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An examination of the similarities between theatre and ice hockey

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**An examination of the similarities between theatre and ice
hockey**

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San Jose State University, 1991

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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE SIMILARITIES
BETWEEN THEATRE AND ICE HOCKEY**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the

Department of Theatre Arts

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

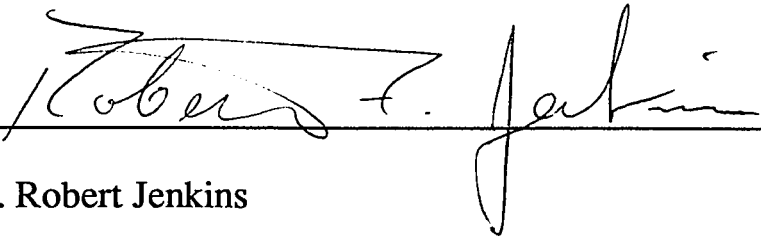
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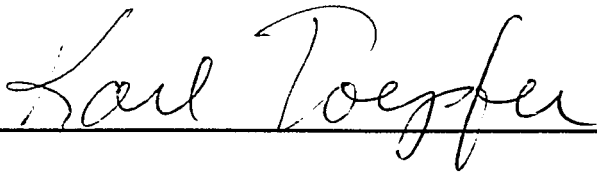
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December, 1990

Approved for the Department of Theatre Arts



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ABSTRACT

An Examination of the Similarities Between Theatre and Ice Hockey

by Gary Zaro

This thesis will examine the similarities between theatre and ice hockey in order to prove ice hockey is an active form of theatre. Ice hockey will be applied to three different theories of theatre: Aristotle's Poetics, Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" theory, and Robert Cohen's ideas of the duality of "play."

There are similarities inherent to theatre and hockey, ranging from the most basic such as teamwork, the performance of players, and conventions followed in each discipline, to the shared elements of transcendence, ephemerality, and audience relationship. Also prevalent is the phenomenon of celebrity that actors and athletes must face. This phenomenon ties in directly with the importance of the relationship with the audience in theatre and in hockey.

Ice hockey and theatre maintain a relationship that make them two popular forms of entertainment in our society. Through the application of hockey to the three theories of theatre, hockey is shown to possess many of the same elements and qualities of theatre, making it an active form of theatre.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

At first glance, theatre and sports appear to be very different disciplines. Theatre is often considered an intellectual art form, whereas sports are most often conceived as an arena for athletes to demonstrate their physical prowess. However, many actors will attest to the rigorous physical demands of complicated blocking, stage combat, and dancing. On the other hand, the modern athlete is faced with a myriad of intellectual demands and decisions in the athletic arena. Modern day sports are infused with a vast array of choreographed plays and strategies for every conceivable situation. Therefore, the bridge between theatre and sports is a significantly narrow one. In fact, the correlation between them is very close. As John Lahr succinctly stated, “Games are a means, through make-believe, of coping with the world. So is theatre.”¹

This thesis will examine the concurrent relationship between theatre and ice hockey through an exploration of their similarities. Due to its violent nature, there is not another sport that appears so

¹ John Lahr, *Astonish Me. Adventures in Contemporary Theatre*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), 17.

dissimilar to a visual art, such as theatre, than does ice hockey. Previous studies of this problem have had difficulties in bridging the gap between sports and the humanities. As Frank B. Ryan commented on the problem, "My task is not unlike trying to mix oil with water."² A contributing factor to this predicament is that the vast majority of research has been done by sports scholars, not theatre scholars. A reason for this disparity is that sports scholars realize the importance of drama to the success and appeal of sports, whereas theatre scholars, with a few exceptions, tend to stay within the boundaries of the visual and aural arts. Building a bridge from only one shore can be a difficult task. This essay will fill the gap of research that has been left vacant.

The examination of the similarities between theatre and ice hockey will delve into a rather uncharted area of research in order to emphasize the symbiotic relationship between two of this country's major forms of entertainment. Further research may uncover specific needs and desires in our society for entertainment through drama and sports that dates back to the Dionysian and Olympic festivals of

² Frank B. Ryan, "Sports and the Humanities: Friends or Foes?," *Sports and the Humanities: A Symposium*, eds. William J. Baker and James A. Rog. (Maine: University of Maine at Orono Press, 1983), 13.

ancient Greece.

One tool of research will be to explore previous research of the problem. A limitation here is that the majority of previous research concerns the relationship and correlation between sports and the humanities as a whole. Little of the research deals with specific sports, such as ice hockey, or specific branches of the humanities like theatre.

In order to begin examining the similarity between theatre and ice hockey, common denominators between them must be identified. An examination of similar properties between hockey and theatre will be made so that conclusions can be drawn that signify sport and theatre as brethren. For further clarification of purpose, ice hockey will be applied to workable theories of theatre. These applications will also amplify the common denominators between ice hockey and theatre.

In addition , the role of the spectator will be examined. In ice hockey and in theatre the spectator is an integral element. The effect of the spectator on the drama of ice hockey and theatre will be explored, as well as the effect of drama on the spectator. From their inceptions in ancient Greece, sport and theatre have depended on the

spectator to enhance the drama of their respective rituals through a cathartic response. In the modern era, they are also financially dependent. As Donald W. Calhoun noted, “A sporting event is a dramatic ritual, an agon, of which the actions of the watchers are as much a part as are those of the performers.”³

Three theories of theatre will be applied to ice hockey in this thesis: Aristotle’s Poetics, Antonin Artaud’s “Theatre of Cruelty,” and Robert Cohen’s theory of the relationship between theatre and sports.

Aristotle’s Poetics was chosen because it has been a standard tool that scholars have used for centuries in defining and developing a common structure for theatre. The Poetics will be applied to ice hockey in order to develop a concurrent structure between ice hockey and theatre.

Artaud’s “Theatre of Cruelty” theory was chosen for its reliance on the sensory aspects of the sonic and the visual having an emotional (what Aristotle would call a cathartic) effect on the audience. Artaud was not concerned with the importance of spoken dialogue to convey plot, character, and emotion, but rather on physical and aural fluidity

³ Donald W. Calhoun, Sport, Culture, and Personality (Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., 1987), 325.

to demonstrate the aforementioned theatrical devices.

Another aspect of Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" in this thesis is the correlation to the violent nature of ice hockey. Although Artaud was against a physical interpretation of cruelty, he did acquiesce that it was "a very minor aspect of the question."⁴ Thus, though it is a minor aspect of Artaud's dark interpretation of theatre, it is nonetheless a part.

The third theorist chosen for this essay, Robert Cohen, was selected for his modern applications of the relationship between sports and theatre. His ideas are currently being taught in approximately 400 university theatre programs across the country, making it a significant, and recent contribution to the theatrical academic world.⁵ Cohen traces the roots of this relationship back to the Greek Dionysian festivals of theatre and the Olympic festivals of sport that dominated that ancient civilization. Cohen follows the relationship through the Roman period, into the Elizabethan, and up to the present day. He also focuses on the domination of sports and drama on the

⁴ Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 394.

⁵ According to Danilo Purlia of Mayfield Publishing Company, Robert Cohen's *Theatre* is used in approximately 190 universities. In addition, Cohen's *Theatre, Brief Version* is used in approximately 200 universities in the United States.

great communicator and pastime of our age: television.

Cohen also enters the territory of amateur devotion to both fields and the phenomenon of celebrity that is dominated in our society by actors and athletes. As Cohen points out, “many a retired sports hero has found a second career in acting.”⁶ Conversely, many an actor has relied on sports as his foremost hobby outside of his profession, and has at times combined them, particularly in film when an actor has achieved the luxury of celebrity (e.g., Robert Redford in Downhill Racer and Tom Cruise in Days of Thunder).

The sport of ice hockey will be specifically applied to Cohen’s treatment of the relationship between sports and theatre. The major focus here will be on the historical relationship between sports and theatre from ancient Greece up to the twentieth century.

Each of these theatrical theorists adds a different approach, foundation, and perspective from which the relationship between sports and theatre will be examined. Beginning with Aristotle, whose civilization created theatre and sports, to the avant-garde theories of Artaud, up to the modern day correlations developed by Cohen, the relationship between theatre and ice hockey will be explored and

⁶ Robert Cohen, Theatre (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1988), 13.

developed in this thesis. The conclusions drawn at the end of this thesis will be strengthened by the individual importance of these theorists as well as the diversity between them. Although very different in their scholastic contributions, they are important theorists taught in the majority of college theatre programs.

The predominant importance of the conclusions drawn will be applicable to the study of sports as the major form of entertainment in Western civilization, whether it be live performance or televised. This was once a position unique to the theatre, then later to drama on film, on the radio, and finally on television. With the dominance of television in our society, sports has rocketed to the forefront as our main form of entertainment. Sports has benefited the most from the advent of television to enhance its dramatic qualities. Not only are the most watched programs those of sporting events (i.e., Super Bowls, World Series, and accompanying playoff games), but live performance attendance of sporting events far outweighs the attendance of live theatre.

Therefore, this thesis may be applied to research concerning the phenomenon of sports as the predominant choice of entertainment, live performance and televised, in our society today.

Chapter 2 will discuss the properties that are similar between ice hockey and theatre. The significance and commonality of these common denominators will form the foundation of the thesis.

Chapter 3 will be devoted to applying ice hockey to Aristotle's Poetics. The Poetics have been applied to most facets of theatre and is arguably considered the litmus test for works of theatre and poetry. The durability of The Poetics is testament to its importance to theatre and gives it the strength to hold up under this unorthodox comparison. The common denominators listed in Chapter 2 will serve as points of reference for this analysis.

