PLATFORM
*A Journal of Theatre and
Performing Arts*

COVER IMAGE
Eye-Height courtesy of Daniel Malhão

PlatForm

Journal of Theatre and Performing Arts

Transformations

This special edition of *Platform,* entitled *Transformations,* focuses on contemporary explorations of experimental methodologies and interdisciplinary challenges in arts research. It points to some key areas of change and evolution in twenty-first century performance practice and scholarship. As many of the contributions suggest, approaches to the arts in general and theatre in particular are in continuous need of re-evaluation against the backdrop of local and global concerns. Human behaviour changes with the cultural, political and sociological influences of the world in which we live. In this spirit, *Transformations* demonstrates the contributions practitioners and researchers can make to the understanding of diverse performance practices. At the same time, we are wary of totalizing claims about the characteristics of our globalized era. As such we hope that, without being prescriptive, this edition of *Platform* charts some of the potential for transformation our times offer the individual practitioner or theorist.

Identity politics are central to *Transformations*. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theories provide a through-line that unites some of the more disparate themes in this issue. Notions of deterritorialization and reterritorialization are significant in thinking about the ways in which identity and difference are displaced and reconciled within rapidly changing spaces. Embedded in these terms is the theoretically adjacent notion of nomadism – with its connotations of movement and settlement – reflected in papers which span, geographically, from Taiwan to France, and, thematically, from the witnessing of catastrophe to the interactions of moving bodies with scenographic objects. Deleuze and Guattari's work on minor literature also comes into play, giving weight to the identities produced by sub-cultures, and to the political significances inherent in marginalised cultural phenomena.

In this regard, Chih-Chieh Liu's investigation of the subversion of Korean music videos through online subtitling in Taiwan provides an excellent example of minor literature. By locating these (sub)cultural artefacts within their specific socio-cultural contexts, Liu shows how meanings can mutate across cultures to create laughter, and in doing so she calls linguistic and anthropological assumptions into question. Eugénie Pastor's contribution echoes this sense of movement across national and cultural zones. Pastor discusses the work of Escale, a travelling theatre company in France. Her difficulty in creating an analytical language for the interstitial space in which the company operates drives an inquiry into French and English conceptions of physical theatre, as well as into her positioning as a researcher between these academic traditions.

The human body becomes the transforming and transformed entity in our two practice as research papers: Stephen Robins's 'Real Beauty Doesn't Have to Try like That: How I Got to Transform Cost into Value' and Paul Hurley's 'When the Body Becomes Too Much: Writing on *Becoming-locust* and the Spectacle of Theory.' Robins documents a year-long project in which he attended the gym daily in order to attain a body that accords with a mainstream ideal of male beauty. An analysis of the production that arose from this project, *Coinage*, explores the relationship between politics, economics, and the body, linking Robins's subjectivity with local and global communities and events. Hurley explores the politics of becoming through the final performance of his becoming animal series: *Becoming-locust*. Harnessing concepts of the carnivalesque and abjection, as well as tropes from queer and gender theory, Hurley shows how his performance problematises identity and transforms the human subject. The article offers a comment on the ways in which performance art can simultaneously deconstruct and express queer or Othered subjectivities in a twenty-first century context.

Beatriz Cantinho's photo essay, '*Eye-Height*: A Project in Pictures,' also offers an insight into the ways in which the human body, and movement in particular, can be transformed. Cantinho and her production team created an instrumental stage – a scenographic / instrumental object which operates as a resonance box for choreographed performance. Cantinho's photographs provide a sense of the aesthetic and function of her research project, in which dancers' movements become sound, while their bodies interact simultaneously with the instrumental stage object, the off-stage musicians, and the sensory perspective of the

audience. Bringing objects to life is also a key concern of Little Bulb Theatre Company, who find great dramatic inspiration in the minutiae of everyday experiences. In interview, they discuss their creative process and ways in which tiny details can be transformed into meaning and emotion.

