

Caryl Churchill'in *Deli Orman: Romanya'dan Bir Oyun* Eserinde Brecht Tiyatrosu Kuramlarının İzleri

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Özet

Britanya'da İkinci Dalga Feminizm ekolünden çıkmış olan Caryl Churchill modern tiyatronun önemli sosyalist ve feminist yazarlarından biridir. Churchill, özellikle günümüzde dahi popüler olan natüralist tiyatro gibi baskın temsil biçimlerine meydan okuyabilmesi için oyunlarında demokratik ve deneysel bir tiyatro pratiği yaratmasını sağlayan, çeşitli işlevsel yöntemler geliştirmiştir. Churchill, *Deli Orman: Romanya'dan Bir Oyun* (1990) adlı oyununda Brecht tiyatrosu ve teknikleri ile güçlü bağları olan Epik tiyatro ve yabancılaştırma etkisini kullanmıştır. Bu makale, epizodik sahneler, montaj prensibi, jest (*gestus*), her bir sahnenin isimlendirilmesi, oyun içinde ara oyun ve şarkıların kullanılması gibi özellikler taşıyan Brecht Tiyatrosunun uygulanışını ve işlevselliğini, Brecht'in haleflerinden biri olan, Caryl Churchill'in *Deli Orman: Romanya'dan Bir Oyun* adlı eserinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma hem Bertolt Brecht Tiyatrosu literatürüne hem de Caryl Churchill'in oyunları üzerine yazılmış eleştirel çalışmalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

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Epik Tiyatro
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Traces of Brechtian-Theatre Theories in Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest: A Play from Romania*

Abstract

Caryl Churchill, who emerged from Second Wave Feminism in Britain, is one of the most important socialist and feminist figures in the modern drama. She developed various working methods which created a democratic and experimental theatre practice so her theatre could challenge the dominant modes of representation, particularly the still-popular naturalistic drama. Churchill in *Mad Forest: A Play from Romania* (1990) uses an Epic dramaturgy and alienation effect, which are inextricably linked to Brechtian Theatre theories and techniques. This article aims to explore the application and functions of the Brechtian theory of theatre and his theatrical alienation techniques like episodic scenes, the montage, the *gestus*, titles to each scene, advertising the play's fictionality, interludes and songs on stage in *Mad Forest: A Play from Romania*. This study, furthermore, aims to contribute not only to the scholarship on Bertolt Brecht's dramaturgy but also to the critical studies on Caryl Churchill's plays.

Keywords

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About Article

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Introduction

Spanning more than three decades, from 1910s to 1940s, the interwar period of time has witnessed so much chaos and violence in the world history. That period of time has been characterized by restlessness and confusion in Europe because totalitarian, fascist and nationalist dictatorships emerged in several European countries. Writers of those years were also influenced by the ascending feelings of anxiety and depression, and accordingly, they wanted to react against realism and naturalism which was predominant in the narrative and dramatic literature. What urged them to challenge realism and to have a very different and experimental artistic tendency was their objective of presenting the prevailing unrest of the world in their artistic products. Hence, they tried to devise and reconfigure new ways and modes of grasping and revealing the zeitgeist in their works.

In the dramatic literature and drama, critical and confrontational plays of the Theatre of Cruelty, Theatre of the Absurd and Epic Theatre, to name but a few, were born as results of such creative attempts of political theatre. One of the most prominent playwrights of the time influenced by the Marxist thought, Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), who observed this period of change and its influence on people's having a new view of the world, attempted to respond to change and depict this significant shift in the way of the world. In this wise, Brecht established Epic Theatre whose main argument is to make the audience keep in mind that they are watching a play – a literary construct – which is presented on stage in order to convey ideas and messages.

Brecht, in his book (1964), affirmed that the theatre's wide and timeless aim was to educate, and he asserted that "it is the noblest function that we have found for theatre" (p. 180). He came up with and developed an influential theory of theatre in the Epic Theatre wherein a play should not cause the spectator to emotionally identify with the action before him or her, but should instead provoke rational self-reflection and a critical view of the actions on the stage. According to this logic, since Epic Theatre aims to pinpoint the changing social and political conditions and structures, the dramatic conventions should be as well adjusted to reveal the ideological dimensions and phenomena. He believed that the experience of a climactic catharsis of emotion would leave the audience gratified and self-assured. Instead, he wanted his audience to be intellectually involved, and through their critical perspective, he demanded audience to identify ideological elements and social ills at work and be moved and illuminated, as it were, after receiving the social and ideological messages in the play and start to change.

