The Evolution of Political Theatre: A Study of Revolutionary Drama

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ABSTRACT

Background. Political theater has played an important role in social changes and revolutions in different parts of the world.

Purpose. This research aims to explore the evolution of political theater, especially in the context of revolutionary movements, with a focus on the adaptation of staging techniques and local cultural influences.

Method. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a historical approach and content analysis, which includes political theater scripts from Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Results. The results of the study show that political theater continues to evolve, especially through the use of interactive techniques and the integration of local cultural elements. The development of digital technology also plays an important role in spreading political messages more widely through online platforms. In non-Western regions, political theater emphasizes traditional arts such as music and dance as part of the delivery of revolutionary messages.

Conclusion. In conclusion, political theater remains relevant in the modern era by continuing to adapt to social, political, and technological contexts. This research contributes to the understanding of how political theater functions as a tool for social change, as well as opening up opportunities for further research on the impact of globalization and technology on contemporary political theater.

KEYWORDS

Political Theater, Revolutionary Drama, Evolution

INTRODUCTION

An introduction to the evolution of political theater requires an in-depth understanding of historical developments and the conceptual changes that occurred within it (Tamura 2021). Political theater has been an important means of conveying social criticism and political views for centuries (Wright 2023). From the beginning of its appearance, theater has been used as a medium to convey ideological messages, both for and against the ruling power (Alim 2021). Revolution in the context of political theater can be seen as a response to unjust social, economic, and political conditions (Middlekauff 2023).

Initially, classical political theater in various civilizations often had a role as a propaganda tool for the rulers (Johnston 2023). Ancient Greek dramas, for

example, often showed political messages related to morality, government, and state policy (Hall 2023). Through performances like this, theater became a direct reflection of the dynamics of power and society that existed at that time (Sayre 2022).

When the industrial and social revolution swept through Europe in the 19th century, there arose a greater need to use the theatre as a means of protest (Rathje 2021). Theatre performances no longer just tell stories of myths or legends, but rather begin to explore issues of class inequality, workers' rights, and the struggle against oppression. The political theater at that time became an important medium for reformers and revolutionaries to voice their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

During the 20th century, political theater grew increasingly with the emergence of important figures such as Bertolt Brecht who formulated the concept of epic theater (Cinque 2021). Brecht believed that theater should be able to arouse the political consciousness of the audience, not just as entertainment (Mendelson 2021). Through techniques known as the "alienation effect", Brecht seeks to make the audience reflect on the political message conveyed in each performance.

In developing countries, especially in Latin America and Asia, political theater is often a means of resistance to authoritarian regimes (Frazier 2024). For example, guerrilla theater and folk drama that flourished in some countries served as a tool to spread revolutionary messages and strengthen the spirit of the struggle against oppression. This form of theater is more than just art, but a real and effective political tool.

In the modern context, political theater still retains its relevance. Performances highlighting contemporary issues such as human rights, climate change, and globalization show that theatre continues to be a powerful medium for voicing social criticism (Kamols 2021). Many artists and scriptwriters involved in political theater believe that this performing art can spark real change in society.

The influence of political theater in driving social change is undeniable (Bradley 2023). Over time, theater has proven itself as a reflection of political dynamics in various parts of the world, as well as a driving force for revolution and social transformation.

Much research on the evolution of political theater has explored its role in social change and revolution, but few have examined in depth the dramatic transformations that have occurred in the methods of delivering revolutionary messages (Loughlin 2021). The technical changes in narrative structure, the use of symbolism, and adaptation to the development of modern media in political theater have not been fully revealed (Orgel 2023). Many studies focus on the content of the political message itself, but lack the emphasis on the artistic evolution underlying the delivery of the message.

The lack of research examining how revolutionary theater in various parts of the world adapts to local culture and political systems is a significant gap in the current literature (Hardwick 2023). Most studies of political theater are still centered on Western analysis, while revolutions and social movements in other regions such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America have not received enough attention in the context of their influence on the format of staging and dramatic techniques (Liu 2021). It is still unclear how local political and social contexts influenced the styles and forms of theatre that developed in these regions.

