Common Poetics? — The Reappraisal of Chinese-Brechtian Theater

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Since the early seventies, fruitful and interesting studies of Chinese theater and Brechtian theater have increasingly appeared: for example, Lane Jennings's "Chinese Literature and Thought in the Poetry and Prose of Bertolt Brecht" (1970)[1], Renata Berg-Pan's "The Chinese Influence on the Dramaturgy of Bertolt Brecht" (1971)[2], Chen Shu-yi's 陳淑義"Brecht, Epic Theater and Traditional Chinese Dramaturgy" 布雷希特，敍述劇與中國傳統的舞臺藝術 (1976)[3], and Clara Yu's "The Chinese Influence on the Theater of Bertolt Brecht" (1978)[4]. Whether in Chinese or English, all of these comparative studies focus on Brecht's indebtedness to Chinese theater; no attention has been paid to the impact of Brecht's dramatic theory on the Chinese. Thus, my study does not repeat my predecessors' efforts, instead, I trace how and why Chinese theater circles[5] have responded to Brecht's theory in the light of the particular situation of contemporary Chinese theater.

In order to pinpoint why Brecht's theory has attracted the attention of Chinese theater circles, some basic elements of Brecht's theory need to be reviewed as a basis for discussion. Many critics have pointed out a number of parallels that exist between Chinese theater and Brechtian epic theater. The parallels can be outlined as the following:

> (1) The plays of the epic theater, which reject the logically built, well-made drama, are free from the need of creating suspense, loosely knit, and episodic; instead of mounting to a dynamic climax, the story unfolds in a number of separate situations, each rounded and complete in itself. The total effect of the play is built up through the juxtaposition and "montage"

of contrasting episodes. The epic drama can be cut into slices that will continue to make sense and give pleasure like the extracts from plays of great length that are performed as self-contained units in classical Chinese theater.[6]

(2) The story of a classical Chinese play is usually a historical legend and takes place in the past. More strictly, according to Brecht, during a play it must at all times be made apparent to the spectators that they are not witnessing real events happening before their eyes at the very moment, but that they are sitting in a theater, listening to an account of things that have happened in the past at a certain time in a certain place.[7]

(3) There is, further, the same detached style of acting. In Chinese theater, upon entering the stage, each important character describes his basic nature and appearance in a half-spoken, half-chanted passage. This is often followed by other lines in which he explains the story and tells his name, family background and other information. As in many of Brecht's plays, the actors introduce themselves and even provide their own comments on the story to break up the coherence of the plot.[8]

(4) In Chinese theater the audience witnesses the preparation being made for the various scenes since the stage assistant does his work in full view of the audience. It is also true in Brecht's theater. There he continuously reminds the audience of the appearance of the stage assistant. In a poem entitled "Die Vorbaenge," Brecht describes the stage assistant's job:

. . . .
Leaning back in his chair, let the spectator
Be aware of busy preparations, made for him
Cunningly; he sees a tinfoil moon
Float down, or a tiled roof
Being carried in; do not show him too much,
But show him something! And let him notice
That you are not wizards,
Friends, but workers. . . .[9]

Brecht wants the audience to witness the preparation attentively and thus the audience will be conscious of who and where they are and judge the play coolly.

(5) The musicians in Brechtian theater are not hidden,

> but must be visible. They are sometimes placed on the stage, where the Chinese feel they belong, sometimes in full view of the audience, sometimes off to one side, perhaps behind a screen or a light veil.[10]

These parallels as well as symbolic gesture, suggestive setting and the invitation of audience participation not only center on Brecht's "Verfremdungseffekt," which has often been wrongly translated as "alienation effect,"[11] but they serve to build a bridge between Chinese theater and Brechtian theater. And since Chinese theater is still in its growing-pains to find a theory to confirm, this neologism seems to exercise a powerful spell on some Chinese critics' minds. They find the theory of alienation effect so illuminating that they feel comfortably at home in paraphrasing it into Chinese as *shu-li hsiao-kuo* 疏離效果.[12] And in their lectures and books they spare no effort to coin fashionable terms or utilize the theory to meet their critical needs in studying classical Chinese plays:

> 由於平劇劇場所具上述諸性質，使其飄浮於現實世界之上，或即布萊希特所謂之「疏離」。[13]
> The revealing nature of Peking Opera causes it to be detached from reality like the so-called Brechtian alienation effect.

