

In Regards to Two Scenes from Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* how would traditional Epic Theatre Set Design and Lighting be Applied?

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Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, proved to be one of his most demonstrative productions in regards to his application of Marxist text, and mastery of mise-en-scène¹. Based upon Li Qianfu's zaju play: *The Chalk Circle* (灰蘭記) as adapted by Klabund, Brecht effectively transported the 1300A.D tale into the 20th century², "like none other of his productions... (*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*)...showcased Brecht's delight in mixing old and new artistry in order to make a social point"³. A theatre company endeavouring to perform *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in traditional Brechtian style would require a thorough understanding of the principals and theories of Epic Theatre scenography. "Scenography, props and pieces of business were...governed by a principle of stylized naturalness"⁴ and a correct application of such is essential for the preservation of authenticity. Two fundamental scenes in which the adoption of appropriate scenography is paramount would be the concluding chalk circle trial and Scene 2 in which the Governor's wife leaves her child behind. In terms of Brecht's Epic theatre the key elements of scenography are evidenced in lighting, set and props, all of which must culminate to present Brechtian theatre in its most traditional form.

Written in the concluding months of World War II *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* presents in its opening, "a home for reason on this earth"⁵, only to transport its audience to a world that is representative of reality the world of unreason, a world plagued by injustice and disorder⁶. The play presents two separate tales, that of Grusha and her flight from the city, newly adopted child in tow, to that of Azdak who, following a twisting narrative, proves to abide over the Chalk Circle trial by which Grusha is granted her child, by warrant of genuine motherliness.

An attempt at crafting a traditional Brechtian performance of *the Caucasian Chalk Circle* demands an understanding of the style and purpose with which

¹ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (pg. 91)

²"The Caucasian Chalk Circle." *South Wilts Grammar School for Girls*. N.p., n.d. Web. 7 Apr. 2012.

<www.swgs.wilts.sch.uk/SWGSFiles/Subjects/Drama/The%20Caucasian%20Chalk%20Circle%20commentary.pdf.>

³ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (pg. 91)

⁴ Ibid (110)

⁵ Brecht, Bertolt, and Eric Bentley. *Bertolt Brecht: The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Print. (xvii)

⁶ Ibid (xvi)

technical elements were constructed and designed in Epic Theatre. The power of *the Caucasian Chalk Circle* relies upon the "separation of the elements of production, which need not illustrate the play's characterization or milieu, but can comment on the action through open aesthetic self-presentation"⁷. Lighting must serve a different purpose to that of set design and to that of props, each piece presenting a new idea which, through their separation, allows for enhanced audience appreciation and understanding. A traditional necessity of Epic Theatre is that "the set must appear like a factory with the machinery exposed"⁸, therefore, in the creation of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle's* set specific care must be taken to avoid illusion, to break up any "hypnosis that is likely to induce sordid intoxication"⁹.

Brecht in the devising of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* worked closely with Karl Von Appen and together they established an aesthetic for the original performance that was alike to nativity scenes and folk art¹⁰. An authentic reproduction of such would require this theme to be maintained as it proved effective in accentuating the secular themes of the play as evidenced in its events and figures¹¹. To achieve this effect the set design must readily and openly display the maker's labour¹², the use of "bright, cool lighting"¹³ bathing the stage's set will effectively reveal its artificiality similarly to how it was used as a means through which to accentuate "the visibility of the stitched seams in crib-figure costumes"¹⁴. Ultimately, great care must be taken by the designer to display their work to the audience.

The display of the "maker's labour" however must not overpower the action on stage, and as such the original performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* followed principles of minimalism as evidenced in one of Brecht's first production's *Die Mutter*. "The stage was not supposed to represent any real

⁷ Frick, John W. *Theatrical directors: a biographical dictionary*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994. Print. (54)

⁸ "Brecht." *Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2012. <faculty-staff.ou.edu/L/A-Robert.R.Lauer-1/Brecht.html>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (110)

¹¹ ibid

¹² Ibid(111)

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

locality...it quoted, narrated, prepared and recalled."¹⁵ As such the elements of set utilised in Scene 2 and the Chalk Circle Trial must hold significant importance and influence upon the production,"i.e. those without which the action would have been altered or halted"¹⁶.

In Scene 2 this theory must be applied in the creation of a traditional set. The set pieces used as representation for the palace and the church were two ornate "door-like facades"¹⁷.



