/about_ibs.html)>.

Sterris, Mykaela. *Makeup and Hair: Design Board*, et al. 2014. Photograph. Fullerton. *Tagxedo.com*. Tagxedo, 2013. Web. 4 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.tagxedo.com/app.html?url=http%3A//sites.google.com/site/germanliterature/20th-century/brecht/mutter-courage-and-her-children&shape=Classic&orientation=Any>>.

*Tagxedo.com*. Tagxedo, 2013. Web. 4 Dec. 2013. <[http://www.tagxedo.com/app.html?url=http%3A//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty\\_Years%27\\_War&shape=Classic&orientation=Any](http://www.tagxedo.com/app.html?url=http%3A//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_Years%27_War&shape=Classic&orientation=Any)>.

*Telegraph.uk.co*. The Telegraph, 28 Sept. 2009. Web. 8 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/6239491/Mother-Courage-And-Her-Children-at-the-National-Theatre-review.html>>.

Terry, Catherine. *Backstage Exposure Including the Onstage Exit Sign*, et al. 2014.

Photograph. Fullerton.

*Theatre and War*. Dir. John Walter. Perf. Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline, and Tony Kushner.

Lorber Films, 2008. Film.

Thomas, Jim. "Brechtian Exercises." *livestrong.com*. Livestrong, 10 July 2011. Web. 29

Apr. 2015. <<http://www.livestrong.com/article/489018-brechtian-exercises/>>.

Thomson, Peter, and Vivien Gardner. *Brecht: Mother Courage and Her Children*.

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.

Turner, Cathy and Behrndt, Synne. *Dramaturgy and Performance*. Palgrave MacMillian,

2008. Print.

"*Wikimedia Commons*." Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 6 Sept. 2013. Web. 11 Nov. 2013.

<[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann\\_Tserclaes\\_Tilly.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Tserclaes_Tilly.jpg)>.

Williams, Jennifer. *Lighting: White Harsh Exposed Lighting*, et al. 2014. Photograph.

Fullerton.



APPENDIX A  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTS

**IRB Approval Letter**  
**Michael J. Despars M.A. Student in Theatre Education**



*Institutional Review Board*

DATE: August 4, 2014

TO: Michael Despars, MA  
 FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [607499-2] Mother Courage and Her Children: Masters Thesis Project  
 SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED  
 APPROVAL DATE: August 4, 2014  
 EXPIRATION DATE: August 4, 2015  
 REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of August 4, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or [Sherry.May@unco.edu](mailto:Sherry.May@unco.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

**Hello Michael,**

**I am the second reviewer on your IRB Application. I have only one additional item to attend to, but will not hold up your approval for this minor issue. On your Consent and Assent letters, please add a place for the signer's initials at the bottom of page 1 on each of these. That just allows us to be sure that page 1 was actually read. Thanks so much for taking care of this and good luck with your production and your research.**

**Sincerely,**

**Nancy White, PhD, IRB Co-Chair**

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

## **Narrative**

**Michael J. Despars M.A. Student in Theatre Education**

**Title: Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus in an Already Highly Active Visual World.**

**Narrative for UNC-IRB Application**

**By Michael Despars, M.A. Student in Theatre Education**

### **A. Purpose**

1. The purpose of this production is to examine Epic Theatre and the theoretical practice of gestus, or highly stylized gestures that cause an emotional connection to the content of the play and not the characters. This will be applied to whether or not the practice is applicable today.

Students are immersed in a highly visual world where the internet, television, and other forms of entertainment are saturated with imagery that those images that once could be considered distasteful are no longer shocking. The saturation of visual media has caused an influx in desensitization to the images. This exploration will be conducted through the use of Bertolt Brecht's play *Mother Courage and Her Children* where the impact visuals have regarding war, death, and desperation will be tested on a modern audience and through the rehearsal process with actors and technicians. The ultimate purpose is to determine whether or not Brecht's work and his use of gestus still have substance at a time when what was appalling during World War II is not longer appalling today.

As a teacher of the International Baccalaureate Theatre Program at Fullerton Union High School I understand the importance of pushing students beyond the traditional theatre they are enveloped in. So often students are only exposed to musical theatre, Shakespeare, or American classics such as *The Glass Menagerie* or *Our Town*. This exposure is limiting within the realm of genre of theatre as a whole. *Mother Courage and Her Children* is a play that will challenge my actors and technicians in ways they are not used to including the examination of developing and creating highly visual content.

2. I am applying in the category of expedited because I do not plan to do anything out of the educational norm with my students. They have been involved in several productions prior to the one I am currently proposing. Furthermore, this research will not involve more than minimal risk to students and audience members.

### **B. Methods – Be specific when addressing the following items.**

1. Participants: The participants of this production will include over 60 student actors and technicians that are in the 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. These students are involved in a comprehensive and highly active arts program.

This show is open cast allowing for anyone who is a part of the student body to audition. Students will find out about auditions for the production in their homerooms when announcements occur. Audition information will also be posted at [www.fullertonacts.com](http://www.fullertonacts.com)

Consent and Assents forms will be distributed prior to students auditioning. These will be included in the standard audition packet that also includes the show contract and information we need from each actor and technician such as contact and emergency information. Prior to formal auditions parents and students will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the research that is being conducted.

## 2. Data Collection Procedures

- a. Students will participate in a workshop that covers the elements of Brecht's Epic Theatre. During this workshop they will be introduced to the elements of gestus.
- b. Students will rehearse four days a week between the hours of 5:45PM and 8:45PM. Rehearsals begin after Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and sports programs are done for the day.
- c. Each rehearsal will begin with a group discussion about the scene(s) that will be covered during that evening's rehearsal to gain further insight into how gestus can be used to enhance the audience's understanding of the production.
- d. Technicians will meet weekly for production meetings and on Saturday's for technical work. During this time discussions will take place and observations made.
- e. Students will perform the final production five times in two weeks between October 17<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014.
- f. The stage manager will keep a complete set of rehearsal notes that include staging, reminders, and next steps.
- g. This production will be evaluated and adjudicated by The Orange County Cappies Critics Program. This program allows twenty-five student critics to see the production, discuss the major components of the production, and write 400-500 word reviews critiquing the production. Since their writing becomes public domain when it is published in the Orange County Register it can be used to evaluate whether or not the purpose of this thesis has been attained.
- h. This production will be evaluated and adjudicated by the California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) for main stage placement at the CETA High School Theatre Festival in January 2015. Three theatre professionals will see the production and write an in depth evaluation and narrative based on their observations. This will also include ways in which the production can be improved. These adjudications will be available 48 hours after the adjudicator attends the production.

- i. Upon completion of the productions, students will be asked to write a narrative about their experience. This includes their perspective of their performance and the performance of others.
- j. I will ask students and parents to sign an assent/consent form giving me permission to use their student's image in pictures I may include in my thesis. If I include images of costume, set, or action, I will have their permission to do so. I will also provide a copy of the form to each parent and student for his or her own keeping.
- k. I work in a public high school that has a strong performing arts component. I do not have to have approval from my administration when it comes to selecting material to be performed on the main stage as long as I use my own discretion. I have, however, notified my principal about the requirements of this research thesis and the need to collect data from students.

### 3. Data Analysis Procedures

Data will be collected analyzed in a variety of ways including through written notes during cast discussion and technical meetings, written adjudications from both CETA and the Orange County Cappies, and through written evaluations outlining the students experience during the production. Data from the rehearsal notes taken by the stage manager will be emailed nightly to the director and key members of the production staff. Most of these notes contain information on what was accomplished during the rehearsal and technical needs that arise. Data that can be stored digitally including adjudications and photos will added to Dropbox. Other data will be collected and placed into a director's binder. This binder will be secured and held by the director during the research process.

### 4. Data Handling Procedures

Data for this project will be stored digitally using Dropbox as is standard for every production produced and directed. This is only accessible to the researcher unless others are identified and invited to share the files electronically. Data from adjudicators will also be in a digital format, however this data is considered public knowledge and will be readily accessible by the public through the Orange County Register's website and the Fullerton Union High School Theatre website at [www.fullertonacts.com](http://www.fullertonacts.com). Data including blocking, notes taken during cast discussions, and technical drawings will be kept in a directors binder that is kept by the director at all times.

Consent and Assent forms will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the Research Advisor's office for three years, after which they will be destroyed as per page 17 of the Procedures Manual.

Students will be addressed and referred to by their characters name throughout the research.

### **C. Risks, Discomforts and Benefits**

All productions include inherit risk and discomfort. Although this can be non-existent or minimal the risk cannot be foreseen, students will be dealing with material that topically is challenging and will require copious amounts of movement both physically and emotionally. Student technicians will also be building and creating all of the technical elements of the production and even with proper training does pose some risk of injury. Proper theatre safety has been taught to students and a stage manager is trained to complete rehearsal and insurance reports nightly.

The benefits of participating in this production will far outweigh and risks of discomforts. Those benefits include the development of a well-rounded resume that will be used for college admission, the exploration of a new type of theatre including its theories and the experience of collaborating in a theatrical environment in preparation for professional participation at the college and professional level.

Theatre provides students with a plethora of other benefits besides the ones listed above including the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

### **D. Costs and Compensations**

Students will not be compensated financially or receive a grade for their participation in this production. Students are, however, encouraged to contribute \$100.00 towards their participation in this production, which is standard practice during any production. This contribution is not mandatory for either casting or participating in the production.

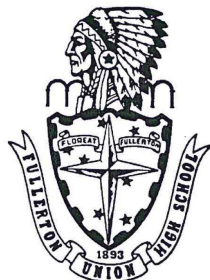
Beyond the standard production costs, the production will be entered in the CETA High School Theatre Festival and a cost of \$300.00 and the Cappies Critics Program at a cost of \$175. These are one time fees and cover the cost of adjudication. Cost are paid through the production budget.

The researcher is being paid as part of a yearly stipend to direct a theatre program at Fullerton Union High School. The researcher will incur the cost of using Dropbox to store digital materials for this thesis.

### **E. Grant Information (if applicable)**

There is no grant funding for this research project.

**Principal Approval Letter**  
**Michael J. Despars M.A. Student in Theatre Education**



***FULLERTON UNION HIGH SCHOOL***  
*A California Distinguished School*  
*9 Golden Bell Awards*

201 East Chapman Avenue ♦ Fullerton, California 92832  
 Phone (714) 626-3803 FAX (714) 449-0777

*Rani Goyal, Principal*

June 12, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Michael Despars, Theater Educator and Fullerton Union High School, has my permission to include students in his master thesis production and research entitled "*Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus in an Already Highly Active Visual World*" for the University. I understand that there is an element of research involved in this production but that there is no identifiable information on specific student included in the production.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Rani Goyal  
 Principal

*Offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program*  
*Academy of the Arts, Digital Arts, Agri-Science Academy,*  
*Culinary Academy, Speech and Debate*  
*Fullerton Joint Union High School District*



**Student Assent Form****Michael J. Despars M.A. Student in Theatre Education**

Project Title: Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus in an Already Highly Active Visual World.

Researcher: Michael Despars, School of Theatre Education

Phone: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Advisor: Dr. Mary Schuttler

Phone: (970) 351-1926

Email:

mary.schuttler@unco.edu

ASSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Actors and Technicians

Thank you for completing this application to participate in this production of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. This is a very difficult play from a technical, content, and development standpoint. This may be the reason that it is not often produced at the high school level. I believe that theatre provides us all with opportunities to learn about life and to give a voice to those that do not have one. This production will allow us all to explore, develop and provide commentary about the difficulties of war. I also believe that we can take this play and make it accessible to a high school audience and meet the goals that Bertolt Brecht envisioned when he penned this work.

This is a very special production for me because it represents over a year's worth of pre-planning, research, and development as part of my master's thesis research project. I am currently a Master's Candidate at the University of Northern Colorado. I will be using my observations, including our cast discussions of the play in rehearsal in both pre-production and post-productions.

The FUHS Theatre Department is led by two missions. The first is the Academy of the Arts mission: "To provide an elevated and accelerated arts curriculum which is open to all students throughout Orange County who have an exceptional need, interest or talent". The second is the FUHS Theatre mission: "To provide meaningful, Arts opportunities, that will incite desire, professionalism, ensemble ethic, communication, safety, and self-confidence in order to teach students to be productive men and women in society". By participating in this production we all will be meeting the missions developed by both the Academy of the Arts and the FUHS Theatre department.

