

A POSTMODERN ANALYSIS OF ANTONIN ARTAUD'S "THEATRE OF CRUELTY" FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF PETER BROOK

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Abstract

Postmodernism as a new phenomenon has influenced different disciplines such as theatre, music, social sciences, and so on. It is considered as a reaction against modernism, manipulating minimalism and deconstruction. Unlike the realistic theatres, it has not been following a particular framework, but reconciling different thoughts and forms. The persistence of different approaches in art has had a direct relationship with the change in the structure of the world. The emergence of these structures can be considered crucial in the impact postmodernism has had on theatre.

The article focuses on Artaud as the progenitor of a form of theater whose aim is to unsettle and radically transform its audience and its culture, such as. Artaud called for an end to a drama of rationality, masterpieces, and psychological exploration. He thought that society and the world of theatre had become an empty shell. Advocating the "theatre of cruelty" in his work, *The Theater and Its Double* (1938), he was trying to revolutionize theatre - figuratively burn it to the ground so that it could start again. He was trying to connect people with something more primal, honest and true within themselves that had been lost for most people. He spoke of cruelty not in the sense of violent behavior, but rather the cruelty it takes for actors to show an audience, a truth that they do not wish to see. He believed that text had been a tyrant over meaning, and advocated, instead, for a theatre made up of a unique language that lay halfway between thought and gesture. Artaud described the spiritual in physical terms, and believed that all expression is physical expression in space. He is famous for the influence he exerted, through his writings and performances, on the way writers, directors, actors, and communal theater. Such a theater, according to Artaud, should employ expressive breathing, animal sounds, uninhibited gestures, huge masks, puppets, and an architecture that destroys the barrier between actors and audience in order to turn spectators into participants, and bring them to a level of experience Artaud deemed more profound than any experience accessible through passive understanding or absorption of language, plot, or coherently structured action. In this article an attempt is made to point out the role he and Peter Brook played in the postmodern theatre.

On the other hand Peter Brook, who had come to know the emptiness of contemporary theatre, believed that what had saved theatre earlier could not do so now. He established an inter-cultural theatre which would be in direct relationship with the audience. For this purpose he preferred using such elements like gestures, tone than the rational meaning of his drama.

Keywords: Postmodernism, double, minimalism, deconstruction, rationality, theatre of cruelty

1- INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism as a new phenomenon has influenced different disciplines such as theatre, music, social sciences, and so on. It is considered as a reaction against modernism, manipulating minimalism and deconstruction. Unlike the realistic theatres, it has not been following a particular framework, but reconciling different thoughts and forms. The persistence of different approaches in art has had a direct relationship with the change in the structure of the world. The emergence of these structures can be considered crucial in the impact postmodernism has had on theatre.

As far as the definition of the term "Postmodernism" is concerned, there has been no unique definition of the term due to its extensive meanings. The French contemporary theoretician, Lyotard, believes that Postmodernism produces and redefines itself continuously. Sometimes, it challenges our talent, thought and feeling, and sometimes it makes us challenge it. Where modernism paid attention to enlightenment, and sought to correct everything in a rational way, Postmodernism emphasized deconstruction and disintegration.

Since the emergence of every style and school in arts is in direct and indirect relationship with social structure, therefore the main reason for the tendency towards different performing arts based on the understanding of the audience can be the continuous migrations, and consequently, mixing of the various cultures. The emergence of such structures is indebted to postmodernism. The origin of postmodernist theatre lies in the anti-realistic theatre. Unlike the non-realistic theater, it is less optimistic. It does not care for the symbolic and surrealist theatres which intend to reveal the internal realities of the world and something beyond realities; it is also not concerned with Brecht's epic theatre which is set to save the world. Such known postmodern directors like Antonin Artaud, Peter Brooks, Grotowski, Mirzoeff, Forman, Wilson, and etc. focus on the lack of continuity of the reality which they observe, rather than looking for a particular meaning.

Indeed in the postmodern world, theatre is considered as a marginal culture. According to Buadriard, theatre has been transformed from the dominant art in the modern Europe to a secondary framework in the postmodern world.

