

**THE USE OF THE BRECHTIAN ALIENATION EFFECT
IN HANAY GEIOGAMAH'S PLAYS:
BODY INDIAN AND *FOGHORN***

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Filiz ALTIN

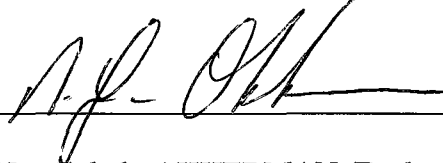
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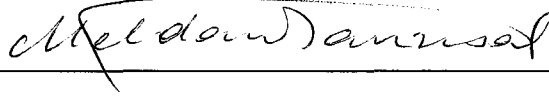
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KABUL VE ONAY

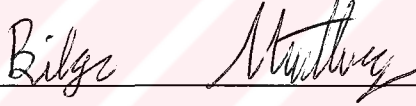
Filiz Altın tarafından hazırlanan "The Use of the Brechtian Alienation Effect in Hanay Geiogamah's Plays: *Body Indian* and *Foghorn*" adlı bu çalışma 7 Temmuz 2006 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.




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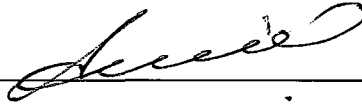
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Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylım.



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BİLDİRİM

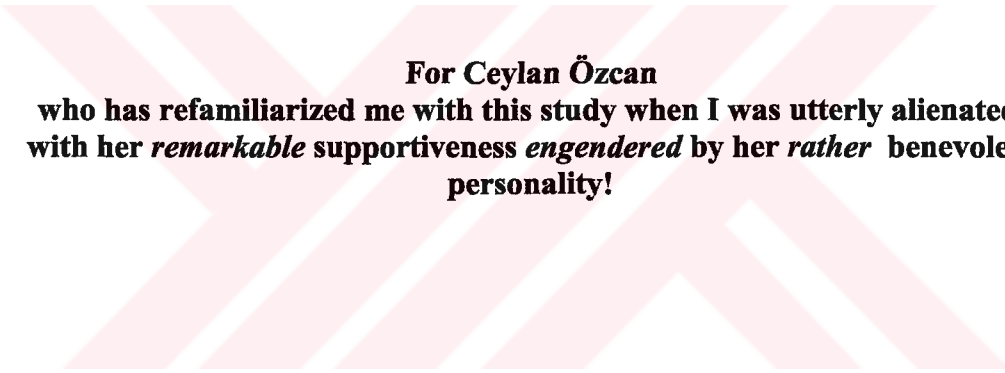
Hazırladığım tezin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin kağıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım:

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For Ceylan Özcan
who has refamiliarized me with this study when I was utterly alienated,
with her *remarkable* supportiveness *engendered* by her *rather* benevolent
personality!

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ÖZET

ALTIN, Filiz. “Hanay Geiogamah’nın *Body Indian* ve *Foghorn* Adlı Oyunlarında Brecht’in Yabancılaştırma Etkisi’nin Kullanımı.” Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2006.

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nde 1950’lerin sonlarına doğru başlayan ve özellikle etnik azınlıklar temelinde gerçekleşen toplumsal uyanış süreci, Amerikan yerlileri için de politik, sosyal ve kültürel anlamda bir yenilenme hareketine yol açmıştır. Bu dönemde sanatı toplumsal bilinci uyandırmak amacıyla kullanan sanatçılar arasında Amerikan yerlisi oyun yazarı Hanay Geiogamah da vardır. Geiogamah’nın 1970’lerin ilk yarısında yazmış olduğu ve Yerli Amerikan Tiyatrosu’na öncülük eden oyunları, söz konusu edilen toplumsal uyanışa hizmet etmeleri açısından önemlidir. Bunlardan *Body Indian* ve *Foghorn* adlı oyunlar, Alman oyun yazarı ve tiyatro düşünürü Bertolt Brecht’in sosyal ve politik bilinç uyandırmaya adanmış tiyatrosunun temel öğelerinden olan Yabancılaştırma Etkisi’nden faydalanıyor olmalarıyla dikkat çekicidir.

Bu tez çalışması, Hanay Geiogamah’nın *Body Indian* ve *Foghorn* oyunlarında Brecht’in Yabancılaştırma Etkisi’nin ne şekilde kullanıldığını tartışmayı amaçlamakta ve Amerikan Yerlisi oyun yazarının Batılı bir sanat dalı olan tiyatro aracılığıyla toplumuna nasıl hitap ettiği konusunda bir sonuca varmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Yerli Amerikan Tiyatrosu, Hanay Geiogamah, Bertolt Brecht, Yabancılaştırma Etkisi, Gestus

ABSTRACT

ALTIN, Filiz. "The Use of the Brechtian Alienation Effect in Hanay Geiogamah's Plays: *Body Indian* and *Foghorn*." Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2006.

The period of social awakening, that began in the United States of America in the late 1950s, during which ethnic minorities were especially active, stimulated the Native American community's political, social and cultural restoration movement. Native American playwright, Hanay Geiogamah, is one of the artists who utilized art at the time, as a means for raising social consciousness. Among his plays which pioneered Native American Theater, the ones written in the first half of the 1970s are significant in serving the cause of social awakening. The plays entitled *Body Indian* and *Foghorn* are conspicuous in adopting the alienation effect which is one of the fundamental elements of the German playwright and theatrical theorist Bertolt Brecht's epic theater dedicated to social and political consciousness raising.

This thesis attempts to discuss how the Brechtian alienation effect is applied in Hanay Geiogamah's *Body Indian* and *Foghorn*; and aims to come to a conclusion about how the Native American playwright communicates with his community via the theater which is a Western art form.

Keywords

Native American Theater, Hanay Geiogamah, Bertolt Brecht, Alienation Effect, Gestus.

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INTRODUCTION

THE NEW NATIVE AMERICAN THEATER

The Civil Rights movement, a milestone in the United States history, led to remarkable transformations in American society; especially on part of the ethnic minorities. The WASP- oriented social and political norms were questioned, challenged and altered by the *others* of America. The influence of this social upheaval upon the Native American community is observed mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. These decades have set a new paradigm in the Native American community's social and political posture which can also be observed in various forms of art. During this period, many Native American artists, besides their aesthetic purposes, utilized art as a tool for cultural awakening. Therefore, if the 1960s and the 1970s are considered the beginning of a new epoch in Native American arts, with his theater, Hanay Geiogamah is the harbinger of a new era in performance traditions for Native Americans. Not only did the New Native American Theater, as a combination of Native traditions and Western theatrical techniques, emerge under Geiogamah's guidance; but its aims and directions were also defined by him. However, it is not yet possible to claim that the tradition of Native American drama has been thoroughly established. A conscious and unique Native American drama, with all-Indian plays written by Indian authors and performed for Indian audiences by Indian actors, can still be considered relatively new, for all of the productions of the New Native American Drama belong to the second half of the twentieth century.

With the invigorating energy Geiogamah takes from the revolutionary atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s, he uses the art of theater in order to raise consciousness within the Native American community by sharing his political stance with his people. In his plays which are devoted to instruction, stimulation and entertainment, Geiogamah's application of certain Brechtian techniques is crucial in fulfilling his objectives. This thesis aims to trace the elements Hanay Geiogamah borrows from the Brechtian theater and applies in *Body Indian* (1972) and *Foghorn* (1973); the main focus being Brecht's

alienation effect. Within this context, the Brechtian use of episodic structure, the application of multimedia devices, the Brechtian use of music, historicization, the presentational style of acting and *gestus* will be discussed; and how they serve to create the alienation effect will be analyzed.

Despite the fact that works of Native American writers have long been widely acclaimed in American artistic circles, the genre of theater emerged relatively late compared to the acknowledged success of Native American poetry, fiction, nonfiction and arts. The reason behind this is the fact that rituals, as a vital element in traditional Native American life, had been satisfying the theatrical impulse of the community. However “[w]hen the recurrent rituals of daily life—music, dance, religious ceremonies, tribal commemorations, seasonal observances—were banned and outlawed along with tribal languages near the end of the nineteenth century, the feeling for form and group endeavor they engendered fell into a deep kind of hibernation” (Geiogamah 1). Thus, it was not until this period which, Geiogamah calls hibernation, that the Native American community experienced the void created by the absence of communal practices, especially the rituals.

At this point, theater, being a contemporary interactive activity, came to serve as an instrument “complementing but never replacing those ceremonies which relate more directly to the Indian past and to tribal identity” (Bigsby *Critical* 369). In order to explain the delay in the emergence of Native American theater, it is necessary to clarify the significance of the concept of ritual, and its place in Native American culture, and its connection to drama.

Although the exact origin of theater is still not definite, the theory pointing at ancient rituals as the source from which the dramatic performance flourished is the most credited one. A brief look at the origin of ritual itself, and its basic characteristics will provide a better understanding of ritual as the origin of drama.

In spite of the fact that primitive people were devoid of scientific lore to interpret nature and the universe, their desire to understand the mysteries of life itself and to live in

harmony with the order they had not been able to discover fully was no less powerful than ours. Oscar G. Brockett explains that, since they could not explain natural events, such as rain, thunder, and the changing of the seasons, the primitive people related them to supernatural or magical powers. He states that, what these people did was to seek ways of gaining the approval of these powers. In the course of time, they had come to believe that there was a connection between the acts which they performed to attain this approval and the desired result. Thus, they started to repeat these acts and the concept of ritual was gradually established within different cultures. For instance, communities which perceived volcanic eruptions as the revelation of a supernatural power's wrath may have developed a ritual of sacrifice. In time, the supernatural forces began to be personified within rituals. According to Brockett "[t]his impersonation is a major sign of a developing dramatic sense" (*History* 3). The theory of ritual origins hold that "[o]ut of that basic [. . .]reality, were evolved the arts, especially dance, music, and drama, through several stages" (Kernodle 6).

Brockett explains these stages arguing that, as people began to explain the world around them more rationally, beliefs and values transformed, so did the rituals. As a result, some of the myth-based stories were separated from their ceremonial characteristics and were performed solely and simply as drama. According to the theory of ritual origin, this is the first step towards the formation of theater as a separate activity. From this point on, the ritual embraced aesthetic concerns besides the religious and pragmatic ends (*History* 3). George R. Kernodle, on the other hand, observes that "[o]ne stage saw the substitution of animal sacrifice for the human victim and another, the selection of a mock king to preside over the festival and suffer a mock death or be driven out, in a ritual game that led to the invention of drama"(6).

Though there have been countless rituals, varying from culture to culture, it is possible to determine some basic characteristics shared by most rituals. First of all, rituals reflect the collective conscious of a certain community and their relationship with the universe. Moreover, Brockett argues, they are of vital importance, especially for cultures that have not developed a written language, in terms of serving as bridges between generations through which cultural and traditional traits are transmitted. Rituals are

prominent sources of information about sacred beliefs, taboos, traditions and history. Therefore, they have an undeniably important role in the survival of cultures. Furthermore, rituals may effect or control events. For instance, primitive people who were unable to discover the cycle of seasons, used to perform rituals in winter for the renewal of spring. Thus, both the perception and the action of the community were being directed and controlled by the ritual. In addition to these, rituals fulfill the function of praise. Through the rituals, people express their gratitude to a supernatural power; a hero, a totem, or a victory in war or hunting. Finally, rituals entertain and please people. Even the gravest one is enjoyable with its visual quality, or the performers' skills (Brockett *History* 4-5).

For Native Americans rituals have always been one of the strongest vehicles for their interaction with nature, with each other and with life, in general. They also performed rituals for the sake of religious, social and individual purposes. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff notes that "[...] ceremonies express a tribe's attempts to order its spiritual and physical world through the power of the word, whether chanted, spoken, or sung" (19). From the naming of a child to the hunting of the buffalo, almost every pace of traditional Indian life is full of rituals and ceremonies that explain and justify the actions these people take in life. With the spiritual satisfaction the rituals provide, a Native American individual's, as well as the community's, existence is rendered meaningful. Hornby adds that "[e]very time a ceremony is performed, it is a kind of revalidation of the whole culture in which it exists" (52).

Another significant issue Brockett points out is the fact that ritual and theater use many common elements such as music, dance, utterance, masks, costumes, performers, audience and stage, which are "[. . .] all the elements required for a fully developed theatre" (*Essential* 3). He explains that, in rituals, pantomime-dance and rhythmic music are used as essential devices, especially in rituals of primitive societies. Human voice is quite frequently heard, although dialogue and speech are rarely used. The use of masks and costumes, on the other hand, is common. Furthermore, make up, which might be observed in the form of paint, ash or juice, is used to complement the mask and the costume. It should also be noted that, since there is almost no room for diversions in a

ritual, disciplined and talented performers are needed. Usually the priests and the elderly supervise and control the order of the ritual. Their function is actually rather similar to that of the directors in theater. Finally, in a ritual, there is a place for the performers and a place for the audience (if one exists), just as the stage and the auditorium in theater (*History 6*). Despite his reservations about the theory of ritual origin, Kernodle also admits the relationship between theater and ritual:

The myth of ritual drama has opened the eyes of theatre people to the religions and the masks, dances, and dramas of different cultures all over the world. What they borrow is neither cruelty nor frenzy but discipline in performance and rich use of dance and song [. . .]. Even though drama did not evolve from ritual but was a parallel form of symbolic expression as old ritual itself, it is clear that drama and ritual have much in common. (Kernodle 7)

In conclusion, as Brockett asserts, the premises listed above point to the fact that ritual has always included the *theatrical* activity as an elemental device shaping man's vision of himself and of the world in general. Since supernatural powers were central in primitive communities' lives, it can be asserted that the concept of ritual had a religious quality. Therefore, the theater had also been under the influence of religious concerns. However, as man's confidence in his own capability as a human being increased, the non-religious content in theatrical activities became more prevalent, as well. Thus, drama has gradually become a unique, self-sufficient, distinctive activity. Today, ritual and drama serve different ends in contemporary cultures, but they meet from time to time, nonetheless (*History 6*).

Native American theater, in this sense, can be considered a crossroads where ritual and theater meet. As Richard Hornby states "[i]t is clear [...] that ceremony operates very much like theatre. Both employ sets of codes that enable people to understand themselves and their world, through the medium of their culture" (52). Thus, for Native Americans, as a form of cultural articulation, hence cultural survival, ritual and theater serve the same function.

As vital parts of Native American existence, rituals and ceremonies were natural targets for the assimilation policy of the United States government. Ruoff states that "[t]hrough

the participation in ritual dramas or ceremonies, American Indians renewed themselves in the rich culture that has sustained tribal life for centuries” (24). However, with the prohibition of the ritualistic and ceremonial activities the individuals, and the Native American community as a whole, lost their devices of renewal. After centuries of the systematic intoxication of the Native American body, mind and soul, American Indian culture entered an era of awakening and restoration with the power of art. Within this context, theater came to function as an important vehicle to rediscover and reaffirm Native American culture and identity. What has been created so far is undeniably promising for American Indians since Native American playwrights now prefer to leave aside the centuries-old passive complaints, and instead re-assert their cultural identity as “Native Americans” or “American Indians” through their works of art.

Although academic studies on Native American drama focus mostly on the second half of the twentieth century, the involvement of Native American individuals in theater prior to this period is rare but not unknown. As Ann Haugo observes in her article entitled “‘Circles Upon Circles Upon Circles’: Native Women in Theater and Performance,” there were Native American names who took active parts in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century American and Canadian theater (229-232). Furthermore, the 1930s witnessed the contributions of the Cherokee playwright Rollie Lynn Riggs, while the 1940s and 1950s attested to the beginnings of cultural revitalization with communal entertainment activities, such as fairs and powwows, and the progress made by the American Indian Drama Company in New York under the leadership of the Cherokee playwright and director Arthur Junaluska (Darby vi). Ann Haugo notes that this company, also known as the American Indian Repertory Company, was established in 1956 by Junaluska and E. Claude Richards. However, two years later, in 1958, the company “appears to have folded [. . .] when Junaluska took a position as drama director at South Dakota Wesleyan University” (252).

Rollie Lynn Riggs (1899-1954) is a significant figure in the brief history of Native American theater, for he is “the only Indian author to publish dramas in the first half of the twentieth century” (Ruoff 74). Although he is acknowledged mainly as a playwright, Riggs was also among the prolific Indian poets of his time. His most

prominent plays are: *Big Lake* (1927) which was produced for a short time on Broadway, *Roadside* (1930) and *Green Grow the Lilacs* (1931) which was later staged as a musical production under the name of *Oklahoma!* in 1943. Lynn Riggs's drama can be included in the mainstream American theater, since his plays mainly evolve around the Oklahoma folk culture; with little or no Native American issues. Don B. Wilmeth argues that, Lynn Riggs "was more interested in the cowboy culture of the Indian Territory than that of the Indian," and refers to Riggs' only plays with Indians as central characters, *The Cherokee Night* (1936) and *Cream in the Well* (1941), as "unsuccessful." He further asserts that *The Cherokee Night* dealing with the theme of the diminishing traditional Cherokee culture was "too non-traditional and obscure for Broadway," whereas the tragedy presented in *Cream in the Well* had little to do with *Indianness* (Wilmeth 146). Nevertheless, Rollie Lynn Riggs's work is an early attempt towards a drama with Native American issues and characters.

Notwithstanding the stirring movements in the name of Native American theater during the first half of the century, the most striking outpour of Native American drama is observed in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s, which took its impetus from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s. Being a time of social and political revolution, this period saw the radical awakening of those who had been marginalized, or alienated. From women and homosexuals, to anti-war propagandists, almost every layer of American society found ways to confront and react against the fixed social and political norms of the United States. Ethnic minorities were probably the most active group of the period. Blacks, Hispanics, Asians all took a decisive and even radical social and political stance in order to gain the rights they had been denied for so long. These minority groups turned to various branches of arts as a means of powerful cultural expression and propaganda. Native Americans, being "among the poorest, least educated, least healthy and most depressed populations in the United States," as the Meriam Report states, were no exception (Champagne 39).

As indicated by George B. Tindall, during the rise of Native American political involvement, "[. . .] Indian militants adopted the tactics of civil rights and black power activists. In 1968 the American Indian Movement (AIM) was founded on the promise of

advancing ‘red power’” (903-904). A number of notable events mark the era, and illustrate Indian anger, and their new militancy. The first major Native American appearance in political protests was their participation in “[. . .] the Poor People’s March on Washington in 1968” (Lacy 90).

Later, in 1969, “[. . .] a small group of Indians seized Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. Arguing that an 1868 Sioux treaty entitled them to possession of unused federal lands, the group occupied the island until mid-1971” (Norton 1042). The choice of spot for the event was not random. Troy Johnson in his article “The Alcatraz Indian Occupation” draws attention to the fact that the island had always been utilized by Native American people, even long before the arrival of Europeans centuries ago. “Based on oral history it appears that Alcatraz was used as a place of isolation or ostracization for tribal members who had violated a tribal law or taboo, as a camping spot, an area for gathering foods, especially bird eggs and sea-life, and that Alcatraz was utilized also as a hiding place for many Indians attempting to escape from the California Mission system” (Johnson).

After the United States government transformed Alcatraz into a penitentiary, many Indian persons or groups were confined on the island as prisoners. Therefore, the Native American activists of the 1960s considered the place to be a proper spot with its symbolic significance for their community. The nineteen-month occupation, which the second episode of *Foghorn* honors, took place between November 1969 and June 1971. The occupiers demanded “the deed to the island, they wanted to establish an Indian university, a cultural center, and a museum” (Johnson).

Although none of these were granted, it would be wrong to claim that the occupation failed its aim. First of all, it managed to draw a rather large extent of public attention onto the rights and demands of American Indian citizens of the United States. Second, as C.W.E. Bigsby states, this “symbolic act of repossession” later led to the restoration of some land to tribes; and last but not least, the Alcatraz occupation “inspired hope, in a number of Indian tribes that they might similarly one day reclaim their own lands” (*Critical* 367).

The Alcatraz occupation stimulated two major occupations, as well; one of them being the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)¹ in 1972. The reason behind this protests was the uncompromising attitude of the BIA towards the “twenty-point position paper” proposing a “[. . .] radical return to Indian sovereignty- renegotiation of all treaties, restoration of a 110-million-acre land base, and exemption from all state laws. When BIA officials refused swift compliance, AIM members occupied and trashed the Bureau’s headquarters” (Nabokov 361).

Furthermore, probably the most intense event of the period, the Wounded Knee takeover, occurred in 1973, when:

[M]embers of the militant American Indian Movement (AIM), demanding the rights guaranteed Indians in treaties with the United States, seized eleven hostages and a trading post on the Pine Ridge Reservation at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, where troops of the 7th Cavalry had massacred the Sioux in 1890. Their seventy-one-day confrontation with federal marshals ended with a government agreement to examine the treaty rights of the Oglala Sioux. (Norton 1042)

Tom Holm indicates that the occupation of Wounded Knee was an act of resistance against the tribal government of the Oglala Sioux. Dissatisfied with the “nontraditional” and much debated tribal government, they aimed to draw the political attention of the federal government onto the issue of independent government of their tribe. Although it started as a takeover, the event soon turned into a siege with the involvement of United States armed forces. Holm notes, this culminated in the killing of “two Indian men [. . .] in exchanges of gunfire between Wounded Knee occupation forces and federal agents” (137). This radical protest at “Wounded Knee, in the final analysis, was a challenge to government suppression of tribal self-determination” (Holm 143). Moreover, the occupation is remarkable in the sense that it “provided an opportunity for Indians to demand an accounting from the United States” (Deloria, Jr. 253).