Much of the data I will be collecting will be from reviews written by the Orange County Cappies Critics and adjudication narratives written by the California Educational Theatre Association. Although it is my intention to maintain complete confidentiality throughout the research process these reviews are considered public knowledge, however, when I write about your work within my thesis your name will not be used, instead I will refer to you by the character(s) you play. In addition, I would like to use photographs taken during the process to show costuming, sets, and action that may or may not include you in them. The photographs will be similar to the ones we have professionally taken during all of our productions and will be completed during the pre- and post- production stages. This thesis will be published through the University of Northern Colorado Library and could be made available on the ProQuest's Dissertations and Theses database for use in other educational research. There is a remote possibility that you may be identified in these photographs and every effort will be made to only submit images that are in wide shot and are not facially recognizable. By signing below, you understand that my observations of your progress and performance will be used in my thesis.

Participation in my research will not give you an advantage during the audition process nor will it exclude you from being able to participate. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your participation in my research, please contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED].

I agree to participate in the Research Mr. Despars is conducting for his Master's Thesis.

---

Student	Date
---------	------

---

Researcher	Date
------------	------

Please include this Assent form when you turn in your audition packets prior to your audition.

**Parent Assent Form****Michael J. Despars M.A. Student in Theatre Education**

Project Title: Mother Courage and Her Children: An Exploration of the Power of Gestus in an Already Highly Active Visual World.

Researcher: Michael Despars, School of Theatre Education

Phone:

E-mail:

Advisor:

Dr. Mary Schuttler

Phone:

Email:

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

### Parents

Thank you for completing this application for your students to participate in this production of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. This is a very difficult play from a technical, content, and development standpoint. This may be the reason that it is not often produced at the high school level. I believe that theatre provides us all with opportunities to learn about life and to give a voice to those that do not have one. This production will allow the students to explore, develop and provide commentary about the difficulties of war. I also believe that we can take this play and make it accessible to a high school audience and meet the goals that Bertolt Brecht envisioned when he penned this work.

This is a very special production for me because it represents over a year's worth of pre-planning, research, and development as part of my master's thesis research project. I am currently a Master's Candidate at the University of Northern Colorado. I will be using my observations, including our cast discussions of the play in rehearsal in both pre-production and post-productions.

The FUHS Theatre Department is led by two missions. The first is the Academy of the Arts mission: "To provide an elevated and accelerated arts curriculum which is open to all students throughout Orange County who have an exceptional need, interest or talent". The second is the FUHS Theatre mission: "To provide meaningful, Arts opportunities, that will incite desire, professionalism, ensemble ethic, communication, safety, and self-confidence in order to teach students to be productive men and women in society". By participating in this production we all will be meeting the missions developed by both the Academy of the Arts and the FUHS Theatre department.

Much of the data I will be collecting will be from reviews written by the Orange County Cappies Critics and adjudication narratives written by the California Educational Theatre

Association. Although it is my intention to maintain complete confidentiality throughout the research process these reviews are considered public knowledge, however, when I write about your students work within my thesis their name will not be used, instead I will refer to your student by the character(s) they play. In addition, I would like to use photographs taken during the process to show costuming, sets, and action that may or may not include your student in them. The photographs will be similar to the ones we have professionally taken during all of our productions and will be completed during the pre- and post- production stages. This thesis will be published through the University of Northern Colorado Library and could be made available on the ProQuest's Dissertations and Theses database for use in other educational research. There is a remote possibility that your student may be identified in these photographs and every effort will be made to only submit images that are in wide shot and are not facially recognizable. By signing below, you understand that my observations of your student's progress and performance will be used in my thesis.

Participation in my research will not give your student an advantage during the audition process nor will it exclude them from being able to participate. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to allow your student to participate in this study and if (s)he begins participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your student's participation in my research, please contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

I agree to allow my child to participate in the Research Mr. Despars is conducting for his Master's Thesis.

---

Student's Name

---

Parent Signature

---

Date

---

Researcher

---


Date

APPENDIX B  
PRODUCTION ADJUDICATIONS  
AND REVIEWS

## California Educational Theatre Association Adjudication #1

## CETA HSTF Area 3 Orange County

#5

<b>School *</b>	Fullerton Union High School
<b>Title of Play</b>	Mother Courage and Her Children
<b>Directed By</b>	Michale Despars
<b>Date of Attendance</b>	10/17/14
<b>Start Time</b>	7:30 pm
<b>End Time</b>	10:00 pm
<b>Certificates of Merit (Awarded at the CETA Festival)</b> Award certificates of merit to the following people (student or adult). Please include roles and/or job titles. Please list as many students or adults by name and position as you see fit to acknowledge. Do not forget students in technical roles.	
<b>Ex:</b> Patrick Smith (John Proctor) <b>ExL:</b> Susan Johnson (Set Design)	
<b>ACTING: How thoroughly did the actors understand their characters? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: Physicality: To what extent did the actors' choices of actions, posture, gesture, and stage business enhance the telling of the story? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: To what extent were the characters portrayed in believable, truthful and consistent manners? *</b>	2 Good
<b>ACTING: To what degree did the cast commit to active and engaged listening? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: What was the level of the actors' commitment to the emotional development of their</b>	3 Excellent

characters? \*

**ACTING: Projection: how well were you able to hear the actors? \*** 1 Fair

**ACTING: Articulation/Clarity: how well were you able to understand the actors' words? \*** 2 Good

**ACTING: How effectively/clearly were the relationships between/among the characters portrayed? Consider status, age, power, and other criteria for gauging relationship. \*** 2 Good

**ACTING: To what extent was the cast fully in character and appropriately engaged in the telling of the story while on stage? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Was/were the conflict(s) of this story clearly communicated? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Were the non-speaking moments used effectively? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Was there good stage energy? \*** 4 Superior

**Overall effectiveness of acting choices\*** 3 Excellent

## Part 2: Narrative

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section.**

\*

Fullerton Union High School's production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* gave its audience a pronounced perspective on war and the effects thereof. It was very apparent to any member of the audience that the cast worked together as an ensemble to bring the play to life. Valerie Williams, who played Anna Fierling (Mother Courage) brought an unbelievable amount of energy to the stage. Not only did she engage the audience in her character and story, but many other actors followed her example. Particularly Josiah Haugen (The Cook), Patrick Lines (The Chaplain), and Arcadia Eckmayer (Katrin), just to name a few. There were some areas of opportunity with the volume of the play. Some of the lines were inaudible due to the actors' lack of projecting. Also, there was some opportunity to balance the actor's voice with the actor's energy.

Patrick Lines (The Cook) did an excellent job controlling the emotions of his character. For example, in many of his scenes with Valerie Williams (Mother Courage) and Arcadia Eckmayer (Katrin), Patrick

Lines (The Cook) portrayed his character with elegance and perseverance. Although he may have not been as vocally loud as some of his scene partners, he never allowed them to overpower him on stage. Even when playing a character that does not speak, Arcadia Erckmayer brought great life to Katrin always making her motivations and objectives clear on stage. Overall, the cast worked very hard to tell the story found in *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

**DIRECTING: Was the blocking appropriate and effective in telling the story? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: Did stage pictures effectively support the storytelling? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Is the director's interpretation consistent and well thought-out? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Did the play run smoothly? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: Was the tempo/rhythm effective and appropriate to the material? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: How thoroughly did the director prepare the actors for performance? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Overall Effectiveness Of Directing Choices \*** 3 Excellent

### **Part Two: Directing Narrative**

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section.**

**Please write comments that tell the director specifically what you felt worked well and what could have used improvement. \***

The direction of *Mother Courage and Her Children* took a difficult play to stage and brought it to life. The idea of war and what war is like can be very difficult for someone to understand. However, it is clear the director incorporated that within the production. For example, many of the characters portray the hardships that come with war. It was apparent the director had a clear vision for the play and executed it properly. Even combining elements of epic theatre with dramatic theatre can be a challenge within itself.

*Mother of Courage* is also a lengthy play. Regardless, the scene changes were quick and seamless. I also found that the actions the actors were performing in the background while the focus was on other characters were perfect. Directing them to have little movements, yet not be distracting, was executed wonderfully. Utilizing the projector to display the narration was great. However, there seemed to be a disconnection between the narration and what was going on stage.



Overall, the direction of *Mother Courage and Her Children* helped convey this touching account of war experiences and the effects war can have.

**SET DESIGN: Was there evidence of effective use of the stage in the set design? Consider: sight lines, acting areas, levels. \*** 3 Excellent

**SET DESIGN: Did the set pieces support the telling of the story? (e.g. convey time, place, theme, atmosphere) \*** 4 Superior

**SET DESIGN: Was the design innovative? \*** 4 Superior

**SET DESIGN: Was the design aesthetically pleasing? \*** 4 Superior

**PROPS: Were the props correct for the setting (time/place) of the play? \*** 4 Superior

**PROPS: Were the props used effectively? \*** 1 Fair

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Did the costumes support the concept and period of the play? \*** 4 Superior

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Were the costumes suitable for the characters?\*** 4 Superior

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Did the makeup support portrayal of the characters? Consider age, health, personality. \*** 4 Superior

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Were the hairstyles/wigs suited to the style of the play? \*** 4 Superior

**LIGHTING: How effectively did the lighting support the telling of the story? Consider time, place, atmosphere and the focus of the audience's attention. \*** 4 Superior

**LIGHTING: Were the performance areas appropriately defined by the lighting? \*** 4 Superior

**LIGHTING: Were the lighting cues and effects executed effectively? \*** 4 Superior

**SOUND: Did the sound/music effectively support the telling of the story? \*** 4 Superior

**SOUND: Were the sound cues executed effectively? \*** 3 Excellent

**Overall design effectiveness of technical choices \*** 3 Excellent

## Part Two: Narrative

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section. \***

Mother Courage and Her Children involved many technical elements. The set was very well designed for the show. The use of specific colors (i.e., tan, brown, dark green, etc.) was a great visual on stage, and then adding certain pops of colors (i.e., Mother Courage's red on her jacket) was great. The costume and make-up design fit well with all the characters, yet did not distract. For example, Mother Courage's make-up was fitting for her character and you did not feel as you were focusing on her make-up, but rather her as a character. The costumes also worked very well for this production.

The lighting design was great for the show. The audience's focus was easily directed with the lights. Also, using the different lighting techniques to display certain colors for symbolism was great. The sound design presented some problems. For example, having actors switching back between speaking their lines with no mic and then using the mic for some of them became confusing. Although they were trying to distinguish between different parts of their performance, using mics throughout the entire performance would be beneficial. The background music and effects were great for the play. However, because of those effects, some lines became inaudible and lost to the audience. Also, it might be best to fade out the music when it is used during the show so it is not an abrupt transition.

Regardless of the technical elements on stage, it was very apparent that the crew backstage worked very hard before and during the production.

**OVERALL: How well did all aspects of the production work together to present a cohesive performance? \*** 3 Excellent

## Part Two: OVERALL Narrative

**Your comments should reflect your Sections 1 through 3 ratings of this production.**

**Please do not comment on the choice of play, but rather concentrate on this production of the play**

\*


Mother Courage and Her Children is a difficult play for any director to mount, let alone on a high school stage. The manner in which the cast and crew handled the material really speaks to the maturity of the department. This play has tough message that can be difficult for an audience to be receptive to. However, the cast worked diligently on stage to bring energy and life to the play. The direction helped foster the vision as well as bring the technical elements together. I would like to see the actors focus their energy inside them. For example, many of the characters were always at the highest level of their character and that can be emotionally exhausting on stage and in the audience. It's not that the actors were not focused on their character, but rather being focused on the individual moment, being connected to the believability you can bring to your character, so we can see the different levels your character has.

---

## California Educational Theatre Association Adjudication #2

### CETA HSTF Area 3 Orange County

### #7

<b>School *</b>	Fullerton Union High School
<b>Title of Play</b>	Mother Courage and Her Children
<b>Directed By</b>	Michael J. Despars
<b>Date of Attendance</b>	10/17/14
<b>Start Time</b>	7:33pm
<b>End Time</b>	10:21pm
<b>Certificates of Merit (Awarded at the CETA Festival)</b> Award certificates of merit to the following people (student or adult). Please include roles and/or job titles. Please list as many students or adults by name and position as you see fit to acknowledge. Do not forget students in technical roles.  Ex: Patrick Smith (John Proctor) ExL Susan Johnson (Set Design)	
<b>ACTING: How thoroughly did the actors understand their characters? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: Physicality: To what extent did the actors' choices of actions, posture, gesture, and stage business enhance the telling of the story? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: To what extent were the characters portrayed in believable, truthful and consistent manners? *</b>	2 Good
<b>ACTING: To what degree did the cast commit to active and engaged listening? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: What was the level of the actors' commitment to the</b>	3 Excellent

**emotional development of their characters? \***

**ACTING: Projection: how well were you able to hear the actors? \*** 3 Excellent

**ACTING: Articulation/Clarity: how well were you able to understand the actors' words? \*** 3 Excellent

**ACTING: How effectively/clearly were the relationships between/among the characters portrayed? Consider status, age, power, and other criteria for gauging relationship. \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: To what extent was the cast fully in character and appropriately engaged in the telling of the story while on stage? \*** 3 Excellent

**ACTING: Was/were the conflict(s) of this story clearly communicated? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Were the non-speaking moments used effectively? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Was there good stage energy? \*** 4 Superior

**Overall effectiveness of acting choices\*** 3 Excellent

## **Part 2: Narrative**

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section.**

\*

I really enjoyed the commitment of the actors to this piece. You could see the work they put not only into their characters, but into the form of epic theatre. The energy level was great and the story and theatre style was communicated effectively. The actors had good projection and articulation through most of the show. The non-speaking moments were great and I enjoyed the reactions of those not verbally involved in the scenes.