Brecht's alienation techniques in his Epic Theatre have inspired many playwrights' work including Caryl Churchill's play (*Mad Forest* hereafter). Right after the disposition of Romanian communist leader Ceauşescu in 1989, Churchill went to Romania and her experiences and impressions became the raw materials for the production of her play. Theatrical techniques of Epic Theatre should be looked over and their presence in *Mad Forest* (1990) should be underlined in order to draw a sound and working parallelism between Churchill's play and Brechtian Epic Theatre techniques.

Bertolt Brecht's Theatre Techniques in Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*

Mad Forest attracts audience's attention thanks to Churchill's mastery of Epic dramaturgy. As mentioned before, Epic Theatre is a phrase which is identified with Bertolt Brecht. The

continuity of Brecht's works does not lie in their style because over the span of his career Brecht experimented with a variety of theatrical modes such as the traditional German popular theatre, Japanese Nôh theatre and English and Spanish Renaissance theatre. In other terms, his theatre is an amalgam of other modern drama techniques. Brecht pursued the most appropriate means to convey a play's message; in other words, the content dictated the form and his success stems from his persistent purpose. He sought to create a theatre which was analytical, "one which opposed the existing orthodoxies and was committed to the political Left; in his words, a 'Theatre for the Scientific Age'" (Counsell, 1996, p. 79-80). "Theatre for the Scientific Age" is an expression quoted from Bertolt Brecht's book, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (1964). This was the mode what Brecht termed Epic Theatre. According to Ewen (1992), "Brecht's poetics is non-Aristotelian" (p. 212) in terms of ignoring the cause-effect relationship delineated in Aristotle's *Poetics*. On this subject, Wright (1989) argues that unlike the realist drama which was thoroughly about the bourgeoisie and "taught us to view the world in the way that the ruling classes wanted it to be viewed" (p. 27). Discontented Brecht did not conform to this illusionary perspective and he instead introduced Epic Theatre.

The area which takes up a large part of Brecht's Epic Theatre is *distanciation/ verfremdungseffekt*, or as more commonly put, alienation effect. Brecht himself made its purpose explicit as follows: "The aim of this effect, known as the alienation-effect, was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism in his approach to the [play's] incident" (Brecht, 1964, p. 136). The alienation effect is Brecht's term for defamiliarization or 'strange-making'; the subversion of the audience's customary, ideological view of an event or object, causing the spectator to view it afresh. Akçeşme (2009) also explains that "the alienation device presents the familiar world in an estranging or defamiliarizing manner to make the audience see the things which they have not noticed beforehand without any emotional identification" (p. 102).

One of the components of Brecht's Epic Theatre is its narrative structure that is made up of episodic scenes to break the emphatic link between the audience and the actor. Scenes are comprehensive and complete in themselves, set in one location with a single collection of characters and essentially deal with one issue or event. This feature is evident throughout Churchill's *Mad Forest*. For instance, the play opens with a scene in the Vladus house where the characters on the stage act without talking to each other. The only sound heard comes from their radio. The next scene presents another family, the Antenescus, acting. There is no causality between the scenes. These two scenes are not only non-successive but the link between them is also quite weak. Another example for non-successive scenes is the one where a soldier and a waiter chase a mouse on the street and at that moment other characters, Gabriel, Radu and Ianoş, are passing by. They also join the waiter and the soldier in chasing the mouse. In the next scene, Mihai, Flavia and her dead grandmother are presented when they talk about the war. These quick and unconnected scenes do not only break the illusion of reality for the audience but they also require an interpretative logic which encompasses both scenes. Therefore, the audience's gaze/reading must make the connection between them. As asserted by Brechtian Epic Theatre, Churchill's audience does not passively watch the play. Rather, such scenes consequently invite the audience to be a consciously critical observer.