Figure 3.3 A version by scenographer Karl von Appen of the ornate, door-like facades and the scene 2 meeting between Prince and Governor. © Volker Schnur, image courtesy of Archiv Darstellende Kunst, Akademie der Künste

This image, extracted from Meg Mumford's "Bertolt Brecht", pictures the set design as established by Karl Von Appen for *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. The structures representative of the palace and church are clearly visible framing the arrangement of actors.

Figure 1: Scene 2, Karl Von Appen Set Design¹⁸

These constructs were crafted through the use of Papier-mâché, and then covered with silver and copper foil in order to present the impression of costly beaten metal, furthermore the semi-circular connecting carpet was a deep red¹⁹. As such Von Appen communicates the "inauthentic, mobile and allegorical

¹⁵ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (57)

¹⁶ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print

¹⁷ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (111)

¹⁸ Schnur, Volker. Karl Von Appen's scenography for Scene 2. 1954. Archiv Darstellende Kunst, Berlin. Bertolt Brecht. By Meg Mumford. USA: Routledge, 2009. 111. Print (111)

¹⁹ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (111)

nature"²⁰ of the set. Thus the importance of set in the recreation of a traditional performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* is encapsulated in its necessity for importance and thematic purpose.

The Chalk Circle scene however demands an entirely different scenic design to that of Scene 2, as evidenced in Figure 2 below. Despite the shift from Marxist critique on the interconnected nature of church and state²¹ to an earthy village scene the principles of Brechtian Theatre still hold true in the sets composition and design. The scene's stage directions detail the basic requirements of the forthcoming action: a "gateway"²² a "judge's chair"²³ and a "fire-red sky"²⁴. The establishment of the "fire-red sky"²⁵ was achieved through the use of a drop-cloth as detailed later. The strongest evidence for the construction of the remaining elements is pictured in Figure 2.



This picture is of the Berliner Ensemble's performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, it serves as an acute means with which to observe the traditional scenic design of Brecht's final scene, and reflects many of the principles of Epic Theatre scenography.

Figure 2: The Chalk Circle, Berliner Ensemble original staging²⁶

²⁰ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (112)

²¹ Ibid.

²² Brecht, Bertolt, and Eric Bentley. *Bertolt Brecht: The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Print. (86)

²³ Ibid. (90)

²⁴ Ibid. (86)

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Unknown. *Berliner Ensemble: The Chalk Circle*. 1948. Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre, Berlin. <http://www.english.emory.edu/DRAMA/ExpressionImage.html>. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.

A key element of Brechtian stage design is authenticity; "Brecht used authentic objects like the sheepskin in the farmhouse, rather than abstractions or symbols"²⁷ as such it is important for a theatre group to apply this tradition to the construction of the final scene. The scene does not take place in as lavish surroundings as does Scene 2 however "(the set designer) knows every craft and is careful to see that even the poorest furniture is executed in an artistic way"²⁸. As such, the materials required for the construction of the scene must embody both artistry and authenticity. Iron, wood and canvas must be combined as they would in genuine construction, it is here in which the naturalism of Epic Theatre scenic design²⁹ must be obeyed. Such materials are, in the final scene, used "economically...as the play demands"³⁰ contrary to the lavish Scene 2. The importance of naturalistic design is evidenced in Brecht's writings when he claims that the set designer of Epic Theatre visits the blacksmith in order to acquire forged swords, and to the florists to have wreaths woven and cut accordingly³¹. However Brecht's use of naturalistic prop and scenic pieces can, as his writing suggests, be relaxed in favour of practicality, the flowers mentioned above often taken from an "artificial florist"³² and made of "tin"³³. In order to obey the rules of Epic Theatre the construction of props must "pass the closest inspection"³⁴, architectural pieces however are provided a greater leniency in their creation, as such in the creation of the gateway a production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* is able "to give indications, poetic and artistic representations...which do honour as much to...imagination as to... (observation)"³⁵.

Despite the differences in location it is evident that both Scene 2 and the Chalk Circle scene share the base principles of set construction in the Epic Theatre. As such the traditional performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* must observe

²⁷ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print. (125)

²⁸ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (231)

²⁹ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (pg. 91)

³⁰ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (231)

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

and maintain the prescribed aesthetic of Brechtian production. This aesthetic is further outlined throughout Brecht's writings. The Epic Theatre set designer must "achieve a richer effect with a varied structure of different greys and whites than many other artists with the entire palette"³⁶. However that is not to say that scenic design is limited to grey and white as evidenced in the red carpet as pictured, unfortunately, in black and white in Figure 1, it suggests however that care must be taken to maintain the idea that "whatever does not further the narrative harms it"³⁷. Ultimately the aesthetic of Epic Theatre set design must project the impression of "very lightly constructed, easily transformed and beautiful pieces of scaffolding"³⁸, as evidenced in the frames of Figure 1 and wooden gateway of Figure 2.