There were times where the acting style wasn't consistent through each performance as a whole. Make sure you're working as a team to convey the style the director has set in place. Also, be sure to have confidence in the musical moments. There seemed to be some uneasiness in the eyes of a few actors when transitioning into song.

Overall, the actors did a great job with the material. You can see they really studied the characters and the style of the piece.

**DIRECTING: Was the blocking appropriate and effective in telling the story? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: Did stage pictures effectively support the storytelling? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Is the director's interpretation consistent and well thought-out? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Did the play run smoothly? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: Was the tempo/rhythm effective and appropriate to the material? \*** 2 Good

**DIRECTING: How thoroughly did the director prepare the actors for performance? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: Overall Effectiveness Of Directing Choices \*** 3 Excellent

### **Part Two: Directing Narrative**

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section.**

**Please write comments that tell the director specifically what you felt worked well and what could have used improvement. \***

First off, I have to say I was greatly appreciative of the director's notes in the program. It was a necessary preparation for what the audience was about to witness. The style of epic theatreEpic Theatre is very different and informing the audience of the details of the style, I think, is important to their enjoyment of the piece. Even though I'm not a huge fan of epic theatreEpic Theatre, I think the director was very effective in his execution of the style. Not only in the direction of the characters, but in the staging, set, transitions, multi-media and multi-era pieces (costuming, props, etc).

There were moments where the actors weren't all consistent as a whole with the acting style which made things a little disjointed at times. The musical pieces may have been more effective if the actors were a little more confident. Some of the sound and sound effects got too loud and made it hard to hear the actors even when they were projecting. The show also lasted close to 3 hours (with intermission) and felt a little long at times.

As a whole, the epic theatreEpic Theatre style was well thought out and executed. The director did a great job conveying the style to both performers and audience. He was consistent and effective throughout the piece and I believe constructed a production in which the playwright would have

intended.	
<b>SET DESIGN: Was there evidence of effective use of the stage in the set design? Consider: sight lines, acting areas, levels. *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>SET DESIGN: Did the set pieces support the telling of the story? (e.g. convey time, place, theme, atmosphere) *</b>	4 Superior
<b>SET DESIGN: Was the design innovative? *</b>	4 Superior
<b>SET DESIGN: Was the design aesthetically pleasing? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>PROPS: Were the props correct for the setting (time/place) of the play? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>PROPS: Were the props used effectively? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>COSTUMES &amp; MAKEUP: Did the costumes support the concept and period of the play? *</b>	4 Superior
<b>COSTUMES &amp; MAKEUP: Were the costumes suitable for the characters?*</b>	4 Superior
<b>COSTUMES &amp; MAKEUP: Did the makeup support portrayal of the characters? Consider age, health, personality. *</b>	2 Good
<b>COSTUMES &amp; MAKEUP: Were the hairstyles/wigs suited to the style of the play? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>LIGHTING: How effectively did the lighting support the telling of the story? Consider time, place, atmosphere and the focus of the audience's attention. *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>LIGHTING: Were the performance areas appropriately defined by the lighting? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>LIGHTING: Were the lighting cues</b>	3 Excellent

and effects executed effectively? \*

<b>SOUND: Did the sound/music effectively support the telling of the story? *</b>	3 Excellent
---	-------------

<b>SOUND: Were the sound cues executed effectively? *</b>	3 Excellent
---	-------------

<b>Overall design effectiveness of technical choices *</b>	3 Excellent
--	-------------

## Part Two: Narrative

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section. \***

The technical elements definitely worked together to support the effectiveness of the show. The set design was very creative and fit well with the style. The props were also well executed and used effectively to the director's intentions. The multi-era costumes were well done and in line with the concept. The lighting was used well with the story telling in the shadowing and highlighting the creative staging. The execution of the projections was also well done.

I enjoyed the scarring make-up for The Cook, however, most of the aging make-up was not well blended and just looked like lines painted on the actors faces. The sound levels were off for most of the show. Many of the sound effects were so loud that it made it hard to hear what the actors were saying.

Overall, the technical elements worked really well in telling the story and conveying the style of the show. The technicians were very creative and made a great impact on the piece.

<b>OVERALL: How well did all aspects of the production work together to present a cohesive performance? *</b>	3 Excellent
---	-------------

## Part Two: OVERALL Narrative

**Your comments should reflect your Sections 1 through 3 ratings of this production.**

**Please do not comment on the choice of play, but rather concentrate on this production of the play**

\*

This production and its style are a great undertaking for the high school level and were executed well. The director had a clear sense of the story and style and conveyed them well through the actors and technical elements of the show. The actors clearly did their work in studying the characters and style of the piece. They performed with great energy and a lot of commitment. The technical elements were creative and helpful in communicating the story and style. While there were definitely elements that could've been improved upon, I think the intention of the piece and the director's vision were well



executed on the whole.

## California Educational Theatre Association Adjudication #3

### CETA HSTF Area 3 Orange County

### #13

<b>School *</b>	Fullerton Union High School
<b>Title of Play</b>	Mother Courage and Her Children
<b>Directed By</b>	Michael Despars
<b>Date of Attendance</b>	10/24/14
<b>Start Time</b>	7:30 PM
<b>End Time</b>	10:20 PM
<p><b>Certificates of Merit (Awarded at the CETA Festival)</b>  Award certificates of merit to the following people (student or adult). Please include roles and/or job titles. Please list as many students or adults by name and position as you see fit to acknowledge. Do not forget students in technical roles.</p> <p>Ex: Patrick Smith (John Proctor)  ExL Susan Johnson (Set Design)</p>	
<b>ACTING: How thoroughly did the actors understand their characters? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>ACTING: Physicality: To what extent did the actors' choices of actions, posture, gesture, and stage business enhance the telling of the story? *</b>	4 Superior
<b>ACTING: To what extent were the</b>	3 Excellent

characters portrayed in believable, truthful and consistent manners? \*

**ACTING: To what degree did the cast commit to active and engaged listening? \*** 3 Excellent

**ACTING: What was the level of the actors' commitment to the emotional development of their characters? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Projection: how well were you able to hear the actors? \*** 2 Good

**ACTING: Articulation/Clarity: how well were you able to understand the actors' words? \*** 2 Good

**ACTING: How effectively/clearly were the relationships between/among the characters portrayed? Consider status, age, power, and other criteria for gauging relationship. \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: To what extent was the cast fully in character and appropriately engaged in the telling of the story while on stage? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Was/were the conflict(s) of this story clearly communicated? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Were the non-speaking moments used effectively? \*** 4 Superior

**ACTING: Was there good stage energy? \*** 4 Superior

**Overall effectiveness of acting choices\*** 3 Excellent

## **Part 2: Narrative**

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section.**

\*

The production of Mother Courage and Her Children at Fullerton Union High School was a phenomenal example of ensemble acting. The entire cast completely supported each other throughout the entire two and a half hour show. It was most apparent that this cast had spent a great deal of time working together, and studying the demands of Epic Theatre. While there were many phenomenal performances, the cast was most certainly lead by the stellar performance given by Valerie Williams, as

the title character. Her complete commitment to both the emotional and physical demands of this character were incredible. Her ability to move from moment to moment, including those where she was breaking the fourth wall was brilliant. Also delivering an incredible performance was Arcadia Eckmayer as Katrin, the mute daughter of Anna. She delivered some of the most memorable moments in the entire production. Considering the fact that this actress never spoke a word, it was most impressive how she was able to convey the loneliness, and devastation of her character purely through physicality and facial expressions. As The Cook, Josiah Haugen was also brilliant. There were many times during his performance that it was forgotten that this was a high school student. His scenes with Anna and The Chaplain in Act II were phenomenal. The relationships between these characters were completely believable. The supporting cast are not to be forgotten, as they were equally as committed to their performances. As Yvette, Nicole Wormley was a wonderful addition to the show. Her comedic timing, and line delivery were awesome. The relationship between her and Anna was a welcome relief in this devastating environment. As The Chaplain, Patrick Lines was very good as well. His commitment to his character was very impressive.

**DIRECTING: Was the blocking appropriate and effective in telling the story? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Did stage pictures effectively support the storytelling? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Is the director's interpretation consistent and well thought-out? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Did the play run smoothly? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: Was the tempo/rhythm effective and appropriate to the material? \*** 3 Excellent

**DIRECTING: How thoroughly did the director prepare the actors for performance? \*** 4 Superior

**DIRECTING: Overall Effectiveness Of Directing Choices \*** 4 Superior

## **Part Two: Directing Narrative**

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section.**

**Please write comments that tell the director specifically what you felt worked well and what could have used improvement. \***

The direction of this production was excellent. It was more than obvious that Michael Despars had done his homework to prepare his cast and crew for the daunting task of taking on such a massive undertaking as Epic Theatre. His director's notes in the program were well thought out and very helpful for an audience that may have been unfamiliar with this style of theatre. From the moment the audience walks

in the theatre, it is apparent that this is not a typical show. The very dystopian look and feel to the set immediately served to create the environment of war. The use of projections to guide the audience through the scenes was very well thought out, although there were times they did not coincide with the action on stage. The blocking worked very well, was natural, and did not appear forced. The actors' movement was motivated, and purposeful.

The only issue with the blocking, was that some of the actors were blocked so far upstage, it was difficult to hear their lines. In this case it may be beneficial to either mic the actors, or if this compromises the integrity of the show, perhaps hang mics above the upstage area. Regardless of these few issues, this was a brilliantly directed show by Michael Despars. His ability to bring out the caliber of performances in his actors as he did, and to choreograph a stage crew to create flawless set changes, speaks volumes as to his dedication, not only to his students, but to the art of theatre as well.

**SET DESIGN: Was there evidence of effective use of the stage in the set design? Consider: sight lines, acting areas, levels. \*** 3 Excellent

**SET DESIGN: Did the set pieces support the telling of the story? (e.g. convey time, place, theme, atmosphere) \*** 3 Excellent

**SET DESIGN: Was the design innovative? \*** 4 Superior

**SET DESIGN: Was the design aesthetically pleasing? \*** 4 Superior

**PROPS: Were the props correct for the setting (time/place) of the play? \*** 4 Superior

**PROPS: Were the props used effectively? \*** 3 Excellent

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Did the costumes support the concept and period of the play? \*** 3 Excellent

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Were the costumes suitable for the characters?\*** 3 Excellent

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Did the makeup support portrayal of the characters? Consider age, health, personality. \*** 3 Excellent

**COSTUMES & MAKEUP: Were the hairstyles/wigs suited to the style of the play? \*** 3 Excellent

<b>LIGHTING: How effectively did the lighting support the telling of the story? Consider time, place, atmosphere and the focus of the audience's attention. *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>LIGHTING: Were the performance areas appropriately defined by the lighting? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>LIGHTING: Were the lighting cues and effects executed effectively? *</b>	3 Excellent
<b>SOUND: Did the sound/music effectively support the telling of the story? *</b>	2 Good
<b>SOUND: Were the sound cues executed effectively? *</b>	2 Good
<b>Overall design effectiveness of technical choices *</b>	3 Excellent

## Part Two: Narrative

**Your comments must be two to three paragraphs in length and must specifically address your ratings in Part 1 of this section. \***

This was a very technical production, and considering this, the majority of the elements all worked well, and served to create a visually pleasing production. The set design was simple yet effective. The use of the chain link fences, was very creative, and they were easily repurposed from scene to scene. It was very smart, and creative to keep the majority of the props on Anna's cart, as this helped the audience to understand that this family literally carried everything they owned. The lighting was excellent, and gave a very specific look and feel of war and chaos to the show. The costumes were simple yet timeless, which was somewhat unnerving, as this gave the audience the impression that this could be happening in real time.

The sound design was somewhat inconsistent, as there were many times in the show that the voices on stage were inaudible due to the sound being much too loud. There needed to be a greater balance between the sound effects and the voices. The make-up was quite good, especially for The Cook. His injury to his neck area was very well done.

