
**BERTOLT BRECHT'S PLAYS AND PAKISTANI THEATRE FOR SOCIAL
CHANGE: AJOKA'S ADAPTATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how the German playwright Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) plays have been interpreted in Pakistan and analyzes the Urdu and Punjabi adaptations of his works on the local stage by various Pakistani parallel theatre groups specially by Ajoka. The previous studies show that Brecht has been performed in various parts of the world, but there has been no research on the relevance of his plays to Pakistan's indigenous society. The local theatre groups such as Ajoka, Dastak, and Lok Raqs have demonstrated that Brecht's epic theatre can be performed successfully in the developing corners of the world. The local stagings of Brecht's plays on Pakistani stage is indicative of how relevant his plays are in Pakistani context and how well do they reflect the socio-political landscape of the country. His epic plays have successfully engaged the local audience in the process of social self-awareness that ultimately stimulates analysis and finally, leads to a healthy social change. The study employs qualitative research design as it uses close textual analysis to examine the relevance of Brecht's works to Pakistan's socio-political landscape. The study's major findings reveal that the local adaptations of Brecht's plays highlight social, political, and economic conditions of contemporary Pakistan and have developed an environment congenial for a productive debate and a thought-provoking analysis of contemporary Pakistani society. In continuation of this research, therefore, it is suggested that future researchers examine the works of other playwrights that have been successfully adapted by Pakistan's local theatre groups. Future researchers may also pay attention to whether or not the local stagings of these playwrights' works have led to a critical debate in the society.

Keywords: Pakistani Theatre, political landscape, media, social conditions, poverty, epic.

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the relevance of Bertolt Brecht's plays to Pakistan's socio political landscape and Urdu and Punjabi adaptations of his epic plays on the Pakistan's local stage by various Pakistani parallel theatre groups particularly by Ajoka. The article exclusively focuses on how Brecht's play have been interpreted and performed by Pakistani theatre groups.

The relevance of Brecht's social and political concerns to contemporary Pakistan and its institutions on the one hand, and on the other, the relation of his theatre and dramaturgic principles to Asian theatre is acknowledged through local performance of his plays in Pakistan. The essay also explores through Brecht's theory of Alienation Effect the divergent ways in which the mechanics of his theatre have been explored, reinterpreted, and reworked by indigenous theatre groups. Brecht's dramaturgy is an attempt to explore the world in all its contradictions and controversies, and this is what makes his works relevant in Pakistani context as our society is plagued by the same contradictions and controversies. The present study is significant in that no research has been previously done on local adaptations of Brecht's plays in Pakistan. The research underscores Brecht's relevance to socio-political landscape of Pakistan's contemporary society and establishes the effectiveness of the message conveyed in these plays.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study's research design is qualitative in nature and it employs the method of close analysis of text and performance to establish of the relevance of Brecht to Pakistan's indigenous society. As the 'primary methodology' of literary texts (Jockers, 2013:6), close reading method encompasses diverse activities ranging from unraveling Shakespearean puns to exposing the political unconscious of Victorian novels (Smith, 2016:57). It is 'an informed, fine-grained analysis of some piece of writing, usually in connection with some broader question of interest' (Smith, 2016:58). This qualitative literary study aims at exploring and producing new meaning of the indigenous adaptations of Brecht's plays in Pakistan's context.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Lack of reliability resulting from data collected through qualitative method and lack of sufficient content could limit the scope of the analysis. Researchers who intend to study this further may overcome this problem by employing mixed-method approach. Besides, since it is a qualitative method, it may have certain subjective elements and biases. However, great care has been taken to make this study as structured, objective, and systematic as possible.

ANALYSIS

Brecht draws a parallel between his epic theatre and ancient Asian theatre in its emphasis on aesthetic form, demonstration and

