

Is Postdramatic Theatre Post-Brechtian?

A Keynote speech at the book launch, regena avi mama da emi translated by
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“Friends, when I am dead,
Hang up behind the altar the small harp,
There on the wall where garlands glisten,
Memories of girls now dead”
-Ludwig Höltz, *Brecht As They Knew Him*

Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence
-Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*

To begin with, here is a little anecdote. In nineteen ninety one, I was an Advanced Level student studying at the Horana Vidyarathna Pirivena. Brecht’s *Caucasian Chalk Circle* translated by Henry Jayasena was one of the texts we had to study for literature. During this time, a seminar was organised at Horana Thakshila Central College and Mr. Jayasen was the chef guest and the key speaker at the seminar. During this seminar, I had a chance to raise a question. The previous night I prepared my questions while reading the original text I found in my father’s book shelf. The time arrived. I asked my question: “Is Brecht Marxist”? Suddenly, the hall was submerged in silence. Then there was a murmur in the audience and Mr. Jayasena was restless and suddenly stood up: “I don’t know whether he is Marxist or not; what I know is that he is a humanist!” A teacher at the Thakshila collage came up to me hurriedly and asked me to sit and not to ask questions anymore. She may have thought I had humiliated this theatrical celebrity. Brecht was exiled due to his politically motivated theatre; here I was forcefully silenced and humiliated among other students for trying to explore the ideological implications of Brechtian theatre.

This anecdote marks a particular problem still evident in Brechtian scholarship. Despite Brecht’s avowed Marxist leanings and his explicit use of Marxist theory and dialectics, his writing and theatre practice have been categorised within a humanist world view asserting that Brecht is a great literary figure and his work is eternal and universally

acceptable. Brecht's relevance in today's postmodern, globalised world is also pertinent because of the Marxist underpinnings of his dialectical theatre. In this short paper I intend to address the second premise that Brecht is still alive within contemporary theatre while arguing that his theatrical practice enhances and influences dramatic theory and practice in late capitalism.

My concern here is, particularly, Brecht's contribution to theatrical imaginings in the 21st century and his influence on later developments of post-dramatic theatre. One may wonder whether it is still relevant or worthwhile to talk about Brecht in contemporary theatre because other modernist theatre directors such as Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Artaud or Grotowski have superseded him. Brecht's legacy has seemingly been diminishing in the so called postmodern era as well. But here I ask how important it is for us to reconsider Brecht and his theatrical legacy today? What implications have his ideas had on 'political theatre' in particular and how is it that they still continue to influence the next generation of theatre making?

It is a difficult task to explore such a complex topic within a short space. While Brecht was a poet, a writer, a director, theorist and an activist, my specific attempt here is to reconsider whether Brecht's ideas on theatre and the actor's practice are still of relevance and worth considering within today's complex social and political realities. I will try to provide a justification here that Brecht's legacy is still possesses vitality within post-dramatic or rather post-Brechtian theatre. In the first section of this enquiry, I consider Brecht's contribution to modernist approaches in early theatre in conjunction with the work of other modernist directors. I consider the philosophical and political underpinnings of Brecht's work in relation to modernist conceptions of theatre making. I use the term postdramatic to identify a specific genre of theatre and especially an era in which theatre making becomes an anti-mimetic practice. I introduce and make use of Hans-Thies Lahmann's theorisation of postdramatic theatre, its significance and its unique idealisation of the contemporary theatre making. With this theorisation of postdramatic theatre, I will then discuss how contemporary theatre in general, and European theatre in particular, is postdramatic or more precisely post-Brechtian in nature. I will conclude that Brecht's legacy still underpins contemporary postdramatic, and intermedial performance practice.

Modernist Theatre and Brecht

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) has been regarded as one of the foremost theatre writers, poets, activists and theorists in 21st century theatre. His ideas pertaining to political theatre as well as experimental theatre have been highly influential in forming and developing many new theatrical genres. Brecht's approaches to theatre and acting were 'avant-garde' and revolutionary in the sense that his theatre practice and conceptions about the actor's work were literally anti-Aristotelian and unconventional. Many aspects of Brecht's approaches to theatre making and theories pertaining to the actor's involvement in the theatre have been explored. No other theatre director has had such

significant attention than Brecht, whose literary works and artistic practices have been the subject matter of theatre scholarship throughout the last century.