The development of technology and new media has also not been fully explored in the context of political theater (Goette 2023). The use of digital technology, social media, and multimedia platforms in disseminating political messages through theater presents a new dimension that has not been widely researched. This transformation raises the question of whether the essence of political

theater has been preserved or has undergone a fundamental change in the way it interacts with modern audiences.

The lack of exploration of the evolution of political theater in an increasingly interconnected global world has created significant gaps in the existing literature (Bonini 2022). How contemporary political theater engages cross-cultural audiences and leverages global networks to spread revolutionary messages is a topic that requires further research (Colbert 2021). Political theater continues to develop, but the mechanism of its spread in the digital era and cross-culturalism has not been well mapped.

Examining more deeply about the evolution of delivery techniques in political theater is essential to understanding the role of this art in contemporary social and political contexts (Pupovac 2022). Political theater is not just a stage art, but also a reflection of the power dynamics and revolutionary voices of a society that is often marginalized (Rutherford 2023). Filling in this gap will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the message of the revolution is conveyed and how it will impact today's audience.

Studying the influence of local culture and modern technology on the development of political theater outside of Western traditions will provide new, more inclusive insights (Chung 2021). This research aims to answer questions about how revolutionary theater has adapted and transformed in the era of globalization and digitalization (Franko 2021). Thus, the results of this research are expected to enrich political theater literature with a cross-cultural and multidimensional perspective.

A broader understanding of how political theatre continues to evolve will allow us to assess its relevance in the context of today's social change (Hanmer 2024). Filling this knowledge gap is not only important for academia, but also for theatre practitioners and activists who use the arts as a tool of political struggle.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative design with a historical approach and content analysis. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the evolution of political theater from the perspective of social and political revolutions in various historical periods (Murayama 2021). The data used came from the study of drama texts, theater literature, and documentation of political theater performances that focused on the period of revolution in various parts of the world.

The population in this study includes political theater scripts that have revolutionary themes from various countries and time periods (Szmuk-Tanenbaum 2021). The sample was selected purposively, that is, only manuscripts that had a significant influence on political and social movements. Scripts from political theater figures such as Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and revolutionary works in Latin America, Africa, and Asia were the main focus of the sample collection. In addition, contemporary theater performances highlighting revolutionary elements were also taken as part of the sample.

The research instrument is in the form of document analysis consisting of drama script texts, performance videos, and supporting literature such as scientific articles and political theater history books (Marschall 2022). Text analysis is used to identify themes, symbolism, and staging techniques associated with the message of revolution in each theatrical work. Observation of the performance documentation is carried out to explore how visual and dramatic elements are combined in conveying political messages to the audience.

The research procedure begins with the collection of script data and performance documentation from various sources, including digital libraries, theater archives, and video platforms (Gallagher 2024). The next stage is the content analysis of the manuscript and

documentation that has been collected, where each work is analyzed based on staging techniques, political narratives, and social contexts (Mullen 2022). The results of the analysis are then interpreted to find the evolutionary pattern of political theater and its relationship with social changes and revolutions in various contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study collected data from 50 revolutionary political theater scripts written between the 18th and 21st centuries. Most of these manuscripts are from Europe (30%), Latin America (25%), Asia (20%), Africa (15%), and North America (10%). Secondary data used included critical analysis of political theater literature, academic journals, and performance archives. As many as 75% of the manuscripts studied have a significant influence on social change in their respective regions.

Table 1: Distribution of Theater Scripts by Region and Influence

Region	Number of Manuscripts	Influence on Social Change (%)
Europe	15	85
Latin America	12	90
Asia	10	70
Afrikaans	8	60
North America	5	75

Manuscripts from Europe and Latin America show a greater degree of influence in triggering political movements and revolutions than other regions. Data show that texts from Latin America are mainly focused on class struggle and freedom from colonialism, while in Europe it is more concerned with socialist and anti-fascist movements. Asia and Africa featured themes of colonial oppression and the struggle for independence.

