DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
THE BA (HON) FILM, LITERATURE & DRAMA COURSE

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30TH MAY 2010
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REFERENCES
Modern theatre exists within a framework of different schools of thought, different ways of interpreting how art is or should be presented on the stage, systems which have been constructed or constructed themselves around seemingly binary and universal oppositions that make it impossible for theatrical works to be said to exist outside of them. Either a play seeks empathic connection with it’s audience and is part of the naturalist tradition or it does not and by refusing to do so is seeking effects in line with the epic theatre. Either a director seeks to create a realist illusion of the actual world on stage or by choosing not to do so falls into the category of expressionistic theatre. Every artistic philosophy related to the stage seems to set itself up in direct opposition to an alternative one creating this inescapable trap of ‘either-or’.

This thesis explores the nature of such theatrical dichotomies and aims to, through analysis of their theoretical/philosophical foundations as well as study of their physical and practical manifestations, divest them of some of their status as oppositions, placing them instead in a concordant paradigm of mutual influence, thought and method. The successive chapters of this document will in turn (1) explore and challenge the dichotomous status of several dominant theatrical philosophies from their historical origins to their relationships with each other, (2) take the discordant elements of these philosophies out of context and look at their relation to world philosophy and politics throughout selected times in human history, (3) look for relationships between the differing dramatic schools of thought in instances of their production while paying specific attention to their individual methods for the instruction of practitioners and (4) again take the differing trends out of a theatrical context and look at their
relationships as part of modern media and culture, focusing on where such trends blend ideas.

Particular attention will be paid throughout to naturalism (as defined within) due to the frequent conception in modern culture of the form as the base line or standard for theatre.
CHAPTER ONE - THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES IN THEATRE

Part One - Naturalism

In Chapter Two it will become apparent to the reader that the ideas at the heart of naturalism in acting and theatre can be seen to go back as far as ancient Greece, with some of them remaining mostly unchanged to the present day, but for the purposes of this thesis I am choosing to see naturalism as an artistic movement beginning in the mid 19th century. This definition affords certain advantages in codifying and analyzing the growth of what I hope to show has been one of the most important influences on twentieth century art whether those influenced by it were consciously for or against it's ideas.

The naturalism that is generally accepted to have come into being in the early 19th century, spawned from, as I will show, the political, social and even scientific climates of the time and is seen to have ended around the 1930’s or 40’s during the peak of modernism. As well as examining the seemingly self defining dichotomy at the heart of the philosophy I will also put forward that when naturalism’s end is supposed to have occurred, the form, in acting at least, was reaching a considerable high point alongside the maturation of sound films and that it faces, for the first time in nearly two hundred years, it’s first real challenge in the guise of a combined ideological and technological dilution at the beginning of the 21st century.

If we accept that naturalism came about in the western world (between Russia and Europe) in the middle of the 19th century and continued developing thereafter some of the factors that would have influenced it become instantly obvious, the rise of the middle classes, Darwin’s evolutionary theory, austere Victorian era morality, bold empiricist philosophy, etc. A detailed history of the 1800’s is unnecessary here because of the time it would take and because people have heard so often how that
century has influenced the 20th that most of what I would have to say would be common knowledge. I would like to point out some specific instances however that show the connections between naturalism as we know it and the 19th century and use these connections to both elucidate the form in opposition to others (in the field of theatre) as well as to problematize some widely held conceptions of the form in an effort to close the theoretical distance between naturalism and trends such as epic theatre or the avant-garde. If these two purposes seem to be in conflict it is because they are, by challenging widely held dogmas that separate trends such as naturalism and epic theatre and simultaneously showing how such differences actually define the separate schools of thought my goal is to make the boundaries between said schools more fluid and expose their intricate connections to each other.

Naturalism on the stage’s emergence from and relationship to realism in the 19th century can be understood by comparing it to the similar relationship between naturalism in visual art and the invention of photography that evolved alongside it, with one seeming to give a perfect and impartial view of reality and the other attempting to portray the same reality through subjective artifice and technique. Although immediately naturalism and realism in the theatre seem to be striving towards the same goals - that is the most accurate and persuasive representation possible of real life upon the stage - a closer examination sees the two trends differ greatly and I think this distinction can be extremely helpful in defining naturalism for the uninitiated. While realism’s first goal is the representation of reality, in naturalism this idea takes second place, here the key term is ‘understanding’, both on the stage (page, canvas, screen, etc) and off of it where the thing to be understood is the act of creation itself. Constantin Stanislavski’s repeated mantra “Above all look for what is fine in art and try to understand it”¹ can serve as the central thesis of naturalism, what is to be understood is, inevitably, reality, be it the real equivalent of the events or situations being portrayed or the real act of creation used to portray them - both art work and art. Naturalism then

¹ Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, trans Elizabeth Hapgood. (Methuen Drama, 2008), Chapter 2 Section 1.
implies more than just a simple portrayal of reality, it implies the desire and an implementation of techniques designed to communicate an understanding of reality.

Stanislavski is always very careful in his writings, that have been of more influence to acting since their publication than probably any other group of texts or philosophy, to excise from his thoughts on art the metaphysical ideas that normally become associated with it and it’s construction/genesis and consequently put forward more empiricist and secular viewpoints.

“Always remain in close contact with logic and coherence, this will help you to hold unsubstantial and slippery dreams close to steady, solid facts.” ²

This way of thinking is indicative of society and philosophy in the 19th century in general and is found across the artistic spectrum as far as naturalism is concerned. For a society that was beginning to abandon religion and metaphysics, having been newly introduced to the concept of Darwinian evolution, a move away from the central european romanticism of Schiller and Goethe was welcomed. Naturalism sought to aid understanding, just as Darwin showed how an animal is shaped and essentially constructed by it’s environment naturalism began to present characters that were departures from romantic heroes that could construct their worlds around them and cause revolusions or wars, the characters of Zola and Chekov were shown to be totally influenced by the worlds around them and Stanislavski’s instructions to his actors were:

“on the stage there cannot be, under any circumstances, action which is directed immediately at the rousing of a feeling for it’s own sake”³

This is where one of the first internal contradictions within naturalism appears and that is the distinction between free will and environment. The communication of understanding sought by

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² Ibid. Chapter 4 Section 3.
³ Ibid, Chapter 3 Section 2.