2- ARTAUD AND POSTMODERN THEATRE

Antonin Artaud, poet and theorist of revolutionary theater, avant-garde novelist and surrealist screenwriter, actor, drug addict, and madman is the progenitor of a form of theater whose aim is to unsettle and radically transform its audience and its culture, such as happenings, theater of the absurd, or experimental theater. Artaud called for an end to a drama of rationality, masterpieces, and psychological exploration. He advocated a "theatre of cruelty"—a provocative theater drawing on Symbolist sensory derangement, psychoanalytic theory, and the Balinese theater. Such a theater, according to Artaud, should employ expressive breathing, animal sounds, uninhibited gestures, huge masks, puppets, and an architecture that destroys the barrier between actors and audience in order to turn spectators into participants. Artaud deemed more profound than any experience accessible through passive understanding or absorption of language, plot, or coherently structured action. His aim was to unblock repression and to purge violence, hypocrisy, and the malaise he saw as endemic to society. He is remembered more for his tormented life, for having turned himself inside out in the attempt to discover a way to transform theater and society, and for the concepts he developed for effectuating transformation. He intended to transform a theatre based on text. In *Antonin Artaud: Man of Vision*, Bettina Knapp offered an explanation of Artaud's popularity long after his death: "In his time, he was a man alienated from his society, divided within himself, a victim of inner and outer forces beyond his control. ... The tidal force of his imagination and the urgency of his therapeutic quest were disregarded and cast aside as the ravings of a madman. ... Modern man can respond to Artaud now because they share so many psychological similarities and affinities" (Knapp, 1969, p. 204). Artaud's individual works, throughout his lifetime, were often received badly. He destroyed the frameworks and conventions dominating the Western theatre. He believed that the Western theatre had limited itself to a narrow path of human experience, the psychological problems of individuals or the social problems of the classes. He believed that the traditional theatre has been so fixed and conventional that is not visible any more, and therefore pointed out to three different weaknesses in the theatre he already knew; these are 1) it dealt with the old themes and structures, 2) it could not absorb people and its audience, 3) it emphasized the role of words.

2-1 Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*

In *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud warns that it is better to create the work on the stage rather than creating one in text. According to him, the theatre should also "take gestures and push them as far as they

will go." Theatre should also "reforge the chain between what is and what is not, between the visible and the invisible." He advised the writers to remember two things when making use of classical works: 1) Different aspects of the text of the play, 2) renovating the play in relation to the contemporary issue. He intended to remove the border between the place of performance and stage, and create a space where the audience is involved in the play. He was against the text which makes the actor immovable.

For Artaud it is the difference between the "virtuality of the possible and what already exists in materialized nature; between what is and what is only dreamed." He writes on

The theatre restores us all our dormant conflicts and all their powers, and gives these powers names we hail as symbols: and behold! Before our eyes is fought a battle of symbols, one charging against another in an impossible *melée*; for there can be theatre only from the moment when the impossible really begins and when the poetry which occurs on the stage sustains and superheats the realized symbols. In the true theatre a play disturbs the senses' repose, frees the repressed unconscious, incites a kind of virtual revolution (which moreover can have its full effect only if it remains virtual), and imposes on the assembled collectivity an attitude that is both difficult and heroic. (Artaud, 1958, 87)

His theatre would never be sided with those in power. It would always be on the front edge of the avant-garde pushing the power toward change. His theatre, like the plague, is in the image of this carnage (freedom of life, sexual freedom,) and this essential separation. "It releases conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and these powers are dark, it is the fault not of the plague nor of the theatre, but of life." (88)

It may be true that the poison of theatre, when injected in the body of society, destroys it, as St. Augustine asserted, but it does so as a plague, a revenging scourge, a redeeming epidemic when credulous ages were convinced they saw God's hand in it, while it was nothing more than a natural law applied, where all gestures were offset by another gesture, every action by a reaction. (89)

He writes later in the essay that theatre is a disease because it is the supreme equilibrium which cannot be achieved without destruction. In the Mary Caroline Richards translation of "The Plague", published in *The Theater and Its Double*, we read: "(the theater) .. invites the mind to share a delirium which exalts its energies; and we can see, to conclude, that from the human point of view, the action of theatre, like that of the plague, is beneficial, for, impelling men to see themselves as they are, it causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world..." (90).