style. He also maintains that to perform an epic theatre a powerful social movement that has interest in free discussion of vital problems is required with certain technical standards (Brecht, 1964:76). Indigenous Pakistani theatre groups such as Ajoka, Dastak, and Lok RaHS have, nevertheless, demonstrated that Brecht's epic theatre can be performed successfully anywhere particularly in the developing corners of the world. The successful presentation of *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944) (Chalk Chakkar), *Threepenny Opera* (Ik Takay Da Tamasha), *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Bala King), *The Good Person of Schewan* (Mangal Poor Ka Nck Insaan) on Pakistani local stage is indicative of how relevant Brecht's plays are in Pakistan's social context. His epic plays have successfully engaged the local audience in the process of social self-awareness that ultimately stimulates analysis and finally, leads to a healthy social change. The social, political, and economic conditions in contemporary Pakistan have developed an environment congenial for a productive debate and a thought provoking analysis of contemporary Pakistani society. Ajoka, Dastak, and Loak RaHS have been an active part of a social struggle for the last two decades. The politically charged atmosphere of the country has provided the possibility of an active social movement that can rectify the imbalances in society. The commendable presentation of Urdu and Punjabi adaptations of Brecht's plays for the theatre and their acceptance and applause by the audience is an acknowledgement of the most potent artistic effect of Brechtian theatre. The local staging's of his plays are a beautiful amalgamation of the old and the new dramaturgical principles that operate his theatre. In presenting Brecht's theatre in Pakistan, we witness the growth of a new theatre for social change. Brechtian dramaturgy suggests a possibility of reconciliation between the opposing elements of life and aesthetics, and history and contemporaneity. The local performances of Brecht's *Galileo* (1938), *The Good Woman* (1943), *Three penny Opera* (1928), *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1941-44), and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941) imply the old flowing gently into the new, history into contemporaneity, and dramatic dimensions of theatre into the social realities of the audience across the globe.

Through an innovative reworking of the classical epic and opera forms, Brecht debunks the old and the classical as insufficient in encompassing the truth and social realities. His placement of demythologized unconventional figures at the very centre of classical dramatic forms, his treatment of history as an evolving phenomenon,

his dramatic use of the notion of duality of the dimensions of theatre form the basis of Brechtian dialectics. The ambivalent portrayal of his characters Galileo and Shen Teh, demythologized portrayal of gods, the unconventional positioning of beggars in the centre of the classical opera form evoke a dialectical response in the audience and expose the complex operatives of his dramatic technique. He employs this ambivalence as a dialectical method to expose fully the actor's duality as a performer and as a character in a play and to lay bare the contradictions of the inner and outer worlds that his characters inhabit. It is these mechanics of his theatre that have been fully utilized by Pakistani theatre groups in this fertile and culturally rich part of the world.

Eric Bentley maintains, "theatricality is, by definition, audacious", and Bertolt Brecht's theatre is 'audacious' by virtue of its experimental quality and the dialectical laws that operate it. He also calls theatre "the art of explosions" and asserts that the "interplay between audacity and control" engenders the most potent artistic effect (Bentley, 1977:541). It is this experimental quality of Brechtian theatre that has fully been exploited by leading Pakistani theatre groups in developing a new theatre for social change. Local adaptations of Brecht's plays in Urdu and Punjabi for Pakistani theatre and their audacious performance have imparted a new dimension to Brechtian drama, and Pakistani audience has witnessed the birth of a new Brecht in Pakistan.

It would be quite helpful, at this point, to give a brief overview of theatre landscape in Pakistan for a better understanding and appreciation of local staging of Brecht's plays. In the prologue to her book, *A Critical Stage*, Fawzia Afzal Khan outlines some salient features of Pakistani theatre. She states: Asian theatre evolved from Indian subcontinent's practiced traditions with its origins in folk, epic, religious customs and forms. Nautanki, Tmamasha and Kathakali are several forms of prominent theatre embedded in an ethnically and religiously mixed society, with interwoven song, dance comic elements performed mainly in the round. Elements of British drama entered the theatre lexicon of India, including English- language productions with the arrival of British colonial rule in India (Khan, 2005:1).

For the last two decades, theater has been engaged in struggle for democratically equal society in Pakistan. Due to environment of opposition and disregard towards performing arts for many years, only a few cultural institutes have been able to succeed, even survive in

Pakistan, but against very heavy odds numerous theatre groups have struggled with fortitude. All governments have been disinterested, if not antagonistic towards socially meaningful art. Conservative elements have also been opposed to the very idea of theatre, and the corporate sector has not played its role in promoting art and culture. In her book Khan argues, "'Theatre', both as a concept and as a living art, failed to take root and develop in Pakistan as it did in India or even in Bangladesh post-1971" (Khan, 2005:2). Khalid Ahmad, cofounder of the Karachi-based theater group, Tehrik-i-Niswan also holds the view that it would not be expected that military dictators or feudals would look at sensitive cultural activities in favor "since these lead to questioning and questioning can lead to change" (*Dawn*, 1997:5). Despite such bleak circumstances, several varieties of theatre have nevertheless developed. A credit to theatre workers is the creation of theatre going audiences (Khan, 2005:3) which are not just passive observers but active agents of social change.