**OVERALL: How well did all aspects of the production work together to present a cohesive performance? \***

4 Superior

**Part Two: OVERALL Narrative**

**Your comments should reflect your Sections 1 through 3 ratings of this production.**

**Please do not comment on the choice of play, but rather concentrate on this production of the play**

Fullerton Union High School's production of Mother Courage was a brilliant show with superior acting by a wonderful ensemble cast, and excellent technical qualities. This very difficult show was a very brave and courageous choice by director, Michael Despars. The fact that a high school director had the confidence and skill to bring such a thought provoking piece of theatre as Mother Courage to his students, truly speaks volumes to him not only being a great director, but also a great teacher.

\*

## CAPPIES Critics Reviews

TO: Advisor and Show Director of Mother Courage and Her Children at Fullerton Union  
FROM: Michael Despars

Here are the Cappies reviews for Mother Courage and Her Children. There were 25 critics at your show, and up to now we have received 25 reviews. If we receive late reviews, we will forward them to you.

Please share these reviews with your cast and crew.

Thank you.

-----

Fullerton Union High School's time-bending production of "Mother Courage and Her Children" presents the theatre world with a strong argument: To see backstage, or not to see backstage.

With a radiant, lyrical projection throughout the course of the story, the stage directions follow the journey of a strong-headed mother's battle between profiting off the war and caring for her children. A couple blinding lights and gun shots later, the production teaches us the unsettling result of alienating the illusion of a play from reality and letting the audience witness the crew running behind the stage.

Providing the appropriate distraction from the organized chaos behind the open black curtains is Valerie Williams, the roaring mother who could. William's performance as Mother Courage is as impressive as her ability to speak at such a loud volume and sing her lungs out. With raised eyebrows and punchy movements, William's delivers a shocking and fantastic performance.

Arcadia Eckmayer as Kattrin, the mute daughter of Mother Courage, proves that actions really can speak louder than words. Given a script with no lines, Eckmayer flawlessly manages to provide an insight to the human psyche during wartime through a combination of frightened jumps, careless dancing, and vacant looks at her surroundings.

The ensemble as a whole appropriately drags the aspect of creepiness while transitioning between scenes. Actors would cross the stage with strictly identical movements and place props, such as their makeshift graveyard, on stage, thus creating a whole new aspect to the production.

Katya Beener serves as the master choreographer of the backstage. As a stage manager, she carefully placed every actor and crew member in precise positions so the audience could see. She surpasses the expectation of a stage manager through her ability to not only stage the movements of the backstage but to the point where it became just as much of a performance as the play itself.

Patrick Lines' use of the unhardened shadows and character silhouettes outfitted the stage to look just as that, a high school theater stage. Lines used the vigor of a spotlight on actors during monologues and solos, thus creating an aspect of alienation on stage. Between gentle white-washes of the room and blinding white and red flashes, the emotion of the story is undoubtedly apparent and overall moving.

Overall, this production of "Mother Courage and her Children" is a force to be reckoned with, just remember, it's only a play.

by Ashley Ramos of Fountain Valley High School

---

A courageous performance from Fullerton Union

Fullerton Union High School's superb production of "Mother Courage and Her Children" tackles the gravity and devastation that war brings, following a group of petty peddlers as they eke out a living in conflict's midst. Consisting of the mother, her children, and a few migratory travelers, the repercussions of war become all too prevalent as each child is violently taken from her.

The show begins with a rock 'n' roll entrance by Valerie Williams as the undoubted matriarch of the show, Mother Courage. With powerful, resonant vocals and extravagant gesturing, she is completely captivating; nevertheless, she continues to be the main driving force throughout the performance, accentuating her astounding endurance.

Just as enthralling is Arcadia Eckmayer as the Mother's mute daughter Katrin, whose panicked, raw emotions show insight into her character's psyche. From desperately running towards her newly-conscripted brother to dauntlessly drumming a town awake, she shows how truly loud a silent character can be. Her quiet, introverted nature is juxtaposed with contrasting characters such as the Cook, played by Josiah Haugen. The cook's, whose boisterous belligerence is underscored by a booming baritone and substantial stage presence. His initial hostility, however, turns to empathetic vulnerability in his final confrontation with Mother Courage, during which his former aggression metamorphoses into forlorn reluctance.

The sensational acting of the production is heightened by its tremendous technical ambitions. Patrick Lines' lighting design maintains true Brechtian style through the almost exclusive use of glaring, white spill light. The most spectacular scenes utilize a spellbinding array of modern effects, including flashes of red to accent the disorderly disarray of war.



In addition, Sonia Mendez's costume design is exceptional, with apparel from a variety of ages emphasizing the timelessness of Brecht's antiwar theme. Many characters adorn themselves with military uniforms from different decades, a reminder that no matter what the circumstances, war's catastrophic consequences are the same.

The most outstanding technical aspect, however, would undoubtedly be Delaney Echavarria's projection design, which communicates the stage directions of the performance to the audience in real time. Accordingly, the use of a blotted, archaic font characteristic of a 1940's typewriter helps to underline the production's militaristic subject matter.

Fullerton Union High School's production is a provocative piece that punctuates the sentiments of war, brilliantly blending powerful performances with masterful design to create profound political commentary that is still relevant today.

by Jackson Maxwell of Mission Viejo High School

-----

"Mother Courage and Her Children " will not soon be forgotten.

Fullerton Union High School has a great deal of courage in undertaking such a thought provoking, unconventional show such as "Mother Courage and Her Children". Such a show poses a great challenge, a challenge Fullerton Union has met and completed quite profoundly.

The extravagant Mother Courage, portrayed by Valerie Williams, dominates the stage as she endures all the trials and tribulations of being a single mother trying to make a living during the war. Throughout the production, Williams never loses her vibe, giving energy to every line and every action. Arcadia Eckmayer, Mother Courage's only daughter Kattrin, delivers an astounding silent performance. Each flick of the eyes, each furrow of the brow, each change in posture exemplifies Kattrin's emotions and reactions stunningly.

The twist in this production is that it incorporates uniforms and weapons from an array of time periods. This poses an obstacle for Sonia Mendez, which she handled beautifully. The mix of modern day attire and war uniforms from as early as the 17th century accentuates the message of the show; war is war and it affects us all.

The makeup crew excelled beyond expectations with the intricate, gruesome injuries and scars of the soldiers affected by war. An especially noteworthy mention is the scarring on the face and neck of the cook, a result of an accident with boiling water. The perfectly blended discoloration and elaborate disfigurement of the skin was impressive beyond words.

A concept uncommon to theatre that is introduced in this show is keeping the backstage areas visible to the audience, exposing members of the crew and set changes. Such a

concept could easily become a distraction, but the excellently organized stage management of Katya Beener and McKenna Vargas proved this to not be the case. Well planned and efficient set changes facilitated the complex transitions from scene to scene.

Great attention to detail and a combined effort from both cast and crew produced a wonderfully executed production. Though it required much time and effort, no doubt, that time and effort was put to good use. "Mother Courage and Her Children " will not soon be forgotten.

by Olivia Robertson of Aliso Niguel High School

-----

Fullerton Union High School's production of "Mother Courage and her Children" beg the question, is war fair?

War is a powerful being. Through the ages it stands cold and strong, fueled by hate and passion. In Fullerton Union High School's production of the epic drama Mother Courage and Her Children reveals the consequences of any war and the inevitable pain it brings to everyone.

Mother Courage has made her livelihood off the Thirty Years War, selling supplies on the road with her three children. One by one, she loses her children into the dark death she had unintentionally foretold. Even so Mother Courage marches on, her wagon in tow, looking for her next customer.

As the title character of Mother Courage, Valerie Williams commands attention of her customers and her audience with her bellowing voice and confident stride. Williams uses the stage as her soapbox, announcing her views to anyone close enough to hear. Yet when it comes to her children, the show woman crumbles away to reveal another caring mother who's had her children stolen by the war.

Silent, sweet, yet strong, Arcadia Eckmayer shines through no words at all. As Mother Courage's mute daughter, Kattrin, airs her frustration through helpless grunts and shrieks, accompanied by anxious shaking and hyperventilating in times of panic. Though she is the king nurturer throughout the play, Eckmayer reveals the stubbornness Kattrin has inherited from her mother as she forcefully thunders the drum staring death in the face.

The costumes of the show done by Bev Shirk derives from various time periods and emphasizes the argument that war is war, no matter what is being fought over. Although they differed, there was a sense of harshness and pain that unified every outfit as a whole. This is with the exception of Kattrin's flowing 70's style outfit to parallel her peaceful nature. Patrick Lines' stark lighting also matches the reality of war. His use of red, a color used throughout the show, highlights the anger and passion of the war while the cold white not only reminds the audience that they were in fact watching a show but how real the situations really are.

For a show completely revealing its backstage work to the audience, the stage crew, managed by Katya Beener, executes gracefully choreographed scene changes without any flaws.

The entire cast and crew of Fullerton Union's production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* came together in perfect unison to create a true piece of epic theatreEpic Theatre.

by Danielle Darling of Aliso Niguel High School

-----

"Virtue is dangerous today, you're better off if you simply put some food on the table," says on character in *"Mother Courage and Her Children,"* by Bertolt Brecht, summarizing the antiwar message that is drilled home over the course of this 3 hour play. This is an ambitious and difficult piece for anyone to produce, and the Fullerton Union High School students put forth an admirable effort.

"Mother Courage" is set in the 1600s (though this production is designed so that it takes place in wars throughout time). This production follows the title character as she follows the war with her children and her cart, out of which she makes her living selling wares. During the production, Mother Courage suffers through brutal realities of war- including the deaths of her children.

Fullerton Union's production combined elements of Brecht's "epic theatreEpic Theatre," in which the audience is distanced, as opposed to becoming engaged in the plot, so that the intellectual response is greater than the emotional response.

Arcadia Eckmayer's performance as Katrin, Mother Courage's mute daughter, was of particular note, managing to portray an immense amount purely through her eyes and body; especially powerful were her wordless breakdowns as her brothers go to war and are kidnapped, respectively, and her final display of bravery, sacrificing herself to save a nearby town. Josiah Haugen lent humanity to the role of The Cook, fueled by desperation. Patrick Line's Chaplain may have most embodied the play's message, as we watch him lose hope and stray further from the original hopeful, religious man he began as. Valerie Williams as Mother Courage must be commended for her endurance, never once slipping out of character or losing her energy during the show- nearly all of which she was onstage for, both shouting and singing- as well as for the huge physicality she used, with every movement seeming to take up the entire stage. Unfortunately, many actors had trouble with the syntax of their lines, emphasizing words in such a way that the meaning was lost.

The actors were not amplified in the intimate space. The lighting, designed by Patrick Lines, had some very effective moments, including the strategic placing of lights for silhouettes (utilized when Mother Courage's children are being shot), and the bright flood

of lights- so bright I nearly had to close my eyes- as Katrin was shot by a canon. Bev Shirk's costumes were intelligently designed, being comprised of military uniforms of different locations and eras and the simple but effective set was designed by Lynda Osborn. These three elements tied together nicely, all working to create the chilling final image of a band of soldiers through the ages, all marching to war, being followed by Mother Courage and her cart, the only thing she has left in the world.

Overall, despite some problems, this incredibly challenging, thought-provoking piece achieved its goal.

by Caitlin McFann of Capistrano Valley High School

-----

Fullerton Union High School's strong cast and backstage crew uniquely take on "Mother Courage and Her Children"

Valerie Williams creates an unforgettable character in her role as Mother Courage. Throughout the production Williams maintains a brilliant level of energy, never losing the eccentric boldness she brought to her character. Through her intense facial expressions and outward body language, Williams portrays the confident Mother Courage effortlessly.

In her role as Katrin, Arcadia Eckmayer faced the challenge of portraying a war torn and emotionally complex girl without using words. Despite playing mute, Eckmayer delivers a captivating performance as she shows the struggle of a girl conflicted by the war using brilliant facial expressions and body language. Eckmayer clearly shows Katrin's stance on the war and her feelings on those around her without ever speaking.

As the relationship between Mother Courage and Katrin develops, both Williams and Eckmayer use their interactions with each other to create a powerful dynamic.

Patrick Lines uses strong body language and posture to portray his role of the Chaplain. His use of varying levels of inflection and posture helps his character develop from a stiff-backed, proper chaplain to a bitter alcoholic. Lines' strong choices of movement and volume add to his character's development as he portrays his transformation.

Along with the talent of the actors, the backstage crew played a crucial role in the production of this show. The light design took advantage of its deep reds and stark whites to create intense additions to the mood of the scene. As the chaos of war ensues, the stage is flooded with dark red, while in the moment of Katrin's death, the stage is flooded with a stark white. In addition to lights, the backstage crew also used exceptional make-up skills to create vivid and realistic additions to characters, such as bruising, blood, and the burn marks on the face of the Cook.

