

# Theatre Styles: Naturalism

6th Century BC:  
Ancient Greek  
Theatre

9th Century:  
Medieval Theatre

16th Century:  
Commedia dell'Arte

16th Century:  
Elizabethan Theatre

19th Century:  
Melodrama

19th Century:  
Naturalism

20th Century: Epic  
Theatre



## Fact File:

Name: Konstantin Stanislavski (Stan)

Born: 17/01/1863 Died: 07/08/1938

Nationality: Russian

Style: Naturalism



**Naturalism** is a theatrical style that attempts to resemble real-life on stage.

**Stanislavski** developed a performance process, allowing actors to use their personal histories to express authentic emotion and create rich characters. This process helps an actor create the illusion of reality – a naturalistic character.

### **In a Naturalistic play expect to see:**

- Accurate characterisation skills, including accent, physicality, voice.
- A performance that involves real life issues and topics. Audience made to sympathise/empathise with characters.
- Full costume, appropriate for the situation, context and character.
- Full set used for each scene. Lots of props that would be in that particular moment.

### **Stanislavski's rehearsal techniques included:**

- **Emotional Memory:** This requires actors to call on the **memory** of details from a similar situation (or more recently a situation with similar **emotions**) and import those feelings to those of their characters.
- **Method of Physical Action:** This requires actors to consider the **inner-incentives** of the character. Question **why** they are undertaking the physical steps that they take throughout the scene.
- Identifying **subtext:** This is an underlying theme or idea that is hidden within what is happening or what is being said. Subtext can be portrayed by the way a line is said or the physical structure of the staging.
- **The Magic 'if':** This is when an actor starts to ask themselves 'if' questions about the character that they are playing. In doing this they can discover whole new elements. Asking 'if', unleashes the imagination and encourages the actor to believe in what they are doing, and stimulates creativity.

# Theatre Styles: Epic Theatre

6th Century BC:  
Ancient Greek  
Theatre

9th Century:  
Medieval Theatre

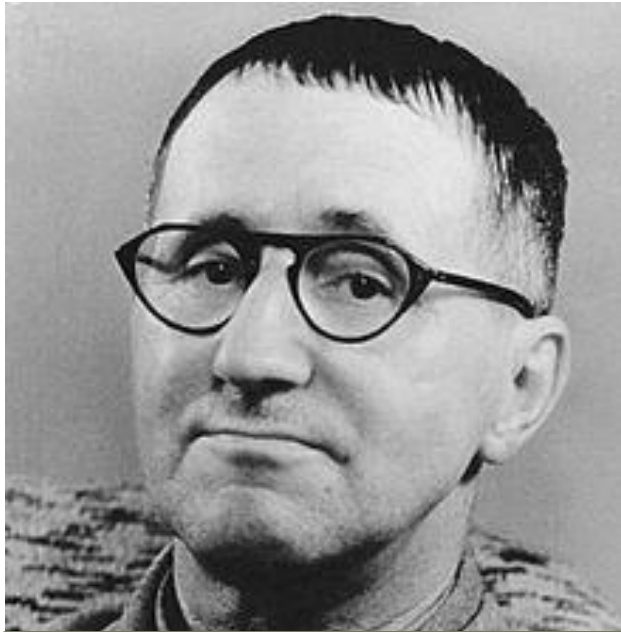
16th Century:  
Commedia dell'Arte

16th Century:  
Elizabethan Theatre

19th Century:  
Melodrama

19th Century:  
Naturalism

20th Century: Epic  
Theatre



## Fact File:

Name: Bertolt Brecht

Born: 10/02/1898 Died: 14/08/1956

Nationality: German

Style: Epic Theatre

**Lehrstucke** = Learning Plays.  
Brecht wanted his audience to take something away and have learned something from the play – not just feel emotions.

**Epic Theatre** is a theatrical style opposed to naturalistic theatre.

Epic theatre often has a **fractured narrative** that is non-linear and jumps about in time. Epic theatre also shows an argument, a clear **political statement**. Standing outside of the action emotionally, the audience remains objective and watches a **montage** or a series of scenes.

**Brecht** changed the rules of theatre, by **distancing the actors and audiences** from the events being portrayed. He basically wanted his audiences to be reminded they were watching a play at all times and leave **thinking** and **questioning** the action.

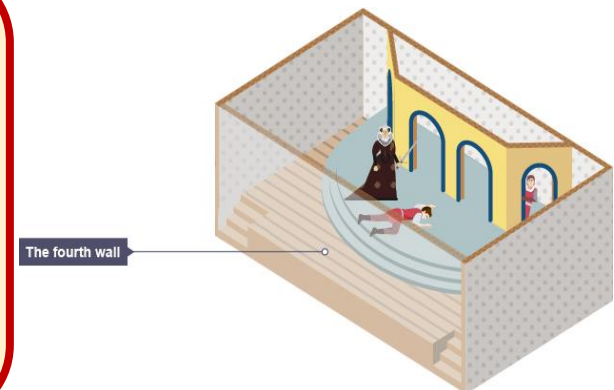
## **Verfremdungseffekt** = The Alienation Effect.

This term means to perform in a way that the audience is stopped from simply identifying themselves with the characters in the play. Brecht wanted his audience to consider the social actions of the characters in order to learn from them, rather than sympathise/empathise with them.



## What techniques did Brecht use to make his audience THINK?

Breaking the fourth wall  
Actors stepping in and out of character  
Direct address  
Third person narration  
Non-linear narrative  
Multi-rolling  
Placards



# Theatre Styles: Theatre of the Oppressed

6th Century BC:  
Ancient Greek  
Theatre

9th Century:  
Medieval Theatre

16th Century:  
Commedia dell'Arte

16th Century:  
Elizabethan Theatre

19th Century:  
Melodrama

19th Century:  
Naturalism

**20th Century:** Epic  
Theatre



## Fact File:

Name: Augusto Boal

Born: 16/03/1931 Died: 02/05/2009

Nationality: Brazilian

Style: Theatre of the Oppressed

**Theatre of the Oppressed** is a theatre style created by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre practitioner.

**Boal**, created the Theatre of the Oppressed to be a form of **interactive theatre** intended to transform lives as spectators become performers, acting out solutions to social problems. His techniques are still used today to motivate change.

## **Forum Theatre**

Forum Theatre is a technique whereby the audience are given the power to control what happens on stage. They can stop and change the action.

For Forum Theatre to be successful, the boundary between the actors and audience needs to be taken away and they need to work together successfully.

## **Important roles in Forum Theatre**

**Joker** – the facilitator who communicates with the audience.

**Protagonist** – the leading character e.g. the oppressed.

**Antagonist** – a hostile person e.g. the bully.

**Other actors** – need to improvise their responses to suggested changes.

**Spect-actors** – the members of the audience who change the performance.