Therefore, Artaud's attitude turned out to be a source for the artists, critics and dominant figures in theatre. His different look at the things, with an increase in the postmodern perspectives in the 70s and 80s, paved the way for the pioneers of theatre, so that life, ritual, text, sacred, audience, belief, director, actor and finally philosophy would mix together and become creative. According to Brook, "In the Theatre, the tendency for centuries has been to put the actor at a remote distance, on a platform, framed, decorated, lit, painted, in high shoes--so as to help to persuade the ignorant that he is holy, that his art is sacred. Did this express reverence? Or was there behind it a fear that something would be exposed if the light were too bright, the meeting too near?" (Brook, 1968, 64)

"The Theatre and the Plague"--an essay included in the collection published as *The Theater and Its Double*--proposes that one of the great scourges of mankind, the Plague, in many ways resembles the theatre which, as an art, consists of some of mankind's great acts of affirmation. "The plague ... cleanses. Like a boil, it brings whatever would have noxious, hidden, and festering to the surface--and expels it. Theatre can do likewise. It simulates the dark, unindulged passions, the abnormal feelings, of mankind (the actor is a murderer) and by expelling them at one remove, in performance, cleanses the performer and spectator alike in its collective experience" (Bermel, 18-19).

Artaud believed that the only salvation for mankind and society was theatre, working as one of its doubles, the plague, to purge the world of its violence and ugliness. If we can think freely, let our mind make the connections freely, without thinking of the ugliness on the underside, as Artaud suggests in the essay, we will see the parallels that Artaud envisioned between the plague and his vision of theatre. Once the theatre is established in a city, normal social order collapses. There is no more refuse collection, no police. Pyres are lit to burn the dead whenever sanitation workers are available. At first each family wants its own pyre. Then wood, other fuels and space grow scarce and families fight around the fires, but this is soon followed by general flight from the cities since there are too many corpses and too few places to burn them. The streets are already choked with crumbling pyramids of the dead. Other theatre victims, those who remain inside their apartments lacking swollen glands or delirium, pain or rashes, examine themselves proudly in the mirror

each morning, feeling in splendid health, only to fall dead in the bathroom with their toothbrush in hand. This improvisation shows quite clearly the destruction and havoc that Artaud envisioned his theatre as a plague should wreck on a society that had lost its way in the metaphysical universe. The theatre is a victim, for instance:

... Who dies without any material destruction, yet with all the stigma of an absolute, almost abstract disease upon him, is in the same condition as an actor totally penetrated by feelings without any benefit or relation to reality. Everything in the actor's physical aspect, just as in the theatre victim, shows life has reached to a paroxysm, yet nothing has happened." (Artaud, *the Theater and Its Double*, 17)

The plague extends dormant images into the most extreme gestures. According to Artaud, the theatre should also "take gestures and push them as far as they will go." Theatre should also "reforge the chain between what is and what is not, between the visible and the invisible." For Artaud it is the difference between the "virtuality of the possible and what already exists in materialized nature; between what is and what is only dreamed." He writes on:

The theatre restores us all our dormant conflicts and all their powers, and gives these powers names we hail as symbols: and behold! Before our eyes is fought a battle of symbols, one charging against another in an impossible melée; for there can be theatre only from the moment when the impossible really begins and when the poetry which occurs on the stage sustains and superheats the realized symbols. In the true theatre a play disturbs the senses' repose, frees the repressed unconscious, incites a kind of virtual revolution (which moreover can have its full effect only if it remains virtual), and imposes on the assembled collectivity an attitude that is both difficult and heroic. (16)

The performer infects the audience with the correct emotional response and the audience is cleansed through the contagion, but not until after the audience has gone through an experience similar to the one that the performer goes through.

Aristotle viewed theatre as an act of purgation, catharsis. With "The Theatre and the Plague," Artaud goes much further. Rather than concurring that theatre is a healthy diversion to be described by such adjectives as "pleasant, entertaining, enjoyable," he insists that it is like the Plague, a social necessity. Theatre, as an art, has an obligation: its every performance, by virtue of its cleansing and purifying, must transfigure its audiences.

2-1-1 Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty"

In the beginning of 50th, Artaud offered his theory, "Theatre of Cruelty". He spoke of cruelty not in the sense of violent behavior, but rather the cruelty it takes for actors to show an audience a truth that they do not wish to see. He believed that text had been a tyrant over meaning, and advocated, instead, for a theatre made up of a unique language that lay halfway between thought and gesture. Artaud described the spiritual in physical terms, and believed that all expression is physical expression in space. For him cruelty was not that of material greed for life, but also he believed it should be to the extent that both the actor and the audience are involved in the play. On the other hand he thought that society and the world of theatre had become an empty shell. In the Theatre of Cruelty, he was trying to revolutionize theatre - figuratively burn it to the ground so that it could start again. He was trying to connect people with something more primal, honest and true within themselves that had been lost for most people.