Theatre in the early nineteenth century is regarded as modernist in its orientation. There were many modernist theatre directors and theorists who attempted to interpret theatre and the modes of actors' work in line with some assumptions relating to the modernist world view. Russian pedagogue Stanislavski, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski and Meyerhold are some of the key proponents of modern theatre and they tried to conceptualise their theatrical approaches as a response to the prejudices of conventional theatre. (Leach, 2013) For instance, Stanislavski's theatre career led him to explore a particular truth claim about the actor's work. (Stanislavski, 2012) He believed that there is a universal truth about the inner and outer relationship of the actor. He meticulously continued and extended his research to explore such truth to be able to bring it out to the surface.

The two key terms 'modern theatre' and 'modernist theatre' are much debated among theatre scholars. According to Robert Leach, modern theatre is the theatre of today. Modernist theatre refers to the four to five decades of the last century. (Leach 2013, p. 1) However, Leach's argument is that the modernist directors such as Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Brecht and Artaud are key theorists who developed modern or 'avant-garde' theatre in the last century. He further contends:

Modernism created the 'avant-garde': those who not only introduced new subject matter to art, but did so by the use of new methods and new forms. They were the Symbolists, the Futurists, the Expressionists, the Surrealists, and all the other innovators and iconoclasts of that period (Leach 2013, p. 1).

These key proponents of the modernist theatre have had an undeniable influence on many contemporary theatre practitioners and still continue to be influential today. Stanislavski's legacy had a major impact on actor training in theatre and the film industry since the early nineteenth century and in the development of method and psychophysical acting practice. (Carnicke, 1998) Meyerhold's formulation of the Biomechanics and Artaud's theatre of cruelty has influenced the development of contemporary physical theatre and other performance arts. (Leach, 2013) Grotowski's poor theatre and his notion of *via negativa*, as Richard Schechner put it, have influenced many theatre groups -- similar to the ripples created by a stone thrown in water. (Schechner & Wylam, 2013) His fragmented assemblage of texts and the rejection of the text as the central piece of the creative process directly embraced the emerging post-structuralist movement in Europe and America. (Romanska 2012, p. 50) Most importantly, Brecht's theatrical legacy has impacted contemporary feminist theatre and the theatre of the oppressed formulated by Augusto Boal and the later development of postdramatic theatre. (Auslander, 1997)

In general, modernist theatre extended Aristotelian theatrical premises such as its fundamental assumptions about 'mimetical representation' and its connection to the outer world. As David Bennett argues, conventional dramatic conception is that drama is representation and it re-contextualises these representational values within time and

space. (Brater et al., 2013, p. 14) Modernist directors believed that theatre can be revitalised through the symbolic replication of social realities on stage. Brecht and other directors, therefore, to a great extent, believed there is an ultimate human/individual/social or spiritual truth in the world and that unattainable truth can be fleshed out through theatre. When Brecht believes that theatre is symbolic, it means that theatre represents social reality or that 'it stands for something else in the world'. (Leach 2013, p. 2) In order to attain this theatrical truth (or true consciousness), the vehicle he employed was the craft of acting. All modernists believed that interpreting the actor's work and her approaches through inner or outer means potentially enables the director to access this ultimate truth claim (or in Brechtian terms, the revelation of the false consciousness). Not only Brecht but other modernist theatre practitioners such as Stanislavski, Artaud, Meyerhold or even Grotowski also believed that the actor is the core of their theatrical exploration. From Stanislavski onwards, all these avant-gardists radicalised the way we perceive the actors' work in theatrical performance. Stanislavski, for instance, believed that the actor is the sole agent of the theatrical experience and tried to interpret and emphasise the need for understanding the actor as a creator. Grotowski also extended this conception and suggested the centrality of the holy actor in the theatrical experience. (Grotowski & Barba, 1991) Brecht challenged the ways in which the traditional role of the actor was perceived in the Western theatre, and suggested a non-mimetic mode of acting. Furthermore, as I explained above, Brecht was also looking for a particular truth or a social transformation, and believed that this truth can be accessible and changeable through theatre and its manipulation of the ruling ideology. (Brater et al., 2013, p. 3)