Churchill, like Brecht, uses the montage principle in her play, as it always refers to the scenes which are far apart in terms of time, location or the social position of its characters. Churchill, under the influence of Brecht, uses montage techniques to provoke the dialectic. By

juxtaposing the contradictory ideas and images in the play, Churchill aims to represent the collision and interaction of forces in society itself. To illustrate, in one of the scenes, Flavia while teaching her students, in tongue-in-cheek-mode praises the dictator of Romania as follows:

FLAVIA:

It's evident to everybody that linked to the personality of this great son of the nation is everything in the country that is most durable and harmonious, the huge transformations taking place in all areas of activity, the ever more vigorous and ascendant path towards the highest stages of progress and civilization. (Churchill, 1990, p. 16)

Flavia functions as a mouth-piece of the playwright to convey her satirical point of view. However, this scene is followed by another in which Radu is in a queue of people and he whispers:

RADU:

Down with Ceaușescu.

The woman in front of him starts to look round, then pretends she hasn't heard. The man behind pretends he hasn't heard and casually steps slightly from RADU.

Two people towards the head of the queue look round and RADU looks round as if wondering who spoke. They go on queuing. (Churchill, 1990, p. 17)

The montage principle of Epic Theatre is at work here because Flavia's, so called, glorifying words for Ceaușescu in the former scene are contrasted or juxtaposed with Radu's gestures and protesting slogans in the latter one. Therefore, in Epic Theatre the story is to proceed in montage-like leaps, juxtaposing one scene against the next, one 'moment' against its opposite to raise contradictions and so the audience cannot see an illusion of reality whose events are coherent and linear.

Caryl Churchill who follows the footsteps of Brecht in terms of employing Epic Theatre techniques in her play, uses Brechtian *gestus* or gestures. It is any performance sign which can indicate the social positions and relationships in a play. In other words, *gestus* stands for the actor's attitude as manifested during the acting in the epic narration. Brecht (1964) puts forward that "the choice of viewpoint [or attitude] is also a major element of the actor's art, and it [*gestus*] has to be decided outside the theatre" (p. 196) because Brecht believes that the political viewpoint of the actor is very powerful in his/her expression of *gestus*. Accordingly, in *Mad Forest* almost every scene which presents actions without speeches contains *gestuses*. As an example of it, one can refer to the first scene of the play in which none of the characters talks but they act and listen to music. This scene is composed of a series of stage directions. As an alternative means of communication, 'acting' seems to be superior to 'uttering words':

Music continues. BOGDAN and IRINA VLADU sit in silence, smoking Romanian cigarettes. BOGDAN turns up the music on the radio very loud. He sits looking at IRINA. IRINA puts her head close to BOGDAN's and talks quickly and quietly, to convince him. He argues back, she insists, he gets angry. We can't hear anything they say. (Churchill, 1990, p. 13)

As Willet (1986) underlines the function of music in Brechtian Theatre, "music becomes a kind of punctuation, an underlining of the words, a well-aimed comment giving the gist of the action or the text. And this remains its prime function in all Brecht's plays" (p. 132). Music in

Brechtian Epic Theatre of Churchill's play is transformed into a technical medium to disrupt the linear temporal logic and movement of the play.

The use of *gestus* in fact helps to foreground another element, namely alienation effect, upon which the entire thought of Epic Theatre has been established by Brecht. The alienation or distancing effect is achieved by the way the "artist never acts as if there were a fourth wall besides the three surrounding him ... The audience can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place" (Brecht, 1964, p. 91). The use of direct audience-address is one way of disrupting the stage illusion and generating the distancing effect. As illustrated in the quotation above, lighting a cigarette, turning up the radio volume to drown out conversation and keeping their voices down in public are presented as the rich representation of life in the wake of/under totalitarian regime. Moreover, actors on the stage make the audience share some of the physical demands to which the play's characters are subject. This is a sort of interaction between the audience and the play. Furthermore, the radio music in the first scene is turned up to a high level and the continual lighting of cigarettes subjects the audience to a cloud of acrid smoke. As the play's director, Wing Davey, explains in a discussion following the performance, "such decisions were deliberate, they reflected his belief that, among its other concerns, *Mad Forest* dealt with the physical and cognitive discomforts involved in confronting a society as removed as that of Romania" (Garner, 1992, p. 399). As he notes, this technique of making reception difficult parallels the text's concern with the linguistic barriers to this kind of intercultural contact.

