

SPORT, MEDIA, AND THE EROTIC

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No Pain, No Gain: Antonin Artaud's "Theater of Cruelty" and the Spectacle of Modern Sport

Why does modern sport remain so popular, despite the presence of pampered athletes with outrageous salaries, rapacious owners and poor management, violence in sport, stadium conflicts, and doping? What are the characteristics of modern sport that enable sport contests to continue to attract such large audiences? A possible answer may lie in the theoretical writings of the French actor, writer, and thinker Antonin Artaud (1896-1938). In his capacity as a leading figure in avant-garde theater, film, and theory, Artaud articulated some of the most revolutionary and far-reaching criticism of theater, art, and society of his (or any) generation. Among his most influential works is a 1932 essay, "The Theater of Cruelty." In a brief but sustained attack on contemporary drama Artaud called for a re-making and revitalizing of the theater and its place in the public consciousness. The product, Artaud argued, of a transformation of dramatic technique and practice would be a theater that developed a new "language" capable of, "utilizing the nervous magnetism of man, to transgress the ordinary limits of art and speech, in order to actively, that is magically, in real terms, [produce] a kind of total creation in which man can only resume his place between dreams and events." That is, through an art of the body theater could produce something akin to "magical" or transcendent experience. Could sport be the realization and manifestation of Artaud's theory?

To answer these questions I will employ video clips and analysis of American and European football (soccer) and their presentation and coverage by the media. I will also briefly survey other theoretical efforts to understand and interpret sport through the use of performance theory-paying special attention to "classical" theories derived from the tragic drama of the ancient Greeks. Using Artaud's theories as developed in the "Theater of Cruelty" and other writings, I will then argue that modern sport indeed manifests many of the characteristics Artaud identified and

promoted. Further, the insights Artaud presented may help explain the continued enthusiasm for sport demonstrated by people throughout the world. The paper will offer insights into how performance theory may be productively used to evaluate and understand the development and trajectory of modern sport and, hopefully, raise further questions about the role and function of sport in modern societies and cultures.

Don Morrow

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Moaning, Shoveling and Reeling: An Analysis & Synthesis of Early 20th Century Canadian Sporting Journalism

This paper synthesizes research, presentations and publications the author has done over the past 10 years on specific sport journalists and their roles in promoting sport in Canada during the early twentieth century. The purpose of the paper is to examine the nature and function of sport journalism as it evolved between the two world wars. To date, no one has undertaken such a comprehensive analysis of sport journalism in Canada; this analysis is part of ongoing research into the form and function of sport journalism. The evidence used will be newspapers and popular magazines (such as MacLean's) printed and published primarily in central Canada. The argument is that journalists both shaped and reflected the development of sport during this period of time. Using content analysis, the paper will show journalists' roles in that and reflecting process in the context of the cultural and sporting times.

Amanda Schweinbenz

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Smile for the Camera: Media Feminization of Women Athletes at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles

This paper examines how newspaper coverage of the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles selectively reported on women athletes in ways that "feminized" them and thereby authorized their performance in events that otherwise might have been interpreted as too "masculine," given the social mores of the time. This coverage extended a news formula that had commenced in the