Clara Escoda's article represents, in some ways, a traditional textual analysis of Martin Crimp's adaptation of Chekov's *The Seagull*. Yet it touches, like so many of our other contributions, on changing understandings of subjectivity and the relationship between micro- and macropolitics. Escoda offers a close reading of Chekhov's character Nina and her speeches, with special attention to their importance as testimony within a shifting world order. Nina's speeches, Escoda argues, do not just attest to her personal romantic tragedy, but also encourage the audience to engage with the ethical demand that the Other makes upon us – thus making the personal political. A different approach to issues of suffering, language, and relationships can be found in the work of Christopher O'Shaughnessy, whose one act verse drama, *The Strokes*, explores the relationship of a mother and son following the mother's strokes, which leave both struggling to articulate and re-establish their lives.

If the contributions in this edition speak to specific instances of transformation and change within diverse twenty-first century contexts, it is fitting that there are transformations underway within *Platform* itself. As a partnership between *Platform* and the University of Surrey, this issue disseminates some of the findings presented during the *trans.form@work* symposium at the University of Surrey in March 2010. The two-day symposium was the culmination of the collaborative research training scheme, *Sharing Dance Research: Theory and Practice*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and co-organised by the University of Surrey, University of Chichester and Royal Holloway, University of London. A series of successful training seminars focusing on sharing, writing, disseminating and presenting research in dance and theatre were offered by Professor Rachel Fensham (Surrey), Professor Sarah Rubidge (Chichester), Professor Valerie Briginshaw (Chichester) and Dr Libby Worth (Royal Holloway) from 2007 to 2009. *Platform* is delighted to have been able to both draw on this forward-reaching work, and forge new collaborative links between Royal Holloway, Surrey and Chichester.

This collaboration has broadened the scope of the journal. Thus, we are delighted to welcome Lise Uytterhoeven as a guest

editor from Surrey whose work on the *trans.form@work* symposium has strengthened the interdisciplinary nature of this edition of *Platform*. In addition, Dan O'Gorman from the Royal Holloway Department of English has joined the editorial board for this issue. We hope to continue to foster links between the journal and other institutions and departments. Moreover, in our ongoing commitment to broadening our remit of contributions, this edition includes a photo essay, a piece of new dramatic writing, an interview with a dynamic fringe theatre company and two practice-as-research articles. Through these contributions we are furthering efforts to bridge the gap between theory and practice that can polarise our discipline. Lastly, with this, the eighth edition of *Platform*, we are pleased to offer print copies for the first time.

Mara Lockowandt and Emer O'Toole (Head Editors)
Lise Uytterhoeven (Guest Editor)
On behalf of all the Platform Editorial Board
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Note on Contributors

Sofia Apospori is currently a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research, which is supervised by Professor Helen Nicholson and advised by Dr. Colette Conroy, explores theatre for people with visual impairments. More specifically, it engages with the theoretical, aesthetic and ethical challenges that are implicated by the re-evaluation of performance space in reference to visual and non-visual perception respectively. Over the last two years, Sofia has been a visiting tutor in the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, teaching Writing and Performance and Staging Histories. She holds a BA in Drama and Theatre Studies and an MA in Theatre (Applied Drama), both of which were awarded by Royal Holloway, University of London.

Beatriz Cantinho is presently developing practice based research work as a PhD student in Dance/Philsophy at the Edinburgh College of Art. Her work focuses mainly on the mechanisms of image perception within aesthetics and performance art. The academic research as been presented at Edinburgh University, Chelsea College of Art, Cambridge University and the University of Surrey. Beatriz graduated from the Superior School of Dance at Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa. She took an intensive training course in Noh Theatre at the Kyoto Art Centre. She has completed a professional internship in the theatre company Royal de Luxe. Artistically for the past few years she has been developing work as a choreographer in projects such as *Parde2*, *Scch…Um Ensaio Sobre o Silêncio*, and *Peça Veloz Corpo Volátil*. She has also been involved in collaborative projects with artists from different disciplines with work that has been presented in Portugal, France, the UK, Germany, and Austria.