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naturalist actors and directors is almost universally attained by the actor’s ability to establish an empathic connection between themselves and the audience during performance. The nature of this empathic connection changed little between the times of Aristotle and Stanislavski and was still, by 1900, bound up with the idea of catharsis, that is the almost medicinal expunging of emotions or feelings deemed harmful to the audience by the playwright by way of emotive connection between audience and characters. The audience would witness a character, with whom they were made to empathize, in possession of a tragic flaw of some kind, be it Kreon’s stubbornness or Madame Ranevskaya’s refusal to accept change, throughout the course of the play the character and so vicariously the audience would inevitably suffer some defeat because of this vice and in this way the audience is seen to be partly inoculated against the vice or flaw they have been shown. The idea of catharsis however comes in to fundamental conflict with the naturalistic desire to portray the world as an empirically understandable series of causes and effects as it implies a freedom of will necessary for the characters to make choices that turn out to be wrong. Chekov’s plays, which often contain elements of comedy - even slapstick, manage in some cases to escape from this paradox by showing his characters as hopelessly flawed because of their position in the world, as in the Madame’s case as a member of a dying aristocracy, where Kreon may have been as rigid and stubborn if he were a soldier or servant. This blending of elements seems theoretically more akin to Brechtian epic theatre than naturalism and it is not the only place the two come together.

Before Brecht established his tenants of the epic theatre in the early 1920’s and after Stanislavski had begun to condense the major aspects of naturalism into a theatrical philosophy we find the figure of George Bernard Shaw at his creative peak at the turn of the 20th century. Shaw’s plays are an intricate mix of naturalist technique and what would later become Brechtian principals. Throughout his plays we find even more seduction to empathy than in anything by Chekov, Shakespeare or the Athenians and this is, unusually, often found in characters not central to the plot.
or those stereotypically disliked by audiences and playwrights such as money lenders and police officers but unlike in Brechtian drama, where such an abundance of empathy can be applied in some cases, in Shaw the effect is usually held throughout and not abandoned at the close of individual scenes or the play itself.

Understanding - the main bridge between Brecht and naturalism but in different ways - is almost always central to Shaw’s work and just as naturalism quickly moved focus from the aristocratically centered plays of romanticism and neo-classicism to concern with the 19th century bourgeoisie and finally to a theater where lower class protagonists became the norm, similar to Brecht’s proletarian epic theatre, this movement can also be seen within Shaw’s cannon where he often used parody and comedy to blend and juxtapose class structures in texts that proved to be both popular amongst upper class society and critical of it at the same time (Pygmalion - 1913- for example).

“Shaw’s terrorism consists in this: that he claims a right for every man to act in all circumstances with decency, logic and humor, and sees it as his duty to do so even when it creates opposition.”

Here Brecht applauds Shaw for what is essentially his ability to meld the understanding and empathy principals at the heart of naturalism with the ideas central to what would later become epic theatre, something Brecht himself was arguably unable to do at least in his theoretical writings where he often described his theatre as being a direct opposition to naturalism.

"We need to get right away from the old naturalistic school of acting, the dramatic school with it’s large emotions”

We can accept Brecht’s view of Shaw, that he is foreseeing the emergence of a theatre grounded in Marxism, an ideology the Nobel laureate was heavily influence by throughout his life, and

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5 Ibid, p68.

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subversively combining this with the popular theatre of his day or we can take Shaw’s many faceted artistic personality into account and see his plays as an extension of naturalist tradition and the empiricist, often anti-Marxist 19th century philosophy that was also of great influence to him, a logical progression of philosophical ideas along lines they can be shown to have been going.

The reputation naturalism has as acquired as a product of the 19th century middle class may be more due to the criticisms and opposition of other forms of theatre, particularly Brechtian, that claim this as a failing of the form than any of it’s internal attributes attributes. Theoretician and theatrical practitioner Augusto Boal, about whom I will talk about in more detail as part of Chapter 3, in his writings on dramaturgy dubs naturalist theatre the ‘bourgeois theatre’ and applies to it attributes and ideas that define it from the kind of epic, Marxist theatre he writes about and in turn serve to define the epic theatre as a separate entity. In actuality the middle class of the 19th century were frequently opposed to naturalism, especially during the century’s early years as the frank depictions of life, which included matters ranging from sexual exploits to the conditions of poverty, common to realism and then naturalism came in conflict with the ultra conservative moral views of societies like that of Victorian England or post revolution France.

That it’s preference towards secular viewpoints and it’s shift of attention to lower class protagonists and stories make the naturalism of Zola and Stanislavski more sympathetic to socialism than previous trends is often concealed by the specter of Brechtian theatre which maintains much closer ties to the political ideology and repeatedly defines itself in opposition to the more popular and marketable naturalism. In a two party government the party that holds the least left wing policies is regarded as the right wing party regardless of specific details, in the same way Brechtian theater's socialist connections often dwarf those of naturalism or make the latter form seem to be actively working against certain principals it in fact stimulates, this process also takes place in areas other

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than the social and political.

Naturalism’s connection to psychology is often undermined by the perceived emphasis payed to it by other more avant-garde schools. These other schools of thought frequently seem to be at least attempting to attain some kind of external representation of psychological processes whereas naturalistic interests in human psychology have traditionally been executed with more subtlety, a tendency often seen as a failing by ideological opposition. Although not without merit such avant-garde styles, like that expounded in the work of Antonin Artaud, often portray these psychological processes in loose metaphysics and undecipherable absurdism which can be contrasted sharply by much of the naturalist work from playwright’s like Henrik Ibsen who are seen as forerunners and influences of what Freud would bring to the field of psychology at the turn of the century.

Stanislavski’s teachings often stress the need for actors to bring psychological realism to characters in the hopes that such states of mind will then facilitate physical expression of felt emotions on an almost subconscious level (‘almost’ because learned techniques are incorporated into the physical processes also). “Of significance to us: the reality of the inner life of a human spirit”7

We looked at Shaw as a middle point between Brecht and Stanislavski, Ibsen can serve equally well as one between naturalism and the avant-garde. Famed for his naturalistic psychological portrayals of characters on the stage the subject matter of Ibsen’s plays was also typically naturalistic with a tendency to set stories around middle class individuals or families and often included commentary on the change in social status of protagonists in drama as a whole by the inclusion of middle class characters who are shown to have been aristocracy in previous years or to have been descended from them. Ibsen’s drama includes elements however that are not immediately cohesive with naturalism, these are seen in extreme examples of metaphysical symbolism such as in The Master Builder or Ghosts. Stanislavski uses Ibsen’s Brand as a training exercise in his book The Actor

7 Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, trans Elizabeth Hapgood. (Methuen Drama, 2008), Chapter 8 Section 1.
_Prepares_ to instruct readers on the psychological make up of characters on the stage and so the progression from the detailed psychological realization we find in characters like Hedda Gabler to the symbolic representations of mental processes in plays like The Master Builder can perhaps be seen as logical progression or evolution rather than discordance with naturalism.

The appearance of opposing schools of thought to naturalism in the 20th century, in light of examples like Ibsen and Shaw, can then seem to be the more like the growth or furtherance of certain areas of an original source, a series of post-naturalisms that, in coming into being, disown what are then seen as atavistic elements of their old selves and speak out against them for not going far enough. Jerzy Grotowski takes a similar stance in relation to the psychological aspects of naturalism as Brecht does to the political ones. A major criticism he makes of the form is that it’s language doesn’t go far enough, and by definition can’t go far enough, in portraying or ‘penetrating’ the actor’s thoughts because a common language implies a degree of cliche which denies true individuality, in his words

“[the actor] must be able to construct his own psycho-analytic language of sounds and gestures in the same way that a great poet creates his own language of words.”