Evidence for Brecht's penchant of combining old-age art and tradition with modernity is evidenced in his chosen sets and scenic design, and must therefore be explored in a traditional performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

"Stationary staging" as utilised in medieval theatre was employed in the play³⁹ and as such a performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* demands a very specific type of stage.

In the Berliner Ensemble's performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* the audience was faced by a "huge revolving turntable"⁴⁰, this rotating stage gave Brecht a freedom in transitioning from scene to scene. "During the "Flight into the Northern Mountains", as Grusha trudged with Michael on her back against a revolve, the various stations on her journey were represented by simple and easily constructed set pieces that emerged from behind a drop cloth and travelled towards her".⁴¹ However it is said that at the same time "everything

³⁶ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print. (232)

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (112)

⁴⁰ Brecht, Bertolt, and Michael Marland. "The Caucasian Chalk Circle - Bertolt Brecht" *Google*, N.p, n.d. Web. 8 Apr. 2012.

<http://books.google.ru/books?id=hfoCig8S1JgC&pg=PA110&lpg=PA110&dq=Berliner+Ensemble+rotating+stage&source=bl&ots=dAvZYTq4_X&sig=cDWH_SZLAAKHnGX2yt3gcD1Nh7g&hl=ru&sa=X&ei=wniBT4usMcvtsagmITnBA&ved=0CDsQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Berliner%20Ensemble%20rotating%20

⁴¹ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (112)

has a beauty, and the essential detail is most lovingly carried out".⁴² As such in the creation of the set pieces, which rotate on and off stage in a short space of time, equal care must be taken as to the construction of the door-like facades of Scene 2. The use of a drop cloth is essential in performing a traditional production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. The drop is an essential means with which to communicate that dialogue with the past, in conjunction with innovation is key to the beginning of social change.⁴³ Both Scene 2 and the Chalk Circle Trial utilised the drop cloth, against which the scenes took place, in reference to Chinese art⁴⁴. In the original performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* the same drop cloth was used for both the Chalk Trial and Scene 2 as evidenced in Figure 1 and Figure 4. The drop cloth pictured a beehive-like town of box houses, and for scenes away from the town, this cloth could be switched out in favour of ones depicting gnarled trees, cliff edges and mountain ranges as required.

The use of back drops served as a tool with which to further the "division of the stage"⁴⁵ as such the scene required is constructed at half-height downstage whilst another environment is, in the case of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, painted behind.⁴⁶ Such a technique must be utilised as a tool through which to continually remind the audience of the difference between the set designed and the world outside of the theatre.⁴⁷

The back drops must be painted using black Ink as is typical of Chinese ink drawings⁴⁸. Additionally these drop cloths were not secured through the use of battens but rather hung so as to allow them to flutter⁴⁹. Again the instability of staging is exemplified in orthodox Brechtian production, and as such a traditional performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* must endeavour to juxtapose new stage technology, as with the revolving stage, with old-age art. In doing such

⁴² Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (231)

⁴³ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (112)

⁴⁴ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (112)

⁴⁵ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print. (232)

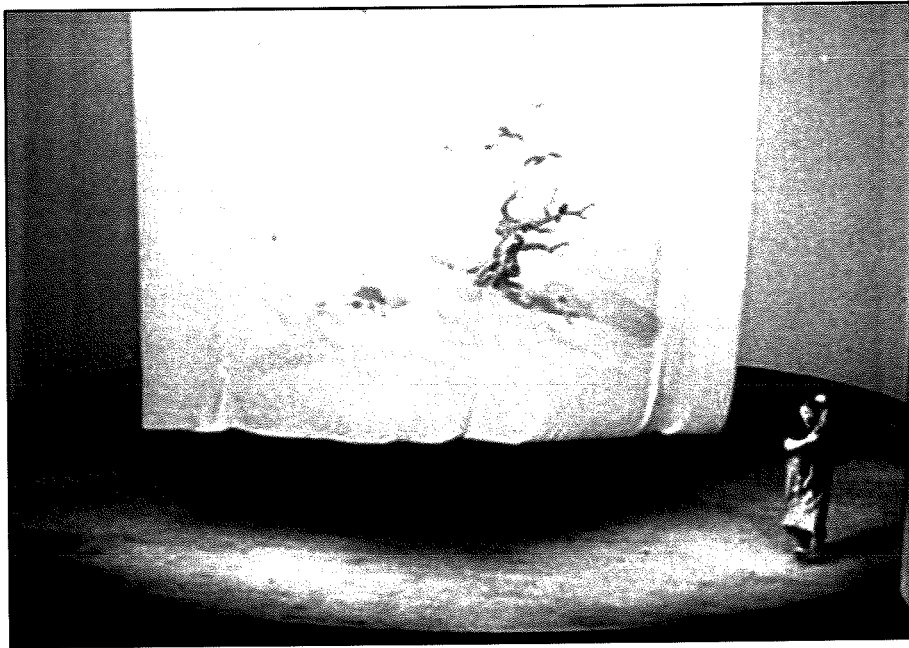
⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print. (112)

