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The Female Economic Independence in *Mother Courage and Her Children*

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Abstract

This research investigates female economic independence throughout the war in Brecht's play *Mother Courage and her Children* (1941). Mother Courage is a single mother alongside her three children making sacrifices and hustling to provide for herself and her children not being dependent on a male to live but only on her personal wagon. The methods used to prove her perseverance to achieve economic independence are through the lenses of two materialist feminist theories the first one is Simone De Beauvoir and her theories are taken from her book *The Second Sex* (2011). The second theory belongs to Charlotte Gilman and her book *Women and Economics* (1898). These theories are used to analyze the text of the play and spot the whereabouts of materialist feminism and how this character is following what is called materialist feminism, even though it was written before the theories. At the end of this study, a clear picture is formed of how Mother Courage truly proved herself worthy of the title "Mother Courage" in a sense of achieving or at least never giving up to create her

financial goals to be an independent working mother through the worst possible scenarios.

Keywords: Materialist Feminism, Mother Courage, War, Economic Independence.

Bertolt Brecht

Brecht traveled to Berlin to help variety Reinhardt's former Deutsches Theater in the Soviet sector with the 1949 staging of *Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder* (*Mother Courage and Her Children*). Helene Weigel, his wife, portrayed the title character. As a result, Brecht has established their own business, the Berliner Ensemble, and moved back to Berlin permanently. After the Ensemble, Brecht put his attention toward writing his works. Because of his peculiar creative goals, some people in Eastern Europe began to doubt his morality, and because of his Communist affiliations, those in the West criticized or shunned him. In addition to receiving the Stalin Peace Prize in Moscow, he performed at the Théâtre des Nations in Paris in 1955 to rave reviews. The next year, he had a heart attack and passed away suddenly in East Berlin. Brecht's ability to compose in a range of literary styles was his greatest strength (Britannica, 2022). He was a tireless worker, a restless assembler of ideas that were not always his own, a man of sharp humor, and a man of extraordinary musical and visual awareness, but he frequently failed at creating believable characters or giving his plays tension and shape. Because he was a perfectionist, he forced the German theater to underplay, which was the opposite of what it typically did to a book (Britannica, 2022). As a producer, he valued narrative sequences that were succinct, humorous, and well organized. He started by constructing ideas based on his preferences—and frequently even his shortcomings (Britannica, 2022).

Mother Courage and Her Children

In the 1940s, when it seemed as though the world and Europe were turning inside out, Brecht wrote and performed the original version of *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941). The advent of the Nazi party and the Holocaust caused a significant social and political change in Brecht's homeland Germany following World War I. The majority of the Western world was fighting alongside Germany in the Second World War at the time of these occurrences. Because of his political beliefs and outspoken resistance, Brecht was expelled

from Germany; after landing in America, he rewrote this play. Among the historical occurrences that are depicted in *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941) are the Holocaust and the Second World War. The Holocaust, the Second World War, and Brecht's political theory, Marxism, which was prominent in Europe at the time, all had a significant impact on *Mother Courage and Her Children*. These social and economic factors, the atrocities done by Nazi Germany, and the fate of the workers all have an impact on the play's plot and message. The sociopolitical setting of the Holocaust catastrophe had a significant impact on the play's theme and tone. *Mother Courage and Her Children* was published in the early 1940s, at the start of World War II and after nearly ten years of a systematic Jewish genocide and Nazi German tyranny of the "lesser" classes of society. The piece skillfully portrays the enduring dread of Nazi Germany (1933-1945), which takes place in the 1600s during the Thirty Years' War. The Holocaust is a well-known example of human cruelty and depravity. The tone of the play is greatly influenced by this idea. The story's narrative framework makes the killings of Courage's boys seem senseless and random. Through the massacre, Mother Courage faces the egotistical, cowardly, and nameless self. Mother Courage confronts rapacious, spineless, unidentified warriors who scatter destruction, death, and hardship at random, as it marches through the ruins. Even when a faceless, horrible power is raining agony down on her, Mother Courage is still trying to survive (Brodsky, 1998). Not a deity, but humanity created this ability. This play's unending sorrow is entirely the result of human behavior. The entire work is permeated by this senselessness, which evokes a feeling of dread and hopelessness akin to the unfathomable genocide of the German Holocaust. Conflict is the primary focus of this play, which immediately links Courage's story to modern European civilization and establishes a connection to another social setting—the World Wars. Brecht uses metaphor to contrast the Thirty Years War period with modern society in light of the total devastation and suffering of World War I. Brecht uses this contrast to hint at the intensity and duration of World War II. In her paper "Post-war Iconographies: Wandering Women in Brecht, Duras, and Kluge," scholar Caroline Rupprecht argues that the devastation of war "manifests itself in the depiction of actual or expecting mothers who wander through territories in which they have no home – not unlike the millions of displaced persons who

wandered across the face of Europe in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War” (2006, p.36).

The socioeconomic condition in Europe and Germany, notably the energy of Marxism, which is particularly evident in the characters of Courage and Yevtte, served as inspiration for this drama. Karl Marx’s ideas on the social revolution were hotly debated throughout Europe in the first ten years of the 20th century. *Mother Courage* is an obvious example of a worker whose identity is determined by her work, the money she makes, and the things she produces, by Marxist theories of capitalism. Marx’s claim is based on the separation of a person’s identity from their worth, power, and profit as well as the classification of workers based on the kind of labor they perform (Daram, 2006, p.37).

The working class’s resistance is the thing that is linked to the socioeconomic issue that has an impact on this drama. The themes of the play make this very evident. The Nazis outlawed independent unions in 1933, which intensified working-class antagonism toward them (Brodsky, 1998, p.1). It is discussed that “common economic conditions, a history of class solidarity, and a shared hate of fascism” served as the foundation for the working class unification (Brodsky, 1998, p.1). *Mother Courage* takes on the play’s main task of learning to rely on her resources, despite the soldiers’ individual attempts to manipulate and deceive her and the social milieu of the war posing a threat to her ability to grow independently the difficulties are similar to this task.