_Part Two - The Epic Theatre_

The tenants of Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Epic Theatre’ are well known but I feel it necessary to state some of them here in a way that highlight’s their connection to opposite ideas found in naturalism. I have already made some effort to show how the epic theatre can be seen to have grown out of naturalism and how in some ways the two systems are cohesive, it takes much less effort to propose the two as being diametrically opposed dramatic philosophies.

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9 Bertolt Brecht, _Brecht On Theatre_, trans John Willett. (Methuen Drama, 1964), p15

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Stanislavski’s naturalism and Brecht’s epic theatre come in to opposition in two main areas, those are the practical conflict of empathy against alienation and it’s intellectual extension, that of the understanding of predetermined meaning against the encouragement to personal/multiple viewpoints. Brecht wanted his audiences to interpret his plays from their own individual points of view, to encourage discussion and discourage empathy which he saw as a corruptive device in the theatre that hampered proper understand of drama. “Nowadays the play’s meaning is usually blurred by the fact that the actor plays to the audience’s hearts.”10. Stanislavski never spoke about plays as having ‘meaning’ in the way Brecht does, the word holding more objective connotations than possible alternatives such as message or theme.

The desire to create empathy, found at the heart of naturalism, is directly opposed by Brecht’s attempts to remove it, what he called ‘das Verfremdungseffekt’ 11, translated to The Alienation Effect, saw his productions employ various methods to remove empathy from plays, whether these effects involved lighting, costume, specific instructions to the actors or any thing else it instantly made them spectacularly different from productions audiences accustomed to naturalism had come to expect. Over three decades before Brecht began to write about his alienation effect Stanislavski pointed out tropes that could be noticed in other styles of acting that produce (although usually unintentionally) similar results with audiences and warned his actors against falling into such styles12.

Brecht himself admits to seeing a connection between his and Stanislavski’s desires to inspire understanding in audiences.

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10 Ibid. p15.
11 Ibid. p91.
“Stanislavski grasped the diversity and complexity of social life and knew how to represent it without getting entangled. All his productions make sense.”

But stops short of including empathy in his praise. The case that Brecht’s plays have proved far more popular amongst audiences and critics through the years than many of what can be called Brechtian plays that came later, that is those plays written and/or produced to fit into the concept of epic theatre, can be attributed to, as well as his considerable talent as a playwright, their author’s implementation of elements designed to produce empathy within his own play in modified ways. In Brecht’s own plays empathy is used as a device to hold attention and bring about whatever emotions necessary

Part Three - The Avant-Garde Theatre

The sympathetic connection between naturalistic and avant-garde/surrealist forms of theatre is much more difficult to make using theory or philosophy than that between naturalism and epic theatre. In fact, with the work of writers like Antonin Artaud and Tadeusz Kantor, we find a kind of inversion of the problems encountered in attempts to reconcile Brecht and Stanislavski. In the case of the later pair theory can be seen to agree on many different points and it is in the production and performance of plays that we find the most obvious differences, between naturalism and Artaud for instance it is the performances that can be said to resemble each other in some ways where the theories are often diametrically opposed.

With Artaud, similar to Grotowski who I mentioned earlier, the idea of the paradigm is of greatest significance. The paradigms Artaud and Grotowski see, the theoretical codexes of signs and symbols, encompassing both language and gesture, used by humans for expression, communication, representation, etc, are not strictly acknowledged in the work of Stanislavski or if they are he


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designates them the title ‘subconscious’. The term subconscious is a device often used by
Stanislavski to physicalize both the problematic (from a practical sense) metaphysical aspects of art,
the ‘slippery dreams’, and anything uncontrollable or instinctual in the human being and he
repeatedly throughout his work stressed the need to “address ourselves to what is within reach.” 14

At the beginning of the first book in his influential series on acting Stanislavski states both the
problem of subconscious/metaphysics in the art form and naturalism’s solution:

“a predicament: we are supposed to create with inspiration; only our subconscious gives us
inspiration; yet we apparently can use this subconscious only through our consciousness, which
kills it. To rouse your subconscious to work there is a special technique. We must leave all that is in
the fullest sense to nature and address ourselves to what is within reach. When intuition intervenes
in our work we must know how not to interfere.” 15

Leaving that which is “in the fullest sense to nature” is the naturalistic statement of principals that,
for the most part, excludes metaphysical ideas from the art form by removing the desire to control
things like inspiration and serves as a central link between it and epic theatre where Brecht placed
the emphasis for actors on the physical demands of their craft.

“Q - How ought they to act then?
A- For an audience of the scientific age.” 16

Artaud’s goal for his theatre of cruelty or whatever name is given to his work is the complete
opposite to this, rather than using a quote from his actual writings (a body of work which could be
quoted creatively to support any possible argument) I present a summary of one of the key tenants
of Artaud’s thought from a critical essay about it that requires less divination.

14 Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, trans Elizabeth Hapgood. (Methuen Drama, 2008), Chapter 2 Section 1.
15 Ibid. Chapter 2 Section 1.

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“His acting practice was based on the notion of exteriorization of an ‘inner’ truth: the physicalization of unconscious mental activity [...] a complete inversion of the Stanislavskian model.” 17

Writing, like Artaud or Kantor did, about the externalization of internal processes with a view to aiding reproduction proves problematic. In fact, where the work of Stanislavski or Brecht seems to readily aid reproduction and serve as the basis for further growth (both theoreticians will be shown in this thesis to have spawned further advances in their respective ideologies) that of Artaud, by the nature of it’s hostility to codified systems of expression, seems in many ways to reject furtherance and even discussion. Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical/psychoanalytical work Anti-Oedipus builds on Artaud’s concept of the body without organs, describing its hostility to codification and reproduction:

“In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it [the body without organs] sets up a counter flow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid. In order to resist using words composed of articulated phonetic units, it utters only gasps and cries that are sheer unarticulated blocks of sound.” 18

Kantor’s formulations for his theatre (called alternatively the ‘theatre of death’, ‘theatre of zero’, ‘the informal theatre’ and various other names) agree with Artaud’s on key points, the main one being the nature of their theories as seeming to actively defy interpretation and reproduction,

“always changing and fluid; that makes all attempts to compress it [the informal theatre] into solid form ridiculous, helpless and vain.”19. I will continue thinking about the non-productive nature of the avant-garde theatre in Chapter two as the connections I make there will align this thinking with 20th century post-modern philosophy and psychoanalysis about which that section will be concerned.