Chapter 4 will explore the applicability of Antonin Artaud's theory of theatre to ice hockey. In particular, Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" theory will be applied to ice hockey. Perhaps more than any other theory of theatre, Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" runs concurrent with sports, especially the intensity, excitement, emotion, and violence of ice hockey. Artaud wrote that his "Theatre of Cruelty" would occur by "providing the spectator with the true sources of his dreams, in which his taste for crime, his erotic obsessions, his savagery, his illusions, his utopian ideals, even his

cannibalism, would surge forth.”⁷

Chapter 5 will discuss Robert Cohen’s notion of the relationship between sports and theatre, applied to ice hockey as the particular sport. Cohen approaches the subject in a modern sensibility that is developed in conjunction with the manners and mores of our society. This is important because Aristotle’s Poetics was written for literary works centuries ago. Also, Artaud’s “Theatre of Cruelty,” although radical and thought-provoking, lacks a wide applicability to the general society of the 1930’s or the 1990’s.

Chapter 6 will bring together the data gathered in the previous four chapters in order to draw a final conclusion. The theatrical elements inherent to ice hockey, derived from ice hockey’s application to the previously mentioned theories of theatre, will show the sport of ice hockey to be an active form of theatre, thus signifying the relationship between sports and theatre.

⁷ Cohen, 287.

CHAPTER 2

Similar Properties of Theatre and Ice Hockey

To begin an examination of the relationship between theatre and ice hockey, a foundation must be built from which the analysis will ensue. The most apparent similarity between these two forms of action is that they are both popular forms of entertainment. Both disciplines are dependent on an audience for emotional responses as well as financial support. However, on closer inspection there are other properties that each share in their structure and in their significance to our society.

For purposes of clarity, the following table will list properties that are similar or have a similar function between theatre and ice hockey:

Table 1
Similar Properties Between Theatre and Ice Hockey

Ice Hockey	Theatre
Performance of a team	Performance of a cast
Instructed by a coach	Instructed by a director
Aided by assistant coaches	Aided by assistant directors, designers, and choreographers
Athletes <i>play</i> in a game (also known as players)	Actors perform in a <i>play</i> (also known as players)
Players wear uniforms	Actors wear costumes
Most games are in the evening	Most plays are in the evening
Played in a specially designed arena on a specifically designed surface	Performed in a specially designed arena on a specifically designed set
Players often become celebrities as well as actors after their athletic careers end	Actors often become celebrities
Action is governed by rules	Action is governed by a script
Players play a specific position	Actors play a specific character
Organized sports began in Greece	Theatre began in Greece
Athletic teams practice	Plays are rehearsed
Use of scripted plays and improv- isational plays during a game	Use of a script and set blocking as well as improvisational movement and dialogue

Table 1 (continued)

Ice Hockey	Theatre
Conventions accepted by the audience	Conventions accepted by the audience
Ephemeral aspect of a time limited game	Ephemeral aspect of a scripted play
Danger of the unknown in a spontaneous set of actions	Danger of the unknown in a live performance
Element of transcendence	Element of transcendence

This table list properties similar between theatre and ice hockey. Most of them are self-explanatory. However, there are some that need further examination. The similarities of conventions will be discussed in the next chapter in conjunction with Aristotle's Poetics. The concept of "play" in theatre and ice hockey will be further explored in chapter 5 since this is also an aspect of Robert Cohen's theory of the relationship between theatre and sports. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to examining the aspects of teamwork, role-playing, ephemerality, transcendence, and audience relationship. There are, of course, dissimilarities between theatre and ice hockey. Throughout this thesis, where appropriate in specific comparisons, the

dissimilarities will be discussed.

Teamwork in ice hockey, as in any sport, is not an unfamiliar term. The concept of teamwork in theatre is equally as important, but is not always given equal importance. As illustrated in the preceding table, theatre shares much of the same qualities as ice hockey, or any other team sport. Therefore the concept of teamwork in theatre is not so strange.

Theatre has always been a collaborative art form, therefore lending itself nicely to the concept of teamwork. Through the chain of command from producer to director to designer to actor, etc., the collaboration of a team working towards achieving a single goal is clearly evident. As Augusto Boal of the Arena Theatre in Sao Paulo, Brazil discovered in 1966, "Theatre performed by a team: a new concept."¹ This concept, however, is not as much new as newly identified. If the aforementioned components of a theatrical production can't meld their ideas, efforts, and goals into a consistent finished product, then they haven't achieved their main objective. On stage the actors must perform like a team. All persons must know their roles so well that they move, speak, and react in accordance with

¹ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (New York: Urizen Books, 1979), 160.

the other people on stage. Similarly, the player on an ice hockey team must be in the correct position at the right instance in order to coincide with their teammates. In both cases, the proper execution of all components is much like a choreographed dance.

Also fundamental to teamwork is trust. The athlete must have trust in his coach to lead him in the right direction through training, strategy, and play calling. The athlete must also trust his teammates to execute at the right moment their specific roles and assignments. Conversely, the actor must trust his director's knowledge and instincts to lead him and his fellow actors along the right path. The actor must also trust the other actors on stage with him to be where they're supposed to be and say what they're supposed to say at the precise moments.

Another similar aspect that theatre and ice hockey share is the bond that develops as a result of teamwork and trust. These bonds are very strong and therefore very difficult to break. As a result, many rituals exist to further strengthen these bonds. These rituals may include socializing, secrets known only to the team, superstitions, customs, and ceremonies. In the theatre some of the many rituals include wishing someone to "break a leg," not mentioning "The

Scottish Play” by its given title, the ritual used in case of an inadvertent mention of this play, never wishing someone “good luck,” and avoiding wearing the color green on stage.

Hockey players are no less superstitious. For good luck, the goaltender always leads a team out of the locker room. It is also good luck to tap a goaltender’s leg pads with your stick before a game. Ice hockey also possesses one of the most bizarre, and often harrowing, bonding rituals in existence. It is a tradition (now fading) where the rookies of a team are tied down naked on a training table by the veterans. They are then shaved with the dulllest possible razor from head to toe, not leaving a single follicle untouched. Although precarious at times, this ritual has ushered in many a new member of ice hockey teams.

These rituals and superstitions that enhance the camaraderie of actors and athletes are common denominators that theatre and ice hockey share. They are further strengthened by a body of ethics that governs each discipline. In theatre, an actor is always prepared with his lines, blocking, etc. He never deliberately steps on another actors lines or upstages another actor. Actors never give each other notes on how to improve their performance. In hockey, opponents are never

allowed to physically encroach a goaltender. Teammates stick up for one another physically and emotionally. Teammates never criticize each other or their coaches. These types of ethical behaviors build and strengthen the trust, camaraderie, and teamwork that develops between athletes and actors.

Another quality shared by theatre and ice hockey is that of role-playing. In theatre an actor, obviously, plays a role, impersonates another person (his or her character). Whether it be Hamlet in Hamlet, or a waiter in Hello Dolly, the actor is playing a role. The term “role” refers not only to the character in a play, but also the function that that character serves in the total context of the play: the plot, themes, and structure of the play as well as in relation to the other characters in the play. The actor also plays the role of the actor. He must learn his craft, audition for roles, learn characters, work with directors and other actors, find outside work when necessary, and deal with celebrity should it find him.

The hockey player is not much different. Although he doesn't impersonate anyone, he does participate in role-playing. In a game he plays a particular position that requires him to perform certain actions at certain times, meanwhile working in collaboration with his

teammates to achieve their common goal. The hockey player also plays the *role* of hockey player. He must learn the necessary skills, tryout for teams (or get drafted), work with coaches and other players towards a common end, find outside work when necessary, and deal with celebrity should it find him. In addition, the persona of the on-ice hockey player may differ significantly from his persona off of the ice. Chris Chelios of the Chicago Blackhawks, considered very aggressive, and often dirty, exemplifies this fact, "Reading about how I'm a dirty player is one thing, but when it gets personal and starts to affect (wife) Tracee, it's not right ... I'd like to have a reputation as a good person, the kind who is good to people and they're good back to you. Off the ice, that is."²

The concept of role-playing shows again the parallel between the life of the actor and the life of the athlete. Although team oriented disciplines, the individual is responsible for much of his training and development of skills in professions where success is never guaranteed, and when achieved is often fleeting.

The aspect of ephemerality affects both theatre and ice hockey. Ephemerality is the concept of an action or set of actions that are

² Jay Greenberg, "Daddy Dearest," *Sports Illustrated*, 8 Jan. 1990: 36-39.

short-lived or constrained by a particular time frame. Within this time frame goals are either achieved or not. Ephemerality can also determine events whose outcome will forever change the way that event is judged or viewed. However, ephemerality doesn't have to cause any grand changes or provide any new standards for a particular action, it may just be a guide for which an action must gauge itself. If the championship winning goal is scored with one second remaining in a hockey game, then the ephemeral has significantly increased the dramatic intensity and value of that particular hockey game. If the winning goal was scored with fifteen minutes left in the game, or the score is very lopsided, then the ephemeral has had little effect on that particular game.

The average ice hockey game lasts between two and a half and three hours. The average play lasts about two to three hours. In that short time span, the entire event is carried out. The careers of all involved can change forever in those few short hours. In a few short hours, Laurence Olivier set the standard from which all Hamlets will be judged. February 22, 1980 will always be remembered as the day the U.S. Olympic hockey team defeated the Soviet team at the Lake Placid Olympics. Even briefer moments can be equally everlasting:

The rousing finale of A Chorus Line, or Bobby Orr's diving goal that gave the Boston Bruins the Stanley Cup in 1970.

The actor and hockey player share the ability to make moments that can change lives and leave indelible impressions and memories on those who witness them.

