A Theatre of Daidala

Sensuality, Spectacle and the Pregnant Void

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture

Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

May 2009

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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-51990-5
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-51990-5

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Abstract

Theatrical performances have been used as a mode of communication. Artists have projected social, political and cultural notations through the use of theatre. Responses to and from the audience have aided in developing a methodology for the altering of theatrical projections to better relate the author's intentions. Origins of theatre established a direct connection with the audience by attempting to situate them as having a role in a reenacted situation. Yet the evolution of theatre has diminished the importance of this relationship. The current practice of mainstream theatre has been criticized for its lack of audience involvement. Historically, theatre theorists have provided various proposals for the means to invigorate theatre practice, and while each focused on different aspects of theatre, their goal remained the same.

Architecture attempts to develop relationships with its occupants, encouraging certain emotions through the use of specifically placed gestures. The thesis proposal attempts to use architectural detailing as a tool, preparing the occupants for theatrical engagement. Moments engage the occupants through sensory conditions. The composition of these moments is to be understood as a vehicle for provoking the imagination of the spectator.

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Part I:

Introduction:

Theatre, like architecture, attempts to grab our emotions and throw us into another realm. Using carefully choreographed elements, it displaces us using sensual conditions. It thrusts us into a situation whose conflict will be decided upon at the conclusion of the story, and ultimately into the question of being and our relationship to all that are involved. Or does it?

Traditional theatre has been subject to many claims. It has been a means of communication and representation, preserving stories and events. These are often delivered in an attempt to reflect and translate societal issues from past generations to the present. Theatre itself has its origins in Greek tradition, where stories were representations of gods and theology. Various artists have used theatre as a method of communication, powering their ideas and intentions towards audiences in hopes of delivering successful interpretations. But theatre has evolved throughout the ages, influenced by political and social tensions and changes. Increasingly lavish venues, technological advances in dramatic effects, and famous actors have all increased the glitz and glamour of the theatre; but theatre, as many current dramaturge claim, has to get back to the basics.

The essential basis for theatre is described by Peter Brook in simple fashion, as he states that there only needs to be a meeting or interaction between two people for an act of theatre to exist.

I once claimed that theatre begins when two people meet. If one person stands up and another watches him, this is already a start. For there to be a development, a third person is needed for an encounter to take place. Then life takes over and it is possible to go very far – but the three elements are

essential.¹

The development of this interaction prepares theatrical fundamentals, allowing theatre to exist². Some current traditional methods of theatre have failed in recognizing the simplicity that can exist within theatre. The architectural history of theatres shows that an abundance of visual extravagance continued to increase with the evolution of new theatre construction. Delicately crafted wooden ornamentation, eye-catching paintings, and beautiful fabrics attempted to propel the spectator to a higher status.

The fall of the theatre takes on the identity of traditional theatre where it has evolved into simply a story-telling machine, capable of taking scripts and developing them into a visual experience with beautiful, albeit often mundane, aesthetics. These visual experiences have led to the general public perception that the only means of theatre is that of the musical, a product of western development, which has degraded theatre practices and altered the course of theatre development. This development has diminished society's perception of the importance of theatre, and consequently, produced a roadblock for artists that use the theatre as a method for communicating their ideas. Artistic communication needs to find an alternative machine. Traditional practice of theatre, much like contemporary art, attempts to deliver a message through the provocation of the audience, regardless if the spectator acknowledges the intent. Artists such as Marcel Duchamp (Fountain, 1917) used this method, attempting to communicate with the viewer through art compositions consisting of everyday objects. He challenged conventional thinking, and forced the viewer to actively create an opinion on the intentions behind the composition. Reflecting upon this notion, Umberto Eco's ideas concerning the

1 Peter Brook, *There are No Secrets* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993), 14.

2 Many contemporary artists have taken this approach, minimizing performance in an attempt to encourage the imaginative curiosity of the audience.

“openness or completeness” of an artist’s work challenges the ideas of what it means to interpret a work of art. An artist’s work in theatre is intended to provoke ideas through the use of a third party, the actor. But the end communication towards the public may not coincide with those intentions. Then what may indeed be the determining factor of the perception of a work of art?

*These two expressions refer to a standard situation of which we are all aware in our reception of a work of art: we see it as the end product of an author’s effort to arrange a sequence of communicative effects in such a way that each individual addressee can refashion the original composition devised by the author. The addressee is bound to enter into an interplay of stimulus and response which depends on his unique capacity for sensitive reception of the piece. In this sense the author presents a finished product with the intention that this particular composition should be appreciated and received in the same form as he devised it. As he reacts to the play of stimuli and his own response to their patterning, the individual addressee is bound to supply his own existential credentials, the sense conditioning which is peculiarly his own, a defined culture, a set of tastes, personal inclinations, and prejudices.*³

Umberto Eco’s argument surrounds the notion of “*his comprehension of the original artifact is always modified by his particular individual perspective.*” Thus, through the entering of an “*interplay of stimulus and response,*” the spectator draws their own conclusions from the events.⁴ An individual static selection of art allows a lengthy development of reception, enabling the viewer to challenge their conclusions. Artworks whose timelines are undefined, use time as a constructing element in relating the individual moments that compose the communication of the intent. Architectural installations with slow material reactions are examples of this lengthy transformation that reveals dramatic changes.

Linking these ideas to a theatrical setting, a new dimension is introduced. Dynamic in nature, theatre can be described as an ongoing artistic event that engages an audience, and reacts to their responses. Eco’s words reflect on the

3 Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3.

4 Ibid., 3.

opportunity of the thespians to remain undefined by the script. The “refashioning” undertaken by the actors, allows the play to develop as an event. Curbed by the written script, their projection is unlimited, as they continue to alter its relaying, as they in turn, receive responses from the audience. Consequently, this “openness” can be applied to the audience themselves. If they allow themselves to have a certain quality of “openness”, and are certainly devoid of any hypnotized mindsets, then their openness towards the play is directed back onto the actors themselves. This is precisely the reason that each theatrical performance should vary regardless of venue and time. The various reactions of the spectators would be based upon different influences on those spectators. Indeed, as Peter Brook states, the intent of the play never changes, only its projection.

There are only easy audiences and less easy ones, and our job is to make every audience good. When the audience is easy, it is a gift from heaven, but a difficult audience is not an enemy. On the contrary, an audience is by its very nature resistant, and one must always be looking for what can excite and transform its level of interest. This is the healthy basis for the commercial theatre, but the real challenge arises when the aim is not success, but the arousing of intimate meanings without trying to please at all costs.⁵

The intentions behind Brook’s words sum up the aspirations for the actors within the scene, and as stated, the audience is the key to any performance. But developing their mindset towards the theatre is the most important ingredient for the success of communicating the intent. Samuel Taylor Coleridge states that the aim of any theatrical production is to embrace the audience, projecting them into the story.

“...that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith...to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us...”⁶

5 Peter Brook, *There are No Secrets* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993), 36.

6 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), 314 in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by H.J. Jackson (Oxford, 1985)

Theatre's success is dependant on the projection of the performance and its reception from the audience. Without the audience engaging within this state of mind, the performance is lost.

Influenced by changes in political and social contexts, the theatre has been analyzed by many critics. From a variety of backgrounds, these theorists analyzed and proposed various methodologies for reviving theatre practice. Friedrich Nietzsche, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Peter Brook, all analyzed theatre from a critical standpoint. They, among others, believed that the theatre could be revived to its original intent by restructuring its plays, production techniques and its settings. While each was influenced by a broad range of factors, they all brought a similar purpose; to change the course of the theatre, to rescue it from meaninglessness.

While each of these theorists brought attention to the practice of theatre from varying perspectives, their proposed alterations all included the crafting of a new experience for spectators. Discussing the essence of craftsmanship goes beyond the tangible aspects of finely crafted objects. Early Greek poetry referenced craftsmanship and quality as having more than simply good craft. *'To express an act of supreme craftsmanship more essential to poetic narrative than to archaeology.'*⁷ Supreme craftsmanship helped to define the importance of the object in an intangible sense, its purpose and importance of the quality of the built existence. This supreme craftsmanship can be translated into an embodiment of *daidala* and daidalic crafting. In Greek mythology, Daidalos was the god of Craftsmanship, and it was said that he embodied magical powers of creation, which enabled him to give qualities to whatever he crafted. Multiple Greek legends depicts Daidalos giving inanimate objects, certain life-like qualities and abilities, such as enabling flight to

⁷ Sarah P. Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 30.

sets of wax wings (Ikaros). The translating of Daidalos into daidala, enabled the designation of craftsmen as having similar magical powers. The magical abilities of Daidalos were thus a description of an individual's ability to craft an object that embodied life-like qualities. As Alberto Perez-Gomez states: *"The principle value... is that of enabling inanimate matter to become magically alive, of reproducing life rather than representing it...the more primitive Homeric texts emphasize the ability of the daidalos to seem alive."*⁸ Increasingly important to Greek poetry and theatre, *daidala* enabled the Greeks to communicate ideas of magic through a common title, continuing stories that translated into theologies. Thus, *daidala* was established as a tool for logical reasoning within storytelling. Greek poetry used daidala referencing in groups, as multiples held a greater advantage in delivering the intent.

*The noun daidalos makes its only appearance here (Homer's Odyssey) in the singular in all of epic poetry, all other nominative forms being in the plural, collective for jewelry, armor, or other creations. The object itself is such a marvel that no mere epithet will suffice, and this noun expresses a triumph of technique and design almost as an abstract quality... in so doing, he deploys a favorite epithet, daidaleos, and invokes the power of art-as-life: 'even though made of gold,' the one grasps, the other flails in vivid action. This poetic device is critical to the evolution of theories of art, for eventually it develops into a philosophical concept and characterizes the work of Daidalos."*⁹

The success of diadala principles lays not in a series of individual moments, but in their grouping as a whole. Segregating moments impairs the overall impact of the designation. Similar to theatre, where the composition of individual scenes result in the story's plot, the compounded impact of those moments portrays the intent.