In imitation of Brecht, the local Pakistani theater took up bold topics, explored amazing techniques and incorporated modern non-existent realities into the popular traditional form that created the context of the Brechtian drama. The traditional performances of his plays contribute significantly to the promotion of arts and culture and the struggle for social justice and peace in the country. It also highlights the artists' commitment to the principles of peace and tolerance, both within and outside Pakistan. In promoting a creative theater in Pakistan, local adaptation and re-engineering of Brecht's theater acted as a catalyst. Not only did it provide community-friendly entertainment but also created awareness among the artists about traditional theater forms. It has also helped other theater groups to use traditional theater forms and traditional theater equipment in a new way. Highlighting theatre's role in Pakistan, Dr. Fawzia Afzal argues that these theater activists in Pakistan are apprehensive not only with the production of plays, but also with the development of theater as a tool to counter domineering state policies, thus increasing the scope of the word 'theater' to integrate its concept into development. "It should be clear that theatre is not just 'play', in the typically understood dismissive sense of the word, but rather has the potential to be a catalyst in liberating at least the minds of people, as a potential first step towards achieving a more peaceful and just society" (Khan, 2005:9). And this is what Brecht's theatre aims to achieve.

Brecht intends to shatter the facile urge to categorize people as good or evil and evaluate theatre as classical or modern. This dramatic

method enables him to look backward and forward in quest of a new society and experiment with new aesthetic forms. He inverts the entire traditional concept of heroism and martyrdom, and most of Brecht's characters embody the notion of duality which shows the same ambivalence in character and performance. *The Good Person of Szechwan* and *Three penny Opera* exemplify the same notion of duality through which Brecht explores the conflicting forces and the demands made upon his characters. His figures perform the dual function of the living and performing bodies on the stage and characters in action. The stepping in and stepping out of the conventional roles allows the actors to engage in a discourse with the audience, revealing the polar dimensions of Brecht's theatre.

First performed in 1928 in Berlin, *The Three penny Opera* is one of Brecht's most popular plays. Based on John Gay's 18th Century "Beggar's Opera", the play is a contemptuous satire on a capitalist society, despite its presence in the post-Victorian London Soho. The hero-villain of play is Mac the Knife who is sharp without compassion, recklessness but at the same time representing the principles of capitalism and business principles. Soho's land is full of criminals, cops, priests, beggars who set the scene of wheeling-dealing, scam, betrayal and unchecked conspiracy. The play may seem absurd, but it is a sarcastic attack on the values of the hypocrisy and a competition in an exploitative capitalist society. In Pakistan, *The Three penny Opera* was first introduced under the title *Takey Da Tamasha* by Ajoka in partnership with the Goethe Institute, Lahore in June 1989, and lasted for three days. The play has been performed numerous times by Ajoka, since its first performance. Punjabi adaptation of Shahid Nadeem locates the play in interior Lahore's Tibbi district. It can be considered as Lahore's Soho, with its proliferation of prostitutes, pimps, gangsters, beggars, shady characters, dark places, and drug addicts. Mac the Knife turns out to be the modern "Fooka Terror" of Tibbi, and it is not hard to see the modern political and social connection of the play to modern Pakistani society. In an effort to bring out more similarities Ajoka's current production has expanded Brecht's approach of 'Alienation Effect' (the character's distance from the character) to a typical acting style used in Pakistani cinema that is portrayed as a larger role than life. The spot of the play was the walled city of Lahore.

In fact, by introducing content from local cinema and traditional theater, Brecht's drama has been adopted and made contemporary and relevant by Pakistani theater. While using Brecht's play the traditional

Pakistani style of acting is innovatively used which reflects the experimental value of the theater in Pakistan. Ajoka has tried to wield the renowned visual Pakistan's indigenous truck art as a background to the theme and to the stylized acting in this production that helps to create the Lahore's ambience we all know exists but which many of us would visit under the cover of nightfall. The popular and entertaining performance of the play in Punjabi and the visual background of the famous indigenous Truck Art have provided a native quality to performance. Nadeem does not end the play as Brecht did but moves forward when the Queen announces one billion rupees award to social services made by Fooka during the dictatorship. He has been conferred with medal of democracy by the Queen and play concludes with transformation of Fooka Terror as democratic national hero. Its relevance to ethical norms and prevalent customs of Pakistani society makes it all the more important to encourage such plays that decry evil and crime. Ajoka's production of this play was the first production by any parallel theatre group after the revival of democracy in the country.

Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* was written during World War II. However, it seems to have been particularly written for the post-8th Amendment, post dissolution Pakistan of 1993. In the first half of the play, tensions, a complete lack of any moral or ethical values between the rival parties, and economic, political, and moral turmoil will seem very common to Pakistani spectators. In the second part, we literally see the law standing on its head. Corrupt magistrate Ajab Khan (Azdak) may appear to be discourteous and unpredictable but he is actually making fun of the rampant justice practices of the unjust society and the supreme judge. Brecht believed that enjoyment is the noblest function we have found for the theatre (*Theatre for Pleasure*, 1964:74). But if the audience is going to enjoy what they are learning in the theater, they should always be independent and critical. This is accomplished in a variety of ways including an isolated acting style, continuous music, dance, and storytelling.

Lakht Pasha's Urdu adaptation of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* under Ajoka's production of *Chaak Chakkar* was an audacious step in this regard. It was played in the spacious lawns of Goethe Institute, Lahore. The mythological setting of the play was enriched by live singing, dancing, and the use of a borrowed narrator in a traditional Punjabi theater. All the actors passed through the audience and entered the stage singing the song of Agha Hashr. The opening was somewhat different from Brecht's play as all the artists left the

area except for the narrator who started the old legend called "The Chalk Circle". The artists turned the entire location into stage as they walked freely among the audience. The performance of the play in Pakistan was a real pleasure to watch. The performance was welcomed as a breath of fresh air in a theater that was otherwise passive and uninspiring.

The incorporation of the elements of ancient Asian theatre in staging Brecht's drama has also helped local theatre groups get closer to their own traditions and dramatic techniques. Madeeha Gohar, Ajoka's founder member says: "Brecht was, in fact, influenced by the Asiatic theatrical techniques, which we have inherited from our traditional theatre" (Gohar, Interview, 2008). Like many of its products, Ajoka has also tried to integrate traditional and contemporary theater concepts and has maintained a comely balance between meaningful content and a positive atmosphere. In performing Brecht's play, the "notanky" style of performance has been adopted which prevailed among the people of the sub- continent for centuries. The songs that constitute an integral part of the performance were by a renowned playwright Agha Hashr. Lakht Pasha's skillful Urdu adaptation of the play made the audience think it was an Urdu play written and performed for a Pakistani audience. At the close of the performance, the actors leave the stage, unlike in Brecht's play, while chanting the same song which opens the play.

The native performance of this adaptation mirrors the tragedy of our times, the fragmentation of the social arena, the economic collapse, the warring parties, and the obstacles to justice for the victims. In fact, Brecht's dramas are more relevant in the developing world than any other part of the globe. That the drama was played to a packed audience is ample proof of public interest, as well as the fact that the theater can work productively in Pakistan if the audience is willing to watch a meaningful play.

To mark the 100 Birthday of Brecht, *Bala King* was first performed in March 1998. Written in 1941, "*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*" in which recast of a small- time gangster's take-over of the city's greengrocer trade is a vicious and subtle representation of the upsurge of fascism and Hitler. When it was performed on stage, the audience refused to believe that Bala King was taken from a play written by a European dramatist. The story appears familiar as the play perfectly mimics the rule of democracy used by our sagacious politicians. Everyone believed it was a Pakistani story and not a play by a German playwright. One would have thought that its rendition in

Punjabi would have led to the loss of the translation theme. But its acknowledgment reveals that similar political and social problems plague nations regardless of language or culture.