Clara Escoda is lecturer in the English literature section of the department of English and German, University of Barcelona. She graduated in 2002 from the University of Barcelona with a major in

English Studies, and in 2004 she completed an MA in the Humanities in Hood College (Maryland, USA), with a concentration on African American literature. She is currently completing her PhD thesis, entitled 'Collapse as Resistance in Martin Crimp's Theatre.' This paper is part of the research project 'The Politics of Representation and the Representation of Politics in Contemporary British Theatre from 1990 to the Present,' funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. Clara would like to thank her supervisor, Dr. Mireia Aragay, for her invaluable suggestions and comments on this research.

Nicholas Hamilton completed an MPHIL in Theatre and Performance at Trinity College Dublin, where his dissertation explored the representation of immigration in recent Irish drama. He is currently studying for an MA in Journalism at the University of Westminster, London. His work as a journalist has been published in a number of newspapers, magazines and websites, including The Irish Times and The Independent.

Shonagh Hill completed an MPHIL in Irish Theatre and Film at Trinity College Dublin and is in the final year of her doctorate in Drama Studies at Queen's University, Belfast. Her PhD research examines myths of femininity in work by Irish women playwrights of the twentieth and twenty first century, which employ mythic narratives. Shonagh has previously published with *Platform* and her article 'Articulating the Abject: Metamorphosis in Marina Carr's *The Mai'* appeared in *Staging Gender*(s) 4.1 (Spring): 2009.

Paul Hurley is a performance artist and independent scholar. Primarily working solo, and occasionally collaboratively, he has presented performance, video and photographic work in galleries, studios, theatres and public spaces in over ten countries. He was recently awarded his PhD ('Reconfiguring the Human: The Becoming-other of Performance') by the University of Bristol, supported by a collaborative AHRC Doctoral Award in partnership with The Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, where he is an Associate Artist.

Stella Keramida is currently investigating technology, theatrical aesthetics and the role of the theatre director for her PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London. She holds an MPHIL in Greek theatre and a BA in Theatre studies from the University of Athens. She has studied theatre at Utrecht University (The Netherlands)

and Performance, Film, Philosophy, Stage Management and Production at Yale University (USA). She has also taken courses in performance, film, philosophy, stage management and production at Yale University (USA). She also works as a theatre director, which informs her scholarship.

Chih-Chieh Liu is a PhD candidate in the Department of Dance, Film and Theatre, University of Surrey. Her research interests lie in Asian popular culture and translation theories with special focus on dance in Taiwanese music videos. She has presented her work at various conferences in the U.K., and is now completing her dissertation under the provisional title 'Performative Ambiguity: Corporeal Pun and the Process of Reinvention in Dance in Contemporary Taiwanese Music Videos.' Chih-Chieh would like to thank Mr. 'Long Hair' for his generosity in granting permission for the reproduction of the video images from his *YouTube* video 'That Banana.'

Eugénie Pastor graduated from Sorbonne University, Paris in 2008, with a Masters in Comparative Literature, focusing on the plays of Martin Crimp, Hubert Colas and Evguenii Grichkovets. She was a founding member of the Parisian performance company Teatro Armado. She is currently working on a PhD thesis exploring the relationship between space, movement and intimacy in physical performances, in both French and UK contexts. She is also an active member of Little Bulb Theatre Company, working on several of their performance projects and making music as part of the Little Bulb Band.

