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⁷ Refer to Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform and Revival: The Devadasi and Her Dance", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XX, No. 44, 2 November 1985, pp. 1869-1876 for an incisive analysis of the role of patriarchy and the Non Brahmin Movement in South India in the anti-nautch movement.

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Misogyny in Bertolt Brecht's adaptation of Marlowe's *Edward II*: King as the "hostile oppressor" of the oppressed Queen

-Purnima Trivedi Kulkarni¹

Brecht traces a Newman or an "everyman" in his character King Edward II. The King's worth is belittled or brought down from his exalted status by revealing his homosexuality. Gaveston, the King's gay partner, who is a butcher's son, addresses the King as Eddie. The soldiers too address the King by his nick name. According to Bentley, the subject of Brecht's play is fatal infatuation seen in moreover as "masochistic in relation to the made principle and as sadistic in relation to woman." (Eric Bentley. The Brecht Commentaries 1943 -1980.140) In simple words, the male protagonist of the play *Edward II* is a homosexual who is ready to embrace the thorns when he is accused of being gay but his behaviour towards his wife (the Queen) is odious. Brecht appears to assume that a homosexual subject even in the guise of a king is always the victimized object of an established heterosexist power structure. We cannot say whether Brecht has tried to privilege both homosexual and homosexist positions. However it is very clear that Edward II's marriage is a mixed-orientation marriage (a mixed orientation marriage is a marriage between partners of differing sexual orientations: one person is heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual while the other is of a different orientation.)

Further in this paper, I will make an endeavour to show how heterosexual wives of homosexual men feel when their husbands' sexual orientation is kept under wraps. The female protagonist of the play *Edward II*, Queen Anne feels deceived and cheated when she learns of her husband's controversial affair with his minion. Findings suggest that "heterosexual wives struggled less with the homosexuality itself than with problems of isolation, stigma, loss, cognitive confusion and dissonance, and lack of knowledgeable, empathic support or help in problem solving". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed-orientation_marriage.)

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Now I will throw light on Queen Anne's plight and highlight her suffering and oppression and her disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from a severe mental or emotional stress. Her trauma and harassment can be compared to that of any other heterosexual wife of a homosexual husband who is penalized without any fault of hers. Let us now examine how Brecht underlines the Queen's sexual frustration on the one hand and Edward's tempestuous misogyny on the other.

To quote Brecht's Queen:

Anne: There to dwell in grief and bitterness,

My Lord the King no longer sees me but only this man Gaveston.

He hangs about his neck and if I come he wrinkles up his brow,

"Oh, go away! Can you not see I have Gaveston?"

Brecht, p.13

In order to illustrate and interpret the Queen's character I quote Simone de Beauvoir. The process that "Woman is defined as the "other" by man as a passive object, destined for a life in the sphere of "immanence" that is the concerns of everyday life. Man, on the other hand has defined himself as the "one", the active subject who is capable of "transcendence" that is a life oriented towards freedom. While the Woman is denied the possibility of her own transcendence, the ideology of romantic love teaches her that her life can be meaningful and significant through devoting herself to finding and keeping a man."(Simone de Beauvoir. *The Second Sex*)

To quote Marlowe's Queen:

"I will endure a melancholy life and let him frolic with his minion."

Marlowe, Act I, Scene ii

Edward is a "hostile oppressor". The Queen's struggle against dimensions of power is remarkable in Brecht's play.

The king is not bisexual either as after getting sexual gratification from his minion, he refuses to satisfy the Queen. (Edward has not been able to keep himself chaste homosexually and heterosexually). Edward is a "hostile oppressor". The Queen's struggle against dimensions of power is remarkable in Brecht's play. It is a culturally developed "male ego" to have power over the "female ego." Men's

inability to love can make them seem weak and hopeless to women. It results in a one-way emotional relationship, parasitical, feeding on the emotional strength of women without reciprocity.

Oh, how I wish that when I left fair France, the waters of the Channel had tuned to stone! Or that those arms that hung about my neck had strangled me on my wedding night! Alas, that now I must pursue King Edward, since widowing me, he will do battle for the devil Gaveston at Killingworth....And so I am forever miserable."