In his epic drama *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Brecht depicted the tumultuous sociopolitical and social environment of his time. Brecht was involved in pointing out and discussing society’s flaws. The Holocaust, post-and pre-war Germany, the emergence of Marxism, and the struggles of the working class have influenced all the ideas, characters, tone, and setting of this drama. The turbulent environment in which it was initially conceived and made gives the episodic composition about conflict and resilience weight and importance (Brodsky, 1998, p.2).

The Thirty Years’ War is the setting for Brecht’s *Mother Courage and Her Children*. *Mother Courage*, also known as Anna Fierling, with her three children, Eilif, Swiss Cheese, and Kattrin, live sometime around 1624. They move about handing the soldiers various supplies and ammo while pulling a cart. The Sergeant and the Recruiting Officer meet *Mother Courage* and her children in the opening scene. While recruiting new soldiers, the army recruiter is also

looking for her eldest son, Eilif. Despite being portrayed as a bold and strong young person, likely, Eilif's mental faculties are not as strong as his physical ones. Mother Courage has a strong objection to Eilif enlisting in the military. However, Eilif displays an interest. In the second scene, in 1625 and 1626, Mother Courage sustains her business by travelling with the Swedish army in Poland. Her second son Swiss Cheese is now the regiment's paymaster. Eilif, in the army, has built a reputation for raiding peasants' oxen to provide meat to the army, especially for the high-ranked commanders. Mother Courage looks happy with the success of her children and the profit that she gains from the ongoing war. Three years later, Mother Courage, Kattrin, and Yvett Potier, the camp's prostitute, encounter a surprise attack by the Catholics. Meanwhile, Swiss Cheese shows up with the regimental cash box. While he tries to bring the box to his commander, Catholic spies kidnap him. Mother Courage attempts to bribe the spies, however, she bargains so long for the bribe money they change their minds kill Swiss Cheese. Mother Courage is seen towing her cart to Poland, Moravia, Italy, and Bavaria in upcoming episodes. Along with Kattrin, she is traveling somewhere with a priest who requires immediate security. Eilif stays behind as he departs in search of his mother, a prisoner being held by soldiers. Another family of peasants was killed, and their house was looted. However, during times of peace, such an act is not valued, and Eilif is executed. Eilif's passing is hinted at rather than mentioned openly throughout the play. Mother Courage does not appear to be responding in any particular manner to Eilif's punishment and goes about her daily activities while knowing that the peace would soon be disturbed. Mother Courage and Kattrin appear in the concluding scenes, which take place in 1636 in the protestant town of Halle in Bavaria. The Catholics pose a threat to the community. While Mother Courage is out buying some cheap products, the Catholic Lieutenant warns the locals that they will be shot dead if they cause any problem, Mother Courage leaves Kattrin alone. Kattrin climbs up on a roof and starts to drum to let the community know about the raid. Men in uniform fired at Kattrin with their firearms. When Mother Courage returns, she finds Kattrin's dead body. As she drives the cart and sings a lullaby, she adds, "I wish I could pull the wagon by myself. I can get by even though there isn't much left" (Brecht, 1939, p.111).

Tracing Mother Courage sexuality throughout the play, one might notice that Mother Courage lacks sex or is asexual, she is a difficult female character to

categorize. It would be incorrect to assume that Mother Courage is completely free of her sexuality in light of the opening scene, in which she lists all the lovers she has had children with and the several lovers who have assisted her in raising them. She also benefits from The Cook's attention to her. Even though Mother Courage is the female mother figure and is in charge of raising the children, her situation is more nuanced than what may be assumed from the way that parenting is normally portrayed. One might contend her extreme personality traits, such as her avarice, had an equal impact on her (Coskun, 2015, p.28).

Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* does not critically examine motherhood as a separate subject, as is typical of Brecht's later works; the play is extremely critical of the traditional family system. In reality, the way Mother Courage's family is portrayed makes this criticism clear. Mother Courage and the hiring official talk about the distinctive family names, fathers, and nationalities of each of her three children in the opening scene. Even a few of the last names are slightly different from those of the biological father. On the surface, Mother Courage seems to debunk common misconceptions regarding the sexual orientation, marital status, and family dynamics of women. However, the play's climactic sequences fall short of substantiating this compelling case for the subjectivity of women. More precisely, Mother Courage is reduced to becoming a mother early in the play and loses the perspective that first gave her the appearance of a woman who is at ease with her sexuality. Regarding her three children from three separate lovers, she was quite open. In the end, the drama is centered on the parenting choices she made throughout the conflict. Her acts are solely intended to support her family. Her moral beliefs are influenced by her desire to assist her children in becoming mature, responsible individuals. Her moral choices only have an impact on her children, thus her parenting is analyzed much more closely (Coskun, 2015, p.29).

Mother Courage is mostly shown as a mother, even though her gender identity and sexual orientation have a big impact on how effective a mother she may be. The dialectic between these two polar opposite forces, however, is insufficient to alter how mothers are typically viewed. It is amazing how Mother Courage, despite being a wonderful example of the stereotypical motherhood case describes, runs the risk of being portrayed as a callous mother who "fails" to provide her children with the "necessities" of childrearing because of her occupation, the dynamics of the war, and her lack of empathy. It becomes nearly

hard for the audience to refrain from making generalizations about parenting given the presence of a mother who frequently works exclusively for her children and another mother who consistently fails at her attempts for a variety of reasons (Coskun, 2015, p.30). The argument being made here is that certain people will always support wars for their poor economic interests, whether deliberately or unknowingly. Some people do it out of necessity, in Mother Courage's case, it was to care for her children; in other people's cases, it might be for different survival needs. Mother Courage's participation in the struggle serves as an illustration of another play dynamic, namely, imprisonment or the sense of being a slave to the war (Coskun, 2015, p. 31). Even if it is necessary, Brecht bans his character from supporting and mucking up war. It is challenging to resist doing so in light of Mother Courage's loss of her children, despite his pleadings to the contrary. A soldier foretells the situation at the beginning of the play as the sergeant said: "when a war gives you all you earn, one day it may claim something in return!" (Brecht, 1939, p.33)

