**A CONVERSATION BY PROFESSIONALIZED SOLDIERS**

As the “epic” comments make known, the conversation between the Swedish Sergeant and Recruiting Officer at the outset of the play takes place in 1624 at Dalarna, a southern city in Sweden. Notably, these two men are looking to recruit soldiers for a campaign in Poland, a military quest that would take place *before* Sweden’s entrance into the Thirty Years’ War (which wouldn’t occur until 1630). As the two soldiers discuss their poor recruiting efforts, warfare is portrayed as something economically beneficial for both them and others. Labeling peace as the absence of order rather than the absence of war, the Sergeant believes war’s systemization brings needed organization to society; nothing goes unchecked as horses are counted, populations are confirmed, and moderation is enacted. In its essence, war *serves* the people my providing stability.

Nevertheless, as the scene advances, it becomes clear that both the Recruiting Officer and Sergeant are military men who epitomize the image of soldiering as a professional, long-term career.

While exchanging money for military service is not something unique to the history of warfare in early 17th century Sweden, this period is marked by a modernization of military practices, including the implementation of a long-serving force. As Michael Howard notes, the development of this long-service force meant certain soldiers would have to serve Sweden’s military for up to 20 years.[[1]](#footnote-1) These soldiers would not be paid in times of peace – though they could survive off their lands – and would have to wait until wartime to be paid from the royal treasury. This means war was generally more profitable for these professional, long-serving soldiers than times of peace.

war not only serves as the means for their economic survival, but simultaneously shapes their attitudes towards society. Peace becomes the *absence* of war and all that they understand war stands for, including a sense of systematic

**INDUSTRIAL MILITARY COMPLEX**

The attitudes reflected in the two soldiers’ conversation aptly applies to perceptions of war in today’s industrial military complex. Writing from an American perspective, spending for the

**CONCLUSION: WAR AS LOST EQUIPMENT**

In the outset of *Mother Courage,* the interaction between the professionalized Recruiting Officer and Sergeant demonstrate how economizing the war machine essentializes beliefs in

Though the soldiers perceive war as an organizational system meant to orient communities towards peak performance, I propose reading he lost “equipment” in war as the

As the “epic” comments make known, the conversation between the Swedish Recruiting Officer and Sergeant at the outset of the play takes place in 1624 at Dalarna, a southern city in Sweden. While the Officer mourns the

a Top Sergeant about system of warfare.

the two soldiers discuss their poor recruiting efforts, warfare is portrayed as something economically beneficial for both them and others.

Simultaneously, considering the war begins before the play starts and continues past its end, the war still has 12 more years to go (the exact same length of the play we have just read.

that starts before the first scene, and continues past its end.

the unique progression of time that does not seemingly progress in a uniform manner. Taking place across scenes,

it wouldn’t have been surprised to see each scene taking place in a year.

how its apparent eternality (as shown in the longevity of the war) shapes Mother Courage’s

OUTLINE:

* INTRODUCTION
* TEMPORAL PROGRESSION AND SPATIAL SETTINGS FOR HELP
* “ON THE HIGHWAY”
* MUTTER COURAGE’S RELATION TO TIME
* CONCLUSION

NOTES:

- Against psychological immersion

- Aversion to Bourgeois and capitalist life

- Verfunding: “make something strange” / Creating sense of estrangement

- Do not try to become merged in the play in a tragic or mimetic sense…. Anti-aristotelian in sense of emotional arousal

- Only see what characters do not what they think

- War and Peace is not that different for poor people – life is enternal cycle of work

- Brecht is not making psychological profiles; he is interested in human relations

- Timeframe: 1624 to 1636

- War starts in 1618 ; Ends in 1648

* Chapter 1
  + Date: Spring, 1624
  + Location: Dalarna, Sweden
  + Pages: 10
  + Recruiting Officers campaigning for Poland
* Chapter 2
  + Date: 1625 and 1626
  + Location: Poland
  + Pages: 8
  + Traveling with Swedish army; successful sale of capon; encounter with son

