

“Select Performance Skills associated with Epic Theatre”

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The function of the Actor and Multiple roles

As Porter I represent the lazy official who uses his status stupidly, the uneducated second worker is a stereotype to show the audience how such people know little about the situation in their workplace or the political and economic status of the country. I am the Porter, a security guard at the front gate entrance to a factory in Russia. I am middle-aged, lazy and overweigh, therefore I am mostly found sleeping. Although I do not commit to my job too seriously, I am under the impression that it is a high-priority job. Therefore, I like to think of myself as of a higher status than everyone else because I am an enforcer of the law, which in my eyes is a very important job. My lack of duty as security guards is shown through my easily persuaded nature. For example, when Vlasova has to sneak the leaflets past me into the factory, she needs only to use little persuasion before I let her in so that I may return to my nap.

As Ivan I represent one of the few who can understand the power play at work and as the Policeman, although I feel that I have high status, I fear my superiors, as is shown when strike leaflets enter the factory under my guard.

I use multiple roles and changing of characters to teach the audience the different views in the fight for communism. For example as the Porter it is obvious that my view on the fight for communism is not a strong one as I appear uninterested by falling asleep in my chair with my arms clasped around my exaggerated potbelly. In comparison to the character Ivan who is passionate about changing the current economical state in Russia at the time and this is shown through his participation in the 'march' with his fellow workers. The character Ivan and the use of chorus in the march lets the audience make decisions about the fact that he is a representation of the everyday people on the picket line. Whereas, the Porter's potbelly teaches the audience that he is of higher status than the workers because he is fed better, reflecting the people that benefited from anti-communism at the time of the Russian Revolution. Using a Russian accent while in the multiple roles is due to the fact that *The Mother* is set during the Russian Revolution, in Russia. At times I remove the Russian accent to show the transition into a narrator. For example, when I say "*The problem before this meeting today is quite simply this...*" I stand outside of my role and addressing the audience, as I am teaching them about the reasons for strike. The fact that I am addressing the audience is also influence more because the other workers are in a freeze frame, drawing the attention to me. This shows the audience the overall message of the play that these Russian workers are fighting for change.

Performance Space

The space is open, to turn the spectator into an observer and to remove the 4th wall. A barrier between the fictional piece and the audience. Actors are not trying to 'be' a character but to portray ideas through the character.

Alienation device

My character freezes on Vlasnova's entry, holding a stern attitude but as if he has been put on mute, so that he can be oblivious to Vlasnova's spoken thoughts.

The bell announcing lunch break also suggests the alarms sounded in World War I, reminding the audience of the political ideas in the play.

<p>The alienation effect is used in our piece during the 'march' to force the observer to make decisions about the Russian worker's fight for communism. By using the conventions, dance, song, and chorus, it allows the audience to step back from the flow of the piece. The way I march and use forceful and determined actions, such as kneeling to the floor suddenly and slapping my hand on the ground, paired with my stern and intense eye-contact, has the effect of alienating the audience. This is in order to focus the audience on the words of the chant and the reason why I am rebelling. They understand this further by the use of mime. For example, when I say "Until you come back and show in triumph, what it is you've bought from your conquest, just a slice of bread?", I am on the ground with a confused and disappointed expression, making the audience realize that the 'slice of bread' isn't enough to survive and isn't something to be proud of achieving. Therefore, the helps to support the reasons the Russian workers were rebelling and fighting for a better lifestyle.</p>
<p>Function of the play and the Epic Structure</p>
<p>The date of the original staging of the play when Hitler was gaining power in Germany, and the play was intended to educate society of the time but its ideas can be related to any audience, much like Shakespeare's plays.</p>
<p>Symbolic Movement</p>
<p>In our performance I use high energy physical movements to support the idea of fighting for social change and communism. This is shown when I am a striker of the work force marching on the table, chanting with my fellow workers and then jumping to the ground, punching my first into the air defiantly. The use of gestus by forcing my fist into the air and saying "We'll use all our powers", reinforces to the audience the didactic style of the performance because I am teaching the audience about how, as a Russian worker, I am going to do everything I can to rebel against the current higher status society's rules. This action of raising a fist in the air is done by all the Russian factory workers, as it is a symbol that represents to the audience the rebellion of the workers. This use of gestus educates the audience on how the reason the workers are coming together is to fight for communism so that they can earn enough money to provide for their families as they will not survive another wage cut.</p>
<p>Direct address</p>
<p>As Ivan, when I say -The question before this meeting today...it is out of character and directly to the audience. It is a summary of what is happening and is to get them thinking about their views. Do they agree with the strikers? Or should the workers continue to negotiate?</p>
<p>Song and Dance</p>
<p>The song of The Patch and the Coat is made more effective by the sound of marching feet. This is to create essence of a hard world. The use of song breaks the spell of the action and adds impact to the ideas of the play. For example, Just a little patch Fine you've got the patch But where's the rest? The coat itself?</p> <p>We use dance as an ensemble to choreograph the song. It is a way of making the workers' voices and the ideas of the play more effective through slick imagery.</p>