The play's portrayal of Mother Courage as a war dealer ultimately explains why she encountered obstacles. Only economic considerations have an impact on this function. Mother Courage's subjectivity is consigned to a play-related function within the context of this contradictory continuity, despite the play's accomplishment in portraying the still-operating system of the war economy. It is questionable whether she genuinely possesses subjectivity, to put it another way. The moral choices made by mother courage, who sets the play's events in motion, also greatly contribute to the war's cruelty and her children's deaths. This symbolism establishes the drama's main theme. Brecht aimed to emphasize these typical wartime involvements and their survival, even though mother courage's involvement in the war economy is unsupported by any other dynamics or complexions addressing her subjective reaction to the events (Coskun, 2015, p.32).

Mother Courage faces the risk of abandoning some of her other traits if she restricts her emotional, cognitive, and emotional activities and responses to those that are functional. Her composure and lack of emotional outbursts after the death of her children, in particular, have made a big difference. The possibility for the reproduction of normative attitudes on parenthood is one of the main effects of such emotional deficiency. She seems to be quite concerned about the long-term financial stability of her children. She does not want her sons to join

the military and risk their lives. When Kattrin sustains a facial injury, she also exhibits a lot of kindness and compassion for the victim and shows genuine concern for her well-being. Although she always emphasizes the importance of working hard to gain money to support her children, this rationale also results in their deaths. Mother Courage's promise to keep making the same mistakes so she can benefit from her avarice hides the real "impact" of losing a loved one. The emphasis Brecht places on the resilience of the capitalist system dwarfs the emotional consolation. Considering the circumstances in which the aforementioned symbolism and obligations could lead to the normative perceptions of motherhood that exist today, the audience never experiences the play's obvious emotional impact. The conflict exposes the army's corruption. Soldiers steal from the army, while sergeants accept bribes. The current situation benefits Mother Courage as well. Because of her no-nonsense demeanor and constant bartering, Mother Courage stands out among bribe takers and corrupt officials in a milieu where practically everyone is corrupted. Every time Mother Courage negotiates or uses her professional skills to the fullest throughout the story, she loses her children. When a sergeant tries to enroll Eilif, Mother Courage is busy bargaining for the belts that the army officials wanted to buy. When Swiss Cheese is abducted, Mother Courage bargains with the spies so vehemently that they decide to murder her child. After Kattrin has died, Mother Courage walks toward the town to stock the inexpensive products being sold by the storeowners who are escaping. Because she negotiated for an excessive period and left her kids unattended, the audience may label her conduct as "improper" parenting as they watch the events unfold and may refer to her as a "bad mother" in the broadest sense. Even though it is not the major topic of the conversation, people would disagree with the assertion that Mother Courage was a "bad mother." Some believe that the very existence or appearance of such normative conceptions repeats and supports the normative definition of motherhood, whether or not it is presented from an affirmative posture. A decision has been made she would not have achieved to feed her children anyway. So, if she had not worked that hard for her business, would we blame her for not providing enough for her kids, as a "good mother" should? Most people would not think so because as already mentioned there is no such a valid argument (Coskun, 2015, p.33). In the midst of war, Mother Courage makes her

best to get money; this is seen in scene one when she bargains to sell a belt to the sergeant:

Mother Courage. Half a florin. Two florins is what a belt like that's worth. Climbs down

Again.

Sergeant. 'Taint new. Let me get out of this damned wind and have a proper look at it.

Goes behind the cart with the buckle.

Mother Courage. Ain't what I call windy.

Sergeant. I s'pose it might be worth half a florin, it's silver.

Mother Courage (joining him behind the cart): It's six solid ounces (I. 269-275).

One can therefore question whether the drama runs the risk of increasing this already contentious discussion, given that the play connects Mother Courage's avarice with being an "insensitive" or "unsuitable" mother. Is it ever possible that it will be the opposite? Would Mother Courage's children have a chance of surviving if she were portrayed as being less greedy? The circumstances surrounding Mother Courage are so contradictory that it is difficult to reply. Mother Courage is forced to make moral choices because of her surroundings, yet those choices would be wrong in any circumstance. If she had not been so committed to her business, she would not have been so intent on it.

It is uncertain to what extent Brecht accomplishes his purpose of commenting on Mother Courage's experience as a mother in her situation and blaming capitalism given how frequently he denied Mother Courage her subjective or emotional responses. Mother Courage sings a gloomy lullaby while lamenting the loss of her children as Katrin is about to die. Even while the spectator is invited to take into account the continuous existence of the war economy in this instance, any challenges a mother might face are promptly discounted. Instead of adding to the difficulty of a mother's situation under capitalism, this attitude opens the door to the potential of commodifying Mother Courage's children and supports an "insensitive mother" (Coskun, 2015, p. 34). More than her purportedly "insensitive" parenting, Mother Courage's strong love of avarice and capitalism undermines any identification the audience may have had with her. These excessive Mother Courage characteristics will

probably be seen as a mother's attitude toward her children, even though they are the natural outcomes of a mother in a wartime environment. Due to her general lack of empathy, Mother Courage in this instance runs the risk of having the viewers identify her parenting with these exaggerated features of her personality. These elements were probably included by Brecht to prevent the audience from empathizing with a character who exploits the conflict and seeks to gain an advantage by quietly endorsing it (Coskun, 2015, p.35).

