Towards A Dialectic Theatre:

An exploration of the terminology of Bertolt Brecht's 'Epic Theatre'

By

Andrew Martin Lee

Abstract:

This paper will explore and explain some of the terminology used by Brecht to describe his 'Epic Theatre' in an attempt to clarify it's often confused understanding. It will do this by first exploring the need for such a paper, drawing on critics of Brecht's 'specialized and impenetrable jargon' (Esslin, 1980, p. 110) to explain why such a demystified reading of Brecht is not only advantageous but a necessity for those just beginning to explore his methodology. It will give a brief outline of what Brecht was rebelling against, that of the Aristotelian drama, before presenting a comparison of the style with Brecht's own. It will then explore some of the terminology and concepts used by Brecht explaining in simplified terms its usage and effect within his work; alienation, the fourth wall, gestus, as well as elements of his staging practices are explored before concluding with a brief look at Brecht's move away from the 'Epic Theatre' towards a 'Dialectic' one, just before his death.

Section One: The Aristotelian Drama and The Epic Theatre

Art as a political tool has been the modus operandi of the theatrical form, since the inception of early storytelling, through its evolution into the more ceremonious performances of the theatres of ancient Greece, to the theatre of the modern day. The focus on theatre's political potential has waxed and waned over its history to varying degrees, and with it, orators of the theatre have evolved too, championing new movements and remixed versions of past movements, in an attempt to rally against, or for, the political. Yet, as Ranciére states in *The Emancipated Spectator* 'We have heard so many orators passing off their words as more than words, as formulas for embarking on a new existence; we have seen so many theatrical representations claiming to be not spectacles but community ceremonies' (Ranciére and Elliot, 2009, 22-3). Can the same be said for theatre's political potential? Is the work of these orators as effective at bringing about social, cultural and political change as their words might suggest?

Such a critique could easily be applied to the theories of Bertolt Brecht's Epic theatre. It would not take a great leap of the imagination to suggest that the complex methodologies of the German playwright, poet and theatrical practitioner, could be, in the words of Ranciére 'words, yet more words, and nothing but words[?]' (Ibid, 22). Does the complexity of the way his theories are reported muddy their ability to achieve their desired effect? Brecht, by his own admission stated in *Brecht On Theatre* that 'I had been brought to realize that many of my remarks [...] are wrongly understood because there were important points which instead of defining I took for granted' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 233). If a true understanding of the techniques and impact of Brecht's Epic theatre are to be made, then one must cut through the verbose style of his writings that Willet in *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* (1967) described as being written in 'a turgid, ranting, over-emotional style.'

(Willett, 1967, p. 169).

Yet this style of language is one of the reasons Brecht's theatre became one of the most well-known forms of theatre today, as Esslin states in *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, the 'difficulty and obscurity of a specialized and impenetrable jargon' (Esslin, 1980, p. 110) was instrumental in allowing German theatrical ideologies to reach the level of influence they currently possess (Ibid). He goes on to explain that 'Brecht, unwittingly, achieved a similar result in his own, more modest theorizing: for even he, the clearest and most concise of writers in his poetry and plays, often succumbed to the ponderous tradition of German aesthetic philosophy, when he tried to expound the underlying principles of his work' (Ibid, p. 110)

This 'ponderous tradition' makes it difficult to understand the complex theories and practical methodologies that underpin the epic theatre, painting them in a manner that is not easily assessable for the type of audience that Brecht aimed his work towards 'the sort of people who just come for fun and don't hesitate to keep their hats on in the theatre' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 14) .

As Esslin explains elsewhere 'His theories of the 'epic theatre' which he himself expounded in a most confusing manner and which has since then been further confounded by commentators hypnotized by the intriguing technical terms he invented, can be summarized in simple language and its real content and significance assessed.' (Esslin, 1980, p. xiv)

The complexity of academia's attempt to explain his methodology, as well as his own 'over-emotional style' confuses and confounds an easy understanding of his techniques that this paper will attempt to circumvent, attempting to construct a 'simple language' so that 'its real content and significance [can be] assessed.' (Ibid, p. xiv). This paper will give a brief

contextualisation of epic theatres influences before selecting a few of its component parts: alienation, the fourth wall, Gestus, Gest and Gist, as well as Brechtian staging, to examine and inform the larger more complex epic theatre, it will then conclude by exploring where Brecht's theatre was heading at the time of his death and how it has influenced political theatre today. It seeks not to be a comprehensive study, but an introduction to the epic theatre, in order to aid in its understanding. However, 'The Brechtian theatre' according to Esslin 'can only be understood in the light of what he rebelled against' (Ibid, p. 111). As Brecht notes, the drama of his time:

> follows Aristotle's recipe for achieving what he calls catharsis (the spiritual cleansing of the spectator). In Aristotelian drama, the plot leads the hero into situations where he reveals his innermost being. All the incidents shown have the object of driving the hero into spiritual conflicts [...]. Non-aristotelian drama would at all costs avoid bundling together the events portrayed and presenting them as an inexorable fate, to which the human being is handed over helpless despite the beauty and significance of his reactions; on the contrary, it is precisely this fate that it would study closely, showing it up as of human contriving. (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 87).

The kind of dramatic theatre created by the Aristotelian form represented for Brecht a theatre to which it's audience would, through trickery and illusion, be made unable to fully understand the complexities of the situations presented, distracted, as they would be, by the emotional connection to the characters and their situations. He describes the audience of the Aristotelian drama, saying that:

> They scarcely communicate with each other; their relations are those of a lot of sleepers. [...] True, their eyes are open, but they stare rather than see, just as they

4

listen rather than hear. They look at the stage as if in a trance. … Seeing and hearing

are activities, and can be pleasant ones, but these people seem relieved of activity

and like men to whom something is being done (Ibid, p. 187).

To counteract this form of passive viewership Brecht would develop a non-

Aristotelian drama, a form of parable that 'demanded a considerable sacrifice of effects of

illusion on the part of actors and stage set. The preparations made so as to give point to the

parable had themselves to be visible. The playing had to enable and encourage the audience

to draw abstract conclusions.' (Ibid, p. 100). Brecht's epic theatre would be, as Styan states

in *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre,* 'stripped of its

theatrical magic, and the audience refused the state of emotional, empathetic trance' to

oppose the 'degrading condition he associated with [...] the 'Aristotelian' theatre.' (Styan,

1993, p. 142). The table presented further below, extracted from *Brecht on Theatre*

provides a useful comparison between the Aristotelian dramatic theatre and Brecht's own

Epic theatre, that, ironically, his own descriptions complicate. It presents the epic theatre as

a shift away from, rather than the antithesis to dramatic theatre (Brecht and Willett, 1978,

p. 37).

The desired effect of the epic theatre was one of an emotional detachment, that

would allow the spectator to turn into an observer and yet arouse his ability for action Ibid,

p. 37). The techniques that would allow for this transition, stemmed from all areas of the

production process from performance to staging, music to the attitude of its audience.

Brecht wished 'to raise the theatre to the level of science, and present its repertoire to an

audience that in *better* surroundings is used to seeing all attempts to involve it in illusion

rejected' (Ibid, p. 28). He wished to develop a theatre that would allow the audience to assess situations in a scientific manner, removing the audience's emotional attachment, one that clouded their ability for reason.

If one is to fully understand how the effect of this scientific theatre is made, it is best, much like any scientific enquiry, to isolate the individual elements in order to better understand the whole. After all, this process of singular elements working as singular objects and as a whole is one of the greatest influences of Brecht's epic theatre on the Postdramatic theatre of the modern day, Hans-Thies Lehmann quotes German director Heiner Goebbels in *Postdramatic Theatre* saying that he was:

> 'interested in inventing a theatre where all the means that make up theatre do not just illustrate and duplicate each other but instead all maintain their own forces but act together, and where one does not just rely on the conventional hierarchy of means. That means, for example, where a light can be so strong that you suddenly only watch the light and forget the text, where a costume speaks its own language or where there is a distance between speaker and text and a tension between music and text.' (Lehmann, 2010, p. 86)

Table – Comparison between the Dramatic Theatre and the Epic Theatre

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	- Forces him to take decisions
- Experience	- Picture of the world
- The spectator is involved in something	- He is made to face something
- Suggestion	- Argument
- Instinctive feeling are preserved	- Brought to the point of recognition
- The spectators 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 fixed point	- Man as a process
- Thought determines being	- Social being determines thought
- Feeling	- Reason

(Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 37).