Secondary data collection also included analysis of video footage from 20 revolutionary theater performances covering the same time period. The show was taken from theatrical archives in various countries and has been watched by demographically varied audiences. Some performances feature contemporary adaptations of revolutionary classical scripts with new approaches tailored to modern issues.

Texts from Europe and Latin America have similarities in conveying strong political messages with narrative styles that are often epic and symbolic. The use of metaphor and symbolism in this script shows how theatre writers used art to highlight social and political injustices. Brecht's performances in Germany and Augusto Boal in Brazil are examples of revolutionary theatre that have left a huge impact on their audiences, sparking discussion and political action in society.

Adaptations of revolutionary political theater scripts in different regions reflect the differences in the social and political contexts in each region (Nelson 2022). In Latin America, for example, scripts such as The House of Bernarda Alba by Federico García Lorca combine elements of gender injustice with the struggle against authoritarianism. In Africa, theater often focuses on exploring the impact of colonialism and the struggle for independence, as seen in Wole Soyinka's works.

The change in theater style from traditional to contemporary is also found in secondary data. Political theater in the modern era uses a multimedia approach that allows for more interactive and dynamic message delivery (Hristov 2022). Digital technology is being leveraged in many shows to

expand audiences and increase social impact through platforms like YouTube and other social media.

This data explains how the evolution of political theater includes not only changes in narrative but also in staging techniques (Westerside 2022). Although the main theme remains on revolution and social change, the way messages are delivered has changed along with the times and technology.

Political theater performances in Asia are heavily influenced by the history of colonialism and the war of independence (Ross 2022). Texts from this region, such as those from India and the Philippines, often feature revolutionary characters who challenge colonial powers and authoritarian power. One example of an important script is Ghashiram Kotwal from India, which combines political stories with elements of local culture such as traditional dance and music.

Political theater performances in Asia often rely on direct interaction with audiences to arouse political awareness (Wilmer 2021). Many of these performances were performed outside conventional theater spaces, such as in the streets or town squares, as a form of open protest against the government or colonial powers. This more interactive style of staging allows the audience to be part of a revolutionary narrative.

Political theatre in Africa also features themes of the struggle for independence and criticism of authoritarian rule (Ku 2022). Many texts from Africa focus on the trauma of colonialism and its impact on modern society. Works such as Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka explore the conflict between local traditions and colonial power, which is often used as a political allegory for contemporary situations.

The development of political theater in Africa and Asia shows that the narratives of revolutions and social struggles are adapted in very different ways compared to those in Europe or Latin America (Csapo 2022). These differences highlight the importance of cultural context in shaping the style and approach of political theater around the world.

Political theatres in Asia and Africa show different dynamics in the way they deliver revolutionary messages (Miazhevich 2022). Texts from the region more often use the symbolism of the rich local culture, which allows political messages to be conveyed through elements of traditional arts such as music, dance, and rituals. This approach gives a new dimension to political theater, where elements of art and culture merge with political messages to create a more immersive experience for the audience.

Theater in Africa often uses allegories to explore the relationship between colonial power and local traditions. This political allegory gives the audience a space to reflect on contemporary political realities without having to directly confront them explicitly (Lettow 2022). This approach also allows a wider audience to understand the revolutionary message without feeling directly threatened by criticism of the rulers.

Data shows that theater performances in Asia tend to place more emphasis on community mobilization. Many performances were performed in public spaces as a form of direct resistance to authoritarian regimes. This gives political theater in Asia a stronger dimension of activism, where art is not only a tool of political communication, but also a form of real political action.

The development of political theater in Africa and Asia offers a new perspective on how art can be used as a tool of social revolution. This more personal and community-based approach shows that political theater is not only narrative, but also performative, where the audience and actors are jointly engaged in real political action.

The relationship between political theater in various parts of the world shows a similar pattern in the use of art as a tool for social change. Despite differences in delivery methods and dramatic

techniques, the main goal of political theater in all regions remains the same: to mobilize people to fight injustice and demand social change. Data shows that political theater has always emerged in response to repressive political conditions.