Brecht, p.29

Romance in its popular manifestations is also clearly a heterosexual narrative which constructs love relationship between men and women as the natural way to find fulfillment. Such beliefs contribute to the predominance of heterosexuality as a compulsory way of life which has been highlighted as particularly oppressive to women. The policies of ego in heterosexual unions are likely to reinforce and reproduce male social dominance.

One way in which this unique world view takes shape is a critical consciousness about heterosexist assumptions. Heterosexism is a due set of values and structures that assumes heterosexuality to be the only natural form of sexual and emotional expression, the perceptual screen provided by our patriarchal culture conditioning. Today also, homosexuals and lesbians are called as the "third sex." The real "sex" is heterosexual, penile and penetrative. Sexual maladjustment is seen as the primary cause of marital unhappiness and instability and a threat to the state, family and social order.

According to me, while real life romances with men disadvantages women, it could be argued that striving for a reciprocal romantic relationship; "genuine love", "true love" is an investment of emotional energy which women are already too keen to make. Indeed it may be the fantasy of attaining such an ideal love that blinds women most of their own deep-rooted investments in an unequal system of love. In the play, the Queen's attempt or fantasy to turn the distant and brutal husband into a tender and considerate lover, miserably fails.

Anne: Alas my love, confuses me.,

*On far-off roads I hear him threatened and
Come hurrying back to help him in his need.*

Brecht, p.15

Women's real life dissatisfaction with heterosexual romantic love relationship has been documented by studies, which have found women to be generally disappointed and frustrated with the lack of emotional intimacy in their love relationship with men. We find that the Queen is suffering from the epidemic of "love misery".

*Anne: Miserable Edward how low you have brought me that
I can't strike this fellow in the face but must hold my tongue and
Stand there when he leaps at me in lust.*

(Aloud):

You exploit my misery Mortimer

Brecht, p.14

The King may have rejected heterosexuality as a compulsory way of life, however the Queen cannot deviate from the heterosexist standards. Heterosexuality sees her will as Edward and Mortimer want to experience it. Though she is able to break the boundaries of marriage and accept the adulterous relationship of Mortimer, she is oppressed by both the men and does not find fulfillment in any of her relationships.

Of Brecht's Queen, Bentley says that she will be loyal to her man as long as she is allowed to be, but when this loyalty is mocked and as it were forbidden, she will drift to another man. Brecht's Mortimer is adept at sexually arousing and subsequently taunting Anne.

Anne: Now he has his Scottish troops and now his bitch comes and leaps on him...

My body, though begins to perk up like a Virgin's!

Mortimer: You're surfeited already, and your bloated flesh pines for London.

We have another scene in Brecht where Queen Anne laughs at the world's emptiness, and Mortimer comments on her.

Mortimer: With your legs open and your eyelids closed Snatching at everything.

You're insatiable Anne.

You eat in your sleep. You call out in your sleep.

Things that will be my death.

*Anne: What now remains of that crude expedient of outstretched arms is an empty
prehensile mechanism*

I am old and tired, Roger Mortimer.

Mortimer: Hook up your dress, Anne, do not let your son see your over-ripe flesh.

Brecht, p.p.69,70

It is possible to think of Brecht's Queen as an anti-Sodomite, her possibility of strong female behavior lies outside marriage and its regularization of gender. Brecht pointedly concludes that her strength as a woman lies in refusing the limits of marriage.

The conventional appraisal of a love-sick Queen, is the representation of a scorned woman who however illicit in her adulterous arrangements remains firmly committed to the established regimes of the normative if not the normal. Dressed to kill any suggestion of normality, Brecht's Queen is nonetheless presented as well-practiced in the protocols of self-regarding mastery and royal control. She is repeatedly placed in the company of the most banal representation of social conformity. Her intelligence and ambition in business, her single mindedness, her love for the King and later on passion for Mortimer are all admirable. She is selfish and scheming but not ignominious as she takes up cudgels against her husband reluctantly. She suffers throughout the play. Her life is a story of anguish and pain. Feminists would find her transgression exciting and not entirely iniquitous. The Queen can be seen as a progressive figure and model for women because of her refusal of all that simpering. Thus she becomes 'an icon of resistance'. Her oppression by Edward can be regarded as a source of potential strength and power rather than merely a source of weakness.

The major problem Marlowe and Brecht both faced with is the transformation of the Queen from the wronged and long-suffering wife to the pitiless and hypocritical "she-wolf of France", who orders Edward's death.