> 疏離性，那就是戲劇的目的……要他們感到戲就是戲。[14]
> The alienation effect is the main purpose of the Classical Chinese play. . . . It reminds the audience that the play is a play (not reality).

> 由於劇場的氣氛，演員的服飾，美術化的動作，觀衆並不溶入戲中，反而是一種疏離。[15]
> The atmosphere in the theater, the actor's costuming and the demonstrative acting make the audience alienated from, instead of being empathic in, the play.

Even when they hold critical opinion on Brecht's theoretical framework, they tend to choose and highlight the alienation effect as if it can represent the entirety of Chinese theater:

> 布雷希特對國劇瞭解的根據只是一種極有限的親身經歷，但在國劇還不曾被廣泛提撕到理論探討的情形下，似乎還找不出一種能與變常效

果理論相頡抗的詮釋，足用來更恰當地說明中國傳統舞台上所發生的一切。[16]

> Brecht's understanding of Chinese theater is based on very limited experience, yet so far there is still no equal to the alienation effect in theory that can explain what happens on the traditional Chinese stage.

All of these critics are of high reputation in Taiwan and accordingly their criticism has considerable influence on contemporary Chinese theater. Thus, the question of whether the Brechtian alienation effect is applicable to Chinese theater or not is more important for my concern than the demonstrable parallels.

First of all, the accuracy of Brecht's interpreting Chinese dramaturgy in terms of the alienation effect is doubtful. Although the word "alienation effect" stems from Brecht's visit to Moscow in 1935,[17] the concept of the alienation effect had been conceived in Brecht's mind much earlier. As John Willett suggests:

> Almost certainly this is the first mention in his writings of the term 'Verfremdungseffekt'. That Brecht had already been feeling his way towards some such formula can be seen from his use of the term 'Entfremdung', while his almost instinctive predilection for strangeness can be seen in "A Radio Speech" in 1927.[18]

Therefore, it is quite possible that Brecht watched the performance of the Chinese actor Mei Lan-fang 梅蘭芳 (1894-1961) in Moscow with an unconscious searching for a new way of dramatic expression. In Mei Lan-fang's performance, Brecht saw a living example of a style of acting which employed the device of the "alienation effect," or so Brecht thought. His own notes on the performance gave no evidence that he understood more about Chinese theater than met the eye. During a guest performance[19] Mei Lan-fang demonstrated his art by acting out a scene in a critical, aloof manner and without make-up, costume or lighting.[20] What appealed to Brecht in particular was the fact that Mei Lan-fang did not transform the events and the character he was portraying completely, but rather always retained a certain distance and merely demonstrated. The Chinese actor achieved this, Brecht believed, by two means: the actor is aware of the audience

and plays to it, and the actor is aware of his being observed and even looks "strangely at himself and his work."[21] He recognized immediately that acting was the most developed and sophisticated device used by Chinese actors. The performance impressed him so much that he wrote an essay entitled "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" to clarify it. Judging by the tone and the content of the essay, Brecht's reaction to the new dramatic experience in Moscow revealed that he was so eager to find his own ideas confirmed that he undoubtedly misunderstood some of the gestures and the information given by Mei Lan-fang.

To name a few: according to Brecht, a Chinese actor is not allowed to enter the personality of the character he is representing, and so the audience is not tempted to sentimentalize and thus views the performance critically. Yet Brecht himself witnessed an incident in Moscow where the supposed alienation effect misfired completely. In a passage of his essay we read:

> When Mei Lan-fang was playing a death scene a spectator sitting next me exclaimed with astonishment at one of his gestures. One or two people sitting in front of us turned round indignantly and sshhh'd. They behaved as if they were present at the real death of a real girl.[22]

Brecht insisted that the audience's attitude would have been correct for a European production but was ridiculous for a Chinese. It did not occur to him that he might have misunderstood Mei's acting at this point. I agree with Leonard Cabell Pronko who observes:

> If this is so, the "alienation effect" often misfires for the Chinese spectators as well, for they react emotionally to the sad scenes in Chinese opera.[23]

Indeed, Chinese audiences weep in the tragic scenes and laugh in the comical scenes just as Western audiences react in the realistic plays. It is obvious that a person who has Chinese dramatic experience in China would rarely jump to such a conclusion as Brecht did. Brecht's misunderstanding of Chinese acting was partly because he was ambivalent in his intention, wanting both a hot and a cold audience. He asked that the audience be cold in alienating itself from the play and at the same time be hotly engaged in ideological dialectics.[24] Partly it was because he was unfamiliar with Chinese

stage conventions. He wanted to see more of an alienation effect than there actually was to see, so he did not realize that empathy with the character the actor impersonates is also required in Chinese acting. And his comments on Chinese acting were clearly written from an uninitiated Western observer's viewpoint.

Besides, according to Brecht, the Chinese actor's object was "to appear strange and even surprising to the audience,"[25] and therefore to provoke the audience's cool-headed, thoughtful reactions. He considered that the Chinese actor always pointed to his own acting as if teaching the audience something about the type of acting as well as the object or scene or character he was portraying:

> When he appears on the stage, besides what he actually is doing he will at all essential points discover, specify, imply what he is not doing; that is to say he will act in such a way that the alternative emerges as clearly as possible, that his acting allows the other possibilities to be inferred and only present one out of the possible variants.[26]

What he considered to be "the other possibilities" relates to ideological dialectics. He hoped that the alienation effect in Chinese acting which he thought he had recognized could lay the foundations for an entirely new type of knowledge, a political type of acting which might be put in the service of dramatists "who need such a technique for quite definite social purposes."[27] The end of "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" runs thus:

> In setting up new artistic principles and working out new methods of representation we must start with the compelling demands of a changing epoch; the necessity and the possibility of remodelling society loom ahead. All incidents between men must be noted, and everything must be seen from a social point of view. Among other effects that a new theater will need for its social criticism and its historical reporting of completed transformations is the A-effect.[28]

But, it is not true for Chinese theater. While the Chinese type of theater and especially the acting might seem surprising for the Westerner, the Chinese spectator considers the formality as something totally familiar and

non-stylized. They never feel strange at the actors' words and acting because the plot and the dramatic material are clearly known to them.[29] The audience's attitude as well as the actor's is a purely aesthetic one. Their interest is centered not on the lesson the play might teach them, but on the technique and the theatricality of the actor's presentations. Aesthetics and pleasure are not sacrificed for didacticism in Chinese theater as they are supposed to be in Brechtian theater. Thus, the impression that Brecht had of the art of Mei Lan-fang's acting as something didactic was a somewhat subjective and incorrect one. Few Chinese and very few commentators on Chinese theater would interpret the art of Chinese acting as revolutionary. Brecht's own political and philosophical view seems to provide him with a set of colored glasses. He hoped to find something revolutionary in the acting of Mei Lan-fang and thus he found it, but that was in his own terms. Therefore, it is not surprising that Brecht appreciated Chinese theater for nothing but its achievement of the alienation effect:

> It is not entirely easy to realize that the Chinese actor's alienation effect is a transportable piece of technique: a conception that can be prised loose from the Chinese theater. We see this theater as uncommonly precious, its portrayal of human passions as schematized, its idea of society as rigid and wrong-headed; at first sight this superb art seems to offer nothing applicable to a realistic and revolutionary theater.[30]

His encounter with the non-Aristotelian Chinese theater just helped him find the word "alienation effect" to describe a concept he had developed over the years of experimentations with the European theater in the direction of conscious theatricality. The encounter corroborated his belief that the alienation effect could be taken out of its context and succeed in a vast, popular theater. But it does not suggest that the alienation effect promises a true understanding of Chinese theater. And to call Chinese theater as "alienation theater" is to be most blind. Clara Yu 于漪 has also pointed out Brecht's misunderstanding of Chinese acting:

> He overshoots the mark when he interprets traditional Chinese acting as a kind of doubt or judgement cast by the actor towards the action.[31]