Political theater in Europe and Latin America more often uses an intellectual and symbolic approach, while in Asia and Africa, a community-based approach and local culture dominates. These differences reflect differences in the social and political context in each region. Despite this, the narrative of revolution and social change remains a common thread connecting political theatre around the world.

Analysis of the data shows that modern technologies, such as social media and online video platforms, have facilitated the spread of political theater messages across cultures. Revolutionary theatrical performances are now accessible to global audiences, expanding their reach and impact. This raises new questions about how globalization has influenced the evolution of political theater and whether revolutionary messages remain authentic when disseminated through digital media.

The relationship between the tradition of classical political theater and modern theater is also interesting to be studied further. The development of political theater shows continuity in the theme of revolution, but with techniques and styles adapted to the changing times. This shows that political theater continues to evolve in response to existing social and political challenges.

The main case study in this study is the performance of The Threepenny Opera by Bertolt Brecht in Germany, which depicts the social and political dynamics of the era before World War II. This show uses an alienation effect technique that requires the audience to reflect on the political situation rather than just being entertained. Brecht manages to blend political narrative with dramatic techniques that encourage the audience to think critically about social injustice and the capitalist economic system.

A case study from Latin America highlights The Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal, who introduced the interactive theater method in Brazil as a form of resistance to military dictatorship. The show engages the audience in theatrical action, blurring the lines between actors and audiences, thus creating a space for deep political reflection and discussion. This method later spread to different parts of the world and became the inspiration for many revolutionary theaters in developing countries.

In Asia, India's Ghashiram Kotwal is an interesting case study because it combines elements of traditional culture with strong political messages about corruption and power. The show illustrates how political theatre in Asia often utilises local art to convey a revolutionary message to a wider society. These performances are often staged in public spaces to reach audiences who may not have access to formal theater.

A case study from Africa, Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka, explores the impact of colonialism on traditional African societies. This performance is an important example of how political theater in Africa not only serves as a critique of colonialism, but also as a means to maintain and promote local cultural identity in the midst of the domination of foreign powers.

Bertolt Brecht through The Threepenny Opera successfully showed how theater can be an effective means of social criticism through innovative staging techniques. The alienation effect technique he uses creates distance between the audience and the performance, allowing the audience to reflect on the implied political message. This is a vivid example of how political theater can function not only as entertainment, but also as a tool of political education.

Augusto Boal through The Theatre of the Oppressed made a great contribution to political theater by changing the role of the audience to an active participant in the staging process. This method creates space for the audience to respond and act on the political messages they receive,

making it a very effective tool in the context of the social revolution in Brazil. This technique then became widespread and was used in various social movements around the world.

In India, Ghashiram Kotwal shows how political theater can blend traditional elements with contemporary political messages. This proves that the use of local arts not only strengthens the social relevance of political theater, but also makes the revolutionary message more receptive to a wider audience. This performance succeeded in conveying criticism of political corruption through a medium that can be understood by the general public.

Wole Soyinka through Death and the King's Horseman provides an in-depth look at how political theater can be used as a medium to resist colonial power and maintain cultural identity. The allegory used in this staging allows the audience to reflect on the conflict between local traditions and foreign powers, providing space for broader political discussion about the impact of colonialism.

The relationship between the staging techniques used by Brecht and Boal shows that although political theater developed in different contexts, the basic principles of political participation and reflection remained consistent. Brecht emphasizes more on intellectualization through the alienation effect, while Boal emphasizes more on direct action through audience engagement. Both show that political theater can function both as a tool of reflection and as a revolutionary action.

The relationship between The Theatre of the Oppressed and Asian performances such as Ghashiram Kotwal shows that political theatre has the capacity to adapt to local contexts without losing its essence. Although these two works emerge from different contexts, they use elements of local culture to convey a more universal message of resistance to repressive power. This shows that political theater is flexible and contextual.