These events were significant mainly for two reasons: first, they constituted a public act of resistance on the part of the Native Americans, who, up till then were debilitated by their dependence on federal agencies. Secondly, and more importantly, these events

were “an assertion of independence and a restoration of pride” (Bigby *Critical* 368). The United States government, on the other hand, was not completely oblivious to the historic injustices the Indian had suffered. This can be seen in the following message on Indian affairs President Nixon sent to the Congress on July 8, 1970:

The first Americans—the Indians—are the most deprived and most isolated minority group in our nation. On virtually every scale of measurement—employment, income, education, health—the condition of the Indian people ranks at the bottom. This condition is the heritage of centuries of injustice. From the time of their first contact with European settlers, the American Indians have been oppressed and brutalized, deprived of their ancestral lands and denied the opportunity to control their own destiny [...] But the story of the Indian in America is something more than the record of the white man’s frequent aggression, broken agreements, intermittent remorse and prolonged failure. It is a record of enormous contributions to this country—to its art and culture, to its strength and spirit, to its sense of history and its sense of purpose. (qtd. in Bigby *Critical* 368-369)

No matter how effective the political actions against the white hegemony were, they still needed to be reinforced within the Native American community by cultural means as well. In order to accomplish this, they first needed to reclaim and reassert their identity. Considering the centuries-long process of assimilation this was no easy task. *Indianness* was on the verge of extinction with many Native languages diminished, tribes terminated, rituals banned. However,

[t]he social and political upheavals of the 1960s and early seventies produced some real advances in education, social justice, and the economic condition of the less-than-affluent minorities in America. Funding from the federal government and major foundations began to flow to help Indians towards autonomy, including monies for the arts. This influx of financial support propelled major improvements in education and communications among the tribes and helped to spread fresh ideas and lend spiritual reinforcement. In the hothouse growth of the late sixties came a strong move towards pan-Indianism, more cohesion as a group, and an upsurge in ethnic pride and a sense of cultural uniqueness. A number of intellectuals and political activists began to reevaluate and redefine what it meant ‘to be Indian.’ There was a general recognition of the need to advance and grow, to adapt to changing conditions without losing distinctive identity. (Geiogamah *Stories* 1-2)

The most powerful weapon to fight against acculturation and to preserve the Native American identity appeared in the guise of art forms. Besides the highly remarkable achievements of Native American writers such as the Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich, Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko and Vine Deloria Jr. in literature; Native American artistic activities were stimulated also in the fields of music, painting, ceramics, weaving and beadwork, especially after “1962, [when] the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) was founded as a school for young Native artists, sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs” (Darby vii). Regardless of the genre, the aim of all these artistic activities was to embrace and restore the Native American identity, by reaching as many people as possible.

The art of theater in this sense is worthy of special attention. With its unique nature that offers a genuine interaction and the chance of intervention, both for the audience and the performers, theater was a useful medium for the alienated Native American community. Bigsby further argues:

Whatever its content, the mere fact of theatre works against alienation. It is the public gesture of private people, an endorsement of imaginative freedom and an exercise in communality. The audience is addressed not only as an aggregation of individual sensibilities but also as a group, sensitive to the responses of those around them. There is in effect no closet drama. It is an act which affirms the existence of shared assumptions, the possibility of creating meanings through a co-operative act. And the conscious creation of selves on a stage can hardly help but imply the possibility of similar acts of self-creation on the part of those who watch and for whom the theatre is not merely a mimetic gesture but a paradigm of personal and communal self-invention. (Critical 365)

Though scholars of Native American theater do acknowledge the achievements of several Native playwrights,² Hanay Geiogamah is still regarded as the most outstanding Native American playwright. Praised for his artistic talent and success, Geiogamah “has gained any real national attention, having received visibility and critical attention as the result of the publication of three of his plays [*Body Indian*, *Foghorn* and *49*] in 1980” (Wilmeth 146).

Born in Lawton, Oklahoma on June 22, 1945, Hanay Geiogamah³ was the son of a full-blood Kiowa father and Delaware-Irish mother. Starting with his youth Geiogamah was always conscious about the problems that Native American people encountered. He articulated his concerns about contemporary Indian life in the articles he wrote for the *Anadarko Daily News*, and later for *Oklahoma Daily*. During his high school education, Geiogamah would also edit the school journal *Smoke Signals*. Following these early endeavors Geiogamah studied journalism at the University of Oklahoma. His growing interest in theater, however, would soon lead him to choose a different path. Geiogamah's first step in this direction was to participate in the white drama instructor Roland Meinholtz's American Indian Theater project at the IAIA. Although Geiogamah shared Meinholtz's ambition to create a modern Indian theater which embraced the Native American tradition, Meinholtz's strictly formulized ideals of theater did not appeal to him. The instructor's model for an American Indian theater involved a fixed romanticizing grandeur in which

“a series of short events” of increasing “theatrical intensity” culminate in “an elongated climax” in its central section [. . .] takes into account the performance (always to be “in terms of a prayer to the spirits”), the use of masks, the predominant role of music and dance, and the style of setting (preferably not naturalistic). *Finally, Meinholtz declares his opposition to Brechtian alienation effect, favoring instead an emotional involvement for the audience* [. . .]. (my emphasis Pinazzi 176)

In addition to this, Geiogamah was not in favor of non-Indian involvement in this process (Pinazzi 176-177). Consequently, he decided to establish an independent Native American theater, through which he could pursue his goal of creating an organic Indian theater company. By the time he graduated in 1970, Geiogamah had already created a number of one-act plays which he wished to be performed by Native American actors.

Furthermore, Kent R. Brown indicates that, while he was working with the Indian National Youth Council, Geiogamah was selected as an intern Senate aide at Senator Edward M. Kennedy's office. One of the projects of the program was to contribute to the new national Indian identity. As a part of this project Geiogamah drafted a proposal for the creation of the theater company he envisioned which would produce plays that

would help change the negative image of Indians. Having had his proposal accepted, Geiogamah established contact with the National Endowment for the Arts where he was told that he had to be associated “with a successful producing body” in order to carry out his project. Thus Geiogamah contacted La Mama Experimental Theater Club⁴. With a budget of \$110,000 he started to draw the outlines of his Ensemble. What he aimed to do with this Ensemble was to “eradicate decades of such white-washed and superficial expectations from the public’s mind, and even from the minds of Indians who had themselves accepted ‘traditional’ stereotyping” (Brown 171-172).

As for the formation of the Ensemble, Geiogamah recruited Indian artists, among whom, were not only actors but also singers, dancers and musicians. “To be Indian was the only prerequisite” to be a member of the company (Pinazzi 178). Thus in 1972 the American Indian Theater Ensemble (AITE), “America’s first and only all Indian repertory company” which is regarded as the most significant organization in Native American theater was formed (Brown 169). The group had no fixed program or performance theory and no determined aesthetic line. AITE modeled its own style after La Mama’s example, a style that, as Geiogamah points out, “responded to the needs of a young company with little experience, addressing an equally unsophisticated audience as far as performing technique was considered [...] Unlike Meinholtz’s model [...], AITE’s show was not the result of a preconceived formula” (Pinazzi 178).

The first plays to be performed by the Ensemble were Robert Shorty’s *Na Haaz Zaan*, and Geiogamah’s *Body Indian* in 1972 and the earliest versions of *Coon Cons Coyote* and *Foghorn* the following year. In 1974, the American Indian Theater Ensemble changed its name and continued to operate as the Native American Theater Ensemble (NATE). The group started preparations for the staging of Geiogamah’s *49*. However, although the group did not officially disband, they suspended productions, NATE remained an important and influential organization in the history of the Native American theater⁵ (Pinazzi 178-179)

Despite all these hardships, through his work with the Ensemble, Geiogamah had succeeded in establishing what would be coined as the New Native American Drama.

What distinguished New Native American Drama was Geiogamah's social and political stance as a playwright which involved the writing of "plays for and about Indians, their past, their despairing present, their hopes and dreams and daily lives" (qtd. in Brown 170); in other words writing of plays which "would depict the *truth* about the condition of American Indians" (qtd. in Pinazzi 177).

The plays published by Hanay Geiogamah are *Coon Cons Coyote*, *Body Indian*, *Foghorn*, *49* (which are also translated into Italian), *Grandma* and *Grandpa*. *Coon Cons Coyote* "was first performed by the American Indian Theater Ensemble in October 1973 at Theater im Reichskabarett, West Berlin, Germany" (Geiogamah *Stories* 128). The play is an adaptation of a traditional Nez Percé poem entitled "Coon Cons Coyote, Coyote Eats Coon, Meets Up With Farting Girl, Gets Immured in a Stone House, Eats His Eyes, Eats His Balls, Gets Out, Gets Birdboy's Eyes, Loses Them, and Gets Them Back Again" (Geiogamah *Stories* 129). The play is a comedy with an entirely traditional Native American content.

Grandma and *Grandpa*, on the other hand, are "separate one-act plays that were first performed by the Native American Theater Ensemble at the Los Angeles Actor's Theater in February 1984, where they were directed by Hanay Geiogamah" (Geiogamah *Stories* 316). These plays are the monologues of two old Native Americans, set in the present. The plays are based on the account of the life experiences of these elders, drawing attention to the Native American way of living in their youth and in the present.

49 premiered in 1975 at Oklahoma City University. It was directed by the playwright himself and performed by the Native American Theater Ensemble. The play is set in "[a] ceremonial ground circa 1885 and the same ceremonial ground in the present" (Geiogamah *New Native* 85). The play is named after the 49 gatherings which take place usually after powwows. As noted by Geiogamah, 49s are especially for young Indians. They can be regarded as large open-air Native American parties that start late at night and last till the morning, where the younger members of the community sing, dance, drink, fight; in short, do anything they please. 49 gatherings are important for the

young Indians, for “they find in the 49 not only an emotional release but also a means of expressing thoughts and attitudes difficult to articulate” (88).

The dramatic action in the play is based on a 49 gathering realized under the constant threat of the police patrols representing the white oppression. With the guidance of the Night Walker, an ageless and sexless “ceremonial leader of the tribe” who “can move supernaturally between both eras and speak directly to both generations”, the young Indians gradually achieve the state of awareness of and self confidence about their identity (85, 88). The presence of the Night Walker makes the play ritualistic. Through the spiritual power they obtain from the prayers of the Night Walker, the young 49ers resist the police who try to make them leave the place. The will and the unity of the Indians gradually increase and become so strong at the end that the police have to retreat. The Night Walker, in this sense, is their teacher, the spiritual leader, and the voice of the ancestors whom the young Indians promise never to abandon their traditional ways.

The play, as a whole can be considered an encouraging address to the younger generations of the Native American community. Geiogamah indicates in the notes to the play that he, “[m]ore than anything else [. . .] wanted the young people to be affirmative in the face of despair and unreasoning force” (88). With its optimism, 49 complements a certain contextual pattern initiated by the self-criticism in *Body Indian* and the criticism of the white victimization in *Foghorn*. Although, 49 is a significant play to form a contextual unity with the other two plays, it is excluded from the central discussion of this study; due to the insufficient technical elements the play contains to enable a Brechtian discussion.

The plays, which will be discussed in this study, are the outcome of Geiogamah’s social commitment. *Foghorn*, with its inter-racial concern expressed through frequent historical references, is more politically charged, while intra-racial social commentary dominates *Body Indian*. However, this does not mean that *Foghorn* lacks the social dimension or vice-versa.

Geiogamah is always conscious of the fact that he is writing for a contemporary Native American audience. “His purpose is, first, to present and thereby preserve *living* Indian traditions and, next, to demonstrate the facts of Indian life in America today [...]” (Huntsman xi). While *Foghorn* propagandizes the rebellious spirit of the time, *Body Indian* deals with the problems of the Native Americans in the contemporary urban society. Moreover, Geiogamah’s social and political criticism also focus on contemporary issues. Rather than clinging to the historical fact of white tyranny, he chooses to turn his gaze on the possibilities of re-constructing the Native American identity that will survive in the contemporary United States. Geiogamah’s purpose, as Huntsman argues, is not “mayhem and revolution”; it is “designed to stimulate Indian people to think about their lives of quiet or confirmed desperation. Consequently, he is interested more in survival and self-knowledge than in reproach and confrontation” (xi). What makes Geiogamah a politically conscious playwright, unique among his peers, lies in his attitude that is aimed to be instructive rather than militant.

Although white oppression is always evident in his plays, it is not his main focus. Geiogamah never lets it take precedence over Native American characters. Thus, he attempts to raise consciousness rather than spur white hatred. In this sense, his drama has a rather constructive approach. Tekinay notes that Geiogamah aims at “urging his people to note their conditions and awakening them to the urgency of the present situation.” She likens him to the ancient storyteller who is “out there to educate his community, to teach them to survive in a brutal world” (207).

Another point that distinguishes Geiogamah’s New Native American Drama is that it deals with the *now*. His plays are primarily occupied with the present rather than the past. This argument, however, by no means suggests that Geiogamah’s theater ignores, rejects or excludes the past. On the contrary, the present in Geiogamah’s work exists as the consequences of the past. In other words, the past is embraced as what makes the present, and these two, merge and become one. This is actually one of the very Indian aspects that can be observed in his theater, which is the notion of “the eternal *now*” (Huntsman xx). Although *Foghorn* makes use of flashbacks, they too serve to transmit

the ultimate message concerning the present situation of the Native American community.

Despite the challenges the New Native American Theater encounters, such as inefficient opportunities for publication and financial obstacles, Native playwrights' endeavor to interact with their community and thus to enliven it remains strong. Hanay Geiogamah's role in this process is highly remarkable. As a pioneer of the New Native American Theater, Geiogamah contributed to the revival of the Native American culture with his plays that reached many Indian and non-Indian people in the United States and Europe.

Among these plays *Body Indian* and *Foghorn* are significant to exemplify Geiogamah's early period of writing dedicated to the enlightenment boldly presenting their problems and offering solutions to them. Furthermore, what is also significant about Geiogamah's three plays including *49* is that, when analyzed theme-wise, they present a certain pattern for the audience to follow in order to re-establish the Native American identity in the contemporary world. The path leading to the solution Geiogamah offers his community starts with a grim call for self-criticism in *Body Indian*; continues with the playful propaganda of activism against the historical fact of white hegemony in *Foghorn*; and ends with a strong sense of optimism about the future generations of Native American culture in *49*. In other words, Geiogamah's ultimate message to his audience is that only through a realistic look in the mirror can the community begin healing itself and thus can—and should—rightfully claim Native American rights from the white victimizers. Only after fulfilling these former steps, Geiogamah seems to believe, will the future generations be able to find the power within to embrace the essence of Native American culture and defend their identity in the face of oppression.

As for the technical characteristics of the plays, it is worthy of attention that Geiogamah, as a Native American playwright; writing primarily for Native American audiences, employs the alienation effect of Brechtian theater which is a major tradition of modern Western theater. In the course of this study, the general characteristics of Brecht's theater and the elements Hanay Geiogamah borrows from this tradition, namely the Brechtian use of episodic structure, the application of multimedia devices,

the Brechtian use of music, historicization, the presentational style of acting and gestus, will be explained. Finally, through the discussions of *Body Indian* and *Foghorn*, how the above-mentioned techniques are used in order to arouse alienation, and how the Brechtian alienation effect helps Geiogamah achieve his ends will be clarified. In conclusion, Hanay Geiogamah's pioneering role in the emergence of The New Native American Drama that blends the ancient and the modern, the native and the western will be defined.



Notes

¹ The Bureau of Indian Affairs was established in 1824 as “an agency within the War Department” of the United States. Later, “in 1849, it became part of the U.S. Department of the Interior”. The BIA runs the Indian affairs and “receives over \$1 billion year to oversee federal aid to the tribes, protect Indian lands, and-in theory-to encourage Indian self-government” (Manning 11). However, to what extent the BIA serves the interest of Indian people has always been at debate.

² Some examples of important Native plays and playwrights include: *Cherokee Night* (1934), by Rollie Lynn Riggs (Cherokee), the author of *Green Grow the Lilacs* (1931) (which became *Oklahoma!*), *Unto These Hills* and *Trail of Tears*, collective enterprises of the Cherokee people dating from the 1960s; *Yanowis* (1968) and *Mowitch* (1968), by Monica Charles (Klallam); *To Catch a Never Dream* (1969), *Fire-Life* (1978), and *Legends* (1978), by Bruce King (Oneida-Chippewa); *Na Haaz Zaan* (1972), by Robert Shorty and Geraldine Keams (Navajo); *Butterfly of Hope*, by Ray Baldwin Louis (Navajo); *Skins* (1973), by Linda Poolaw (Kiowa); *Two Ways* (1974) and *Wa-Ku-Pani* (1974), by members of the A-Tu-Mai Theater Company (Southern Ute); *Changer* (1975), by Gerald Bruce Miller (Skokomish-Yakima); and *At the Sweet Gum Bridge* (1978), by Wallace Hampton Tucker (Choctaw) (Huntsman 96).

³ Geiogamah received his B.A. degree in theater and drama from Indiana University, and is the artistic director and cofounder of the American Indian Dance Theater. He is the managing editor of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. Currently a member of the faculty in the Department of Theater and the Interdepartmental Program in American Indian Studies at UCLA, Geiogamah is an active participant in the Project HOOP (Honoring Our Origins and Our People) which introduces Native theater and performing arts in educational institutions throughout the United States. Geiogamah is the author of more than a dozen plays, among which are *Grandpa: A theater piece for one American Indian Actor* (1983), *Grandma: A theater piece for one Indian actress* (1985), *Teatro (Tepee)* (1994). He has also edited *Stories of Our Way: An Anthology of 12 American Indian Plays* and *Voices of the Seventh Generation: A Native American Theater Anthology* and coedited *A Reader for American Indian Theater Studies*. (<http://www.aisc.ucla.edu/admin/about.html>)

⁴ Founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961 La Mama Experimental Theater Club was an influential off-off-Broadway organization located in New York. Characterized by its quest for novelty this experimental group welcomed cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity.

⁵ Geiogamah’s AITE and NATE were highly influential in the formation of other Native American theater companies. The most prominent names are Robert Shorty’s Navajo Land Outdoor Theater (1973), Muriel Miguel and her sisters’ (Gloria and Elizabeth) Spiderwoman Theater (1975), and Don Matt and John Kauffman’s Red Earth Performing Arts Company (1974). Furthermore, a number of smaller companies were formed in the following years, such as, the Echo-Hawk Theater Ensemble in Chicago, the American Indian Theater Company of Oklahoma in Tulsa, and the Native Americans in the Arts New York (Geiogamah 3).

CHAPTER I

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF BERTOLT BRECHT'S EPIC THEATER

1. EMERGENCE AND BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Since the focal aim of this study is to discuss how the Brechtian alienation technique is utilized by the Native American playwright Hanay Geiogamah, the analysis of the Brechtian epic theater is restricted to the discussion of the alienation effect and its relation to certain other elements of the Brechtian epic tradition.

Epic theater, which is also referred to as Brechtian theater, is a mode of presentation in drama which emerged in the 1920s in Germany. Although Erwin Piscator is regarded as the founder of epic theater, it was Bertolt Brecht who established, developed and applied the theory in theater. The sources he was influenced by vary from “the political theatre of Erwin Piscator and [...] agitprop; the cabaret of Frank Wedekind and the work of the music hall comedian Karl Valentin; Charlie Chaplin and American silent film; Asian and revolutionary Soviet theatre; [...] [to] Shakespeare and Elizabethan chronicle plays” (Brooker 187). Among these, Piscator’s political theater and the Soviet agit-prop are worthy of special attention, since some of the aims and techniques they adopted were, to a great extent, in harmony with Brecht’s motivations and artistic concerns.

Aysin Candan states that the stimulation for a political theater occurred basically with the Russian Revolution in 1917 (131). The newly founded Socialist regime had to be immediately communicated, justified and propagandized to the public for their adaptation into the drastic change the Revolution brought about, and also for the reinforcement of socialist ideas. In Russia, therefore, theater with a political agenda was embodied in the form of agit-prop, whereas the rise of political theater was mainly observed in Germany, under the guidance of Erwin Piscator.

As the abbreviation for the words *agitation* and *propaganda*, the term agit-prop was “derived from the name of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda created in September 1920 as part of the Central Committee Secretariat of the Soviet Communist Party” (Cuddon 15). As in the case of its emergence in Russia, agit-prop drama is utilized by those in power. On the other hand, this form of theater is also known to be performed against the authority, by the groups that are somehow victimized or marginalized by it. Regardless of the variations in power dynamics, agit-prop is utterly political and aims to stimulate people about social issues. Another unique trait of agit-prop is its temporary nature stemming from its totally practical usage. In other words, agit-prop theater exists on the condition that there is a certain issue about which the public needs to be agitated. Therefore, it is usually on the rise during the times of socio-political turmoil; and once the intensity of that period subsides, agit-prop performances also disappear until public opinion needs to be stimulated and provoked again. In order to fulfill the task of agitation and propaganda within a limited period of time, agit-prop theater avoids complexity. J. A. Cuddon states that Russian agit-prop theater troops of the “Blue Blouse movement,” whose name is an allusion to the proletarian work attire, used films, eye-catching placards and signs and slogans and they also “drew on [...] traditional folk art and on *avant-garde* [...] techniques to develop [...] accessible and popular forms of agitprop” (15). He further documents the characteristics of Russian agit-prop performances as follows:

Blue blouse troops usually performed away from conventional theatres, in pubs and clubs, on wagons or platforms. They used colloquial language and music in cartoon-style Living Newspapers and revues that featured political analysis of a single topic presented in a montage of effects. This new form was physical, flexible and mobile. It relied on striking but simple costume, minimal props and little or no scenery. The troops worked collectively and attempted to create a new style of performance to match their new form of non-literary, non-naturalistic drama. They were predominantly amateur and reached the height of their influence in the mid-1920s [...]. (15)

Agit-prop as a new and political form in drama soon spread to the West, influencing the German theater in particular. There, Erwin Piscator and, following his political theater, Bertolt Brecht took interest in agit-prop which inspired the establishment of their epic

theater. As stated before, Piscator is known to be the first to apply the epic theater. However, it is Brecht whose name is usually associated with epic theater. Piscator, on the other hand, is primarily acknowledged in the field of political theater to which Brecht owes much for the development of his epic theories.