Considering theatre a sacred place, where man is drawn in his condition of existence, he believes that in this way man is able to cleanse his own experiences; this is a reference to the theatre of cruelty. In order to understand "Theatre of Cruelty", one needs to point out to man's unconscious mind which is the center for man's ambiguous and mysterious desires and is, consequently, repressed by forces of civilization. In this context, Artaud has been influenced by Freud who has divided human psyche into three parts. The latter believes that man knows about two of the three parts, but does not have any knowledge about the third part, which is the most important part. Artaud believes that the audience must be placed under great emotional pressure, tolerating of which would enable him pay attention to his inner self and his instinctive, animalistic, and emotional tendencies. At this stage, the audience loses his senses and realizes the presence of the unconscious. He believes cruelty, in particular, mental cruelty leads to freedom and peace. He intends to remove the distance between the actors and the audience.

He believes that "Theatre of Cruelty" reveals and exposes the immoral and asocial forces within man in order to cleanse his psyche. He seeks to release himself from the hidden and dark forces, thus he decides to focus on the audience rather than the actors. He maintains that all the obstacles between the stage and audience, and theatre and life should be removed. "None the less, from the arresting words 'Theatre of Cruelty' comes

a groping towards a theatre, more violent, less rational, more extreme, less verbal, more dangerous..” (Brook, 49)

By 1932 the Surrealists had moved toward Communism which was gaining favor among the working class, Hitler was developing a power base in Germany and the depression had taken root in America, while Einstein's Theory of Relativity was being developed into a weapon that would threaten the future of the whole planet. If Artaud's world was to be destroyed as he demanded, while riding standing up through the streets of Paris with Anaïs Nin, many options for its destruction either existed or were being developed. If Artaud thought he could shock people into revolt and reconstruction without first destroying society, as he and other artists of the avant-garde of his period had tried to do for years, how would he do it?

Cruelty as a teaching tool is suggested 27 years later by a young absurdist playwright, Edward Albee. In his one-act play *Zoo Story*, which premiered in Germany in 1959 and opened later in New York with Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* as the curtain raiser, his character "Jerry" tells us, after relating the "story of Jerry and the dog" to Peter in Central Park:

... We had made many attempts at contact and we had failed. The dog has returned to garbage, and I to solitary free passage. I have not returned. I mean to say, I have gained solitary free passage, if that much further loss can be said to be gain. I have learned that neither kindness nor cruelty, by themselves, independent of each other, creates any effect beyond themselves; and I have learned that the two combined, together, at the same time, are the teaching emotion. And what is gained is loss. (Strasburg, 1962, 405)

For Albee, it is when cruelty is used in combination with its opposite, kindness, that something "beyond themselves," of universal importance or value, is learned.

As used by Artaud a quarter century before, the word "cruelty" must be considered from a philosophical and, especially, metaphysical point of view. Responding to his friend, Jean Paulhan, in a letter dated Paris, November 14, 1932, Artaud writes:

I use the word 'cruelty' in the sense of hungering after life, cosmic strictness, relentless necessity, in the Gnostic sense of a living vortex engulfing darkness, in the sense of the inescapable necessary pain without which life could not continue. Good has to be desired, it is the result of an act of willpower, while evil is continuous. When the hidden God creates, he obeys a cruel need for creation imposed upon him, yet he cannot avoid creating, thus permitting an ever more condensed, ever more consumed nucleus of evil to enter the eye of the willed vortex of good. Theatre in the sense of constant creation, a wholly magic act, obeys this necessity. A play without this desire, this blind zest for life, capable of surpassing everything seen in every gesture or every act, in the transcendent aspect of the plot, would be useless and a failure as theatre. (Artaud, 78)

Artaud means "everything that is not dormant in life is cruel." In a letter To Mr. R. de R., dated Paris, November 16, 1932, Artaud writes: "Cruelty connects things together, the different stages of creation are formed by it. Good is always an external façade but the inner façade is evil. Evil will eventually be reduced but only at the final moment when all forms are on the point of returning to chaos" (Artaud, *Collected Works*, P. 79.). Peter Brook maintains : "None the less, from the arresting words 'Theatre of Cruelty' comes a groping towards a theatre, more violent, less rational, more extreme, less verbal, more dangerous." (Brook, .54)