Fullerton Union High Schools cast and crew carried a spectacular and memorable performance of "Mother Courage and Her Children"

by Amanda Jenkins of Cypress High School

---

Fullerton High School Presents: "Mother Courage and her Children"

The show, Mother Courage and Her Children, put on by Fullerton Union High School, greatly expresses theater of alienation. Theater of alienation simply means it keeps you from getting lost in the show and forgetting reality, you aware of both worlds, the world in which the show is going on and the world in which your life revolves around.

Valerie Williams, Anna Fierling (Mother Courage), enters a very harsh and brutal time period during the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century. From William's beautiful singing voice, to her miraculous acting skills, she carried the show beautifully with a very strong and well developed character. In the production Mother courage and her three children, travel by wagon through the country. Kattrin, Elif, and Swiss Cheese, the children of Mother Courage, don't seem to mean a lot to her until they have to fight in the war.

Arcadia Eckmayer, who plays the role of Kattrin, is mute throughout the whole production. Without using her words, she talks through facial expressions and body language. Not one word was said, yet there was so much sound in her silence. Throughout the production she watched her brothers, Swiss Cheese and Eilif, pass away without a proper funeral. But when it came time for her to die there was an explosion of white, pure light. When Kattrin passed away she was finally with her brothers, people who truly loved her.

The set, designed by Lynda Osborn, is absolutely breathtaking. The tarnished, and rugged back platform could change into absolutely anything. It went to a military camp, to a house, to a city. The props, designed by Kyle Castillo, set the stage and the time period back three thousand years. One incredible prop is the wagon. Through every single scene the wagon was changed in some way, and towards the end of the show it expressed how much luggage and items were lost because of how bare the wagon was. The show would not have been the same if the wagon had been any different, it was just perfect as it was.

Fullerton Union High School did an outstanding job putting on the show of "Mother Courage and Her Children." They told an incredible story. Every character was very well put together and took a ton of time and effort. The production was a complete success.

by Amy Leonard of El Dorado

---

Fullerton Union's Courageous Production

Dedicated actors and consistent tension perfectly describes Fullerton Union High School's production of "Mother Courage and Her Children." The play takes place during a war, but no particular war, and follows Mother Courage throughout her adventures with her children and acquaintances. Mother Courage is accessorized with songs, which adds to the mood of the play.

As Mother Courage, played by Valerie Williams, enters the stage through song, she immediately establishes her confidence in the character and dominance of the stage. Even when Williams stands to the side of the stage, she is always in character, while she reacts through facial expressions and subtle body movements. Kattrin, played by Arcadia Eckmayer, is Mother Courage's daughter who can't talk. Although the character can't speak, Eckmayer still phenomenally displays Kattrin's emotions through wild movements and facial expressions, like when she bangs on the drum while atop a roof, she exemplifies the anger and hostility in the scene effectively. Yvette Pottier, played by Nicole Wormley, is a stand out character who thoroughly dedicated herself to the saucy character. Yvette impressively switches moods quickly in the scene where Swiss Cheese is killed. Josiah Haugen plays The Cook and effectively engages the audience when he is telling Mother Courage to leave Kattrin behind.

The make-up design is fantastic! The Cook's scar on the side of his face seems real. Yvette's make-up also adds sauciness to the character.

Not only are the main characters played very well, but the smaller characters are also noticeably dedicated. Mykaela Sterris plays the Sergeant. Sterris is believable, and it seems like there is a real Sergeant on stage during the first scene, as Sterris delivers her lines with firm shouts and according body movement in the opening scene. The people lying on the ground after the war scene are evidently dedicated. Many actors lay on the ground for more than 10 minutes without moving, and one actress lays on the stage for about 20 minutes without flinching. While these actors are being carried off stage, it seems as though they are dead because of their limp bodies. During the war scene, the lights are flashing wilding, displaying the lighting design's hard work. The stage management is also impressive. With little backstage, so everything is exposed, the stage management must be organized, and it evidently is!

Fullerton Union's production exemplifies dedication and hard work!

by Brooke Taylor of El Dorado

-----

"Mother Courage and 'Her' Children," a war time play, performed by Fullerton Union High School, is a beautiful show that shows the struggles of Mother Courage during the war. With eloquent facial expressions and over the top body language, the young actors tackle this performance with finesse and beauty.

Valerie Williams is brilliant in her role as Mother Courage. With unbelievable diction, Williams portrayal displays that she took the time to think about what she was saying and knew how to capture attention. Williams also used many different levels in her voice and many different facial expressions that had a tremendous impact on the quality of the show. With ease a dedication Williams was a force to be reckoned with while commanding the stage.

Another girl who captured the heart of many was Arcadia Eckmayer who played the role of Katrin. Though her character could not speak, she was very raw in her performance, and she executed her time on stage flawlessly. Eckmayer embraced her role and took her performance to the full extent, while managing to not overdo it. Eckmayer was phenomenal in this role which is due to her attention to detail in her every movement.

Some actors, however had a more difficult time developing their character, but Michael Laverde, or Swiss Cheese, did exceptional in his role. At first a mama's boy, through Laverde's acting capability he was able to develop and transform into a war time soldier. As with many of the actors in the cast, Laverde paid attention to detail; even when not speaking his emotion and facial expressions were on point.

The lighting for this show, designed by Patrick Lines, was gorgeous. It really captured the mood of war time and all of its horrors and glories. The different silhouettes were also a nice touch in making the show more vulnerable. One marvelous concept was the way the lights didn't drown anyone out, and it highlighted the characters.

The show and whole cast were tremendous, especially their attention to detail. The cast works beautifully together to create a show that is one truly to remember.

by Hunter Nelson of El Dorado

-----

### Inspiring Courage

Scared faces, striking costumes, powerful scenes, a stunning set and intricate lighting, even though we weren't apart of the show itself, Fullerton Union High School Academy of the Arts production of "Mother Courage and Her Children," can draw you into their motivating message.

This dramatic play was written by the one and only Bertolt Brecht in 1939. The show takes place in the 17th century during the Thirty Years' War, varying in location of Sweden, Poland, and Saxony. "Mother Courage and her Children" is in the top ten plays of the 20th century, yet it's not a very popular show. Brecht is known for connecting his audience to the performance and making them realize the message and leaving wanting to make a difference, in other words, the alienation of theater.

The whole ensembles' acting skills and capability of setting a realistic and urgent tone pieced the performance together. Every member of this exceptional cast helped demonstrate the riveting truth behind the important message.

Mother Courage (Valerie Williams) was extremely powerful. She portrayed Courage as a caring yet strict mother who struggled with helping herself and children. Valerie's facial and body movements were precise, deepening her development of character. She did an excellent job of hiding her feelings while telling the spies she didn't know Swiss, then flawlessly transitioned into the gestures and her silent scream spoke more than if she actually screamed.

Supporting character Kattrin (Arcadia Eckmayer) had choices that were very direct and powerful causing it to be very emotional and connective. Though she cannot speak, her dramatic screaming and pacing made it clear as to what she is trying to say. Another standout performer, Yvette Pottier (Nicole Wormley) has very profound character development. She is very comedic and has excellent comedic timing. Her hatred towards the Cook (Josiah Haugen) was believable and they have obvious chemistry.

The set helps further the message. The iPhone package on the cart proves that the theme of this show relates to all eras. The use of red wash in the background and tints of red throughout the performance in Mother's hair, etc., confirms the anger, passion, and war in the color red. The lighting in the scene where Kattrin died made her death seem peaceful and holy.

This production was a strong, powerful wake up experience that that is bound to make a change.

by Jordan Chacon of El Dorado

-----

### Mother Courage and Her Children Leaves the Audience Speechless

Gunshots, Loud voices, and Travel are a very simple way to summarize the intense war story of "Mother Courage and Her Children" put on by Fullerton Union High School Academy of the Arts.

"Mother Courage and Her Children" was written by Bertolt Brecht in 1939. The compelling story takes place during the Thirty Years' War in Europe, specifically in Sweden, Poland, Bavaria, and Saxony. Despite the play being one of the top ten plays of the twentieth century, it is underdone and not very performed very often. Something unique about Brecht's plays are his ability to include the audience and make them feel a part of the show, in other words, theater of alienation. With the Thirty Year's War being dreadfully long, the message of craving peace to end the war is woven throughout the



show.

All together, the cast works beautifully together. The actor's never break character. From acting, to set design, to lighting, all aspects are consistent with each other and work in harmony to overall create a fantastic spectacle.

Mother Courage (played by Valerie Williams) is brilliant. She is strong, powerful, and dynamic. It is clear Valerie really digs deep to play Mother Courage with such an excellent understanding of the character. Throughout the show her struggle of helping herself versus helping her children is obvious whether it is portrayed through words, song, actions, or facial expressions. The endurance it takes to play this character is so demanding, but Valerie plays her effortlessly.

Other memorable performances are by Kattrin (Arcadia Eckmayer) and Yvette Pottier (Nicole Wormley). Kattrin is such a raw, vulnerable character and although she cannot speak, her actions are so expressive she doesn't need words. In her panic attacks, Kattrin's screams are blood-curdling, and Arcadia demands the stage with these screams and strong choices. Yvette is so playful and sassy, Nicole captures her character so well through all of her seductive actions, voice, and movement.

Amazing acting is matched by amazing technical aspects. Makeup by Mykaela Sterris, Andrew Hatfield, Carmen Dina, and Caroline Bilger is especially commendable for work on The Cook's scar and Kattrin's bloody eye. Lighting by Patrick Lines and Laura Bilger is simple yet complimentary to all the scenes. Like lighting, set by Lynda Osborn is stark which perfectly matches the feeling of a war affected society.

"Mother Courage and Her Children" by Fullerton Union is a moving, quite phenomenal piece of theater that deserves great praise.

by Leah Milhander of El Dorado

-----

### The Courageous Red Devil

Mother Courage and Her Children was a riveting piece of art written by Bertolt Brecht, but beautifully preformed by Fullerton Union High School.

Valarie Williams gives an absolutely astonishing performance as Anna Fierling, otherwise known as Mother Courage, a traveling woman trying to sell her wares during the wartime with her children. From the moment she enters the stage, she demands the spotlight as an outstanding character and performer. Her vocal performances were simply amazing, being a main contribution to the show. This red devil pulls out every trick she has in the book, and does it fluidly. Another outstanding performer was Arcadia Eckmayer as Kattrin. Kattrin, Mother Courage's daughter, is mute within the show, but Arcadia's vocal expressions as well as facial expressions spoke for themselves. She is

without a single word throughout the show, yet she speaks the loudest. Kattrin's performance was phenomenal and executed perfectly.

The use of shadow work throughout the show was very moving. At a time of tension, when Eilief was being executed by a soldier, they simply cast a shadow on the back curtain. The use of imagery in the shadows leaves the execution to the imagination. The lighting design was able to portray the scene like no other; making it a memorable and outstanding performance.

The hair and makeup design for the show was distinct and helped define different character aspects. The Cook, played by Josiah Haugen, wore special effect scarring makeup on his neck. The affect of the makeup shaped his character in such a way that he came off as hard headed despite his insecurities. Mother Courage's hair was colored red to reflect communistic elements displayed throughout the show which help unify the war time ethics. The show would not have had the magnitude it had it wasn't for the brilliant special effects.

The ingenious direction given by Michael J. Despars, brought light to a different style of acting. He truly set the stage and gave this top ten play of the 20th Century a run for it's money. This play is a must see and an unforgettable experience.

by Logan Shales of El Dorado

-----

### Fullerton Union Courageously Delivers a Timeless Play

Walking into this production, it is automatically visible that this is going to be unlike the usual play, as there are no curtains hiding actor's entrances, a live feed of the show shown on a television in the stage, and a projection screen above the set which includes a war barricade and a cart that all promise to tell the unforgettable story of Mother Courage and her children. Mother Courage and Her Children by Bertolt Brecht and translated by David Hare is often considered one of the greatest anti-war plays of all time, as Mother Courage's story of relentless perseverance is timeless.

Mother Courage (Valerie Williams) delivers a tour de force performance as she commands the stage with an emotional intensity that sways from hostility to vulnerability effortlessly. While her vocal inflection, physicality, and acute sense of detail all heighten her performance, Mother Courage's moments of interaction with her children is where the most intricate and superb character work shines through. Arcadia Eckmayer's portrayal of Kattrin is completely unsettling as she communicates flawlessly using only her physicality and facial expression. In particular, when Kattrin attempts to warn Swiss Cheese of impending danger she rushes back and forth, throwing her head violently in desperation. Another standout performance is The Cook (Josiah Haugen), particularly in the second act when he reveals to Mother Courage that he has inherited an inn that they can run together but she must leave her daughter behind. Although the revelation he

delivers to her is cruel, Josiah delivers it in a way that balances the contrast of the harshness that comes with reality of war and the pain that comes from making tough decisions, which you can see through his pained facial expression and teary eyes.