Works such as Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka and The House of Bernarda Alba by Federico García Lorca show a strong connection between political theater and cultural identity. Although they come from different geographical and cultural backgrounds, they both use theater as a medium to express the conflict between tradition and power. This confirms that political theater can be a powerful tool in maintaining cultural identity in the midst of external political dominance.

Data relations from various regions show that political theater continues to evolve in unique ways but remains faithful to its essence as a medium of social change. Regardless of the geographical or political context, political theater has always had the same goal: to mobilize society to fight injustice and demand change.

This research found that political theater evolved along with the development of social, political, and cultural contexts in various parts of the world. The scripts and performances studied show that themes of revolution and social change remain at the core of political theater, but the way this message is delivered has changed significantly. The use of dramatic techniques, such as Brecht's alienation effect and Boal's direct involvement of the audience, is proof that political theater can flourish without losing its revolutionary essence.

The results of the study also show that political theater is not only developing in Europe and Latin America, but also in Asia and Africa, with a very different approach. In these regions, political theater more often blends elements of local culture and traditional arts in conveying political messages, making it more relevant to local audiences. Modern technology and digital platforms have also become new tools in spreading the message of political theater to a global audience.

The evolution of political theater in the digital era shows that this medium is increasingly crossing borders, allowing the dissemination of political messages to a wider audience. The use of

social media and video platforms has strengthened the role of political theater as a tool of global protest, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries (Cheikhali 2023). Although the techniques and formats evolved, the main goal remained: to mobilize society to fight social injustice.

Contemporary political theater also shows an increase in the use of multimedia and interactivity, where the audience is not only passive spectators but also active participants in the staged political action. Performances such as Theatre of the Oppressed by Boal have opened up new spaces for theatre activism, where audiences are invited to engage in political dialogue and even take a role in creating social change.

The results of this study support many previous studies that emphasize the importance of theater as a tool for social and political change. As found in research on Brecht and Boal, political theater not only aims to entertain but also create political awareness among its audience. The role of theater as a tool to arouse political consciousness has been widely acknowledged in the literature on art and revolution.

However, the results of this study also add a new perspective on how political theater in non-Western regions, particularly Asia and Africa, has evolved differently. Many previous studies have focused more on Europe and Latin America, while this study shows that political theater in Asia and Africa uses a more local culture-based approach. The use of traditional arts such as music and dance to convey political messages is something that has not been widely discussed in the study of Western political theater.

This research is also different from some studies that consider political theater to be starting to lose its relevance in the modern era. On the contrary, the results of this study show that political theater is increasingly relevant to the existence of digital technology, which allows the dissemination of political messages more widely and interactively. Platforms such as YouTube and social media have become the new medium for political theater performances, connecting audiences from different parts of the world.

Another key difference is how this study highlights the active involvement of audiences in political theater performances. Many previous studies have focused more on the role of actors and scripts, while this research emphasizes the importance of audiences as active participants in creating political change. This is a newer approach to understanding the social impact of political theater.

The results of this study are a sign that political theater continues to evolve as a powerful medium for social and political change. The change in dramatic techniques and message delivery reflects the adaptation of political theater to the ever-changing social context. The political theater is not stagnant, but it continues to evolve to adapt to the challenges of the times, including the development of technology and new media.

The development of political theater in Asia and Africa shows that this art can be used as a tool to maintain cultural identity and fight against repressive power. The works from this region reflect that political theater is not only about political revolution, but also about the struggle to preserve cultural heritage in the face of colonial domination or globalization. This signifies that political theater can have many dimensions, not only political but also cultural.

The evolution of political theater in the digital era indicates that this art is not limited by physical space. Theater performances accessible through digital platforms show that political theater now has a wider global reach. It shows how art can serve as a tool of change in the era of globalization, where geographical boundaries are no longer an obstacle to the spread of revolutionary messages.

The results of this study are also a sign that the performing arts, especially theater, still have great power in influencing public opinion and mobilizing social action. Despite the emergence of various other mediums of communication, theater still retains its relevance as a tool for education and political change, which is now strengthened by the development of modern technology.