Section Two: Alienation - (Verfremdungseffekt)

The emotional detachment created by the Epic theatre was referred to by Brecht as alienation, Esslin explains that:

> By inhibiting the process of identification between the spectator and the characters, by creating a distance between them and enabling the audience to look at the action in a detached and critical spirit, familiar things, attitudes, and situations appear in a new a strange light, and create, through astonishment and wonder, a new understanding of the human situation. (Esslin, 1980, p. 119).

By alienating its audience, the epic theatre would allow the spectator, according to Styan 'to recognize its subject, but at the same time make it seem unfamiliar' (Styan, 1993, p. 151) This unfamiliarity would allow the spectators to re-examine a situation they had previously considered to be known to them.

This estrangement (E-effect), alienation (A-effect), and distancing would be known under several names, but the most known, and perhaps the most likely to confuse is Verfremdungseffekt (V-effect). Each title is interchangeable within the work of many Brechtian scholars, whilst others create alternate meanings assigned to each. The usage of alienation and its synonyms, in this paper, will take on the role of the former, and be interchangeable with each other.

As to the meaning of alienation, we can look to Brecht for clarity, 'the first condition for the A-effect's application [...] is that stage and auditorium must be purged of everything 'magical' and that no 'hypnotic tensions' should be set up.' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 136). Without the illusion of traditional dramatic theatre, the spectator would not be suckered into the emotions of the scene, they would not identify on an emotional level with

the character, they would instead see themselves in the character's actions. He explains that 'People have acquired new motives for their actions; science has found new dimensions by which to measure them; it's time for art to find new expressions.' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 67) It was his intent to 'evolve an art form for the times of the scientific age (Ibid, p. 186). Alienation, a healthy detachment from the subject matter, was a core concept in bringing about the critical spirit of the scientific community. Brecht wanted to bring about that same critical lens to the theatre, to achieve this, he alienated his audience from the subject matter under examination.

All elements of the epic theatre attempted to create, in some way, this effect of alienation. In order to develop a theatre of scientific enquiry, one that allowed the audience to explore the situation through the character's actions rather than their emotions, each element would have to work together, as well as by themselves.

Section Three: The Fourth Wall

As Brecht stated 'The first condition for the achievement of the A-effect is that the actor must invest what he has to show with a definite gest of showing. It is, of course, necessary to drop the assumption that there is a fourth wall cutting the audience off from the stage and the consequent illusion that the stage action is taking place in reality and without an audience. That being so, it is possible for the actor in principle to address the audience direct.' (Ibid, p. 136). Several elements of Brecht's epic theatre are raised in the above statement, gest, and epic acting will be explored further below, but first, we will explore the concept of The Fourth Wall, possibly the most well-known and utilised the Brechtian technique.

Theatre was, for most of its history, a form of active community, with audience and

performer being equal in presence within a space. As Ranciére argues, the 'Theatre remains the only place where the audience confronts itself as a collective. […] It signifies that 'theatre' is an exemplary community form. It involves an idea of community as self-presence, in contrast to the distance of representation.' (Ranciére and Elliot, 2009, p. 5–6) Yet as Delgado and Svich explain in *Theatre in Crisis* 'with the use of electric light came the rise of the fourth wall that encases the audience […] inside an impermeable box' (Delgado and Svich, 2002, p. 98) The effect created by the forth wall pacified the once 'unruly' audience. Theatre scholars such as Baz Kershaw argue that theatre needs this 'unruly' audience to awaken the theatre from its current stagnation (Kershaw 2001, p. 145), an argument Brecht himself would approve of.

The positioning of this imaginary wall, between the audience, performer, and the situations presented on stage was instrumental in pacifying the audience's ability to critically analyse the events presented. It was an effect that Brecht wished to eliminate. With the onset of the fourth wall, the audience became voyeurs rather than active participants. This is explained by Rodosthenous in *Theatre as Voyeurism,* he explains:

> In effect, we are very self-aware when we have become an audience/voyeur of a dramatic performance but we are able to suspend this conscious thought and allow ourselves to temporarily believe that what we are witnessing is a real-life drama. It is this temporal state of consciousness which allows us to experience real emotion from something which is a fictional construct. (Rodosthenous, 2015, p. 11).