A fundamental connection to the ideas of *diadala*, is the idea of *mimesis*, which focuses on natural reactions. Mimetic references and representation relates to natural oral and bodily communication. Theories suggest that the practice

8 Alberto Perez-Gomez, "The Myth of Daedalus," in *AA Files* (Autumn, 10, 1985): 50.

9 Morris, 28.

of architecture emerged when an artificial shelter was constructed, or indeed acknowledged, mimicking those found in nature. The Allegory of the Cave, written in Book VII of Plato's *The Republic*, discusses the relationship between the real world, and the world in which we see it.¹⁰ It is argued that all current architectural relationships are based on similar fundamental relationships found in nature, such as principles of structure and shelter. Mimetic communication reflects the ideas grounded with diadala representation. Diadala crafting and mimetic representations play a distinct role within the delivering of intentions within theatre. Through the interplay of these two ideas, the ability to communicate with an audience becomes much more successful, regardless of the artistic method.

Architecture creates mimetic responses through creativity within the design. Designations within architecture are not defined by labels, but through employing various methods of provoking. Making connections between form and function, materials and intentions, spaces have the opportunity to enhance mimetic reactions in the inhabitant.

¹⁰ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Richard W. Sterling and William C. Scott (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985), pg. 209-234.

Act 1:**Scene 1:**

A bright summer morning, the construction site is bustling with activity. Various crews have started the working day, ready to make good progress on the building. The full height of the four-storey structure has been reached, with construction crews finishing the temporary safety barriers. Windows and frames are being assembled and installed. A young apprentice is on the second level, framing the header for a window.

Tradesman:

Hammering in the last nail for the header, I started to question the purpose for this window. *(Shifts back and forth from looking at the frame to looking through the window).* A triangular window, set between an interior wall, and an angled wall that extends outside. *(Runs hand along window frame)* But its not the window, it's the detail around the window. Remembering another window previously finished on the ground floor, I recall installing a white translucent panel that surrounded it. Essentially, its another frame. A transitional element between interior and exterior.

After putting his hammer away, he wanders towards the construction drawings. He pauses for a moment to watch a construction crew install the temporary floor on the third level, prior to the arrival of the mechanical floor. As he watches, he ponders past advice and tips from his formal training.

Tradesman:

My mentor taught me the importance of patience and accuracy while building. (*Patiently waiting for instructions*), Following guidelines and schedules is important to the overall performance of construction.

He leafs through the drawings, finding a copy of an original sketch from the architect. It had been intentionally attached onto the current construction set. Straining to read the notes, he relays the message.

Tradesman:

"We ended up finding a sketch of the original use of the lot, and were able to find the foundation of the 18 foot high wall that extended along the west perimeter. I wanted to highlight that aspect, creating a distinct barrier between

our lot and its western neighbor. The stables that housed the horses were non-existent, but we want to include the repetitious consistency of their dimensions. Along the north façade, their 3 meter dimensions can now be traced on either the vertical walls or on the imprints that extend onto the sidewalk. The differentiating material is meant to symbolize the changes in construction materials over time.”

(Pausing, placing the construction drawings back on the table).

Tradesman:

It is interesting that these notes exist on such final drawings. I’ve never seen the architect’s intent, and am usually limited in understanding the intent of the building in a magazine or such.

Cleaning his tools with a rag, he puts his tools away, and reflects upon the beginning of the project, and the unorthodox event that occurred.

Tradesman:

(Reflecting) Before we began construction on the project, the architect came to us and spoke about his intentions for the work. He said: "This building is made of moments, moments in which the craft and the materials speak for themselves. I designed this theatre in hopes that you would build your best details that would be reflected into the space." *(Pausing, briefly walking back and forth across the completed ground level, stopping at the detail connections and material changes).* And then he reflected upon the methodology for design behind the great American-architect Louis Kahn when he said, "It was Kahn's belief that a space must reveal how it was made,"¹¹ *(Pausing again, looking at a concrete wall, crouching down to inspect the installed concrete detail at the pool),* "and I hope this space transforms in the same manner." None of us knew completely what he was talking about, but now I understand." *(Directed towards the audience, and walks off stage).*

11 Robert McCarter, *Louis Kahn* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2005)

Scene 2:

The snow falls lightly, as the sunshine has yet to break winter's long darkness. The streets and sidewalks are busy with people heading to work, their dreams are filled of vacations in warmer locations. A lone figure appears from behind the street corner, discussing to himself as he approaches the newly completed building.

Director:

(Walking towards the Entrance to the Theatre) Two weeks ago we gave out the script to the actors, and now we're about to have read-throughs. *(Trudging through the Ottawa snow),* An adaptation of Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth*¹² is perfect for the opening performance of the theatre, *(muttering to himself).*

Walking through the entrance to the theatre, he is careful to wipe his feet on the mats provided, not wanting to track his wet shoes throughout the new finishes.

Director:

One of the more interesting scenes is when the play is acted within the sanctuary. Some of the monks, including Prior Philip will sit among the actual theatre visitors, while

¹² Ken Follet, *The Pillars of the Earth* (New York: Signet, 1989)

the rest of the monks and youth put on a short production of the story of Saint Adolphus.

(Pausing briefly), The actor portraying Philip will give "a short account of the spotless life and miraculous works of Saint Adolphus.¹³" And then he will sit down to a seat within the audience.

Director:

I want the actors entering there *(pointing at the stage left)*, just beyond the scrim, and make sure that that section of the "portholes" are covered *(beckoning, pointing towards the glass section of the floor above the entrance)*.

Space between the actors and the spectators must be demolished, it should not exist as a barrier. There shouldn't be a division between them, even the space between the seats should be accessed by the actors *(motions towards the seats)*.

Director:

(Walking into the theatre, ground floor, and looking upwards towards the white scrim-

13 Follet, 540.

faced walls), These white walls allow us to project light from inside the space, or the outside corridors. (He sees that lighting crews are testing the lights in front and behind the scrim, he walks over to the centre of the room and stops). Ok, light from behind! (Calling to the lighting technician, a light from behind the scrim turns on and off briefly, but shows the outline of the technician as well as the structure) Ok great, now Gobo from interior! (Calling to another lighting technician, and instantly the scrim transformed into a flat canvas with a townscape scene upon it).

Multiple theatre technicians start to enter and mill about, starting various tasks (lighting experiments, cleaning, etc.). Lights go down.

Scene 3:

Thoughts of the warmth of the unforeseen early spring day have been dashed due to the slight chill in the evening air. Dressed in distinguished clothes, people are filling the market area, moving towards their entertainment destination of choice. A sharply dressed couple approaches the newly completed building. The middle-aged woman is smitten with her new outfit, looking forward to her evening at the theatre. Passing through the entrance, a series of lights leads her into the

space.

Visitor:

Passing through the entrance, I am bathed in light, and almost immediately, as if passing through a threshold, the light dims. *(The light is now diffused by translucent glass that separates the entrance and the foyer).* Why would such an intense light be used right there?

Visitor:

(Walking cautiously into the Theatre, and then pausing), A soothing melody of raindrops begins, but it is coming from inside. *(She steps closer to the outside wall, putting an ear even closer still),* they seem to hit something metal at head height but were louder as I continued through the entrance corridor. *(Slowly walking along the corridor, and then a smile...),* As if orchestrated, once I began to hear the soothing melody of raindrops, the sweet smell of cedar wood began to rise. *(Listening more attentively, smelling more deeply),* Its sweet smell relaxes me after the afternoon rush-hour.

Passing into the building looking around at the

simplicity of the design, she hands her date her coat to be checked and begins to follow the hallway.

Visitor:

Approaching the hallway, I grip the handrail, its cold concrete is smooth...Pausing for a moment, I notice the handrail has actually increased in warmth as I pass deeper into the building. Not nearly unbearable to the touch, the warmth begins as the wall juts out into my path a few centimeters, and the handrail follows this similar projection. I start to question this path. What is behind this wall? Why does the wall project out, and why is it creating heat? Oh well, I guess its just hot water pipes. Typical building equipment.

She continues through the building, often pausing cautiously. She interacts carefully, never fully engaging with full force. She brings her hand to elements multiple time, puts her ear closer for listening or taking a deeper breath sequentially, establishing a sensual experience.

Part II:**Development:**

Friedrich Nietzsche, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Peter Brook all recognized the declining impact of Western theatre. Their critical theories surrounding societal and political issues, responded to issues relating to the practice of theatre in their time. Identifying aspects of theatre that lead to its decline, each pinpointed different characteristics that could be redeveloped. The founder of critical analysis of theatrical principles, Nietzsche's early theories involving the demise of the Greek tragedy had an immense impact on numerous philosophers, including Martin Heidegger. Artaud acknowledged the separation between the audience and the actors as problematic, designating the space between as the fourth wall that allowed the theatre to become categorized as an artform along the lines of cinema, as opposed to more traditional forms of art. This distinguishes a separation between actors and audience that detaches both parties physically and mentally, limiting critical responses by each. Brecht outlined principles for proposed change in theatre in his "Epic Theatre," detailing the possibilities for a change in the overall philosophy of theatre production. Brook sought to change the conventional setting of theatre practice, and rewrite the definition on what constitutes acts of theatre. These theoreticians developed and critiqued various solutions in an attempt to reinvent the theatre. Through actor training, theatre designs, theoretical writings, poems, and plays, each attempted to reengage the audience and actor, and ultimately give purpose again for the theatre. Developing their theories throughout different time periods and various trends occurring in theatre, they built upon each other, attempting to propose changes to theatre practice that would result in the performance's abilities to penetrate the audience's mind and soul.

The writings of Friedrich Nietzsche have had a profound effect on all aspects of society, not limited to solely the practice of theatre. Studying the development of Western society from a philosophical point of view, Nietzsche had a unique perspective based upon his philological background. Heidegger was thoroughly influenced by Nietzsche's theories, and Vattimo summed up his impact:

... Heidegger rightly considered Nietzsche to be not merely a philosopher but also a philosopher in the technical sense of the word, because the oldest and most fundamental problem of philosophy was the central focus of Nietzsche's attention, namely the question of Being.¹⁴

The overall philosophical question of human relationships is encompassed throughout the majority of his written works. His theories surrounding the importance of art and science within society brought this fundamental relationship to the foreground. In his early writings, the philosophical focus surrounded the demise of the Greek Tragedy, most notably the opposition and interaction of Apollonian and Dionysian methodologies.