Although this may be repetitive, I must briefly discuss some of the key concepts that Brecht developed in order to formulate his new theatre. His ideas and theories on theatre making have been widely explored and debated globally and to some extent in Sri Lankan theatre scholarship. However it is critical for us to reconsider these key concepts to refresh our discussion about Brecht, his influences and his relevance to contemporary theatre.

V-effect

As is well known, Brecht is famous for as well as quite superficially understood and misinterpreted for his notion of *Verfremdung*. The term *Verfremdung* in general refers to the Alienation Effect or estrangement. Brecht first formulated this term when he was visiting his friend Sergei Tretyakov in Moscow. (Leach 2013, p. 118) At that time as Leach further suggests, Brecht has been exposed to the 'formalist' movement in Russia and they believed that the function of the art is to make people see the world afresh. (ibid, p.118) These formalist ideas and his continued exploration to form a new theatre and his encounter with Asian theatre, most notably Mei Lang Fan, the famous Beijing opera actor's work may have heavily influenced Brecht in his conception of Epic theatre. This formalist idea of 'seeing something afresh' helped Brecht to see that theatre can be used to restructure the ways that the audience sees the world and interpret social phenomena. As Robert Leach correctly puts it, Brecht's idea of *Verfremdung* can be simply articulated

as: a particular way of showing the 'stoniness' of the stone (ibid, p. 118). But Brecht does not stop at this point but he goes on to add another dimension to this 'stoniness'. Brecht further argues that 'was it merely a nuisance, something to stub on your toe on, or could it be used to throw at riot-controlling police, or to help build a barricade?' (ibid, p. 118) This clearly signifies that Brecht wants a paradigmatic shift in the aesthetic judgement of theatregoers but he wanted to also provoke the spectator towards a particular activism. Brecht's spectator, therefore, is not merely a passive observer of the play but a critical viewer who can be actively engaged with the theatrical enactment and change his/her attitudes along with the theatrical experience. Brecht rejects some traditional theatrical tenets in order to break away from the dramatic illusion they offer. Brecht argues:

The idea of a fourth wall which is imagined separating the stage from the audience, an idea that produces the illusion that the stage action is actually taking place without spectators, must of course be abandoned. This being so, it is possible for the actors to turn directly to the audience (Cole & Chinoy, 1954, p. 308).

The theatre which offers engagement of the spectator and the actor based on an illusion does not lead the spectator towards critical judgement according to Brecht. He called this 'culinary theatre'. (Leach 2013, p. 119) This type of theatre demands the spectator to 'hang his brain up in the cloakroom along with its coat'. (ibid, p. 119) Instead, Brecht wanted his spectators to be more vigilant readers who can cross check what they see and re-read what is taking place on stage. This dualistic engagement of the spectator affects the theatrical enactment and hence changes the position from one of observation to critical engagement with what they see.

Gestus

As seen above, Brecht's conception of epic theatre is defined through the Marxist analysis of the base/superstructure model. Many modernist directors I have mentioned such as Stanislavski, Artaud, Grotowski or Mayerhold, attempted to understand the actor and her body as a reflection of historical and social manifestation of habits inscribed on bodies. Stanislavski for instance, proposed a particular (phenomenological) reduction or an isolation of the actor on stage (public solitude) allowing the actor to forget the social habits in order to empathise with the role. (Johnston, 2011) Grotowski also employed such a tool, *via negativa*, which was somewhat different from Stanislavski but is premised on a similar reduction -- a removal or elimination of daily habituation in order to attain a spiritual selfhood for both the actor and the audience alike. Unlike all these modernist directors, Brecht proposes a dialectical theatre. His theatre stages a dialectical relationship between individuals and their perpetual dialogue between social situations. According to this dialogical relationship (intersubjective) between society and the individual; it presupposes contradictions (ambiguities) between social and individual phenomena and assumes contradictions through which social change can be expected. This materialist dialectical relation between the body and the social milieu reflect how

