

Theatre of cruelty essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Antonin Artaud was the creator of the 'Theatre of Cruelty'; Artaud was attempting to change the view of the world and society as he now thought that the world of theatre had become nothing but an empty shell. Artaud believed that the Theatre should affect the audience as much as possible, therefore he used a mixture of strange and disturbing forms of lighting, sound and performance.

He aimed to affect audiences on an entirely non-rational level. We liked this idea as we wanted the audience to feel intimidated, and figured this technique would work well to keep them interested. We used Artaud's work in a few scenes. Firstly in the scene after the child has been kidnapped. Our intention in that scene was to provoke an emotion from the audience. So in the next scene we wanted to change that emotion, by letting them feel involved.

Laura walked around the audience helplessly, and handing out leaflets to them. We used the theatre of cruelty again in the abuse scene. We wanted to intimidate the audience and make them feel trapped and insecure, and momentarily make them feel like that had done something wrong. We did this by shouting at them a scenario in which we believed they had done us wrong. The subject I used was cheating.

I made the audience members I was abusing believe that they were my partner and had cheated on me. I used a Liverpool accent which is socially associated with the lower class, and therefore may help intensify the atmosphere of being trapped that we were collectively trying to create.

Another way in which we enforced this vulnerability in the audience, was

how we positioned the seating. We separated the chairs, so that they were in groups of 2 or 3 which once sat in the dark, meant that they should have felt uncomfortable due to the lack of security from others around them. A third time that we used Artaud's techniques was in the concluding scene.

We used a strong mix of lighting, music and disturbing physical theatre to intensify the psychotic nature of the scene. The cages that we positioned ourselves in also helped us in creating a visually intense scene, as it portrayed the restrictions that were placed upon us due to the paranoia we were representing. We also used Stanislavski. His acting style was more realistic. He wanted to portray every emotion as close to the real thing as possible. He used many techniques to make the actor feel as if they were the character.

The technique we incorporated into our performance was the Magic IF. As the cancer scene was a very sensitive subject, we wanted to ensure that it was handled well. Therefore we used the scenario of 'how would you feel IF you wanted to protect something you couldn't' helped each actor within the scene dig deep and feel the emotion. This also linked to the work of Emile Zola who strongly believed in historical accuracy, and authenticity of characters props and costumes.

He wanted to create an overall picture resembling photographic detail of the period in question. We tried to incorporate this into the Suffragette scene. Although the visual aspect of these scenes were within the actual performing, we thought it was important to have the correct costume of the time, to indeed create a picture perfect image. We also used Brecht's work in

the form of placards. Brecht's ideas were to break the fourth wall and distance the audience, so you don't become emotionally involved.

His main aim was to educate and challenge the audience. Therefore the use of placards was a distancing way to explain what we were doing with the rest of the scene. Another influence we used was the work of DV8. They are an independent collection of dancers, which perform works that break down the barriers between dance, theatre, and personal politics and, communicate ideas and feelings clearly and unpretentiously. We used this idea through our use of choral work in the performance of the epilepsy poem.

The physical theatre worked really well with the contrasts of our voices. We also used our bodies to create a heart. This proved to be very effective to the audience as when it was mixed with the lighting and the sound of a heartbeat we had found, it became explicitly obvious what we were creating. Another practitioner's ideas we used was Steven Berkoff's, he is an actor, playwright and theatre director. His work is physical, musical and surreal, combining movement, mime and text to dramatic effect. Our set was as minimalist as possible, which Berkoff liked.

He didn't like the audience to be distracted from the performance that was on stage. Our set stage was two double black boards featured at the back of the stage, which were covered in the word 'trapped' and written in different sizes, and styles. Although this was simple, it still allowed for the word to become subconsciously ingrained into the audiences minds.