----------------- Time Jump: 3 Years ----------------------

* Chapter 3
  + Date: 1629
  + Location: A Camp
  + Pages: 20
  + Taken Prison by Finnish Army; son killed
* Chapter 4
  + Date: 1629 – only get year based on context in surrounding chapters
  + Location: Officer’s Tent
  + Pages: 5
  + Mother Courage sings The Song of the Great Capitulation; discussion with Soldiers

----------------- Time Jump: 2 Years ----------------------

* Chapter 5
  + Date: 1631
  + Location: Poland, Moravia, Bavaria, Italy, back to Bavaria
  + Pages: 3 pages
  + Encounter with Peasants and Soldiers come drinking
* Chapter 6
  + Date: 1632
  + Location: Germany
  + Pages: 9
  + General Tilly Death at city of Ingolstadt
* Chapter 7
  + Date: 1632 – based on context
  + Location: “On the highway”
  + Pages: 1
  + The Song of Mother Courage
* Chapter 8
  + Date: 1632 based on context – Battle of Lützen
  + Location: “At a camp”
  + Pages: 12
  + Peace threatens Mother Courage with ruin

----------------- Time Jump: 2 Years ----------------------

* Chapter 9
  + Date: 1934
  + Location: Fichtelgebirge (Germany)
  + Pages: 5
  + Discussion with Cook during dire situation; eternity of war (sixteen years since war started, 1618)
* Chapter 10
  + Date: unknown
  + Location: “On the highway”
  + Pages: 1
  + “The Song of Shelter
* Chapter 11
  + Date: 1636
  + Location: Halle, Belgium
  + Pages: 7
  + Kattrin plays drum and dies
* Chapter 12:
  + Date: 1936
  + Location: Halle, Belgium
  + Pages: 2
  + Mother Courage mourning daughter’s death
  + Note that the war doesn’t end until 1948 (and we end seeing an image of Mother Courage continuing on)

treatment of people as “equipment” or means of production that can be organized for optimal performance via systems such as warfare. Notably, these soldiers do not resort to moralistic frameworks to justify war, but solely see it as positive in itself. Considering the ‘epic’ comments invoke the Swedish King Gustavus – who reformed Sweden’s army in the early 1600’s – I relate this sentiment to the development of professional armies.

In contrast to discussions surrounding warfare today, I briefly discuss how “good” war myths are used in viewing war, though they often “cover-up” monetary motivations similar to what is described by the Sergeant and Recruiter. Considering the ‘epic’ comments invoke the Swedish King Gustavus, I simultaneously read their conversation in light of the development of professional armies. This scene

year is 1624, and these soldiers are recruiting for a campaign against Poland that notably occurs *before* Sweden’sintervention in the Thirty Year’s War. In light of this, I propose looking at how warfare is portrayed as something professionalized; by scene 5 (1631), Sweden would have already ended their campaign against Poland and joined this other war. I relate this to the continual expansion of the industrial military complex in the United States[[2]](#footnote-2) which represents the ceaselessness of war.

professional national army

Considering *Mother Courage* is a “Chronicle of the Thirty Years’ War,” it’s quite peculiar that the opening scene occurs in a country not yet involved in said war. Moreover, the Thirty Years’ War would have been already been active for six years, meaning

this reflects a sense of war’s developing ceaselessness – the Thirty Year’s war is already famous for its extreme length, and the actions of the Swedish army represent how quickly a country can go from war to war. Historically, this ability to never stop fighting is made possible by systematizing warfare *and* armies. At this time, professional armies are beginning to form, turning warfare into a career.

The Swedish army as advanced by king Gustavus allows Sweden to not only battle in the Baltic, but quickly join the Thirty Year’s War in 1630.

In the Sergeant’s discussion with the Recruiting Officer, war is portrayed as the solution to disordered society. It is not only recommended, but actively wished for by the officers; “What they could use around here,” says the Sergeant,” is a good war.”

is considered to be a systematic entity with power of revitalizing

is perceived negatively as the absence of order. In peace time, according to the Sergeant, people believes war’s systemization brings needed organization to society. In wartime, nothing goes unchecked: horses are counted, populations are confirmed, and moderation is enacted. In its essence, war *serves* the people my providing stability.

rather than the absence of violence,

The Sergeant and

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)