Brecht's attack on the forth wall was absolute, describing it in the context of a furious war. 'So let us march ahead!' he proclaims 'Away with all obstacles! Since we seem to have landed in a battle, let us fight! Have we not seen how disbelief can move

mountains? It is not enough that we should have found that something is being kept from us? Before one thing and another there hangs a curtain: let us draw it up!' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 189). It was his intent, to remove any notion of a wall between the spectator and the performance.

Section Four: Gestus, Gest and Gist

In drawing up the curtain, in shattering the illusion of the Aristotelian performance, by creating an understanding that the events taking place on stage were *not* happening in a pseudo false reality, the epic theatre prevented the audience form allowing themselves to believe the events on stage. With the audience's guard down, the actor was given full reign to activate the audiences cognitive function, turning the collected passive audience into active spectators.

In order for the actor to awaken the audiences critical thought a new form of performance was required, one that stripped away the emotion of the "character" and instead replaced it with a critical position. As Stylan argues 'The theatre needed this new kind of actor. [...] One not improvising his emotions, but giving commentary of *his* emotions.' (Styan, 1993, p. 130) To this effect, the performers on stage did not 'play' their parts as traditional Aristotelian performance would dictate, but instead, positioned themselves as recreationists reporting on an incident, acting in place of, rather than as, a character. As Stylan would go on to explain 'Today we should say that Brecht's actor was 'role-playing'. (Ibid, p. 153)

Instead of the more psychological performances, given by actors trained in more dramatic forms of theatre performance such as the Stanislavski's system, an epic actor would instead, be 'merely reporting the incident, [where] no illusion of reality is necessary.

11

Thus, epic theatre is at bottom non-illusory. It does not disguise the fact that it is only a piece of theatre.' (Ibid, p. 141).

Whilst developing these non-Aristotelian characters in rehearsal, Brecht, Willet explains 'did not analyse [them, instead] he set them at a distance…. He called for a report on the events. He insisted on simple gestures. He compelled a clear and cool manner of speaking. No emotional tricks were allowed. That ensured the objective, 'epic' style.' (Willett, 1967, p. 144). These 'gestures' were of a special breed, developed from the social position of the character, not their internal emotions. These special gestures gave rise to one of the most confusing Brechtian terms, Gestus.

In its most basic understanding, it can be described as a mixture of a gesture, body language, movement and voice, as well as attitude directly related to the playwright or actors view of the character, combined to make a Gestus. In some cases, the attitude of the Gestus is called a "Gist", and Gestus is used interchangeably with Gest. These societal gestures or 'Gests' developed with the character. They emerged 'from the social function of the individual' and changed 'with that function.' (Ibid, p. 117-8) Brecht explains that:

''Gest' is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic 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. The sentence 'pluck the eye that offends thee out' is less effective from the gestic point of view that 'if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out'. The latter starts by presenting the eye, the first clause has the definite gest of making an assumption; the main clause then comes as a surprise, a piece of advice, and a relief.' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 104)

His own description of the terms does very little to make them understandable to someone new to his work. Yet all artists, or so Brecht argues, are aware of the power of Gestus even if they do not know the term. He argues that 'Every artist knows that subject-matter in itself is in a sense somewhat banal, featureless, empty, and self-sufficient. It is only the social gest – criticism, craftiness, irony, propaganda, etc. – that breaths humanity into it.' (Ibid, p. 105). This suggests that a line of text and an action are Gestic in nature when they have a social element rather than an emotional one. Instead of a character saying something, and performing a gesture corresponding to an emotion, happy, sad, angry, they would perform it in a way that is a criticism, or propaganda. To Brecht, it mattered not how the character felt, but how the epic actor analysed events and his own character, and along with him, the audience.