Transcendence can be a rather mystical term, yet it is a quality shared by theatre and ice hockey that is perhaps their most significant common denominator. In theatre, the ability to create "magic" through the audience's suspension of disbelief, is a goal sought by most directors. Aside from the conventions of theatre that audiences will accept, the production must go a step further in order to transcend themselves beyond audience expectations. Through creative direction, acting, and technical effects, theatre has the ability to transcend itself beyond audience expectation into the realm of what was previously thought to be unattainable. Spectators may walk out of a production feeling as if they have been voyeurs to an actual slice of life, or of a world known only to the participants and confines of that production. In essence, if a spectator feels they have been physically and emotionally a part of an event that was beyond any previous experience or expectation. Thus, the transcendence into the magical

or mystical: that which previously was thought to be aesthetically unattainable.

In ice hockey, as in all sports, we find this same transcendence. The ability of players like Wayne Gretzky allow them to enter this mystical realm; to surpass what previously was thought to be unattainable (such as his 215 points in a single season). The term “he rose to the occasion” is often used in sports to describe an athlete who has surpassed the expected limits in a given situation and overcome the obstacles he faces. It can also be said that he transcended the previous expectations allowing him to achieve his goal. An entire game can also transcend previous expectations. Spectators can feel that they have physically and emotionally been a part of a particular game that surpassed any previous beliefs or expectations. An example is the 1987 final round playoff game between the New York Islanders and the Washington Capitals. The game went into four overtime periods lasting over six hours until Islander Pat LaFontaine scored the winning goal at 8:47 of the fourth overtime. For the players and spectators alike, the game transcended their evening and the game to a shared event that exceeded any previous experience or expectation. It was perhaps best exemplified by the sound technicians of the Capital

Centre where the game was played: they continued to play a tape of the theme from The Twilight Zone during stoppages in play throughout the multiple overtime periods.

Dissimilarities Between Theatre and Ice Hockey

The only disparity here is that in theatre the obstacles and final goals are predetermined, whereas in ice hockey, the obstacles and final goal are undetermined at the beginning. This disparity puts theatre at the disadvantage for this comparison. Theatre has the burden of having to achieve transcendence with the audience, in many cases, knowing the results of the play (Hamlet will always die at the end). Theatre must concern itself with keeping a production of Hamlet, and its foregone conclusion, entertaining, moving, and interesting for the audience. This is where theatre transcends itself. When Olivier played Hamlet, it was considered by many to be the greatest modern performance of Shakespeare's most popular character. Yet, how was Olivier able to accomplish this feat in a 400 year old play, which nearly everyone knows? It can be said that Olivier transcended the expectations of those who saw his performance. Through his

intellectual interpretation and physical execution of the role, Olivier was able to achieve a level of performance of Hamlet that was previously thought by most to be unattainable. Therefore, theatre must concern itself with achieving transcendence during the process without relying on the final result.

This is where theatre's advantage in this comparison comes in to play. The theatre may use every technological and artistic tool at its hands to go beyond previous expectations. Even though Hamlet will surely die at the end, the process that works towards that end can be as spectacular as is humanly possible. Many plays would lack the dramatic impact they possess if it were not for spectacular and innovative sets by designers such as Jo Mielziner, Joseph Svoboda, and Ming Cho Lee. In fact, many plays (usually musicals such as Starlight Express) rely on this advantage to be the strength of the production. Ice hockey teams, however, can't rely on smoke machines, strobe lights, and taped thunder storms to help them achieve transcendence or their final goal of victory.

Many of the common denominators discussed have shared a common thread: audience relationship. This is an aspect that is as equally important to theatre as it is to sports. In theory, the actions of

theatre and ice hockey can occur, but their success and ability to continue is dependent on an audience.

The importance of an audience is not a concept new to the twentieth century. The rituals of sport and theatre in ancient Greece were attended by the masses. And they weren't passive onlookers. The spectator then, and now, has been a measure by which performers judge themselves. The spectator also serves to stimulate and intimidate the performers. The fact that in sports the home team usually wins is support for this theory. Overall, teams tend to have a much better record at home than they do on the road. Taking into account travel time, changes in time zones, staying and eating in hotels, being away from families, and facing hostile spectators, it is no wonder that teams tend to not fare well on the road. Home teams also have an advantage in that they can be motivated by the reactions of the audience. A team may play better as a result of the vocal support given by their home fans. This reaction by the spectators is also a reward for performing well or winning. Athletes know that if they score, make the "big play," and win, they will be serenaded with cheers and accolades from their fans. If they lose and play poorly, the athletes know they will be inflicted with boos and harsh insults from

their “fans.” Any athlete who’s been in a slump can testify to this fact. Positive audience reaction can give a team the added motivation to succeed and maintain the momentum of the game in their favor. Conversely, a visiting team will get no vocal reinforcement for scoring, playing well, or winning. They must rely on their own motivations to win while not allowing the home team’s spectators to inhibit their performance. Since sports rely on psychological motivations, this can be a very difficult task for visiting teams.

In theatre, the success of a production is often gauged by the audience’s reactions, or lack of reactions. A good actor is always aware of his audience. An actor can instinctively tell if an audience is enjoying a performance or not. Obviously in a comedy the tell-tale sign is if the audience is laughing or to what degree they are laughing. In a drama it is a little more difficult to gauge, but is still possible. The sounds of people shifting continually in their seats, the rustling of programs, and hushed conversations are all signs of a bored audience. Empty seats after intermission is another sure fire sign that the production is lacking. However, an audience in a drama that is quiet, save an occasional vocal reaction in support of the action on stage, is a sign of an audience that is enjoying and is involved in the play.

Aside from the financial aspects, it is possible to have theatre or a sporting event without an audience. However, this is a very shortsighted argument. There is a certain joy for the actor and the athlete to perform the skills they have refined and honed over the years. But, this joy is greatly increased if they are allowed to exhibit these skills in front of an audience. As Christopher Lasch noted in a 1977 article:

The attainment of certain skills unavoidably gives rise to an urge to show them off ... the performer wishes to ratify a supremely difficult accomplishment, to give pleasure, to forge a bond between himself and his audience, a shared appreciation of a ritual executed not only flawlessly, but with much feeling and a sense of style and proportion.³

The experience of sharing with an audience has been with the theatre and sports since the early Greeks. George Herbert Mead added that, “to have a satisfying self is to receive a sense of satisfaction from significant other people who observe our activity.”⁴

³ Christopher Lasch, “The Corruption of Sports,” New York Review of Books, 28 April 1977: 24-25.

⁴ Donald W. Calhoun, Sport, Culture, and Personality (Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., 1987), 326.

What changes the importance and degree of actors' or athletes' self-realization, their awareness of themselves as performers and public figures, in the twentieth century is the magnification of the electronic media. The athlete and the actor are now faced with an audience that sees almost every professional move that they make, as well as much of their personal lives. Therefore, the actor and athlete of today, in addition to an audience, has a public. Although the performer (athlete or actor), doesn't hear from the spectator in front of the television or the movie screen, he will experience a reaction of the culmination of the spectator's opinions if and when the spectator views the performer in person. Lasch goes a step further:

...the modern sport audience, mainly composed of men who took part in sport as boys 'and thus acquired a sense of the game and the capacity to make discriminating judgments,' are a more trustworthy judge of quality than are the viewers of drama, dance, and painting, for which skilled amateurs make up only a small part of the audience.⁵

Lasch makes a valid argument. However, the issue of sports fans' fickleness must be confronted. It is no secret that everyone loves a winner. Yet few sports fans will refrain from making their displeasure known when "their team" fails to perform up to their

⁵ Calhoun, 326.

expectations, whereas in the theatre the spectator is far less likely to make his displeasure so widely known. The most common form of protest of the theatre spectator is to get up and leave the theatre, often at intermission so as not to disturb other spectators or the performance. Yet the sports spectator rarely leaves the game out of disgust (usually its to avoid post-game traffic). Instead, he will stay to the end, all the while booing and verbally haranguing "his team." The worst of these type of spectators are the "blues" who follow the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden. The term blues refers to the color of the seats high up in the Garden that these boisterous fans inhabit. The blues are not only vulgar at times, but also cruel. When the Philadelphia Flyers play at the Garden, Flyer goaltender Ron Hextall is often serenaded with, "Buy a Porsche, buy a Porsche!"⁶ Hextall's predecessor, Pelle Lindbergh, was killed when his Porsche lost control and hit a concrete wall in 1986. Each of the 48 blue sections in the Garden has its own cheerleader who will organize a chant, often containing profanity, which will then be taken up by all of the blues sections until the cacophony permeates the arena. This type

⁶ George Plimpton, "The Wild Blue Yonder; Off We Go Into the Raffish Aerie of New York Ranger Fans Known as the Blues," *Sports Illustrated*, 3 April 1989: 65.

of tribal ritual chanting is a throwback to the Greek ancestors of sport and drama.

Up until now these two disciplines have shared the need for an audience for intrinsically the same reasons. Now, however, there is a disparity in spectator behavior. The cause of this disparity has to do with emotional attachment. The theatre spectator is rarely emotionally attached to a particular play or production company. At the most, he may be emotionally attached to a particular actor (or actress), thus being a “fan” of that performer.

If an individual’s favorite play is Hamlet, and he attends a poor production of it, although disappointed, he is not likely to make his displeasure widely known. At most, assuming average intelligence and social acumen, he will leave at intermission. He will do this with the logical assumption that the next production of Hamlet he attends will be better. The spectator is likely to have the same reaction and response if he goes to the theatre to see his favorite actor.

