# Y8 Theatre Styles

| 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** |
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## Naturalism

**NATURALISM** was created by Konstatin Stanislavski and 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 real emotion when playing a character. 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 with similar **emotions**) and apply those feelings to their character.
- **Method of Physical Action:** This requires actors to consider the **inner-incentives** of the character. Question **why** they are acting a particular way.
- **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 actions performed.
- **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.

## Epic Theatre
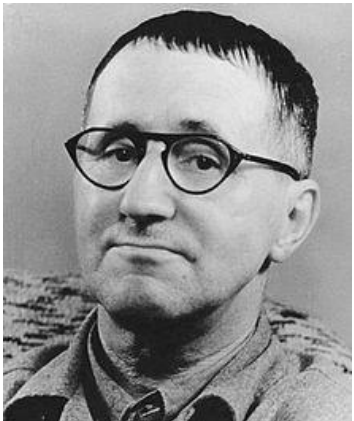
**Epic Theatre was created by Bertolt Brecht and is a** theatrical style that completely contracts and opposes naturalistic theatre.

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.

**Lehrstucke** = Learning Plays

Brecht wanted his audience to take something away and have learned something from the play – not just feel emotions.
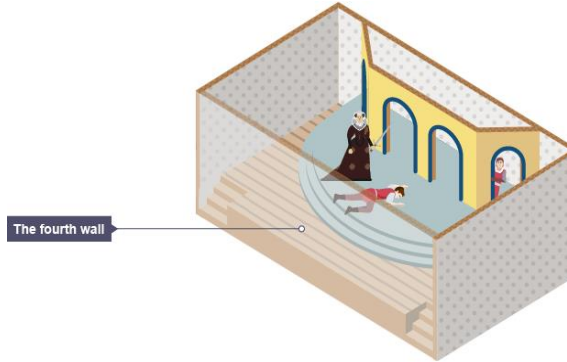
The fourth wall

**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

# Verbatim Theatre

Verbatim theatre is a form of documentary theatre which is based on the spoken words of real people. Verbatim theatre-makers use real people's words exclusively and take this testimony from recorded interviews. As a director/actor you are unable to change anything about a verbatim play without asking for permission from the playwright themselves, this is to ensure that the complete true story is told by the performers on stage.

As an actor this can be a challenging to perform as you have a responsibility to ensure you are performing the characters in the correct way. Actors will spend lots of time listening to the words of the real people in order to understand their stories on a personal level.

**The Actor's Body Scan**

Sustained & withdrawn eye contact

Facial Expressions

Vocal projection, Articulation, Accent, Pitch, Tone, Volume, Diction

Posture

Stance

Proxemics

Body Language

Levels

Gait

**Missing Dan Nolan by Mark Wheeler**
This play is based on the real events of Dan Nolan, a teenage boy who went missing on 1st January 2002. Over a year later is was confirmed that Dan had died when they found human remains on a beach miles away.
The playwright uses the words of Dan's family and friends to explore the mysteries of Dan's disappearance.

**Verbatim Theatre Material could be:**

A news article
An interview
A famous speech
A recorded phone call
A transcript