The terms Dionysian and Apollonian we borrow from the Greeks, who disclose to the discerning mind the profound mysteries of their view of art, not, to be sure, in concepts, but in the impressively clear figures of their gods. Through Apollo and Dionysus, the two art-deities of the Greeks, we come to recognize that in the Greek world there existed a sharp opposition, in origins and aims, between the Apollonian art of sculpture, and the non-plastic, Dionysian, art of music.¹⁵

His research followed through the transformation of Greek theatre practices into Western theatre. His ideas for reviving the theatre were developed surrounding Greek fundamentals of theatrical orientation, where the performance space of Greek theatre was dependent upon the "current positioning of the individual in relation to

14 Gianni Vattimo, *Nietzsche: An Introduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1.

15 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo and The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: The Modern Library, 1927), in Daniel Gerould *Theatre Theory Theatre* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 339.

*the group.*¹⁶ Nietzsche believed that the complete experience of the performance was driven by another fundamental Greek Tragedy element, the chorus.¹⁷ The chorus aided the audience's understanding of the actor's mentality and personal thoughts within the realm of the play. The chorus' function can be defined as an additional tool for the communication for indirectly delivering the intentions within the play. The Greeks used the chorus as a fundamental element within their productions, as a supporting element for developing the performance:

*For we are certainly astonished the moment we compare our familiar theatrical public with this chorus, and ask ourselves whether it could ever be possible to idealize something analogous to the Greek tragic chorus out of such a public. We tacitly deny this, and now wonder as much at the boldness of Schlegel's claim as at the totally different nature of the Greek public. For hitherto we had always believed that the true spectator, whoever he may be, must always remain conscious that he was viewing a work of art and not an empirical reality. But the tragic chorus of the Greeks is forced to recognize real beings in the figures of the drama...*¹⁸

The 'real' natural reactions from the audience towards the attitudes within the play were based upon the 'real' relationships established by the chorus. Nietzsche realized that the Greek theatre itself was incomplete if the chorus absent, as it was a substantial component to the overall success of the Greek theater.

...We have at last realized that the scene, together with the action, was

16 David Wiles, *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 112.

17 The chorus has its origins in the Greek word *chora*, described by Plato as the receptacle for action, it is the space for being. Alberto Perez-Gomez reflects upon *chora* as "...both cosmic place and abstract space, and it is also the substance of the human crafts," (Pg. 9) and "It is both a space for contemplation and a space of participation – a space of recognition." (Pg. 15) The *chora* identifies the space in which the imagining self is meant to inhabit, establishing the third element, as the receptacle of both being and becoming. See Alberto Perez-Gomez, "Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation," *Chora I: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, edited by Alberto Perez-Gomez and Stephen Parcell, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

18 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo and The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: The Modern Library, 1927) in Daniel Gerould, *Theatre Theory Theatre*, (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 341.

*fundamentally and originally thought of only as a vision; that the only reality is just the chorus, which of itself generates the vision and celebrates it with the entire symbolism of dancing, music and speech.*¹⁹

Greek theatre was successful in portraying and developing stories simply as a result of its ability to place the spectator's mind directly into the story. This enabled the spectator to be involved within a "real" situation, and to emphasize and relay the intent of the performance. Nietzsche's theories surrounding Greek principles laid the foundation for critical analysis of theatre.

Antonin Artaud's theories were both elemental and profound to future theatre development, demonstrating the connection between the body and the mind within theatre. Developed from observations throughout his thespian career, Artaud sought to rectify the disconnection between audience and actor. His theatres, although having limited success, were developed upon this idea.

*The difficulties that Artaud laments persist because he is thinking about the unthinkable – about how body is mind and how mind is also a body. This inexhaustible paradox is mirrored in Artaud's wish to produce art that is at the same time anti-art. The latter paradox, however, is more hypothetical than real.*²⁰

This fundamental relationship between the body and the mind, of both the spectator and the actor, was the foundation for all of Artaud's work. Drawing from concepts based on alchemical theory from the Renaissance, Artaud sought an art form that would bring together the spectator and the actor.

*From Renaissance alchemy Artaud drew a model for his theater: like the symbols of alchemy, theater describes 'philosophical states of matter' and attempts to transform them.*²¹

19 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo and The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: The Modern Library, 1927) in Daniel Gerould, *Theatre Theory Theatre* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 346.

20 Susan Sontag, Ed., *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), xxv.

21 Sontag, l.

These principles led to Artaud's designation of the space between the audience and the stage as the fourth wall, the boundary. Proposals to break this boundary were the foundation for the development of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, which were unsuccessful, yet influential to later developments in Theatre Arts.²² Theorizing around the same time as Artaud, Bertolt Brecht's propositions shared many similar characteristics, Brecht's projects often sparking debate in various realms, including social and political situations.

Throughout his life, Brecht was confronted with many situations, both politically and culturally, that affected his work, living arrangements and his social relationships. Underground political messages throughout works such as *The Threepenny Opera* (which was intended for the audience to question propaganda with slogans such as "Eat first, morals second"), caused him to exile from Germany, escaping the Nazis during the events leading up to the Second World War.²³ Throughout his career, Brecht took an increasingly dramatic outlook on theatrical theory, suggesting the importance of using of didactic plays for experimentation. He saw traditional theatre as a bland, monotonous "*apparatus*" which left the participants of the overall experience uninspired. The consistent lackluster productions reduced the theatre's role to simply portraying a story; "*their output then becomes a matter of delivering the goods.*"²⁴ The artist's intent is to send a specific message through a work of art. The use of the theatre, can communicate this intent. Brecht argued that the current stage theatrics downgrades the audience's mental capacity, deterring artists' messages from being communicated.

22 Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards, (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

23 Ronald Gray, *Brecht* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd, 1961), 8-9.

24 Brecht, Bertolt, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), in Daniel Gerould, *Theatre Theory Theatre* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 447.

The magical effect of stage illusion, Brecht argued, hypnotized spectators and put them into a state of trance. By leading the audience to identify with the characters and accept their fate rather than calling it into question, what Brecht called Aristotelian drama served to perpetuate passivity and reinforce the status quo.²⁵

Brecht's argument states that this condition persuades the audience to step back, barricading themselves from the performance, instead of critically being included in the storytelling, and therefore, the intent. Exploring various proposals, his didactic experiments were meant to develop the foundations of teaching methods for actors and directors.

... Brecht wanted to explore and teach forms of revolutionary behaviour and to stir discussion rather than shock audiences, but his intentions were not always recognized: his theatrical experiments did not take place in a social and political 'vacuum' but in the struggle for domination between right and left in the waning years of the Weimar Republic.²⁶

These experiments were meant as instigators to reconnect the audience with the performance, yet difficulties surrounding political instability deterred the success of these experiments. Fundamental to this argument, Brecht felt that there had been a separation between the two rudimental concepts within theatre.

One of the most important and concise summaries of Brechtian theater is the essay 'Über experimentelles Theater' (On Experimental Theater) from 1939. His main argument in this essay is that entertainment and instruction, the two basic functions of drama and theater, had become totally separated in the traditional theater of his time. Although progressive experiments have been undertaken to strengthen one or the other component it was left to Brecht's epic, or non-Aristotelian, theater to unite those two basic functions.²⁷

Throughout the course of his life, Brecht's written works, theory, theatre scripts and

25 Daniel Gerould, *Theatre Theory Theatre* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 445.

26 Karl-Heinz Schoeps, *Bertolt Brecht: Life, Work, and Criticism* (Fredericton: York Press Ltd, 1989), 14.

27 *Ibid.*, 22.

poetry, established and developed his greatest model for theatrical thinking; the 'Epic Theatre.'

Brecht's interest in the "Epic Theatre" can be traced to his relationship with Erwin Piscator, seen as the father of "*a form of anti-illusionary, political theater appealing to the spectator's reason rather than to his emotions.*"²⁸ This theatrical methodology would be based upon narrative timelines, and forced the spectator to call into question the intent of the performance, as if they were experiencing real life. In "The Modern Theatre Is the Epic Theatre (1930)" Brecht compares, what he calls, the dramatic theatre with his explanation for the Epic Theatre.²⁹ Focusing on the evolution of theatre, Brecht emphasized the importance of the spectator's use of natural human tendencies, attempting to arouse "*his capacity for action [and] forces him to make decisions.*"³⁰ Brecht's Epic theatre was instrumental in developing a methodology of theatre that focused upon the development of the written play as a whole.

Influenced by theories of Nietzsche, Artaud, and Brecht, Peter Brook's theatre conceptions reflected ideas of the communicative nature of contemporary art. Brook describes his appreciation of the current practice of traditional theatre very bluntly by stating: "*The theatre has often been called a whore, meaning its art is impure, but today this is true in another sense – whores take the money and then go short on the pleasure.*"³¹ His perception of western theatre, particularly that of the western "musical," is that theatre has given way to a three dimensional cinema, where there is limited interaction with the audience, declining the opportunity to interact and respond with the performance. One of his main arguments, founded

28 Ibid., 7.

29 Brecht, Bertolt, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964)

30 Daniel Gerould, 449.

31 Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (New York: Atheneum, 1984), 10.

from theories of Artaud and Brecht, was the importance of an actor's ability to view the audience's reactions.

*In the early seventies we began doing experiments outside of what was regarded as 'theatres' ... we learned a lot, and the major experience for the actors was playing to an audience they could see, as opposed to the invisible audience to which they were accustomed.*³²

Brook theorized that a greater connection would be developed between the audience and the spectator if both were able to communicate through body reactions. This would enable the actor to modify their performance based upon the reactions of the audience, increasing the possibility for them to communicate the intent of the play. (Fig. 1)

For Brook, the fundamental role of theatre was the stimulating of the imagination of the audience. *"In the theatre, the imagination fills the space, whereas the cinema screen represents the whole, demanding that everything in the frame be linked in a logically coherent matter."*³³ The ongoing connection between the artist,

32 Peter Brook, *There are No Secrets* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993), 5.

33 Ibid., 27.

audience and intent would be stronger if the audience were to be provoked to use their imagination to fill the space. To achieve this imaginative curiosity, Brook insisted that lavish set design must be eliminated; *"The absence of scenery is a prerequisite for the functioning of the imagination."*³⁴ Brook's theories on traditional theatre have been fundamental to the development of theatre practices currently in use by contemporary artists.