Conversely though, the sports spectator is emotionally attached to “his team” because they are his favorite team, of which his favorite player is a part, performing in the only possible season (production). Therefore, the sports fan has all of his allegiances attached to one unit:

his favorite team isn't going to have all new players next game, nor will his favorite player most likely be on a new team next game, nor will the season (production) start over next month because his team isn't playing well. Just as a parent will reprimand a misbehaving child that he loves, the sport fan will chastise the team he is emotionally attached to.

Despite this disparity, theatre and sports share an intrinsic need for an audience. The performers need an audience to show off their talents and achievements as individuals and as a team. It is the satisfying response from other people that give the performer his self-realization, his identity as a performer and a public figure. Like a mirror, it is through the audience that the performer sees himself achieve and excel. Former New York Ranger Dave Maloney observed, "There's not too many other sports (ice hockey) or jobs where you can feel an integral part of the end result and get recognized as the person. The supposed adulation you're receiving, well, we all have a bit of ham in us."⁷

⁷ Larry Sloman, *Thin Ice. A Season in Hell With The New York Rangers* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1982), 67.

CHAPTER 3

Aristotle's Poetics

For centuries, theatre scholars have sought methods of analyzing theatre and its components in order to develop standards of structure and definition. The list of components deduced from Aristotle's Poetics has served as, arguably, the foundational method of analyzing theatre. Through the years, scholars have applied these elements to all facets of theatre. Aristotle listed the elements of plot, character, theme, language, music, and spectacle as the components that constituted a tragedy (meaning a serious play). In addition to these six elements, Aristotle's implied element of convention will be added in order to have a complete standard by which theatre is defined.

This thesis will examine the concurrent relationship between theatre and ice hockey through an exploration of their similarities. For the purposes of this thesis, ice hockey will be applied to Aristotle's elements to show the concurrent relationship between theatre and sports. Equally important, as will be examined, are the conventions of ice hockey and theatre.

The first element to be discussed is plot. Plot, of course, refers

to the sequence of events of a play, the entrances, exists, relationships, actions, behaviors, and communications that take place in order to tell the story. When applied to ice hockey, plot will refer to the structure and sequence of events of the game as a theatrical event.

The structure of ice hockey, including its rules and format, can be considered its plot. The game is divided into three, twenty minute periods (not unlike acts in a play). Each team has approximately 18 to 20 players on the bench with six players on the ice (unless a team is short-handed due to a penalty). The object of the game is to score goals by hitting the puck into the opposing teams net. The team with the most goals at the end of the game is the winner.

This is a very simplified description of the game. It is the basic skeleton (or plot-line) that each game of hockey follows. Within this basic framework are varied situations that give the game texture and uniqueness. A six month run of Romeo and Juliet will basically be the same, although each individual performance of the play will differ due to the nature of live performance: a situation where the fortuitous can and will occur.

The components of logic and suspense are the foundation of plot. In ice hockey, teams will follow a logical pattern of events.

Coaches set up game plans the same way playwrights construct scenes, acts, and entire plays. A team that is offensively strong will attack with little regard for their own defense. A defensively oriented team will use a strategy that accommodates that attribute. Teams on a power play (having a one or two player advantage due to a penalty to the opposing team) will play an aggressively offensive style, whereas the short-handed team will maintain a strictly defensive posture. At the late stages of a game, the team that is behind will often play its best players the majority of the time since they are the most likely to score.

Matching lines is another important strategy in hockey. Coaches will try to match specific players against other specific players in order to gain an advantage in skill or to counteract the other teams advantage in skill. If team A puts out its highest scoring line, team B will most likely put out its best checking line, that is, the line that is defensively the best they have. Players will also try to exploit injured players of opposing teams. It is a rule of thumb that a hockey player rarely goes on the ice with visible stitches, as this is an open invitation to have them removed by an opponent's stick. Hockey teams are also noted for carrying players on their rosters for the sole purpose of

fighting with and intimidating opposing players. These types of players are also used to protect and police their more skilled teammates from this same type of intimidation from opposing teams. These are all examples of how logic permeates a game of ice hockey. They are plausible and accepted events that follow a particular pattern, although, like in theatre, there are occasions when a team will abandon logic for the element of surprise or of the unexpected.

The inherent suspense in ice hockey is always, who will win? As a game progresses, clues as to who the victor will be, unfold. Just as in the best murder mystery, the winner often isn't known until the last moments of the game. A property unique to ice hockey is that of a tie game. The National Hockey League allows for a five minute sudden death overtime period for regular season games. During playoffs, teams tied at the end of regulation time, play 20 minute periods of sudden death overtime until someone scores. Sudden death overtime itself is an element of suspense unlike any other in sports. Like the final fight scenes in many of Shakespeare's tragedies, sudden death overtime embodies the atmosphere of a do or die situation. The only difference is that Hamlet always dies at the end, but the victor in a sudden death hockey game isn't known until the decisive goal is

scored. This, then, heightens the element of suspense in ice hockey.

Therefore, plot is an integral element in the sport of ice hockey. Through its rules and game format, hockey embodies the major elements of plot: logic and suspense. Intrigue is an element of plot structure that is widely used in theatre. Audiences often ask themselves, “what is going to happen next?” or “what does that mean?” In a hockey game audiences are constantly faced with the question, “what is going to happen next?” Because of the unknown outcome of a hockey game, the level of intrigue is extremely high. Audience’s of a hockey game may also ask “what does that mean?” As a reaction to events during the game that are unique to every given situation, audience’s will react to and question the significance of these events to further events, as well as to the outcome of the game. Intrigue can also follow aspects of the game as a whole. When Wayne Gretzky was traded from the Edmonton Oilers to the Los Angeles Kings, the intrigue was, “what effect will Gretzky’s leaving the Oilers have on their success and the success of the Kings?” The answer to this question will take years to analyze, and may still never fully be answered. Similarly, why Hamlet behaves the way he does may also never fully be understood.

The characters of a play are, along with the plot, the most important elements integral to its success. The characters are the physical beings that carry out the actions of the plot. All actors bring a part of their personality to the characters they portray. Therefore, each time Hamlet is brought to life by an actor, that Hamlet will be different from any other Hamlet ever created. It is the influence of personality that keeps 400 year old plays fresh and interesting. The Aristotelian element of character also embodies the concept of role-playing, as discussed in Chapter 2.

In applying the element of character to ice hockey, the reference is to the hockey player. A hockey player is a character in the sense that he plays a designated position with a specific role within that position. In certain given situations, the position a hockey player plays determines the actions he takes as dictated by the rules of the game and the strategy of the coach. Similarly, the character an actor plays in a play requires him to perform certain actions in certain given situations as dictated by the script and the direction of the director.

In addition, the hockey player, like the actor, infuses his own personality into the role, or position, he plays. Wayne Gretzky of the

Los Angeles Kings brings the elements of grace and beauty to his game. He also plays the role of scorer with the temperament and actions of a gentleman: never physical, always willing to walk away from a fight, rarely argumentative. Conversely, Bob Probert of the Detroit Red Wings, brings the traits of aggression and violence to his game. Although a skillful player, Probert is equally comfortable playing a physically aggressive game; including the instigation of fighting without hesitation.

Although both forwards, Gretzky and Probert bring vastly different facets of their personalities to the role of hockey player. As a result, coaches use them in different situations and fans perceive them with differing attitudes. Similarly, if every Hamlet was portrayed the same, the play would not continue to remain popular. Also, if every ice hockey player played his position in the same way, the game would lack popularity and success.

The facet of character that theatre is very strong in is the element of psychological depth. Characters in plays are developed with emotional depth with which an audience can empathize. Characters are often developed with the same complexity as real people. Audiences may care about characters for whom they feel the

emotions of love, hate, sympathy, lust, etc.

Spectators of hockey games certainly feel emotion for the players on the ice. However, this emotion lacks depth or complexity. The usual emotions entail approval (sometimes even idolization), for players on a spectator's favorite team. These same spectators will also feel dislike (occasionally hatred in extreme cases) for players on opposing teams. These emotions are very superficial and based solely on individual alliances. Very often a spectator will change his emotion concerning a particular player if that player is traded to or from another team. Emotions felt for an athlete may be so superficial that they exist only as long as that athlete is on a spectator's favorite team. However, emotions for an athlete, or actor, may become obsessive to the point that they greatly overshadow the work and accomplishments of the performers.

Perhaps the most difficult of the Aristotelian elements applied to ice hockey is that of theme. Used in a theatrical context, themes are often considered the most abstracted element of a play. When compared to a sport, that abstraction becomes intensified.

Theme usually refers to the message a play is trying to get across to the audience. There is no law that says a play must have a

definite theme. A case in point is any number of frothy Broadway musicals (e.g., 42nd Street, My One and Only, etc.). Although financially successful, these musicals' strongest suit is their entertainment value.

This is also sport's strongest suit. No ice hockey game is going to leave a spectator with a message concerning life or the values we hold dear in our society. Sports provide a pure form of entertainment. It has been extremely successful. While 18,000 people may view one National Hockey League game, 500 may view a performance of the Broadway revival of Tennessee William's Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

Although ice hockey doesn't deliver an important message or make a strong statement about something, it nonetheless provides great entertainment. This is also the main contribution of many plays. Therefore, the thematic content of hockey is its tremendous ability to entertain, as attested to by the attendance figures of the sport, in particular, the National Hockey League.

Spoken language is the primary medium through which the message of a play is delivered to an audience. Whether it be poetry or prose, the language allows the characters to introduce themselves and

execute the action of the plot. Language in theatre also refers to the clarity with which it is spoken.