⁴⁹ Ibid

the set becomes, as Brecht desired, a tool with which to place emphasis upon cultural dialogue and innovation.⁵⁰



This image clearly demonstrates the visual impact of the back drops in the ruffling of the material and the way in which it drapes across half of the stage. Additionally it serves as example for an out-of-town backdrop, as opposed to Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 3: Cloth back drop, countryside/mountain example. (Colour altered for increased visibility)⁵¹

A traditional performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* must pay very close attention to the placing and dimensions of set pieces. Brecht admirably remarked of Caspar Neher, his stage designer:

“With what care he selects a chair, and with what thought he places it! And it all helps the playing. One chair will have short legs, and the height of the accompanying table will also be calculated, so that whoever eats at it has to take up a quite specific attitude, and the conversation of these people as they bend more than usual while eating takes on a particular character, which makes the episode clearer.”⁵²

Here Brecht draws attention to the interconnected nature of set and actor within the Epic Theatre, a director, in performing *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* traditionally, must bear this in mind in the establishment of scenic design. Scene

⁵⁰ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print. (112)

⁵¹ KaiDib Films International. *Caucasian Chalk Circle - Drop Cloth*. N.d. Theatre History: German, Berlin. *Hekman Digital Archive*. Web. 3 Apr. 2012.

⁵² Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (231)

2 requires the use of large doorways as pictured in figure 1, and as Brecht remarks: "how many effects are made possible by his doors of the most diverse heights".⁵³ Brecht expressed that he wanted audience members, even if deaf or forced to watch the production from behind sound-proof glass, to still follow the fable of the performance.⁵⁴ Therefore substantial attention must be placed, by the designer and actors, upon the way in which characters interact with set pieces, particularly in regards to Azdak's chair.

The Judge's seat is an example of the way with which set pieces must traditionally hold genuine significance and power within the performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. In his initial appointment Azdak's self-indulgence was evidenced by the progressive adornment of his seat with "ornamental altar mats and other precious objects, together with sausages, ham and wineskins that he had received as bribes"⁵⁵.

The fundamental element of Brechtian drama that must be retained in a traditional performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, is the productions effort to tear down illusion, "a technical apparatus and style of acting had been evolved which could do more to stimulate illusions than to give experiences"⁵⁶. Brecht questioned the use of even the most advance lighting equipment, if all it lit was nought but a childish and twisted representation of the world⁵⁷. In light of such questioning a traditional performance shows "the lighting apparatus openly"⁵⁸. "It scarcely disturbs the necessary concentration"⁵⁹, and the illusion of being present "at a spontaneous, transitory, authentic, unrehearsed event"⁶⁰ is effectively unhinged. The Chalk Circle Trial lends itself to this lighting in its subject matter, as Brecht remarks "no one would expect the lighting to be hidden at a sporting event, a boxing match for instance", as such the battle between Grusha and the Governor's Wife must adopt a sports-like atmosphere

⁵³ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (231)

⁵⁴ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (109)

⁵⁵ Ibid. (112)

⁵⁶ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (133)

⁵⁷ Ibid (133)

⁵⁸ Ibid (141).

⁵⁹ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (141)

⁶⁰ Ibid (141)

as aided by the on-stage lighting. Lighting must be specifically employed within the Chalk Circle Trial and within Scene 2 whenever the Singer performs. Lighting must in a traditional performance be utilised at such moments as a tool with which to avoid the actor dropping into song, but rather making clear the distinction between song and text, effectively fragmenting the piece.⁶¹ Lighting changes, often spotlights, were employed as a means with which to separate the Singer, this technique would be employed often throughout the production, three times within the Chalk Circle Trial, at its beginning, middle and end, and five times within Scene 2.