The lighting in this production, which is done by Patrick Lines and Laura Bilger, significantly adds to specific moments in the show such as the death of Katrin as it flashes and changes to white light. The make-up by MyKaela Sterris, Andrew Hatfield, Carmen Dinger, and Caroline Bilger is shockingly realistic, especially the scar makeup that appears on The Cook. The overall professionalism of the crew is clear through all the detail and precision show throughout the show.

Fullerton Union High School Academy of the Arts production of Mother Courage and Her Children is an unforgettable piece of art that should not be missed.

by Tristen Tarp of El Dorado

-----  
"Mother Courage and Her Children"

"Mother Courage and Her Children performed by Fullerton Union High School is about a Mother and three children who travel Europe, during a war, selling goods to Soldiers. The mother, however, is very protective of her children and doesn't want them to have anything to do with the war.

Many of the actors do a great job at portraying their characters emotions. Arcadia Eckmayer who plays Katrin does an amazing job at showing her emotions and how she feels about everything without the ability of using words. Nicole Wormley playing Yvette Pottier excellently keeps a comedic touch to her scenes. The deaths of characters were carried out perfectly and seemed as if they had really died when they fell to the ground. Vallerie Williams playing Mother Courage also astonishingly stays very loud and clear through the entire play, and she also stayed very active which turned out to be very entertaining.

Hair, make-up, and costumes also were well done. The hair styles of the females were very dynamic, and Mother Courage having a hair style that was very different to the rest of the females kept an essence to her character saying that she wasn't just a girly-girl. The make-up was ashy for the soldiers and in act two, the people that had aged had wrinkles done with make-up. Costumes fit the time period and whenever the time period changed the soldiers changed with it.

Sets, lighting, and Stage-management were carried out almost perfectly. The sets were entertaining and included trees, fences, worn down walls, a wagon, and an upper platform for actors to go up on. Lighting was great and during scenes when a shot was fired the lights would flash. Also with good use of lighting they used puppetry on a back

curtain. Some aspects of Stage-management such as setting out microphones were done during scenes which was an idea from Brecht that was to remind the audience that they are watching a play.

Full of intensity, suspense, and laughter, Fullerton Unions High Schools performance was a very entertaining show.

by Zachary Taylor of El Dorado

---

### Mother Courage takes the stage at Fullerton Union

In the middle of a terrible war, Mother Courage and her children are getting back to business. Armed only with her cart and her fearsome personality, Mother Courage marches alongside battlefields, determined to thrive and survive.

Courage, played by Valerie Williams, is a whirlwind on stage. Constantly selling, selling, selling, her voice is filled with a bravado that never lets up. Mother Courage is first and foremost a survivor; Williams makes that clear. Her confidence, seemingly unstoppable, contrasts with the harsh reality of war surrounding her. Williams is always the saleswoman, with a wide, friendly smile, and a voice full of persuasion. Yet the rare glimpses of vulnerability shown are painful and raw, far different from the Mother Courage earlier seen.

Katrin, played by Arcadia Eckmayer, is the perfect foil to Mother Courage. Katrin, Courage's mute daughter, is delicate, kind, and empathetic. Using no words, Eckmayer tells a tale of heartache. At first a young girl, her longing for a better life is apparent. As she walks around with a pair of bright red boots, the dreams she has shine through her light smile and bright eyes. The transition to a broken down young woman is heartbreaking. Her haunting eyes are full of sorrow and fear, containing the lost hope of a victim of war.

The cook, played by Josiah Haugen, is an intimidating, angry man. A smirk rests comfortably on his face, and he walks about the stage casually gesturing with a large knife. Haugen's conceited attitude shows in his every movement. Chewing on his wooden pipe, Haugen leers at Mother Courage, making his intentions clear.

The set and lighting are astounding. Done by Lynda Osborn and Patrick Lines, the set moves right along with the play. The effects of war clearly take their toll as the set becomes more and more dilapidated. The scenes are harsh and bitter looking; tall fences covered in razor wire are everywhere, and tall dead trees looming over the cast. The lighting is at times severe, a cold white wash that fills the stage. Other times, it is dark and gloomy, a depressing reminder of the terrible situation that is taking place.

Fullerton Union delivers an engaging performance, heart wrenching and bold. Together,

the cast and crew give new life to the meaning of epic theatreEpic Theatre.

by Avril Carrillo of Fountain Valley High School

-----

Fullerton Union displays 'Courage'

Unorthodox and raw, Fullerton Union High School's production of "Mother Courage and her Children" creates a terrifying atmosphere of war, inner conflict, and injustice.

The play, written by Bertolt Brecht, follows Mother Courage (Valerie Williams) and her three children throughout the 30 Years' War. In traditional Brecht-style, the audience is constantly reminded that they are watching a play, rather than being caught up in the story. A stark lack of curtains and shameless stage crew display this for Fullerton.

The performance is anchored by the powerful, unyielding presence of Mother Courage. With her firm shoulders back but motherly arms wide, she portrays the internal struggle of wanting her children to live but the war to continue with grace.

Katrin (Arcadia Eckmayer), Mother Courage's mute daughter, steals the show without a single word. Her panic attacks and frantic movements allow her to convey a sea of emotions without uttering a single sentence. Eckmayer's commitment to the character and complete openness toward Katrin convey what words never could.

Fullerton's ensemble of soldiers throughout the play, clothed in uniforms from different eras, add to the performance with minute details. Their scene in a graveyard, each of them holding a cross or gravestone, reminds that war affects everyone, adding to the message of the play.

The content and acting already war-like and unsettling, technical aspects add to the chaos cleanly, without seeming overdone or fake. The simple sets (Lynda Osborn) featuring barbed wire and a few wooden boxes to sit on are all that's needed to show the atmosphere of war. Projections (Delaney Echavarria) helpfully explain what will happen in each scene, while enhancing the military atmosphere in choice of font.

Lighting (Patrick Lines and Laura Bilger) follows the rest of the performance in highlighting the show rather than the story. The complete whitewash after Katrin's death showcases everyone and everything on stage, abruptly but skillfully bringing invested minds into the real world. The hair and makeup (Mykaela Sterris, Andrew Hatfield, Carmen Dina, Caroline Bilger) features bright reds to represent the chaos of war, and portrays injuries flawlessly: the Cook's (Josiah Haugen) large burn scar on his neck is unnerving and convincing.

"Mother Courage" is by no means a small feat to perform, but Fullerton Union's skill and professionalism allow the performance to wrap viewers up, and then toss them into the

real world once again.

by Claire Pritchard of Fountain Valley High School

-----

Fullerton Union delivers a powerful message with 'Mother Courage'

The booming of cannons and cries of the wounded echoes across war torn Europe and violently disrupts the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. The clever and resilient Mother Courage, however, welcomes the chaos with open arms as war is business for her traveling cart of wares. With their profound production of "Mother Courage and Her Children", Fullerton Union utilizes Brecht's revolutionary epic theatreEpic Theatre to deliver a moving portrayal of the harsh realities that war unleashes upon the innocent and unsuspecting with utmost sincerity and simplicity.

Valerie Williams is the bold and brazen titular character, Mother Courage. As she haggles for shillings from shell-shocked soldiers and military personnel in exchange for alcohol, Williams dominates the stage with her confident stride and thunderous voice, perfectly exemplifying a headstrong saleswomen callous to the horrors of war she has witnessed. She is also able to switch effortlessly between loudly berating her children for their apparently endless faults to serenading the audience with a crisp and captivating voice.

As Mother Courage's skittish mute daughter Katrin, played by Arcadia Eckmayer, demonstrates an impeccable talent with her truly extraordinary performance. Eckmayer is able to convey a young woman terrified of the war even without the luxury of words - her bone-chilling screams and violent trembling during her most heightened points of panic say more than any monologue could hope to do.

The stage management, headed by Katya Beener and McKenna Vargas, pay homage to Brecht's epic theatreEpic Theatre style by allowing the audience full view of the backstage area with minimal curtains and even a television pointed on the actors before the show and during intermission. While many would consider this a foreboding challenge, the stage crew executes their job with professionalism and ease.

The lighting design created by Patrick Lines and Laura Bilger helps to illuminate the atrocities of war unfolding onstage. The stark white lighting in moments of sudden death and blood red light during brutal battle scenes greatly escalate the raw intensity of the show.

'Mother Courage and Her Children' is undoubtedly a formidable undertaking of a show, but Fullerton Union proves its genuine ability to create a unique and poignant production that will certainly leave a lasting impression on its viewers.

by Erin Bola of Fountain Valley High School

---

Fullerton Union High School's rendition of 'Mother Courage' reaches epic proportions

A commanding mother struggles between wanting to care for her children and taking care of herself in Fullerton Union High School's rendition of Mother Courage and Her Children.

Valerie Williams brilliantly takes on the role of Mother Courage, a mother trying to keep her children from being associated with the war as they travel along the road, trading and bargaining. Her overdramatized actions portray the force that her character possesses and make the storyline very clear. As she runs about the stage, singing and shouting with exuberance, Williams' energy never falters. Throughout the play, she obtains multiple traveling companions, two of which are The Chaplain and The Cook, depicted by Patrick Lines and Josiah Haugen, respectively. They both skillfully portray their character's every-changing emotion and personality. Lines' tastefully executed speeches help to show the different levels of the character, while Haugen's emotion brings about a three-dimensional character, which is both cold and vulnerable at the same time.

Arcadia Eckmayer plays Mother Courage's mute daughter, Kattrin. Her raw emotion and impressive ability to convey it without uttering a single word captivates and adds realistically pure element to the production. Her flawlessly executed panic attacks show the character's internal struggle.

The army of soldiers display great attention to detail and truly commit to their characters.

Lighting done by Patrick Lines matches the harsh reality of wartime and helps to convey the emotional aspects of each situation. As a character takes the front of the stage for a monologue or song, the lighting adjusts to set them out of the moment for the time being. At one point in the play, the cart carrying Mother Courage and Kattrin stop in front of a barn to hear a woman singing. The lighting shows only a silhouette of the woman and the lighting surrounding her perfectly captures the warm, peaceful feeling at the time.

The set design by Lynda Osborn accurately represents the chaos ensuing around the characters. Barbed wire lined walls and a view of the backstage convey a powerful message about the horrors of war. The transitions between scenes have great ease and are very mesmerizing.

by Maddie Schultz of Fountain Valley High School

---

Fullerton Union High school enlightens us on the subject of war and it's toll on human beings with their powerful production of MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN.

A play by Bertolt Brecht, a playwright known for alienating his audience and communicating an overarching narration on society itself rather than a typical story, *MOTHER COURAGE* follows the titular Mother Courage (Valerie Williams) and her children as they travel throughout war torn Europe selling miscellaneous goods to soldiers. As Mother Courage's journey progresses, the war gets bigger and the losses pile up. This really is a dark and difficult play to properly convey on a high school stage, But Fullerton Union's talented theater program is able to make it look effortless.

The attention to detail on everything from the gallery of war torn environments to the way the ensemble of soldiers march in unison is very impressive. Set design (Lynda Osborn) is hauntingly beautiful with special mention going to a particular scene in which Mother Courage and Katrin are walking by a house at night, when suddenly they hear a lady singing (Summer Wagner). The image of the silhouetted mother and daughter standing by their wagon listening to this woman sing was absolutely beautiful and cast a rare calm over this otherwise unsettling world.

The entire cast as a whole was magnificent, though not in the way one would usually expect. With a unique style of play also comes a unique style of acting. The whole cast utilizes something called *gestus*, a dramatic form of movement that accentuates gesture and attitude. While at first unfamiliar, the actor's use of *gestus* eventually became very helpful in understanding the subtext of the dialogue. Each actor delivered their lines with unbridled confidence and beautiful orchestration. Every action and gesture felt appropriate and this applies to every single actor who performed. A special mention goes out to The sergeant, Mykaela Sterris. Sterris's commanding presence and booming voice added greatly to the military feel of the narrative and she was very compelling to watch.

Absolutely taking the use of *gestus* to another level was Mother Courage herself, Valerie Williams. Williams's presence and movements were absolutely exploding with energy. Her use of *gestus* was absolutely masterful as she lashed out with frequent arm raises and a myriad of sassy stances that really sold both the character's personality and the message of the play itself. Most impressive was her absolutely unbelievable endurance. Through the entire two hour and fifteen hour production, Williams never lost focus, never lost her character, and never lost her energy.

And then there's Katrin. Arcadia Eckmayer should be absolutely commended for her performance as Mother Courage's mute daughter, Katrin. Eckmayer steals the show without speaking a single word. Her Katrin is a sponge soaking in this tortured world, and a flame, belittled at every turn by reality. As an actor playing a mute character, the usual temptation is to exaggerate your movements in compensation for your lack of words, but Eckmayer resists this urge, giving a performance that is both beautifully subtle and insanely powerful.