Piscator's unwilling service in the First World War, according to Candan, strengthened his political attitude as an anti-war propagandist; and soon led him to identify himself more and more with left wing ideas, especially with those pertaining to Marxist philosophy (131). As a director and producer, Piscator's theater is of particular importance to have influenced the modern theater in two major aspects, the first being the content that is thoroughly political, and second, the form that is highly experimental. Eric Bentley, draws attention to the remarks of Piscator expressing the central issue of his theater:

‘Not man's relation to himself, not his relation to God, but his relation to society is the main issue' [...] ‘No longer the individual with his private, personal destiny, but the age itself, the destiny of the masses is the heroic factor of the new dramaturgy' [...] ‘Authors must learn to grasp the material in all its factuality, the drama of the great simple phenomena of life. The theater demands naïve, direct, uncomplicated, unpsychological effects.’ (*Playwright* 212)

Although Bentley finds “callowness” in Piscator's earliest productions and refers to his statements as “bumptious,” he admits the influence Piscator had on Brecht (*Playwright* 212). Brecht himself, on the other hand, frequently acknowledges with praise Piscator's contributions to the theater: “[...] Piscator, who without doubt is one of the most important theatre men of all times, began to transform its [the modern stage's] scenic potentialities. He introduced a number of far-reaching innovations” (Brecht “German Drama” 77).

Piscator's commitment to Marxism is evident in the plays he directed or produced. These plays are known to be written and performed for the working class. His political dedication drew the attention of the communist party which was well aware of the fact that art could be used as an effective device to influence masses about the political issues; and this was exactly what Piscator's theater was doing:

Piscator's experiments began by causing complete theatrical chaos. While they turned the stage into a machine-room, the auditorium became a public meeting. Piscator saw the theatre as a parliament, the audience as a legislative body. [...] It was the stage's ambition to supply images, statistics, slogans which would enable its parliament, the audience, to reach political decisions. Piscator's stage was not indifferent to applause, but it preferred a discussion. It didn't want only to provide its spectator with an experience but also to squeeze from him a practical decision to intervene actively in life. (Brecht "Experimental Theatre" 130-131)

Therefore, as Candan indicates, the communist party funded Piscator, before the elections of 1924, to produce plays propagandizing the communist cause. Although the election was a disappointment for the communist party, the financial support Piscator's theater received, enabled the producer to gradually realize his theatrical projects which were rather revolutionary at the time (132). Piscator's theater is probably most significant for his experimentations on form and technique which Brecht adopted and developed further. Piscator's theater, therefore, can be regarded as a milestone in the history of the theater, for not only Brecht but also the modern theater as a whole benefited from the innovations he introduced:

One of them was his use of the film and of film projections as an integral part of the settings. The setting was thus awakened to life and began to play on its own, so to speak; the film was a new, gigantic actor that helped to narrate events. By means of it documents could be shown as a part of the scenic background, figures and statics. Simultaneous events in different places could be seen together. [...] This was great progress. Another innovation was the introduction of moving platforms on the stage. [. . .] New facilities for staging allowed the use of musical and graphic elements which the theatre up to this time had not been able to employ. These inspired composers of rank to write music for the theatre. (Brecht "German Drama" 77-78)

In his essay "On Experimental Theatre," Brecht stresses the importance of Piscator's contributions to the theater. He claims that "Piscator's experiments broke nearly all the conventions. They intervened to transform the playwright's creative methods, the actor's style of representation and the work of the stage designer. *They were striving towards an entirely new social function for the theatre*" (Brecht's emphasis 131). This new function Brecht mentions was to be found in his epic theater.

In his “Notes on the Opera,” published in 1930, Brecht declares that “[t]he modern theatre is the epic theatre” (33). As a result of his dedication to theoretical explorations, he later refers to the term *epic*, in the appendices to “A Short Organum for the Theatre”, as somewhat limiting; and suggests “dialectical theatre” as a more convenient term for his theater. However, John Willett notes that terminological alternatives Brecht proposed in his appendices were published posthumously. He indicates that Brecht “was not yet ready to go quite so far as they [the notes concerning his new terminological ideas] suggested” (“Dialectics” 281). Notwithstanding the terminological variations in the theory, the essence of the Brechtian theater basically remained unchanged as far as the aim and the techniques are concerned. Therefore, *epic theater* which has been the most commonly used name in reference to his theater will be utilized in this study. On the other hand, the phrase *Brechtian theater*, which is perhaps the most practical and inclusive expression for the theater theorized and developed by Bertolt Brecht in the epic form, is also used interchangeably. In order to comprehend Brecht’s strong assertion which directly relates modern theater to the epic theater, what distinguishes epic theater from the theater that had been produced prior to its emergence should be explored.

First of all, epic theater negated the Aristotelian separation of epic and dramatic. The Aristotelian approach categorizes these artistic forms as two units that cannot be mingled. Brecht questions such a division and claims that the two are usually evident in each other. In his “Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction” he attempts to nullify the centuries-long practise of this separation:

Many people imagine that the term ‘epic theatre’ is self-contradictory, as the epic and dramatic ways of narrating a story are held, following Aristotle, to be basically distinct. The difference between the two forms was never thought simply to lie in the fact that the one is performed by living beings while the other operates via the written word; epic works such as those of Homer and the medieval singers were at the same time theatrical performances, while dramas like Goethe’s *Faust* and Byron’s *Manfred* are agreed to have been more effective as books. Thus even by Aristotle’s definition the difference between the dramatic and epic forms was attributed to their different methods of construction, whose laws were dealt with by two different branches of aesthetics. The method of

construction depended on the different way of presenting the work to the public, sometimes via the stage, sometimes through a book; and independently of that there was the ‘dramatic element’ in epic works and the ‘epic element’ in dramatic. (70)

Thus, Brecht used in his theater, the epic form which is based on narrative instead of the plot in conventional drama. Furthermore, the narrative, consisting of episodes, is free from the unity of time. Each of the episodes stands for itself and therefore can be analyzed separately. On the other hand, an epic drama does not apply the conventional triangular structure of *rising action-climax-falling action* that is frequently adopted by the illusionary drama. As for the content, social and political issues handled in a didactic style are central. When it comes to technical qualities, the non-illusionary mode of presentation, the use of slide projections and films, signs and placards, the presence of a narrator or chorus are among the defining attributes of epic theater. One can deduce even from this rough summary of unique characteristics of epic theater that Brecht’s determination of applying such an unrecognized form at the time indicates his mistrust in the conventional theater. Evidently, he believed that epic theater would achieve something that Aristotelian theater had not been able to achieve.

Brecht’s following remarks in his notes “On Form and Subject-Matter” defines this problem concisely: “[s]implify to comprehend the new areas of subject-matter imposes a new dramatic and theatrical form” (30). In “The German Drama: pre-Hitler,” he refers to these ‘new areas of subject-matter’ as “the great themes of our times; [...] for example, the building-up of a mammoth industry, the conflict of classes, war, the fight against disease [...]” (77). On the other hand, in “Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction,” Brecht gives a more specific account, indicating that “[o]il, inflation, war, social struggles, the family, religion, wheat, the meat market, all became subjects for theatrical representation” with the emergence of epic theater (71). The playwright questions the capability of the conventional theatrical forms in representing such contemporary issues:

Can we speak of money in the form of iambs? ‘The Mark, first quoted yesterday at 50 dollars, now beyond 100, soon may rise, etc’ – how about that? Petroleum resists the five-act form; today’s catastrophes do not progress in a straight line but in cyclical crises; the ‘heroes’ change with

the different phases, are interchangeable [...]; the graph of people's actions is complicated by abortive actions; fate is no longer a single coherent power; rather there are the fields of force which can be seen radiating in opposite directions; the power groups themselves comprise movements not only against one another but within themselves [...]. It is impossible to explain a present-day character by features or a present-day action by motives that would have been adequate in our fathers' time. (30)

The political criticism directed to the contemporary issues can, therefore, be claimed to determine epic theater's formal characteristics which are, again, rather contrastive with the conventional dramatic norms. In his notes to the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (*Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*), Brecht outlines these contrasts through the following chart:

DRAMATIC THEATRE	EPIC THEATRE
plot	narrative
implicates the spectator in a stage situation	turns the spectator into an observer but
wears down his capacity for action	arouses his capacity for action
provides him with sensations experience	forces him to take decisions picture of the world
the spectator is involved in something	he is made to face something
suggestion	argument
instinctive feelings are preserved	brought to the point of recognition
the spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience	the spectator stands outside, studies
the human being is taken for granted	the human being is the object of the inquiry
he is unalterable	he is alterable and able to alter
eyes on the finish	eyes on the course
one scene makes another	each scene for itself
growth	montage
linear development	in curves
evolutionary determinism	jumps
man as a fixed point	man as a process
thought determines being	social being determines thought
feeling	reason
("Modern" 37)	

As the chart clearly reveals, Brecht's epic theater redefines the relationship between the audience and the stage. The once passive spectators are rendered mentally active so that

they can observe, analyze and judge the issues of contemporary life through a politically conscious state of mind, which is exactly what Brecht wants to achieve via art. To him, “for art to be ‘unpolitical’ means only to ally itself with the ‘ruling’ group” (“Short Organum” 196). Brecht’s essentially Marxist political approach in theater is particularly manifest in “A Short Organum for the Theatre.” Here, he draws attention to the drastic changes the rapid advance of science and technology brought forward; and how the human kind is affected by these changes in social and economic terms. Furthermore, he stresses that the new society shaped by the hammer of science and industry needs equally up-to-date forms of ideas and ways of expression, which is suggested to be provided by the method of dialectical materialism. The method of dialectical materialism “treats social situations as processes, and traces out all their inconsistencies. It regards nothing as existing except in so far as it changes, in other words is in disharmony with itself. This also goes for those human feelings, opinions and attitudes through which at any time the form of men’s life together finds its expression” (“Short Organum” 193).

Thus, theater, according to Brecht should adopt this approach without sacrificing its pleasurable attribute. He argues that theater produced up to that point remains utterly dysfunctional in meeting the demands of the modern society. “We are more and more disturbed to see how crudely and carelessly men’s life together is represented, and that not only in old works but also in contemporary ones constructed according to the old recipes. Our whole way of appreciation is starting to get out of date” (“Short Organum” 183).

Brecht holds that the new way of appreciation should indispensably be rational and critical. On the other hand, this required that the conventional dynamics of theater be radically revised and altered. This process involves the re-establishment of the relationship between not only the audience and the stage action, but also the characters and performers, producer and actors. Walter Benjamin explains the change epic theater brought into these relationships as follows:

For its public, the stage is no longer ‘the planks which signify the world’ [...], but a convenient public exhibition area. For its stage, the public is no

longer a collection of hypnotized test subjects, but an assembly of interested persons whose demands it must satisfy. For its text, the performance is no longer a virtuoso interpretation, but its rigorous control. For its performance, the text is no longer a basis of that performance, but a grid on which, in the form of new formulations, the gains of that performance are marked. For its actor, the producer no longer gives him instructions about effects, but theses for comment. For its producer, the actor is no longer a mime who must embody a role, but a functionary who has to make an inventory of it. (2)

With his theater, Brecht established a break from the Aristotelian theater. What distinguishes Brecht's approach from the Aristotelian tradition is basically his distrust in theatrical illusion. He argues that "[s]ympathetic understanding is the important artificial means of an age in which man is the variable and his surroundings the constant" (Brecht "Experimental" in Corrigan 106). Such a connection between the spectator and the stage confines mankind in the boundaries of an unchanging reality. In reference to the conventional theater, Brecht claims in the same essay:

Human beings go to the theater in order to be swept away, captivated, impressed, uplifted, horrified, moved, kept in suspense, released, diverted, set free, set going, transplanted from their own time, and supplied with illusions. All of this goes so much without saying that the art of the theater is candidly defined as having the power to release, sweep away, uplift, et cetera. It's not an art at all unless it does so. (106)

Illusion is an indispensable trait of the conventional theater which, in the case of this study, refers to all kinds of theater that, in one way or another, apply this Aristotelian tradition. To put it simply, illusion is the *fake* representation of reality. The prerequisite of creating illusion in theater is to ignore or make ignored the fact that it is fake. The acting style that is based on *becoming* the character as much as possible, the stage setting that appears *as if* an actual place, the enigmatic plot and music, etc. build the *fourth wall* between the audience and the stage. While the actors use their talent to the full to go deeper into the psychology of the character, the mechanism of the suspension of disbelief starts working in the auditorium. Consequently, emotional identification takes place on the part of both the actors and the spectators, disabling the analytical mental activity. Lost in the comfort of familiarity, the audience is drawn away from reality.

Epic theater, on the other hand, rejects illusion and emotional identification; instead, it offers a new artistic approach through which the audience is provoked to confront reality with an attentive attitude. Reason, in this sense, replaces the emotions in the interaction between the audience and the stage. This alternative connection is created through the alienation effect.



2. ALIENATION EFFECT

Prior to the detailed discussion of the Brechtian alienation effect, it is necessary to look briefly into the major figures and ideas that influenced the formation of the playwright's theories on the alienation device. In order to prevent any possible confusions regarding the subject, it would be useful to clarify the terminology in advance.

As indicated by Peter Brooker, the Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky originated the term *ostranenie*, which is usually translated into English as *defamiliarization* or *making strange*. On the other hand, Bertolt Brecht, as a German artist, had first used the word *entfremdung*, which was replaced by the term *verfremdung* through the playwright's continuous revision of his theory. Brooker also states that *entfremdung* is "more strictly translated as 'alienation'" and argues that *defamiliarisation* or *estrangement* are more convenient translations for the German playwright's style of application of the device (Brooker 192-193). Moreover, it is possible, on occasion, to come across the German word *verfremdungseffekt* (V-effect) in texts in English, for the original German expression is assumed to be commonly known by the scholars of epic theater. Notwithstanding the varied uses and arguments, the term *alienation effect* (A-effect) is the most widely accepted translation. Therefore, this study mainly adopts *alienation* as the term and the other variations used in order to avoid repetition do not suggest any contextual alteration unless indicated otherwise.

Alienation in arts is known to be used long before the establishment of Bertolt Brecht's epic theater. In theater, alienation has a centuries-long history. However, the theorization of alienation and its intentional application for the sake of certain artistic or philosophical goals took place in the early twentieth century. Bertolt Brecht's sources of influence in applying the alienation effect vary from Russian Formalism to Asian performance arts. Although the Russian Formalist idea of alienation may, at first glance, seem to be the basic inspiration for Brecht's theater, it is evident that the Brechtian concept of alienation significantly differs from that of the Formalists, at certain stages.

It was the school of Russian Formalism, established around 1915, that plunged for the first time into the use and function of alienation as an aesthetic device. Viktor

Shklovsky, a pioneering figure of this school, introduced the term to the literary theory with his essay “Art as Technique” which was inspirational for many artists and theoreticians including Bertolt Brecht. However, it is of vital importance to stress the fact that Shklovsky’s and other Russian Formalists’ theories were basically concerned with the linguistic aspects of literary texts. As Raman Selden indicates, “[t]he Formalists’ technical focus led them to treat literature as a special use of language which achieves its distinctness by deviating from and distorting ‘practical’ language. Practical language is used for communication, while literary language has no practical function at all and simply makes us *see differently*” (*Guide* 32). They argue that the genuine worth of a literary text lies in its capacity to obliterate the firmly rooted mechanism regarding the issue of perception. Selden further clarifies this formalist approach as follows:

Ordinary language, they [the Russian Formalists] argued, tends to diminish our awareness of reality: it simply confirms things as we know them. [...] Such language, according to Shklovsky, encourages the automatization of our perceptions: we take for granted a reality which is already fully *known* to us. Literary language and all other artistic forms work in the opposite direction: they draw attention to perceptions by making them *unfamiliar*. (*Theory* 41-42)

What should especially be deduced from this statement is that defamiliarization, in terms of the formalist theory, can be achieved solely through language. The key to create alienation, according to Shklovsky, is to complicate language and extend the depiction so that the text will cease to provide the immediate connotation of a fixed, unchallenged reality:

The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar’, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception, because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.* (Shklovsky 720)

Clearly, Brecht shares the Formalist objective of deconstructing what has been/is presented as reality. Furthermore he, too, emphasizes the indispensability of creating distance between the work of art and the receiver. The prerequisite of achieving this is

also rendered by alienation in Brechtian Theater. Nevertheless, Brecht's theory of alienation, despite the common characteristics, stands apart from the Formalist concept of defamiliarization as far as the crucial ideals of both are concerned.

First of all, as Shklovsky underlines, the ultimate subject of art is neither its content nor the society to whom that work of art is presented. The linguistic qualities of the text are the first and foremost consideration of the Formalist approach; therefore the alienation device works only for the *artfulness* of the text itself. However, socio-political content is one of the defining attributes of the Brechtian Theater. Brecht's aim in applying alienation is decisively for the sake of social criticism and reconstruction. Selden supports this argument through a comparative instance:

It must be emphasized that Shklovsky was not interested in the *content* of perceptions, but only in the artistic defamiliarisation of them. To take an extreme example, a 'defamiliarised' artistic rendering of starving children in Africa would draw attention to the *perception* (close-up, montage, detail) but not to the moral or political issues. In this respect he differed fundamentally from Bertolt Brecht who used the 'alienation effect' to alter the perceptions of the theatre audience (*Theory* 42).

Furthermore, although it would be wrong to claim that Brechtian plays lack sophistication or artistic mastery, they are meant to be rid of excessive 'artfulness,' in order to be intelligible. In other words, the plainer the Brechtian play is, the more effective the critical message will be; whereas the more complicated the Formalist text is rendered, the more successful it is regarded. Therefore, unlike the Formalist defamiliarization, Brechtian alienation, in fact, serves communication for the sake of social alteration. When evaluated within the frame of the issue in question, Brecht's own statement about the function of the alienation effect will be rather illuminating in exposing both the common motivation and the difference between the two approaches to the device.

The A-effect consists in turning the object of which one is to be made aware, to which one's attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected. What is obvious is in a certain sense made incomprehensible,

but this is only in order that it may then be made all the easier to comprehend. (Brecht "New Technique" 143-144)

In conclusion, it would not be wrong to assert that Bertolt Brecht was influenced by the defamiliarization principle pertaining to Russian Formalism during the formation of his theatrical theory on the alienation effect. Nonetheless, the fact that these two techniques differ from each other in certain basic characteristics should also be kept in mind.

Another major source of inspiration for Bertolt Brecht in formulizing his technique of alienation, is the purely presentational performances of Chinese actors. Influenced by this style of acting he developed what is known as the Brechtian/epic style of acting. Peter Brooker indicates that "[a]mongst these [...] the acting style of Mei Lan-fang whom Brecht saw perform in Moscow in 1935" was of particular importance. He draws attention to the fact that after Mei Lan-fang's performance the concept of alienation in Brecht's epic theater became more tangible and clearer (Brooker 192).

Brooker suggests, as another source of influence on the Brechtian alienation, the Marxist interpretation of alienation referring to "the condition of dehumanised labour and social relations under capitalism which Brecht wished precisely to transcend." Nevertheless, he acknowledges that this is "an echo" of Marxism rather than a "direct derivation" (193). Marxist alienation, in other words, is a fundamental contextual issue, rather than a technical one in Brecht's epic theater. Inspirational as these figures and theories might be, Bertolt Brecht created a unique concept of alienation which today is usually associated with his name.

The significance of the alienation effect, as mentioned before, is that it hinders or breaks the illusion through continuous and various disruptions targeting the perception of the audience. By means of these diversions, which will be discussed later in detail, the spectators are constantly kept aware of the fact that they are *in the theater watching a play*. Thus, possibilities of emotional participation are reduced to a minimum, and, especially with the Brechtian acting style, a distance between the stage personas and the audience is maintained; hence identification is impeded. As a result of the audience's constant exposure to the alienation effect, the afore-mentioned conventional and

essentially sentimental relationship between the stage and the audience is reversed towards an intellectual one. Once the theatrical illusion is obliterated, the viewer's faculty of rational judgment becomes the criterion of response to the play. In this way, the mentally receptive audience is prepared for instruction which is another crucial concern of epic theater.

Instruction, in Brechtian terms, has an extensive content. Not only does it refer to the transaction of scientific data, but it also includes the alteration of the readily accepted conditions and norms. That is to suggest, Brechtian plays aim at transforming what is unknown into known as well as interrogating what is *already* known. The ultimate end is the enlightenment of the audience about social realities, therefore didacticism is not avoided but utilized purposefully, which is epitomized especially by the overtly didactic plays, called *Die Lehrstücke*, he wrote during the 1930s. In these plays "[t]he didactic element was political and derived from Brecht's study of Karl Marx" (Cuddon 452). Regardless of the intensity of didacticism, all Brechtian plays are instructive in the most inclusive sense of the word. Despite the fact that not all Brechtian plays regard the scientific teachings as their primary concern, each refers to an eternal binary opposition: "[r]ight and wrong courses of action were shown. People were shown who knew what they were doing and others who did not" (Brecht "Theatre for Pleasure" 72).

Another issue Brecht calls attention to, in regard to the purpose of instruction, is that it should not overshadow amusement, which he deems an indispensable quality of the art of theater. In regard to the common view point separating instruction and amusement as two distinct, even opposing, activities, Brecht admits, in "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction", having to "defend the epic theatre against the suspicion that it is a highly disagreeable, humourless, indeed strenuous affair." On the contrary, he stresses, in the same text, the "invaluable services modern knowledge and science, if properly applied, can perform for art and especially for the theatre" (73). In accordance with its conviction that enlightenment and instruction can co-exist, Brechtian drama quite frequently makes use of sciences (his favorites apparently being history, politics, sociology and economics) in order to rationalize the plays' teachings about the social issues pertaining to the new world order shaped by modernity. Nevertheless, as in the

“Short Organum”, the playwright underlines the importance he attaches to amusement by stating “[n]othing [in the art of theater] needs less justification than pleasure” (181). Finally, it is clear that a scientific yet pleasurable method of instruction, as a prominent characteristic of Brechtian theater, can be realized by means of alienation which enables the audience to perceive the messages presented attentively. This new attitude brings forth a critical, argumentative and consequently productive interaction for everyone involved.