In further attempt to reveal the "machinery"⁶² of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* a traditional performance must not, in the audiences arrival, establish an air of illusion as would a typical full stage curtain, as Brecht writes the destruction of the assumption that a forth wall exists cutting the audience off from the stage is absolutely necessary for the Epic Theatre⁶³ as is the "consequent illusion that the stage action is taking place in reality and without an audience"⁶⁴. As such a performance of orthodox Epic Theatre does not require a curtain, and in the abolishment of it the spectator begins to see the theatre as a theatre not as a "slice of life on stage"⁶⁵. However this is in contrast to an extract of Brecht's poem *The Curtains* within which he writes: "and please make my curtain half-height, don't block the stage off. Leaning back, let the spectator notice the busy preparations being so ingeniously made for him."⁶⁶ A production abiding by Brechtian tradition, must apply whichever theory applies best to their play, in terms of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* a half-curtain should not be required, due to

⁶¹ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print (203)

⁶²"Brecht." *Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2012. <faculty-staff.ou.edu/L/A-Robert.R.Lauer-1/Brecht.html>.

⁶³ Barthes, Roland. "BRECHT'S EPIC THEATRE AS A MODERN AVANT-GARDE AND ITS INFLUENCE TO POSTMODERN THEATRE." *Universitas Kristen Petra*. N.p., n.d. Web. 6 Apr. 2012. <faculty.petra.ac.id/rbasuki/brecht.htm>

⁶⁴ Barthes, Roland. "BRECHT'S EPIC THEATRE AS A MODERN AVANT-GARDE AND ITS INFLUENCE TO POSTMODERN THEATRE." *Universitas Kristen Petra*. N.p., n.d. Web. 6 Apr. 2012. <faculty.petra.ac.id/rbasuki/brecht.htm>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Mackey, Sally, and Simon Cooper. *Drama and theatre studies: for use with all Drama & Theatre Studies A & AS specifications*. Rev. ed. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 2000. Print (315)

the nature of the rotating set and drop-curtain there is no point at which a half-curtain would be required.