When the performance begins, an atmosphere of interior Lahore which is at once familiar and local in colour was evoked by beating of Dhol (drums) and the simple stage setting. In Shahid Nadeem's Punjabi version of the play, Ui is replaced by Bala King, the leader of the "unemployed" group "pehlwan" who decides to leave Texali Gate "adda" and will try to make his fortune in the world of intercity road transport of Badami Bagh. Self-righteous businessmen ruling Badami Bagh, are willing to trade in all terms in order to reap the benefits of business and lucrative contracts. Bala and his team exploited the weakness and opposition of these groups, aided by the strength of their muscles. To accept his protection at a hefty price, he bribes, coerces and intimidates businessmen and shopkeepers. After changing his name from Bala Pehlwan to "Bala King", he receives training in public speaking and political science and removes all opposition, shuns law and public opinion and eventually establishes his full control of the area. The inherent weaknesses of our society and its exposure to violence, blackmail, and corruption were exposed by the rise of Bala King and the helplessness of the people in deterring his autocratic advances. The play's commendable performance shows that Brecht is as important in Pakistan as he was in Germany and Europe in the 40s. Though an adaptation, Bala King, is a very appropriate and relevant play for Pakistani audiences, where the idea of dictatorship is rampant, where violence and crime seem to be paying off politically and where the masses seem helpless to fight corruption, crime and violence. What makes the whole scheme of this dramatic performance pertinent for Pakistan is the use of the usual urban Punjabi, funny comedy songs, and the culturally rich lorry "adda" reflecting local tastes.

The use of urban Punjabi is not only used to satisfy local tastes and reach the general masses but also used as a tool to counter language imperialism. Attention to this dimension of the performance has been drawn by Khan. "[I]n using Urdu and Punjabi to replace/reconstruct a European idiom and language, Madeeha and Shahid have very consciously formulated a practical resistance to linguistic imperialism rooted in a pre independence British colonial past" (*The Ravi*, 1988:63). Gohar reiterated this fact of his work in an interview published in 1991. She says "... stress should be laid on performing Urdu and Punjabi plays, because every act of creation has its roots in its own reality. Moreover, it does not imply artificial

situation and you can more easily reach towards a greater number of audience" (The Ravi, 1988: 68). Thus, Ajoka's language politics reflect more an anti-colonial stance than an anti-nationalist one.

Translating a German text into Lahori Punjabi was an ordeal according to the director of the plays: "the translation was difficult... you have to remain close to the text and the intention of the playwright" (Gohar, Interview, 2008). Nadeem Shahid has done a commendable job in utilizing rich Punjabi colloquialisms, poking fun at the contradictions inherent in Pakistani society on the one hand, and on the other, communicating to Pakistani audience the essence of Brechtian philosophy in a dramatic form that is at once indigenous and familiar to the local audience. When the local businessmen try to bribe the local maulana" and his son into swindling money from a public road development project, they offer them a "Pajero tey defence wich zameen da plaat (Pajero and a plot in Defence)", both symbols of social status and wealth (Bala King, 2009). Another classic example of the quality of the adaptation occurs when Bala King makes his first political speech, where he tells people how much they need him. "Jaivein kattey noo majh dee zaroorat hondi hay (just as a foal needs a buffalo)", he says (Bala King, 2009). The claim that he understands the poor's weaknesses and talks to them at their level immediately fools them, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation and victimization.

Contextualizing the play did not just involve translation of the text. "What really made a difference were the backdrops, which consisted of "Truck Art" in all its glory" (Husain, 2007:19). "We went to Badami Bagh and all these other places to get the truck artists to paint for us," Madeeha said, and the paintings too drip with satire on the establishment (Gohar, Interview, 2008). The backdrop of a court portraying the scales of justice tipped over with money is an ironic visual comment on the reversal of values and the chaos the local painting signifies.

"Special mention must be made of Sarfraz Ansari who really outdoes himself in playing the character of Bala King. He is a talented artist with chameleon like versatility whether it be playing the Sufi mystic Bulleh Shah or the political thug Bala" (Husain, 2007:19). When asked how he managed to capture the character of Bala and perform it so flawlessly he said, "During the 1998 elections, we would see small Bala Kings in the jalsas and jalooses (protests and processions) in gallis. I just imitated them" (Husain, 2007:19) in the environment of the oppression and resentment towards art that has existed in Pakistan for decades, the adaptation and reworking of

Brecht's plays is indicative of changing winds. The local performance of his plays by indigenous theatre groups is also reflective of a positive change in people's attitude towards dramatic art, and the public is encouraged to reflect on its own role in electing and promoting dictators and complacently serving ambitious and shady politicians. The success and popularity of these plays reveals their willingness to accept theatre as a means of social awareness and productive change. Their acceptance and appreciation implies that Pakistanis are ready to listen and strive to know the dramatic truth.