The concerns of theorists surrounding the evolution of theatre brought to the forefront the fundamentals of theatrical approach and practice. The theories of Nietzsche, Artaud, Brecht and Brook brought attention to various characteristics of theatre that could be altered for a greater impact and probability of success in delivering the intent. While each responded to these concerns in various proposals, they all challenged the notion of communicative practices in theatre.

34 Ibid., 26.

Mimesis in Theatre

Found throughout theories developed by Artaud, Brecht and Brook, essential to theatre is that the audience sees the performance itself is a “real act.” This mindset needs to be addressed through the use of various theatre theory, encouraging critical mimetic responses. Mimetic representations are essential within theatre to create natural responses by the audience members. The magic of theatre, and the natural reactions that follow, are a result of the enforced lack of preconceptions in both setting and scenery. Mimetic representation and reference by the actors themselves, aid in crafting the experience towards the audience, not by rehearsed lines, but by engaging within the elements of mimesis, inducing natural responses, and preparing ones own reaction from those of the audience.

Within Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice and Theory, Michal Kobialka sums up the common stance among theatre theorists, and discusses the need for crossing over previously established boundaries within traditional theatre practices. Not limited by the physicality of the space, but the compounded language of the elements, Kobialka summarizes the importance of relationships between theatre theorists.

...a specific language was used to describe the disappearance and fragmentation of the textual and visual narratives that organized the grid of memorized borders and appropriations and approximations. The words of Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Jerzy Grotowski provide us with the terms and conditions of how to think about borders and border crossings without conforming to the standard assumptions regulating and controlling the position of bodies on stage and the parameters of space where gestures and actions take place. Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty', Brecht's 'Epic Theatre', Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed', and Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre' attempted to rupture the mnemonic grid of how we think about theatre. Their

*statements not only signaled a recognition of the existing conditions or the desire to expand the limits of language as well as the space of intelligibility, but clearly enunciated the reasons it is necessary to abort current theatre practices and become border crossers.*³⁵

Compounding similar ideals from Artaud, Brecht, Boal and Grotowski, Kobialka emphasizes the impact of changes in Western Theatre Practices. The theatres presented by those, as well as, Nietzsche and contemporary Peter Brook, all project their ideals of a new theatre, with the intention to provoke the questioning of current practices of theatrical communication. Kobialka's connections through border crossings underlines the need for a new methodology for approaching the issues surrounding theatre. The theatre itself needs to be reestablished as more than just a place for theatrics. Gestures in architecture attempt to create spaces that suggest spatial and temporal experiences. Various methods of provoking the inhabitant's imagination through materials and spatial planning, encourages a synonymous viewer-viewed relationship between users and the building. Theatre needs to engage in this opportunity, as reconnecting with the audience on an intimate level can be achieved through persuasion in design. Interacting with materials, details, and constant alterations to orientation and circulation, the theatre has the ability to perform as a machine, altering the spectator prior, during and after the performance.

35 Michal Kobialka, Ed., *Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice, and Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6-7.

Act 2:**Scene 1:**

The scene opens with an exterior view of the building, focused on the front entrance. The building process is well underway, as most of the exterior has been completed, and construction crews are in the initial stages of adding interior components. The majority of the glass and translucent exterior panels have been installed. Near the entrance, the apprentice is working adding a drainage layer on top of the plywood layer. This is in preparation for the installation of the sheet metal form.

Stapling the layer, he works with a certain robotic system. After caulking, he begins to reflect on the work.

Tradesman:

Layering up this section of the wall, I've just finished attaching a drainage layer prior to adding the vertical strapping. This wall follows the length of the building and projects outside. *(Walking back inside, picking up the long folded sheet-metal form)*, Now just to attach this at the correct height, *(fitting it into the wall system)*, If the angle is wrong, then the water will flow too quickly or too slowly, and then the system won't

work properly.

After testing the system with a co-worker, he is satisfied with the system. Checking his watch, he realizes that there is adequate time to begin on the next item. Gathering his tools, he walks to the main space on the third floor. He walks with increased confidence, evidence that he is getting more comfortable with his job and his skills.

Tradesman:

We began to lay out the floor on the third level (*motioning to the floor*). On either side of this line, we have to place different materials underneath the finished floor. (*Stepping onto one side of the floor*) On this side is your typical floor finish, (*Stepping on the other side of the line*), and on the temporary floor, I am instructed to lay another layer of padding (*Looking at the plans, seemingly puzzled*).

The work day concludes, the scene shows the workers cleaning work areas and packing up tools and materials saying goodnight to each other before departing. A quick sunset and sunrise finds the apprentice at a different location, working offsite on details. Gathering his tools from the truck, he walks towards the

crew working on the metal components.

Tradesman:

(Sitting down at a metal work station, he picks up some pre-cut metal connection details. He analyzes the pieces formed by the press). I've had some training in precision metal-working, but these pieces have already been cut with a computer-controlled unit. (He begins to place the pieces into a jig) They just need to be welded together. (He fires up the oxy-acetylene torch)

Gently he starts to braze the pieces, gently heating the pieces and the metal rod to an even temperature. Making multiple tack welds, he doses the jig into the water container beside the worktable to cool it. Similar to an orchestrated performance, he assembles and welds, assembles and welds in an automated fashion. Finishing up the welding, he moves onto his next task, preparing the moulds for casting concrete.

Tradesman:

Working offsite, my current role is to prepare the moulds for casting. "A pour is only as good as the mould," they used to say. Some are made for a smooth finish, some to imitate

a different material, yet all are important for their individual role in the building. *(Grabbing the mould, tightening the screws and greasing up the inside while singing a little rhyme)*. There, now for the mix. *(Reading the material list for concrete, he identifies the different mixtures required for the pours)*. A rougher texture is less inviting to the touch than a smooth one. A smooth pour looks almost soft, like a sheet. *(touching the poured concrete test)*. Smooth to the touch, and almost warm in its gentleness. *(Goes back to mixing the concrete aggregate)*.

The scene ends with him mixing the concrete, while discussing various situations with a master craftsman. The master craftsman begins to show him the proper techniques, or altered techniques to achieve success while working with concrete. He is communicating through hand gestures.

Scene 2:

The scene opens on the interior of the building. The inside of the space is busy with activity, as lighting crews, stagehands, and actors are beginning to make preparations. While the actors are greeting each other, the commotion is interrupted by the crash of a large box

*having been toppled over by an energetic stagehand.
The attention from the crowd draws a blush on her face.
The director and artistic director greet each other, both
carrying a large number of notes. The Director motions
for everyone to group together.*

Director:

(Discussing to the group) The orientation of the set is going to reflect the orientation of the Cathedral. And the design of the space is going to be defined by a series of proportions to reflect the proportions of the Cathedral, as discussed by Tom Builder to Jack in Chapter 10.³⁶ *(Staring up at the blank theatre)* The space has the ability to change, but it is essential that the audience members are enveloped within the Cathedral as it is being built.

Dismissing the group, they scatter about, redirecting their attention on the previous tasks. The director focuses his attention upon the stagehands.

Director:

(Watching the stagehands construct a building) The white blocks are meant to

represent the cathedral after it partial fell down

36 Ken Follett, *The Pillars of the Earth* (New York: Signet Printing, 1989) 528.

while Alfred was building it,³⁷ (*Directing the stagehands*), so don't be afraid when you're dismantling it, to throw some into the audience. You're just as important as the actors in engaging the audience.

His confident voice was authoritative, but his character made him approachable by all. Walking back to his desk in the corner of the performance area, he settles down with a pad of paper and a pen.

Director:

(Discussing to himself, as he prepares sketches of the stage). Demonstrating the town planning scene could be interesting if it depicted without the use of visual images of a town. (Drawing from the ideas surrounding the proportions of the Cathedral scene, now looking at the perfectly arranged audience chairs).

What if a birds-eye view was presented, but the organization of the audience seating were the objects demonstrating this planning. (*Getting up and walking around the systematic placement of the chairs*). If we highlight the negative space between the chairs, a grid would form, thus reflecting a grid pattern, mimicking that of the

37 Ibid., 667.

town plan.³⁸

Satisfied with his sketch, he picks up the performance schedule. He gets up and looks upward. Analyzing the structure and the clerestory windows, he ponders to himself.

Director:

Every daytime performance will utilize the clerestory windows that exist in the theatre space, specifically for the use of stained glass windows, whereas night performances will have to make due with the use of Gobos... But *(staring up at the clerestory screen)*, there will be one scene in which the light shines directly on the altar, the marriage ceremony of Jack and Aliena,³⁹ *(Realizing the importance of the clerestory windows)*.

Getting up from his chair, he begins to pace back and forth, muttering to himself. Every sixth step he stops, looks upward, then back down and continues along. After a while, he stops and says.

38 Ibid., 614.

39 Ibid., 907.

Director:

Jack's epiphany comes when he enters Saint-Denis. First he discovers that both types of structural systems can be used congruently, and then he discovers that his lover has found him, and he also has a son. *(Walking again, he stops in the middle of the room)* This is a pinnacle moment in the story, one that emphasizes the important aspects in Jack's life.⁴⁰

And with that, he exists.

Scene 3:

House lights shine on to the visitor, cautiously entering via stage left. Continuing, passing through the space, the visitor has reached the second level of the building. She begins to question the spaces. After the initial experiences through the entrance, she pauses and extends her hand to touch the fabric, as she looks out over the double-height space onto the ground floor.

Visitor:

The soft, fabric walls are inviting.

Running my hand through them, I attempt to grab the form that holds them in place. Their

40 Ibid., 704.

warm, and soft texture flows seamlessly along the length of the hall. Unexpectedly, the wall suddenly becomes hard and cold. In the dark lighting, the wall appears unchanged, yet the texture changes from soft to hard. In an instant, I feel challenged. *(She tenses, her body becomes rigid and her facial expression becomes stern.)*

Leaving the hallway, she turns around and follows the path to the stairwell. Before the stairwell, the view from the rear corner window catches her attention. She walks closer to the window, and finds herself mesmerized by the increasing smell.