The other example of gestic scenes in *Mad Forest* is the one when Radu, Florina, Ianoş stage the execution of the Ceauşescus in an impromptu street performance. Someone announces that "The trial and execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceauşescu" (Churchill, 1990, p. 69) and this announcement also interrupts and summarizes the action for the audience:

RADU and FLORINA are the Ceauşescus.

IANOŞ:

Hurry up. Move along.

RADU:

Where are they taking us, Elena?

FLORINA:

I don't know Nicu. He's a very rude man.

RADU:

Don't worry we'll be rescued in a minute. This is all part of my long-term plan.

CEAUŞESCU (RADU) keeps looking at his watch and up at the sky.

IANOŞ:

Sit down.

FLORINA:

Don't sit down.

RADU:

The Securitate will get in touch with my watch.

IANOŞ:

Answer the questions of the court.

RADU:

What court? I don't see any court. Do you, Elena?

...

FLORINA:

Have these people arrested and mutilated.

RADU:

Maybe just arrested and shot. They are our children.

FLORINA:

After all we've done for them. You should kiss my hands. You should drink my bathwater. (Churchill, 1990, p. 69-70)

This 'play in play' above is an example of *gestus* because it makes characters' social relations and the causality of their behaviour visible, as interpreted from an historical materialist perspective. Every emotion manifests itself as a set of social relations. "For it is what happens between people," Brecht (1964) insists, "that provides them with all the material that they can discuss, criticize and alter" (p. 200). The trial and execution part of the Ceaușescu acted by Radu and Florina reveals this couple's and the Ceaușescu's status in Romanian society. Radu and Florina's gestures and bodily movements attract the audience's attention to their social status. Their gestures also highlight the social discriminations in Romania which encourages the audience to analyse and comment on social facts.

In Brechtian drama one of the most interesting techniques is the use of projection screens "suspended over the stage or hung on the rear flat. The projection – a written commentary or statistics, or a picture of some historical-scale event – would inform the audience's reading of the onstage action and vice versa" (Counsell, 1996, p. 84). Defending his use of placard titles, Brecht (1964) explains:

The orthodox playwright's objection to the title is that the dramatist ought to say everything that has to be said in the action, that the text must express everything within its own confines. The corresponding attitude for the spectator is that he should not think about a subject but within the confines of the subject. But this way of subordinating everything to a single idea, this passion for propelling the spectator along a single track where he can look neither right nor left, up nor down, is something that the new school of play-writing must reject... Some exercise in complex seeing is needed – though it is perhaps more important to be able to think above the stream than to think in the stream. (p. 44)

Accordingly, Churchill uses this technique as it is inferred from the stage direction: "Each scene is announced by one of the company [sic] reading from a phrasebook as if an English tourist, first in Romanian, then in English, and again in Romanian. 1. Lucia are patru ouă. Lucia has four eggs" (Churchill, 1990, p. 13). The title of this scene is 'Lucia has four eggs' and the audience sees only silent characters onstage. Although they are silent, they keep acting and one of these actions is Bogdan's getting angry and breaking one Lucia's eggs. In reading the two together, that is, 'the title of the scene' and 'Bogdan's breaking the egg', the audience must find and employ a Law of the Text that encompasses both title and action. The audience can interpret Bogdan's furious action in various ways, for instance, as a symbol for patriarchy's disrupting the female world. The egg may also represent the social status of their family; it is a working-class family. In Brechtian context, 'food' is an important prop to represent social inequalities and problems like hunger. One of his important quotations also proves this idea: In German, "*Erst kommt das Essen, dann kommt die Moral*" which means "First comes food, then morals" (Brecht, 1949, p. 65). Therefore, breaking the egg is no longer a sign of personal

violence but it becomes a part of the social picture. All scene-titles serve to situate local actions in an informing and larger context.

In Epic Theatre every act should be taken as a symbol for showing those forces of the socio-historical environment that determine human lives. Therefore, every scene-title and object onstage is subject to immense interpretative focus from the audience. Being made aware that scrutiny is demanded, the spectator seeks out more detailed reading. The scene-titles in *Mad Forest* also break the bond between the play and the audience. For instance, in the third episode of *Mad Forest*, the audience is presented with a grotesque and even a gothic couple, a vampire and a dog under the title, "The dog is hungry". From one respect, the vampire reminds the spectator of the existence of Transylvania in Romania. However, this scene with a vampire does not only signal the native land of "Dracula" but it also conveys a very serious message. Its title is 'The dog is hungry'. A very interesting and metaphorical dialogue happens between them as the dog wants the vampire to make it a vampire dog:

VAMPIRE:

You want me to make you a vampire? A vampire dog?