Ice hockey also is dependent on language. Although its importance isn't as significant as it is in theatre, it still exists. The language of ice hockey, though known to all who follow the game, is vital only to those directly involved with the action of the game. In other words, the audience may understand the language, but they don't need to hear the language being communicated by the coaches, players, referees, or announcers to understand or enjoy the game in progress. This, of course, is not the case in theatre, except for mime or dance performances or plays that are supported by sign language.

The language of ice hockey consists of words and phrases that define the rules and elements of the game. Words and phrases like puck, icing, power play, short handed, crease, blue line, off sides, roughing, high sticking, cross checking, hat trick, slashing, 5-minute major, etc. all have specific meanings and particular usages in the course of a game. Many of the terms are unique to hockey. Others, though familiar sounding, have different meanings in the context of a hockey game. In addition, many of the terms used in hockey are accompanied by hand and arm signals that further express and define

the language of ice hockey. It is through this language that a hockey game may take place.

It is possible to have a hockey game without using this spoken language, provided the players, coaches, officials, and spectators know and understand the language. The same occurs in theatre in the form of mime and dance. The terms and definitions are known to the participants and spectators of mime and dance, but those forms of theatre occur without actively using spoken language. Through expression of action this can occur. The dancer or the mime can physically express their character and plot without spoken language. The hockey player is also able to physically express himself and the action of the game without spoken language.

Aristotle's element of music, consisting of the entire sonic effects of a play, is still very prevalent in theatre. Having developed from the Greek dithyramb, music (excluding the obvious use in musicals) is used to underscore the atmosphere, mood, and emotional quality of a play. An example of the use of music in a theatrical event was for the film, Jaws. Within a very short period of time audiences became conditioned to associate the first strains of music with the fear of another impending shark attack, without even seeing the shark.

Sounds can also carry the rhythm and emotion of a play: screams, gunshots, car horn, footsteps, etc.

Music and sound are also used to heighten the atmosphere and emotion of a hockey game. Recorded music, usually a rousing rock and roll beat, will usher the home team onto the ice for the pregame warmups. During stoppages of play, the arena's organ will pound out hand-clapping, foot-stomping tunes in order to arouse the audience into creating additional vocal support for the home team. Also, during the intermissions, videotaped montages of spectacular plays and crushing hits set to music always gets the spectators in a raucous mood that will often spill on to the ice. Music in hockey is also used to comment on the action. If the referee makes a questionable call against the home team, the organist will often play the theme song of "The Mickey Mouse Club." If a player on the visiting team is called for a penalty, he is often serenaded with a few bars from a children's song. During and after fights, the Rocky theme song is very popular with audiences.

Audiences are also known to revert to their Greek ancestors and the dithyramb. During the waning moments a game, when the eventual winner is evident, audiences will often break into an a capella

version of “Na na na na, hey hey hey, goodbye!”

Sound is also very important in hockey. The sounds of skate blades cutting across the ice, wooden sticks slapping at the hard rubber puck, bodies being slammed into the boards all give the game of ice hockey its texture. The frequency and volume of these sounds dictate the atmosphere and emotion in the arena. The unmistakable “ping” of the puck hitting the pipe or crossbar of the goal is sure to produce a vocal reaction from the audience that is a mixture of relief and frustration.

One use of music in ice hockey is the playing and/or singing of the National Anthem (including the Canadian National Anthem if one or both teams is from Canada). For the greatest audience participation and response, live performers will sing the National Anthem. For even more excitement and spectacle, celebrity recording artists will perform this ritual.

Spectacle is the sixth Aristotelian element. In theatre, spectacle refers to the visual aspects of a play: costumes, lights, make-up, scenery, props, special effects, entrances, exits, and movements of the actors, the overall visual look of the theatre and the stage. These elements are used to enhance the mood and atmosphere of a play.

They may be as simple as Laura playing with her glass animals in Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie, or as grandiose as the set and rollerskating actors of Starlight Express.

Spectacle also exists in ice hockey: lights, colorful uniforms, the glistening ice, flags and banners. Again, as in theatre spectacle refers to the visual element of ice hockey. As the audience sits in relative darkness, the ice surface is illuminated with bright lights, juxtaposing the colorful uniforms against the milky white of the ice. For Wayne Gretzky's first game as a Los Angeles King in 1988, his introduction at the beginning of the game was punctuated by him being, in true dramatic fashion, introduced last. With all the lights off, save a single spotlight on Gretzky, he made his way onto the ice accompanied by thunderous applause and majestic music underscoring the entire action. As National Hockey League president John Ziegler stated, "That's part of the game we sell. Call it the field of thunder, the crashing of bodies, the sound of the skates. It's part of the spectacle."

The Montreal Forum is considered the Mecca of ice hockey. A visitor there is witness to 22 Stanley Cup banners hanging from the ceiling. They represent not only a record in professional ice hockey,

¹ Craig Wolff, "Entertainment on Thin Ice," The New York Times, 10 March 1987: B13.

but also a record of the most championships of any professional sports team. In addition, effigies of the retired sweaters (ice hockey nomenclature for jerseys) of the greats of the Montreal Canadiens hang in revered tribute. It is a spectacular sight for hockey fans and also many players. Many players have complained about playing in the Forum because they say they must compete with the ghosts of past Canadien glories. In reality it is more likely a case of intimidation caused by the history of the Forum in connection with the spectacle of the banners and retired sweaters.

Theatre has one advantage over ice hockey in regard to spectacle. Theatre has the luxury of being able to create a variety of spectacle than can be created in hockey. Hockey is a slave to uniformity and consistency. Hockey rinks must all look, more or less, the same. Teams have different uniforms, but each team only has two, a home and an away. Lighting must remain constant during the course of the game. Special effects are limited to before the game and whatever creative messages can be displayed on the electronic scoreboards.

Theatre, on the other hand, has a virtual free reign with spectacle. Hamlet can be staged on a bare stage with minimal lighting

and costumes. It can also be staged on a 21st century stage with chrome and glass scenery, neon plastic and spandex costumes, and lighting punctuated with lasers.

However used, spectacle is an element of theatre, and to a limited degree, of ice hockey. If this thesis were to delve into television, ice hockey would certainly have a greater impact with spectacle than theatre. Through the use of pregame promotion, or hype, announcers and commentators, replay and slow motion photography, and other technological advances, ice hockey is able to create spectacle for the enhancement of the game.

The live action of ice hockey is a significant aspect of its spectacle. Because hockey possesses the element of the unknown ending and an unknown sequence of events, it increases the emotional intensity of the performance. This increased emotional intensity and involvement enhances the spectacle because the audience is acutely focused on the action and the accompanying aspects of it, especially the visual and aural aspects of the game.

An implied Aristotelian element, convention is the final component to be examined in this chapter. Theatrical conventions are agreements between the audience and the production company as to

what are the acceptable givens of a play. These givens range from an audience's suspension of disbelief to the curtain rising to signify the beginning of a play and the lowering of the curtain to signify the end of a play. These conventions become second nature to audiences as they allow for the play to proceed smoothly.

The sport of ice hockey also has its conventions. Audiences of ice hockey accept evening games, with an occasional matinee, as do theatre patrons. Players and spectators accept the convention of the referee being the governing body of a game. Other conventions include the structure and rules of the game, the fact that spectators don't inhabit the space of the players or the action of the game, and the horn signifying the end of periods. When a hockey player scores three goals in a game (known as a hat trick), members of the audience throw their hats on to the ice in tribute to this accomplishment.

Since hockey is a form of entertainment, it contains some of the same conventions as theatre regarding audience conduct and understanding: applauding points of strong approval, laughing at humorous occurrences, utterances of surprise at corresponding instances, the raising of the house lights indicating intermission, respect for fellow spectators, and the acceptance of the end of the

performance (in hockey when time has run out, and in theatre when the written play is ended and the actors have made their curtain call).

The biggest difference in theatre and hockey conventions is that in hockey it is acceptable for spectators to vocally comment on the action during the game. Although sometimes annoying to other spectators, audience members of hockey games may yell comments to the players and coaches of both teams without being ostracized or asked to leave the arena (provided the comments tend to exclude vulgarity). One acceptable occurrence of these vocal outbursts in western theatre is in melodrama theatre.

It appears clear that, with some minor differences, Aristotle's Poetics may be applied to ice hockey. Hockey was found to have a plot and characters. In fact, the plot in ice hockey is enhanced because the outcome of a game is not known until the conclusion of that game. However, theatre is stronger with the element of character since most theatrical characters have more depth and complexity than those characters defined in ice hockey.

Theme was the weakest application of ice hockey. Hockey games rarely make a statement nor do they deliver a deep or thought provoking message to the audience. They do, however, provide a

form of entertainment to far more people than does theatre. The attempt to entertain is an aspect of most theatre, and the only aspect in some theatre. Therefore, hockey's ability to possess a version of a theme, the ability to entertain, runs concurrent with Aristotle's element of theme. The only statement that ice hockey is trying to make is that it is providing entertainment for the masses, thus declaring its thematic purpose.

Language and music are also integral elements of ice hockey. The sport of hockey has its own language for the execution of the game and its rules. Like theatre, hockey isn't solely dependent on spoken language, but it does exist. Although the execution of a game of hockey isn't dependent on the active use of spoken language, the players, coaches, officials, and spectators must be cognizant of that language and its definitions in order for the game to be played.

Music is used to underscore atmosphere and emotion in theatre and in ice hockey. Sounds are also important aspects of enhancing the mood and intensity of theatre and ice hockey. Music is a close, strong Aristotelian element that theatre and ice hockey share.