Brecht's theatre accepts the new challenge as it strives to bring the impossibility of knowing the truth within the sphere of dramatic performance and therefore, rousing the audience to explore new ethics through new dialectical principles. In *Three penny Opera*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Brecht manages to illuminate the area where art, ethics, politics, and economics converge.

The conflict between the old and the new remains unresolved in the Brechtian drama staged in Pakistan. It is precisely this sense of inconclusiveness that Brecht wants to communicate through the presentation of his plays on the stage. Andrea's lament "Unhappy the land that has no heroes" (Brecht, *Life of Galileo*:98) and Galileo's remark, "No unhappy the land where heroes are needed", (Brecht, *Life of Galileo*: 98) reveals Brecht's endeavour in justifying the need for an active theatrical experience. This is precisely the framework on which the structure of Brecht's plays rests revealing chameleon world of Brechtian stage as a dramatic metaphor for the contradictions grounded in the changing times.

Austrian playwright Peter Handke's theatrical pieces or "Speak-ins" offer an interesting parallel to Brecht's plays. Handke sought to develop an "interventionist dramaturgy" that would provoke the spectators directly. He states, "Speak-ins are autonomous prologues to the old plays. They do not want to revolutionize but to make aware" (Handke, 2001:329). Brecht also employs his dramaturgic principles to achieve similar ends: to make people aware of the multi-dimensionality of the social human life. Both the playwrights are innovative and experimental in that they have conducted radical experiments with theatrical production and presentation of their plays. Both have revolutionized the cliché role of actor and introduced new dimensions portraying re-presenting actors as embodying various living bodies. Brecht goes a step further in the art of dramatic performance. Unlike Handke's *Offending the Audience*, which is only a theatrical vocal piece (Sprechstucke) and contains neither dramatic

action nor *dramatis personae*, the action of Brecht's plays is placed in the framework of the modified conventional epic and operatic forms. His plays are structured around epic dramatic action, fragmentation, and alienation effect provoking the audience in much the same way as Handke's vocal pieces or theatrical speak-ins do.

The local staging of Brecht's plays has emerged as the art of volcanic eruption making visible the lava that comes out and compelling the audience to see and feel the interplay between explosion and silence of which Eric Bentley talks. Bentley further argues that Brecht is one of those writers who search less for "the human essence" as they claim to have already found it (Bentley, 1997:541). Brecht's fragmented, episode-style acting is designed to portray a man not only as a perfect man but as a contradictory, ever-changing character. In a letter to Linzer, Heiner Muller writes: "...the fragmentation of an event highlights its nature as a process, prevents the disappearance of production into the product interferes with its marketability, turns the image into an experimental area, in which the public can become the co-producers" (Muller, 2001:324). The experimental style of local performances aims at showing everything in a new and unusual light, so that the viewer is brought in to take a deeper look at what he has taken for granted so far.

Pakistani indigenous style of acting in presenting Brecht is free and flexible and enables the audience to study objectively the socio-political realities from divergent perspectives so that the results of our investigations/studies "make visible the means by which these onerous conditions could be done away with" (*Playwrights on Playwriting*: 312). Ludwig Lewisohn also puts forth the function of theatre which is to alleviate avoidable moral suffering by inculcating an understanding of human life (1997:491). Khan defines the role of theatre in these words: "In particular, it is a cultural response to democracy in a repressive state of oppression under dual pressure of military and Islamic ideology, and has contributed a great deal not only to the theatre world, but also a growing debate about the theory of democracy and praxis, especially as it relates to issues of human rights and gender equality in the vast cultural and political environment of Pakistani society" (Khan, 2005:3). Pakistani style of acting makes social ills visible on the stage and urges the audience to view these problems critically.

CONCLUSION

The rhythm and poise of theatre derives from an audacious dialectical analysis of the conflicting forces that operate the world of stage. Pakistani theatre has the potential to question all belief systems" (Khan, 2005: 2). In staging Brecht in Pakistan, the parallel theatre groups expose the current realities to a thorough critique and call for an active response from the audience. In the realm of theatre performance, the local staging's of Bertolt Brecht's plays have carved a new history on Pakistan's theatre stage.

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