DOG:

Yes please, yes yes.

VAMPIRE:

It means sleeping all day and going about at night.

DOG:

I'd like that.

VAMPIRE:

Going about looking like anyone else, being friendly, nobody knowing you.

DOG:

I'd like that

VAMPIRE:

Living forever, / you've no idea. All that

DOG:

I'd –

VAMPIRE:

happens is you begin to want blood, you try to put it off, you're bored with killing, but you can't sit quiet, you can't settle to anything, your limbs ache, your head burns, you have to keep moving faster and faster, that eases the pain, seeking. Ah.

DOG:

I'd like that. (Churchill, 1990, p. 46)

The stage direction indicates that the vampire is dressed in the elegant black overcoat of an aristocrat; the dog is, however, a commoner, a naked man on all fours. This spectacle is used to distance the audience from the play. Moreover, this scene has an immediate political meaning: the poor dog, like lonely and confused citizens in an anarchic state of Romania, prefers even a death-dealing master, a warmonger, to no master at all. In this context of the play, the use of a vampire and a dog offers several social and political interpretations for the spectator when the spectator takes Romania's political and economic conditions into consideration.

Another technique of the alienation-effect in Epic Theatre is the play's 'advertising its own fictionality'. It aims at reminding the spectator that what s/he is watching on the stage is a play

so that the audience is prevented from sympathizing with the actors and incidents onstage. The audience should not be absorbed in the fictional world of the play. On the contrary, the audience should always be aware that it is watching a play and it should be critical about it. The idea that revealing the fictionality and theatricality of the play also manifests itself in *Mad Forest*. This technique is also called 'Brechtian Interlude' which constitutes the second act of Churchill's play. The 'journalistic' characteristic of this one-scene act is evident which also breaks the link between the spectator and the play. Characters in this part are acted by the same actors who portray an entirely different set of characters and they recount the events of December 21 and December 25, 1989 in Bucharest. Churchill's double using the characters is another alienation technique. Actors act Romanians from all walks of life and they are speaking English with Romanian accent. Rather than enhancing the plot, these characters who take the others onstage for granted 'narrate' their personal experiences of the revolution day. To illustrate, a painter's account of the revolution is as in the following:

PAINTER:

My name is Valentine Bărbat, I am a painter, I hope to go to the Art Institute. I like to paint horses. Other things too but I like horses. On December 20 my girlfriend got a call, go to the Palace Square. People were wearing black armbands for Timișoara. There was plenty of people but no courage. Nothing happened that day and we went home. (Churchill, 1990, p. 29)

...

SECURITATE:

There are barricades and cars burning in my district, I report it. Later the army shoot the people and drive tanks in them. I go off duty. (Churchill, 1990, p. 33)

These isolated and unconnected individuals want to give meaning to what is happening around them. It is obvious from their accounts that they first give information what they did and how their problems were, then they talk about the revolution if they heard the shootings. The chaos and violence on the streets with all its fights and bloody events are simply narrated by the characters in order to break the illusion of the play. This part of the play both summarizes and breaks the action, and it just tells what happened during the revolution and gives the audience some time to think. This scene reveals Romanians' confusion and it also makes the audience confused. In this sense, Brechtian Epic Theatre also demands distance which is preferred the conventional proscenium space not for the sake of illusionism but to allow the audience sufficient freedom for reflection and analysis. Therefore, by revealing the manipulative and politic artistic tools and "fictive" features of the medium, the audience is alienated from any passive acceptance and enjoyment of the play as mere enjoyment or distraction. Instead, the audience is forced to have a critical and intellectual participation that serves to disillusionize him/her of the fact that what he or she is watching is indisputably an unalterable and complacent narrative. This kind of alienation facilitates a didactic function to the extent that it directs the audience to take the form and content very seriously, since the medium itself is a constructed product which is dependent on several cultural, social and ideological circumstances.