Visitor:

Following the line of a wall, a line separating two panels guides my eye. *(Upon closer inspection)*, I find that the wall that's being divided is actually separated, with one section angled, projecting outwards just below this floor, past the exterior wall. *(Mesmerized by the view)*, I find myself staring at views to the outside.

The reveal in the wall leaves much to the imagination. A single slice of light filters through, highlighting a section of the wall behind me.

As she watches through the small window, she

is stung by an increasingly abrupt smell. She turns and walks to a window a few meters to the right.

Visitor:

There is a slight smell of rusting metal that hangs in the air. Walking past a window, the smell becomes stronger. *(Slows down to investigate the window)*. I am drawn closer to the window as the presence increases. *(Focusing on the window)* A small pool of water sits at the base of the window. A space between the floor and the window is filled with water, and the bottom of the frame is submerged. The rusting of the frame shows varying levels of water... I wonder what changed those levels and why? *(Suddenly a rush of steam comes up through the floor, diminishing the ability to see through the window)*, Whoa *(with surprise)*, that was rather unexpected!

Continuing along the hallway, she approaches a smaller hallway, but is startled by a series of spotlights. She stops, and a look of disbelief grows on her face.

Visitor:

What seem like a series of spotlights give a rhythm to the space. But it is an optical

illusion. Two initial spotlights drew me forward, yet as I continue forward, I am confronted with a wall. *(Following the walls with her eyes)*, Incased in the walls, and in perfect perspective and size, the lights continue as they lead to the bar.

She continues along, following the optical illusions, she walks cautiously, assuming that something will eventually jump out from the shadows.

Visitor:

Guiding me toward the performance area, I follow a series of lights. *(The light turns, following a wall)*. Clearly defining the dimensions of the “stage,” I find myself mesmerized by the light. I find a certain familiarity of the tones of light, as if I’ve seen them before. *(Tilting head, curiously)*. Watching the light being caught on the scrim that outlines the sides of the “stage,” a diffusion of light catches my eye. And another. And another. *(Eyes darting around the stage, seamlessly attempting to follow the mysterious diffusion, they become tense and anxious)*. I’m trying desperately to catch a pattern of these diffusions, but to no avail. *(Continuing to walk, dismissing the light)* They appear to be as random as people walking

on the street.

She continues into the performance space, resting on a chair on the perimeter. Sitting comfortably, she presents a state of relaxation, but is evidently nervous. Other spectators are milling about ... an usher comes and speaks to her. His words bring delight to her face. She rises and begins walking in the direction she came.

Visitor:

Of course I'll come for a drink!

*She walks briskly offstage, with a jump in her step.
House lights down.*

Theatre Space:

The philosophical concerns of Nietzsche, Artaud, Brecht and Brook established the fundamental problem of theatre; that of the theatre space itself. The theatre space is traditionally defined as having a stage and a designated viewing “platform” for spectators. But as the theatre declined as a leading artform for communication, other suggestions surfaced to aid in its redevelopment. As suggested by Brook, a theatrical performance can emerge in any setting, suggesting that it can merely be a place where that original interaction between two individuals takes place. Street corners, parking lots, classrooms, and grocery stores all present us with reasonable settings for this conversation, verbal or physical, to take place. Within this idea, Brook designates that theatre is not defined by space or time, but contains a more fundamental human presence.

One is not bound by a unity of place, a unity of time, when the emphasis is on human relationships. What holds our attention is the interplay between one person and another; the social context, always present in life, is not shown but is established by the other characters.⁴¹

Brook establishes an idea that theatre should not be bound by its environment, but theatre’s importance is defined by human interactions and relationships. As a result, Brook identifies that there is a need for a theatrical setting that eliminates provoking notions of traditional Western theatre⁴².

Similarly, Antonin Artaud proposes the use of spaces that challenge the notions of theatre engagement. Propositions such as large derelict spaces, devoid of any current use, are essential to the success of Artaud’s theatre. Yet these spaces

41 Peter Brook, *There are No Secrets* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993), 29.

42 Brook’s emphasis on the use of the spectator’s imagination, helped to create an ideology of potential for theatre. Theatre artists such as Robert Wilson, Philip Glass and Robert Lepage all use various methods of theatre presentation and creativity that aid in communicating the intent of theatre to the audience through imaginational constructs.

previously had a function, and those are identified within the traces left on the space itself. Brook reflects upon Artaud's theories, and summarizes the importance of the blank space, regardless of its previous function. A minimal set also plays a fundamental role. The set need not be bland, nor refined, but it is to be used as a tool to drive the audience's imagination, deterring it away from a mindset similar to that of viewing cinema. Cinema's preoccupation for visual effects often overpowers the dramatic contribution of its actors. By contrast, theatre by its very nature, relies on the actors for the primary delivery of its narratives and intents and should not be overpowered by the setting. Attempting to provoke mimetic reactions, the actors use ammunition such as strong facial expressions, body movements and varying levels of audibility in speech, as well as their interaction to the minimal physical set, to provoke the imagination of the spectator. Forcing the spectator to manufacture their individual interpretation of the invisible setting, the ability to connection with their intangible creativity is established.

Artaud's theater is a strenuous machine for transforming the mind's conceptions into entirely 'material' events, among which are the passions themselves. Against the centuries-old priority that the European theater has given to words as the means for conveying emotion and ideas, Artaud wants to show the organic basis of emotions and the physicality of ideas – in the bodies of the actors. Artaud's theater is a reaction against the state of underdevelopment in which the bodies (and the voices, apart from talking) of Western actors have remained for generations, as have the arts of the spectacle.⁴³

Paralleling theories of Nietzsche, Artaud proposes that the orientation of the audience and actor is another fundamental element for provoking of the audience's creative imagination. Artaud's discourse on the success of the Greek Theatre, reflects that the positioning is fundamental to the communication of the intent to the spectator. Altered orientations and relationships encourage different reactions from the audience. Artaud sought to rectify the importance of this relationship by having

43 Sontag, xxxii.

movable seating, often positioning his audience in the center of the performance space. This reestablishes a theory that the viewing area is never permanently defined, restating that the communication between the actors and spectators, and the intangible “space’ they create together, is the desired goal.

Artaud found that the inability to predict and control the audience was predicated by the current orientation of traditional theatre space. With the seating opposite the stage, a spatial division between the spectator and the spectacle is created. This division designates a separation between what is real and what not. Often, extravagant ornate decoration is found lining the stage, and setting a border for theatricality. This unintentional framing encourages the audience to engage in a purely visual performance, which often limits their mental inclusion.

...The separation between actor and the audience must be reduced (but not ended), by violating the boundary between the stage area and the auditoriums fixed rows of seats. Artaud, with his hieratic sensibility, never envisages a form of theater in which the audience actively participates in the performance, but he wants to do away with the rules of theatrical decorum which permits the audience to dissociate itself from its own experience.⁴⁴

This existing spacial division, Artaud argues, results in the members of the audience being relieved of any conditions to question the purpose or intent of the performance. As a consequence, the actors hardly see the spectator’s reactions. Their eyes and expressions are devoid of any presence, portraying a large number of unemotional, uninteresting, hypnotized spectators.

The theatre is perhaps one of the most difficult arts, for three connections must be accomplished simultaneously and in perfect harmony: links between the actor and his inner life, his partners and the audience.⁴⁵

44 Sontag, xxxiii-xxxiv.

45 Peter Brook, *There are No Secrets* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993), 31.

The harmonious relationships that Brook discusses are often overlooked in traditional models. In order for the actor-audience relationship to be successful, the theatre itself needs to dissolve any preconceptions of theatrical performances. The spectator's preconceptions of theatre should have no boundaries. Yet from the moment they enter the building until the performance begins, those preconceived notions must be relieved.

Theatrical writing has done little to deter from these notions. Brecht's "Epic Theatre" gives examples of how the written component can aid in engaging the audience not only viewing, but through essential questioning and developing understanding through challenging logical opinions. Brecht's aforementioned 'status quo' of the spectator, have blocked the director and playwright from having the opportunity to enter into the mind of the audience. Intentions of the play can revolve around any number of issues, yet without the possibility of an audience member questioning these, then the intent is lost.

As discovered by Artaud and Brecht, and understood by Peter Brook, the main principle of the theatrical experience that they couldn't control was the audience itself. If one takes this stance, then Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief," can be seen as an unattainable goal existing in theatre theoreticians, directors, actors and playwrights. As many have found, one cannot predict or expect an audience to react in a certain manner. In some aspects, the theatre can be categorized with cinema, for the cinema needs no interaction from the audience at all. Artaud's fourth wall can be applied in cinema as the space between the film projector and the screen. But in theatre, that fourth wall is the space between the spectator and the stage. The future success of the theatre depends upon the breaking up of this boundary.

Architecture responds to notions such as these not through words but by

spaces. Using design gestures to develop the aforementioned synonymous viewer and viewed relationships, architecture presents the opportunity to engage the users on various levels. Subtly or intensely, these various levels of engagement are then used in communicating intentions. Buildings attempt to confront the occupants, encouraging them to engage and reconcile their interpretation of the architectural gestures they inhabit. Thus, the spaces and their design gestures attempt to engage their inhabitants on more than just a physical level, breaking boundaries and developing a heightened engagement within the spaces.

The Space Between:

The established problem within Western theatrics is that the theatre space, fundamentally the audience-thespian orientation and overzealous ornamentation, leads to the overall problem of the audience's receptivity. The success of the experience is built upon these two characteristics outlined by Brook, relying on each other to build an overall understanding and appreciation for the theatre. While both current theatre characteristic, the actor-spectator arrangement and the ornamentation, have tangible qualities, the intangible ideas surrounding each characteristic can influence a congruent solution.

The fundamental root of the problem lies in the void between the audience and the stage. The stage should not be limited to the physical stage where the actors portray the story, but the mindset of the whole experience of the building as a stage for theatrical performance. The designation of a particular area as the space in which theatrics occur is the problem with current theatre practices.