Christopher O'Shaughnessy was born in Exeter, Devon. He trained as a teacher in the sixties and followed this career until 2005. Upon retirement, Christopher rekindled his interest in writing for the stage and screen. He is currently completing an MA in Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. His scripts include *The Rowers* (2010) for Robert Poulters's Model Theatre, and *Goat Song* (2010) for the MA requirement. His verse plays are *The Poisoned Atmosphere* (2008) and *The Strokes* (2010). He has been offered a place on the PhD programme at the Department of Drama, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Emer O'Toole is a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research examines the ethics of collaboration, focusing in particular on rights of representation in intercultural

theatre practice; this work is supported by the Thomas Holloway scholarship. She teaches critical theories and contemporary theatremaking, and lectures on Pierre Bourdieu, phenomenology and postcolonialism. She is on the postgraduate committee of the Royal Holloway Postcolonial Research Group. She holds a MPHIL from Trinity College, Dublin and a BA from National University of Ireland, Galway.

Karen Quigley is a PhD candidate in the English Department of King's College London. Her research examines the idea of what it is to say that something is 'unstageable' in theatre and performance, questioning the implications of the word's historical and contemporary use. Karen is also the co-founder of Dropstitch Productions, a theatre and performance company exploring various aspects of the arts in/and healthcare. She holds a BA in Drama and Theatre Studies from Trinity College Dublin, an MA in Text and Performance Studies from King's College London and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and is an Associate of Trinity College London, holding a Diploma (Distinction) in Piano Performance.

Stephen Robins is an associate artist of The Arnolfini Gallery in Bristo. His practice incorporates research, teaching, collaboration and solo performance making. His practical work between 2006 and 2008 has been the focus of a PhD thesis which investigates the role of beauty and ugliness in live art. Stephen's performance work is characterised by humour, periods of stillness and physical endurance. Stephen has performed with La Pocha Nostra, Pearson /Brooks and for Anthony Howell.

From 'Sorry Sorry' to 'That Banana': the Subtitling of a Korean Music Video as a Site of Contestation in Taiwan

BY CHIH-CHIEH LIU

Abstract

Focusing on contemporary Taiwanese popular culture, this paper delineates how the subtitling of a Korean music video has become a battlefield on which meanings are poached through punning in the process of translation. It contextualises Korean popular culture as one of the dominant genres in Taiwan and introduces 'Sorry Sorry,' a chart topper by Super Junior. In the specific social, cultural, political and linguistic context of Taiwan, the intensive commercial promotion of 'Sorry Sorry' in mainstream media has led to fans making sense of the lyrics through a hybridising process of wordplay, resulting in a steadily increasing number of online 'fan videos' with alternative subtitling. Circulating through online video streaming websites, these fan videos testify to the fans' talents as what Henry Jenkins terms 'textual poachers.' Through this poaching process, in one of the most popular online examples, 'Sorry Sorry' is nonsensically mutated into 'That Banana.' Calling upon Walter Redfern's pun theory in tandem with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's notion of minor literature, I examine the linguistic mechanism involved in the mutating process as a springboard to re-articulate theories from anthropology, literary theory and music video studies in the age of the internet. This paper questions the idea of authorship in the age of the internet and points out how the grey area between anthropological definitions of translation and transcription has become an arena for utterance, allowing meanings in fan videos to be poached, negotiated and transformed.

Introduction

As an award-winning chart-topper across Asian countries, officially named in Taiwan as the most-viewed video on *YouTube* in 2009 (I-Ju, Chen), the popularity of 'Sorry Sorry' by Korean boy band Super Junior is a contemporary phenomenon in the landscape of Taiwanese popular culture. Intensive commercial promotion of the Korean song has excited its Chinese-speaking Taiwanese audiences to make sense of the lyrics through punning. This has resulted in the large number of 'fan videos' with nonsensical subtitling now widely circulated through online video-streaming websites, primarily *YouTube*. In the subtitling process, fans play the role of 'textual poachers' (Jenkins). The subtitling of 'Sorry Sorry' has become a battlefield on which jokes are created in the process of translation. Focusing on 'That Banana' (2009), one of the most popular online examples, with a viewing record of more than 1.6 million views on *YouTube*,[1] this article uses the linguistic mechanism involved in the mutating process as a springboard to re-articulate theories from anthropology, literary theory and music video studies in the age of the internet.