Brecht establishes a parallelism between the playwright and the philosopher in that both are/should be occupied with the contemplation in and the discussion of the global phenomenon by which the condition of human existence is defined (*Oyunculuk* 159-161). However the distinction he makes in “Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction” about the philosopher, when referring to the epic theater, is worthy of attention:

The stage began to tell a story. The narrator was no longer missing, along with the fourth wall. Not only did the background adopt an attitude to the events on the stage [...] but the actors too refrained from going over wholly into their role, remaining detached from the character they were playing and clearly inviting criticism of him. [...] It was all a great change. [...] The stage began to be instructive. Choruses enlightened the spectator about facts [...]. Films showed a montage of events from all over the world. Projections added statistical material. And as the ‘background’ came to the front of the stage so people’s activity was subjected to criticism. [...] *The theatre became an affair for philosophers, but only for such philosophers as wished not just to explain the world but also to change it.* (my emphasis 71-72).

The passage quoted above concisely reveals the gist of the epic theater of Bertolt Brecht who, as a *philosopher*, strives to change the world for the better within the matrix of his Marxist ideals. The playwright, on the other hand, is aware of the fact that in order for a change to occur, people must be shown that the so-called undisputable realities of the world are not in fact immune to intervention and alteration. Therefore through his art, Bertolt Brecht aims to rupture the readily accepted stability of what is imposed as the reality via defamiliarizing it. The alienation effect, in this process, is the most

quintessential technical element of the Brechtian theater, to which all the other unique features of his drama are, in some way, related.

Consequently, in this study, other prominent characteristics of Bertolt Brecht's epic theater will be discussed within the axis of the A-effect. Prior to the analysis of *historicization* and *gestus* as two other major elements of the epic theater, certain staging techniques, such as the use of episodic structure, the presence of a narrator, actors' direct address to the audience, the use of multi-media devices, a peculiar style adopted in the use of lighting and the music, and last but not least, the Brechtian style of acting, that create alienation effect will be dealt with.

2.1 Staging Devices

As mentioned before, the episodic structure, which is a fundamental attribute of the epic form, finds its reflections in Brechtian theater. These episodes, by nature of the epic, are loosely connected to each other or not connected, at all. That is to say, the story does not necessarily follow a regular pattern; and each episode can be analyzed independently. Therefore, just as it is in the oral or written epic tradition, the episodes cause ruptures and digressions in the narrative. Moreover, episodes of a work in epic form do not provide the reader/audience with a chronological time line. In other words, one episode set in a certain place and time may be preceded or succeeded by another set in a different place and time.

When epic theater is examined in this context, the episodic structure is observed to create alienation in that the action on the stage is disrupted by the division of the narrative. This disruption stirs the attention of the audiences who are not allowed to be swept away by the stage action. Moreover, the possible time or content-wise shift in the focus forces the spectators to maintain their mental alertness in order to be able to follow the narrative. It is quite possible to argue that the intensity of the alienation effect, created by the interruptions and shifting focuses in the episodes, is higher in the theater due to the immediacy of this art form. That is to say, the spectator has to be extra attentive because once s/he somehow fails to follow the narrative s/he will not have the

opportunity to re-view the scene, whereas it is always possible to go back through the pages of a book and re-read the problematic part of the story. Furthermore, the division and arrangement of the episodes should be decided carefully; for neither the audience should get lost nor the narrative be rushed into a successive episodes. Brecht stresses that the spectator must be able to distinguish one episode from the other and that a reasonable pause between the episodes is necessary in order for the audience to have the time to formulate arguments:

[T]he individual episodes have to be knotted together in such a way that the knots are easily noticed. The episodes must not succeed one another indistinguishably but must give us a chance to interpose our judgment. [...] The parts of the story have to be carefully set off one against another by giving each its own structure as a play within the play. ("Short Organum" 201)

The means Brecht suggests for the explicit division of the episodes is the use of titles for each one. However the title's function is not merely to inform the audience about the beginning of a new episode. The episode title in a Brechtian play must present, in a specifically defined tone, the social condition, event or commentary to which the audience's attention must be drawn. Even though the title refers to a particular issue pertaining to a particular place, the presentation of the title would work in such a way that it appears as a norm, which will alienate the event or issue presented. Ultimately, the aim is to make the audience discuss and judge the nature of the incident presented, in terms of its being a norm or indeed a particular issue bound by the place it takes place.

The titles must include the social point, saying at the same time something about the kind of portrayal wanted. [...] A visit, the treatment of an enemy, a lovers' meeting, agreements about politics or business, can be portrayed as if they were simply illustrations of general principles valid for the place in question. Shown thus, the particular and unrepeatable incident acquires a disconcerting look, because it appears as something general, something that has become a principle. As soon as we ask whether in fact it should have become such, or what about it should have done so, we are alienating the incident. ("Short Organum" 201)

Due to the fact that epic is based on narrative, the presence of a narrator on the stage is frequent. What makes this an alienating technique lies in the fact that a narrator creates a distance between the play (the story) and the viewer. First of all, instead of *watching* a plot unravel, as in the conventional drama, the audience has to pay attention to the narrator who now stands between the stage action and the audience. That is to say, the narrator interrupts the one to one correspondence of the story and the spectator. Thus, this indirectness detaches the audience from the action. The detachment engendered by the interference of the narrator, again, shifts the audience's focus, and disallows illusion. As a result, the audience's awareness is provoked and therefore a mental reaction is stimulated.

Furthermore, Brecht frequently lets his performers directly address the audience, which obviously serves alienation. This technique can especially be observed on the part of the narrator, but is not restricted to him. The characters of the play may also address the audience in order to break the illusion. In this way, the spectator's suspension of disbelief is breached, and the *fourth wall* collapses by this unexpected intrusion. Hence the alienation effect occurs.

As mentioned before, in Brechtian theater, science and technology are of utmost importance; not only content-wise but also in terms of staging techniques. Epic narrative makes use of products of modernity. A radical changeover introduced by the epic theater is the integration of technological equipment, such as films, projections, voice recordings, slides into the play. Following the example of Piscator, Brecht also experimented on the use of multi-media devices radically; making them one of the trademarks of the epic stage. The static feature of the background came to an end with the epic theater, and started to perform the function of an actor, itself. As Brecht argues "the most important transactions between people could no longer be shown simply by personifying the motive forces or subjecting the characters to invisible metaphysical powers" ("Theatre for Pleasure" 70). The actual forces by which the society is affected were carried onto the stage as they are, via the use of films, projections, etc. In other words, the multi-media devices became a vital part of the narrative, and augmented the possibilities of demonstrating multiple topics at the same time. What is also remarkable

about the use of such equipment is that, not only did it enrich the story, but it also presented its own commentary.

[T]he background adopt[ed] an attitude to the events on the stage [...] by big screens recalling other simultaneous events elsewhere, by projecting documents which confirmed or contradicted what the characters said, by concrete and intelligible figures to accompany abstract conversations, by figures and sentences to support mimed transactions whose sense was unclear [...]. (Brecht "Theatre for Pleasure" 71)

Every single detail in Brecht's theatrical theory and praxis aims at establishing a rational interaction with the audience, and the use of technological devices is no exception. On the other hand, the alienation effect, being the provoker of a critical response, is again, directly related with the application of these devices. In "Indirect Impact of the Epic Theatre," Brecht's commentary on the function of one of these devices is rather illuminating: "The projections are in no way pure mechanical aids in the sense of being extras, [...] they do not set out to help the spectator but to block him; they prevent his complete empathy, interrupt his being automatically carried away. They turn the impact into an *indirect* one. Thus they are organic parts of the work of art" (58).

As another indispensable element of the theater, lighting is also used by Brecht in an unorthodox style. In Aristotelian tradition, it was used merely as a part of the illusion, to which Brecht refers in "On Experimental Theatre" as a device that "lit nothing but childish and twisted representations of the world" (133). In epic theater, however, lighting functions as one of the means of creating alienation effect. The foremost prerequisite to engender alienation through lighting is pointed out by Brecht in "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting" as revealing the lighting devices to the audience. In this way, the suspension of disbelief will be suspended and the audience will be reminded once again of the fact that s/he is in the theater; not in an illusionary plot set in the time and place of the story. Therefore, with his alert consciousness, the audience will be able to reflect upon the deliberate use of lighting.

There is a point in showing the lighting apparatus openly, as it is one of the means of preventing an unwanted element of illusion; it scarcely

disturbs the necessary concentration. If we light the actors and their performance in such a way that the lights themselves are within the spectator's field of vision we destroy part of his illusion of being present at a spontaneous, transitory, authentic unrehearsed event. He sees that arrangements have been made to show something; something is being repeated here under special conditions, for instance in a very brilliant light. (141)

Stage design in epic theater bears unique qualities which are in contrast with the traditional settings of the theater based on illusion. In his notes on setting, Brecht criticizes the work of the designers who create life-like settings that lures the theater audience into the illusion of being in a real place (*Oyunculuk* 97). In the epic theater, whose audience is required to be conscious and alert, such insistence on an illusionary realism is deemed useless. On the other hand, the epic stage design also attempts to demonstrate real spaces in which certain groups of people live or certain social conditions take form. What distinguishes the epic setting from the conventional realistic setting is the act of *presentation* of the place, instead of its *imitation*. "If the set represents a town it must look like a town that has been built to last precisely two hours. One must conjure up the reality of time" (Brecht "Stage Design" 232). Brecht argues that a successful stage design can be realized by using props that are necessary. In other words, "what is on the stage must be used in the play; what will not be used in the play must not be on the stage" (my translation Brecht *Oyunculuk* 100).

Moreover, Brecht states that non-Aristotelian settings frequently apply abstractions in the props which are especially significant to the narrative. For instance, the quality of an object may indicate a certain social class or condition which means that the whole is signified by its components, rather than its complete imitation. Such abstraction, according to Brecht, is useful in that it appoints to the audiences the task of concretizing the rest of the setting through the indicative props, and thus stimulates their imagination (*Oyunculuk* 99, 106). In "Stage Design for the Epic Theatre", the playwright praises his friend and stage designer Caspar Neher for his artistic skills and theatrical vision. Through Brecht's account of Neher's work, it is possible to deduce the Brechtian ideals of the stage setting. Brecht draws attention to the fact that the setting is fundamental as it holds together all the elements of the play. He claims that a meticulous stage design will "further the acting and help to tell the evening's story fluently" (232). The setting

in epic theater is also important to sustain the alienation effect. The Brechtian stage regards art as “a form of production, not a mystery; the stage should appear like a factory with the machinery fully exposed” (Mitchell xix). Therefore, as mentioned before in the discussion of the use of lighting, alienation by the setting is rendered through making visible the devices of staging.

It's more important nowadays for the set to tell the spectator he's in a theatre than to tell him he's in, say, Aulis. The theatre must acquire [...] the same fascinating reality as a sporting arena during a boxing match. The best thing is to show the machinery, the ropes and the flies. [...] The materials of the set must be visible. A play can be performed in pasteboard only, or in pasteboard and wood, or in canvas, and so on; but there mustn't be any faking. (Brecht “Stage Design” 233)

Music, on the other hand, functions as a separate part of the narrative, just as all the other elements of epic theater that have been discussed before. In Brechtian theater music has the function of commenting on or contradicting the narrative; in either case, complementing it. Music, choruses and songs in an epic play arouse alienation as they interrupt the narrative and take form on the stage as a separate entity. The music (and the song) is utilized by Brecht in two different ways. Firstly, it serves as a medium through which a dialectical argument can be carried out. For instance, a song may conspicuously diverge from a character's speech or behavior. This contrast will not only precipitate the alienation effect but also foster in the audience's mind questions about the reality presented. Thus the viewers will be channeled to analyze the two contradictory presentations in order to develop judgments. In this way, the message about the changeability of what is accepted as the unchanging reality can be conveyed. This also indicates that the music in an epic play can also be gestic, since it makes a statement of its own, complementing or contrasting the social disposition presented through the acting. Secondly, the song may provide the audience with the necessary information about the narrative. Music and songs are designed in the epic theater in such a way that they also serve as “an active collaborator in the stripping bare of the [...] ideas. [...]” and in that, resemble “a muck-raker, an informer, a nark” (Brecht “On the Use of Music” 86).

Furthermore, another contribution of the song to the alienation effect is that it interrupts the performance of the actor, as well. Brecht stresses that, like all the other components that construct the epic story, songs should be separated from the acting performance; for without a clear partition, they cannot fulfill the task of interrupting the action and producing the alienation effect. This shift from acting to singing must be manifest especially in the actor's presentation. In "Literarization of the Theatre", Brecht calls attention to the issue in question:

When an actor sings he undergoes a change of function. Nothing is more revolting than when the actor pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing. The three levels – plain speech, heightened speech and singing – must always remain distinct, and in no case should heightened speech represent an intensification of plain speech, or singing of heightened speech. In no case therefore should singing take place where words are prevented by excess of feeling. (44)

In conclusion, epic theater makes use of all the alienating staging techniques mentioned above, as substantial devices designed to appeal to the reason rather than the emotions, as is the case with the conventional drama. In "The Street Scene", Brecht illuminates their function indicating that "[w]herever he feels he can the demonstrator breaks off his imitation in order to give explanations. The epic theatre's choruses and documentary projections, the direct addressing of the audience by its actors, are at bottom just this" ("Street Scene" 126). By triggering the A-effect, these devices serve to stimulate thinking. Therefore, the non-Aristotelian theater of Bertolt Brecht applies them extensively and recurrently.

2.2 Acting and "Gestus"

The style of acting is perhaps the most unique feature of the Brechtian theater. Unlike Piscator's epic productions and the dramas of socialist realism dominated mainly by Constantin Stanislavsky's theory of method acting, the Brechtian stage unequivocally rejects illusion in acting. While method acting necessitates the sheer identification of the

actor with the character, Brechtian acting requires actor's detachment from it. The restriction of identification in Brechtian epic theater generates from the endeavor of impeding the fallacy of theatrical illusion. Since Brecht maintains that the social awakening and transformation the art of theater should work toward can only be realized by means of an interaction based on reason, the alienating distance is mandatory in the relationship between the actor and the character, as well. Therefore, whereas the method actor strives to transform into the character by establishing a deeply emotional and psychological relationship with it, the Brechtian actor only *presents* the character he is playing. This is why the Brechtian acting is also referred to as *presentational acting*, which is sustained through various principles.

In order to comprehend the gist of the Brechtian acting thoroughly, Brecht's plain yet effective assertion in "The Street Scene" about the foremost quality of the theater is useful: "the theatre [...] [should] stop pretending not to be theatre" for "it is [but] a demonstration", a repetition of sections from life (121). As simplistic as the statement may seem, it is probably the most concise and intelligible criticism possible directed to the theatrical illusion. It is exactly this kind of plainness and consciousness that Brechtian acting requires. That is to say, the actor's task, according to Brecht, is to demonstrate the character without ignoring his own presence as the actor on the stage. In other words, the actor should stop pretending not to be an actor. Instead, s/he must clearly act as an agent showing how a certain kind of person (character) would act under particular circumstances. Thus, by alienating himself from the character, the actor enables the alienation of the audience as well.

Just as a passer by on the street who happens to witness a car accident would later imitate the actions of the driver or the victim in order to demonstrate how the accident occurred, the actor in Brechtian theater also utilizes the technique of imitation. However, it should be emphasized that in Brechtian performance, the imitation is based on the repetition of actions. As is the case with the "street-corner demonstration", the aim of the demonstrator (actor) is to *show* how the person (character) acted under the circumstances of a particular event. Referring to the demonstrator in the street scene, Brecht indicates the fundamental attitude the Brechtian actor should adopt:

[...] it is important that he should not be too perfect. His demonstration would be spoiled if the bystanders' attention were drawn to his powers of transformation. He has to avoid presenting himself in such a way that someone calls out 'What a lifelike portrayal [...]' He must not 'cast a spell' over anyone. He should not transport people from normality to 'higher realms.' He need not dispose of any special powers of suggestion. ("The Street Scene" 122)

Once the actor establishes among the audiences a rational attitude towards the character he is playing, he invites them to observe it from a critical distance whereby alternative arguments and judgments take form. The most significant theatrical achievement of the Brechtian acting may be found in the fact that "[r]ather than bringing a fixed character into view, or losing themselves [sic] in a role, an epic actor show[s] his/her character in the process of change and growth, as open to comment and alteration [...]" (Brooker 196). The Brechtian style of acting, therefore, works unmistakably toward innovation in terms of presenting the possibilities of change in the strictly framed conceptions of social reality.

Furthermore, Brecht indicates in "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect", that the actions *not* taken by the character are to be drawn attention to as much as the ones that are taken. That is, it must be evident in the actor's performance that the character, under the given circumstances, chooses one specific course of action over the other alternatives. To put it more simply, the audience should be able to tell that the character could also have done something different, but he chose to do it the way he did it. Thus, by "fixing the 'not...but'", the existence of interchanging responses to the conditions is highlighted.

[The actor] 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 represents one out of the possible variants. Whatever he doesn't do must be contained and conserved in what he does. In this way, every sentence and every gesture signifies a decision; the character remains under observation and is tested. The technical term for this procedure is 'fixing the "not...but."' (Brecht "New Technique" 137)

The technique of *quotation* is another prominent feature of the Brechtian style of acting. As explained above, Brecht's theory holds that the actor should regard the character as a separate entity. This requires that the actor perform his role from the outside of the character. In order to realize this, he must maintain his distance throughout the speech or the movements of the character. Thus, because he is uttering the words and presenting the actions of someone other than himself, the actor has to build his performance in the manner of quoting. On the other hand, Brecht underlines that the attitude of quoting should be carefully adopted in order not to distort the congenital quality of human behavior by a mechanical representation. He indicates that the actor "obviously has to render all the quotation's overtones, the remark's full human and concrete shape; similarly the gesture he makes must have the full substance of a human gesture even though it now represents a copy" ("New Technique" 138).

As emphasized so far in the discussion of the Brechtian epic theater, the first and foremost consideration of this particular tradition is one that is social. From the technical qualities to the thematic issues, all elements of this tradition are ultimately designed to achieve social consciousness and reform. Among these, the acting is no exception. Perhaps the most substantial characteristic of the Brechtian style of acting is found in its essential social context. Brecht underscores that in order for the theater "to qualify as epic, [...] the demonstration should have a socially practical significance" ("Street Scene" 122). Therefore, it is possible to deduce that the evolution of a character in an epic play is bound to the social conditions, which also suggests that the attitude a character demonstrates reflects his/her response to these conditions. Hence, the disposition of the character is basically social.

The acting in the epic theater, therefore, is constructed so as to reveal clearly the social bearing of the characters, which is found in the *gestus*. As indicated by Peter Brooker, the term is problematic especially when translated into English, for the word *gesture* is acknowledged by several scholars to be insufficient to express fully the content of the term in question. Instead, the texts in English, which do not use the original terms *gestus* and *gestisch*, generally adopt the terms *gest* and *gestic* (195). Here, it should be noted that this study employs the original term, *gestus* as well as the terms in English.

Although *gestus* is directly related to gestures, each gesture cannot be classified as *gestus*. What distinguishes the *gestus* from the gesture is the above-mentioned social context of the behavior presented. In his notes, “On Gestic Music”, Brecht points to the significance of this nuance:

‘Gest’ is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or empathic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes. A language is gestic when it is grounded in a gest and conveys particular attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men. [...] Not all gests are social gests. [...] a gest of pain, [for instance] as long as it is kept so abstract and generalized that it does not rise above a purely animal category, is not yet a social one. [...] the social gest is the gest relevant to society, the gest that allows conclusions to be drawn about the social circumstances. (104-105)

Christine Kiebuszinska’s remarks are also rather illuminating for the comprehension of this distinction that is central to the uniquely Brechtian style of acting and the contribution the technique makes to the alienation effect:

The *Gestus*, unlike conventional gestures that are primarily expressive or aesthetic, serves as an index of a social attitude, an intentional sign used by the actor to indicate the character’s social attitude. Essentially the *Gestus* appears to be a kind of prelanguage, giving direct presentation of social relationships; at the same time it serves as an alienating mask rather than as a medium of true expression [...] such a nonnaturalistic, unreal style of acting allows the actor to call upon moments of direct communication with the audience. Thus, the *Gestus* demonstrates over and over that the signs of social forces can be discovered and made legible. (56)

Furthermore, considering the emphasis on the fact that the gestic acting necessitates a social interaction to occur, how this interaction is operated on the stage in order to expose the character’s “demonstrable social attitude” must be clarified (Styan 141). Patrice Pavis indicates that “[g]estus consists in a simple movement by one person when faced with another, in a particular social and corporal behaviour. Any stage action presupposes a certain attitude on the part of protagonists toward each other and within the social universe – the *social gestus*” (164). In the light of this information it could be stated that there must be a confrontation for the revelation of the *gestus*. The interruption created in the moment of confrontation, therefore, can be regarded as the

key paving the way to a physical reaction that can be observed as a fixed social attitude, the *gestus*. Walter Benjamin, on the other hand, draws attention to the “frame-like, enclosed nature” as one of the essential features of the *gestus* stating that “unlike people’s actions and endeavours, it [*gestus*] has a definable beginning and a definable end.” Furthermore, Benjamin seconds the idea that interruption is vital for the *gestus* to appear and therefore deduces that “the more frequently we interrupt someone engaged in an action, the more gestures [*gestus*] we obtain. Hence the interrupting of action is one of the principal concerns of epic theatre” (3). While the interruption can be caused by the afore-mentioned devices of alienation in staging, he adds that the text may also partake in the interruption of the action; for in the epic theater:

[...] the function of the text in epic theatre, we can at least say that often its main function is not to illustrate or advance the action but, on the contrary, to interrupt it: not only the action of the others, but also the action of one’s own. It is the retarding quality of these interruptions and the episodic quality of this framing of action which allows gestural [*gestisch*] theatre to become epic theatre. (Benjamin 3-4)

Moreover, since *gestus* takes form physically, its being observable and recognizable is important. This requires the actor’s full command of “his physical demeanour, facial expression, vocal utterances, costume and so forth” (Weber 182). The dialectical principle of the Brechtian epic theater also helps the actor in building the character. Dialectics, as mentioned before, holds that the whole is made up of components that are essentially in contradiction with one other. As befitting this principle, many of the Brechtian characters, Candan indicates, are created on the basis of a dilemma in personality, which brings these characters closer to actual human beings. She further explains that since this dilemma is inevitably evident also in the social disposition of the character, the actor can easily show the contradictory attitudes adopted by the character through demonstrating contrastive *gests* (158, 159). On the other hand, the choreography also helps actors present their social conduct. As Brecht claims in the “Short Organum”, “a theatre where everything depends on the *gest* cannot do without choreography. Elegant movement and graceful grouping, for a start, can alienate, and inventive miming greatly helps the story” (204).