Brecht conceptualises his theatre as a tool to manipulate society and the individual alike. Marx's widely discussed base-superstructure model through which he defines the relationship between culture and the economic basis in society (Leach, 2013) is adapted by Brecht in his analysis of socio-cultural relationships to understand the actor's body within dialectical theatre.

The term he introduces is *Gestus* to indicate the dialectic between the cultural superstructure and the economic basis of the society. In other words, Brecht sees the human body as a product of historical and social changes inscribed and habituated within a particular socio-political milieu. The body reflects social hierarchies of behaviour and the alienation of labour habitually sedimented on bodies. As discussed before, Brecht's tool of *Verfremdung* renders familiar dramatic situations created on stage somewhat unfamiliar or strange. The notion of *Gestus* thus 'connects the character to society through the body of the actor'. (Brater et al., 2013, p. 50) When other modernist directors use a particular reduction to isolate the actor's body on the stage to be able to find an unideological/neutral/uncoded body, Brecht wants his actors to demonstrate the social implication and relevance of their bodily *Gestus* to provoke the spectators to see an ideological body on stage. Phillip Auslander explains how ideological bodies function in Brecht theatre. For instance, In *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Azdak instructs his disguised visitor thus:

Finish your cheese, but eat it like a poor man, or else they'll catch you.....Lay your elbows on the table. Now, encircle the cheese on your plate like it might be snatched from you at any moment (Cited in Auslander, 1997, p. 103).

As this quotation reveals, Azdak asks his visitor to act like a poor man who eats his cheese with hungry and greediness. This theatrical enactment indicates a particular *Gestic* structure of the character on stage. Walter Benjamin, the Marxist critique stated that the epic theatre is inherently 'gestural' to signify this connection in Brecht's portrayals of social *Gestus* (ibid, p. 129). With the notion of *Gestis/Gest*, Brecht does not want his actors' to eliminate their inherent bodily habituations but to use them as social *Gestus* to demonstrate the relation between the body and its connection to the ideological construction of society. Acting on the stage is thus not an empathic imitation of an ideal model but a way of demonstrating the knowledge of 'human relations, of human behaviours, of human capacities' (Brecht cited in Auslander, 1997, p. 32).

As I have argued, it is evident that Brecht's theatre seems a complex and difficult experiment to be realised. Although I have limited my discussion to *Verfremdung* and *Gestus*, there are other key elements such as texts, music and scenic structure which are very important elements in Brecht's Epic theatre. I do not explore these aspects in detail here. His conception of the actor as 'showman' of the character signals his departure from modern theatre and indicates his influence on post-Brechtian theatre, which I will discuss later. As Phillip Auslander argues, 'it is clear that the presence of the social self in performance is important to Brecht, who has as little use for the parrot-actor and the

monkey-actor as Stanislavski has for the representational actor'. (Auslander, 1997, p. 34) Although it is a difficult task to realise, Brecht proposes to alter the traditional aesthetic model of theatre making and perceiving and concludes that his theatre should be instructive and moreover entertaining for the people.

Postdramatic Theatre

A groundbreaking German book *Postdramatisches Theater* (2006) written by Hans-Thies Lehmann attempted to formulate the contemporary conditions and nature of theatre practice and its political relevance in the new millennium. This book was first published in German and later translated into English in 1999. Following this translation, Lehmann's theorisation of the contemporary theatre has been brought to the attention of many theatre scholars and practitioners who were waiting to understand and make sense of new theatrical ventures taking place in Europe and elsewhere. It is important to look at Lehmann's term 'postdramatic theatre' to explore what it connotes and its applicability in identifying a specific theatrical genre emerging in the past few decades in world theatre.