The Thirty Years' War, which lasted from 1618 to 1648, served as an inspiration to *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Since it lasted for thirty years, the phrase "thirty-year war" speaks for itself; at the time, it was believed to be the longest war in history. According to Gardiner, the altercation took place at a bad time and resulted in an estimated 8 million deaths, it is recognized as the worst time in European history. This war was caused by disputes between Lutherans and Catholics in the Roman Empire. Brecht emphasized women's responsibility in his play *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Women played a variety of responsibilities during the thirty-year struggle for survival, including those of parents, family members, and company owners, all of which are discussed in this text. Not to mention, patriarchal-minded males said that Mother Courage erred by departing from the truth. She is merely a war agent. Mother Courage is separated from the joy, tranquility, and other cultural aspects of society as she attends to her business. Additionally, the weather throughout the play is unchanged, which is winter. This is to reflect the gloomy atmosphere the devastation of war that stole life from everyone. During this Thirty Years War, she continues to sell goods and food to the army and support her family out of her canteen cart. She became well known while still only focused on living by navigating a city (Riga) under attack while pulling a cart of bread to sell to the Swedish army; her name ironically came out of her financial necessity she was set on making money. In scene one, she says the reason why she was named that way. She stated, "Courage is the name they gave me because I was scared of going broke, sergeant, so I drove me cart right through the bombardment of Riga with fifty loaves of bread aboard. They were going mouldy, it was high time, hadn't any choice really" (I.72-76). Therefore, Mother Courage's main concern was not to feed the soldiers but to sell her loaves in order to make money.

When things are going well, Mother Courage never stops working; she persistently haggles, bargains, and relies on the money she makes from winning

the war as her source of income. She assumes the role of the play's sage woman and, as her song suggests, provides sage counsel on the conflict at all times. For instance, praising a brave soldier implies that a campaign was unsuccessful, a leader makes his team accountable for errors, and the poor requires bravery. Similarly, small victories are more common than large ones. She is aware that in difficult circumstances, qualities become useless. Ironically, Courage will both see and foretell the murders of her children in scene one. The price the battle will exact from Courage's way of life is the children she will lose while conducting business. Gilman states that, "a woman who understands the world and lives in it can be far more to her children than was previously thought possible—a global servant rather than a domestic servant. After she has a child, the world will be a different place for that child" (Gilman, 1898, p.48). Mother Courage insisted, in some ways murderously, that only her children would escape the battle even while Courage firmly protected them. She is brave because of her want to survive again, which usually makes her bashful. For instance, in scene four, she coerces a soldier to bow to oppressive power in a brutal manner before sadly learning a lesson from her song and giving up on a planned uprising. The murdered body of her son was placed in the background. She will not give up even after Kattrin has left. Instead, she will keep pulling the cart, dooming her to a life of labor.

According to Gilman in her book *Women and Economics* woman's "exclusive confinement" to the home devalues her humanity and causes her to develop "mental myopia," or the inability to see beyond the immediate surroundings (Gilman, 1898, p.56).

One needs to adopt a feminist perspective in order to defend equality, oppose male dominance, and fight for women's justice (Fadhil and Allah, 2020, p.23). Brecht makes it clear that because Mother Courage is naturally preoccupied with survival. Mother Courage's cart is a symbol of financial independence and security, which provides freedom from the oppression of the patriarchal society; the cart also represents fortitude and perseverance in the face of difficulty. The image of Mother Courage as a survivor pulling a cart only adds to the suffering of women in society. Subtly conveyed is the dominance of men over women. In other words, it can be difficult for women to work because they should not have to put themselves in danger at work or in hostile environments. She stands to benefit the most from the battle and has a stake in it.

This assertion holds that Mother Courage has created warfare. In this situation, she frequently encounters criticism and sympathy—two polar opposite responses. She draws criticism for having a corporate mindset and seeing conflict as an opportunity to earn. Mother Courage found a way to support herself and her children as long as she has her wagon. She came up with a plan for her firm that would enable her to fight without the assistance of soldiers (Farmer 2008). Despite the cart being damaged during the war, breaking down, and showing how worn it is, the family is still taken care of by moving the cart from one location to another. However, the greater significance of the cart is related to the heavier burden. Mother Courage would not have lived without conflict.

Despite the difficulties of the battle, Mother Courage was bravely moving across the various fighting zones. She has not taken any people on road trips since she wants to protect the kids and her future. On the other hand, a corporation may be suspicious if it is moving in one particular way. Another element is how the actual pattern is evaluated. The canteen cart cannot support the four parts of a roof. The cart is therefore required for the battle. Mother Courage transports urgently needed goods throughout Europe on a soldier-pulled cart (Salman, 2017).

De Beauvoir is investigating her claim in in *The Second Sex* (1949), in the minds of men, women are the second sex. Women are undervalued in society and culture. She believes that rather than being naturally female, women are “made” to be that way (2011, p.995).The writings of Beauvoir offer a thorough examination of the women of the time and their traits as perceived by males. Despite the loss of her children yet the cart remains. Mother Courage will not be able to handle this burden when she needs to start pulling her own cart. In the closing, scene 12, Mother Courage picks up herself together again by securing herself to her cart. Even though she lost all of her children yet somehow she hopes she will be able to pull the cart by herself to achieve that she puts aside all of her motherly emotions and focuses on one target, which is to be independent and break free from the patriarchal oppression as shown in this scene:

MOTHER COURAGE. (Harnessing herself to the cart): Hope I can pull the cart all right

By meself. Be all right, nowt much inside it. Got to get back in

Business again.

(Another regiment with its fifes and drums marches past in the background).

MOTHER COURAGE. Tugging the cart: Take me along! (Brecht, 1942. XII. 42-49)

Mother Courage's independence abandoning the conventional stereotype of motherhood rebelling to attain equality in a social and patriarchal sense that detaches abandoning social constructs and patriarchy leaving her emotions or feminine soft side aside and pertaining to reason instead of feeling her decisions setting a new feminine power on display. By establishing her personal economic independence with perseverance and will to be economically free to fulfill her financial needs away from the pressure enforced on her by society and the chain of power set to erase women's role. Brecht constructed a character that is powerful, witty, and determined to keep going even during the most difficult hardship, which is war. Brecht built a female empowerment character and put her to show how determined and tenacious women can be. She broke the motherly stereotype to accomplish a higher goal, which is to reinforce the thought of women's powerful capabilities without any form of dependency or support from the male supremacy. She refused the shackles of society and chose not to settle down with either The Chaplain or The Cook, to be fully self-independent despite her vicious environment. It is evident in the lines from scene nine:

Mother Courage. Sometimes I sees meself driving through hell with me cart selling

Brimstone, or across heaven with packed lunches for hungry souls. Give

Me my kids what's left, let's find some place they ain't shooting, and I'd

Like a few more years undisturbed.