However, due to the very same nature of the *gestus*, that is physicality, it is relatively harder to trace this technique by referring only to the text of a play, without observing the performance. Nevertheless, the social and historical content of a play provides the reader with the necessary means to analyze its gestic qualities. In his notes on *gestus*, Brecht also admits that the overall *gestus* of a play usually remains vague; so do the questions to be asked to determine it. He relates this to the fact that the *gestus* depends basically on the attitude and intentions of the playwright, which may vary greatly. Moreover, he adds that the answers to the probable questions are likely to prove contradictory; but still, it is these contradictions that makes a play genuine (*Sanat* 139).

Regardless of the complexity of the concept, it is always possible to carry out a discussion about the *gestus* in a play as long as the significance of the social context is kept in mind. After all, in the Brechtian theater, “eyes [are] on the course,” not “on the finish” (Brecht “The Modern Theatre” 37). In other words, the process of discussion and criticism is what Brecht values as a playwright and thinker.

2.3 Historicization

The alienation effect also operates through another prominent feature of the Brechtian epic theater, *historicization*. Candan concisely defines historicization as “the method of demonstrating the reality in its social, historical and local conditions as a process” (my translation 58). For a thorough understanding of this definition, it is necessary, once again, to emphasize that Brecht’s theater is socio-political. The ultimate end of his art and philosophy is to help transform the society. In that, Brecht utilizes art as a weapon aiming at the degeneration in the class-conscious bourgeois society as a product of capitalism. Brecht’s viewpoint is essentially Marxist, although he does not overtly propagandize Marxism in his plays. It is rather an alternate medium through which the playwright demonstrates the ills of the present social conditions. In other words, “Brecht’s Marxism was in conception, therefore, neither mechanical nor deterministic; and nor was his art [...]” (Brooker 186). Moreover, Brecht’s goal as an artist, is not restricted to the presentation of social dynamics. It is equally crucial for him to make the public realize that change is not only imperative but also possible. In order to arouse in

people's mind such an awareness, Brecht first renders his audiences critically detached from the play. The second step he takes is to demonstrate the social issues that are familiar to the audience from their collective past experiences which are usually chosen from the historical events that have social significance. Thus, Brecht enables his audience to re-evaluate past issues from a contemporary perspective and formulate arguments about them. This process is called historicization.

However, it is of vital importance to note that this retrospective criticism is not meant to contemplate on the bygone affairs of history; rather its aim is to initiate a discussion about the present social situation. In other words, historicization aims to create a contemporary analytical and argumentative outlook by means of drawing a parallelism between the present and the past issues demonstrated on the stage in a new light that generates from the A-effect.

The relationship between the alienation effect and historicization is inter-dependent. That is, in order for the technique of historicization to work alienation is indispensable; on the other hand, once an event is historicized alienation of the audience by it is inevitable. In "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting", Brecht states that "[t]he A-effect [...] was principally designed to historicize the incidents portrayed" (96). The reason why an incident should be historicized on the stage is that, it provides the audience with the opportunity to create new and different outlooks about the issue at hand. Brecht claims that the "bourgeois theatre" is incapable of achieving this:

The bourgeois theatre emphasized the timelessness of its objects. Its representation of people is bound by the alleged 'eternally human.' Its story is arranged in such a way as to create 'universal' situations that allow Man with a capital M to express himself: man of every period and every colour. *All its incidents are just one enormous cue, and this cue is followed by the 'eternal' response: the inevitable, usual, natural, purely human response.* (my emphasis 96-97)

Such negation of the variable social conditions and the different reactions people may expose in different circumstances and periods of time is utterly in contrast with the attitude of Brecht's theater. As opposed to the conventional theater, the Brechtian epic takes both the man and the society as capable of transforming oneself as well as the

other. Therefore, historicization according to Brecht is necessary, because “[t]he idea of man as a function of the environment and the environment as a function of man, i.e. the breaking up of the environment into relationships between men, corresponds to a new way of thinking, the historical way” (“Alienation Effects” 97).

The technique of alienation “that is necessary to all understanding” as Brecht asserts in “Theatre for Pleasure”, is fundamental in the process of historicization (71). Without it, the story would be no more than a replay of a past event with which the audience is already familiar from history. Naturally, the contentment provided by this familiarity would necessitate no rational observation or criticism whatsoever. “When something seems ‘the most obvious thing in the world’” Brecht argues, “it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up” (“Theatre for Pleasure” 71). Consequently, unless the alienation techniques are not applied, the theater would manage to offer its audiences nothing more than a pleasant couple of hours during which they are isolated from reality. Therefore, the familiar must be defamiliarized and reason must be provoked in order for the history to be instructive.

It is clear that the technique of historicization is operated by means of alienation. On the other hand, historicization itself also stimulates the alienation effect. Historical events, due to the natural course of time, are already remote from the present moment. Therefore, when an incident is historicized on the stage, a certain distance naturally occurs in the perception of the audience, which is what is meant to achieve by the use of the alienation technique. Furthermore, as Brecht also indicates in “New Technique”, historical events are particular cases of the past, so they resist generalizations. Moreover, because they are bound by certain time periods, when both the people and the social conditions were different from those of the present, historical events are most likely to be regarded as peculiar without much effort to be presented so. Brecht, for instance, states “[t]he conduct of those born before us is alienated from us by an incessant evolution” (“On Experimental Theatre” 140). In other words, historical incidents, by nature, are rather practical in alienating the audience.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that historicization serves alienation as much as alienation serves historicization. In the “Short Organum”, Brecht illuminates this cooperation of the two techniques as follows:

If we ensure that our actors on the stage are moved by social impulses and that these differ according to the period, then we make it harder for our spectator to identify himself with them. He cannot simply feel: that’s how I would act, but at most can say: if I had lived under those circumstances. And if we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which he himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins.
(190)

In conclusion, it is evident that in the Brechtian epic theater, the alienation effect works via several techniques, which have been discussed here under three subtitles as “Staging Devices” including the narrative episodic structure, the use of titles, the presence of a narrator, the employment of multi-media devices, the setting, the use of lighting and music; “Acting and ‘Gestus’”; and “Historicization.” In working for/with the alienation effect, these elements of the epic theater are essential for Bertolt Brecht to create a unique artistic expression that serves efficiently the playwright’s final goal of transforming the society through instruction and entertainment.

In the light of this chapter’s discussion, it is clear that the alienation effect is the fundamental device on which Brecht based his “dynamic” theater in order to rid the stage of the “essentially static” representation of the conventional theater based on the Aristotelian principle of illusion (“German Drama” 79). The audiences of the Brechtian theater is rendered mentally active, critical and judgmental by means of the alienation effect; hence they are able to learn from the presentation of the dynamic workings of the world, which is indispensable for its transformation to be realized.

Thus, Bertolt Brecht’s theater of alienation that set a new paradigm for the twentieth century drama can be regarded as a major break from the conventional theater. The philosophical task he appoints to the art of theater and the theories and techniques he developed have been inspirational for many artists from all around the world.

CHAPTER II

THE ALIENATION EFFECT IN HANAY GEIOGAMAH'S THEATER

1. *BODY INDIAN*

The play was performed for the first time at La Mama Experimental Theater Club in New York City in 1972. Hanay Geiogamah's signature play *Body Indian*'s fundamental concern is to present the intra-racial social dynamics with a highly critical stance. Theme-wise, the play portrays issues such as alcoholism, poverty, unemployment, hypocrisy, deceit and the hardships of being Indian in the United States.

The plot of *Body Indian* evolves around Bobby Lee, an alcoholic Indian man around thirty five years of age, who has lost a leg in a traumatic train accident. He lives on lease money that is usually barely enough to make ends meet. Bobby wants to overcome his alcohol addiction, so he has decided to enter a rehabilitation program. Since a relative of his must co-sign the papers according to the regulations, Bobby needs to see his cousin Marie who lives in the same apartment building with Bobby's friend Howard whom he calls "uncle." After making his lease, Bobby goes to visit Howard and plans to tell Marie about the rehabilitation. Ironically enough, he goes there with sacks full of bottles of wine and joins the group who has been drinking in Howard's apartment for days. In the course of conversations, they learn that Bobby has his lease money on him, which he will spend on his treatment. As the plot unravels, Bobby's friends rob him each time he passes out, due to intoxication, until he has no money left. Finally, the play ends with Bobby waking up only to find out that his artificial leg is stolen, too.

A contextual analysis of the play proves that Geiogamah's aim in writing *Body Indian* is to a great extent in keeping with the objectives of the Brechtian theater. First of all, Geiogamah's play is entirely dedicated to the presentation of social issues concerning the Native American community. The characters are also handled in regard to the social and economic circumstances, rather than their individual psychological conditions. In

other words, it is the community that shapes the lives of the individual; and also the community itself is shaped by the individuals. Furthermore, Geiogamah's attitude as a playwright mirrors Brecht's critical outlook. Although Geiogamah does point to certain problems arising mainly because of the more general inter-racial issues, he is primarily occupied with the exposition of the degeneration that takes place within the Native American community.

Poverty and unemployment, for instance, is dealt with references to the United States governmental policy about Native American peoples. The issue of leasing, set forth in Scene 1, appears also in the following scenes as the contemporary variation of the unfair land treaties signed between the Indian tribes and the United States government. The lease money is suggested to be the only income that the characters have. It is also implied that the leasing process usually works against the Indians.

BOBBY. [...] my damn white lease man didn't want to pay me what I wanted. I was too broke to hold out, so I just signed it. (11)

The issues of poverty and unemployment are discussed through dialogues throughout the play. It is understood that all of the characters are living on lease money that is never enough. When it comes to representing the economic plight of American Indians, Geiogamah does not refrain from overt expressions.

MARIE. [...] Jobs are hard to find. 'Specially for Indians 'round here. You know how it is. Money's sure scarce. (20, scene 2)

Land is a vital part of the characters' lives, just as it was for their ancestors. However, in modern times, the relationship between the Native American individual and land has changed drastically. In the past land, as an all-encompassing entity, was paid the highest spiritual respect. In the lives of Native American characters from the late twentieth century, however, land is a financial resource, a piece of earth out of which individuals profit in order to meet their material needs. In other words, "Mother Earth" is reduced to a commodity. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that the pursuit of the playwright is to represent the urban life of his people, just as it is. *Body Indian* is a play written, set and performed in the twentieth century for the twentieth century audience. Therefore, in

dwelling on land-leasing as an issue, Geiogamah's primary consideration seems to be the exposition of the harsh realities American Indians confront in their daily routine, rather than the condemnation of his people for not honoring traditional values.

Nevertheless, the presentation of such a contrast between traditional and contemporary priorities are also in line with the Brechtian theater in that, they underline the evolution of the community. More importantly, Geiogamah, just like Brecht, attempts to make a social and economic point about the urban Native American life pertaining to the contemporary age where material concerns such as unemployment, land-leasing, poverty, education, etc. prevail. The lines quoted below from the third scene exemplify Geiogamah's social criticism on inequality and racial prejudice in the United States:

BETTY. [...] All those white people think Indians have it good because they think the government takes care of us. They don't even know. It's rougher than they know. I'd like to trade my house for a white lady's house on Mission Street. I'd like for a white lady to have my roaches. You can see them at the store, and they look at you like your purse is full of government checks. I wish my purse could be full of government checks. (23)

The Brechtian attitude that can be observed in *Body Indian* is evident in the discussion of how Geiogamah handles the inter-racial issues. The inter-racial argument is carried out mainly through the text (dialogues), in a rather direct manner. On the other hand, the central criticism of the play is directed towards the subversive social dynamics of the Native American community. Despite the fact that *Body Indian* is closer to dramatic theater with its linear plot unraveling towards a climax through five scenes, its employment of certain alienation techniques brings a Brechtian touch to the play. Since Geiogamah primarily aims at consciousness raising among the Native American audience, it is essential for him to appeal to the reason of his spectators and stimulate critical thinking among them. Only then can the playwright make his audiences formulate judgments about the alcohol addicted, hypocritical and self-deceptive stage representation of the modern Native American community to which they, themselves, also belong. In this sense, the alienation effect helps Geiogamah create a critical distance between the action and the audience.

The approaching train, one of the most prominent symbols in the play, is suggested through the sound and light effects together with the slide projections of railroad tracks. Even though its approach is heard frequently and its light is seen at the end, the train functions only symbolically in the play as an element with a historical significance. The presence of the train is an allusion to the trans-continental railroad whose construction was completed by 1869. The construction of the railroad is a milestone in Native American history. Crossing through the Indian territory, the railroad accelerated the whites' occupation of the Indian land and altered Native American life forever. The train, therefore, is used as a symbol of threat already extant in the collective conscious of the Native American community. Moreover, the fact that the main character in *Body Indian* was run over and crippled by a train transforms it into an object of terror for him.

In spite of the fact that the train historically points to an inter-racial problem, Geiogamah juxtaposes the immediate connotation of *the approaching danger* with an intra-racial one, alcoholism. The playwright especially underlines in his notes to the play that it would be a misinterpretation to conclude that the statement *Body Indian* attempts to make is restricted to alcoholism. (8) The more general criticism about the Native American individuals' mistreatment of one another, their constant apathy, pretense and self-deceit are presented via the issue of abusive drinking and are equally significant.

On the other hand, the presentation of the approaching train, as the symbol of the threat rising within the community, is significant in technical terms, as well. It is carried out by the use of projections and certain lighting techniques, which create the alienation effect. As indicated before, these alienation devices breach the illusion that is likely to occur due to the conventional dramatic elements the play also adopts.

As soon as the play begins with Bobby's entrance into the apartment, the drinking starts, accompanied by the gradually intensifying sound of drums and rattles which serve to alert the audience, preparing them for something dangerous and unpleasant that will come to pass soon. For instance, when Bobby drinks for the first time, from the bottle offered by his friends, the sound of drums and rattles increase so as to suggest that he

should not be drinking. The rise of tension is supported by the change in lighting and a new, unsafe atmosphere is created. Moreover, as Betty reaches for the wine in Scene 1, the sound of the approaching train increases with blasting whistles while the drums and rattles intensify. The threat of the approaching train parallels the threat emerging within the community. Finally in the very end of the scene, “[w]hen the train whistle is heard, color slide projections of railroad tracks [. . .] appear, taken at varied sharp angles and flashing in rapid sequence, onto the back wall” (16).

Unlike in the previous scene, where all the characters comment on the distant sound of the train, it is only Thompson who comments on the train’s approach. While the rest of the cast freeze, he says “[. . .] It...it’s st... sti-ll there. Movin’ this way. Comin’ closer” (21) At the end of Scene 3, the sound effects of the train are “*louder than before*”, which indicate that the train is closer now. Furthermore, in this scene, the projection of the railroad tracks *over* the female characters, who are the ones that have stolen from Bobby in this scene, implies that these characters are also the target of the approaching danger. Their *gestus* indicates that they also acknowledge that the train is coming closer to them. In Scene 4, on the other hand, it is the teenagers who comment on the approaching train. It is understood that the train is now very close, for the characters try touching the track projections and they feel the “buzz” (32).

Finally, in the last scene, the railroad tracks are projected over Bobby’s body, putting their ultimate victim under the spot light. The train whistle is now so loud that Bobby wakes up and realizes that his artificial leg is missing. However, this time, it is only Bobby who hears the loud whistle of the train. In the end, when the train finally arrives the flashing light of the train is projected onto his face, indicating the confrontation. Here, the use of bright light is significant to exemplify the Brechtian style. The play ends with the reenactment of the traumatic train accident that cost Bobby a leg. These projections and the use of light in the flashing mode to draw the attention of the audience onto a certain spot, are alienating in the sense that they interrupt and distort the realistic realm represented.

In *Body Indian* the most effective use of the alienation technique is achieved through characterization. All the characters in the play can be defined by an excessive defect of some sort. While Bobby suffers from a constant lack of will power, self-deceit and gullibility; the rest of the characters are extremely tyrannical, greedy, hypocritical, insincere and phony. These flaws are emphasized so insistently that it is impossible for the audience to identify with any of these characters and become emotionally attached. The emotional response is likely to remain restricted only to irritation, which does not weaken the alienation effect, for it is the outcome of the audience's criticism and judgment on the characters. Thus the feeling of irritation reinforces the tendency to criticize and judge. Although the alienation effect, in this case, is maintained basically by contextual means, its aim and result are the same as in the Brechtian theater.

Furthermore, Brecht's dialectical attitude in characterization can also be observed in *Body Indian* in which the characters' social dispositions are exposed through contradictory behaviors. For instance, at the very beginning of the play where Bobby Lee enters Howard's apartment and meets his *Pah-be-mas*¹ and *Ko-ta-kes*², gestures of a warm welcome and friendliness are observed:

THOMPSON. (*opening door*) Well, I'lll beee! B—obbye Lee! Come in, hites³, come in! Long time no see! (*He reaches for Bobby's hand. They shake.*) [. . .]. (9)

[...]

EULAH LAH. Weeeelll Bobbyee Lee. Heeey. (*She gets off bed and goes to hug and kiss him.*) [...]. (9-10)

[...]

Howard rises from the bed, sees Bobby sitting in the chair, shouts a greeting, then moves [...] toward Bobby and embraces him [...].

ETHEL. H—ell—oo Bobby. How are you, sonny? [...]. (12)

However, towards the end of the scene, when Bobby passes out, “[s]lowly they all surround him. There is a menacing air as they do this. The lights dim to a haze” (14). The attitude of the characters immediately changes when Bobby is unconscious. Friendly gestures turn into “stealthy movement[s]” and insincere affection (15). Bobby's *uncle* Howard pretends to ask his permission to *borrow* some money despite the fact that he is quite sure Bobby cannot hear him. After they lay Bobby on the bed, Howard goes on and reveals the fact that the reason why Bobby is drinking so much is the loss

of his leg on the railroad tracks. Howard seems to be sorry for his friend, but after a pause, as stated in the stage directions, he shifts his attitude and says “I know he got money on him. He always hide it in that leg” (14). Thus the peak of the dramatic action in this scene is the robbing of the unconscious crippled *friend* who wanted to spend his money on his alcohol addiction treatment. The same pattern repeats itself in each of the five scenes and the contradiction between the friendly and the hostile *gestus* sharpens gradually. On the other hand, that characters perform a kind of preparation right before they start robbing Bobby is worthy of attention. For instance, towards the end of Scene 3, the way the women talk about Bobby, who is lying unconscious, intensifies the audience’s astonishment in that such compassionate expressions are immediately followed by their stealing Bobby’s money:

BETTY. I know he’d help us out if he could.

ETHEL. He’s my relative. I know he’d help me out.

EULAHLAH. Me and Thompson helped him out before.

ALICE. He always comes to my house when he’s here. I always take care of him.

[. . .]

BETTY. He sure is a g—ood guy. Poor thing. (25, 26)

In this way, they try to justify their wicked deed and clear their conscience. One by one, they all talk about what a good guy Bobby is and how they will be good to him. Of course, none of these sounds plausible but calls for the judgment of their hypocrisy through a bitter irony. Another significant shift in the women’s attitude is observed when Marie interrupts the action the moment she sees Eulahlah searching the artificial leg where the greatest amount of money is hidden. As soon as Marie intervenes by shouting “I saw you!”, “[*the*] women quickly return to their dancing and singing, pretending they have not rolled Bobby” (26). This hideous action is allegedly covered by singing and dancing which are traditional elements. Organized crime is replaced with communal celebration.

Furthermore, in Scene 5, another preparation is performed before the final robbery of ‘the poor friend Bobby’. This scene can be resembled to a twisted ritual conducted by Howard who performs as an evil shaman:

HOWARD. Sit down, y'all, sit down.

Howard now takes control, his grimness exerting a force over the others.

Y'all know how Bobby Lee gets when he's been drinkin' for a long time and runs out. (*They all indicate that they know what he's talking about.*)

He gets real sick, haw?

(*more agreement*) I was with him one time in Oklahoma City jail when he got sick, real sick. [. . .] He was really havin' those dee-tees⁴. His legs was a-shakin'. He soun' like he was chokin'. (*He strains for composure, coughs, trembles.*) [. . .]

He said he felt like his head was bein' hit with a big iron 'bout so often.

[. . .]

He said he felt like he was fallin' through the whole jailhouse floor into the sewer lines.

He said his hair was long as an old lady's, and his fingers were all shrunk up, like he was a-dead.

[. . .]

I don't want him to have them again! [. . .]

[. . .] He's goin' have them again if he don't get a drink.

He don't have any more al-hong-ya [money]. It's all gone. He spent it all. He always spen' his money fast.

[. . .]

I'm goin' get him some more wine before he wakes up. He's goin' need it. (*pause*) He sure is goin2 need a drink when he wakes up. Y'all know that!

Howard moves to bed. He signals Thompson to join him. They begin jostling Bobby's body roughly, almost brutally. The others begin, one by one, to rise and stand around the bed to watch, hiding the operation from the audience. There is complete silence. Out of the audience's view, Howard and Thompson are removing Bobby's artificial leg. [. . .]. (41-42-43)

This scene is very important for it reverses the traditional Native American healing rituals which are performed for curing the individual or the society suffering from sickness. Their aim is to restore the disturbed physical or spiritual order and health. In short, the healing rituals work toward a positive transformation. In this scene, however, the situation is exactly the opposite. The *ritual* makes the *sick* worse because Bobby is crippled once again both physically and spiritually, by his Indian fellows. Moreover, the real disorder within the community Geiogamah exposes is furthered by the arrival of the new liquor supply. However, ironically enough, the disorder of the group, caused by their running out of alcohol, seems to be restored by this *ritual*, which is indicated by

the women's cleaning up in a complacent manner. What is also significant about this scene is that the characters' denial and pretense is even more obvious than before. While the apartment is being prepared for the next drinking session, Bobby speaks and shouts; but he is no longer heard by the others.