However, basically she agrees that "there is doubtlessly an element of remoteness in Chinese acting that may be described as an 'alienation effect'."[32] It seems she has failed to give sufficient attention to the ideological disparities in an alien culture at this point. For she knows that to Western audience the "remoteness," "coldness" in Chinese acting is actually "a result of rigid stylization in an age-old, conventional theater,"[33] and she knows that the alienation effect does not function with a Chinese audience at all. Since the "alienation effect" is totally a concept developed from the Western point of view, can it be taken from Brechtian epic theater and indiscriminately applied to Chinese theater?

For years, in dealing with Eastern and Western literatures, some Chinese comparatists have tried to avoid privileging a monocultural perspective in the effort to elucidate a "common poetics"[34] with which different cultural systems can be interpreted with a fair degree of certainty. In defense of the application of Brecht's theory to Chinese theater, those Chinese theorists have engaged themselves in a gross distortion of Common Poetics. For one thing, their approach has depended first on seeking parallels between two theaters, but techniques which at first seem parallel are ultimately at opposite poles of dramatic intention. For example, in Brechtian theater we can see something spiritually akin to the visible stage assistant on the Chinese stage who not only hands needed props to the actors but also sets up the scene for the next act. Brecht takes it for granted that the spectator will be aware of the change of setting that is going on. But in Chinese theater it is taken for granted that the spectator concentrates on the most interesting part of the performance and pays no attention to the stage assistant's movement. Moreover, Chinese music is designed to control the timing of movement, accompany the sung passages and arouse the audience's deep emotions. Brecht, on the contrary, uses music to break illusion, to establish "distance."[35] They are different despite the fact that each is separated as an independent form and incorporative as an organic part of dramatic expression.

A study of the history of Chinese theater would further disclose to us the main reason for Brecht's attraction for Chinese theorists is that Chinese theater itself lacks organized theory. Until quite recently, Chinese playwriting was regarded as an inferior study which a learned person was not supposed to devote himself to. The acting profession was looked down upon by the community even if the art which the actor provided was widely appreciated among all strata of society. Accordingly, the social status of

the actor was low. Very few people would willingly see their sons take up acting which would involve a considerable loss of face.[36] The actor normally came from lower class families. Furthermore, theater students were trained by oral teaching that inspired understanding within. There was never a systematic nomenclature for teachers and students to follow. The actor's superb command of movement and gesture was only achieved after long years of arduous training commenced in early youth. And most of the dramatic criticism focused only on the actor's singing technique and later was proved to be nothing but unfounded and frivolous remarks. Both the actor and the audience knew how to perform and appreciate the play but were woefully ignorant of the theatrical secrets behind it.[37] It was no wonder that when Mei Lan-fang was invited to take his troupe to the United States in 1930, the first time in history for a Chinese troupe to go to the west, the first result was a suggestion to set up an illusory backdrop instead of the traditional bare one to fit Western audience preferences.[38]

Since the younger generation educated in western ways has little motivation and method to discover the traditional dramatic repertory and since Peking Opera would thus likely decline, some far thinking persons starting in the late forties have been working for a renaissance in traditional Chinese theater. Among them Chi Ju-shen 齊如山(1876-1963)[39] was one of the distinguished scholars doing research in the methods of the traditional theater. His lifelong efforts in theorizing about the art of traditional Chinese theater can be summarized in only three main principles: (1) "Every movement the actor makes must contain the elegance of dance," 無動不舞. (2) "Every sound the actor utters must confer the beauty of a song,"有聲皆歌 (3) "No real properties are allowed on the stage," 不許眞實器物上台.[40] This fact tells how difficult it is to put traditional Chinese theater in order. Compared with what remains to be done, the studies of Chinese theater that have appeared in print are only a drop in the ocean.