The Cook. You and me could get that inn going, Courage, think it over. Made up me mind

In the night, I did: back to Utrecht with or without you, starting today.
Mother Courage. Have to talk to Kattrin. That's a bit too quick for me; I'm against

Making decisions all freezing cold and nowt inside you...(Brecht, 1942. IX. 25-34)

Mother Courage somehow still will not abandon her children and be under a man's control. After the cook asked her to abandon her daughter and stay with him, she stated that she will not accept it:

Mother Courage. Shut your big mouth. I said not so loud.

The Cook. Light's on in parson's house. We can try singing.

Mother Courage. Cooky, how's she to pull the cart on her own? War scares her.

She'll never stand it. The dreams she must have...(Brecht, 1942. IX. 64-69)

Mother Courage proved that she does not need a man to survive despite the darkest circumstances she faced she remained focused on financial gain, and in certain scenes, she made the best out of war flourished and prospered and was creative to invent her own project.

The moment that private property is established for women, it frees them from patriarchal control. De Beauvoir discusses the difficulties that women actually encounter in achieving this goal. The establishment of private property that permanently deposes women alters their destiny. Each woman's past is closely related to her family's history of inheritance. What considered existence was in the males' property, which was more important to the males than anything else was. Women were not allowed to inherit at that time; even while a piece of property continues to exist after a person's physical body has passed away as an earthly and bodily manifestation of their eternal soul. This ongoing existence is only feasible while the property is still under their possession (De Beauvoir, 2011, p.162). Mother Courage defies this standard and achieves her

prosperity in scene seven she was able to reach financial independence in the description of the scene as follows:

(Chaplain, Mother Courage and Kattrin are pulling the cart, which is hung with new wares. Mother Courage is wearing a necklace of silver).

Mother Courage: I won't have you folk spoiling my war for me. I'm told it kills off

The weak, but they're write-off in peace time too. And war gives

Its people a better deal. (Brecht, 1942.VII. 1-7)

Here Mother Courage clearly states that war is her main source of living despite its severe damage and the losses it costs; she is still convinced that without war she will lose her source of income, which equals her value.

Women according to De Beauvoir are obliged to comply with unfulfilling existence and they must obey their husbands and stay inside the house cleaning and cooking and raising the children, yet Mother Courage refused to stay bound to these restrictions and went to achieve her independence only by securing herself a job, she can free herself (De Beauvoir, 2011, pp.330-331).

Mother Courage knows that only by sticking to her cart she can achieve her independence from this slavery system as she stated it is her livelihood not just a cart in scene three as follows:

Mother courage. (Firmly) I got to have it, but sooner run myself ragged looking

For a bidder than sell outright. And why? The cart's our Livelihood. It's a chance for you, Yevette; who friend to Advise you, am I right? (Brecht, 1942. III. 481-485)

Because of the patriarchal system women had a parasitic life although they were not allowed to participate in activities because of their gender; female members of the furious class were forced to watch events from the sidelines. The working woman will be able to acquire the skills that the parasitic woman, whether noble or bourgeois, never gained once economic power passes into their hands. Women are free to live in chaos as the revolution is put down; however, when society is restructured, she is once more tightly enslaved (De Beauvoir, 2011, p.159). Several of the prostitutes who exploited this freedom were successful. High gallantry offered more opportunities for female liberty than the

life of an “honest lady,” much as it did during the courtesan era. The typical spinster hides in the shadow of the paternal family or looks for others who are like her within the walls of convents because she is familiar with those settings, despite the fact that she has full legal capacity and that the laws are abstract and meaningless; she lacks social standing and economic independence. Women’s circumstances will always be poor as long as their freedom remains adverse. The wife lives a parasitic lifestyle, is uneducated, and needs exceptional circumstances in order to think of and carry out any concrete project. She was abused because of her sexuality among the nobility and bourgeoisie. It is clear how uncommon it was for a wife to act—or even to be noticed—in such situations. Queens and regents have the uncommon good fortune of being lifted above their sex (De Beauvoir, 2011, p.145). Here, this applies to Yvette; she worked as a prostitute to achieve her freedom through the most indecent ways, yet she managed to gain power in times of war where the soldiers would listen to her, prior to becoming the only character to become wealthy throughout the war by marrying and obtaining the land of a lecherous old Colonel. Yvette originally appears as a camp prostitute. She is a war-torn lady who is adamant about safeguarding her interests despite lamenting the loss of her love. Brecht emphasizes the cost Yvette pays for her prosperity by showing her deformity, which is her return home after many years of marriage appearing obese and repulsive. It is interesting how Yvette functions for Kattrin as both a mystery and a teaching resource. She would demonstrate the counterfeit feminine sexuality that Kattrin imitates while also reducing Kattrin’s capacity for love (Coskun, 2015, p.14). Even though Mother Courage asked her to help her free her son, she occupied a good position and at the end, she was able to raise to the status of a countess, she achieved her social and financial independence through her immoral job. Once, Mother Courage was unable to provide the army side with the necessary supplies due to the challenging negotiations in her field of employment. The scenario of the action contains yet another lengthy discussion regarding the canteen. It would seem that Yvette, the camp prostitute, got her position by selling her body for the money required to buy Mother Courage’s canteen. The idea calls on a mother to have the courage to spend money in order to preserve her son’s life. Brecht characterizes Yvette’s Colonel as a “negative monster,” a lusty figure whose major goal is to emphasize the steep price Yvette must pay for her labor:

Yvette. Yes my friend thinks I should clinch it, but I'm not sure. If its only a pledge ... so

You agree we ought to buy outright?