The significance of the title *Body Indian* becomes fully clear at this point. The moment he has nothing more to offer, he becomes invisible to them. Instead of a human-being, Bobby is reduced to a *body* which the others feast upon, like vultures. Furthermore, considering the fact that the word *body* indicates *wholeness*, the title turns also quite ironic as the physical (and spiritual) wholeness of the central character is ravaged with the removal of his prosthesis by his fellows. Furthermore, this so-called close friendship between the characters connotes another ironic interpretation of the title which is rendered by a pun on the words *buddy* and *body*.

All these contradictions are vital for the audience's criticism of the degeneration within the community, for, as befitting the Brechtian dialectical approach, the cruel action is drawn attention to by the presentation of its opposite.

The shift in the groups' treatment of Bobby after he passes out can also be observed in their treatment of each other. At such moments characters tend to behave in a more hostile and unfriendly manner. For instance, Howard's girlfriend Ethel tries to hide the money she found in Bobby's pocket. She does not want to share it with the others. When Howard notices this, the two lovers start fighting with each other for the money. Such actions point out that relationships between the characters portrayed so far are not sincere but superficial, and that individual interests easily surpass that of the community as opposed to the traditional Native American social dynamics based on the supremacy of the community over the individual. The gesture of freezing that the characters display, at the moments when the sound of the train interrupts the action of robbery, is also significant because it suggests that they acknowledge the impending danger; however they quickly disregard its approach and hence the cruel action they have just taken. On the other hand, the freezing at the end of Scene 3 and the reaction of the characters to the train whistle is notably different than in the other scenes. This time the characters

cannot ignore it easily; they freeze in fear and “*reach their hands out toward the audience*” (26). Not only does this signal that the characters are in need of help, but also that help could be provided by the audience. In other words, this gestus of seeking help suggests that the ills animated on stage belong to the whole Native American community and it is the community who can heal them.

The use of gestus discussed so far in *Body Indian*, helps Geiogamah transmit his critical message concerning the hypocrisy inherent in the social relationships within his community. Moreover, the sharp contrast between the social dispositions supports the alienation effect in that it astonishes the audience.

Another important technical issue which Geiogamah underlines is creating “an Indian frame of mind” through acting (7). That is to say, the playwright wants the performers to speak English the way Native American people speak, and to drink the way *they* drink. In other words, the whole performance should be based on the general social disposition of Indian people, which furthers the gestic quality in the play. In order to achieve this end, the author not only gives the definitions for the Indian words used in the play, but also describes in detail, how the performers should pronounce the English words:

Lines must be delivered in a clipped fashion, a kind of talk characterized by a tendency to drop final *g* (“*goin*”), to jam words together (“*lotta*”), to add a grammatically superfluous final *s* (“*mens*”), to leave a hiatus between a final and an initial vowel (“*a old one*”), and (in women’s speech particularly) to lengthen vowels inordinately (“*l—ots*”). In no way whatever is anything negative or degrading intended; this is simply the way the characters in this play speak English. (7)

Apart from the speech, “drinking” is another focal element in performing Indianness. Therefore, according to Geiogamah, it must be particularly handled in acting. Otherwise, if over-acted, alcoholism as an issue, is likely to surpass other, equally important, issues presented in the play.

Group effort will produce both the proper restraint and gusto for the requisite Indian style of drinking. The drinking should be a controlled

part of the entire performance; that is, the actors should be cautioned not to exaggerate the drinking movements, which must be performed as naturally as possible. Great swaggering and swilling of the bottles are more indicative of amateur acting than anything else. It is important that the acting nowhere is conducive to the mistaken idea that this play is primarily a study of the problem of Indian alcoholism. At moments in the play when much drink is available, the performers may take large drinks; when the supply is dwindling, the drinks are smaller or are sipped carefully. (8)

In *Body Indian*, the drinking requires special attention, because it points to one of the most important issues in the play, alcoholism. All the central characters in the play are portrayed as alcoholics. The ones who are not specified as addicts (Marie and the three teenagers) also drink. The characters not only drink in order to socialize, but they socialize in order to drink. Drinking, being the most dominant and most recurrent motif in the play, functions as a deconstructive daily ritual in the characters' lives. It seems to be their central urge, the motivating force which makes them go on living, but to live only to drink some more. It is their basic communal activity, but one that mutilates the community. It is the core of their bonding, but only in superficial and insincere terms.

Being the infamous legacy, alcoholism has been the internalized burden of the Native American community. Although the historical significance of the issue is undeniable, Geiogamah obviously rejects using it as an excuse for the present day community. On the contrary, he openly criticizes those who still cling to alcoholism as their inevitable and unchangeable destiny, via the cruel characters he created and also by presenting the urge to buy some more to drink as the motivation behind their cruel deed of robbery in the play.

The stage directions at the very beginning of Scene 2 read “[t]here is no indication that anything wicked has taken place, or that there is a world beyond the shabby walls” (17). This is actually the point the entire play attempts to make. In *Body Indian* Geiogamah's central aim is to criticize the indifference, apathy and hypocrisy that the Native American community suffers from. The characters in this play seem to have internalized the victim psyche so much that all they do is get drunk and drown in their own misery. They constantly complain about poverty and unemployment, but it is

worthy of attention that none of these characters talks about finding a job or spending the little money they have on something other than alcohol. Let alone rejecting being victimized by alcohol, they do not even hesitate to steal their friends' money to buy more.

As seen at the beginning of Scene 4, as soon as the group runs out of alcohol, they tend to pick at one another. Without the false comfort of wine, they are a bunch of sad and restless Indians. While a depressing conversation is carried out, Bobby wakes up and realizes that he has been robbed. Due to the fact that he is still intoxicated, he fails to deal with the issue seriously. Besides, his friends completely ignore him. Bobby's drunken query is interrupted by the entrance of three young characters, James, Martha and Fina. They are the ones to "roll" Bobby this time. The presence of such young characters usually represents hope for the future. However in this case, Geiogamah's portrayal of the future is rather pessimistic. Just like the rest of the group, James, Martha and Fina do not hesitate to steal Bobby's money in order to fulfill their "dreams," which are getting high in a rock concert and not having to go to school for days and buying a "living bra". (30) By the end of the play, all of the characters commit the same crime. Although every one of them knows what has been going on, none of them talks about it. They all pretend as if nothing unusual has taken place. Briefly, as individuals and as a community in general, they are corrupted.

Geiogamah deliberately creates such despicable characters to disturb and alienate his audience in order to make them contemplate on the internal problems of the contemporary Native American community.

On the other hand, Bobby's apparent determination to receive medical treatment for alcoholism is also far from promising hope for his future survival. Again, this is due to the contradiction between Bobby's intentions and his actions. Bobby's attitude, in this context, can be analyzed through the Brechtian technique of "not...but." Although Bobby wants to get rid of his alcohol addiction, he goes to Howard's apartment where drinking is apparently a daily routine. What is more, he goes there with sacks full of

bottles of wine. Furthermore, he does *not* refuse to drink with the company, *but* joins them until he passes out at the end of each of the first four scenes. Moreover, every time he regains his consciousness, Bobby does *not* attempt to stop drinking, *but* partakes in another round. Even when he finds out, in the beginning of the fourth scene, that he has been robbed by his “brothers” and “sisters” Bobby does *not* leave the place *but* stays and drinks more. Thus his intention to be cured loses its credibility and his actions continuously invite the judgment of the audience.

The audience, on the other hand, is provoked by the application of the “not...but” technique, to imagine the possibilities of the actions not taken by Bobby Lee throughout the play. This line of reasoning is significant, as explained in the discussion of the Brechtian theater, to lead the audiences to speculate on alternative solutions that might solve the problem presented. In doing so, they will be able to see that the social conditions may be transformed by taking the right courses of action. In short, such portrayals of the characters serve to draw attention to the urgency of self-criticism for the Native American community. Rather than clinging to the past injustices, Geiogamah stresses the importance of the realization of the present social situation. On the condition that this analytical criticism is achieved, Geiogamah’s stage becomes instructive, just like the Brechtian stage.

In the “Author’s Note,” Geiogamah stresses that the tone and the mood of the play should immediately be exposed in the first scene (7). Therefore the setting bears extra significance in terms of conveying a certain desired impression on the audience. The whole play takes place in a one-room apartment. The physical space is filled with props representing simple, ordinary household items indicating a lower economic standard. The setting is meant to be realistic with the large, old-fashioned bed, the one-faucet sink, the small stove, the small mattress and the empty liquor bottles on the floor. All these ordinary props are deliberately chosen in order to represent the defining attributes of the urban life Native American people of the United States lead today. Moreover, the characteristics of the apartment and the props are significant for they are the visual and concrete representations of the play’s thematic issues. The fact that it is a one-room apartment immediately connotes the limitation of physical space. Not only does this

indicate poverty, but it also invokes a sense of imprisonment and entrapment. The apartment is the embodiment of the vicious cycle the characters are stuck in. From a larger perspective, it could even remind the audience of how Native American land was restricted to the borders of Reservations. Furthermore, the old and simple objects and furniture in the house (the small stove, the mattress, the “one”-faucet sink, the oilcloth covering on the table, the cheap wine) represent poverty, whereas the “many empty liquor bottles,” so many that “the performers must stumble over and around them to make their way through the action of the play,” obviously point to the problem of alcoholism (6). Stumbling is an important symbolic action representing Indians’ frustration in the hands of alcoholism. Actually if one were to specify an overall *gestus* in *Body Indian*, stumbling is most likely to be it.

The bleak, gloomy, almost claustrophobic setting is carefully created in order to sustain the mood and the tone of the whole play. In this sense, the apartment is a microcosm of contemporary urban American-Indian life. The realistically detailed stage design is far from the suggestive and economic settings of the epic theater. Nonetheless, it should be noted that *Body Indian*’s setting reflects the Native American community’s socio-economic condition, of which poverty is a defining attribute. Therefore, the setting contains an attitude which mirrors the community’s social condition.

In conclusion, it could be argued that despite its conventional structure, *Body Indian* is a significant example of how Geiogamah borrows certain techniques from the Brechtian theater. In the light of this discussion, it is evident that Geiogamah creates the alienation effect in *Body Indian* mainly through characterization. Furthermore, the employment of projections in the staging shows the influence of Brechtian staging techniques. Moreover, the element of *gestus* found in the acting is in line with the Brechtian acting principle of revealing the social attitude of the characters. Last but not least, Geiogamah’s critical stance and his aim of raising consciousness about the present social condition of his community echo Brecht’s artistic approach. In spite of the fact that the play has quite a pessimistic view of the contemporary Native American community, it can be regarded as an affirmative work in the sense that by uncovering the ills within the community, it aims to exorcise them. In this sense, the play, written

and performed by/for American Indians, is a promising start for the New Native American Drama.



NOTES

¹ *Pah-be-mas*: A way of addressing as friends women who are not related by blood. (Geiogamah 7)

² *Ko-ta-kes*: a misspoken euphemism for “brothers,” or for “brothers who’ve chosen each other as brothers,” or, in a special usage, “blood brothers” without being kin by birth. (Geiogamah 7-8)

³ *Hites*: a close friend, usually male, like brother but not related by blood; one who has shared many life experiences with you. (Geiogamah 7)

⁴ D.T’s (DELIRIUM TREMENS): a withdrawal syndrome occurring in persons who have developed physiological dependence on alcohol, characterized by tremor, visual hallucinations, and autonomic instability



2. FOGHORN

Foghorn was first performed in West Berlin, at Theater im Reichskabarett in 1973. The play adopts the Brechtian narrative structure with its eleven episodes which “retrace in a loosely chronological order situations exemplifying the mistakes, commonplaces, and prejudices that have characterized the history of Indian and Euro-American relationships since contact” (Pinazzi 183-184). The narrative beginning in the time of the arrival of white colonizers, traces the history of the Native American community, within the contextual frame of white oppression, highlighting the events and facts that determined the historical, social and political condition of American Indian peoples.

The first episode dates back to the time of the discovery of the American continent. It sets the beginning of the play in parallel with the beginning of the change in Native American peoples’ lives with the arrival of the Europeans. The first encounter is followed by a forward jump into the twentieth century in episode 2, namely to the phenomenal occupation of Alcatraz Island that took place between the years 1969-1971. The following two slapstick episodes illustrate the White-Christian attempts to convert Indian “heathens”, with the white nun in section 3, and the “clownish” schoolteacher struggling to teach young Indian “savages” how to be “civilized”, in episode 4 (58). The satirical humor employed so far, is carried into episode 5 in which the coy princess Pocahontas informs her maidens about her failed attempt at intercourse with the impotent white captain. Episode 6, on the other hand, parodies one of the white iconic fictional figures, the Lone Ranger. This is succeeded by episode 7 in which a First Lady of the United States gives a clumsy speech to her Indian audience, in honor of the opening of a national park on Reservation land. Furthermore, in episode 8, a caricaturized government spy informs the White House about the possible Indian attack on the Bureau of Indian Affairs and, as a solution, suggests bribing this “miserable and poor, and [. . .] most isolated minority” of the United States (74). The resentment toward the unfair or broken treaties is reflected through a slapstick presentation in episode 9 which is immediately followed by a Wild West Show sequence. Finally, the play ends with the grave and assertive declarations of resistance in episode 11.

The title of the play not only represents Geiogamah's warning to his audience about the urgency of claiming the Native American identity, but it is also a reference to the foghorn blasts the whites used in order to harass the Indian occupiers on Alcatraz Island, as also indicated by Bigsby. (*Critical* 371)

Foghorn is a manifestation of Geiogamah's political and social attitude. The play is designed to raise consciousness among the audience about the inter-racial problems and instruct them about the historical facts whose impact is still evident in contemporary Native American life. What Geiogamah tries to convey in *Foghorn*, in its broadest sense, is a notion of Native American identity which also contains historical consciousness. As it is discussed in the following pages, the subversive white gaze upon Native American identity begins as early as the first contact, and gradually intensifies in parallel with the westward expansion. Together with the loss of the land, the American Indian identity has remained helpless against the forced assimilation. The land occupations of the Native American activists, which are also commemorated in *Foghorn*, actually aimed to reclaim the Native American identity.

The clarification of identity involves, in the case of the American Indian community, the issue of who they are not, before defining who they are. In other words, the stereotypical identity and codes of behavior attributed to Native Americans by Anglo-Americans should be confronted and eliminated. Geiogamah comments on the destructive effects of this kind of stereotyping as follows:

For decades Indians have been portrayed in films and television in a manner entirely derogatory to their cultural and mental well-being. Who on this earth can enjoy seeing themselves and their race portrayed as fiendish savages and murderers who scream blood-curdling yelps as seemingly their only form of vocal communication? It is thought by many American Indian leaders and activists that this unabated, corrupt use of American Indians by the American dream makers has been a major factor in the deepening cultural and spiritual malaise of American Indians. (introduction 2)

When explaining the effect of the noble and ignoble Indian images, Dagmar Wernitznig notes that:

Both portrayals – the ignoble as well as the noble one – are doomed to be and to remain extremely pattered and abstract. It is a set-up of contrasts that hardly corresponds with actual life, for it is determined by a decidedly black-and-white structure. Features, character traits, and habits become classified through the polar terms *good* and *bad* and unilaterally applied to the noble or the ignoble savage image. As these two images are unequivocally defined by positive or negative aspects, they can never turn out to be holograms. Instead, these portrayals stay flat and particularly one-dimensional. There is no differentiation except for blatant good or bad. Individual portrayals with intermingling positive and negative features are nonexistent. The only aspect that counts is the collective with any gray areas missing. (xiv)

Regardless of the kind, Geiogamah is well aware of the dangers of stereotyping. As Wernitznig also argues, whether they are negative or positive, stereotypes deprive characters of the complexities of individual human existence. Thus, both serve to reinforce prejudice rather than positive deconstruction (xiv).

Interestingly enough, Geiogamah's method of confronting Native American stereotypes, involves creating stereotypes of his own. Pushing them "to the point of absurdity", the playwright turns the stereotypes into totally irrational and unrealistic caricatures to be mocked and laughed at, so that the accepted stereotypes will be negated in the minds of the Native American audience as well as those of the whites (Geiogamah *New Native* 49).

At this point, the power of humor, which is another device Geiogamah uses, gains significance. In his plays, it functions to heal and help the community survive the harshness of reality. In an interview with Kenneth Lincoln, Geiogamah elaborates on the importance of humor:

I see Indi'n capacity for humor as a blessing. And I see it as one of the fundamental miracles of our lives. It's a miraculous thing that's pulled us through so much. It's a force that's part of our religion. [. . .] What the hell do you want to live for if you can't laugh? I wouldn't want to live if I couldn't laugh. (Lincoln 79-80)

Therefore, humor, as a means for cultural survival, helps the audience and the performers challenge the inter/intra-racial commonplace perceptions of the self and of the other, which usually appear as stereotypical images and judgments. Geiogamah uses humor as a strategy in the presentation of his deliberately stereotyped characters. He admits having “pushed [them] to the point of absurdity” so that these stereotypical images will begin de-constructing themselves once the audience perceives them as something to laugh at (49). In other words, he utilizes humor to transform the unbearable into bearable.

In short, Geiogamah tries to help his people retrieve their true identity mostly through an alternate handling of the stereotypes, which is framed by episodes containing grave references both to the distant and the recent history of the Native American community within the frame of critical confrontations with the whites. More importantly, the use of stereotypes and humor in *Foghorn* is significant in technical terms as well, for, as discussed below, they are also utilized by the playwright to create the alienation effect which is the central concern of this study.

Episode 1

The first episode of *Foghorn* immediately initiates the narrative with a “*progressive electronic sound, one that evokes a journey through time and space*” (51). As a technique borrowed from the epic theater, music is used in this scene as an essential part of the narrative. Moreover, the projection of the “*large, painted, Indian face [. . .] moving slowly [. . .] gazing its eyes toward the audience*” is another technique which points to the Brechtian influence in the play (51). This projection stands for all Native American peoples who, regardless of their tribal origins, have shared the same bitter experience under white supremacy. In the first episode where the narration is mainly carried out by the technological equipment, the first contact is presented through a voice recording:

SPANISH SAILOR. (*very excited*) Senor Capitan Columbus! Mire! Mire! Mire!
Alla! Mire! Dios mio! Estos hombres, cho-co-la-tes! Los indios! Los indios!
Ellos son los indios!¹ (52)

These lines are an allusion to the arrival of Christopher Columbus and his crew who believed that they were setting foot in India. They had, therefore, mistaken the Native Americans for Asian-Indians. The first encounter, in this sense, is significant to be the initial misperception, hence the first stigmatization of the Native American identity. Immediately after the delivery of these lines, the projected Indian face fades and the performers appear.

The influence of the Brechtian style of acting, which is presentational, can be observed in *Foghorn*. Geiogamah indicates, in the stage directions, that “*the performing group [. . .] form[s] an ensemble*” (51). As ensemble acting is not based on the representation of characters, but the demonstration of the parts, it is, by nature, presentational. As discussed in the previous chapter, the presentational acting style creates the alienation effect through the detachment of the actor from the character, which rids the performance of histrionics. Thus, the presentational acting hinders the illusion and the audience’s emotional reaction. Therefore, just like Brecht, Geiogamah enables his spectators to ‘observe’ the play with a rational and critical attitude.

The presentation of the recorded voices of the white figures, who are representatives of the significant phases in the history of the relationships between Indians and whites, is also worthy of attention. Their statements frame the narrative of the episode; and the ensemble acts within this frame. That is to say, voices portray the white viewpoint according to which American Indian peoples are forced to act. In the light of this attitude, when the voices of the Europeans are regarded as the dominant voice of the Anglo-American society which has shaped the Native American identity, the episode can be said to contain a Brechtian influence in terms of thematic concern as well, for it indicates that social balances determine the destiny of Native American peoples.

From a technical perspective, this part is also significant in that, the performance of the ensemble is gestic. As stated in the stage directions, “[*t*he costumes and movement [of the ensemble] should suggest a forced journey, such as the Trail of Tears, spanning the centuries from 1492 to the present and stretching geographically from the West Indies

to *Alcatraz Island*" (51). Therefore, the gestures of the ensemble show the changing communal attitude of the Native American community at the moments they encounter white oppression.

After the voice of the Spanish Sailor is heard, the ensemble freezes, which is a gesture reflecting the bewilderment and frustration of American Indians as a response to the new comers. With the resuming electronic music, the narrative moves forward to the time of early settlements. A Male Settler shouts gradually raising his voice "You're only an Injun. Don't talk back!" (52). The tone of the male settler indicates the emerging hostility toward the Natives. His lines are interrupted by sounds of gunfire that stand for the countless skirmishes and battles fought between the Indians and the Whites. Following these effects, Two White Men and a Female Settler condemn Native Americans as "[v]armits," "[f]ilthy savages," "[m]urderers" and "[s]calpers" (52). In between these lines, the ensemble moves together with the music, suggesting the struggle in the course of time. The fifth voice to be heard in the first episode belongs to an Angry Male Vigilante, verbalizing the unfathomable hatred of Indians, that has now culminated into the desire to "force 'em off the land [...] Move 'em with force, guns" (52). The stage directions following these lines are worthy of attention: "*[e]lectronic journey music, group movement, mixed gunshots, high volume. Electronic journey music and group movement continue. More gunshots. Electronic journey music and group movement now becoming fragmented*" (52).