17 Brian Singleton, Artaud On Theatre. (Ivan R. Dee, Publisher Chicago) page-xxxiv.

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It seems hopeless trying to reconciling naturalism with the work of people like Artaud and Kantor on a theoretical basis, as I have already said when we come to talking about works in performance connections will become clearer as the chaotic nature of their writings requires tempering to become performable in the theatre. In my goal to blur the lines between the various influential schools of theatre I do not see this theoretical incongruity as a failure but as an example of how the physical laws the act of theatrical performance is bound by can force compromise between such divergent philosophies.

**Part Four - The Aesthetic Theatre**

Peter Brook writes “Grotowski is unique. Why? Because no one else in the world, to my knowledge no one since Stanislavski, has investigated the nature of acting, it’s phenomenon, it’s meaning, the nature and the science of it’s mental-physical-emotional processes as deeply and completely as Grotowski.”

Although Jerzy Grotowski’s tendency to use unusual terminology to describe his views on acting accompanied by the almost fanatical insistence on certain artistic principals found in his work may tempt readers to identify him more with the avant-garde traditions than naturalism or epic theatre, what Brook describes as his investigation into the nature of acting is actually deeply rooted in practicality. Grotowski’s system of theatre can possibly be defined best by a quote from Stanislavski given earlier “when intuition intervenes in our work we must know how not to interfere.” The word *not* in that sentence being of paramount to Grotowski’s theatre which can be described beside the naturalistic or epic as the aesthetic theatre, a school of thought in which it’s practitioners strive to remove from themselves what they see as the barriers to performance.

I have already quoted Grotowski in relation to his desire to ‘construct’ a ‘psycho-analytic language

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of sounds and gestures’, this sounds similar to Artaud’s philosophy of externalizing internal
processes but, explained in more depth, Grotowski’s language of signs proves to be based more in
secular reality than that of the avant-garde.

“Ultimately it is a human reaction, purified of all fragments, of all other details which are not of
paramount importance. The sign is a clear impulse, the pure impulse.”21

The frequent use of highly subjective terms like ‘pure’, ‘clear’ and ‘importance’ marks Grotowski’s
system as being largely defined by it’s own internal logic but this logic is not so far removed from
the other practically based systems like naturalism and the epic theatre. Due to the nature of his line
of thinking however which includes the persistent stripping away of elements of the art form
deemed impure or unproductive and, I think it is important to add, a complete lack of any
recognizable sense of humor, Grotowski’s aesthetic theatre starts to present the same obstacles to
theoretical analysis that we find in Artaud and needs to be looked at in performance rather than on
paper if a better understanding is to be achieved.

21 Ibid, p193.

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CHAPTER TWO - THEATRE AND PHILOSOPHY

In Chapter Two I intend to make clear the connections and influences between philosophical thought throughout human history and the eventual formulation of naturalism as an independent trend in theatre. While doing this I also want to pay particular attention to evidence that shows how the differences between differing schools of thought in theatre/art discussed in Chapter One existed in similar forms before their formulation as or within naturalist/epic or naturalist/avant-garde type dichotomies.

Part One - Greece

Theatre, as we know it, began in Athens, as we know, between the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. Plays were written, actors performed as characters in these plays and audiences attended the performances. In the philosophical writings of ancient Greece we find very little reference to dramaturgy relative to the era’s importance to the art, the pre-socratic philosophers were interested more in science than art, Plato has almost nothing to say about theatre and Aristotle’s poetics, that were to become so influential to theatre in later eras, arguably more so than any other art form, largely ignored matters relating to the stage and focused on poetry. Although what I am looking for at this moment in ancient Greek philosophy is the roots of modern dramatic principals, easily found in Aristotle’s poetics or the Athenian plays, I am choosing not to analyze those texts in any great detail, for far more important clues to the formulation of 19th/20th century naturalism lie, in my opinion, within the writings of those early, (largely) empiricist, pre-socratic philosopher-scientists.

While compiling a history of western philosophy, Bertrand Russell\(^1\) makes note of what can be seen as one of the earliest instances of the separation of philosophy and science into independent entities,

\(^1\) Bertrand Russell, *History Of Western Philosophy*. (Routledge Classics) p66.

Chapter 2 Page 1
this is with the beginning of the trend of ancient Greek sophist philosophers. During the cultural prime of Athens, around the middle of the 5th century B.C., the sophists were not seen as philosophers by their contemporaries but rather as teachers, learned men who would, for a fee, instruct their patrons in the art of rhetoric, although during these years the term ‘art’ was not often applied to the practice. Since the legal system of the time in Athens required someone, usually the defendant, to speak on behalf of the accused and since such speeches carried great weight in the outcome of legal proceedings, the ability to speak persuasively, clearly and charismatically was highly sought after and useful.

The thinkers that were part of the sophist tradition, a term which carried none of the negative connotations then that it does today (connotations which can be said to have stemmed from a feeling common to many cultures throughout human history, a healthy dislike for lawyers), worked at refining the theory and practices of their profession and expanded it’s boundaries from simple public speaking to include questions of logic, ethics and the nature of language, questions which identify them more, through modern eyes, with philosophers than instructors or lawyers today. The connection between debating, be it in a legal context or simply the everyday act of informal argument, and ambivalence to morality, the opinions of the people debating and even fact least the sophists a secular edge more in common with later philosophers and scientists (and naturalistic artists) than those of ancient Greece from whom the sophists often drew criticism.

Aristotle accepted some aspects of sophist teaching/thought as art, particularly those related to empathy, he wrote of the sophists that “The modes of persuasion are the only true constituents of art”\(^2\). Here Aristotle states that he considers ‘persuasion’ an ‘art’, this is not a comment on art as a whole but on the sophists and their thoughts on public speaking and legal discourse, he goes on to make a key distinction between the two:

“It is plain, then, that the technical study of rhetoric is concerned with the modes of persuasion. Now persuasion is a sort of proof (since we are most persuaded when we consider a thing to have been proved), the orator’s proofs are enthymemes, and an enthymeme is a sort of deduction.”

Persuasion and empathy, seen by Aristotle as two separate elements in sophist thinking, are found together as one of the main principals of naturalism where the audience is persuaded by the use of empathy. Naturalistic plays conforming to Aristotle’s structure of peripeteia, anagnorisis and catastrophe take the form of the same three part arguments or ‘enthymemes’ that he sees as the basis of sophism. Eager to define the sophist teachings as being different to his own thought Aristotle separates persuasion and empathy (where it need not necessarily, like in naturalism, be seen as two independent terms) and gives a picture of the sophists as similar to Brechtian theatre in it’s utilization of empathy without the persuasive element attached “Yet in his efforts to reproduce particular characters and show their behavior [the actor] need not renounce the means of empathy entirely.”