Colonel. I agree, pet.

Mother Courage. Best look and see if you can find anything for sale then; maybe you will

If you don't rush it, take your friend along with you, say a week or

Fortnight, might find something suits you.

Yvette. Then lets go looking. I adore going around looking for things, I adore going

Around with you, Pmuch, isn't such fun; isn't it? No matter if it takes a fortnight.

How soon would you pay the money back if you got it? (Brecht, 1942. III. 486-495)

Similarly According to Gilman's Women and Economics, which was decades ahead of its time, women's dependency on money and the excessive emphasis placed on appearance to ensure their financial survival amount to a low-level form of prostitution. She said that; "women's economic benefit comes from the power of sex attraction, from the debutante with the most bouquets to the odalisque with the most bracelets." She referred to it as, "the open market of vice" or prostitution (1898,p.40).Yvette gained power that is obvious in scene three when Mother Courage asked her:

Mother Courage.Yvette, it's no time for checking your cart, s'posing it is yours. You

Promised you'd talk to sergeant about Swiss Cheese, there ain't a minute

To lose, they say in an hour he'll be court martialled.

Yvette. Just let me count the shirts. (Brecht, 1942. III. 516-519)

Yvette has the power and connection to arrange meeting with people of high rank in the military. Yvette says in scene three: "I fixed to meet that one-eyed fellow in the copse, he should be there by now" (Brecht, 1942. III. 32).

De Beauvoir discusses the difficulties that women actually encounter in achieving this goal. The establishment of private property that permanently deposes women alters their destiny. Women are compelled to maintain strict chastity in return. Despite the taboos, matriarchal societies permit a great lot of behavioral latitude; premarital chastity is rarely needed, and adultery is not generally frowned upon. The paterfamilias has the authority to put a guilty woman to death because it would be the worst of crimes to endanger granting heritage rights to a foreign offspring. Instead, once a woman is a man's property, he requires a virgin and perfect fidelity under penalty of severe punishment (De Beauvoir, 2011, p.119). Contrarily, when society disintegrates, women gain more autonomy while also losing dominance since they are no longer seen as being under the rule of men. They are left with just a terrible type of freedom, one that only manifests as laziness and frivolity (De Beauvoir, 2011, p.183). This is seen in the circumstances where *Mother Courage* makes use of the war that was ongoing to prosper economically. Her entire life had been devoted to making sure that others, including her children, were secure and happy. She is, however, forced to choose between her livelihood and survival, as things get worse. Since it portrays the terrible lives of those who suffer because of this conflict between faith and politics, the play is typically referred to as an anti-war drama. It is clear that "for feminists, Brechtian techniques offer a way to examine the material conditions of gender behavior (how they are internalized, opposed, and changed) and their interaction with other socio-political factors such as class" (Johns, 2021). *Mother Courage* is a narcissistic con artist who is shrewd. This is shown through her dispute with the cook over a sad chicken she wants to sell him and by her drive to keep working and earning money despite gradually losing her daughter and other children. Such a woman is undoubtedly a victim of war like all other victims in any community, despite being a mother who is moved by love for her children (Betti, 2021).

Brecht wants his viewpoint on women to be distinctive. Being categorized *Mother Courage* behaves like a hyena on the battlefield. She exhibits her callous contempt for the suffering when she refuses to let her pricey shirts be torn into bandages for the wounded Protestants of the city that had been overrun and pillaged by the Catholic soldiers of General Tilly. In this condition, she practically experiences nothing that is not human. When the Chaplain persists on purchasing the shirts from her, she replies, "I can't give nowt. What with

expenses, taxes, loan interest and bribes” (V. 33-34). For instance, in times of need, Mother Courage buys supplies including clothing, food, medicine, and weaponry to sell to soldiers. Although she sells these products in large quantities and spends the company’s profits, she does not use them herself. Therefore, it has value on the market. In other words, when she buys artifacts from the war era as investments to resell them for a profit or when she buys them to impress others with her affluent taste, she commercializes the era. Wartime sales of products must either represent trade value or have exchange value. Mother Courage views war as a business as result. Mother Courage’s acts appear to be those of a respectable working-class person. Despite the success of her firm, she still has domestic problems. She is not engaging in ostentatious consumption here. She belongs to the haves group and works as a salesperson, yet she is a member of the have-nots because she depends on war to protect her children and support herself. Similar to a corporation, the drama starts with the marketing of conflict. As a result, Mother Courage’s naïve daughter, who is being pushed by her two sons in her canteen wagon, enters the new war upon her first appearance. Mother Courage is deeply concerned for the welfare of her boys. Her drive for commercial opportunities outweighs her dislike of conflict. She wants to safeguard her family from danger and support them in the ongoing struggle by doing both continues to be a contradiction (Larson, 2019, p.46). The song that Mother Courage is singing along to in scene seven expresses her desire for the struggle to never end. Mother Courage makes a comparison between buying and selling cheese and war. She is describing the latter as a commercial operation “private trading” including the use of force.

Swiss Cheese, Mother Courage’s youngest son, purportedly works as a cashier for the Second Finnish Regiment. While scene two depicts some of the war’s victories, Scene 3 depicts its devastation, emphasizing the action’s unintended consequences. Mother Courage is making a generalized allusion to the unstable nature of the situation. The Catholic army ambushes the Second Swedish (Protestant) regiment, as it is getting ready for battle, causing it to flee. One of the many dramatic and action-packed episodes in Scene Three is the unexpected assault by Catholic soldiers on the Protestant regiment. Swiss Cheese’s actions with the regimental cash box and his attempts to protect it. Brecht’s strategy is successful in demonstrating how the mother bravely bears the death of Swiss Cheese’s body without expressing any emotion by

highlighting her harsh exterior and her devotion to her work. As one reads the play, Mother Courage character starts to take on a different appearance as she is forced to enter the fray. In the last conversation of scene three where Mother Courage abandons her motherly feelings to save herself and job:

Sergeant. Here's somebody we dunno the name of. It's got to be listed, though, so

Everything's shipshape. He had a meal here. Have a look, see if you know him.