The music, again, indicates the flow of time whereas the continuous group movement presents the Indians' endeavor to survive against the violent white oppression suggested through the rising gunfire effects. The stronger the gunshots are the weaker the resistance of the group is. Finally it breaks and thus begins the ultimate disintegration of American Indian life. It is deduced from the arrogant, impudent and indifferent speech of the United States Senator that the confiscation of the Native American land suggested by the Angry Male Vigilante has now been realized:

UNITED STATES SENATOR

The Indian problem is a matter for the courts and the Congress to deal with. We've been victorious over them on the battlefield, now they must

settle on the reservations we have generously set aside for them. They have stood in the way of our great American Manifest Destiny long enough. (52-53)

All white characters, except for the Spanish sailor, are stereotypes of white victimizers, whose speeches demonstrate the process of the establishment of the ignorant, savage, ignoble Indian stigmas. Geiogamah notes that their lines are to be "*timed as a narration for the journey, and must convey an evolving attitude toward Indians*" (51). From the sailor to the senator, each of the white characters' statements comprises a certain attitude. An overall glance upon these will reveal the chronicle evolution of the attitude the playwright mentions. This attitude presented in the six statements of the white characters follows the pattern of astonishment-contempt-disgust-accusation-tyranny and confinement. On the other hand, the ensemble's movements against the afore mentioned evolving attitude are remarkable in terms of analyzing the social behavior of the Native American community when faced with white authority.

The whole episode can be summarized as the presentation of Native American peoples' centuries-long journey, which is both physical and spiritual. This journey is imposed, interrupted and directed by the dominant white power. The performance of the ensemble is accordingly interrupted by the utterances and attacks of the white oppressor, revealing the gestures of pausing, freezing and fragmentation, all of which are embodied in the concept of being frustrated by this forced journey. Therefore, it could be argued that frustration is the overall gestus of the episode.

Another Brechtian element Hanay Geiogamah makes use of in the first episode is historicization. The discovery of the continent in 1492 and the Trail of Tears are two obvious historical allusions. As indicated before, the episode recalls the time of discovery only to remind the audiences of the accidental use of the word "Indians" by which not only the white society but also the Native Americans still define themselves. However, the correction of this mistake is not the issue. Through the sailor's impetuous repetition of the name "Los indios", the American Indian audiences are incited to contemplate on what it really means to be Indian; in other words, they are channelled to contemplate on their present existence.

When it comes to the Trail of Tears, the event is implied rather than being directly referred to. Nevertheless, the performance of a “forced journey”, and statements such as “force ‘em off the land!” and key words like “reservations” are more than enough to arouse the connotation of the Trail of Tears in the minds of an American Indian audience (Geiogamah 51, 52, 53). The name Trail of Tears is given originally to the route The Cherokee of Georgia involuntarily followed during 1838-1839, when they were removed from their land by the United States government. However, not only The Cherokee but also many other tribes were exposed to the same tyranny. Therefore, the Trail of Tears has come to be the name of the traumatic experience of removal from the land in the collective conscious of all Native American peoples.

Though not specified, other periods from Native American history such as the time of early frontier settlements and the period after the foundation of the United States of America, during which cultural clash turned into the systematic oppression with a wide range of social, economical and political sanctions, are alluded to as well. Regardless of the period of the element of historicization, the aim is the same in all cases: Interrogation of the present social reality through the demonstration of the historical highlights.

Episode 2

Although the episodes of *Foghorn* are not entitled, the projections function, more or less, as titles which are not inscribed, as is the case in the beginning of this episode with the projection “*a panoramic view of Alcatraz Island [...] onto the cyclorama or back wall of the playing area*” (53).

The technique of historicization finds its reflections also in this episode. The entire section is dedicated to one of the climactic points in recent Native American history, the occupation of the Alcatraz Island. The event is presented by the projection of the photographs taken during the occupation. As mentioned before, the occupation was a stimulus for political activism among the Native American community. This spirit,

filled with inspiration and hope, is demonstrated by the performers through the Zuni Sunrise Chant. The chant is significant because, “as seen through the culture of the Zuni people of Arizona and New Mexico, the Sunrise is something to sing to, to pray to, and to rejoice in” (Grosjean). Accompanied by the sequential projections of the photographs taken during the Alcatraz occupation, the sunrise chant of the group celebrates the achievements of the occupiers, and conjures the spirit of restoration for the present community which, in this case, includes the audience.

In this episode one of the most prominent devices *Foghorn* borrows from the essentially narrative Brechtian drama is the presence of a narrator. In an epic play, “[t]he playwright [...] brings back choric commentary by introducing narrators, songs, soliloquies and other ‘interruptive’ devices” (Bentley *Playwright* 217). Geiogamah’s narrator in *Foghorn* gives the audience an account of the Alcatraz Island occupation and relates clearly why the event is important to the Native American community. His speech is direct and concise, explaining the motivations behind the act. The address of the narrator is important in the sense that it creates the alienation effect and also aims to *teach*. Indeed, this part of the episode is almost like a brief lecture supported with slides:

NARRATOR

Thanksgiving Day, 1969. Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay. We are discovered, once again. It was the first time that we had taken back land that already was ours. Indian people everywhere felt good about our having the island, about our determination. [...] We planned to develop the island, to build a cultural and spiritual center for all tribes, all people. Nineteen months. It was a good beginning. (54)

While the narrator addresses the audience, the performance of the ensemble follows the narrative. The method they adopt in this episode includes pantomime, which is another alienation device. As Hornby indicates. “[...] the defamiliarization may be achieved through an induction, or with interpolated material like the pantomime; interpolations can include songs, slides, films, interludes” (44). Such alienation reassures the distance between the audience and the stage, constantly reminding the audience of the fact that they are in the theater and this is a play, and thus hinders the possibility of theatrical

illusion. In this way, the mentally aroused audience is prepared for the final address of the narrator.

The gravity the narrator radiates can also be observed in the performance of the ensemble. Against the back wall on which now a large United States map, showing only the Reservation areas is projected, the group forms a phalanx right after their pantomime presentation of the Alcatraz occupiers' sailing back from the island, having fulfilled their task. The position the group takes is not randomly decided. As all possible definitions of the word *phalanx*² suggest, the performing group now stands like a victorious army that has just won a battle and is ready to fight more. On the other hand, the narrator now stands center stage and declares their victory like a general:

NARRATOR. We, the Native Americans, reclaim this land, known as America, in the name of all American Indians, by the right of discovery. We wish to be fair and honorable with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land, who as a majority wrongfully claim it as theirs, and hereby pledge that we shall give to the majority inhabitants of this country a portion of land for their own, to be held trust by the American Indian people – for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea! We will further guide the majority inhabitants in the proper way of living. We will offer them our religion, our education, our way of life – in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their white brothers from their savage and unhappy state. (55-56)

This statement counteracts the declaration of the United States Senator at the end of the first episode. Actually, the second episode as a whole, can be considered an assertive response to the entire previous section. It was only the white characters who had a voice; and that voice pronounced the words of insult and accusation against the Native Americans, and sovereignty over them. In this episode, however, it is the Indians who are vocal, active and in control. The political attitude presented in the section climaxes with the above-quoted statement of the narrator, which is like an American Indian manifesto. The narrator, on behalf of all his people, reclaims power and authority not only over their lives, but also over the lives of all Americans. His is the alternative discourse to that of the WASP authority that has been dominant for centuries.

Episodes 3-4

The grave tone prevailing the first two sections is replaced in the following episodes by a satirical humor which “exhibits a critical view of a social or political practice or human vice” (Pavis 321). Other than the presentational acting, the projections and the use of music and humor in *Foghorn* also serve the alienation effect. Geiogamah’s playful attitude in handling the stereotypes increases the distance between the characters and the audience. The more these types are ridiculed, the harder the identification of the audience. The emotionally distant audience, therefore, is mentally active so that they can learn from the play.

The third and fourth episodes are analyzed together as they are almost identical in terms of themes and theatrical techniques applied. In these two sections, the practices in question are the two prominent means of assimilation imposed upon Native Americans: the White-Christian missionary activities aimed at converting the Indian *heathens* and the forced education in order to teach the *savage* Indians the American ways, the ways of *civilization*, which appears as a parody of the Native American declaration quoted above. The technique Hanay Geiogamah adopts in satirizing these facts involves elements from slapstick that is usually associated with “buffoonery, [and] with coarse laughter” rendered mainly through exaggeration both in characterization and in physical action (Pavis 147).

Just like most of the other characters in *Foghorn*, the Catholic Nun, the Schoolteacher and the Indians in the third and fourth episodes are stereotypes rather than carefully constructed life-like identities. As for the action, it is quite exaggerated on the parts of both the white characters and the Indians. Furthermore physical violence is used in these episodes; however it is performed in such a way that “the audience is supposed to understand the very hyperbolic nature of such violence to exceed the boundaries of common sense and thus license non-cruel laughter”, which is a prominent feature of slapstick (www.wikipedia.com).

The third episode, in which Geiogamah plays with *the heathen savage* stereotype, opens with a “*Plains Indian War Dance song in celebration*” as a humorous indication of the

Indian attack that will take place in the end (56). As soon as the loud singing and drumming stops “*an organ blasts out church music,*” creating a sharp contrast to the Indian War Dance song (56). The alienation effect is reinforced by the music which has humorous and an ironic comment. The catholic nun, who has interrupted the celebration, is a caricature-like character that cannot be taken seriously just as the other white portrayals in the play. She is followed by an Indian altar boy moving up and down “*a cross covered with paper money*” which is another slapstick element displaying the playwright’s satirical vision of institutionalized and materialized religion. Beginning her address with a funny oxymoron, “My blessed savages”, the *compassionate* catholic nun soon begins to strive not to lose control when cataloguing the attributes of Indians:

NUN

[...]

You are heathens.

Pagans.

Poor, miserable, ignorant, uncivilized, NAKED!

(*she calms herself*). (57)

At the end of her speech, the nun stands “*triumphantly*” before the Indians, cocksure of the power of her Christian rhetoric (58). However, her impudent sermon is surprisingly returned with the attack of the Indians wrapped in blankets which, together with the violent action, reinforces their stereotypical *savagery*. Moreover, church music that is heard in the background at the moment of the Indian attack reveals an ironic contrast that augments the comic effect, and the alienation effect.

Humor, together with the stereotypical demonstration of the characters, also functions as an alienating device in these episodes; for it maintains the distance between the audience and the gravity of the situation presented on the stage. Geiogamah’s types as presented in *Foghorn*, are alienating in the sense that they are too much exaggerated, even for stereotypes. Just as the characters in *Body Indian*, the ones in *Foghorn* are impossible for the audience to identify with, although the attitude adopted in the characterization in the two plays is unmistakably different. Nevertheless, the result is the same: the audience is drawn away from the characters due to their remoteness to being real. Especially because they are demonstrated through a presentational style of

acting, the stereotypes in *Foghorn* are observed from a critical distance, therefore they are open to judgment.

However, this should not suggest that the rational attitude required from the audience weakens the entertaining quality of the presentation. On the contrary, as also supported by Bertolt Brecht, plays dedicated to a social argument do not have to be 'serious' in terms of the tone. Furthermore, entertainment is an indispensable quality of the art of theater. In short, Geiogamah attempts to instruct and stimulate his audience without sacrificing the laughter.

By the constructive influence of humor, neither the attack of the Indians nor the nun's insults are perceived as disturbingly brutal acts. What remains after the laughter is the audience's acknowledgment of the nullity of the stereotypes presented. The section ends as "*a sharp drilling noise is heard, the lights flash, and action visuals of giant chunks of earth flying through space are projected on the playing area*" (58). Once again, the narrative proceeds into the next episode by means of technological equipment.

The fourth episode, following the same pattern in terms of action and characterization, is like a version of the previous one. Indians in this section are young pupils and the nun is replaced by a white schoolteacher. The depiction of the teacher in the stage directions opening the episode sets her as a slapstick character: "[a] *clownish schoolteacher dances on stage, ringing a bell, carrying a bundle of small American flags, singing 'Good Morning to You' [...] The teacher is snobbish, nervous, rude, feisty and blusterous*" (58).

She is not only verbally but also physically violent toward the Indian pupils. The extremely abusive behavior of the white teacher, who continuously harasses the Indian children, using all kinds of degrading diction such as "savage", "stupid", "ignorant", "worthless", "lousy", "filthy" etc., generates the ironic trick played on the concept of savagery. Furthermore, throughout this episode, the performance of the school teacher has slapstick qualities:

TEACHER

(very overdone, but with control) [...] fusses with her hair and dress. The students pay no attention. She becomes angry) G-ood morning, savages! [...] You are all totally ignorant. You might as well be deaf and dumb! (58-59)

[...]

(She sees one of the girls gesture to one of the others, and pummels the girls [...]) What are you doing there? What was that? Was that an Indian sign-language gesture I saw you making there? Was it? Was it sign language? (59)

[...]

([...] then she sees the girl make the gesture again, lunges at her, yanks up the child, shouts directly into her face. [...] She shakes the child violently. [...] She pulls out a bottle of castor oil and pours it down the struggling child's mouth). (60-61)

[...]

(Suddenly pinching her nose in broad gesture) Ooooooooooh, ooooooh! What an odor! (59)

[...]

(Looking in one of the boys' hair) Oh, heavens alive! Oh, good heavens! Nits! Nits! [...] Oh, oh! Lice! [...] (She scratches herself wildly). (59-60)

Towards the end of the episode, the Indian pupils, too, contribute to the slapstick performance aping and imitating the white teacher with outward signs of buffoonery. Meanwhile, the teacher, just like the nun, “*soars on her success*”, only to be attacked by the Indian kids (62). The episode ends with the same audio visuals suggesting the course of time.

In the case of these two episodes, it is the humor presented through slapstick by the help of which “the spectators have their revenge on the constraints of reality and reason; liberating laughter and drives win over tragic inhibition and anxiety, in the guise of buffoonery [...]” (Pavis 148). Starting from the third episode, humor continues to dominate the play, until the last two sections.

Episodes 5-6

Geiogamah continues his satirical attitude also in the fifth and sixth episodes; this time, in the form of parody. Parody is a “[p]lay or fragment of a text that transforms an earlier

text ironically by mocking it, using all kinds of comic effects” (Pavis, 250). Though the definition seems to refer only to literature, parody is a frequently used humorous device in all branches of art.

Considering Geiogamah’s social and political commitment to the betterment of his community, parody is quite a practical device for him to utilize in his plays. First of all, parody is humorous. Therefore it is easily accessible. The play’s entertaining quality, gives the playwright the chance to communicate his ideas to the audience without much trouble. Since Geiogamah’s objective is to instruct the Native American community, humor functions as a conductive device in his theater. Furthermore, parody is usually satirical. In other words, it has a critical approach towards the material parodied. And being critical is one of the defining attributes of Geiogamah’s attitude as a playwright. Moreover, parody is transformative. It presents any given situation or concept in a new and different – at times even subversive – perspective. This trait is also in harmony with Geiogamah’s aims at contributing to the restoration of inter/intra racial dynamics concerning the Native American community. Therefore, a more wide-ranging definition of parody would be appropriate in analyzing these episodes: “Parody includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice” (Dentith, 9).

The fifth episode parodies (hi)story of Pocahontas. Although an actual person, Pocahontas and her life has been so much romanticized that it is hard to distinguish fact from tale. What turned this Indian woman into one of the most popular romantic icons lies in her interracial experiences.

Pocahontas was the daughter of Wahunsonacock, the chief of an “Algonquian- speaking confederacy of [about 30] tribes [...whose] territory extended from what is now Washington D.C to North Carolina, the area designated as Virginia by England” (Nies 114). Chief Wahunsonacock who is also known as ‘Powhatan,’ helped the Jamestown colonists survive a harsh time of starvation and sickness. He made acquaintance with the colony’s governor Captain John Smith, and taught the white man how to cultivate plants, especially the tobacco out of which the colony later made a fortune. It is believed

that Pocahontas, who was about ten years old at the time, was among the tribal members who took Powhatan's donations to the new comers. However, Powhatan's generosity was soon returned by the colonists as the invasion of Indian lands causing violent skirmishes between the two sides. During this intense period John Smith was captured by the Indians. According to the narratives, whose factuality is still at debate, it was Pocahontas who saved Captain John Smith from execution. Eventually, Pocahontas was kidnapped by the Europeans who declared that they would free her only on the condition that Powhatan released all English captives. Though the chief did as the whites wanted, Pocahontas was not released. The colonists claimed that she stayed of her own free will. During her captivity Pocahontas "was baptized a Christian, instructed in English, and although already married, was supposedly in love with one of her English captors and teachers, John Rolfe" (Nies 120). Before her marriage with Rolfe, Pocahontas took the Christian name Rebecca. Judith Nies writes that when she later went to England, her husband did not miss any chance to show her off in the society as the Indian princess. Pocahontas was even presented to King of England. All was done for the sake of political and financial support for the colony. On the way back home, Rebecca died of a European disease. Therefore, she never had the chance to verify this story. This is probably the main reason why there are so many different tales about Pocahontas.

However, leaving aside the question of factuality, one can argue that no matter which version is analyzed, there is one certain fact that does not seem to change. It is the portrayal of Pocahontas. She has come to be known as the helpful, compassionate, docile, beautiful, shy and innocent Indian maiden with stereotypical qualities. On the other hand Captain John Smith is commonly known as a strong, determinate, brave adventurer. Furthermore, there are no historical evidences indicating that Captain John Smith and Pocahontas had a love affair. On the contrary, such an affair seems improbable since Pocahontas was only a child at the time besides the fact that she married John Rolfe. What Geiogamah does in the fifth episode is to present these characters in a new light through parody.

In Geiogamah's version there is an affair, or at least the attempt of one, between Pocahontas and Captain John Smith. According to what Pocahontas tells her handmaidens, the white captain is desperately in love with her. Pocahontas's narrative begins with the detailed depiction of the physical *largeness* of the white male, and develops around the erotic account of the foreplay, which to Pocahontas's disappointment, ends up in Captain's losing his erection.

This funny parody is devoid of the romantic content as far as Pocahontas's attitude is concerned. Even Captain John Smith's "luff" for Pocahontas cannot save him from the mockery of the Indian women (64). What Geiogamah does in this parody is to ridicule the two fixed images. First Pocahontas is overtly making fun of the white man's inability to sustain his penile erection. Her attitude contrasts the archetypal image of the Indian maiden who is usually defined by her innocence, shyness, compassion and docility. As for John Smith, "[t]he big, big captain", the impotence transforms this strong and big white 'conqueror' into a loser (63). Thus, the cultural power balances are playfully shifted and the historical impotence of the Native American community is reversed.

The sixth episode is the parody of the fictional white heroic icon the Lone Ranger and his submissive Indian side-kick Tonto. The Lone Ranger was a rather popular radio program "[f]irst aired on Jan. 30, 1933," on a radio station in Detroit (Encyclopedia Britannica online). The show is based on the adventures of John Reid, a Texas ranger. Together with his friends Reid was attacked by outlaws who killed all his friends and injured him fatally. Tonto, an Indian, found him and saved his life. From then on, the two dedicated themselves to wandering in the Wild West "to aid those in need, to fight evil and to establish justice" (Encyclopedia Britannica online). Although the Lone Ranger and Tonto always back and support one another in their path of 'righteousness', the interracial tension lurks beneath their relationship. Gerald Sussman observes that "[...] the first half century of commercial broadcasting offered little more than insulting or patronizing racial stereotypes" (192). In the Lone Ranger series the hero is always the white ranger whereas Tonto is just a congenial noble savage type. Although, later some

renovations in Tonto's characterization were realized for the sake of political correctness, as Jane Tompkins also stresses, they are never presented as equals.

It is this balance of inter-racial partnership that Geiogamah parodies in the sixth episode of *Foghorn*. The white American hero Lone Ranger is deprived of his admirable qualities, and mocked as a selfish, stupid megalomaniac who apparently suffers from an inferiority complex. Tonto on the other hand is also far from the 'loyal friend' type. He seems to have had enough of the Lone Ranger. Nevertheless, he remains indifferent and submissive until the end of the section. While the Lone Ranger tells his 'brilliant' plans about how to restore his charisma run down by "an illiterate Injun like [Tonto, doing] all the clever thinking and even outsmarting the white man", Tonto keeps on shining the Ranger's boots and says nothing but "Kemo Sabay" (65). The only words uttered by this 'inarticulate Injun' are "translated as both 'Faithful Friend' and 'Trusted Scout'" (Terrace 111). Of course, the expression turns out to be quite ironic when Tonto finally cuts Lone Ranger's throat at the end. The parody in this section is presented through slapstick elements which are the exaggerated dumbness of the ranger, Tonto's mocking gestures towards him, the playful use of music and the physical violence in the end. Like the previous one, this episode ends with "[d]rilling sounds [and] earth visuals" (68).

In both of these episodes the parody "quotes the original by distorting it, and constantly calls on the [...] spectator to reconstruct it" (Pavis, 250). In a sense, Geiogamah demythicises the positive stereotypes glorifying not only the white figures but also the Indians.

Episodes 7-8

The seventh episode opens with a tape recording of the song "America the Beautiful" followed by "*scattered applause*", and a "Deep Male Voice", announcing the First Lady of the United States, who immediately connotes, despite lack of direct reference, president Lyndon Johnson's nature-loving wife Lady Bird Johnson (68). Together with the recorded voices, alienation breaks the illusion, again, via the presentational

performance of the ensemble that transforms into an audience for the First Lady's speech.

The speech is delivered in honor of the opening of a national park in the Reservation territory. First Lady's ridiculous remarks serve to criticize humorously the white "romanticizing Indian-lovers" (Huntsman, introduction xix).

FIRST LADY. [. . .] I want to say right away that I have never seen such lovely, stoic faces as those of our Indian friends here with us today. Just look at those beautiful facial lines, those high cheekbones, those wonderfully well-rounded lips, those big dark eyes. And their costumes. Aren't they simply too beautiful? (68)

As her speech progresses, the criticism of the United States government's approach to Indian affairs is presented:

FIRST LADY. [. . .] The idea for this new park came directly from my husband, the pres-i-dent, and his assistant, the secretary of the interior. The three of us were having tea and ladyfingers in my sitting room [. . .] and the secretary said to the pres-i-dent, "Mr. Pres-i-dent, [. . .] why don't we declare one of these reservations a national park? [. . .] The Indians get very little use of them anyway" The pres-i-dent said it was time [. . .] an entire Indian reservation be made a national park. (69)

The restlessness arising among First Lady's Indian audiences finally leads them to reveal their reaction. The First Lady poses for a fancy picture, but to her horror, appears a "*puff of smoke, [and] sparks fly, the First Lady lets out a very ladylike scream*" (69).