Overall, The stage management (Ktya Beener, McKenna Vargas) was very organized and ran the show along incredibly smoothly. Also deserving of special mention, the lighting contributed to the themes of sadness and hope that are juxtaposed throughout the show.



MOTHER COURAGE is a very tricky show for a high school to properly do justice to, but Fullerton Union impresses with great performances, great tech, and an obvious reverence for the source material.

by Michael Peters of Fountain Valley High School

-----

The tension never ends in Fullerton Union's "Mother Courage and Her Children"

A cannon shot cracks through the air and is followed by absolute silence as Katrin falls to her death, but it is not until the lights flash white, blindingly white, that the gravity of the moment sinks in.

Fullerton Union's adaptation of "Mother Courage and Her Children" abounded with dramatic moments such as these with a tension that never failed.

Taking place in the midst of 30 Years' War, Mother Courage treks along the front lines with her three children and creaky wagon in tow, both earning and losing her livelihood from the battle as she makes friends and sacrifices along the way.

Valerie Williams brings an unrivaled energy as Mother Courage, her endurance and stamina never failing as she struts across stage and flings her arm about, singing and throwing her head back with absolute abandon, her resolve apparent in every movement.

Another notable performance is Arcadia Eckmayer's portrayal of Katrin, Mother Courage's mute daughter. Despite her inability to speak, Eckmayer is able to portray all the emotion and sadness associated with the hardships of wartime through her facial expressions, downcast eyes, and slumped shoulders. She conveys hysteria just as artfully with pained shrieks and gesticulations without excessive exaggeration.

Also memorable is Josiah Haugen as the Cook, who brings diversity to his character as he transitions from a swanky yet indifferent battalion chef to a man who, except for his protruding belly, has been hardened by the war and means only to carve a living out of the misery of bloodshed.

Patrick Lines and Laura Bilger's use of bright, white lighting throughout the show and to highlight key character moments and songs allows the audience to connect to the stark, cold reality of war. The realistic makeup also portrays wrinkles, gashes, and dirt with stunning clarity while the wartime regalia from various periods ranging from the 1600s to present times temporarily pulls the audience out of the action in order to truly contemplate the universality of war, just as Brecht and his practice of epic theatre Epic Theatre intended.

Fullerton Union High Schools adaptation of "Mother and Courage and Her Children"

leaves the audience spellbound with a uniquely moving yet distant piece on the harsh realities of war.

by Nathalie Huynh of Fountain Valley High School

---

Fullerton's courageous cast takes on Mother Courage and Her Children

Through a combination of dramatic acting and upbeat music, Fullerton Union tackles the severity of war in Mother Courage and Her Children.

The story is centered around Mother Courage, a tough, yet poverty stricken woman who is determined to survive the war. As the play progresses, we see the crippling effect the war has, not only on Mother Courage, but on everyone during that time.

Dominating the stage with wide gestures and exaggerated facial expressions is Valerie Williams, who plays Mother Courage. With an ever present determination, Williams tackles the complex character with a deep stance and long strides. As the war goes on, we see her constant struggle to survive manifested through furrowed eyebrows and a strong gaze.

Countering Mother Courage is the meek and gentle Kattrin, played by Arcadia Eckmayer. Even without words, Eckmayer manages to tell her character's story purely through strong physicality and raw emotion. Also adding strength to the production is Josiah Haugen, The Cook. Haugen reveals multiple sides to his character, particularly during the scene when he wants to abandon Kattrin. Through the harshness of his words, there is a touch of guilt, allowing the audience to sympathize with his character and his will to survive.

Patrick Lines and Laura Bilger, accurately recreate the chaos and tragedy of war through constant harsh lighting. The predominant use of red light symbolizes the anger and passion that often accompanies war. Implementing Brecht's vision is Katya Beener and McKenna Vargas, the stage management crew. An exposed backstage can often prove challenging for a stage crew, but through expert direction, the show is executed seamlessly. The set pieces used are minimalistic and harsh, creating an accurate representation of the setting and time.

Dedicated actors and a brilliant technical crew are what makes Fullerton's Mother Courage and Her Children such a powerful and impactful show.

by Katie Van Horn of Mission Viejo High School

---

Fullerton Unions conquers 'Mother Courage'

Amidst a time where virtue is weakness and war is backbone, Fullerton Union isolates reality in their thought-provoking performance of Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children." Mother Courage is a shrewd profiteer of war, booming with aggression to all. She learns harshly that there is a lasting price to war: her children, each of whom die throughout the course of the play.

Valerie Williams is our thundering anti-hero, Mother Courage. It is both a physically and emotionally demanding role to undertake, and Williams is a real tour-de-force, exacting an enormous amount of endurance during her performance. She exaggerates her words strongly and strides with conviction.

There is a scene where Mother Courage is asked to identify her son's dead body, but is forced to lie and say she does not recognize him in order to save herself. Red lighting floods the stage and surrounds Williams. While lost in the moment, she silently screams in agony. The suffering that Williams expresses without uttering a single word is show-stopping.

Arcadia Eckmayer is Katrin, Mother Courage's daughter who cannot communicate through speech. Eckmayer effectively relies on the only tools given to her: her face and body. When her brothers are being taken away from the war, she cries in despair, violently hurling herself onto Mother Courage to prevent this from happening. Hyperventilating and shaking as she does so, adds to the rawness of her character.

The technical elements of 'Mother Courage' further emphasizes that this play is detached from reality. The stage directions are projected onto the stage during the scenes (Delaney Echavarria), uniquely connecting the performance of the actor and the playwright's original intentions with its sleek design. Impressively, the stage management is not hidden from blackouts, and is all coordinated in the light by stage manager, Katya Beener.

The lighting is intelligently designed by Patrick Lines, utilizing the saturation of color and the simplicity of white. Specifically, when Katrin is shot to death by a cannon, there is no sound of an explosion. Instead, the lights are pointed directly at the audience in a blinding ray. The lighting is so effective that through light there is a symbolic sound of a cannon, which is an incredible feat to achieve.

All-embracing, the passionate actors and flawless technical executions in Fullerton's "Mother Courage and Her Children" transcends the fierce brutality of war with stellar excellence.

by Rachel Umana of Mission Viejo High School

-----

Fullerton Union comes guns a-blazing in 'Mother Courage'

An eerie glow illuminates the war-torn stage of Fullerton Union High School. Actors step into the light with raw emotion etched on their faces. Skilled artists come together and reveal the brutal turmoil of war. They deliver a story that follows Mother Courage, her children, and her other companions' journey of trials.

Mother Courage (played by Valerie Williams) enduringly drives the plot forward. She has a bounding gait and holds her head high; she draws attention with sweeping gestures and a raised voice. Mute character, Kattrin (Arcadia Eckmayer) is meek, with hands clasped and head down. She impressively portrays emotion with the use of no words. Michael Laverde presents the character of Swiss Cheese as he strikes a fine balance between being honest and naïve. Andrew Hatfield presents Eilif with a dynamic arc from powerful to powerless, from a strutting arrogance to wild hopelessness.

The Cook (Josiah Haugen), with pipe in hand, seems ironically relaxed- though he has clearly been through much, evident by the scar covering half his neck and the weary posture he assumes. The Chaplain (Patrick Lines) seems reserved at first. However, he soon develops into a passionate character with strong motives in every character choice.

The technical aspects are outstanding. The costumes (Sonia Mendez) are consistently realistic, and represent the era accurately. The makeup (Andrew Hatfield, Mykaela Sterris) is impressively detailed, and implies expert application. The lighting (Patrick Lines) has a fluidity and boldness seldom seen. At times there may be a subtle glow suggesting some far off battle, and other times harsh and sudden flashes depicting the chaos on stage. The set (Lynda Osborn) is mainly of wood and metal; the fences and barbed wire establish a theme of harsh simplicity. The sound effects (Casey Moore) are appropriate and precise. The choice of songs (all relating to war) from different eras is an interesting touch, and asserts that the problem of war transcends time. Projections (Delaney Echavarria) on a overhead screen narrate what occurs in typewriter font with the respective clacking sound effect, lending to immersion. Throughout the performance, the stage crew (Katya Beener) flawlessly runs the set transitions, with an efficiency unlike other tech crews.

It's evident the time spent on this production, and the impression it has made will be remembered with a long-lasting respect.

by Trevor Casillas of Mission Viejo High School

-----

### Fullerton Union Teaches 'Courage' in the Face of War

War is devastating, and Fullerton Union High School captures the trial of its victims in "Mother Courage and Her Children." We follow Mother Courage as she scrapes by with her children, selling wares from her wagon regardless of which side is buying.

Fullerton's unusual production doesn't let the audience sit back and forget about their lives for a while. Instead, the audience is challenged to think critically about what they see: the effects of war. Following the philosophy of its writer, Brecht, the audience is always aware they are watching a play.

The backstage area is exposed so that nothing hides "behind the scenes." The audience watches actors preparing, set pieces moving, and makeup being applied. Because of this, Katya Beener's work as Stage Manager is particularly impressive. Not only does she organize action on stage, but she must choreograph action off stage as well.

As Mother Courage, Valerie Williams carries the story. She is a force to be reckoned with: Williams crosses the stage with long strides and she exaggerates her facial expressions, eyes sometimes wide with anger. To save them from the war, Mother Courage tries to control her children. Williams conveys her authority with dominant body language, hands on hips. She peers viciously at her children when they question her. But Williams also conveys a mother's deep caring when her tough facade cracks: Hearing her son die, she sinks to her knees and screams, her face torn apart in anguish.

Under Mother Courage's wing is her distraught, mute daughter Katrin, played by Arcadia Eckmayer. Her raw emotions are visible in panic attacks, when her fists clench and her whole body trembles. She is also dynamic: She remains reserved as she is often cast out, but she is triumphant when she finds purpose in warning a town of an ambush. She beats her drum fervently, smiling and eyes flashing bright, happy to be relevant at last.

Lighting, designed by Patrick Lines, enhances the moods of each scene. A harsh red light during Mother Courage's scream helps convey the extent of her horror. When Katrin dies after her triumphant moment, harsh white lights shine on the audience, reminding us to reflect on the barbarity of war.

Fullerton Union High School successfully presents an evocative drama, giving the grim nature of war to the audience to digest and discuss.

by Liam McGregor of St. Margaret's Episcopal School

-----

"Mother Courage and Her Children," a masterpiece by Bertolt Brecht, concerns timeless struggles-struggles especially acute during the 30 Years War. Mother Courage, in a societal hell, battles to survive, but in the process loses sight of what is important. Ultimately, while trying to make a profit from the chaos around her, she loses all three of her children, failing to realize that war has no real victor.

Showcasing obvious creativity, talent, and coordination, the folks at Fullerton Union High School simply do a stellar job with a play characteristic of Brecht and epic theater-an atypical format for drama.

The Brechtian practice in which theater is distinguished from story, keeping the audience from being submerged in the story, is innovative and well executed in this production of *Mother Courage*. By illuminating the entire stage, displaying the tech crew frequently, projecting storyline onto a screen, and even using televisions to reveal backstage, the cast and crew, under Micheal Despars' inspired direction, create an epic barrier intended to keep the audience questioning and thinking. Powerful scenes, brief musical interludes, and disorienting bright lights pointing at the crowd not only keep things interesting but work to dislodge the spectator from the expected storyline and linear progression, further emphasizing the unconventional. By prompting us to draw our own conclusions, Fullerton Union High School brings greater meaning to a rich play-in this way, they triumph.

Despars successfully conveys the play's timeless nature by including costumes, soundtracks and props from different eras in the performance. Ironically (for an epic play), one of the most outstanding aspects of *Mother Courage* is the persuasive affect of the actors; every cast member is consistent and solid, playing their parts with precision and passion. The tact and talent of *Mother Courage* and her three children was particularly intriguing. *Mother courage* and her children, played by Arcadia Eckmayer, Andrew Hatfield and Micheal Lavarde, impressively project charisma on stage. Arcadia Eckmayer's emotional depth in her performance of Kattrin are essential to the gravity of the play. Even though Kattrin cannot speak, Eckmayer portrays a sophisticated and even lovable character. Eckmayer seems to live the frustration and sorrow of her character as she reacts to the chaos around her, all the while showing relentless kindness. This was quite a fantastic accomplishment to connect with the audience while not being able to speak and being so distanced from the audience.

A novel experience from a fantastic cast and crew. *Mother Courage and Her Children* by Fullerton Union High School is a treasure.

by Nico Hawthorne of University High School

APPENDIX C  
COMMUNITY RESPONSE

**Letter from a Parent and Community Member**



## HOPE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Mr. Despars and the *Academy of the Arts* at Fullerton Union High School,

I have to admit, even as an academic, I was not initially excited to hear that FUHS would be performing Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*. But, since I have now seen your production twice, I am very happy that FUHS did not follow in the pattern of so many high schools in offering yet another cliché production that fits our culture's increasing desire for comfortable mind-numbing entertainment.