In traditional theatre performance arrangements, the space that exists between the spectator and the actor is devoid of any theatrical engagement. It is simply a gap that separates the viewer and the viewed. The spectator engages the theatre building as they would any other, moving throughout towards a particular destination. Often, theatres attempt to prepare the spectators for the performance by use of posters, paraphernalia, and ornamentation. This may be an attempt at establishing the theatre as a higher cultural space, where people are propelled into an area where their current social standing is undefined; a socially-neutral zone where every audience member is of the highest class of society.

The space needs to aid the spectator's involvement, and propel them into a mind-set that engages the performance's intentions on a critical level. Although this can simply be defined as a path from the street to the performance space, this space

may be used to create anxiety or anticipation within the spectator, encouraging them to engage with the message of the theatre and/or the performance, as opposed to a simple visual display of theatrical talent or commercial media. The intent of the performance is to provoke the questioning of the presented artistic creation, and until the spectator becomes critically engaged by their inclusion or role within the story, the importance of the theatrical “message” is lost.

Sensory Engagement:

Our first reactions to conditions or situations involving everyday life are grounded in our initial sensory reaction. A vibrant scent or distinctive sound can initiate a strong impression towards a situation. They also induce reactions recalling memories and other natural responses which define our current understanding of those conditions. The communication of intentions within theatre and architecture could be delivered through the use of sensual situations directed towards all senses including visual. These would invoke natural reactions to provoke spectators, directing them towards a particular natural emotion. These could be subtle or dramatic, to suit the intent. As Jenelle Reinelt wrote in her essay *Staging the Nation of Nation Stages*,

*(Peter) Brook's view of (Peter) Wiess's play naturally fit in with Brook's interests: 'Starting with its title, everything about this play is designed to crack the spectator on the jaw, then douse him with ice-cold water, then force him to assess intelligently what has happened to him, then give him a kick in the balls, then bring him back to his senses again.'*⁴⁶

Provoking the spectator to critically question the ideas within the performance is often lost in the visual aspects of performance. Other sensual connections have the opportunity to break Artaud's fourth wall that exists between spectator and spectacle, resulting in the development of their engagement within the "real act" which is theatre.

Two primary senses that are often overlooked within theatre to provoke an audience, the senses of smell and touch. These are two fundamental sensory operations of the human body. Within *Mimesis and Alterity*, Micheal Taussig

⁴⁶ Jenelle Reinelt, "Staging the Nation on Nation Stages" in Michal Kobińska, Ed., *Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice, and Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 136.

discusses the magnitude of the sense of smell;

*'Of all the sense,' they write, 'that of smell – which is attracted without objectifying – bears clearest witness to the urge to lose oneself in and become the 'other'. Thus we are led back to Benjamin's sentience taking one out of oneself, led by the nose to think anew of what it means to objectify and send an-Other, of losing oneself in that Other, as when Benjamin writes of mimesis as a rudiment of a former compulsion to be another, and Caillois toys with the scary idea of becoming similar, nor similar to something, just similar.'*⁴⁷

Taussig details the importance of the sense of smell, its ability to provide a direct sensory communication.

Similar, is the sense of touch. The engagement of a physical object becomes increasingly sensual. Immanuel Kant stated that *"the hand is the window on to the mind,"*⁴⁸ emphasizing the connection between engaging an object as a tool for perceptual understanding and thought. The sense of touch enables the diversity of an object's attributes to be communicated.

Kinesthetics and haptic technology are based upon the interaction given by the sense of touch. Kinesthetic learners find that learning an idea or subject with hands-on intimacy is more successful than merely engaging with the subject through visuals and speech. These types of learners often engage critically with a subject or object, and learn to understand their properties and functions. By directly engaging with the object, Kinesthetic learners often have an increased understanding of the qualities, abilities and limitations of objects and their composition.

*Haptic Technology refers to technology which interfaces the user via the sense of touch by applying forces, vibration and/or motions to the user.*⁴⁹

47 Micheal Taussig. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc. 1993), 66.

48 Raymond Tallis, *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry in Human Being* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 4.

49 Kenneth Barner, www.ee.udel.edu/InfoAccess/Technology/haptic.html (accessed October 15, 2008).

Both Kinesthetic learners and those using haptic technology, tend to approach subjects with an objective mindset, and allow the material or object to present its characteristics and limitations, without preconceptions. Society may distinguish this type of interaction only in educational and training settings, but this approach presents opportunities for various artists to communicate dynamic ideas. The true intent of an artwork may never be grasped by the majority of the audience, but by engaging in a tactile way, the artwork would provoke ideas within the audience that differentiated from the visual perception. This can also be used as a test of the aforementioned theories of Umberto Eco's "openness" and "completeness" of an artist and artwork. Relating back to theatrical intent, this may present an opportunity to engage the spectator with the space surrounding them. Forcing the spectators to engage, may alter or remove any standard preconceptions of theatre. Trances or gestures connecting the audience within the space may lead to natural reactions. These mimetic responses may enable the spectator's intellectual palette to be "cleansed." Reflecting upon Kant's appreciation of the relationship between the mind and the hand, Richard Sennett expands that into verbal communication connecting movement with objects.

... Verbs drive from hand movements, nouns "holds" things as names, and adverbs and adjectives, like hand tools, modify movements and objects.⁵⁰

Sennett's quote encourages the spectator's role with interaction in regards to the theatre itself. By providing didactic relationships between the spectator, the object and its exposed meaning, a questioning mind frame might appear. Architectural interventions give the opportunity for connecting the user through sensual connections, encouraging critical engagement. Sensual communication provides an opportunity to experience reactions to intangible conditions. While verbal

50 Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 180.

responses such as “warm” or “sweet” are simply words used to establish a dictionary of characteristics, senses allow the human body to interact with intangible qualities. Crafting a particular situation may involve individualizing certain elements, such as a handrail, or creating a particular viewing area to provide moments of engagement, prior to engaging with the performance itself. While the setting is important for the societal context of the theatre, it should not limit or deter the audience’s mind from using its imagination in interpreting the performance.

While crafting and craftsmanship allows the inclusion of more tangible qualities, these notions are part of a larger context when interpreted in terms of gestural theory. Gestural theory provides an opportunity to connect both tangible and intangible qualities into a compounded whole, similar to the Greek understanding of multiple didactic conditions. Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests that the “anthropomorphic Greek religion of art [can] return in the context of contemporary art”⁵¹ through the use of gestural theory. The fundamental basis for gesture theory is that the suggestion is more powerful than itself.

What a gesture expresses is ‘there’ in the gesture itself. A gesture is something wholly corporeal and wholly spiritual at one and the same time. The gesture reveals no inner meaning behind itself. The whole being of gesture lies in what it says. At the same time every gesture is also opaque in an enigmatic fashion. It is a mystery that holds back as much as it reveals. For what the gesture reveals is the being of meaning rather than the knowledge of meaning. Or, to put it in Hegelian terms, the gesture is substantial rather than subjective. Every gesture is human, but not every gesture is exclusively the gesture of a human being. Indeed, no gesture is merely the expression of an individual person. Like language, the gesture always reflects a world of meaning to which it belongs. And the gestures that the artist is able to bring out in his work, the gestures that allow us to interpret our world, are never simply human gestures.⁵²

51 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 79.

52 Gadamer, 79.

The nature of gestures allows their embodiment not to be the conclusion, but the means to the conclusion. The suggested nature of architecture allows design decisions to be made as part of a series of gestures towards a particular intent.

Act 3:**Scene 1:**

The scene opens looking upon the interior of the building, with construction nearing completion. Minimal areas await completion, with various contractors in the final stages of building. Adjustments are being made to various pre-assembled components, and the apprentice is beginning to assemble a flooring system on the third floor.

Tradesman:

Taking out the last section of the seating from the shipping crate, it attaches without any trouble (carefully placing the last seating section into place, he connects the final four nuts). There, all finished, (Running his hand across the section, he finds one nut that is still not flush with the actual seat, and readjusts it). Now to test (he stands up and sets aside his tools. Then he shifts and unlocks a bracket on all four corners of the assembly). (The assembly starts to flatten out, and he watches, puzzled). The pneumatics are meant to slow this down, but it still seems to be flattening out at an alarming rate. (A quick readjustment of the pneumatics is in order, which he does quickly, and tests again) There, much

better. *(Running his hand along the floor)* And according to the plans, this ought to flatten to be flush with the floor, and it does. Perfect.

Satisfied with the completion of the seating assembly, the apprentice cleans up and moves his tools to the main stairwell connecting the second and third floors.

Tradesman:

We tightened the strings on each tread, each string having different thicknesses. I tried each string *(trying to pluck the string)*, and one needed a little more tension. There *(Stepping up and walking up and down the stairs, slower and faster, more and less pressure, each producing a different melody)*. Just a few adjustments to the top and bottom of the handrail.

He continues to adjust with the strings, rotating between adjusting and testing. He sits back and reflects upon his work, finally pleased.

Tradesman:

(Cleaning the work area). The poured concrete had left square indentations with the bottom, with inset metal hardware. *(Stepping onto the platform).* We test-assembled the

platform that sat upon the concrete; it seemed to float above, while the light of the pool gave the base a heavenly glow.

The day has gone by quickly for the tradesman.

He reflects on the work to be done tomorrow, prior to the grand opening of the building. Besides cleaning, making small adjustments (as portions begin to settle) and a final walkthrough, the project was pretty much complete. He begins to wander through the building, often mumbling to himself, quietly discussing his emotional attachment with this project, and the confidence it has brought him.

Scene 2:

The house lights are low, and the performance is about to begin. The director watches nervously from one of the side curtains. He scans the audience, attempting to grasp what they are thinking.

Director:

Upon seating themselves within the space, the audience will be bathed in a soft glow, like a blanket that covers the entire set. *(Pausing, looking up at the surrounding walls)* Upon silence, the actors begin to enter and propel themselves into the space of the audience.

(Fast-Forward) He is quite pleased with the opening scene. The selective framing of moments to add cues to heighten the emotions, seemed successful. The inclusion of the actors into the audience brought many surprised looks from the spectators.

Director:

(Speaking softly to himself) When the actor portraying Philip sat down to watch the performance within the play, his response to the audience members watching him was perfect. He stayed in character, giving a stern look to those who were still watching him instead of the performance.