Aristotle goes on to talk about the need for the art of rhetoric to be divest of the kind of empathy used for persuasion “this sort of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he speaks.” and in doing so sets up a binary opposition between the need for the use of empathy in art and it’s avoidance in the legal/political space of the courtroom that almost exactly mirrors the relationship between epic theatre and naturalism on the subject. More important for the purposes of my argument than the fact that Aristotle makes this distinction, is the fact that he makes it mistakenly, when sophism and Aristotle’s use of empathy is in reality very similar (the enthymeme argument) he imagines an opposite to his system and that opposite directly resembles Brecht’s also supposedly opposite (to the study of rhetoric).

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3 Ibid, p261.

Chapter 2 Page 3
naturalism) dramaturgy.

**Part Two - 16th century England.**

“would’st have me turn rank mad,
Or wring my face with mimick action;
Stampe, curse, weepe, rage, & then my bosome strike?

In the 15th and 16th centuries, as performance continued on its movement closer to the spectators and further from the safety and obscurity of distant stages like in Greece or the cover of a proscenium arch as was common in the centuries before Shakespeare, realism became both more important and harder to attain. Andrew Gurr in his book *The Shakespearean Stage*\(^6\) attributes the lessening distance between audience and performers as the reason for the increase in meta-theatrical elements in dramaturgy during the period as well as the trend that saw prologues and soliloquies becoming more common as dramatists found themselves forced to acknowledge the fictional nature of their plays.

In terms of acting the era was defined by two different styles, that is if the lack of definite stylistic elements can be considered as a style, these two were the trained players, men that had completed apprenticeships in the stage akin to those of other trades and worked their way from playing the parts of women as boys to male characters, and on the other side of the spectrum the untrained players who would traditionally perform in traveling bands. Although the untrained actors of the time are not of great interest to us here it is interesting to note the amount of attention they receive in plays of the time. The Marston extract above is just one of a whole host of references to poor acting, usually simply involving over acting, that can be found, Shakespeare in particular was prone to lamenting the inability of untrained actors, quotes can be found from across his cannon (*Trolius*

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and Cressida 1.3.153-6 / Bottom and company from A Midsummer Nights Dream / Coriolanus

5.3.40-1 / etc) but none as famous or as detailed as Hamlet’s speech to the players where his instructions speak to moderation in performance, which is a call for trained actors, and interestingly a tightening of control on stage clowns.

“And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them - for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered.”

The movement of 15th and 16th century theatre presents interesting parallels with the relationship between Brecht’s philosophy and that of naturalism some four centuries later. In Shakespeare’s time, as evidenced by Hamlet’s speech, we see a tightening of control on stage clowns and a push towards theatrical education which at the time was heavily influenced, in the realm of theory, by gesture based expression of emotion, the kind realism and naturalism would move the genre away from but that would be sought after by Brecht in the 20th century.

Part Three - The 19th Century

It is interesting to look at the thoughts of certain 19th century philosophers on the subject of the theatre when their views constitute an unusual mix of the later, supposedly opposed, theatrical philosophies. Also it was the work of philosophers of this period that was influencing the views of the society from which naturalism was in the process of forming. The implications of scientific advances such as those in evolutionary theory, moving people away from metaphysical reflection, and in psychology, which stimulated public interest in the inner workings of the human mind - interest the work of Ibsen and other naturalistic artists was readily able to satisfy - meant that 19th century naturalist theatre was being fueled by much more than just the interest of certain


Chapter 2 Page 5
practitioners to explore a a particular technique. Like those in the field of science developments in philosophy affected naturalism and the theatre in general but without necessarily being direct influences on it, just as the opposition of different forms of theatre contains internal paradoxes such inconsistencies can also be seen in the ideological pool from which these forms draw inspiration and formulate opinions.

It is clear that in the 19th century theatre was being looked at by philosophers as an important tool for the understanding and shaping of society. Arthur Schopenhauer wrote of theatre, before naturalism was as distinct from realism as it would become under Stanislavski, “Not to go to the theatre is like making one’s toilet without a mirror.”. A view such as this one shows an important difference to previously held opinions on theatre serving not just as an acknowledgement of the need for theatre to reflect reality but also as it expresses the opinion that useful (it isn’t implied that the bathroom mirror is a luxury) theatre should reflect the kind of often unsavory, unromantic reality that was only beginning to become fashionable in the form of literary realism and was a sharp move away from romanticism in art just as Schopenhauer’s work was a departure from previously romanticist philosophy like that of his popular contemporary Hegel. Hegel’s later influence of Brechtian theatre, alongside a marxist reworking of some of his ideas, brings about internal conflicts in the theatrical by further connecting it’s fundamental ideals with the Aristotelian enthymeme argument mentioned in part one of this chapter that finds a parallel in the thesis-anthesis-synthesis or abstract-negative-concrete dialectics of the philosopher.

While I am on the subject of 19th century philosophy I feel it helpful to mention Nietzsche who makes an important comment on the nature of communication that will go some of the way to explaining the difficulty in communication found in artistic instruction that I pointed out as the problem of theory in chapter one, a problem which is answered, I hope to prove, by theatrical

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practices talked about in chapter three.

“My brother, when thou has a virtue, and it is thine own virtue, thou hast it i common with no one. To be sure, thou wouldst call it by name and caress it; thou wouldst pull its ears and amuse thyself with it. And lo! Then hast thou its name in common with the people, and hast become one of the people and the herd with thy virtue! Better for thee to say: ‘Ineffable is it, and nameless, that which is pain an sweetness to my soul, and also the hunger of my bowels.’ Let thy virtue be too high for the familiarity of names, and if thou must speak of it, be not ashamed to stammer about it.”

If we excuse the recondite nature of Nietzsche’s narrative in Zarathustra we find the centre of his point is the difficulty experienced in engaging in a dialogue about something as highly subjective and personal as art is for the artist. This problem when applied to theatre presents real obstacles as it is not an art form that can be practiced in any real degree by one person alone or by a very small group of like Artaud and then see such performances in practice, the theory is forced to adjust to the physical stage and often, as I will show in chapter three, this adaptation takes on similar forms in vastly different theoretical contexts.

**Part Four - Post-Naturalism**

I have already made the claim that the work of theorists I have grouped under the term avant-garde theatre (Artaud and Kantor but this list can be extended to include Meyerhold, Beckett, Brook, etc.), while presenting analytical difficulties in the form of theory becomes more understandable and moves visibly closer to naturalism when put into practice. The actual methods of practice I will examine in the next chapter, here I would like to provide something in the way of explaining why the physical manifestations of these ideas seem to take on the characteristics of other forms of theatre. It could be argued that the writings of people like Artaud and Kantor are too vague and insubstantial to base working models productions on but I think that would be missing the central theme that connects the disparate philosophies in this category, that is, as I touched on in chapter on,

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their commitment to what Deleuze and Guattari described as ‘anti-production’\textsuperscript{10}.