(He removes the sheet. Know him? Mother Courage shakes her head). What,

Never see him before he had that meal here? Mother Courage shakes her head.

Pick him up. Chuck him in the pit. He's got nobody knows him. They carry him

Away. (Brecht, 1942.VI, 618-625)

The conflict between a mother's love for her kids and her wise financial judgment serves as an example of the patriarchal mentality that pervaded the entire institution. Concerns regarding the woman's decision are present. Eilif is often patriarchal because he is a masculine character. As a result, he does not see anything wrong with the situation as it is. Mother Courage preferred her cart over her son's life, she knows that only by maintaining her cart she can keep her freedom as she was willing to do in Scene Three when Yvette scolded her after the death of Swiss Cheese as follows:

Yvette arrives, (very pale). Well, you got what you asked for, with your haggling and

Trying to keep your cart. Elven bullets they gave him, that's all.

You don't deserve I should bother anymore about you. But I

Did hear they don't believe the box is really in the river. They've

An idea it's here and anyhow you're connected with him. They're going

To bring hik here, see if you gives yourself away when
you sees him.

Thought I'd better warn you so's you don't recognise him,
else you'll all be

For it. They're right on my heels, best tell you quick. Shall
I keep Kattrin

Away? She mayn't have heard the drumming or know what it
meant.(Brecht, 1942. III, 603-613)

Marriage has been corrupted to become a binding contract. A woman who marries her husband "becomes the home servant, or at least the housekeeping." Both their courting and their marriage are distorted by it. She finds a husband to assist her. Through his employment, he meets his wife. A system like that also devalues mothers, which is harmful for children. According to Gilman's opinion "even if the mother chooses to serve society rather than her family, she will still fulfill her fundamental maternal duties. When she is not in constant contact with her child and shifts with ever-increasing passion and intensity from her life to its life and back again, she will still love it just as much, if not more" (1898, p.42). Mother Courage did not entertain the possibility to be bound to such a contract this can be seen in scene six when the Chaplain wanted to get in a "closer relationship". She made clear that her "cart," which is her business, is more important than any serious relationship. She preferred her economic independence over being settled under the control of a man as is seen in scene six as follows:

The Chaplain. Don't change the subject. Seriously, Courage, I
sometimes ask myself

What it would be like if our relationships were to become
somewhat closer.

I mean, given that the whirlwind of war has so strangely
whirled us together.

Mother Courage. I'd say it was close enough. I cook meals for you and
you run around

And chop firewood for instance.

The Chaplain (coming closer). You know what I mean by closer; it's not
a relationship

Founded on meals and wood- chopping and other such base necessities. Let

Your head speak, harden thyself not...

Mother courage. Be sensible, padre. I like you. I don't want to row you. All I'm after is

Get myself and my children through all this with my cart. I don't see it as

Mine, and I ain't in the mood for private affairs. Right now I'm taking a

Gamble, buying stores just where commander in chief's fallen and all the

Talk's of peace...(Brecht, 1942.VI. 196- 217)

So here, it is evident how Mother Courage refused to bind herself to a future of chores, cooking and cleaning without the ability to gain her freedom while the cart allows her to win her freedom by making a living being the mater of herself.

According to Gilman's *Women and Economics*, women make a living through marriage, men do so through their employment. Their status is based on their spouses' employment, not on their own. It is challenging to imagine a male doctor identifying as the husband of a stay-at-home mother. Although the repercussions are severe, they differ for men and women. Gender disparities are made worse by women's economic dependency. Men downplay their empathy while increasing their competition, fury, and anger. Women enhance their femininity by downplaying their humanity in favor of more stereotypically feminine characteristics like attractiveness and humility. Therefore, she claims, women "oversex" or overuse their naturally feminine traits at the expense of their human ones. As a result of the overdevelopment of feminine traits. She asserted that the overdevelopment of feminine traits at the expense of human traits is the reason why males are more "human" than women, adding that "man is the human creature" (Degler, 1966, p.xxxiv).

Feminists believe patriarchal capitalism, which promotes men's rule of women, is causally tied to women's subjugation. By caring for their working spouses and having children who support men, women contribute labor power to home duties, yet they are not compensated for their effort. Patriarchy is arguably one of the earliest examples of one group of people taking advantage of another.

People in high caste positions—in this case, men—develop a strong stake in the preservation of the fundamental structure and their own favored standing when a race, ethnicity, religion, and class-based system is established. Maintaining the underlying structure is advantageous for men’s interests in the near term as dealers of political, economic, and cultural institutions—and, perhaps more significantly, as men. Mother Courage does not grasp the chaplain’s attempts to explain the physical climate; hence, there is a misunderstanding in their exchange. It shows how a capitalist culture makes women’s busy lives even busier. There are no obvious ritual or recreational objectives. Thus, it constitutes exploitation. In scene six, Mother Courage was asking for wood but the Chaplain wanted her to do it the Chaplain said, “I happen to be a pastor of souls, not a wood cutter. Mother Courage replied, “I got no soul, you see. Need firewood, though” (VI. 140-141). Here it is remarkable she admits that she no longer has a soul, which indicates her becoming dedicated to making money only.

Mother Courage also has the flaw of believing that war is necessary since it allows her to survive, even though she is a fierce opponent of it. She wants the conflict to go on, she depends on it for her livelihood even though she is aware of the great harm the war has done to her personally, and how it destroyed her children in scene six she goes on:

Mother Courage. What I call a historic moment is them bashing my daughter over the

Eye. She’s half wrecked already, won’t get no husband now, and her so

Crazy about kids; any road she’s only dumb from war, soldier stuffed

Something in her mouth when she was little. As for Swiss Cheese I’ll

Never see him again, and where Eilif is God alone knows.