Postdramatic theatre was coined first to describe a particular theatrical category that emerged in the mid sixties. It explored the new theatrical writing of some European, British and North American theatre writers. These works have been difficult to place within traditional dramatic categories and therefore needed a fresh approach to understand their structures and their political relevance to the current social order. In order to grasp the primary ideas related to the term postdramatic, it is worth considering Karen Jürs-Munby's interpretation of postdramatic theatre:

Post' here is to be understood neither as an epochal category, nor simply as a chronological 'after' drama, a 'forgetting' of the dramatic 'past', but rather as a rupture and a beyond that continue to entertain relationships with drama and are in many ways an analysis and 'anamnesis' of drama (Cited in Brater et al., 2013, p. 14).

Because of the nature of the term, it tends to signify a usual after modern connotation or a particular category in which the current theatre practice can be placed as something coming after modernity. As Jürs-Munby articulates, it should not be necessarily understood as a particular era; of an end to the traditional notion of drama or as a forgetting of this traditional past. But it signifies a particular rupture or discontinuation of a dramatic formula through the emergence of a new relationship proposed and seen in contemporary theatre. In contrast to Jürs-Munby, David Barnett argues that postdramatic theatre neither indicates a rupture or discontinuity and at the same time, does not indicate a particular 'extra metadramatic layer'. (Ibid, p. 14) Lehmann subsequently use this innovative term, postdramatic to identify a specific trend in theatre making mushrooming in contemporary European theatre following revolutionary approaches of modernist playwrights and directors including Brecht. In 2011, the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies in London organised an inaugural international conference in which theatre scholars for the first time gathered to explore the applicability and relevance of Lehmann's theory in relation to emerging theatre practices in the contemporary world.



Figure 9: 'Dionysus in 69' by Performance Group based on Richard Schechner's ideas on environmental and participatory theatre (Photo Richard Schechner).

Lehmann presumably coined the term postdramatic to identify the vast number of theatre and performance practices appearing in many locations which did not necessarily reflect the traditional modes of theatre making and their aesthetic values. (Brater et al., 2013, p. 1) Writing an introduction to the English translation of Lehman's landmark study, Karen Jürs-Munby, writes that Lehman's topography of postdramatic theatre focuses on unacknowledged anxieties, pressures, pleasures, paradoxes and perversities that usually surrounded performance situations'. (Lehmann, 2006, p. 4) As Barnett argues these performance practices 'no longer conformed to the idea of mimetically enacting a dramatic conflict in the form of a story (fable) and dialogue spoken by characters in a fictional universe'. (ibid, p.1) After his publication *Postdramatic Theatre*, Lehmann again claimed that there are some promising achievements in German theatre which deal with political and social issues framed in theatre. He argued that the rise of rightist political leaders in Europe, the collapse of twin towers, wars in the Middle Eastern region, fall of the Berlin wall and other calamities in the political scene in the world have directly motivated theatre directors to address these issues through different artistic means (ibid, p. 2). Moreover, as Bernett suggests, there is more politically motivated theatre to be revived. Other issues such as the US debt crisis in 2008 which led to unemployment, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the global climate crisis and the 'Arab Spring' among many more have impacted the emergence of such politically motivated theatre. (ibid, p.2-3)

In his landmark study, Lehmann identifies a wide variety of performance practices which led him to develop a comprehensive analysis of the postdramatic theatre. In the early seventies emerging trends in performance arts became interlaced with new