Experiencing cruelty could be related to facing the truth of a present existence or reality, such as the violence of birth, war, death, or living in poverty without drugs: "It is upon this idea of extreme action, pushed beyond all limits, that theatre must be rebuilt." Artaud felt that destruction, like the plague, is a transforming force and that teaching through cruelty, is a means of transforming and healing the audience. This differs with the concept of teaching of Christian morals of the Bible the Sentimentalists of the eighteenth century accomplished at the behest of the merchant class of England. Artaud describes the extramural effects of cruelty in connection with his production of *The Cenci*:

My heroes ... dwell in the realm of cruelty and must be judged outside of good and evil. They are incestuous and sacrilegious; they are adulterers, rebels, insurgents, and blasphemers. And that cruelty in which the entire work is bathed does not only result from the bloody story of the Cenci family, since it is not a purely corporal cruelty but a moral one; it goes to the extremity of instinct and forces the actor to plunge right to the roots of his being so that he leaves the stage exhausted. A cruelty which acts as well upon the spectator and should not allow him to leave the theatre intact, but exhausted, involved, perhaps transformed! (Sellin, 129)

Artaud also thought the interplay of lights on the stage should be designed to create an atmosphere capable

of moving the spectator to anxiety, terror, eroticism, or love. Lighting would be a force which can play on the mind of the spectator because of its vibratory possibilities, cast onto the stage in waves, in sheets, or in fiery arrows. There should be no separation between the stage and the audience and the theatre should be modified according to the architecture of certain sacred places--as in Tibet. The walls should be painted with lime to absorb the light; action should take place on all levels and dimensions, in height and in depth to grip and assault the spectator--as though the outside world were, symbolically speaking, acting upon and stimulating the spectator's inner world. Esslin informs us: "As a further act of depersonalization he placed dummies on stage among the live actors, "to make the heroes of the play say what perturbs them and what they could not convey in ordinary conversation." He was trying "to make beings, rather than men, speak." ... "Like great incarnate forces," ... they would have to remain psychologically plausible" (Esslin, 86.).

Rose has pointed out the most important elements influential in the progress of Artaudian drama. She believes that that besides the (1) "breathing techniques" mentioned above, his performances included the technical display of: (2) "puppet-like movements," (3) "animal movements," (4) "movements portraying monsters," (5) "masks, costumes, padding, stilts, fabric, puppets, objects and accessories," (6) "movements timed in relation to mechanically controlled puppets, masks, mirrors, scenery, furniture, lighting and objects," (7) "stage action combined with filmed movement and slide projections," (8) "elaborate solo and ensemble gesture and movement, often in a multi-leveled space surrounding the audience." Emotional expression was communicated to the audience by: (9) "realistic gesture and action to depict ordinary and extraordinary human behavior," (10) "gestures and actions that contradict a character's intentions and lines," (11) "intensely emotional and exaggerated gestures and action through which the actor's latent cruelty is explored, expressed, and purged," (12) "dreams and fantasies as sources for movement, and nonlinear plot development," (13) "stylized, formalized, stereotypical, and illustrative dance movement which symbolized special inner states and metaphysical ideas," (14) "gestures and movements with a ritualistic quality appropriate for a theatre whose main goal is to purge the human tendency to violence and bloodshed through the depiction of horrifying subjects and events" (Rose, 1986, 1-5).

Artaud used his own particular language which was able to defy the rules and conventions of language in theatre. He did not have faith in the Western and Realistic theatre which used a language which would highlight man's psychological and social conflicts. He was not in favor of such theatre which would prefer text rather than performance. His favorite language should be related with the space, keeps a distance from the text and should be kept away from ordinary dialogue, so that it would create an independent art. He also believed in Gesture in theatre, and preferred it to language. He even turned to loud songs. He believed that words should function as important elements in the play.

As a model for postmodern playwrights and directors like Peter Brook, and unlike other realistic playwrights, Artaud created actors who were able to release themselves of the unimportant events and emotional simultaneity, and who would avoid being absolutely free in playing their roles. These actors would attain such bodily discipline which would enable them act when needed. Indeed Artaud was in search of a super doll, a dancer compared with the Balese theatre actors. He was in favor of the measured muscle movements of body organs.

