

## Bertolt Brecht's epic theater: Fostering critical thought and social transformation

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### Abstract

Bertolt Brecht was a renowned playwright, poet, and theater director known for his pioneering work in developing Epic Theater. One of the central concepts in Brecht's Epic Theater is the Alienation Effect. He aimed to distance the audience from the emotional and empathetic engagement with the characters on stage. Instead of allowing the audience to passively identify with the characters, he wanted to make them think critically about the social and political issues presented in the play. This was achieved through various techniques like actors breaking the fourth wall, using placards, and highlighting the artificiality of the performance. Brecht's plays were deeply rooted in the historical and social context of his time. He often used historical settings and characters to comment on contemporary issues, drawing parallels between the past and present. Brecht's Epic Theater was didactic in nature. He believed that theater should not only entertain but also educate the audience. His plays were often overtly political, addressing social injustices, class struggle, and the consequences of capitalism. Brecht wanted his theater to serve as a tool for social change and consciousness-raising. Brecht rejected the traditional Aristotelian dramatic structure, which emphasized a linear narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Instead, he used episodic structures that fragmented the narrative, making it easier for the audience to see the broader social and political issues at play. In summary, Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theater was characterized by its commitment to critical engagement, historical and social context, political didacticism, and innovative theatrical techniques. His artistic personality was shaped by his desire to use theater as a tool for raising awareness, fostering critical thinking, and advocating for social and political transformation.

**Keywords:** Alienation Effect (Verfremdungseffekt), Historical Context, Non-Aristotelian Dramatic Structure, Epic Theater Techniques.

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