Only the vaguest notion of Chinese theater has existed in the minds of Westerners because of the lack of comprehensive introductions and analyses, and these have consisted more of fantasy than reality. It was not surprising that well into the third decade of the twentieth century, Sheldon Cheney still evaluated Chinese plays as "child-like fairy tale." And the reason he gave was:

> The Chinese theater offers even greater difficulties to the Western mind. Chinese drama has no literary values for us, and the

> conventions of presentation are so different that almost insuperable barriers to understanding are set up.[41]

To those Chinese who want to study traditional drama, the difficulty of gleaning dramatic materials is even greater than studying Western drama. Consequently, they prefer to find explanations in distant cultures and advocate "horizontal transplantation" from the West rather than "vertical inheritance" from native roots. Brecht's theory has been accepted by Chinese at least partly because it answers the need of affirmation. Thus, interestingly enough, as Chinese theater is a catalyst for Brecht's theory, his theory contributes to stimulate Chinese to examine closely the various problems of Chinese theater. To give just one example, while reading Brecht's plays and theories in class, teachers often ask students to go to Peking Opera and see how accurate Brecht's theory is. To many students who only enjoy Western realistic drama, it is their first time to enter a traditional Chinese play-house which provides a complete experience for audiences through the manipulation of sound and movement within space that cannot be replaced by reading a text. On the one hand, they by and large find that it is futile to attempt to fit Brecht's alienation effect into traditional Chinese plays. On the other hand, with the help of Brecht's creative misprision, they unexpectedly realize that the heritage of Chinese theater remains abundant and unstudied. They find that given some understanding of the essences of traditional Chinese theater, the same device which they felt tedious and distracting before becomes an effective source of contrast and vigor. The process of their transformation is a matter of detachment, of reorientation, exactly what Brecht explains the alienation effect to be – to "show everything in a fresh and unfamiliar light, so that the spectator is brought to look critically even at what he has so far taken for granted."[42] As such, Brecht's alienation effect takes its special effect on Chinese audiences. In Taiwan, the number of young play-goers has been growing for the last ten years. Part of the credit for this situation should be given to Brecht who motivates critical appreciation and new perception for Chinese theater.

Some playwrights have made experiments with a wider scope of themes and techniques recently because they believe that a new theater which can reach a harmonious blending of the illusory theater and the traditional theater has to be developed to resolve the dilemma of the co-existence of the two separate dramatic forms in Taiwan.[43] The acting, setting and music

which they have presented so far are a compound of traditional techniques and Western derivations. For instance, in "A New Match for Ho-chu" (*Ho-chu hsin-p'ei* 荷珠新配) performed by Lan-lin Experimental Troupe (1980), each actor stepped aside and individually explained the role he played to the audience.[44] Besides, during the intermission, the audience leisurely witnessed the actors busy preparing props for the next scene, and in the meantime popular songs were broadcast. The purpose was "to give the audience a familiar circumstance, to make them reflect the living surroundings more."[45] Most recently, Lan-lin Experimental Troupe again struck the audience with the functional role the four stage assistants play in "This Life" (*Chin-sheng chin-shih* 今生今世) (1985).[46]

Such techniques ignored by the realistic speech drama in the last fifty years have now been rediscovered and endowed with new significance. This reappearance fulfills Yu Shang-yuan's 余上沅 prediction:

> Radical Western playwrights have been successful in breaking the Fourth Wall. If Chinese theater wants to follow Western realism to run the circle, it will be a great waste of energy.[47]

This comment was made in 1927. At that time the Western-style realistic speech drama was considered to be the only dramatic form that could echo the contemporary sentiment and serve the needs of the modern age. Pioneers in the new theater movement discarded the traditional theater without scrupulously examining its merits. They accepted a new form of dramatic expression that promised to help them implement revolutionary ideals. And naturally the new theatrical current overpowered Yu Shang-yuan's voice. But it turns out that his judgement is correct and penetrating.

After a half century of voyaging through the West, Chinese theater seems to have found a way back to its traditional sources. History reveals to us that in treating the relationship between Chinese literature and Western literature, one must examine Western ideology on its merits and that only those aspects which stand the test of scrutiny can possibily be adopted to the Chinese context. In the case of Brecht's "alienation effect," more theoretical elaboration of its applicability to Chinese theater is still necessary.

Notes

1. Lane Jennings, "Chinese Literature and Thought in the Poetry and Prose of Bertolt Brecht," Diss. Harvard University, 1970.