Spectacle, or the visual aspects of a performance, are evident in theatre and in ice hockey. Theatre, has a slight advantage with

spectacle in that it knows very few limits, while hockey must obey certain visual standards in every game played. The spectacle in hockey is heightened by its inherent aspect of the unknown ending and unknown sequence of events. This element of the unknown adds to the emotional intensity of the game. In turn, this intensity further increases the spectator's acute awareness of the visual and aural aspects of the game.

Theatre and ice hockey share many of the same conventions, especially those concerning audience behavior. A glaring difference is that hockey spectators have the social right to yell at the players, coaches, and referees positively and negatively, often within the boundaries of good taste.

CHAPTER 4

Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty

Far from the theories of Aristotle, Antonin Artaud declared that theatre “... is, like the plague, a social necessity.”¹ Although not a plague, the same can be said of sport's niche in society. While sports are certainly entertaining, as is theatre, they have grown to encompass a vital part of society's needs. Sports fans flock to stadiums and arenas all year long, often braving extreme weather conditions, lengthy traffic delays, and prohibitive prices for tickets, food, and parking. For the less adventurous spectator, the dedication is equally intense. People plan their days around watching sporting events on television. The changing seasons once referred to climatic shifts, around which planting crops, preparing the house, and changing a wardrobe were the natural responses. Today, the changing seasons signify a shift from baseball to football to hockey to basketball. The natural responses now are where to get tickets, which channels and cable networks are providing the best coverage, and how to plan our weekly and weekend schedules around events such as Monday Night

¹ Albert Bernel, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1977), 19.

Football.

Artaud said that theatre was a necessity not just for the avid theatregoers, but also for the general public. It was for the masses that Artaud formulated his “Theatre of Cruelty.” Although this term created a lot of criticism, Artaud stuck by it and defended it with ardor. He often used terms such as “terror, violence, and danger,”² to supplement his theory. He felt people ignored the theatre because it failed to satisfy their basic desires and fears. Artaud claimed that “Audiences turned to films, the circus, spectator sports, and newspaper calamities and disasters for their violent satisfactions.”³

Artaud felt that ordinary plays, especially “the great works,” should be abolished. He thought language should be struck from the theatre. Instead, Artaud wanted plays that relied on every imaginable visual and sonic effect that could be incorporated. He envisaged actors in colorful costumes and grotesque masks, bathed in the spectrum of light, yielding moans, groans, and cries while underscored by music. All of this was to be an ever-changing process within the rhythmical patterns set by the sounds and movements of the

² Bermel, 22.

³ Bermel, 22.

actors, lighting, scenery, and music. Many of Artaud's ideas were inspired by the Oriental and Balinese theatres.

Artaud felt that culture wasn't learned, but was rather manifested inside of the individual, much like an internal organ. Further, he thought that civilization was a monster because it was a regulated system that forced people to adhere to signs, forms, and regulations. Artaud saw the theatre as an outlet for repression, using primal human actions like gestures, screams, sounds in conjunction with light and darkness to renew man's sense of life.

Applying Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" to ice hockey begins to draw its own parallels. Ice hockey, like many popular sports, captures the attention of the masses to the point of addiction. It is a sport which, perhaps more than any other, is often described as violent and dangerous. If the general public, as Artaud claims, wants to satisfy its violent desires, sport, especially ice hockey is a natural solution.

Artaud stated:

The actor is like the physical athlete, but with this surprising difference: his affective organism is analogous to the organism of the athlete, is parallel to it, as if it were its double, although not acting upon the same plane.

The actor is an athlete of the heart.

⁴ Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1958), 133.

Artaud bridges the gap between theatre and sports by comparing the actor and the athlete. Much of what he says coincides with the listing of common denominators in Chapter 2. In further narrowing the parallel between theatre and sports, Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty," where violence, danger, and the spectator's desire for these elements is of paramount importance, manifests itself in ice hockey. Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" also "works on the nerves and senses, rather than on the intellect, and ... impinges on anxieties common to all men ..."⁵ Although a good part of ice hockey, and every other sport, depends on an intellectual understanding of the game and its strategies, much of the initial response of players and spectators is generated on the nerves and the senses.

Artaud makes an exception to his parallel of the actor and the athlete: "... in breathing, for example, the actor's body is supported by his breath whereas the physical athlete's breath is supported by his body."⁶ But he fails to draw yet another parallel to strengthen his theory. Artaud claims that "What the athlete depends upon in running

⁵ Bermel, 23.

⁶ Artaud, 133.

is what the actor depends upon in shouting a passionate curse, but the actor's course is altogether interior."⁷ This statement could have the modern athlete, and actor, furious. As was discussed in Chapter 1, the athlete of today is faced with complex game plans, designed plays, and strategies for every conceivable situation. Artaud is amiss in his own theory of discounting the intellectual necessity and ability of the athlete. Equally worth mentioning is the physical nature of acting. Some of the greatest roles ever written put great physical demands on the actor. But again, the actor must intellectually analyze these physical demands. The best parallel to draw from this is that the actor and athlete, regardless of the physical, emotional, or intellectual demands, relies on *passion* to achieve the objective.

Another aspect of Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" was his attempt to induce on the audience, through theatrical cruelty, a state of violence, and then expel it.⁸ This idea was developed much in the same way that ancient psychomedical practices "exorcised" evil spirits from individuals suffering from epilepsy or hysteria. Ice hockey, through its violent nature, has often created feelings of violence in the

⁷ Artaud, 133.

⁸ Bermel, 39.

audience. At times this state of violence in the audience has caused fights between spectators as well as fights between spectators and the players. These cases have been documented numerous times at all levels of the game. The problem that arises is how is this level of violence quelled?

Artaud thought that, through his unique visual and aural approach to theatre, that he could punish the audience by exposing them to danger, evil, and ugliness, then, by the same means, free them from it so that each spectator would feel cleansed of evil and terror, as if they had awakened from a nightmare.

However, there is no evidence of Artaud's ability to achieve a level of violence in an audience and then expel it from them. Chris Hanson, vice president of event operations for Madison Square Garden, said the idea is to "Keep the excitement level of the crowd up, but not to a frenzy-high pitch." Ice hockey is able to discharge a high level of violence in the audience through rational means: the expulsion of spectators by security or law enforcement officials and the expulsion of players by the on-ice officials.

One final quality that ice hockey shares with Artaud's theory is

^o Wolff, B13.

the proximity of the spectator to the action. Audience members encircle the ice rink, with seats inches away from the action, separated only by a pane of plexiglass. Enthused spectators are able to shout both accolades and aspersions while pounding the glass with their fists. Like the Romans at the Coliseum cheering and jeering the battles of the gladiators, hockey audiences surround the furious action and become a part of its intensity, excitement, and sometimes, violence. This is exactly what Artaud was trying to achieve with his theatre of cruelty. As he stated, "I have tried by all available means to place the audience in the midst of the action."¹⁰

Artaud's theatre of cruelty not only dealt with themes of violence, but he wanted to diminish the aspect of dialogue in plays. Instead of words, Artaud felt plays should consist of

cries, groans, apparitions, surprises, theatricalities, of all kinds, magic beauty of costumes taken from certain ritual models; resplendent lighting, ... physical rhythm of movements whose crescendo and decrescendo will accord exactly with the pulsation of familiar movements, ... evocative gestures ... excited pounding out of rhythms and sounds, ... all the lapses of mind and tongue, by which are revealed what might be called the impotences of speech.¹¹

¹⁰ Bermel, 86.

¹¹ Cohen, 287.

Although ice hockey lacks high degrees of theatricalities in the form of special effects, especially lighting which was very important to Artaud, it still possesses much of what Artaud is speaking of in the above quote. The connection between “cries, groans, surprises, beauty of costumes,” etc. are obvious. The most significant correlation between hockey and Artaud’s vision is the importance of the rhythm of movement and sound. Despite its violent nature, ice hockey is a sport of continuous movement. Because it is played on ice, that movement is fast, fluid, and graceful. It is a style of movement unique to itself. When juxtaposed with the aggressive and often violent aspects of the sport, often due to the speed of the game, the rhythms of the movements are constantly changing from crescendo to decrescendo and back again. Although the majority of the movements are familiar to the experienced spectator, they continue to elicit focus and excitement.

The sounds of hockey are also rhythmical and distinctive, especially when combined with the visual. The action and rhythm of hockey can be gauged by just the sonic aspects of the game. But when combined with the visual action and rhythm, the sport is viewed at its

highest level. Skates cutting into the ice, wooden sticks slapping at the frozen rubber puck, bodies slamming into the fiberglass boards, are sounds unique to ice hockey and have a captivating rhythm equally unique. The “excited pounding out” of these rhythms and sounds in ice hockey further exemplify Artaud’s “Theatre of Cruelty” theory. An apt Artaudian example is that of Washington Capital fan, Charlie Hodge. Hodge is a Washington attorney who has been blind since birth. A season ticket for over 15 years, Hodge listens to and creates a picture of the game in his head, “I visualize the game. I’m familiar with the equipment. I know the size of the rink ... The thing about hockey, because of its speed, because of its brute force, the crowd really gets into the game. There are great cheers and oohs and aahs when a player is sideswiped or knocked off his skates. And hockey fans are rabid -- they’re like South American soccer fans.”¹²

Although ice hockey, as discussed in Chapter 3, has its own language, it isn’t reliant on it as are many other sports. Artaud felt theatre should be presented the same way. A game of ice hockey may be played completely without the use of spoken language. By merely

¹² Sue Anne Pressley, “A Hockey Fan’s Truly Personal Viewpoint,” *The Washington Post*, 24 March 1989: A1.

watching the action of the game, understanding the rules and the gestures that the officials use to control the game, a game of hockey may occur.