From the make-up, to the set, to the missing curtains, to the lights shining in my face, to the actors' interactions with the audience, to the microphoned singing (with microphones being moved on and off stage), to the gas-mask-march, to a no curtain-call ending, I was consistently disassociated from entering into the story and forced to reflect existentially on what I was seeing and hearing. I applaud your ability to achieve the *verfremdungseffekt* that is an important part of Brecht's intention. Your production caused me to reevaluate my responsibility in both war and religion.

This production forced me to confront the ways in which we are all complicit in our society in regard to war, even those of us who attempt to disassociate ourselves from the explicit support of war. Whether we support war or as a just necessity in our world today or not, Brecht reminds us that our constant need for economic growth is often fed by our military spending. While some people certainly profit off of war more than others, all of us in America have benefitted from a war economy throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On a global scale, Americans seem to be among the few who prosper. Yet while we may prosper from war, there are tremendous costs. Brecht forces us to consider those costs.

I was reminded of the ways that war alters the virtues of wisdom, bravery, honesty, and kindness into vices that lead to destruction. While the wisdom of Mother Courage gets her through the war with profit, this virtue costs her every person that she loves. She is left alone. Eilif's bravery becomes the cowardice of murder of innocents and leads to his own death. Swiss Cheese is killed for his honesty. Katrin dies for her hopefulness and kindness toward children. This portrayal of the virtues of civil society as weaknesses in war forces us to reevaluate our society's romantic vision of the valor of war.

Finally, as a person of faith, Brecht reminds me of the ways that religion can easily be co-opted into supporting a political or ideological position that dehumanizes the *other* to the point of validating war and killing. It is certainly a clear warning: when people of faith become focused on validating a position at all costs, retaining political power, and excluding others rather than focused on restoration, reconciliation and transformation of our communities, religion loses its power to connect people with transcendent universals and quickly becomes the pawn of nationalist or sectarian interests. It is here that we find religion feeding the war machine. Just as the virtues of a civil society are distorted into vices by war, Brecht displays the universal hope of religion, distorted by war, as a meager mind-numbing distraction.

You will certainly receive negative feedback for courageously taking on this production of *Mother Courage* at FUHS because of its adult themes, obscenities, criticism of religion, and maybe even its Marxist undertones. I hope you will also hear from others like myself who applaud you for providing a space for thoughtfulness and reflection on the horrors of war and our relationship to it in a time when we try to avoid thinking about our complicity. How valuable it is for our youth to explore these themes in a safe, thoughtful, and creative environment! I know that this production was emotionally, physically and even spiritually draining for the cast and crew, but the statement was extremely powerful. Thank you.

Kip Lines, PhD  
Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies  
Hope International University

*Preparing Servant Leaders Since 1928*

2500 E. Nutwood Ave. • Fullerton, California 92831 • U.S.A. • (714) 879-3901 • HIU.edu



APPENDIX D  
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

## OC Register Article

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## Fullerton Union High actors take on 'Mother Courage'

BY JORDAN R. YOUNG

2014-10-10 17:24:28



War may not be healthy for children and other living things, as the Vietnam War-era slogan reminds us, but putting on a play about war can be a positive experience.

Fullerton Union High School's fall production of Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children," perhaps the greatest anti-war play ever written, is proving to be an eye-opener for the young people involved.

"I was envisioning something very different," said sophomore **Arcadia Eckmayer**, who plays Mother Courage's deaf mute daughter, Katrin. "I was expecting something more toward the traditional. It was a big shock."

Senior **Valerie Williams**, who heads the 32-member cast in the title role, agreed: "It's a lot different than the usual shows we do."

More than a month into the play's eight-week rehearsal schedule, she said, "It's still a bit overwhelming due to the subject, because it's very emotional and complicated. But I'm starting to feel more comfortable and easing into it a bit more."

Asked to describe the play, junior **Patrick Lines**, the show's lighting designer, said, "It's not about making the audience like the play. It's not a cute play. It's a very scary outlook on war. Our society often desensitizes war. They don't understand how painful it can be. The play is also telling a story about people who've been affected by war, using broad characters to do that."

**Michael J. Despars**, Fullerton Union High's theater arts director, chose to direct the play as his master's thesis. "Working on this production with high school students is not the norm and will provide them with the challenge of telling an important cautionary tale about the effects of war," he said.

"This is my thesis, but it's being designed and implemented by the students," said Despars, a master's candidate at the University of Northern Colorado. "It's all student-designed and -run, the sets, the lighting, the choreography. I have a large crew, about 35 students. I've lived with it for two years. It's time for them to take the reins."

His students are immersing themselves in a style of performance called "epic theater," which was utilized by the German-born Brecht.

Developed in the early 20th century as a counterpoint to naturalistic styles of performing, epic theater performances strive to ensure that the audience members are always aware they are watching a play.

Brecht said, "What is 'natural' must have the force of what is startling."

Said Despars: "It's one of the things we want to make sure students learn before they graduate. It's rare that someone creates a new style, as Brecht did. This is considered one of the top 10 plays in the modern theater canon, although it's not performed very often."

Despars is "giving a lot of good direction, but he's also turning us loose. If it's not 'epic theater' enough, he brings us back in," Eckmayer said. "Epic theater, to me, is telling a story but trying to convey the message more so than the story or the plot."

Williams agreed: "We're trying to get across the message, not the emotion." She sees Mother Courage as one of the most challenging roles ever devised for an actress.

"(As) a businesswoman who survives off the war, she's in a sense the anti-hero," she said. "People say she's horrible, but she's like everyone else in the war. She's a very strong person. She'll do anything to get herself through this war."

The senior, who's been involved in nearly all Fullerton's stage productions since her freshman year, has found inspiration in a quote from actress Meryl Streep, who starred in a 2006 New York production.

"She said, 'I am the voice of the dead.' Mother Courage is the one who connects the audience to the message. The characters in the play are giving a voice to people who don't have one."

Last year Despars' students studied playwright Tony Kushner's adaptation of the play, which Streep performed. For this production, they are using David Hare's version, done earlier this year by Kathleen Turner in Washington, D.C. Although Brecht wrote the original in the late 1930s in response to the rise of Nazism and Fascism, he set it in the 1600s, during the Thirty Years War in Central Europe.

Said Despars: "Our production covers war from the 1700s up to today. We're not necessarily modernizing the play, but referencing other wars. We're doing a modern take on various anti-war songs. You might hear a cover of 'Fortunate Son,' a Vietnam-era song, done in a different way. A lot of the props are a mix of old and modern – leftover things you might hold onto are found along the way."

Direct address to the audience, known as "breaking the fourth wall," is another major technique the production will include.

"We're also doing some shadow work," said Despars. "(We are) doing a riff on shadow puppetry, since Brecht did a lot with puppets."

Eckmayer, who called the play "a great contrast" to the "typical" theater she has done in the past, acknowledged that the show is not for everyone. "I definitely have friends who want to see it," she said, "but I have some – it's a bit too weird for their taste."

**Contact the writer:** 714-796-2258 or [varsityarts@ocregister.com](mailto:varsityarts@ocregister.com)



## OC Register Review 1

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## Fullerton Union offers a moving 'Mother Courage'

BY ASHLEY RAMOS

2014-11-05 10:43:10



Fullerton Union High School's time-bending production of "Mother Courage and Her Children" follows a strong-willed mother's battle between profiting off the war and caring for her children.

The production uses the techniques of "epic theater," which was brought to the forefront by the play's author, Bertolt Brecht. This style of performance exposes the action onstage as well as behind the scenes so that the audience focuses on the action of the play rather than the emotions of the characters. The elements are big and bold, with radiant projections throughout and a couple of blinding lights and the sound of gun shots.

Providing the appropriate distraction from the organized chaos behind the open black curtains is **Valerie Williams** as the roaring Mother who could. Williams' performance as Mother Courage is as impressive as her ability to speak loudly and sing her lungs out. With raised eyebrows and punchy movements, she delivers a fantastic performance.

**Arcadia Eckmayer** as Katrin, the mute daughter of Mother Courage, proves that actions really can speak louder than words. Given a script with no lines, Eckmayer flawlessly manages to provide insight to the

human psyche during wartime through a combination of frightened jumps, careless dancing and vacant looks at her surroundings.

The ensemble extends the aspect of creepiness while transitioning between scenes. Actors cross the stage with strictly identical movements as they place props such as a makeshift graveyard.

**Katya Beener** serves as the master backstage choreographer. As stage manager, she carefully places every actor and crew member in precise positions. The actions backstage become just as much of a performance as the play itself.

Lighting designer **Patrick Lines**' use of unhardened shadows and character silhouettes outfit the stage to look just like what it is, a high school theater venue. Lines uses the spotlights to isolate the actors during monologues and solo moments. Between gentle whitewashes of the room and blinding white and red flashes, the emotion of the story is apparent and moving.

Overall, this production of "Mother Courage and Her Children" is a force to be reckoned with, all the while reminding that it's only a play.

Ashley Ramos is a senior from Fountain Valley High School in Fountain Valley.

© Copyright 2015 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)

## OC Register Review 2

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## A courageous production of 'Mother' from Fullerton Union

BY JACKSON MAXWELL

2014-10-31 17:57:36



Fullerton Union High School's superb production of Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children" tackles the gravity of war and the devastation it brings. The story tells of a group of peddlers, including a mother and her children, as they eke out a living amid the conflict and the repercussions that follow as each child is violently taken.

The show begins with a rock 'n' roll entrance by **Valerie Williams** as the matriarch of the show, Mother Courage. With powerful, resonant vocals and extravagant gestures, she is captivating as the driving force throughout the performance.

Just as enthralling is **Arcadia Eckmayer** as the Mother's mute daughter, Kattrin. Her panicked, raw displays of emotion offer insight into her character's psyche. From desperately running toward her newly conscripted brother to dauntlessly drumming a town awake, she shows how loud a silent character can be.

Eckmayer's introverted nature is contrasted by characters like the Cook, played by **Josiah Haugen**. The Cook's boisterous belligerence is underscored by a booming baritone and substantial stage presence. His initial hostility, however, turns to empathetic vulnerability in his final confrontation with Mother Courage, during which his former aggression metamorphoses into forlorn reluctance.

The sensational acting of the production is heightened by its tremendous technical ambitions. **Patrick Lines'** lighting design uses Brechtian techniques that include harsh, glaring white lights. The most spectacular scenes utilize a spellbinding array of modern effects, including flashes of red to accent the disarray of war.

In addition, **Sonia Mendez's** costume design is exceptional, with apparel from a variety of periods, emphasizing the timelessness of Brecht's antiwar theme. Many characters adorn themselves with military uniforms from different decades, a reminder that no matter what the circumstances, war's catastrophic consequences are the same.

The most outstanding technical aspect, however, would undoubtedly be **Delaney Echavarria's** projection design, which communicates the stage directions of the performance to the audience in real time. Accordingly, the use of a blotted, archaic font characteristic of that from a 1940s typewriter helps to underline the production's militaristic subject matter.

Fullerton Union High School's production is a provocative piece that punctuates the sentiments of war, brilliantly blending powerful performances with masterful design to create profound political commentary that is still relevant.

Jackson Maxwell is a sophomore from Mission Viejo High School in Mission Viejo.

© Copyright 2015 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)

APPENDIX E  
NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS

**CAPPIES Nominations**

*Mother Courage and Her Children*

Lighting in a Play . . . Patrick Lines & Laura Bilger

Sets in a Play . . . Lynda Osborn

Special Effects/Technology . . . Delaney Echavarria

Stage Crew in a Play . . . Katya Beener & McKenna Vargas

Supporting Actress in a Play . . . Arcadia Eckmayer as Kattrin\*

Lead Actress in a Play . . . Valerie Williams as Mother Courage\*

*\*Indicates Winner*

**CETA High School Theatre Festival Awards**

Artistic Merit Award: *Mother Courage and Her Children*

Certificates of Merit:

Adam Ritter

AJ Castro

Alec Murdock

Alexa Hillman

Andrew Hatfield

Arcadia Eckmayer

Beverly Shirk

Fifi Rodriguez

Jose Navarro

Joshia Haugen

Katya Beener

Stage Crew

Kendall Wenderlich

Kyle Castillo

Lynda Osborn

Madeline Wilson

McKenna Vargas

Michael Laverde

Mykaela Sterris

Nicole Wormley

Nilza Soto

Noah Martinez

Patrick Lines

Sarah Ritter

Sonia Mendez

Beverly Shirk

Dani Curtis

Summer Wagner

Valerie Williams

Zachary Bane