theatre practices. Further, he contends that the new technologies and visual and audio landscapes have also been influential in developing these new modes of theatrical performances. (Hamilton, 2008, p. 13) These new modes of theatre integrate theatre, performance art, opera, dance and other conventional performances to elaborate a new theatre experience. In *Theory of Modern Drama*, as Peter Szondi argues that new theatre has attempted to eradicate prologue, chorus, and epilogue, in order to establish ‘an interpersonal communication’ through ‘absolute dominance of dialogue’. (Hamilton, 2008, p. 13). Postdramatic theatre further extends such processes of eradication or elimination of the text, character and language. (ibid, p.13) As Margaret Hamilton further asserts Mervin Carlson as well as Richard Schchner’s works have addressed the new forms of theatre extending their analysis under the umbrella term performance studies. According to them, performance studies encapsulate not only dramatic performance that we witness in the theatre buildings but in sociology, politics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics and technology. Whereas Lehmann coins the term postdramatic to capture wider performance practices within his term which consist of key performative components: 1. Ritual. 2. Interactive performance, and 3. Production of presence. (Hamilton, 2008, p. 14) These three premises of postdramatic theatre perhaps correspond with Brechtian influences on contemporary dramatic or performance theory. In the next section I will briefly address how post-Brechtian theatre can be postdramatic.

Post-Brechtian Theatre

Lehmann argues that postdramatic theatre is a post-Brechtian theatre. (Brater et al., 2013, p. 48) By this claim, Lehman asserts that Brechtian theatrical elements and its aesthetics logics have directly or indirectly infiltrated or have been adapted in contemporary theatre making after the phase of modernist approaches to theatre. As seen in many critiques, Brechtian theatre has been understood and interpreted as a tool to flesh out the ideological constructions of the social milieu or in other words, a tool via which the implicit ‘false consciousness’ can be exposed. But as Sean Carney argues that the underlying assumption of Brecht’s theatre is not only ideological but there is something in excess—perhaps his theatre is ideology *plus*. (Carney 2013, pp. 1-2) According to Carney’s analysis, it is true that the ideological construction underlying theatre can also be fleshed out through dialectics. This strategy is less relevant and has little applicability in the contemporary theatrical scene. (ibid, p.2) Therefore, it is vital to reconsider how and in what ways Brechtian theatre influences and motivates us to rethink theatre and develop our critical thinking to expand the parameters of contemporary theatre.

The reconsideration of Brecht’s theatrical legacy has a particular significance for contemporary theatre. As we have already seen, in Sri Lankan adaptations and interpretations of Brecht, it is evident that his political philosophy is overshadowed by his aesthetic practice. As Carney argues, Brecht’s aesthetic conceptions and particularly his formulation of such notions of *Verfremdung* and *Gestus* are directly related to his ideological Marxist project. (2005, p. 9) It is this political ideology which dominates and makes Brecht a valuable theatre maker in the contemporary post-Brechtian theatre.

Without this political ideology relating to his dialectical aesthetic, Brecht is no longer a valuable theorist or a dramatist for twenty first century theatre.

As Robert Leach argues in the twenty first century, Brecht was a dead poet for many. His writing had been considered and categorised as ‘classic’ similar to other writers such as D. H. Lawrence or Dostoyevsky. (Leach & Ebook, 2013, p. 146) But after the nineteen sixties, his theories of theatre and the questions he raised about human identity attracted many postmodern theorists such as Roland Barthes and Fredric Jameson. Barthes as Leach argues admired the notion of *gest* and the ‘demystification’ of the theatre propagated by Brecht’s aesthetic theories. He pointed out how Brecht’s ideas favoured the politics of signs in theatre. (ibid, p. 147) For Barthes, Brecht’s theatre texts are ‘readerly texts’ (a system) which do not conclude final meanings (writerly texts). In other words, what Barthes argues is that Brecht’s theatrical text question logocentrism or the modernist text-centred literary aesthetics and foreground postmodern intertextuality.



Figure 10: Heiner Müller’s ZEMENT/Residenztheater München (Photo Armin Smailovic).