2. Renata Berg-Pan, "The Chinese Influence on the Dramaturgy of Bertolt Brecht," Diss. Harvard University, 1971.
3. Chen Shu-yi 陳淑義, "Brecht, Epic Theater and Traditional Chinese Dramaturgy 布雷希特，敍事劇與中國傳統的舞台藝術," *Chung-wai Literary Monthly* 中外文學 , Vol. 5, No. 1 (June, 1976), pp. 4-36.
4. Clara Yu Cuadrado, "Chinese and Western Theater: Contrasts, Cross-currents, and Convergences," Diss. University of Illinois, 1978. Chapter 3, pp. 85-121.
5. In this paper "Chinese theater circles" refers to Taiwan only, and does not include Mainland China, Hong Kong and other Chinese communities in Asia.
6. Martin Esslin, "The Brechtian Theater – Its Theory and Practice," *Brecht: The Man and His Work* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), pp. 134-35.
7. Ibid., p. 131.
8. For instance, in *The Threepenny Opera*, when Macheath is standing on the gallows, Peachum suddenly speaks to the audience:

> So, gentleman, to this point we have come
> You all can see what Captain Mackie's fate is.
> Which proves that in the whole of Christendom
> Nothing is granted any of us gratis.
>
> But lest you jump to the conclusion
> That we are parties to the deal, and in collusion,
> Macheath will not be hanged till he is dead
> We have devised another end instead.

   Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964), pp. 94-95.
9. Martin Esslin, "The Brechtian Theater," p. 143.
10. Leonard Cabell Pronko, "Servitude and Grandure of the Chinese Opera Adventure," *Theater East and West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 60.
11. As Martin Esslin rightly suggests: "It really means strange-making effect – in other words, a method by which the spectator is kept detached from the action, safe against the temptation of being sucked into it." Martin Esslin, *An Anatomy of Drama* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), p. 65. Rather, "alienation" is sociological terminology describing "an action of estranging or state of estrangement in relation to a breakdown of relations between a man or a group and some received political authority." Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 29.
12. Yang Lien's 楊漣 "The Eternal Drama" 亘古的戲劇 is the earliest essay that I have found in which "alienation effect" is translated as *shu-li hsiao-kuo* 疏離效果. *China Times* 中國時報, April 14, 1975.
13. Yao Yi-wai 姚一葦, "Form and Structure of Peking Opera" 平劇的形式與結構, *Drama and Literature* 戲劇與文學 (Taipei: Yuan-ching Publishing Co.遠景出版社, 1984), p. 49.
14. Tseng Yung-yi 曾永義 , "The Characteristics of Classical Chinese Drama" 中國古典戲劇的特質, *Chung-wai Literary Monthly* 中外文學 , Vol. 4, No. 4 (Sep., 1975), p. 41.
15. Shih Su-ching 施叔青 , "On Yu Ta-kang's 'Wang Kui's Ingratitude to Kuei Ying' " 看俞大綱先生的「王魁負桂英」 , *The Westerner Views Chinese Theater* 西方人看中國戲劇 (Taipei: Lien-ching Publishing Co.聯經出版社 , 1976), p. 24.

See also her study of "Picking Up the Bracelet" 「拾玉鐲」的研究 in which the use of the alienation effect serves as the dominant manner of critique. pp. 79-130, esp. pp. 112-115.

16. Chen Shu-yi陳淑義 , "Brecht, Epic Theater and Traditional Chinese Dramaturgy" 布雷希特，敍事劇與中國傳統的舞台藝術, p. 23.
17. The first appearance of this term in Brecht's writing is in the essay entitled "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting." Brecht's pencilled note informs us that the essay was occasioned by seeing Mei Lan-fang's troupe in Moscow in 1935, See Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theater,* tr. & ed. by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 99.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 95.
20. Ibid., p. 94.
21. Ibid., p. 92.
22. Ibid., p. 95.
23. Leonard Cabell Pronko, "Servitude and Grandure of the Chinese Opera Adventures," p. 57.
24. As a result, even in Brecht's plays, alienation effect misfires. Martin Esslin has a full discussion of this point:

> Conversely, in Brecht's own plays the alienation effect invariably fails in performance whenever the emotions portrayed are of such a nature that they correspond to those of the audience: Brecht wanted the audience to criticize Mother Courage for her involvement with war as a business, to condemn her for causing the death of her children. But in spite of songs, anti-illusionist staging, posters with the exact time and date, the distancing effect does not take place; the mothers in the audience – and not only they – still identify with the predicament of a loving mother who loses her children.