The other important element in Artaud's theatre is gesture. In this regards he was influenced by Balese Theatre. In Artaud theatre, gesture functions as dialogue. Costume is another important element in Artaudian theatre. He was not in favor of modern and historical dresses used by actors, but instead preferred using artificial dresses and gigantic dolls. He also emphasizes the role of the director in creating a play. He considers director superior to the writer, because the former bring life to text, and creates a language far better than words. The other important factor is stage equipment. In Artaudian theatre all the dissimilar objects which are not related together are kept side by side; this would shock the audience. For Artaud, each object had a function to do, and carries a particular meaning. That is why objects play the same roles in the language of performance as the words play the written and oral languages. Space also plays a crucial role in Artaudian plays. Artaud was in search of direct connection between actors and audience, to the extent that audience is mesmerized and theatre would turn into a ritual shared by both audience and actors. This way the audience is involved in the play and witnesses his own life played. The last device used by Artaud was music. He used musical devices with unbearable sounds, and turned to old musical devices for creating such sounds. Artaud's use of improper music had greatly influenced such musicians like John Cage who created improper sounds.

2-1 Peter Brook and Postmodern Drama

Peter Brook (1925), whom Trevor Nunn considered as a stranger and revolutionary, spend most parts of his

life doing research on the nature of drama. He had carried the legacy left for him by Artaud. Having written few prominent plays and directed some important Shakespearean plays for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Brooks' special contribution to postmodern theatre was to use actors with cultural differences, in the direction of modern multiculturalism. He was not only influenced by Artaud, but also was in line with Grotowski, whose stage movement concepts and practices might be compared to Artaud's ideas and attempts at "Affective Athleticism" because of their emphasis upon gesture, breath and emotional expression. In his essay, "He Wasn't Entirely Himself," he writes that "we are entering into the age of Artaud." (Grotowski, 1968, p. 117) In the same essay he writes:

When an eminent creator with an achieved style and personality, like Peter Brook, turns to Artaud, it's not to hide his own weaknesses, or to ape the man. It just happens that at a given point of his development he finds himself in agreement with Artaud, feels the need of a confrontation, tests Artaud, and retains whatever stands up to this test. ... And when ... we discover that the essence of the theatre is found neither in the narration of an event, nor in the discussion of a hypothesis with an audience, nor in the representation of life as it appears from the outside, nor even in a vision--but that the theatre is an act carried out here and now in the actor's organisms, in front of other men; when we discover that theatrical reality is instantaneous, not an illustration of life but something linked to life only by analogy; when we realize all this, then we ask ourselves the question: wasn't Artaud talking about just this and nothing else?

... Like Isaiah, Artaud knew of Emmanuel's coming, and what it promised. He saw the image of it through a glass darkly. (Grotowski, pp. 117-125)

Grotowski believed that Artaud was a visionary and prophet who envisioned the expanded dimensions of the actor's physical expression and agrees with Esslin that Artaud left no methodology to fulfill his prophecy.

The influence of Artaud on Brook can be explained in terms of the former's theory of "Theatre of Cruelty" when Brook writes of the RSC's Theatre of Cruelty season of 1964-65 in his book *The Empty Space*:

Charles Marowitz and I instituted a group with the Royal Shakespeare Theatre called the Theatre of Cruelty to investigate ... to try and learn for ourselves what a holy theatre might be.

... We used his title (Theatre of Cruelty) to cover our own experiments, many of which were directly stimulated by Artaud's thought--although many exercises were very far from what he had proposed. We did not start at the blazing centre, we began very simply on the fringes. (Brook, 49)

The audition and rehearsal process for the Theatre of Cruelty season consisted of many improvisational exercises devised by Brook and Marowitz. For instance, an actor was asked to imagine a dramatic situation without physical movement, and then the rest of the company tried to understand what emotional state the actor was in. Brook writes that it was impossible. But, he also writes, this was the point of the exercise. They wanted to discover the very least that was needed, in terms of expression or gesture, before it was possible to understand the emotional state of the actor. A sound, a movement, a rhythm--was these things interchangeable, or had each its special strengths and limitations? In another exercise, the actor must communicate an idea--the start must always be a thought or a wish that he has to project--but he has only one finger, one tone of voice, a cry, or the capacity to whistle at his disposal.