In Marlowe's play, the Queen proposes Edward's death.

"So it were not by my means".

Marlowe, Act V, Scene ii

It was indeed a stroke of genius for Marlowe to make the Queen, the initiator of Gaveston's recall thus marking her a sympathetic figure to the audience, by demonstrating her wifely forgiveness and love for King Edward at the beginning of the play, yet suggesting even thus the early influence which she is beginning to exercise over young Mortimer.

Brecht however makes her a truly pathetic figure towards the end. She loses the dignity of her wrongs and becomes a tool in Mortimer's hands. Mortimer loses his impetuosity and becomes a mechanical stage villain.

Mortimer: With Westminster bells and bastard teeth.

For before the noses of the incredulous piers you've got to crown your son in haste.

Anne: Not my son, please!

Not that child Suckled with she wolf's milk in weeks when she was vagrant,

Wandering through the swamps.

Mortimer: As I pull myself upwards I see even more dead weight.

Around the knees of the last one, another last one.

Ropes of people. And at the pulley-wheel of these ropes breathless,

Dragging them all up: me.

Brecht, p.68.69

The Queen's opposition to her King/husband is condemned in both the plays (Marlowe's play in five acts and Brecht's adaptation) by her own son, King Edward III.

Patriarchal ideology ensures the socialization of individuals according to already given stereotyped lines of sex category. It promotes the false consciousness which works continually to misrepresent women and their lives.

The child (Edward II, the successor to Edward II) understands almost everything that goes on beyond his age and maturity level, but is a sole child of Patriarchy, he fails to understand his mother's sacrifice, frustration and passion for Mortimer out of desperation. He sends his mother to the Tower nonchalantly. The Queen in both the

plays is oppressed and exploited not only by her husband and Gaveston but also by Mortimer and her son.

First I quote Marlowe

King Edward III: Mother, you are suspected for his death.

And therefore we commit you to the Tower

Till further trial may be made thereof.

If you be guilty, though be your son,

Think not to find me slack or pitiful.

Queen Isabella: May, to my death, for too long have I lived

Whereas my son thinks to abridge my days.

He hath forgotten me:

Stay, I am his mother.

Marlowe, Act V, Scene vi

I quote Brecht.

Anne: such a death's head joke as that you did suck up with your mother's milk third Edwards...

I saw injustice always feeding its man and rewarding success every conquest of conscience but even injustice let me down.

Brecht, p.93

Biologically men have only one innate orientation- a sexual one that draws them to women, while women have two innate orientations, sexual towards men and reproductive towards their young. All these products of patriarchal consciousness are proposed as ideological because they teach, among other things, the acceptance of those sex roles.

Young Edward cannot understand his mother's plight and treats her harshly in Mortimer's presence.

Young Edward: Remove this third party your sight.

Anne: We wish to talk to you. Mortimer's your mother's prop and stay, child.

Young Edward: I want you to give me some news of my father.

Anne: If your mother hung the perilous decision upon your lips, child, tell me, would you go along with her into the tower if through the coloring of your answer

That is the way the dice should fall?

Brecht, p.70

Be it Marlowe's Queen or Brecht's she becomes a universal woman who inspires the common lot of woman and brings them to their senses and to their meaning in History. She becomes an ebullient, infinite woman, immersed in naivete. Kept in the dark about herself, led into self-disdain by the great arm of conjugal phallocentrism but who has not been ashamed of her strength.

Brecht's Queen Anne is a defiant woman who asserts herself and refuses to give in to Edward's oppression:

Anne: If you want to spit on me, here's my face.

Edward: Your face is a gravestone, On it's written Here lies poor Gaveston.

Anne: Though I shall not forget this insult- For the little I have in my head stays there And, Fades away but slowly- It's just as well that fellow is not here.

Brecht, p.34

Women need only throw off their oppression for a "real" self to appear. They deconstruct their socially constructed "feminine" identity. They speak out and give their testimony. Their identity is built at least out of pain and suffering, out of experience.