He looks away from the performance. Reviewing his notes, he realizes the time is nearing for the most interesting scene. A stagehand waiting nearby seems nervous, as the director walks towards him, and discusses the next few moments.

Director:

Don't be nervous, just wait for the signal and do exactly as we've practiced. (He says with a confident voice)

He motions for the stagehand to take his position,

beside the corner of the scrim. Patiently, he waits for the signal. Suddenly, the corner section opens up and a brilliant beam of light fills the space, focusing on the two actors portraying Jack and Aliena. Members of the audience gasp, as the light frames a square area in the middle of the seating arrangement.

Director:

Perfect, the light for the wedding will begin to show how the space is constructed.

From this moment onward, the members of the audience will start to identify the theatre as an abstraction of the Cathedral.

As the performance is given and the construction of the building continues, more and more light starts to fill the space. The "clerestory" windows from the upper portion of the walls are allowing light to enter the space, creating the cathedral effect. The director helps the stagehands to co-ordinate the introduction of color, to give abstractions of the stained glass of the cathedral.

(Fast-Forward) The performance is over, and the spectators are filing out. They seem pleased with their role in the performance, making comments to the ushers. The Director is standing at the top of the stairs, thanking

the spectators for coming.

Director:

(Discussing to himself after he thanks the last remaining spectator) The play was a success, as it seemed to created a positive reaction. From what I can tell, the audience enjoyed taking part in the performance. I just hope the critics are also that positive. (And with that, he spins and joins the rest of the cast and crew celebrating opening night)

Scene 3:

The spectators have gathered in the bar/lounge area on the top floor of the building, and the doors to the performance space have opened. Oddly, the chairs have been arranged in the middle of the space, and the spectators cautiously attempt to find their seat. A middle-aged woman begins to enter the space.

Visitor:

(Cautiously walking across the floor, pausing every couple of steps). Walking across the stage, the floor is unsettling. With every step,

I feel the floor resettling with every movement.
 The fluctuations end as I walk onto the seating
 platform. As if stepping over a threshold, the
 difference between stage and audience is quite
 unique. *(Testing the change in floor, she returns to
 a normal walk)*

Visitor:

*(Seemingly unsettled in her seat, her
 wandering eyes catch something above).*
(Muttering to herself) A single dark line seems
 to be drawn across the length of the ceiling
 separating the audience from the stage. A
 distinction between the observers and the
 observed. Watching the line, I follow it down
 the walls of the space, and then across the
 floor. *(Focusing back on the stage, but still with
 a puzzled look)* I remember the difference in the
 movement of the floor between the stage and the
 seating. *(Turning back to the line)* I realize that
 this line that is drawn throughout the room is
 not a line at all. It's a reveal. *(Satisfied with this
 conclusion, she returns to the stage)* A separation
 between two materials, this line is actually just
 a space that helps to delineate two functions,
 interesting.

The play has begun, and she starts discussing to herself quietly as she listens attentively.

Visitor:

The actor portraying Philip just sat down beside me, preparing to watch the performance of Saint Adolphus put on by the monks.

(Watching him) He never let up his character, never departing from being the prior, just watching and listening attentively. He glanced and me, and giving a stern look he nodded his head in the direction of the performance.

(Refocusing on the performance), The monks produced the story through various simple methods, in a joyful manner...

Visitor:

The actors portraying Philip and Jack began to discuss the organization of the town, once a crude spraying of lines that were portrayed on the floor had gradually faded, and lights between the audience's chairs faded down.

(Looking down to the lights between the chairs)

The organization of the chairs reflected the organization of the town. *(Sitting back, refocused on the actors)*.

Visitor:

I find it quite odd that I'm leaving the theatre much differently that I approached it. *(Quickly widening her stance, her is suddenly wide-eyed and frightened as she grabs the handrail).* Grabbing the handrail again, I have a sudden sense of fear. Are we moving? Is the earth shuddering?? *(Relaxing again),* Realizing that it is merely the handrail that is vibrating I try to answer the question why? *(People passing by, and the handrail is vibrating again, but after the majority of people leave, the handrail's vibration diminishes. A look of comfort grew upon her face).* *(One step, and she shudders again in discomfort, but then she realizes that the handrail shakes once one walks down the stairs).* It may be a little disconcerting, but I understand.

Continuing down the stairs (with an increased amount of caution), she starts placing her experiences throughout the building in order. A puzzled look forms onto her face. (Pause). With a look of satisfaction, she is thrilled with the overall experience. Her date was waiting at the bottom of the stairs with her coat. Hand-in-hand they walked outside, enjoying the spring evening.

Proposal:

The thesis project proposes a new theatre building that is developed as a response to the theories identified within the thesis text. Individual moments have been described through a narrative approach. These “parts” were designed as opportunities for diadala crafting in hopes of provoking the imagination of all users of the building. Assembling the detail components, the building acts as a vehicle, preparing the users for theatrical and artistic engagement.

The site is identified as Lot 13, Clarence Street South, Ottawa, Ontario. Throughout its recent history, the lot was used a supplementary space for the parking of vehicles. During the nineteenth century the lot was used for the housing of horses and storage for buggies, for the clients of the Commercial Hotel, once located adjacently on York Street. The descriptions of the history of the lot suggest that simple, primary buildings were all that were ever constructed.⁵³

Programmatically, the proposal uses a series of private and public spaces and the

⁵³ In the Byward Market of Ottawa, Ontario, a parking lot exists on the south side of Clarence Street. The parking lot is surrounded by buildings on three sides, with no building exceeding the height of two stories. Located within a socialable district of the city, the western neighbor is currently is an restaurant establishment named “Cornerstone Bar and Grill”, while the eastern neighbor is a nightclub called “Tila Tequila.” The southern neighbors are also restaurants. The parking lot is labeled as Lot 13 Clarence Street South. James Inglis originally leased the lot in May 1829, but in 1837, he transferred the lease to Robert Elliott. Elliot owned the Commercial Hotel, located on York Street, adjacent Lot 13, who used the lot as stables and sheds for the tenants of the Hotel. Along the north façade of Lot 13, a large building, running the entire length of the façade, once stood as horse stalls. Along the west façade, an eighteen foot high stone wall had been previously erected. The horse stable and the wall are simple structures, yet they are highlighted throughout the proposed design of the theatre. And while it is important to highlight the existing conditions of the site, the surrounding buildings give the opportunities for engagement with different sensory moments. See Newton, Michael. Lower Town Ottawa: V. 2, 1854-1900. Canada: National Capital Commission, 1981.

Standing close to the southern and western buildings, one can smell the quality food being prepared for the customers, as well as the discarded food. The eastern neighbor has an interesting characteristic that could be emphasized. The constant melody of the music through the nightclub is a fascinating quality of the program that could referenced with ease, connecting with the outside community.

The site of the theatre does not necessarily have any direct influences on the performance itself, but the setting of theatre can bring the audience into a state of questioning their relationship with the building. The proposed theatre is machine for purifying the audience’s mind, helping to engage the spectator, and clear their minds of preconceptions prior to the performance. The path through the theatre attempts to produce simple yet dynamic relationships in theatre setting that help to aid in further purifying the audience’s mind.

thresholds between them to encourage the occupants to reflect on their relationship to the space and the performance within the building. The building is developed focusing on the need for adaptability within theatre. Large spaces with undefined seating arrangements are characteristic of both the first and third level performance spaces. The first level space has a two-story height, with a second level wraparound walkway, that enables the spectator to view the work from above. The walls of the walkway surrounding the two-story space are composed primarily of removable scrim, enabling colors, images and various lighting conditions to be projected. A centrally placed rectangular pool gives a central focus to the space. The pool is also the foundation for an assembled platform, giving opportunities for the installation of artworks, and an elevated central stage for actors or a seating platform for the audience during performances. An extruded square form (of scrim material) can be dropped from the ceiling and attached to the platform, providing a canvas for video projections, lighting installations, or multimedia events.

The third floor performance space is also a double-height space, and is the largest in floor area. This space attempts to be an example of a “black box” theatre, having characteristics that allow for multiple seating arrangements and various staging and lighting conditions.⁵⁴ A section of the floor can be removed, enabling the actors or work of art to be positioned on the ground floor or within the east length of the second-floor balcony, which then can be viewed from the third level. The third-story space also has a series of seating platforms that are mechanically driven. Stored within the southwest

54 Contemporary theatre has established a new type of theatre setting, transforming the ways in which spectators view performances. A Black Box theatre created a new typology for theatre engagement, preparing various opportunities for the manner in which one perceives theatre performances. This relies on a number of theoretical propositions, including those from Artaud, Brecht and Brook. Along with Brook’s ideals for the essence of a theatrical event, the black box presupposes that any viewing point can be established. This allows artists to define the viewing position for their art works, altering those left from previous tenants. As with various types of artistic methods, the theatrical artist is thus allowed to engage with a larger performance without needing to establish a venue for a one-time use. Qualities such as a lack of ornamentation, no predetermined seating or lighting arrangements and an undefined viewing frame, allows the Black Box theatre to be likened to Artaud’s proposal of large, neutral, derelict spaces.

corner of the surrounding walls, these seating platforms enable artists to use a more-common audience viewing position.

Areas surrounding the performance spaces are to be understood as places for theatrical engagements themselves. Contained within these spaces are the private program elements and public areas of greater intimacy for material engagement.

The material palette was chosen for their properties and their potential for change under varying situational conditions. Translucent panels and scrim are utilized for their characteristics in capturing light and projections. Used in moments where there is a physical interaction, concrete is used for its ability to retain heat and can be poured into various forms. Steel and wood are used in some instances where reactions to water involve odorous responses. All these materials were chosen for their ability to encourage a sensual engagement by the occupant.

The building is meant as a viewing platform for not only the internal users, but as a canvas for artists to display their work to the outside. The exterior walls of the third-story performance space are constructed as an assembly of transparent and translucent materials. The exterior layer of this assembly is transparent, while an interior shade-system allows the light to become completely blocked, enabling the performances to be viewed in darkness regardless of the time of day. The opportunity also exists for the spectators to be placed along the street to view the performance, as a canvas for the city.