Once, Peter Brook is asked by the INTERVIEWER:

Mr. Brook, what is your attitude as a director towards Artaud's theories?

BROOK: ... I feel that in our theatre it is needed more by the director and the actor than by the writer... the writer shares the privileges of almost all other artists, and to make experiments all he needs is the wish to experiment, imagination and very cheap materials--pencil and paper for the writer, sketchbook and pencil for the painter, or piano and a pair of hands for the composer. The writer of plays is largely in the same position of absolute freedom--if he wishes to make an experiment he can sit at home and turn the theatre of his mind into a semi-realized form on a scrap of paper that he can then discard... a lot of texts by writers who have gone a considerable way in tackling problems on paper, which they have partially resolved from their end, but which no theatre company in the world is yet truly qualified to resolve from their end... Now Genet has evolved over the years a very complex dramatic technique which calls upon all the resources of many different and often conflicting theatre traditions, from the Japanese theatre to naturalism --and there are aspects of all these in that particular many-leveled form of writing.... Artaud gave the company the ability to bridge conflicting ideas and theatre traditions ...

INTERVIEWER: Are ... the actors going to have considerable freedom of approach?

BROOK: ... What we are trying to bring about is for the actor, in making his choice, to make it as an independent, responsible creative artist. Instead of turning his impulses into one of the many forms that are already there (so that his choice fits into the form that he has learnt to appreciate and assimilate), here his responsibility is to transcend his first naturalistic impulse, and then he has to manifest the best expressive choice, in a way that he can afterwards defend as being to the limit of his consciousness. Funnily enough, what the actor first wants to do in an improvisation is only superficially his first idea: when he realizes this, in a Zen-like way he can find an even quicker expression, one in which he is operating as an artist, not in accordance with his trained reflexes. (Williams, 32)

Brook sought to introduce a fundamental change in the intercultural theatre, and for this reason he believed that the traditional theatre could not be useful. He believes that in the present sick society it is impossible to reach truth through traditional theatre. Therefore he is in search of the roots of the human experience. His major works dealing with different human cultures and experiences from different parts of the world include: *The Mahabharata*, *Timon of Athens*-, *ubu aux Bauffes* , *Orghast* , *The Conference of Birds*, *Agades*.

Brook is known today for the plays he directed in 1960s. These were *King Lear* (1962), *Marat/Sade* (1946), and *Midsummer Night Dreams* (1970). He was quite innovative in directing these plays. He directed these plays so that they would show the presence of the contemporary period. He made use of disintegrated and incoherent elements in these plays; this would express the characteristics of the postmodern theatre.

Brook also made use of empty space which would make the attention and imagination of the audience free of any obligation. In such an empty space, there is no pre-determined plan and idea.

He is one of those postmodern directors who is selective in making use of the elements of performance; although his performance is simple, but he shocks his audience. The objects he uses are considered strong signifiers which have great impact on the plays; he knows how to make a minimalistic use of objects on the stage. His choice of dress and costumes falls in line with the postmodern theatre. Simple costume is used in order to establish a connection between the actors and the audience. He uses costumes as signs and signifiers. He also makes use of minimum amount of colors in his performances. He believed that colors function as signs which have psychological and emotional impacts on the audience.

It is generally agreed that the most thorough test of Artaud's theories in process were by Brook and Marowitz during the RSC's Theatre of Cruelty season. The RSC production of Peter Weiss' *Marat/Sade* at the beginning of the next season, directed by Peter Brook, was probably the most commercially successful application of many of his theories in praxis. So, it is important to discuss this work.

Marat / Sade, directed by Brook, was first performed in London in 1965. The play is meant to disturb the complacencies of its audience and force them to realize what has happened to them. It belongs to the modern times. It deals with the murder of Jean Paul Marat, the French revolutionary, during the French Revolution on July 13th 1793, by a young patriot girl. Brook believes Weiss has placed everything in the service of the play, serious next to comic, particular next to common, literary next to chaotic and spiritual next to material. The peaceful turns to violent and there is no fixed structure, and the outcome is complicated. Brook's play is metaphorical; he has used different devices to meet the end. He intends to involve the audience in the play and using madness, he intends to direct a progressive play.