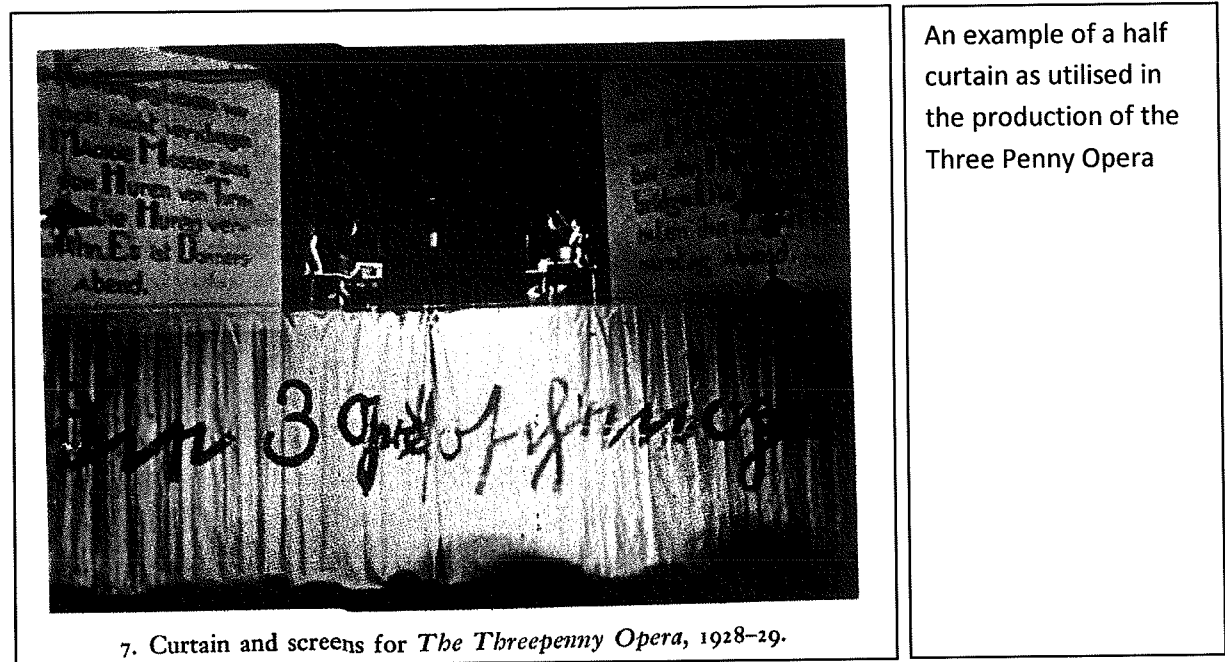


Figure 4: Three Penny Opera half curtain⁶⁷

Brecht's style of theatre lends itself to experimentation however fundamental elements of his style must be adhered to in a traditional production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, it is through such retention of aesthetic and theatrical elements that Brechtian Theatre "helps us to know the interpretive frameworks within which we operate, to transform our oppressive positions, and to develop what it takes to master the complex art of pleasurable production"⁶⁸. A performance of Brechtian theatre is granted considerable creative freedom within a firmly constructed framework in terms of scenic design and lighting use, and a genuine retention of such boundaries allows for the authenticity and stylistic naturalism as desired by Brecht to carry through and propel a performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, in classic Epic Theatre style.

⁶⁷ Koch, Carl. Curtains and Screens for The Threepenny Opera. 1928. Berliner Ensemble, Berlin. Brecht on Theatre; the Development of an Aesthetic. By John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992. Image 7. Print.

⁶⁸ Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print (47)

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<faculty.petra.ac.id/rbasuki/brecht.htm>.

This website page was compiled by university professor Roland Barthes; it provides a general overview of Epic Theatre, specifically in regards to its contributions to postmodern theatre performance. Barthes utilises a number of different sources within his writing and as such the majority of information can be verified and attributed to a published academic source. His language however is somewhat familiar and does not serve as brilliant quotable material, however in its familiarity it does provide a solid base upon which to further research. I utilised his site more as a tool with which to discover more sources and literature on Epic Theatre then as a basis for my Research Investigation.

"Brecht." *Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2012.
<faculty-staff.ou.edu/L/A-Robert.R.Lauer-1/Brecht.html>.

University professor Robert R. Lauer's webpage was comprised of a vast quantity of notes in regards to Brecht's Epic theatre. There were a couple of quotations that were useful in that they spoke of lighting and set conventions, however few of these were Mr. Lauer's own words, although they were all sourced and referenced appropriately. As such the site was, similarly to Roland Barthes, less useful as a primary source and more beneficial as a comprehensive list of available works of literature and alternative sources, ultimately the site referenced **Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print** numerous times and as such drove me to acquire it, ultimately leading me to one of the most useful Epic Theatre research books. Additionally the site allowed me to utilize quotes from books I would otherwise have been unable to acquire, by referencing Lauer's notes instead.

Brecht, Bertolt, and Michael Marland. "The Caucasian Chalk Circle - Bertolt Brecht" *Google*, N.p, n.d. Web. 8 Apr. 2012.

<http://books.google.ru/books?id=hfoCig8S1JgC&pg=PA110&lpg=PA110&dq=Berliner+Ensemble+rotating+stage&source=bl&ots=dAvZYTq4_X&sig=cDWH_SZLAAKHnGX2yt3gcD1Nh7g&hl=ru&sa=X&ei=wniBT4usMcvtsGagmITnBA&ved=0CDsQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Berliner%20Ensemble%20rotating%20>.

This source was ultimately one of the least useful that I included in my research investigation, this was in part due to the method with which I viewed. Utilising Google books I was provided with a restricted preview of the book, from which I decided that the book did not include enough specific information in regards to set and lighting as to be useful for my investigation. This is in part due to the fact that the book in question "The Caucasian Chalk Circle – Bertolt Brecht" was a script, and not an analysis or outline of Brechtian theatrical practice. It did however in its closing pages include notes specifically how to perform The Caucasian Chalk Circle in schools, in outlining this Michael Marland expresses how the original Berliner Ensembles performance appeared, and how that must differ from a school-based performance. As such I was able to extract a useful comment in regards to the rotating stage, and ignore the remaining comments in regards to adapting the piece.

"The Caucasian Chalk Circle." *South Wilts Grammar School for Girls*. N.p., n.d. Web. 7 Apr. 2012.

<www.swgs.wilts.sch.uk/SWGSFiles/Subjects/Drama/The%20Caucasian%20Chalk%20Circle%20commentary.pdf>

This source, of all those utilised throughout my Research Investigation, is the least trustworthy in regards to its origin and validity. It is not possible to track down the author of the source likely they are unaccredited due to its relative shortness and probable use as a worksheet for the Grammar School. However that is not to say that the information included within the source is worthless to my investigation, ultimately it proved a succinct and precise evaluation of Brechtian Marxist interpretation, which although not entirely relevant to my research question, certainly shed light on many of the set and lighting principles of Epic Theatre. Due to the uncertainty of the sources validity and origin I made

sure not to rely upon the information provided within it and instead utilised it as a means with which to contextualise *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in my introduction, ultimately discounting any critique or interpretation within the source, in favour of utilising it for my own personal knowledge base upon which to further heighten and narrow my research

Books:

Brecht, Bertolt, and Eric Bentley. *Bertolt Brecht: The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Print.