War be

Damned.(Brecht, 1942. VI. 257-263)

Despite of her awareness of the destruction force of war, she persists on refusing peace for her materialistic gains, in scene six, she was worried that the war might be heading to an end she stated to the Chaplain her urge for the war to last:

Mother Courage. Ee, I’m not asking for fun of it, but because I’m thinking whether to

Stock up, prices are low now, but if war's going to end
it's money down

The drain.(Brecht, 1942.VI, 48- 50)

When Mother Courage heard the war is going to continue, she seized the moment and went to stock up “I’ll buy fresh stocks then” (Brecht, 1942. VI. 110). Mother Courage asserts that her appetite to fight destroys weak people. She tells the Cook that the cease-fire has caused her to break her neck. Mother Courage believes that fighting is a force for good despite the use of weapons and ammunition that considerably increases destruction. Fighters run the risk of dying too soon even though they are crucial for fighting. Wars, however, are a commercial proposition. We may once again see that war has two faces. Mother Courage is aware of these two conflictual facets.

Accepting that long-standing sociopolitical and cultural norms have a key part in explaining why men choose to exploit women is essential to evaluating that. The situation that the women in *Mother Courage and Her Children* encountered in the 1920s was made up; as it was, the post-war era and the surroundings were being repaired. Women felt the repercussions of war. Anyone who behaves in such a manner would control how society views women and the general people. As a result, this scenario involves both military and economic intervention. Reality is not felt, despite encouraging freedom. The impending battle has resulted from campaigns run by Mother Courage in particular and others generally. Their husbands, sons, male relatives, and other male family members, who ultimately become a hurdle in their path, ultimately silence both within and outside the home their voices. Therefore, those who favor women have influential positions. As a result, women encounter social isolation. Because of their lack of financial independence, Mother Courage, Yvette, and all of these other women must undergo misery. To buck this trend, women must be released from financial constraints. The first step is to comprehend the external factors that have made it feasible for women to be exploited. They will not be able to speak up against this false awareness until Brecht teaches them to recognize their class and liberates them from the false consciousness generated by men. You need to overcome these obstacles if you want to be financially independent. Mother Courage appeared to be just as tough in her negotiation technique after losing baby after baby. She swiftly lays her body in front of the march after initially contesting the death of her daughter and

says, "I must get back into business" (Brecht, 1939, p.42). She picks up the cart and carries it across the stage while moving circularly to further explore her motif. She seemed to have a damned soul that is continually at battle with itself and remembered all the past arguments.

The essence of conflict is primarily analyzed in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, and in light of Mother Courage's unconventional strategies, a representative is dispatched to provide for Mother Courage's needs. However, she eventually runs out of money and joins the ranks of other intermediaries in the patriarchal system. Because of the male-directed strategy that is continually in the foreground, women, peasants, and commoners can participate in the struggle for their country and their self-interest. Simply said, it is a biased perspective that does nothing to improve the lives of women. In the name of the war, the affluent people assert that they are assisting women, but it is in their nature to oppress women. Mother Courage is a good illustration. Mother Courage is a heroic figure who eventually turns into a dejected heroine. She is not given the identification of an angelic mother despite the erasure of her subjectivity; rather, she is given the identity of a cunning businessperson. She is used to highlight the dialectical nature of the capitalist war economy, which was also stressed by Brecht. As a result, even though the conflict frequently interferes with Mother Courage's parenting responsibilities, she nevertheless engages in it occasionally because of the financial benefit it provides to flourish and prosper to break the patriarchal chains. Mother Courage is aware of the damage of the war and she lost all of her children yet she persists to keep her cart and make her livelihood out of it to achieve her independence and flourish economically. She seized the worst situations of war to be independent apart from the chains of society that forces women to stay home under the control of their husbands as servants to fully dominate the women. Patriarchy tries to prevent women from achieving their freedom through their work to reach their economic independence. The reason why Mother Courage is an example of a woman's struggle and sacrifices that is to reach her freedom she had to dedicate herself for her job. All in all in order for women to get their financial independence from this patriarchy society, they have to endure several sacrifices and struggles.

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الاستقلال الاقتصادي للمرأة في مسرحية (الأم شجاعة و أولادها)

طالبة الماجستير فداء طارق قاسم

وزارة العدل

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المستخلص

يتناول هذا البحث موضوع الاستقلال الاقتصادي النسوي أثناء الحرب في مسرحية بريخت (الأم شجاعة و أولادها) (١٩٤٢). الأم شجاعة هي أم عزباء لثلاثة اطفال. تقوم بتقديم العديد من التضحيات وحتى تقوم بالتحايل لإعالة نفسها وأطفالها من أجل عدم الاستعانة بأي مساعدة من الرجال وانما الاعتماد على عملها على عربتها الشخصية. والاساليب المستخدمة لإثبات مئابرتها لتحقيق الاستقلال الاقتصادي في هذا البحث فكانت بالاعتماد على نظريتين نسويتين، الأولى هي لسيمون دي بوفوار ونظرياتها المأخوذة من كتابها (الجنس الثاني) (٢٠١١). أما بالنسبة للنظرية الثانية، فهي لشارلوت جيلمان وكتابها (المرأة والاقتصاد) (١٨٩٨). تُستخدم هذه النظريات لتحليل نص المسرحية وتحديد مكان وجود النسوية المادية وكيف تتبع هذه الشخصية بالفعل ما يسمى بالنسوية المادية، على الرغم من أن هذه المسرحية كتبت قبل أن تنشأ هذه النظرية وفي نهاية هذا البحث، تم تكوين فكرة واضحة لكيفية إثبات الأم شجاعة حقاً أنها تستحق هذا اللقب بأنها "أم شجاعة" بمعنى تحقيق أهدافها المالية أو على الأقل عدم التخلي عنها أبداً لتكون أماً عاملة مستقلة حتى خلال أسوأ الأحداث الممكنة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية المادية، الأم شجاعة، الحرب، الاستقلال الاقتصادي