The next episode, on the other hand, criticizes the United States government's attitude at the time when Indian activism has peaked. An agent caricature wearing a braided wig and "*wrapped in Indian blankets*" informs the White House about the Indian riot directed to the BIA. As Huntsman also indicates in his introduction to the plays, the whole episode is an allusion to the Watergate Scandal³ that took place during the presidency of Richard Nixon (xviii). The presentation of the silly, inept government spy

disguising himself in a traditional American Indian costume phones the White House and tells that the easiest way to solve the Indian problem is to “buy’em off”:

SPY. [. . .] If my figures are correct, Indians are about two-thirds of one percent of the total population of the country, right? So, give them something like, uh, \$66,500. Say to the press it’s for travel expenses, to get the Indians back to their reservations. The public will be impressed that even the poor old Indians are getting a little of the dole from Washington.

[. . .]

[. . .]

My fee for this national security operation will be \$250,000, in cold, cold, hard, hard, cash, of course. (72, 73)

The White House agrees and as soon as the spy gets out of the phone booth having accomplished his *dangerous* task, he “*is showered with money*” (74).

Episodes 9-10

In the ninth episode, the ensemble plays and sings live the song “Pass That Peace Pipe”. The stage directions indicate that the performance is *delivered “in a choreographed pattern”* (75). The scene bears elements of farce:

Between each of the stanzas of the song delivered as a wild production number, an actor wearing a bull’s head is spotlighted with a pretty girl in pigtails, who reads from a giant roll of toilet tissue. The bull also holds a roll, and unwinds enough tissue to wipe his behind each time a treaty is called out. (75)

The lyrics to the song are significant to create an ironic contrast with the treaties. The episode is an allusion to the broken treaties signed between the United States government and the Native American tribes. Besides criticizing the indifference of the government, the lyrics also give an ironic message to the audience. In the jolly and relaxed tone of the song is a warning for the Native American community. The Indians are invited not to remain passive in the face of the injustice:

CHORUS.

Write that apology, and dispatch it,
 When you've quarreled, it's better to patch it.
 Pass that peace pipe and bury that hatchet
 Like the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Chattahoochies, Chippewas
 [. . .]
 Do! (76-77)

The tenth episode, on the other hand, is a demonstration of the Wild West Shows in which the Indians are the villains and the white cowboys are the heroes saving the day. The episode recalls the stereotypical presentation of Native Americans in these shows as savages and fierce warriors.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE.

[. . .]
 See the Lovely White Maiden!
 The surprise!
 The chase!
 The taking of the scalp!
 A Savage, Brutal SCALP DANCE!
 THE TRIUMPH OF THE WHITES! (78)

This episode is important to end the humorous and playful tone that has dominated the play since the third section, especially when the “[*I*oud drumbeat for shotgun blast [. . .] knocks the Indians dead on the floor” (78). After the announcer’s voice subsides, the intensified “drilling sound and earth slides” begin the transition into the final episode. The drilling sound and the earth visuals are replaced by “rifle fire and vistas of the terrain around Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The visuals stop on a single picture of a marshal peering through a rifle scope that is aimed toward the performers and the audience” (79).

Episode 11

The final episode brings back the grave tone in the play’s beginning. The section presents the Wounded Knee siege. After a gunshot is heard, the drummer singing the AIM song lies dead on the floor. Following this, the recorded voice presenting the marshal is heard. He declares that the Indians are under arrest. After the speech of the

marshal ends, the projections presenting the siege disappear, and a ceremonial presentation of a funeral for the dead Indian lying on the floor takes place.

[T]he performing group files back on the darkened stage in a funeral procession, led by a drummer who sounds a single heavy beat. The men carry the body of the dead drummer covered by a star blanket. A series of visuals showing the hands of the performing group members being handcuffed are projected as they file off. Then, one by one, they return to the stage, handcuffed, with their arms raised above their heads. The narrator steps to the front of the group. (81)

With the return of the narrator the narration proceeds into the trial of the Indian occupiers who are presented by the handcuffed ensemble. One by one, the performers directly address the audience claiming their Indian identity out loud. In between, the narrator intervenes and declares that the journey of all Native American peoples is continuing:

NARRATOR. We move on. [. . .]
 PERFORMER. (*Moving out of the group, he thrusts his hands toward audience.*) I am Pawnee
 NARRATOR. We move on
 PERFORMER [. . .] I am Creek
 NARRATOR. Back to our homes
 PERFORMER. I am Winnebago
 NARRATOR. We move on.
 [. . .]
 NARRATOR. To the land.
 [. . .]
 NARRATOR. To the sky.
 [. . .] (82)

The projection of the Indian face appears once again, and the voice of the Spanish Sailor is replayed on tape; thus the narrative is framed, and the story ends with the narrator's declaration of innocence, on behalf of all Native Americans:

NARRATOR. (*very compassionately*) I am . . . NOT GUILTY! (82)

This closing statement of the play asserts, as Huntsman indicates, "Native Americans are not guilty of the misconceptions in others' minds, nor of the behavior encoded in assaultive or paternalistic white stereotypes, nor of the things for which Indians have

suffered injustice, inhumanity, and brutality”(introduction xix). In an interview with Jaye T. Darby, Geiogamah instructs Native American people to reject the commonplace stigmas, and to define their own identity, by saying: “If you don’t do it, then the white people will do it for you. That I found out . . . They’ll tell your story for you. They’ll tell you who you are. They’ll tell you what you are if you let them” (Darby vii). With *Foghorn*, Geiogamah defies the most popular, at the same time infamous, stereotypes attributed to American Indian peoples and provides his audiences with an alternative, and most of the time playful, approach to their cultural history. Hence, he achieves his aim of restoring the Native American identity through the art of theater.

Although *Foghorn* cannot be considered a precise example of the Brechtian epic theater, the techniques he borrows from this tradition are worthy of attention. Since the Native American playwright’s social consciousness urges him to use the art of theater for the instruction and entertainment of his audience, the techniques of the Brechtian theater becomes an appropriate vehicle for him to realize his objectives. The alienation technique, in this sense, is employed by Geiogamah in order to communicate his messages to the spectators, for this technique is vital for addressing their mind in order to teach them via his play. As discussed in the analysis of the play, *Foghorn* also applies various Brechtian devices which serve the alienation effect. Among these are the narrative episodic structure, the presence of a narrator, the presentational acting and gestus, the use of multi-media devices such as slide projections and sound recordings, and in a thematic frame, the stereotypical characters hindering the emotional attachment of the audience. *Foghorn*, in short, is an important play to exemplify how Geiogamah achieves to apply elements from the western theatrical tradition in order to establish a contact through his art which is both instructive, entertaining and also critical of the white *civilization*.

NOTES

¹ “Captain Columbus! Look! Look! Look! There! Look! My God! These men, chocolates! The Indians! The Indians! They are the Indians!” (my translation)

² phalanx: 1. (in ancient Greece) a group of heavily armed infantry formed in ranks and files close and deep, with shields joined and long spears overlapping.

2. any body of troops in close array.

3. a number of persons united for a common purpose.

4. a compact or closely massed body of persons, animals, or things.

5. (in Fourierism) a group of about 1800 persons, living together and holding their property in common. (Random House Webster’s Dictionary)

³ Watergate Scandal: “On June, 17, 1972, a security guard at the elegant Watergate hotel-apartment-office complex in Washington D.C., reported to police that a burglary was under way in the headquarters of the Democratic Party. Among the suspects arrested were two officials employed by the Committee to Re-Elect the President [Richard Nixon] and a former CIA agent and White House aide” (Jordan 432-433). After gradual revelations about the event it was clear that President Nixon was directly involved. “Through [. . .] Watergate, the American people would come to learn of the full extent of these activities. That was more than enough to destroy President Nixon’s credibility, strip his administration of any moral authority, and pave the way for his downfall (Jordan 432). The names mentioned in *Foghorn’s* humorous episode are direct allusions to the spies who took part in the scandal.

CONCLUSION

Among the communal activities of the traditional Native American culture, rituals had been one of the basic media through which the community renovated itself and maintained its beliefs and values. However, at the end of the nineteenth century traditional Native American life ended and tribes were forced to abandon many culturally significant activities including the rituals. Thus the Native American community, deprived of life as they knew it, experienced a long period of cultural decline which lasted till the mid twentieth century. The era of social and political turmoil beginning toward the end of the 1950s, during which especially the ethnic minorities in the United States struggled for their rights, inspired American Indian people as well. Thus, a period of cultural renewal began for the Native American community.

Political involvement and activism was a common tendency in the country and art was frequently used for the sake of communicating social, political and cultural messages. During this period, the art of theater emerged, more or less, as a contemporary alternative to the rituals for Native Americans. The Native American playwright Hanay Geiogamah is the architect of what is called the New Native American Theater that is still in the process of development.

In accordance with Geiogamah's political stance, which stems from his social commitment to raising consciousness in Native American community, the central aim of his theater is to educate and entertain his people. Through his theater, Geiogamah attempts to illuminate Native Americans about the realities of their social conditions in the late twentieth century. In order to achieve this end, Geiogamah believes that the following need to be considered:

In judging an Indian play, readers and viewers should keep in mind that the most important function of the Indian dramatist is to communicate with his own people. The major questions are: Does the play speak

effectively to Indians? Can Indians understand what is happening on stage? If there is a message, is it communicated clearly and effectively in Indian terms? Are the characters and dialogue culturally authentic? (Introduction 5)

The importance Geiogamah attaches to communication is also the reason why his plays are simple and short. To him, the Native American playwright should avoid complexity and excessive sophistication so that the “express” purpose of teaching his people can be fulfilled.

The Native American playwright’s dedication to instruction and social criticism presided over his art especially in his earlier works. The theatrical techniques he applies in order to convey his messages to the Native American audience are quintessential in exemplifying how the theater, as a western form of art, serves the indigenous peoples of the United States not only to preserve their cultural values but also to adapt to the contemporary American life. Geiogamah has been successful in turning this seemingly paradoxical cooperation between the Native American and the Western into a fruitful medium for cultural reawakening of his community.

Particularly in *Body Indian* and *Foghorn*, Geiogamah wrote during the early 1970s when his social and political activism was at peak, an undeniable Brechtian influence is evident. Bearing in mind the entirely analytical and critical social content of Bertolt Brecht’s epic theater, it is quite possible to observe a parallelism, if not identity, between Geiogamah’s above mentioned plays and the German playwright’s theater. Both are designed to operate toward social transformation by stimulating the audience to evaluate the play in a rational and judgmental manner and create alternate possibilities to the apparently unchanging reality. On the other hand, the Brechtian influence in these two plays is not observed solely in the objectives. Geiogamah also borrows from the Brechtian epic theater, certain theatrical techniques to fulfill the end of raising consciousness. The Brechtian alienation effect applied in his plays designed to “entertain, instruct and outrage” the Native American community, is of particular importance to serve the aims of the playwright directly (Geiogamah introduction 6).

The alienation effect creates a distance between the stage action and the audience through various means. This distance prevents theatrical illusion and emotional identification. Thus the audience is forced to evaluate the play only rationally with as little emotional involvement as possible. By provoking the spectators to think the alienation effect causes the audience to criticize, judge, and learn from what is presented on the stage. Considering Geiogamah's foremost aim of instruction and arousing awareness, the alienation effect is a crucial device. By defamiliarizing his audience, Geiogamah communicates his messages and thus he refamiliarizes his audience with a new form of reality that he aims to establish.

The techniques he borrows from Brecht in order to create the alienation effect are the application of episodic narrative structure, the use of multimedia devices, the presentational acting, the Brechtian use of music, the *gestus*, and historicization. All these techniques serve to create the alienation effect which is the most essential Brechtian device Geiogamah makes use of. Both *Body Indian* and *Foghorn*, which make use of these alienation devices in varying degrees, are representatives of Geiogamah's social commitment concerning the problems his community suffers from.

In *Body Indian*, what Geiogamah attempts to channel his audience to criticize is the corruption within the contemporary Native American community. In the play, the alienation effect is most effective in the characterization. The community is represented by a dysfunctional group of alcoholic, self-deceptive, indifferent and cunning Indians. The destructive nature of the relationships between the characters hinders the audience's empathy and their gradually intensifying wickedness and hypocrisy leave no room for the emotional identification. On the contrary, such a disturbing portrayal of the Indian characters arouses a constant astonishment among the Indian audiences. As a result, the spectators are continuously provoked to judge their cruel actions. Hence, the alienation effect succeeds in creating a critical distance between the audience and the characters, which culminates in the audience's rational interrogation of the present situation of the Native American community. Thus, notwithstanding the intriguing plot, conventionally proceeding toward a climax, the spectators are prevented from being carried away by the action; instead their response is rendered rational rather than emotional. Brecht's

reference to the difference between the reaction of the audience in the conventional theater and the epic theater further illuminates the issue:

The dramatic theatre's spectator says: Yes, I have felt like that too – Just like me – It's only natural – It'll never change – The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are inescapable – That's great art; it all seems the most obvious thing in the world – I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh.

The epic theatre's spectator says: I'd never have thought it – That's not the way – That's extraordinary, hardly believable – It's got to stop – The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are unnecessary – That's great art: nothing obvious in it – I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh. ("Theatre for Pleasure" 71)

The alienation effect created via characterization is supported by other Brechtian techniques as well. Just like the epic plays, *Body Indian* makes use of technological equipment as a device of alienation. The central symbol of the play, the train, is presented by means of slide projections. The danger the approaching train bears not only represent the corruption growing within the community but also the terror of the traumatic train accident due to which the main character was crippled. In a historical context, on the other hand, it is the reminiscent of the transcontinental railroad that accelerated the irretrievable decline of the traditional Native American life. Furthermore, from a contemporary socio-economic perspective, the character's dwelling nearby the railway indicates to poverty. Due to the appointment of such powerful symbolism to the projections, the stage itself comes alive and the back wall bears an unmistakable attitude, as befitting the Brechtian traits. Moreover, the recurrent appearance of these projections serves the alienation effect also in interrupting the action and breaking the illusion.

The gestus, which is an elemental trait of the Brechtian style of acting, can also be traced in *Body Indian*. Regarding the implicit social commentary the train symbolism contains, the characters' reactions at the moments their action is interrupted by the approaching train can be deemed gestic in that they expose the characters' social attitude at times of confrontation with a problem concerning the community. While various and sometimes contradictory gests are evident in the play, it is possible to claim

that the gestus of stumbling, characters reveal as they try to walk through the liquor bottles on the floor, is the overall gestus of *Body Indian*, as far as the significance of the issue of alcoholism is concerned. The gestus works together with the alienation effect so that the audience can develop social commentaries and arguments observing the physical disposition of the characters.

When it comes to *Foghorn*, on the other hand, the Brechtian influence is more obvious. Geiogamah's critical gaze, directed upon the Native American community in *Body Indian*, turns toward the white oppression with this play. Geiogamah's fundamental concern in *Foghorn* is to re-tell the story of the American Indian which has been told, for centuries, from the Euro-American perspective. The stereotypical forms of Native American identity created by this perspective are the targets of a humorous counter-attack that primarily aims to rid the mind of the Indian audience from the boundaries of the clichés the communal identity has been stuck in. In achieving this end, the Brechtian alienation technique works rather effectively throughout the play.

The most immediately observed element Geiogamah borrows from Brecht's epic theater is the episodic narration of the story. Cruising the history from the first encounter to the current events of the early 1970s, each of the eleven episodes of *Foghorn* can be analyzed separately. As a result of such division, the narrative is continuously interrupted and the change in the focus keeps the audience mentally alert, forcing them to formulate judgments about various issues. Such interruptions in the play are vital in Brechtian theater, for they also interrupt the formation of illusion.

Just as in *Body Indian*, the characterization in *Foghorn* also contributes to the alienation effect. Again, most of the characters, being stereotypes, are handled with a deliberate emphasis on their peculiarities; however, the tone is quite playful this time. In other words, *Body Indian*'s characters, who are too hideous to be true, are replaced in *Foghorn* with those who are too absurd to be real. Therefore, humor and stereotyping in *Foghorn* work together in the creation of the alienation effect. Except for the ones in the opening and closing episodes that are considerably graver in tone, none of the characters in the play can be taken seriously. Instead, they are portrayed so as to underline the

absurdity and irrationality of these stereotypes; thus, they render neither identification nor emotional attachment probable. Consequently, the theatrical illusion is prevented by means characterization.

In *Foghorn*, illusion is avoided through the acting, as well. The ensemble acting applied in Geiogamah's play calls for a presentational mode of performance, which is one of the basic characteristics of Brecht's theater. The presentational acting is among Brechtian theater's major breaks from the conventional theater that requires the actor's transformation into the character he is playing. However, the Brechtian acting is designed to emphasize the fact that the character and the actor are separate entities. What the actor must do on stage is only to demonstrate the character. This approach toward the characters is also adopted in *Foghorn*. As mentioned before, the types presented in the play lack the psychological and emotional depth. They are portrayed as caricatures rather than life-like persons. Such two-dimensional presentations place the character in a distant position from the actor and the audience. As a result, a critical evaluation of the characters is encouraged.

Moreover, *gestus*, as another Brechtian influence, is observed in *Foghorn*. The gestic presentational acting reveals different *gests* throughout the eleven episodes of the play. What makes them qualify as Brechtian *gestus* is that each of these *gests* is directly related to certain social realities. Either by epitomizing the social reaction (i.e. the *gestus* of frustration of the Indian peoples in episode 1) or deliberately exaggerating or reversing it (i.e. the dumbness of the Lone Ranger in episode 6), all gestic moments in *Foghorn* possess a particular content that points to a social bearing.

On the other hand, the Brechtian influence on Geiogamah's use of music is worthy of attention. The music in *Foghorn* is an essential part of the narrative. First of all, the transitions between the episodes are carried out by music. In this sense, the music is informative. As in the very beginning of the play, it is also suggestive; the historical journey of the Native American peoples, from the first encounter to the present, is indicated by the music. Since this journey is the story itself in *Foghorn*, it can also be argued that the music is also gestic. Moreover, as observed in episodes 3 and 9, the

music and songs bear a social attitude, as well. Briefly, the music in *Foghorn* used not in a conventional manner that appeals to emotions but in a Brechtian fashion which, at times, complements or contrasts the action.

The Brechtian influence in *Foghorn* also manifests itself in the employment of multimedia devices throughout the play. As is the case with the music, the projections, slides, photographs, voice recordings, etc. exist as a separate but elemental part of the narrative. Not only do these instruments block the illusion but also provoke the critical attention of the audience. Besides the performers, the multimedia devices play their own parts on the stage and fulfill the function of an actor. Thus, their application clearly echoes the Brechtian epic theater.

Furthermore, historicization, a technique Brecht frequently makes use of, can also be traced in *Foghorn*. The play brings back the historical events such as the occupation of Alcatraz Island or the siege of Wounded Knee. As in Brecht's epic theater, historicization is applied for the sake of raising consciousness about the issues of the present. When the audiences are alienated through the various techniques discussed above, they bear a critical and judgmental attitude towards the historical event presented on the stage. Ridding the history of its familiarity, historicization causes the spectators to observe history with a fresh outlook that enables new and different arguments on what had happened/could have happened in the past. This awareness eventually leads the audience to re-evaluate the issues of the present with the same critical approach, which is the basic function of historicization. Therefore, *Foghorn's* recurrent references to the past experiences of the Native American community, work unmistakably toward stimulating today's community to formulate alternate arguments about the present conditions.

A comprehensive analysis of these two plays reveals that it is a European theatrical tradition that Geiogamah adopts in order to guide his people towards fighting against the destructive impacts of the Euro-American oppression as well as the problems emerging within the community. *Body Indian* and *Foghorn* are the products of Geiogamah's palpable ideological concerns and his ambition to transform the

contemporary Native American community by encouraging his audiences to have a critical assessment of the social realities. Therefore, the cardinal political and instructive theater of Bertolt Brecht appears as a major source of influence in these plays. The alienation effect is an exclusively practical technique for Geiogamah to borrow from the Brechtian theater for it is the fundamental instrument to appeal to the mind of the spectator, which is indispensable regarding Geiogamah's goal of raising consciousness.

Although Geiogamah indicates that “[a]cceptance by non-Indian audiences was not a primary consideration”, the Native American theater has not attracted Indians only (introduction 2). First welcomed by “the *New York Times* [. . .] drama critic Clive Barnes [. . .] as ‘a new kind of theater’” the productions of Geiogamah's American Indian Theater Ensemble (and later Native American Theater Ensemble) were received with excitement also abroad (introduction 2). As Pinazzi notes, besides performing on various Reservations and cultural centers, the Ensemble “received numerous tour engagement offers (in Germany, England, Holland, and Italy)” (179). Despite Geiogamah's theater is technically western, the indigenous Native American content it presents can definitely be considered a contribution to the world theater. From a Native American cultural perspective, his work is extremely important to bring his people closer to the theater, one of the most exquisite artistic genres. Hanay Geiogamah has succeeded in planting the seeds of the New Native American Drama which is promising in terms of introducing a new form of cultural expression and interaction through the theater that originated as a western art form.

On the other hand, it is equally important that the Native playwright's utilization of the *ways of* the western art of theater also indicates, at least to some extent, the compromise between these two cultures which have been, in many aspects, in conflict with each other. The truly interactive nature of this form of art provides Geiogamah with the opportunity to conjure the restorative spirit of the old rituals through which the communal and individual identity and relationships were strengthened. In this sense, the New Native American Drama promises to be a modern alternate to the old Native American dramas, the rituals. Today, an increasing number of American-Indian

playwrights, directors, producers and actors are working towards developing this new formation called the New Native American Drama with an Indian soul and a western body.



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