Eric Bentley's translation of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* was the version of Brecht's play with which I approached my Research Investigation. The Theatre Journal writes of Bentley's translation "At last—the definitive translations of one of the 20th century's most influential playwrights...Far superior to the competition." Certainly my experience with the text supports the Journal's conclusion; the text seemingly did not lose its tone and flow in translation from German to English. I did not however often quote the script directly within my Research Investigation as the nature of my question lent itself to stage-direction and general aesthetic not to precise dialogue as translated by Bentley, but evidently without such dialogue and translation my knowledge of the set requirements as outlined by the script would have been severely hindered. Furthermore Eric Bentley included within the work a "comments" section within which he writes about the social and political impact *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* had following its debut performance and, additionally, Bentley remarks as to the effectiveness of Brecht's scriptwriting in providing such impact and discussion. Although this comment section provided little in regards to practical theatrical elements such as lighting and set design it did serve to provide an outline for the importance of the production in its original form, and as such provided a much needed, definitive, breakdown of Brecht's purpose in the creation of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, the methods with which to achieve such goals outlined in the following two sources.

Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic*. [1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Print.

John Willet in his book "Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic" has accumulated a wealth of writings by Brecht and others regarding every elements of the Epic Theatre and as such this collection served as one of the primary driving forces behind my Research Investigation. The strength of this source is expressed in that a vast majority of the writings come directly from Brecht himself, numerous of these being in the form of newspaper articles, notes, both public and private, and letters between him and fellow practitioners. Such variety of sources provides numerous evidence and examples of the practical elements of Brechtian theatre. In terms of my research investigation there was one section from which I extracted the majority of my points: "Stage Design for the Epic Theatre" originally "Der Bühnenbau des epischen Theaters". This article was written in 1951 by Brecht and was included within the "Messingkauf" collection published within "Theaterarbeit". The article is written in description of Caspar Neher, who designed the majority of Brecht's productions, however in this manner it can be extracted and applied to any scenic designer attempting to recreate a Brechtian performance traditionally. As such I quoted this article numerous times in reference to the construction of scenic elements and general aesthetic of an Epic theatre performance. Although Brecht was famous for experimenting within his own theatre style the points outlined within this article are effectively fundamental to the Brechtian orthodox style and as such may be taken as the ultimate authority on Epic Theatre stage design, in light of such I endeavoured to extract as much specific, appropriate information as was possible, a task made easy by the clarity of the writing style and formulaic layout of the points and requirements of Epic Theatre scenic design. Additionally to that specific article there other articles within Willet's book that reference scenic design in regards to specific plays, where these were appropriate to the Caucasian Chalk Circle, or similar productions, they proved useful in once again detailing specific examples for the application of Brechtian theory. In terms of lighting the book proved to be my strongest source of evidence, specifically in regards to the passage titles "Making Visible the sources of light" once again this segment was translated directly from Brecht and thus serves as an authentic trustworthy explanation of lighting theory within the Epic Theatre.

(Additionally this source provided me with Figure 4, more detail in Images section)

Frick, John W. *Theatrical directors: a biographical dictionary*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994. Print.

This source was not hugely useful in its lack of specific information regarding set and lighting traditions of Brechtian theatre however it did include a particular quote which was appropriate and effective within my research investigation, ultimately detailing the necessity for the separation of theatrical elements. As such I was able to take that quote and utilise it as a means with which to structure my investigation focusing on each element of research individually, commenting on their specific use, not necessarily on the overall effect. The weaknesses of the source is to be found in its scope its very use of the word "dictionary" suggest that each entry will not contain specific detail or evidence and for the most part this was true throughout Frick's book. However the source was not written as an in-depth research into Epic Theatre and as such provided a concise and basic introduction to Brecht's style and theory, serving a similar purpose to that of the website sources I utilised; as a spring-board for further research and enhanced precision.