While the process of building was undertaken from a details-first direction, the composition of those elements responds to the need to provoke the imagination and engagement of the spectators. Developed from the theories of Nietzsche, Artaud, Brecht and Brook, involving adaptability, provocation and establishing realism in theatre, the proposal attempts to develop a relationship between the occupant's imagination and their engagement in the theatrical event.

Conclusion:

The constant drive of human perception to associate intangible intellectual conditions with life-like characteristics is built on imaginative creativity. Greek theatre used these circumstances as a methodology for communication through performances. The spectator's imagination was provoked through methods that used the chorus for developing characters and situations, engaging the audience within "real" situations. This reality within Greek theatre was the product of magic within the performance, connecting both tangible and intangible qualities for a powerful overall experience. This magic, *daidala*, was the essential component that made Greek theatre powerful, and impacted the audience's reaction. When reflecting upon the evolution of Greek theatre practice, it seems that the greater the use of intangible *daidala* within a production, an increased opportunity in provoking the spectator's imagination occurs. This is the goal of theatre production, and current theatre trends seem to have lost this focus.

Building upon theories of Greek theatre, Nietzsche, Artaud, Brecht and Brook all identified that the key to the success of communicating ideas within theatre is the ability to provoke the audience. Nietzsche's writings connected art and science, and the importance of both their theological approaches to society, as a machine for imaginative thought.

... he shows how art and science are not different from each other because the former is a pure play of the imagination while the other is cold knowledge of things in themselves. Rather, the difference lies far more in the greater freedom, equanimity and sobriety with which the scientific man approaches the world.⁵⁵

Nietzsche delineated the importance of the intellectual mindsets and approaches of both art and science, as the signifying factors for the success of theatre as derived from the constant intellectual interplay between their differing approaches.

The proposition for the theatre on Lot 13 of Clarence Street South, in Ottawa

55 Gianni Vattimo, *Nietzsche: An Introduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 54.

Ontario, is an attempt to develop a machine for provoking the audience's imagination in preparation for theatrical performances. Its foundation is based upon theories laid out by Nietzsche, Artaud, Brecht and Brook, and the importance of stimulating the audience's participation and provoking their imagination. The building is to be engaged using sensory interactions, attempting to dissolve any preconceptions of traditional theatre practices through the stimulation of the spectator's mind and senses. The impact of these moments comes through the use of daidala principles in crafting "magic."

The large performance spaces attempt to reinforce the audience's questioning of themselves in the space. The spaces act as blank canvases, black boxes open for installations and interpretation by artists to communicate their ideas to the public.⁵⁶ Folding panels and temporary assembled construction members allow for the space to be transformed with great ease. The spaces will be devoid of any prearranged seating orientation, therefore expanding the opportunities for artists to develop various angles and directions for the engagement of the members of the audience. Unlimited in arrangements and transformations, these spaces are a direct influence of the needed flexibility that resides in theatre practices. The central issue in the ideology of the building, is the need for the spaces between the entrance and the main performance space, to act as a machine for transforming cultural tendencies, enabling the audience to be fully involved within the performance itself.

Previously established, the space that exists between the spectator and the performers is problematic in current theatre practice. This separation is a division that defines the perception of the audience as a simple visual connection and disengaged understanding. The main focus of the building's development are the spaces that are inhabited between the exterior of the building and the main theatre spaces. These spaces are moments in which the building acts as a machine for simplifying situations and

⁵⁶ As Artaud suggests a barn as a theatre space, acting as the foundation for purposeful theatre interaction, the large performance spaces themselves are developed on these principles.

interactions, while emphasizing certain elements to provoke the spectator's imagination. While the building is developed as a space for performance, the interaction between the building and the audience itself is the essential intent. By eliminating the context of the traditional western theatre, and emphasizing certain elements and phenomenon of common occurrences, the building attempts to "cleanse" the spectator's sensual palette in preparation for theatrical performances. Individualizing certain aspects and using daidalic craftsmanship, the moments within the building help to promote the spectator's engagement. By using Kinesthetic and Haptic methods of discovery, the spectator is forced to engage building elements in various situations, emphasizing Kant's theories on the importance of physical engagement through all of the senses.

Material selections are based upon their reaction to certain situations, and their aesthetics considerations. Temperance to weather variations and programmatic conditions are often the main concerns when materials are selected. Careful material selections often produce situations where the conceptual intent of a building is revealed or emphasized. These considerations give magical qualities to the engagement of building space, enabling users to develop relationships that are more than simply visual connections. These relationships are also linked with opportunities of engagement within a theatre setting. The material selections within the building moments are meant to have a dramatic effect on the philosophy of the spectators. As they begin the procession through the building, whether towards the coat check, the washroom facilities or a particular performance space, the spectator is forced to engage the individual moments in unconventional ways. Using senses other than strictly visual, the spectator is asked to reflect upon the space that surrounds them, and their relationship within that space. Design gestures aid in provoking the spectator, preparing them for their participation in the theatrical performance. Gestures are instrumental to the success of exposing a space's design influences, through programmatic considerations, material palettes, and spatial

relationships.

The overall intention of the proposal is to force the spectator to become engaged within the building, and understand that it is a vehicle of “realities.” Each moment is an attempt to expose the phenomenon that exists within art and architecture. As important as the first interactions with these moments are, the foci are the methodologies of approach and reception from the spectator. Attempting to prepare the user for the main theatrical performance, the moments are meant to provoke the spectator’s imagination about the space surrounding them, as well as their relationship to the space itself. As Artaud and Brecht theorized, the importance of theatre relied on the spectator’s perception that the performance is “real,” and without that element, the spectator would be less likely to be provoked into questioning the theatrical performance, and more importantly, their role within the event.

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Fig. 2

PROPOSED SITE: LOT 13 SOUTH, CLARENCE ST. OTTAWA, ONTARIO.

Fig. 3

PRELIMINARY THEATRE SPACE MASSING MODELS 71

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

Fig. 14

Fig. 15

Fig. 16

Fig. 17

Fig. 18

Fig. 19

Fig. 20

Fig. 21

Fig. 22

Fig. 23

Fig. 24

Fig. 25: COMPOSITE DRAWING PANEL

Fig. 26: COMPOSITE DRAWING PANEL

PLANS:

Fig. 27

BASEMENT PLAN (1:200)

- 1 Vehicle Parking Areas
- 2 Vehicle Entrance
- 3 Garbage/Recycling Storage
- 4 Storage
- 5 Open To Below

Fig. 28

GROUND FLOOR PLAN (1:200)

- 6 Pedestrian Entrance
- 7 Ticket Office
- 8 Coat Check
- 9 Water Detail/Foundation for Assembled Platform
- 10 Actor Changing Rooms
- 11 Actor Communal Areas

Fig. 29

SECOND FLOOR PLAN (1:200)

- 1 Office
- 2 Balcony Catwalk
- 3 Bathroom Facilities
- 4 Open To Below
- 5 Storage

Fig. 30

THIRD FLOOR PLAN (1:200)

- 6 Main Performance Area
- 7 Retractable Seating Storage
- 8 Line Of Extent Of Removable Floor
- 9 Audience Entrance
- 10 Actor's Entrance
- 11 Bar

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN (1:200)

- 1 Main Performance Space Catwalk
- 2 Clerestory Windows
- 3 Open To Below
- 4 Roof Below

Fig. 32: GROUND FLOOR PLAN 1:200

Fig. 33: SECOND FLOOR PLAN 1:200

Fig. 34: THIRD FLOOR PLAN 1:200

SECTIONS:

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Fig. 35: SECTION A-A (1:200)

Fig. 37: SECTION C-C (1:200)

Fig. 36: SECTION B-B (1:200)

- 1 Actor Changing Rooms
- 2 Actor Communal Areas
- 3 Water Detail/Foundation for Assembled Platform
- 4 Removable Floor
- 5 First Floor Performance Area
- 6 Second Level Balcony Catwalk
- 7 Third Floor Main Performance Area
- 8 Fourth Floor Balcony Catwalk
- 9 Office
- 10 Ticket Office
- 11 Bathroom Facilities
- 12 Storage

Fig. 38: SECTION A-A (1:200)

Fig. 39: SECTION B-B (1:200)

ENTRANCE/WATER DETAIL
Steel Angle, Sheet Metal, Cedar

Fig. 40: Entrance Model

Fig. 42: Entrance Model

Fig. 41: Entrance Model

Fig. 43: Entrance Model

GROUND FLOOR CANVAS STRUCTURE/SECOND FLOOR
BALCONY STRUCTURE

Steel Angle, Steel Tubing, Steel Rods, Wood, Acrylic.

Fig. 44: Completed
Balcony Model

Fig. 45: Detail of Scrim
Connection Within
Structure

Fig. 46: Completed Model,
Interior Elevation
View

Fig. 47: Completed
Model, Exterior
Elevation View

EXTRUDED WALL/SLICE DETAIL

Wood, Plexiglass, Sheet Metal, Plastic

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Fig. 48: Extrusion/Slice Model,
Exterior View

Fig. 50: Extrusion/Slice
Model, Interior View

Fig. 49: Extrusion/Slice Model,
Interior View.

Fig. 51: Extrusion/Slice,
Interior Model

HANDRAIL/LIGHT FIXTURE DETAIL

Concrete, Steel Angle, Steel Flatbar, Metal Hardware, Plywood

Fig. 52: Handrail/Light Fixture Detail Sketch

Fig. 53: Plywood Mould for Concrete Pour (Plywood, Board Insulation, Steel Flatbar, Hardware)

Fig. 54: Finished Concrete Handrail

Fig. 55: Finished Concrete and Steel Handrail and Light Fixture

Fig. 56: Finished Concrete and Steel Handrail and Light Fixture

Fig. 57: Finished Concrete and Steel Handrail and Light Fixture

STAIRWELL DETAIL

Wood (Bass, Walnut, MDF), Metal, Guitar Strings.

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Fig. 58

Fig. 60

Fig. 59

Fig. 61

Fig. 62

Fig. 63

Fig. 64

1:100 BUILDING MODEL

Fig. 65

Fig. 68

Fig. 66

Fig. 69

Fig. 67

Fig. 70

1:100 BUILDING MODEL

Fig. 71

Fig. 72

Fig. 73

Fig. 74

Fig. 75

Fig. 76