The action of the play was a "debate between the paranoid Marat, prophet of the totalitarian state, and Sade, the cold voluptuary, the anarchist, apostle of unbridled individual liberty. If Marat represented the future, Sade represented the fantasy." But what most of the audience came away from the production with, "shuddering, was the visual impact," which was like the debris of souls from Artaud's private hell: "... chalky clothing, the writhing limbs, the hysteria, the grimacing, the lolling heads, the whirl and thud of the guillotine, the buckets of blood, the schizoids and cretins, erotic-maniacs and manic-depressives, the faces peering from the hidden baths, and Charlotte Corday's use of her hair to whip the naked Sade" (Williams, p. 65-66). Then the end "... crowned all when the entire company advancing towards the edge of the stage, fell to fighting, and to smashing up the bath-house. On a signal all went quiet and as the audience applauded ... the cast replied with the sudden irony of a slow hand-clap." _ "If we had conventional curtain-calls," said Brook, "the audience would emerge relieved, and that's the last thing we want." (Williams, p. 66) If this seems Brechtian, and not Artaudian, it is, somewhat.

As staged by Brook, "the play fluctuated between the 'direction' given to the story of Marat from within the play by the notorious Marquis, and the nearly uncontrollable madness of the asylum inmates" At the end of the play the menace directed toward the audience described by Trewin erupts into a frightening rage as related by Zinder:

The wife and daughter of the asylum director, who, up until that moment had been watching the performance as did the aristocracy of those days, were brutally attacked by the patients as both inmates and staff lost control over the events. Bars were then lowered between the stage and the audience, ostensibly to prevent the patients from continuing their rampage into the hall.... Brook's aim was--to awaken the need for just such a conscious dismissal [it's only a dream] of a terrifying eventuality through the destruction, however momentary, of the security that attends the function of a spectator in the theatre. A few moments later, after the inmates/actors had been bludgeoned into a quivering silence by the orderlies, the bars were lifted, signifying--or so it seemed--the end of the play. The audience immediately responded with a resounding ovation, but once again Brook, using well-known Dada and Surrealist techniques, short-circuited the communication: the assembled cast did not take the expected bow. Instead, from the very depths of the bare, grey-tiled stage, they began advancing, *en bloc*, toward the front of the stage, all still in character and rhythmically clapping their hands. No longer protected by the bars, and very uncertain as to what it was expected to do, the audience nervously stopped applauding. Those who did not actually leave the theatre in fright at that moment stood their ground silently, but with real trepidation, as the massed inmates and staff, some still slobbering, slowly approached the edge of the stage. The tension was only partially relieved when it became clear that the actors were not going to jump into the hall. Partially, because the terrorizing effect was not abandoned: the actors remained in character and kept up the ritualistic rhythmic clapping until the very last spectator had left the hall. (Zinder, 1976, 128-129)

The staged violence threatens to become part of the life of the spectators, but in a staging so ambiguous as to heighten rather than diminish the menace.

3- CONCLUSION

Artaud, as the progenitor of a form of theater whose aim is to unsettle and radically transform its audience and its culture, called for an end to a drama of rationality, masterpieces, and psychological exploration. He thought that society and the world of theatre had become an empty shell. Advocating the "theatre of cruelty" in his work, *The Theater and Its Double* (1938), he was trying to revolutionize theatre - figuratively burn it to the ground so that it could start again. He was trying to connect people with something more primal, honest and true within themselves that had been lost for most people. He spoke of cruelty not in the sense of violent behavior, but rather the cruelty it takes for actors to show an audience, a truth that they do not wish to see. He believed that text had been a tyrant over meaning, and advocated, instead, for a theatre made up of a unique language that lay halfway between thought and gesture. Artaud, described the spiritual in physical terms, and believed that all expression is physical expression in space. He is famous for the influence he exerted, through his writings and performances, on the way writers, directors, actors, and communal theater. Such a theater, according to Artaud, should employ expressive breathing, animal sounds, uninhibited gestures, huge masks, puppets, and an architecture that destroys the barrier between actors and audience in order to turn spectators into participants, and bring them to a level of experience Artaud deemed more profound than any experience accessible through passive understanding or absorption of language, plot, or coherently structured action. In this article an attempt is made to point out the role he and Peter Brook played in the postmodern theatre.

On the other hand Peter Brook, who had come to know the emptiness of contemporary theatre, believed that what had saved theatre earlier could not do so now. He established an inter-cultural theatre which would be in direct relationship with the audience. For this purpose he preferred using such elements like gestures than the rational meaning of his drama.

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