Artaud's ideas have proved to be more theoretical than practical. Although important, his theories have never truly found their place on the stage. As societies become more tolerant and directors more brave, his theories may find some success on the stage. Until then, the sport of ice hockey is a superior popular activity for witnessing many of Artaud's ideas about a "Theatre of Cruelty."

As a final note of clarification, the sport of ice hockey is not engulfed with violence. Although American television has painted a picture of violence in hockey, it is by no means the central aspect of the game. Hockey is fast and aggressive. There are no out of bounds. Therefore, with twelve bodies skating at upwards of 40 miles per hour in every direction on an enclosed area, carrying a potentially lethal weapon, shooting the puck at 100 miles per hour plus, emotions and tempers are bound to run high. But hockey is also a sport of beauty. The grace and finesse of skating many players possess is often breathtaking to watch. Combine this with its brute force and the potential for violence, is what, perhaps, makes ice hockey such a

popular and successful sport. A 1984 reader poll conducted by The Hockey News discovered that 67% of those responding felt that the level of violence in hockey was acceptable, and 62.5% said they didn't feel that fighting should be banned.¹³ As Artaud said, "Without an element of cruelty at the root of every performance, the theatre is not possible."¹⁴ This is also true of hockey.

¹³ Robert Creamer, "Not So Violent Opinions," Sports Illustrated, 3 Sept. 1984: 10.

¹⁴ Cohen, 287.

Chapter 5

Cohen's Notion of "Play"

Robert Cohen develops his notion of the relationship between sports and theatre by first examining the dual meaning of *play*. "Play" is the term used to describe the main product of the theatre. Hamlet is a *play*. "Play" is also used to describe participation in a sporting event or game. Wayne Gretzky *plays* hockey. He points out that this linguistic duality exists in French, German, Latin, and, of course, English. From this duality, Cohen deduces that, "This association points to a relationship that is fundamental to the understanding of theatre: theatre *is* a kind of game."¹

Cohen goes on to draw a historical parallel between theatre and sports. Beginning with the Greek Dionysian and Olympic festivals, through the Roman circuses, and the Elizabethan theatre that contained plays and animal baiting spectacles, Cohen concludes with the domination of sports and dramatizations on television today. He next explores the phenomenon of celebrity shared by professional actors and athletes, to the degree, he points out, that many retired

¹ Cohen, 12-13.

sports heroes have begun second careers as actors. One such case is that of former Dallas Cowboy Harvey Martin. Since retiring from football, Martin has had supporting roles in several movies and has performed in stage productions of Damn Yankees and The Odd Couple. Says Martin of his two careers:

I sort of got hooked on the stage because you have to be so prepared to do a play. It reminds me of football, because the pressure is always there to perform, and you get instant fan gratification. If you do your lines right on the stage, they laugh; when I played football, if you made a good tackle they applauded. The comparison is strange. A lot of people wouldn't think of it like that, but that's the way I see it.²

Cohen believes this connection begins at childhood where its formed, " ... in 'child's play,' which usually manifests both game-like and drama-like aspects."³ As we grow into adulthood, Cohen points out that this relationship still exists. He cites the tremendous participation of adults in amateur sports and theatre, regardless of the fact that neither activity offers any remuneration beyond personal satisfaction. He explains that,

Both sports and theatricals offer splendid opportunities for intense physical involvement, competition, self-expression, and emotional engagement--and all within limits set by precise

² Phil Barber, "The Write Stuff," Gameday, 26 Nov. 1989: 4A.

³ Cohen, 13.

and sensible rules. What is more, both can generate an audience because the energies and passions they project are rarely expressed so openly in daily life beyond the playgrounds of childhood.⁴

Cohen brings his theory full circle by discussing the idea that persons that spend their lives in the theatre or in sports are often considered, “child-like--or, more pejoratively, as immature and irresponsible--for their ‘playing’ evokes myriad memories of youth.”⁵

Finally, Cohen draws a distinction between theatre and sports by pointing out that theatre is a calculated act, where every part of the act is determined before it is begun. Sports, however, are open-ended activities where all parts of the act are not predetermined. As he concludes, “The Yankees may not win the World Series this year, but Hamlet definitely will die in the fifth act.”⁶

Ice hockey, as well as the aforementioned sports of baseball and football, fits Cohen’s ideas. The application of one particular sport is not the focus of Cohen’s theory, but rather the relationship between sports and theatre in general is his main focus. However, for the

⁴ Cohen, 14.

⁵ Cohen, 14.

⁶ Cohen, 14.

purposes of this thesis, a direct application of ice hockey to Cohen's theory will be conducted.

Although ice hockey doesn't share the overall television exposure of football, baseball, and basketball, it does have a very strong market in Canada and the Northeastern United States. However, hockey's popularity is becoming wider throughout the U.S.

With Wayne Gretzky, arguably the game's best player of all time, playing in Los Angeles and the development of an expansion team in the Bay Area in the Fall of 1991, television coverage of the sport has, and will, increase dramatically over the next few years. Therefore, with these two large markets, hockey will gain a higher share in the dominance of televised sports.

The crossover effect of celebrity is no stranger to hockey than it is to any other sport. Just like famous actors or actresses, athletes are subjected to the joys and sorrows of celebrity. Their pictures are plastered all over magazines, newspapers, and television, fans constantly hound them for autographs, personal mementos, or just a moment of their lives that they can share with their fans. Athletes are idolized for their "greater-than-life" achievements on the playing field, just as actors are idolized for their "greater-than-life"

achievements on the stage or screen. As former Montreal Canadien Ken Dryden reflected, “We are celebrities. Like actors, musicians, politicians, writers, famous people, we are common threads between husbands and wives, parents and kids, friends ... And we love it. We say we don’t, but we do.”⁷

In addition, celebrity carries with it special privileges. In his book, The Game, Ken Dryden talks of never having to wait in line at the bank because of his star status as Montreal’s premiere goaltender, “For the tellers and me, it has become routine and normal. They treat me the way they think people like me expect to be treated. And I accept.”⁸

Some special privileges carry even heavier weight. Three members of the Washington Capitals hockey team were accused of having sexual relations with a minor in the back of a limousine during the playoffs in the Spring of 1990. Although their celebrity caused wide publication of the alleged event, it also provided them with protection from the media by their team and the support of their fans, the vast majority of whom have never met the players in question.

⁷ Ken Dryden, The Game (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 159.

⁸ Dryden, 158.

The issue is not a question of guilty or not guilty. The issue is that of the privilege of celebrity. A Superior Court grand jury declined to file charges against any of the players. Most of the attempted coverage had been suppressed by the Capital's organization. After the grand jury's decision, the Capitals issued a statement regarding the incident, "Although there was no criminal activity involved in this incident, we realize there has been substantial damage to the image of the Washington Capital's organization within the community."⁹ It is often a situation where a celebrity, involved in a legal matter, has the proceedings diverted around his playing or performing schedule. Meanwhile, the average person is faced with the near impossible task of even postponing jury duty.

Cohen also discusses the development of "play" in early childhood as a precursor toward a relationship between sports and theatre. This is certainly reasonable and rational, but it can go even farther. In childhood, as this experimentation with "play" takes place, so does the foundation of learning to follow the rules take place.

When children begin to play sports, in addition to learning the fundamentals of the particular game, the rules are also learned so that

⁹ "No Charges for 3 Capitals," New York Times, 30 June 1990: 15.

the game may be played correctly. Through the adherence of these rules, children develop their sense of “play.” They learn that if they violate the rules, they will no longer be able to “play.” This would ostracize them from the structured group activity. This then transcends itself to the child’s ability to function in society. In conjunction with theatre, as the child learns the rules of “play,” he also learns and develops his ability to role-play. Whether through games like hide-and-seek, “house,” or ice hockey, the child learns how to play a particular role in a given situation and relate that role to roles being played by other children.

Through “play” and into organized sports, children get their first exposure of spectacle. Young athletes quickly learn the inherent drama of sports. They also become aware of the environment in which they play: the boundaries of the playing area and its relation to the audience. In their colorful uniforms (costumes), they are a part, through their actions, of the spectacle of play. They are they functionaries of the game, the only ones able to execute its format, rules, and strategies. They also have the ability to dictate the emotions and reactions of their audience. A child in theatre also becomes aware of these same abilities and their results, although a child’s

performance, regardless of its brilliance, can't usually change the scripted result of a play.

As adults we transcend what we learned as children into, if not professions as actors or athletes, amateur forms of "play." Community theatres and amateur sports leagues are prevalent throughout North America. Organizations like the San Jose Civic Light Opera, with the largest subscription base for civic light opera companies in the nation, while employing some equity actors, uses upwards of 50 or more amateur community players (A 1982 production of Anything Goes boasted "100 tapping feet on stage at one time!"). The largest amateur hockey league in North America is Hockey North America, based in Fairfax, Virginia. Hockey North America has approximately 900 teams in the United States and Canada, with each team consisting of approximately eighteen players, male and female. The strong amateur following of theatre and sports can be attributed to their common attributes: competition, teamwork, physical and emotional action, self-expression, self-satisfaction, performance in front of and approval by an audience, the pure enjoyment of participating in the activity, and, as Cohen states, "within

limits set by precise and sensible rules.”¹⁰ A condition learned as children at “play.”

Cohen remarks on the child-like label that is often placed on professional actors and athletes. Cohen attributes this factor back to his theory of “play” and the connotations of youthful behavior it elicits. There is some truth to his stance, but it goes even further. The phenomenon of celebrity is also an equal cause. Actors and athletes who have achieved celebrity status, as discussed earlier, aren’t subjected to the norms of behavior that the rest of society must abide by. Because of the public’s idolization of them, celebrities are allowed to deviate from the norms, within reason, as long as they continue to perform at the level society has become accustomed to.