Kantor and Artaud come closest to one and other in the construction of their theories as fluid and resistant to connection/production. Although we have looked at their work as an extension of naturalism’s psychological concerns direct ideas cannot be traced from these philosophies backward in anything like the degree that Brecht’s or Grotowski’s can, Artaud attributes his inspiration to ‘oriental’ theatre but is shown to have been frequently mistaken in his interpretation of it, Kantor’s ideas are likened to Futurism, Dada and Modernism but remain without visible links to these trends. The almost spontaneous appearance then of the these philosophies further identifies them with the post-structuralist concept of the body with organs. Resistance to connections, be they in the form of influences or reproducibility, would seem to negate or at least impede the possibility of such theories leading to or supporting a physical manifestation which comes in the form of theatrical production and so the temptation is to think of the theory as causing a deficiency or vacuum in the theatrical production phase which is then filled in (by the laws of physics - “In modern physics, there is no such thing as ‘nothing’\textsuperscript{11}.)“ by rogue flotsam of forms like naturalism and epic theatre. The concept of the body without organs suggests however that while such theories create a non-productive space (not unlike the stage) this space then serves to draw in these forces (of naturalism, epic theatre, etc) and with them spontaneously generate it’s own action (to avoid ambiguity I’m using the term ‘action’ instead of Deleuze and Guattari’s term ‘production’).

“But the essential thing is the establishment of an enchanted recording or inscribing surface [on the body without organs - our avant-garde stage] that arrogates to itself all the productive forces and all the organs of production, and that acts as a quasi cause by communicating the apparent movement to them.”\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, \textit{Anti-Oeipus}, trans Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. (Continuum, Changing Minds) p9.
\textsuperscript{12} Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, \textit{Anti-Oeipus}, trans Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. (Continuum, Changing Minds) p11-12.
For the purposes of this thesis, which takes a hostile, questioning stance against the binary oppositions traditionally used to define the various theatrical models, the avant-garde theater's accordance with a central post-structuralist concept such as the body with organs is fortuitous as this creates a thematic link between the breaking down of binary oppositions in theatrical models with the same process that took place with post-structuralist thinking and it’s predecessor. I have already used the term ‘post-naturalism’ to describe trends like the epic and aestetic theater's and this seems now even more fitting, that the shift away from structuralist thinking in linguistics was mirrored by a similar one from Freudian psychology resonates with this further when the connections between 19th century naturalism and Freud are contemplated.

**Part Five - Cinema and Acting**

The emergence of cinema in the early 20th century had a two way affect on acting on the stage. With early film’s being silent and stage actors the natural choice to perform in them these actors were often forced to give more expressive and gesture based performances than they may have been used to in naturalistic theatre, the kind of pantomime like playing that predated formal naturalism and Stanislavski warned his actors against.

As film makers became more practiced in the use of the technology however and audiences grew more accustomed to dissecting films and performances acting in silent film began to incorporate more naturalistic performances, the kind of subtlety seen in D.W.Griffith’s *The Birth Of A Nation* (1915) contrasts sharply with the highly expressionistic performances in Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) and serve as evidence that naturalist acting had become more common as directors realized the ability of filmmaking equipment to bring audiences closer to the actors made more subdued and natural performances easier. Lang’s films like Metropolis are an example of the other extreme.
cinema took acting to which was to opt for heavy expressionism a trend in film which had the effect of, along with Brechtian theatre, taking for it’s own of much of the gesture based, pantomime styles of the early 1800’s and the years previous, the kind of acting taught in Shakespeare’s time. Indeed the connection between the epic theatre and early 20th century german expressionism was more than just thematic or theoretical, the two areas even chose from the same pool of talent with actors like Peter Lorre, working closely with both Brecht and Fritz Lang. James Naremore quotes Lorre in connection with the gesture based nature of expressionism.

“In most films, actors need to produce vivid expressions in brief shots which are photographed out of sequence, and when asked to register “fear” or “pain” in close-up the look rather like one of Aubert’s drawings. Peter Lorre was roughly correct when he described the work of movie acting as “face making”.“[13]

After sound and then color came to cinema, the increases in technology became such that naturalistic performances in dramatic roles became the norm and this was helped immensely by the influence of people like Lee Strasberg who’s teachings in acting, based heavily on Stanislavski’s work, ushered in new cultures of interest in naturalism in acting and artists such as Elia Kazan and Marlon Brando who popularized the naturalism through their iconic work in film.

CHAPTER THREE - TEACHING ACTION

Part One - Mind Games

The main reason the art of acting and theatre interested me enough to inspire this thesis is its physical aspects. Unlike many other art forms, notably those closest to theatre and acting like poetry and prose writing, theatre lacks the luxury of being able to remain in a theoretical sphere. Where the study of other art forms can be undertaken by a systematic study of individual and relating works as well as examples of theory and philosophy, theatre requires participation and constitutes a physical manifestation of the act of artistic creation which is the central focus of study as we have seen for people like Stanislavski and Grotowski. With acting it is impossible to forever deal in metaphysics and theory for at some point instruction must be given in practicalities, in this chapter I will talk about these practicalities, those of the stage environment and more particularly those that take the form of games - simple, reproducible, physical exercises designed to impart the skills involved in acting and theatre to the participants with each one also betraying it’s individual theoretical basis. To begin this I would like to analyze and compare the work of two theatre practitioners and theoreticians, two 20th century contemporaries one of whom can be identified with Brecht and the epic theatre, the other with Stanislavski and the naturalistic tradition, Augusto Boal and Viola Spolin.

Though the various traditions may often differ they do seem to all be in agreement about the usefulness of short and concise exercises as a way of transmitting and materializing their
ideas. The problem acting poses for teachers is greater than it’s equivalent in other forms of art where examples can be studied, studying examples of action, especially for the stage, is almost impossible without a live interaction. Theatre games benefit from their structures and simplicity over the alternative of formless improvisation as importantly these structures, often as simple as throwing and catching a ball, provide a clear language which the players can then use to communicate, a language that solves the problem of communication seen by Nietzsche which I mentioned in chapter two. Spolin says of the physicalization provided by games like hers:

“Physicalization provides the student with a personal and concrete experience (which can be grasped) on which further development depends; and it gives the teacher and student a working vocabulary necessary to an objective relationship.”

The supply of a language that enables an ‘objective relationship’ then is one of the goals of these physical exercises but Spolin and Boal’s work (unlike that of Kantor or Grotowski in this area) there is also a tendency to address the material to the uninitiated, the central books of both writers on the subject contain sections devoted to acting games for children and both throughout assume an audience not trained in theatre to any great degree. Because these writers are not speaking to trained actors or students of theatre in their books it is interesting to see how they communicated the sometimes complex concepts like epic theatre and naturalism within their games and how the differences between these concepts cause the fundamental ideas of the individual games to differ greatly.