In Epic Theatre, songs are used as barriers to the audience's empathy. Singing or listening to songs onstage underlines the fictionality of the incidents. The play, as mentioned before, begins with a stirring Romanian music. At the end of the first act, after Lucia's wedding ceremony a piece of music is heard again. However, as it is indicated in the Production Note,

"it is a hymn to the Ceaușescu and the music continues till everyone [is] in place for the beginning of December" (Churchill, 1990, p. 10). The first act is deliberately closed with a hymn to the Ceaușescu because the first act is set in Communist Romania, several months before the Revolution, and establishes an atmosphere that is violated by the Securitate, in which Lucia's engagement to an American man, Wayne attracts attention to all of her family and acquaintances. This hymn and the following songs will reflect a contradiction about Romanians' reactions before and after the revolution. After the second act, the whole company of actors sings a verse from 'Wake up Romania'. Drifted away by the wind of revolution and with the shift of ideology, people also change as the change of the song's tone and idea reflect it. In the last act, the peasant aunt's song to Florina attracts the audience's attention:

Little bride, little bride,
You're laughing, we've cried.
Now a man's come to choose you
We're sad because we lose you.
Makes you proud to be wife
But it's not an easy life.
...
Lovely girl you're like a flower, /
Only pretty for an hour- (Churchill, 1990, p. 76)

In a wedding, such a sad song is not expected by the audience. Churchill, with this song, does not only alienate the viewer but she also puts forward her feminism. Moreover, in the third act the dance music is lambada which is deliberately chosen by Churchill. (Churchill, 1990, p. 10) The confusing movements of lambada disclose the confusion and exhaustion of people in Romania after the revolution. This scene stands for the idea that people do not know what the revolution is good for or what lies ahead for Romania. This confusion alienates the audience and reminds it of the patient's questions:

PATIENT:
Did we have a revolution or a putsch? Who was shooting on the 21st And who was shooting on 22nd ... Most important of all, were the terrorists and the army really fighting or were they only pretending to fight? And for whose benefit? And by whose orders?
(Churchill, 1990, p. 50)

All of the characters are on the stage and they dance disconnectedly. They cannot even communicate in an efficient way because of prejudices and class discriminations in their society. The lack of a sound communication among people is represented by their disorderly dancing. The most surprising couple dancing there is the angel and the vampire as the latter's talking ends the play. The vampire is powerful at the last scene because the confusion is a suitable place where evil people can manipulate others. The last scene of the play also alludes to the title because the scene is like a mad forest. Consequently, the audience is confronted with no settled interpretation and the performance "becomes a discussion about social relations with the audience that the actor is addressing" (Brecht, 1964, p. 124). Therefore, the play is an argumentative one which requires its audience to scrutinize and be aware of social and political ills in a society. *Mad Forest* is an open-ended play which poses questions and lacks a unity. The nature of revolution is questioned in *Mad Forest* and it necessitates the audience to form its own opinion about how things might be changed.

Conclusion

To sum up, like many playwrights of her generation, Caryl Churchill is also influenced by Brechtian Epic Theatre. In her plays, she deliberately avoids absorbing and engaging plotting, and choosing instead an episodic approach to storytelling on stage. As a representative of her plays, which have been influenced by Epic Theatre, Churchill's *Mad Forest* consists of several loosely connected scenes which in any case do not integrate seamlessly with each other, but rather build up, through patterning, a general picture. In this manner, Churchill's audience is turned into an observer who are urged, in Brecht's words (1964), to have their "eyes on the course" and not "on the finish" (p. 37). Brecht's alienation effect was a direct means of evoking the viewer's participation as they are emotionally distanced from characters by using such techniques as episodic scenes, the montage principle, the *gestus*, scene-titles, advertising the play's fictionality, interludes and songs. By the help of these alienation techniques, the audience is never allowed to confuse what it sees on the stage with reality. By means of this distancing or defamiliarization technique, the audience can be set free to observe the discussion of the play. *Mad Forest* follows the same path of Brecht's goal of alienating the audience to see the incidents from a fresh angle and to try and change the world. Churchill's ability to use the epic medium to its fullest widens the range of theatre and her unique application of epic devices to her socialist feminist politics makes Brechtian Epic Theatre a useful paradigm within which to read her play, *Mad Forest*. All in all, it can be asserted that Churchill employs Brechtian Epic Theatre techniques as a tool to discuss and correct the oppressive political and social systems and to deliver political and social messages to the audience who is expected to change completely at the end of the play.

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