Conversely, celebrities’ lives are under constant scrutiny and magnification. Virtually every action they make is reported and commented on by somebody. Montreal may will be the most hockey oriented city in the world. Former Canadien defenseman Chris Chelios described its importance:

The obsession here with the Canadiens is unbelievable. I’m at a red light one day, and I see this drunk stagger, fall and cut his head open on the cement. I get out of the car and help the guy up. He opens his eyes, looks at me

¹⁰ Cohen, 14.

and says, 'Chelios!' I mean, holy smokes, *everybody* knows you.¹¹

If the average person behaves in an immature way, it rarely goes beyond the notice of those closest to him. But if a celebrity acts immaturity, it becomes headline news. As Washington Capital Dino Ciccarelli commented regarding his alleged sexual incident, "Everybody makes mistakes, but as pro athletes we're different. People look up to us and when we do wrong the incident becomes highly-publicized."¹²

The next question that arises is who is to blame for this type of behavior. It is rather one-sided to label professional actors and athletes as child-like or immature because of their chosen professions. The phenomenon of celebrity is a state that the general public has created and imposed on actors and athletes. With it comes ideas of invincibility and immunity that are subjected on the celebrities by society, yet society reserves the right to pass judgment on the celebrities they have created. Perhaps it is a burden, to coexist with the privileges and sacrifices that celebrity brings to actors and

¹¹ Greenberg, 37.

¹² Stan Fischler, "Ciccarelli Puts Image on the (Phone) Line," The Hockey News, 28 September 1990: 9.

athletes.

Finally, Cohen draws a distinction between theatre and sports. He states that theatre, from beginning to end, is a calculated act, whereas sport is, from beginning to end, an open-ended act. This appears to be a strong and prevalent distinction between theatre and sports. Nevertheless, according to Cohen, the root of the relationship between theatre and sports is the duality of *play*. Academy Award winning actress Joanne Woodward is in accord, “When you’re studying acting, and you’re trying to put an actor at risk, never forget the word *play* -- play with me. It’s a play. The essence of being an actor is being able to play.”¹³

¹³ Dotson Rader, “Why Paul Newman Came Back Home,” *Parade*, 28 October 1990: 5.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Ice hockey and theatre are two popular forms of entertainment in this country. Apart from that, they are rarely considered in the same thought. Upon closer examination though, they have much more in common than is at first apparent.

In order to draw specific parallels between them, three very different theories of theatre were applied to ice hockey: Aristotle's Poetics, Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" theory, and Robert Cohen's ideas of the relationship between play and sports. Each of these theories is from a different period of theatre history as well as having different perspectives on theatre and its components.

The elements of Aristotle's Poetics: plot, character, theme, language, music, and spectacle were applied to ice hockey. In addition, also applied was Aristotle's implied element of convention. Summarily, ice hockey adapted very well to Aristotle's Poetics. The structure of the game was defined under the element of plot, sharing many of the same qualities of theatrical plots such as logic and suspense. Character was also readily applicable, except that it was

shown that theatrical characters possess the ability for greater depth and psychological complexity.

Theme was the most difficult element to apply to ice hockey. The game lacks the ability to deliver a message or statement to an audience, except under rare circumstances. The closest quality to theme that hockey possesses is its entertainment value. All sports are entertaining; that is their goal, or message, if you will. As National Hockey League president John Ziegler stated, "What matters to me is providing a product that people enjoy and want to go see ... because I am in the entertainment business, and the measure to me is, are people going to see this entertainment? And they are saying yes to it ..."¹ Although entertainment is also an important aspect of theatre, it is not generally considered a theme in the context that Aristotle defined theme. However, one of the foremost goals of hockey, and of a lot of theatre, is to entertain its audiences. In that respect, entertainment is the major theme of hockey, as opposed to a "statement" or "message" that is normally associated with theme.

Ice hockey was discussed as having its own language. This language uses words, phrases, and gestures that are unique to the

¹ Steve Wulf, "That's Entertainment?," *Sports Illustrated*, 25 May 1987: 17.

game. Like theatre, hockey is dependent on the understanding of this language, but as in dance and mime, the action of the game isn't reliant on the actual use of the spoken language.

Music is a very important part of hockey. As in theatre, it is used to create atmosphere in the arena as well as comment on the action. In the same category, sound is also an integral and unique aspect of hockey. More closely related to Aristotle's idea of music is the rhythm of sounds that underscore and reinforce the action, reminiscent of the choral chants in ancient Greek theatre. Testament of this was the blind fan who creates pictures of the game and its texture in his mind, based on the sounds of the game and descriptions of other spectators.

Spectacle is apparent in sports and in theatre. Sport relies on the dramatic function of the unknown ending to enhance its spectacle. Also important to hockey are the visual and aural elements of the game. The speed at which the game is played, the brute force of the action, and the often violent nature of the game add to its visual spectacle. Theatre has an advantage with spectacle because it possesses the flexibility to use lighting, sets, costumes, sound, and music to their fullest technological abilities, whereas in hockey, the game is

constrained by rules and conventions that focus on the action of the game as the central aspect.

Finally, convention was applied to ice hockey. Audiences are acclimated to conventions in theatre just as they are in hockey. It is through the use and acceptance of these conventions that the actions of theatre and ice hockey may exist. Without them, both activities may be so disjointed as to prohibit their execution. If theatre patrons failed to stop talking once the house lights go down and the curtain is raised, the performance of the production would be difficult. Similarly, if hockey spectators failed to refrain from walking on to the ice, the game would be disrupted to the possible point of permanent interruption.

The application of the Aristotelian elements to ice hockey proved the sport possesses many of the same qualities as theatre. Many of the same criteria by which theatre is studied, are readily applicable to hockey. The only Aristotelian element that is somewhat weak is theme. However, when the aspect of entertainment, the main goal of hockey as a professional sport, is considered, the thematic implications are justified. This is particularly true when the importance of entertainment in theatre is considered.

Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" theory was then applied to ice hockey. Artaud felt that theatre should provide the spectator with his need for violence, savagery, crime, eroticism, and illusions. Artaud also stressed the importance of the visual and aural, as opposed to the dependence on language for theatre to succeed. He felt that the "Sensational (as in sensory) aspects of sonic vibrations and visual extravagance continually assaulting all the senses"² should dominate the action of theatre.

Ice hockey is a sport very adaptable to Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty." Certainly one of the most prevalent aspects of the sport is its violent tendencies. The popularity of hockey and its violent nature is evident in the attendance figures that grow annually as well as the N.H.L.'s willingness to promote fighting and violence to sell tickets. Games on television are often promoted with ads like, "Tune in for another Patrick Division brawl as the Rangers battle Philadelphia."³

Further testament to Artaud's theory is the popularity of videotapes that feature nothing but hockey fights. They can be rented or bought from video stores or by mail order. Although there has

² Cohen, 287-288.

³ Douglas S. Looney, "Fight Promoters," *Sports Illustrated*, 25 March 1985: 14.

been some public outcry against this type of glorification of violence, the N.H.L. has done nothing to curb it. It's not just the violence of fighting that attracts spectators to hockey. More so it is the aspect of hard hitting being an integral and legal part of the game. The N.H.L. readily promotes the sales and rentals of videotapes showing "Hockey's Greatest or Hardest Hits."

Artaud would also be pleased with the sensory aspect of hockey. It is a sport that, although it has its own language, is dramatically heightened by its visual and aural aspects: the speed of the skating, the velocity at which the puck is shot, the sound of crashing bodies against the fiberglass boards, and the enthusiasm of the audience's reactions. These are truly the spectacle of ice hockey.

Finally, Robert Cohen's ideas of the relationship between play and sports was explored. Cohen traces the relationship of sports and theatre back to their concurrent inceptions in ancient Greece. The foundation of Cohen's ideas is based on the element of "play" in both disciplines. Cohen believes that we learn the elements of play and the dual purpose of it as children. Applying ice hockey to Cohen's ideas works as well as any other sport since it is the main function of the theory: the relationship between sports and theatre.

Cohen also explores other similar avenues between sports and theatre. One of the most important is the phenomenon of celebrity. Celebrity status reaches a pinnacle with athletes and actors. This phenomenon is not lost on hockey.

Celebrity also brings privileges and sacrifices to those that acquire it. Cohen describes the label of immature and irresponsible that often is attached to professional athletes and actors. Again, this appears to be another result of celebrity that society imposes on actors and athletes.

Cohen makes a final distinction between theatre and sports. He points out that theatre is a predetermined action with a preordained ending, whereas sports are open-ended from beginning to end. This was also the most prevalent disparity found between theatre and hockey.

It can be said that sport, in the specific case of this thesis, ice hockey, is an active form of theatre. Ice hockey maintains many of the same qualities of theatre as proven through comparison and applicability of theatre theories. If the analysis doesn't always fit perfectly, there are also many forms of theatre that don't fit into these theories perfectly either.

Based on these conclusions, further research may be conducted exploring this relationship with other sports and different disciplines of theatre. Another important aspect is the dominance in television of sports and dramatic programming. That in itself is the foundation for further study, particularly examining the sociological connotations. Finally, perhaps the theatre world can learn from the sporting world how to recapture the dominance of spectacle and mass appeal. As John Lahr commented:

Theatre cannot compete with the ritual experiences of sports spectacle ... theatre has lost its sense of ritual and forgotten how to deal with primal impulses. Too often our theatre is overly polite and self-conscious. It rarely understands the spectacle it offers and how to capitalize on the forms of pleasure which feed its audience's 'collective unconscious.'⁴

⁴ Lahr, *Astonish Me. Adventures in Contemporary Theatre*, 35.

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