Mackey, Sally, and Simon Cooper. *Drama and theatre studies: for use with all Drama & Theatre Studies A & AS specifications*. Rev. ed. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 2000. Print

I found this source in a very deliberate search for one of Brecht's poems "The Curtains" although I used this source only once in reference to that specific poem, without it a useful counter argument to an early point would have been lost, in such a respect this source proved a valuable element of my investigation. The poem was difficult to find anywhere other than within this book, although mentioned across numerous websites it was never correctly sourced and referenced, ultimately rendering the poem useless, until I found this source that directly and correctly attributes Brecht with the poem's creation. However it is important to note that this book was written with A and AS education requirements in mind as such does not include information of a higher academic standard, as such its use as a primary source was severely limited, providing broad and vague comments as to Brechtian theory in addition to play synopses as opposed to the necessary explanation and evidence of practical elements. In

light of this I decided not to use the book other than to reference the poem, in favour of more academically rich sources.

Mumford, Meg. *Bertolt Brecht*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print

Meg Mumford's "Bertolt Brecht" was the basis upon which I founded my entire research investigation, the source was critical in the creation of both my Research question and the continued propulsion of the investigation. Meg Mumford works as a lecturer in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of New South Wales. She is a well-respected author in Brecht and the Epic Theatre and has published numerous works on the subject of Brecht and contemporary reimaginings of his style. As such her work can be viewed as a trustworthy exploration of Brechtian Theory and practice, additionally her constant reference to theory and evidence ensures that the book does not comprise of her interpretations, but rather evidenced fact. Mumford endeavours to provide an overview of Brecht's life and work providing a clear and detailed analysis of his theory and purpose, however most importantly for my Investigation Mumford provides a detailed account of the 1954 production of the Berliner Ensembles *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* as such aspects of scenic design, scene transition, drop cloth and prop creation are all detailed along with specific references to Brecht's theory. The primary strength of the source was in the formulaic approach to the production Mumford outlines the context of the performance, the aim of the performance and slowly divulges into the specifics of each production element, paying particular attention to Scene 2. However despite the strengths of this source it did have notable holes in its information most importantly in regards to lighting theory, and the final scene of the performance, the trial. It would have surely strengthened the source had lighting been included within the breakdown of the performance, as despite its comparative simplicity to set and props it holds an equal level of significance, and seemingly Mumford's book ignores this fact and fails to draw any meaningful description or explanation of the 1954 production's use of light. Furthermore the absence of the final scene in the production breakdown is surprising in that it is ultimately, being the concluding scene, one of the most stylistically interesting and thematically important scenes within the play. The source would have proved even more useful had it shifted its focus away from the set of the wedding scene towards the scenic design of the Chalk Circle Trial.

Images:

Figure 1: Schnur, Volker. Karl Von Appen's scenography for Scene 2. 1954. Archiv Darstellende Kunst, Berlin. Bertolt Brecht. By Meg Mumford. USA: Routledge, 2009. 111. Print

Figure 2: Unknown. Berliner Ensemble: The Chalk Circle. 1948. Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre, Berlin.
<http://www.english.emory.edu/DRAMA/ExpressionImage.html>. Web. 12 Apr. 2012

Figure 3: KaiDib Films International. Caucasian Chalk Circle - Drop Cloth. N.d. Theatre History: German, Berlin. Hekman Digital Archive. Web. 3 Apr. 2012

Figure 4: Koch, Carl. Curtains and Screens for The Threepenny Opera. 1928. Berliner Ensemble, Berlin. Brecht on Theatre; the Development of an Aesthetic. By John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992. Image 7. Print

The Four images that I utilised within my investigation proved to be as useful in many respects as my textual sources. Often an image is difficult to connect to its photographer, especially when the image is found on multiple websites that fail to attribute the image to a specific individual. Additionally in order to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the images I utilised images that are specific to the original Berliner Ensembles performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. There are numerous images of modern-day performances of Brecht's play however it is unlikely that they follow the exact traditions of Brechtian drama as evidenced in the Berliner Ensembles performance in 1954. Attributing my images to a photographer proved a challenge however Meg Mumford references Figure 1 to Volker Schnur, both Figure 2 and Figure 3 are not attributed, however it is possible that, due to the similar time frame and subject matter that they were taken by Volker Schnur, however this is not necessarily the case. Figure 4 taken from Willett's "Brecht on theatre; the development of an aesthetic" is of *The Threepenny Opera* taken sometime between 1928 and 1929 by Carl Koch. Ultimately the image sources served as both an illuminating reference point but

also as a visual representation of the often mentioned stylistic naturalism, as evidenced in Figures 1 and 2 particularly. In order to obtain a thorough understanding of the principles of Epic Theatre set design pictures are a useful tool with which to solidify written theory and explanation.