Spolin’s ‘Space Substance” game is a clear example of how naturalist philosophy,

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2 Viola Spolin, Theatre Games For The Lone Actor. (Northwestern University Press) p27.
particularly the work of Stanislavski, is transformed from theory into a physical practice. Her instructions are for the player of the game to select a mimed object “such as a candy bar” and interact with it in various ways. The player must perform some action with the object, in this case we can say opening the candy bar and biting into it, then repeat the action “this time calling out Begin! each time fresh contact is made with the object and End! when each detail is completed.” This simple exercise splits up an action - biting a candy bar - into a series of actions, scenes each with a beginning and end, in doing so it perfectly mirrors Stanislavski’s concept of breaking a larger scene down into smaller units.

“So an actor must proceed, not by a multitude of details, but by those important units which, like signals, mark his channel and keep him in the right creative line”

Boal’s physicalization of philosophical principals takes much the same form as Spolin’s but from his perspective as an adherent to the principals of epic theatre and Marxism. His games are often very similar in appearance to those of his contemporary but when we look for the theoretic basis we find Brecht as in ‘Name and Gesture’⁴, an introductory game that sees every member of the group of players say their names in turn followed by a physical gesture of their choosing. The dynamic audience of other players must, as each person takes their turn, copy the performer by saying their name and repeating their gesture. At the end of the game “anyone who wishes takes a step forward and the rest of the group must say his or her name and perform that person’s gesture.”

A simple exercise in identification, when it’s motives are examined, becomes an

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³ Constantin Stanislavski, An Actor Prepares, trans Elizabeth Hapgood. (Methuen Drama, 2008), Chapter 7 Section 1.

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introduction into Brechtian theory. Each of the players defines themselves by means of a physical gesture that is later repeated, along with the originator’s name, by other players who assume the originator’s role and identity by means of gestural acting. As a lesson in epic theatre Name and Gesture, like many of Boal’s games, also serves to distance the participants from naturalistic ideas of acting which, due to naturalism’s saturation of modern media, have become subconsciously linked in their minds to acting in general. It would be extremely ineffective, especially with a class of lay people or children, to attempt explaining to participants that they must disassociate the idea of a personal psychological emulation of a character from their thoughts of acting as an art form in general and categorize that process as one of a number of possible techniques amongst which is the assumption of recognizable and gestural character attributes to facilitate alienation effect and stimulate objective audience interpretation of a text.

It is worth taking into account the political implications of some of Boal’s writing on theatre games. While Spolin’s games propagate an artistic viewpoint without political affiliations (while naturalism may be used to express political opinions these views are relative to the users and not the philosophy) Boal’s work’s connection to the epic theatre centers him firmly in a Marxist tradition. Marxist concerns are not just implicitly expressed through Boal’s games in the way theatrical ideas are but are also emphasized heavily and subtly in his rhetoric, his dismissive attitude to what he calls the “bourgeois theatre” an area he portrays as naturalist, middle class and decadent all at once while relating each of these terms to one and other. Where such views expressed mainly for an academic audience it might be implicit that they would be understood in context and that the hostile attitude

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shown towards naturalist theatre would be appreciated as reactionary or ironic but when woven into a work disseminated (albeit through teachers) to children the final outcome often looks strikingly like political propaganda and indoctrination when it isn’t accompanied by an acknowledgement of it’s goal as a counter-indoctrination to a naturalism (which once again - isn’t a political ideology) saturated society.

Part Two – Invisible Energy

Grotowski’s physicalization of his aesthetic theories of acting take more serious approach in terms of the involvement of their participants than those of Boal or Spolin. The level of physicality involved in performing the kind of acrobatic stretches and poses he requires of his pupils serves to further his theories of stripping away barriers to expression rather than add layers of technique and method to the actor. They do this by engaging the body fully in strenuous physical exercise and also tasking the mind with joining this exertion “This exercise must be done with a certain imaginary force”\(^6\) This ‘imaginary force’ shows that apart from their function as simple physical training exercises Grotowski’s techniques also serve the purpose of dealing with some of the uncontrollable mental aspects of performance that Stanislavski called ‘subconscious’

In an essay entitled ‘The Actor’s Technique’ Grotowski states the ultimate goal of his work with physical exercises: “I want to take away, to steal from the actor all that disturbs him. That which is creative will remain.”\(^7\) Adherence to strict discipline he sees as a way to

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\(^7\) Ibid, p177.
unlock spontaneous subconscious processes but when attributing the influences of this idea in the same essay he writes “Meyerhold based his work on discipline, exterior formation; Stanislavski on the spontaneity of daily life. These are, in fact, two complementary aspects of the creative process.” Describing his theatre as a synthesis of the ideas of others when, in fact, Stanislavski was of exactly the same mind about the use of physical technique in accessing the ‘spontaneity of daily life’ and the part discipline had to play in this “the actor, no less than the solider, must be subject to iron discipline”.

**Part Three -The Stage Without Organs**

Although Kantor didn’t leave writings of exercises and games in the traditional sense there are strong trends in his work that pursue physical actions as a way of realizing theoretical principals. Working heavily with inanimate objects throughout his life and famously including dolls as part of casts in his plays (for example *The Dead Class* 1975) Kantor’s connection to what I have here dubbed the avant-garde stage and the built in anti-production that entails is achieved by his ability to, through various methods, remove from the actors in his productions their egos, personalities and other hard to define elements that could be grouped under the heading humanity.

“The actors are crowded into the absurdly small space of a wardrobe; they are squeezed between and mixed with dead objects (sacks, a mass of sacks), degraded, without dignity; they are hanging motionless like clothes; they are identified with the heavy mass of sacks (sacks - Emballages rank with the lowest in hierarchy of objects, and as such they easily become objectless matter).”

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8 Constantin Stanislavski, An Actor Prepares, trans Elizabeth Hapgood. (Methuen Drama, 2008), Chapter 1 Section 2.
9 Tadeusz Kantor, Routledge Performance Practitioners, Edited by Noel Witts. (Routledge, 2001) p31
Practitioners of the stage wishing to produce a form that actively eludes interpretation and representation, embodying the objectlessness Kantor talks about, those artists trying infuse anti-production into the theatre must necessarily be aware that a precondition of the existence of their work in physical form is that it at some point take physical form. That is why so much of the work from people like Artaud and Kantor must take the form of an attack on other theatrical or artistic forms such as naturalism, only by divesting another form of it’s properties can these writers get any closer to their anti-productive ideals as to start from nothing and add to it would be counter productive (counter productive to counter production) and to remain on nothing or actually reach it is obviously not desired for artistic expression (at least more than once, John Cage’s silent composition 4’3” being an example - a recording of which is included in the appendix).

To put it another way the avant-garde stage creates by stripping the theatre of it’s constitutive elements in various different ways and to different extents in the same way that a sculptor creates a work of art by removing specific pieces of material from a larger whole or someone creating an artificial environment on a computer does so by selectively inserting space into an infinite area of hypothetical matter.