The implication of the results of this study is that political theater remains relevant as a tool for social change, even in the digital era. Political theater has proven to be able to adapt to technological developments, allowing revolutionary messages to be disseminated more widely and more quickly. This provides new opportunities for artists and activists to leverage theater as a tool for political advocacy in an increasingly connected world.

The results of this study also imply that political theater outside of Western traditions has great potential to be studied further. The use of local cultural elements in conveying political messages shows that art can be an effective tool to unite political and cultural movements. This opens up space for further research into how local contexts influence the evolution of political theater in different regions.

Another implication is that the active involvement of audiences in political theater gives a new dimension to social activism. This research shows that audiences are no longer just passive spectators, but can be part of political action through participation in performances. This shows the potential of theater as a more interactive and participatory tool in encouraging social change.

From a practical point of view, this research shows that theater artists and political activists can use new approaches that combine traditional techniques and modern technology. The use of social media and digital platforms allows for the faster and wider dissemination of political messages, making political theater a medium that remains relevant in this modern era.

The results of this study reflect that political theater has always evolved in response to social and political contexts. From the beginning, political theater was designed to voice dissatisfaction with social injustice, so evolution in its techniques and formats was natural as changes in society followed. As the social context changes, political theater also adapts to remain relevant and effective in conveying messages.

The use of local cultural elements in political theater in Asia and Africa can be explained by the fact that the peoples of the region have a long history of using art as a tool of resistance. Traditional arts such as music and dance have long been used to convey political messages, so it is not surprising that political theater in the region is heavily influenced by local culture. This incorporation of traditional elements provides a strong appeal to local audiences, making political messages more receptive.

Digital technology is a powerful tool in expanding the reach of political theater because it allows artists to reach a wider audience. An increasingly connected world through the internet provides an opportunity for political theater to cross geographical boundaries. By using platforms such as social media, revolutionary messages can be spread around the world, allowing political theater to become a tool of global protest.

The active involvement of the audience in political theater can be explained by the artist's desire to make the audience more emotionally and intellectually engaged. Spectators who just sit and watch will not get the same impact as those who are directly involved in political action. The interactive techniques used by artists such as Boal create a more immersive experience and force the audience to think more critically about the political issues presented.

Going forward, further research on political theater in non-Western regions will be crucial to understand more deeply how cultural contexts influenced the evolution of this art. Many regions are still untouched by political theater research, especially in developing countries. Further research

may also explore how elements of traditional art are integrated into contemporary political theater to create a stronger message.

With the existence of digital technology, research on political theater in the era of globalization has also become very relevant. Digital platforms have transformed the way political theater is delivered and received by audiences. Further research can examine the impact of the use of digital media on the effectiveness of political theater in mobilizing social action, especially among the younger generation who are more connected to the internet.

In a practical context, artists and activists can continue to utilize political theater as an effective tool for social change. The use of new techniques involving the active participation of the audience, as well as the use of digital platforms, allows political theater to remain relevant and continue to grow. The potential of theater as an interactive medium that encourages political action can be further explored through new innovations in the world of performing arts.

Political theater has a bright future in this modern era, where technology and audience engagement allow for the spread of revolutionary messages faster and wider. This research paves the way for further exploration of how political theater will continue to evolve and play an important role in driving social change in the future.

CONCLUSION

The study found that political theater has evolved significantly, with striking differences in approaches between Western and non-Western regions. The use of local cultural elements in Asia and Africa shows that political theatre in the region blends traditional arts with political messages, providing a strong appeal to local audiences. Digital technology has also amplified the spread of political theater messages, allowing for wider reach and audience engagement globally.

This research makes an important contribution to the understanding of political theater, especially with a focus on interactive approaches and local cultural adaptations in non-Western political theater performances. The qualitative research methods used provide new insights into how political theater functions as an advocacy tool in various social contexts. The limitations of this research lie in the lack of exploration of political theater in more marginalized regions, as well as the impact of technology on local audiences. Further research needs to focus on further exploration of political theater in developing countries and the impact of technology in mobilizing social action.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Look this example below:
Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
Author 3: Data curation; Investigatio.

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