Framing 'Sorry Sorry' and 'That Banana' within the Field of Popular Culture in Contemporary Taiwan

Contemporary popular culture in East Asia testifies to the emergence of what Arjun Appadurai terms the transnational and ultra-regional cultural flow, which is the basic component of the new cultural topography: modernity. Appadurai distinguishes its five basic forms: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes (33-36). Based on Appadurai's theory of cultural flow, with a focus on mediascapes, Koichi Iwabuchi argues that since the early 1990s the globalisation process has been 'drastically intensifying the intraregional flows and connections' (*Cultures of Empire* 144) demonstrated in the rising Japanisation of East Asian popular culture during this period. The ascent of Japanese transnational cultural power is, to quote Iwabuchi, 'most conspicuously illustrated in the specific cultural geography of East and Southeast Asia' (*Recentering Globalization* 47). In the new millennium, the speed of the intensification of media flow has increased, creating a mediascape in which agents are 'more collaborative' and media flow is 'more multi-vectored'

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[1] The exact viewing record is 1,670,899 (Super Junior).

(*Cultures of Empire* 151). This is marked by a conspicuous development of the rise of Korean popular culture, which often surpasses the appeal of its Japanese counterpart (*Cultures of Empire* 152). The phenomenon whereby popular Korean cultural products such as film, television drama, and popular music are systematically imported into various Asian locations is identified by a newly-coined phrase: the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) (Iwabuchi; Shim; Shin).

According to Hyunjoon Shin, the period comprising the late 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century was one of globalisation for the Korean music industry. During this time, Korean pop stars transcended the national boundary to be launched onto a transnational stage (514). Iwabuchi argues that 'cross-national industry cooperation in promoting a mutual media culture in East Asian markets' (*Cultures of Empire* 148) has played a significant role in this development. The popularity of Korean stars is described in *Asia Times* as follows:

> teenagers from Tokyo to Taipei swoon over performers such as the singer Park Ji Yoon and the boy band Shinhwa, buying their CDs and posters and even learning Korean so that they can sing along in karaoke. […] 'Korea is like the next epicenter of pop culture in Asia', says Jessica Kam, the vice president for MTV Networks Asia. (qtd. in Shin 513)

Despite the rave reception of the Korean Wave in Asia, it has, due to ideological and political conflicts, encountered some negative backlash. With the increasing popularity of the Korean Wave, anti-Korean sentiments have developed in Taiwan, China and Japan. In Taiwan there are counter-discourses that 'militarise' the Korean Wave as an 'invasion' (Chua 110-1), while in 2006, China government officials raised concerns over the excessive media inflow of the Korean Wave (Chan 32). In Japan, a newly-coined term 'hating "the Korean Wave" (嫌韓流)' materialised through the publication of a controversial, yet commercially successful manga (Japanese comic book) in 2005, which depicted a nationalist and xenophobic antagonism in Japan towards the Korean Wave (Allen and Sakamoto). In the linguistic landscape of Taiwan, anti-Korean sentiments have resulted in sarcastic statements from the media, and in some cases the sense of ridicule

has been deepened through punning in pejorative terms (Chen and Chiang).[2]

