

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate mothers' images and strength in difficult times via Bertolt Brecht's three mothers: Vlassova in *The Mother*, Mother Courage in *Mother Courage and Her Children* and Grusha in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. These indomitable mothers' deeds manifest how they respond to their children's behaviors, and how they sacrifice to meet their children's needs. By examining these three female protagonists, we can understand that being a mother, especially a responsible mother, is always not an easy task.

In the beginning, a full understanding of Brecht's historical and biographical background is necessary. His own mother's background and the relationships with his female collaborators influenced Brecht's ideas when he created the female characters in these plays. The three key devices of his epic theatre are historicization, epic and alienation. These devices not only innovate stage ideas but also make the audience understand the "Lehrstück" the plays for learning, or the didactic plays according to Martin Esslin's translation.

Vlassova, Mother Courage, and Grusha are all single mothers; and by making comparisons among them, each of their own maternity in different styles is obvious. The adversities, such as war and turmoil, cannot crush their will to survive, weaken their spirit of self-reliance, or even enfeeble their strength to love their children. Moreover, Brecht was once a member of the Communist party; therefore, Karl Marx's ideas of class struggle and surplus value maybe useful for interpreting these mothers' economic setbacks caused by the conflict between capitalists and laborers. In addition, I've also employed Simone de Beauvoir's arguments in *The Second Sex* to explain these mothers' plights caused by male traditional biases in the androcentric society. Besides, from Sartre's perspective, these female protagonists hold an

existentialist attitude to realistically face their difficulties.

At the end, the conclusion would sum up the contents of each chapter. By observing these mothers in Brecht's plays, we not only notice their indomitable spirits, but also urge all people to pay attention to the problems of the single mothers in our society.



摘要

本論文的立意在於透過貝爾托 布萊希特(Bertolt Brecht)三劇作中的母親角色：母親(*The Mother*)裡的 Vlassova，勇氣媽媽(*Mother Courage and Her Children*)裡的 Mother Courage，以及高加索灰蘭記(*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*)的 Grusha 來檢視母親在困苦時刻所散發出的形象與力量。他們的行為顯露了如何回應孩子們的舉止以及犧牲自我來滿足小孩們的需求。藉由檢視此三位女主角我們可以理解成為一位母親尤其是負責任的母親，總不是件輕鬆的差事。

首先充分了解布萊希特的生平背景、他與他的母親之互動、以及和女性友人的關係是必要的，我們可看見這些因素將如何影響此劇作家創作其女性角色。布萊希特三個極具影響力的劇場技巧：以古寓今、史詩性、以及疏離效果。這些技巧不只賦予了舞台新的風貌，更是讓觀眾們知曉這些劇作是具有教育意義之演出，抑或是根據 Martin Esslin 的解釋所謂擁有辯證效果之劇作。

雖然在這些劇中的三位女主角都是單親媽媽，但是在比對之下我們明顯地看到了其各具特色的母愛精神。諸如戰爭與動亂此類的災難都不能摧毀她們的生存意志，也不能打擊他們自力更生的精神，更不會削減他們對孩子們的愛。除此之外布萊希特曾為共產黨員，因此馬克思(Karl Marx)的階級鬥爭和剩餘價值理論可用來解釋劇中母親們的經濟困境。西蒙 波娃(Simone de Beauvoir)的第二性(*The Second Sex*)將闡明母親們在男性中心社會裡所受到的壓迫與歧視。最後從沙特(Jean-Paul Sartre)的觀點下，存在主義則是她們遇到難題時所抱持的態度。

最後結論將總結各章的內容。而重要的是藉著觀察此三劇中的母親角色，我們除了知曉他們不屈不撓精神之外，更需引以為鑒來督促人們正視當今社會裡單親媽媽的問題與現狀。