

YEAR 12 DRAMA

UNIT 4: ANTI CLIMAX: Political Theatre Meets Contemporary Performance

PRESENTING: – TASK EIGHT

NAME: _____

WEEK DUE : _____

TEACHER:

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT: Group Presenting – Scripted Performance

TASK DESCRIPTION:

Brecht's notions of what constituted an appropriate mode of performance for his epic theatre were, of course, evolved in opposition to the style of acting he observed in Germany in the 1920's and early 1930's. His objections focused upon the over-emotional, self-indulgent 'romanticism', which he associated – not altogether correctly, with Stanislavskian 'naturalism'. Brecht poured scorn on Stanislavski's idea that an actor should and can convince an audience that he or she really is the character, by drawing on a 'system' of exercise that aid the expression of the inner feelings of the role. Brecht was against luring and deceiving the audience into an emotional proximity with the character portrayed. The plays that Brecht wrote for his epic theatre were intended to serve a socio-political function and therefore, he argued, required a different kind of performance style. From his early days as a writer/director he wanted to reduce – not eliminate- the audience's empathy with the characters on stage in order to aid their intellectual understanding of the events presented. This intention led Brecht to his theory of the 'alienation' effect. This 'distancing' or making the familiar strange was not an original aesthetic idea, Brecht's application of it to theatre and the resultant dramaturgical effects were new.

*"Actors on Brecht" by M Eddershaw in
The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*

In groups of 3 or more, you are to present in Brechtian style an extract/episode from the "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" by Bertolt Brecht. Your presentation must strongly demonstrate Brecht's didactic message within this play/ the episode you focus on. As you have discovered and experienced during lesson time, Brecht's epic style of acting consisted of direct address, multiple role-taking, alienation, narration, historification, didacticism and performance technologies/mult-media in order to "aid the audience in their intellectual understanding of the events presented". You should include these in your interpretation of your text extract/episode.

CONDITIONS:

- 3-5 minutes per person.
- Performance must be memorized/polished.
- 3 weeks lesson preparation plus student's own time.
- Annotated scripts must be attached.

PRESENTING CRITERIA:

- Select and use the dramatic languages informed by the dramatic perspectives to demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and function in drama.
- Communicate action and its intended meaning to an audience.
- Demonstrate planned and rehearsed skills of performance.