Martin Esslin, *Bertolt Brecht* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 37-38.

25. Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theater,* p. 92.
26. Ibid., p. 137.
27. Ibid., p. 96.
28. Ibid., pp. 98-99.
29. Because drama as a significant literary form emerges in China after novels, most of the plays are derived from novels whose contents the audience is very familiar with.
30. Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theater,* p. 95.
31. Clara Yu, "Chinese and Western Theater: Contrasts, Cross-Currents, and Convergences," p. 108.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. The *New Asia Academic Bulletin* (Special Issue on East-West Comparative Literature; The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1978) claims its editorial policies is to elucidate a common poetics. Many comparatists in Taiwan and Hong Kong have also endeavored to pursue this goal.
35. At this point, O. G. Brockett's annotation goes: "Each element of production was designed to contribute to the 'alienation' of the spectator. Brecht did not envision, as have most twentieth-century theorists, a synthesis of all the arts in

the theater, but rather the independence of each. Music, for example, should make a comment upon the action rather than merely underscoring the meaning of the words. For example, in Mother Courage the satirically bitter words of a song which tell of the gradual moral degradation of a character are set to a consciously "pretty," light-hearted tune. The contrast between words and music achieves alienation and forces the spectator into a thoughtful consideration of a song's significance." O. G. Brockett, *The Theater: An Introduction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 312.

36. It is a common saying of Chinese people that "Having an entertainer-son is like having no son at all." 有個當戲子的兒子就好像沒有一般
37. Brecht's misunderstanding of Chinese theater can be also viewed in this aspect. Indeed, his interest in Chinese theater was hampered by the lack of an adequate survey. There was little comprehensive study of Chinese music, acting and stage design, let alone first hand information on Chinese theater in German at that time. Had he had sufficient materials of Chinese theater and studied it extensively, he might not have interpreted Chinese acting in terms of the alienation effect.
38. Owing to two Americans' objection, this suggestion was not put into practice. Chi Ju-shen 齊如山 , *Peking Opera Fifty Years* 國劇五十年 (Taipei: Chung-cheng Book Store 中正書局 , 1962), p. 141.
39. Chi was a veritable encyclopedia of theatrical knowledge. He was the power behind the actor Mei Lan-fang as playwright, adviser, and impresario. They had an artistic partnership of some twenty years' standing.
40. Chi Ju-shen 齊如山 , *The Art of Peking Opera* 國劇藝術彙考 (Taipei: Chung-kuang Publishing Co. 重光出版社 , 1962), p. 330. The first two items follow the translations of Clara Yu.
41. Sheldon Cheney, *The Theater: Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting and Stagecraft* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929), p. 121.
42. John Willett, *The Theater of Bertolt Brecht* (London: Hertferd and Harlow, 1959), p. 179.
43. As Clara Yu analyzes: "There have been two forms of theater, one realistic in nature, capable of treating contemporary subjects, only enjoyed by the young generation; the other, the classical theater, with its historical figures, fedual morals and remote conventions, quite detached from contemporary life, yet loved by the vast majority of the populace brought up in the classical tradition." Clara Yu, "Chinese and Western Theater: Contrasts, Cross-Currents, and Convergences," p. 189.
44. Chen Pai 陳白 , "On the Road of Experiments" 在實驗的路上 , *United Daily News* 聯合報 , Oct. 2, 1980.
45. Chiang Hsun 蔣勳 , "Create! Create! Create! – On Huai-men Lin's Performance" 創造！創造！創造！—談林懷民的實驗演出 , *Sunday Times Chinese Weekly* 時報週刊 , No. 124, pp. 51-52.
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