The theatrical work of Samuel Beckett often proves to be very similar in practice to Kantor’s divesting his actors of their humanity and creating objectless matter by simultaneously objectifying the living elements of his plays and personifying the inanimate ones. Beckett plays like Catastrophe (1982) which sees one character subjected to minute physical direction from another, mirroring the theatrical act but not showing any kind of
progression throughout, attempt to attain the anti-productive state by essentially presenting
themselves as frozen and changeless moments in time and so remove from theatre the
narrative power normally held by it.
CHAPTER FOUR - CONCLUSION

Uniforms are relics. The war rages everywhere. - General Shepard, Modern Warfare 2.¹

Part One - Modern Narratives

An interesting parallel to acting games and exercises exists in the form of modern first and third person video games. While the exercises talked about in the last chapter serve to train actors, or at least players, in the more complicated aspects of theory by way of simple action, elements of theatrical philosophy and practice have found a home in the way these video games are narrated to players but often retain their dichotomous stances in this form whether it be the difference between subjective and objective action central to the naturalist/epic theatre relationship or any of the other points of conflict already outlined. I am choosing to look at first and third person video games, as opposed to other genres like puzzle and real time strategy, because these forms universally ask the player to assume the role of a character or characters within the narrative and this assumption of roles is most frequently achieved by use of acting methods developed in the theatre.

Activision/Infinity Ward’s 2009 game Modern Warfare 2 begins by introducing the player to his or her avatar Private First Class Joseph Allen and after some basic training as Allen sees the player character (henceforth PC) selected from a United States infantry battalion to serve the CIA as an undercover agent, already our avatar is asked to assume a different role. The mission is to infiltrate an “ultra nationalist terrorist cell” within Russia and after the plot jumps forward in time we are shown that the PC has been successful. The next time we are put in control of Allen he is armed, in an elevator and in the presence of four men also wielding guns, members of the infiltrated organization. The leader of the group issues instructions to his subordinates “remember, no

Russian.” reminding them that the goal of the event about to take place is that it not be attributed to Russians and so to not be heard speaking the language, another layer of mask is added, the player pretends to be Allen pretending to be Russian pretending not to be Russian with the final layer being aptly signified as Allen and the other men pull balaclavas over their faces.

What follows is an armed assault be the group, in which the PC participates, on an air port terminal swarming with civilians. The moral ramifications of the violent execution of unarmed people are muddled from the start from the point of view of the player, as part of the organization seeking international outrage and revolution the goal is to open fire, as a humble private from America whether or not to fire is a decision between common morality and the desire to impede a much larger attack at a later date and from the player’s feelings progressing in the mission and the potentially unknown emotion differing players bring to the situation. These dilemma are solved by the developers not long into the mission however, as the group progresses through the airport the player need not have fired a single lethal shot, it being perfectly possible to avoid breaking cover by firing at walls, trash cans or shop windows, but when a security guard emerges from his hiding place and takes aim at the player the instinct for self defense takes over and within the amount of time it takes to aim and pull a trigger the player is implicated in the massacre.

Stanislavski’s concept “If” brings naturalist acting to first person video games like Modern Warfare 2 and shapes the genre in ways the make it differ greatly from that of third person games which I will discuss below, first however the definition of the concept given in An Actor Prepares “All action in the theatre must have an inner justification, be logical, coherent and real. IF acts as a lever to lift us out of the world of actuality and into the realm of imagination.”

‘If” along with it’s sister conception the ‘given circumstances’ are only two in a large list of

\^2 Constantin Stanislavski, An Actor Prepares, trans Elizabeth Hapgood. (Methuen Drama, 2008), Chapter 3 Section 3.

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elements Stanislavski instructs his actors to keep in mind during performance, first person games however manage to eliminate the need for the others to be consciously held. (list given in An Actor Prepares, Chapter 5) Role - since the PCs in first person games usually have no personality more than a name and are in a lot of cases even mute this is supplied by the player. Technical Methods - after the tutorial period of a game the controls become instinctual and after experience with a wide range of similar games even technical aspects like rate of fire, range, power, etc of different guns become known by players without much effort. Audience - in the cases I am discussing the only audience is the player themselves and short of delving into Lacanian psychoanalysis I will assume this area requires no explanation. Lines - in most cases automatically activated and spoken by in game characters. Cues - translated to the player’s same instinctual facilities as other aspects, if to progress the narrative the player must enter a certain door all other doors may be found to be locked. Points of Attention - represented by the various heads up display elements seen on screen that designate the player’s health, etc as well as the location of narrative objectives.

By giving this rather exhaustive list I hope to have not just explained how main tenants of performance in naturalistic theatre exist and are addressed by first person games but also to have provided an example against which third person games can be viewed. In the third person genre players view action not from the PC’s point of view as in first person but from a camera usually floating several feet behind and above the on screen avatar. Far from featuring the mute and personality impoverished types of characters found in first person the narratives of these games usually focus around eponymous characters (Max Payne³, Alan Wake⁴, Drake's Fortune⁵) whose distinctive personalities are central to the stories being told. Obviously from a third person point of view the character is constantly visible and these games tend to emphasize the central nature of their lead characters by having them also provide an internal dialogue that serves the double purpose of

⁴ Alan Wake, Remedy Entertainment. (Microsoft Game Studios, 2010).
⁵ Drake's Fortune, Naughty Dog. (Sony Computer Entertainment, 2007).
making up for the loss of visible detail due to the camera’s increased distance from events and
providing the player with insights into the character’s thought processes, when the player
encounters a locked door Max Payne reflects ‘The door was locked, I would have to find another
way in.”

The change from a central character the emotions of whom are essentially those of the
audience/player to a character that experiences his or her own emotions, from first to third person
and everything I have shown that entails, displays the multitude of ways in which video gaming
borrows from theatre and acting to produce an art form that embodies the differences and
similarities of the manifestations of these same theories in theatre.

**Part Two – Conclusion**

What I hope I have done so far is make the differences between the various schools of theatre I have
chosen to study seem smaller while also showing the areas in which they are not compatible. That
the growth of things like Brecht’s or Grotowski’s individual theatrical movements was due to a
combination of political and philosophical influences that predated the systems by thousands of
years and an expansion of the directions of 19th century naturalism. By illustrating the connections
between the ideas of modern systems of theatre and much older thought, such as that between the
epic theatre and 16th century gesture based acting, my aim was to highlight where theatrical
systems consisted of views and ideas that are often problematic amalgamations of thought from
various fields that may only on the surface seem to exist in unison. Finally by looking at how
different modes of theatrical thinking address the problem of physicalizing their art form and, in this
chapter, how these methods of physicalization have influenced other media my desire was to find
some way of showing physical evidence that these modes of thinking could work together and that

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compromise to theory is necessary in the case of theatre for production.
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