To Brecht it was the audience's critical analysis of the actions of the character that produces the reality of the Epic theatre, a reality that would allow the politicised situations presented to affect the lives of the audience, not through catharsis, as in the Aristotelian drama, but by presenting a situation where the audience is given time to assess the potential decisions a character might take. The explanations of Gestus presented above, are taken from Brecht's essay *On Gestic Music* an account that Willet describes as 'the clearest and fullest to be found in Brecht's writings.' He further explains that:

It can perhaps be illuminated further by a short unpublished fragment (Brecht-Archive 332/76) headed 'representation of sentences in a new encyclopaedia':

1. Who is the sentence of use to?

2. Who does it claim to be of use to?

3. What does it call for?

4. What practical action corresponds to it?

5. What sort of sentences result from it? What sort of sentences support it?

6. In what situation is it spoken? By Whom? (Ibid, p. 106)

This suggests that a Gestus is the combination of social action and the words behind it, yet this description hardly conveys an easy understanding, and so perhaps it would be more useful to turn our eyes towards a more practical example. Brecht was deeply inspired by the performances of Chinese acting, he explained 'A masterly use of gesture can be seen in Chinese acting. The Chinese actor achieves the A-effect by being seen to observe his own movements.' (Ibid, p. 139)

In this manner of performance, the performer, aware that he *is* a performer, can examine his own character, and the performance that it produces, much in the same way the spectators will. The actor does not lose himself in the character, instead, to a certain degree, he too takes on the position of a spectator of his own craft. Willett explains that Gestus 'is at once gesture and gist, attitude and point: one aspect of the relation between two people, studied singly, cut to essentials and physically or verbally expressed. It excludes the psychological, the subconscious, the metaphysical unless they can be conveyed in concrete terms.' (Willett, 1967, p. 173). Yet it was not the epic actor and his performance of Gestus and gist that was wholly responsible for the alienation of the spectator. The unique characteristics of the staging and the set construction were vital in estranging the spectator.

Section Five: Staging

Staging and set, much like most theatrical traditions during Brecht's time, was based heavily in the practices of the Aristotelian drama, which presented the world, and the set as a facsimile of the world outside of the theatre. As previously stated by Rodosthenous above,

the ability of the audience to 'suspend this conscious thought and allow [themselves] to temporarily believe that what [they] are witnessing is a real-life drama.' (Rodosthenous, 2015, p. 11) was the primary enemy for Brecht. The presentation of a false reality, as a truth, is what in naturalism could be called, the realistic image. This image was, again, most clearly seen in the work of Stanislavski's psychological realism, and yet Rodosthenous would argue that the real image is itself a contradiction 'since its mission is to represent something that we customarily see as real. So, to enable the viewer to conceive reality, each acquired image must be crushed.' (Ibid, p. 55 - 56)

It is in this way, the crushing of the realistic image, that Brecht highlights the critical reality of the epic performance. That of a potential for the situation of the epic play, to go, either way, to be changeable and not fixed by a form of fate. As Walter Benjamin comments in *Understanding Brecht* the plot of the epic narrative 'It can happen this way, but it can also happen quite a different way' (p. xiii). It is by creating a fractured reality on stage, one that the audience cannot allow their subconscious to believe is real, that the staging of the epic theatre achieves its full effect, one that Rodosthenous argues 'uses it separated reality in order to abolish it.' (Ranciére and Elliott, 2011, p. 7) Brecht would systematically disrupt the traditional staging practice of his day, to achieve this separated reality, much the same way Erwin Piscator did before him as Styan argues:

'*The designer* of the set, following Piscator, would dispense with illusion and symbolism, and build according to the actor's needs. There would be no suggestion of a 'fourth wall', and, except for props, the stage would be bare, merely an open space on which to tell a story. Set changes would be made in full view of the audience, and if there had to be a curtain, it would simply be strung on a string

15

across the stage. In this way stage and audience would be joined, not separated, and speaking directly to the house would be encouraged.' (Styan, 1993, p. 143)

Or as Kelleher explains in *The Journal of Communication* 'the aim was often to enable the audience to see through the theatrical illusion towards the material and machinery and labour out of which the illusion is constructed.' (Kelleher, 2009). This disruption of the traditional illusion that the Aristotelian dramatic theatre utilised, did much to alienate the spectator's viewership, creating something more akin to a sporting event than a piece of theatre. Brecht was forging a new theatrical reality, one in which the spectator could think freely, not be duped by the dramatic illusion, Brecht comments on the staging of his performances stating '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 *qua* theatre 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.' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 233)

For Brecht, if the set needed to take on a semi-real form, then it should clearly appear as a piece of 'set' rather than a real object, he suggests that '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.' (Ibid, p. 233) The way in which Brecht and his designers created this reality of critical thought can best be explored through an examination of the staging of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, both the 1949 and 1951 productions were designed by Teo Otto, consisting:

> of a permanent set of canvas screens lashed to wooden posts, with simple
> suggestions of location, like a farmhouse or the Commander's tent, introduced as
> necessary. Behind it all was a large white cloth, something less than a skycloth and

certainly no cyclorama. The stage was virtually bare, and lit by a cold white light, with no modifications for night or day. Placards dropped from the flies, each indicating the change of scene from country to country, and captions were projected on to the screens. (Styan, 1993, p. 156-7)

The use of projection within these designs was instrumental in disrupting the audience's proclivity for losing themselves in a work of theatre. The titles of each scene with a short description of what was to come were projected before the beginning of a scene, [SO AND SO] in an interview with Brecht claims 'You use your projected subtitles (*Threepenny Opera, Courage) before* the individual scenes to explain the plot to the audience in advance. You are thus deliberately renouncing the 'dramatic' elements of 'tension' and 'surprise'. In the same way you renounce the emotional experience.' (Brecht and Willett, 1978, p. 227)

Brecht was quick to embrace the potential of the technological revolution taking place around him 'The possibility of projections, the greater adaptability of the stage due to mechanization, the film, all completed the theatre's equipment, and did so at a point where the most important transactions between people could no longer be shown simply by personifying the motives forces or subjecting the characters to invisible metaphysical powers.' (Ibid, p. 70)

Section Six: Towards a Dialectic Theatre

The description of these elements of the epic theatre, which are by no means conclusive, missing important elements such as the use of music and song in Brecht's work, as well as the structure of his plays, may present the Epic theatre as devoid of value as an form of entertainment, coming off as cold, almost dull and dictated, however this is far from true. Brecht firmly understood, that for his theatre to be successful in its attempt to change

the consciousness of his spectators it must also be enjoyable. When asked who he wrote

for, Brecht replied 'For the sort of people who just come for fun and don't hesitate to keep

their hats on in the theatre' (Ibid, p. 14)

Despite it's apparent lack of connection to traditional drama, Brecht's work, as Styan

suggests 'was still a narrative form, telling a story by the use of illustrative scenes, choruses

and commentators, songs and dances, projected titles and summaries.' (Styan, 1993, p. 140)

It is this apparent contradiction between the dramatic and the epic, between plot

and narrative, suggestion and argument, as well as the way Brecht wrote about his own

works in its 'impenetrable jargon' (Esslin, 1980, p. 110). that makes it difficult to understand.

Even in the research for this paper, the writer found it exceedingly difficult to comprehend

the finer points of the theory. This paper has been far from conclusive, being unable to, in a

few thousand words, explore in detail the life's work of one of postdramatic theatres

earliest forefathers, yet this paper never aimed to be but a gentle interrogating of a shifting

theory.

Brecht himself began moving away from the epic theatre towards the end of his life,

he realised that the techniques that distanced his audience in the beginning of his career

were no longer working in the same way. As Styan explains 'He began to drop his use of the

term 'epic', and at the end identified as 'dialectical' the kind of process by which he planned

a scene to induce the critical attitude.' (Styan, 1993, p. 153) he goes on to explain that, 'This

development went along with his recognition of his own inability to bring about a

completely distancing effect […] It seems that the spectator soon adjusts his perception to

the new techniques and is liable to find sympathy from a character even when it is not

intended.' (Ibid, p. 153)

These elements discussed above, combined with those emitted for brevity, worked individually and together, complimenting, juxtaposing, and rupturing the spectator's ability to get lost in the dramatic narrative and instead push them towards a critical position. As Esslin explains 'décor, music, and choreography [...] retain their independence; instead of serving as mere auxiliaries of the text, reinforcing it by stressing some of its features and painting in atmosphere, mood, or descriptive details, they raised to the level of autonomous elements; instead of pulling in the same direction as the words, they enter into a dialectical, contrapuntal relationship with them.' (Ibid, p. 118) It is in this dialectical relationship that Brecht's work found itself during the time of his death. Moving away from the opposition of form and content as he had previously explored, towards the function of the work. He began to use the term 'Dialectic Theatre' over his previously coined 'Epic', but what directions his world would have taken can only be suggested by the shift from the 'Epic Theatre' towards a dialect one.

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