The Queen, be it Marlowe's or Brecht's battles against "oppression" and "repression" as well. Her desire (what she wants) is repressed or misrepresented in a phallocentric society. Be it Marlowe's Edward or 'Brecht's, his behavior towards the Queen is totally unforgivable. He takes interest in her only in so far as she can help his unnatural passion. Just as he rebukes her for being too intimate with Mortimer, so he urges her to use her influence with the latter on his behalf. He threatens to banish her if she does not succeed in keeping Gaveston at court. When she secures the recall of his favourite, he takes her hands as if to ratify their nuptials, which will not prevent him from being as unfaithful as in the past.

Brecht's Edward is constant in his love for Gaveston. Contentment descends upon him like a charm when he is alone with Gaveston. But while mating Gaveston, he outwears all men's patience and respect and even the loyalty of his brother, his frenzy is violent enough to harm the queen and before the slow accumulation of hostility, he collapses into garrulous self-pity. Brecht's Edward is a man given to outbursts of emotional violence and ungovernable passion devoid of intelligence.

Now let us comment on the androcentric language used by Mortimer in Brecht's play. Mortimer uses a male-centered language for the Queen, rather than a gender neutral or non-sexist one. Language generates stereotypical portrayal of the Queen. Language provides a particular kind of an image that powerfully shapes our understanding and attitudes towards gender.

I need to repeat Mortimer's lines quoted before, this time in a linguistic context.

Mortimer: With your legs open and your eyelids closed

Snatching at everything. You're insatiable Anne.

Mortimer: Hook up your dress, Anne, do not let your son see your over-ripe flesh.

Brecht, p.69

The English language is used to portray females negatively- as immature incompetent and inescapable, but males positively- as competent, capable and mature. In addition, males are linguistically defined in terms of their sexual Prowess (lover women) while, women are defined as the sexual objects of men's desire. Thus, the androcentric language used by Mortimer cannot escape the negative representation of the Queen.

Brecht does not want his audience to be passive and unthinking. I would like to conclude my paper with an observation that through Queen Anne's character, Brecht makes an effort to show the audience what was wrong with the world in order to promote social change. His method of alienation or "Verfremdungseffekt" was used to distance the audience from the events that were happening on stage so they could think about them critically and understand that they were only viewing one version of events. In other words, Brecht wished to prevent the audience from getting emotionally involved with the Queen's character. Instead he implied that if the King

had every right to fulfill his homosexual desires, there was no reason why the Queen should have saved her marriage. She too had every right to satisfy her emotional needs and carnal pleasures.

Feminism, as a liberation struggle, must make a sincere endeavor to eradicate domination and dismantle oppression, repression and suppression in all its forms. Brecht may not have been a feminist, but his "epic theatre" proved to be useful to feminists to examine the social conditions which were instrumental in compelling women to take on alternate identities because of oppressive patriarchal structures. Brecht adapted *Marlowe's Edward II* to suit the exigencies of his "epic theatre". At the end of my research paper, I have come to the inference that through the Queen's character in the play, we could actually try to eliminate the societal organization that is based upon male supremacy and exploitation of women. This kind of revolutionary change is exactly what Brecht desired to bring through his theatre of revolt.

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Importance of Interdisciplinary studies in social sciences

-Salma Aziz¹

Abstract

Educational institutions throughout the world at all levels have relied on academic disciplines as platforms for imparting knowledge and generating new knowledge. Today, interdisciplinary learning at all levels is far more common as there is growing recognition that it is needed to answer complex questions, solve complex problems, and gain coherent understanding of complex issues that are increasingly beyond the ability of any single discipline to address comprehensively or resolve adequately. Thus, interdisciplinary studies in social sciences become important for a person (student) as each discipline focuses on one aspect of social reality. The social sciences deal with systems, issues, problems, and questions that are even more complex. This has resulted in the development of a large and growing number of interdisciplinary fields and programs that span the social sciences and connect to the natural sciences and the humanities.

Key Words: interdisciplinary studies, interdisciplinarity, interdisciplinarians

Introduction

For over a century, educational institutions throughout the world at all levels have relied on academic disciplines as platforms for imparting knowledge and generating new knowledge. Today, interdisciplinary learning at all levels is far more common as there is growing recognition that it is needed to answer complex questions, solve complex problems, and gain coherent understanding of complex issues that are increasingly beyond the ability of any single discipline to address comprehensively or resolve adequately. Furthermore, it has been observed that interdisciplinarity is one of the solutions for understanding and addressing this complexity. Thus, interdisciplinary studies are a necessary and important component of today's

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