Brecht’s aesthetic theories have further influenced the development of contemporary feminist theatre and film criticism. As Elin Diamond argues the umbrella term, feminist theory may cover a wide range of disciplines such as feminist film theory, feminist literary theory, psychoanalytic feminist theory, lesbian feminist theory, and cross-cultural feminist theory to mention a few. All these disciplines have attempted to analyse ‘gender in material social relations and in discursive and representational structures, especially theatre and films which involve scopic pleasures and the body’. (Diamond, 1988, pp. 82-83) In these feminist approaches to critical analysis, gender is assumed to be a social construction. Brecht’s theories of aesthetics and *gestus* support this argument. Further, Brecht’s historicisation also supports the deconstruction of the ‘oppressed position of women in history’. (Leach & Ebook, 2013, p. 147) Furthermore, presenting a

paper at the annual research symposium, University of Kelaniya, Indika Ferdinando and I argued that Aristotelian dramatic climax replicates the dominant male orgasmic experience and proposed a multiple climatic point in the fragmented dramatic representation through the play *Colombo Colombo* produced in 2010. Sue-Ellen Case also confirms this argument that, male sexual experience proceeding with 'foreplay, to arousal to ejaculation' replicates the 'subliminal maleness of tragedy'. (Leach 2013, p.147) Whereas Sue-Ellen argues that Brecht's epic dramatic structure favours women's multiple orgasmic experience.



Figure 11: Martin Crimp's *Attempts on Her Life*, Sydney Theatre Company 2000, Directed by Benedict Andrews (Photo Tracey Schramm).

Brecht's ideological apparatuses have also been adapted by Brazilian director and theorist, Augusto Boal. Boal's notion of the theatre of the oppressed corresponds with the Brechtian assertion that ideology creates a gap between the performer and the audience member. Boal's articulation of the body resonates with Marxist political analysis that the body is 'inscribed by ideological discourses'. (Auslander, 1997, p. 102) Boal's strategy is to free the body from these ideological apparatuses via which the oppressor manipulates and habituates bodies for social, political needs. Similar to other modernist theatre directors, Boal's project has been to emancipate the oppressed bodies from their ideological regimens to be able to make them expressive and neutral in the performance process. But as Brecht used *Gestus* to extricate the class structure and social regimens between humans, Boal also reveals bodily habituations and social regimens through 'de-specialisation' as 'a necessary step toward the exploration of the oppression through theatre' (ibid 1997, p. 102).

There are many other theatre directors and writers in the global theatrical scene who have adapted and developed Brecht's aesthetics and theatre norms. In this paper I do not have enough space to discuss all the theatre writers and directors influenced by Brecht. But there are four names that I would like to mention here: Two British writers, Martin Crimp, Sarah Cane and German directors Heiner Müller an Austrian playwright, Ewald Palmethofer have radicalised the contemporary post-Brechtian theatre. Labelling of these writers' work as postdramatic or rather Brechtian is still a matter of debate among theatre scholars.

Conclusion

Brecht as a revolutionary director believed that the reality that we see in the social milieu is already disguised through ideological filters. In order to identify the real or extricate primordial relations between humans and society, he suggested a tool, *Verfremdung*. Therefore, he rejected the apparent reality of social situations and human relations. He wanted to extricate the dialectics of those relations via which he believed that true reality or true consciousness can be realised. This assumption has been a key configuration in post Brechtian theatre that it rejects the mimetic representation of daily reality in the theatre. As Lehmann also affirms postdramatic theatre rejects such traditional dramatic elements which re-present the outer world as they appear to us. Thus post-Brechtian theatre does not replicate mere reality as it appears in our daily experience and reconstruct it within a 'fictitious cosmos' (Brater et al., 2013, p. 249). Brecht's theatre suggested a particular ontological category for the actor as well as for the spectator. It is not just replicating mere reality within conventional dramatic elements and performing them assuming that dramatic theatre is epistemological. Contemporary experimental theatre proposes an 'existence' or a 'Being' for enactment by bypassing traditional epistemological regimes of representation. These postdramatic theatres as Lehmann suggests is 'itself to *be* a kind of reality' or 'irruption of the real' in the Lacanian sense. (Brater et al., 2013, p. 249) Departing key elements that dramatic theatre inherited from Aristotelian mimesis, Brecht and his precursors abandoned representation and suggested presence as the key theatricality in the post-Brechtian theatre. They further favour process over product, more manifestation than signification, impulse over information. In this way, Brecht's legacy is still being altered, modified and further questioned in the era of late capitalism.