Despite such antipathy towards Korea, Korean pop stars remain relatively well-received in Taiwan. Over the past few years, the landscape of the Korean Wave in Taiwan has been characterised by the rise of a new pop group comprising thirteen boys: Super Junior. Renamed from its forerunner Super Junior 05, the group made its debut in Korea in 2005. With several chart-topping singles and albums in Korea over the course of the following three years, Super Junior was successfully launched in other Asian countries, starting with Thailand and China in 2006, followed by Taiwan in 2007, and Japan in 2008. As well as from the familiarisation of Korean stars in a trans-Asian context since the rise of the Korean Wave, it may be argued that Super Junior's success has derived from careful marketing strategies that take local linguistic factors into account. Super Junior adopted the idea of subdivision to form sub-groups for different markets: Super Junior-M ('M' stands for Mandarin), for example, was devised especially for the Mandarin-speaking market (I, Chen). In Taiwan, Super Junior released two albums during the period from 2007 to 2008,[3] one of them in Mandarin, both well-received.[4] However, the group's biggest success came from their third complete album, *Sorry Sorry*. Released in 2009, it is Super Junior's best-selling album to date in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, China and the Philippines. Its title track is credited as 'one of Asia's most popular songs' (Park). In Taiwan, where, as a result of cultural policy during the post-war era (Taylor 69), Mandarin pop as a genre dominates the landscape of popular culture, the popularity of 'Sorry Sorry' as a foreign-language song defied this domination to

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[2] For example, the Chinese word 'kuo' (country) in 'han-kuo' (Korea) could be replaced by 'kou' (dog) to become a pejorative phrase, but the excuse might be offered that this racist expression was the result of a typographical error.

[3] A Korean album *Don't Don* (2007) and a Chinese album by Super Junior-M, *Me* (迷) (2008).

[4] *Don't Don*, for example, broke a record, following its release in 2007, as the highest-ranked Korean album on the *G-music Combo Billboard Chart*, surpassing the albums of TVXQ and Shinhwa. Super Junior's album also ranked above Taiwanese boy band K-One (Avex Taiwan, 'Super Junior: "Sorry Sorry"').

be proclaimed the most-viewed video of the year in the official 2009 statistics for *YouTube* in Taiwan.[5]

To explain this success, 'Sorry Sorry' needs to be analysed from the perspectives of its lyrical soundscape, linguistic viewpoint and socio-cultural context. From the perspective of its lyrical soundscape, 'Sorry Sorry' is repetitious in its construction: the chorus is repeated after each of the four verses; phrases within each verse are also repeated; and the English employed to construct the main body of the chorus uses a four-times repeated 'sorry' as its theme. According to the official promotional review, this repetition 'has a charm that immediately grabs the audience.'[6] This 'charm' seems to be well-received. In a Taiwanese magazine article, for example, one author describes his/her experience of listening to Korean pop music as follows:

> Korean pop songs often choose a rhythm that is brisk and easy to follow. […] Moreover, it contains some simple English words (for example, 'sorry sorry' and 'nobody nobody but you') and some cute sounds such as 'no no', 'oh yeah', 'do-lu-do' etc. [I] cannot help but sing along with the song and call out at the same time. It is catchy so that [I] master the song after several listening experiences. It creates a melody that constantly appears in [my] brain as if it's being poisoned.[7] (Hui)

It may be argued that the 'charm' – the quality of being catchy – is achieved through a focus that prioritises musical sound over linguistic meaning. Despite simple English words (such as 'sorry') being deployed to facilitate the distribution of the song outside a

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[5] 'Sorry Sorry' beat other Mandarin and Anglo-European videos ranging from music videos to Television advertisements, animations and television programmes (I-Ju, Chen).

[6] Author's translation: '歌詞中不斷重複的 'Sorry' 和意指 baby (稱呼戀人的暱稱) 的 'Shawty' 有著瞬間擄獲聽者的魅力' (Avex Taiwan, 'Album Information').

[7] Author's translation: '韓國偶像團體強打主打的一定是節奏輕快的舞曲, […] 另外以簡單的英文編撰成副歌歌詞的主體 (如 'Sorry Sorry', 'Nobody Nobody But You, 啾'), 有時加入一些可以呼應歌詞的可愛合音如 'No No', '喔耶', '嘟嚕嘟' 等等 […], 讓人聽下去之後情不自禁的開口跟著唱兩句或叫一聲, 於是聽幾次就很容易朗朗上口, 接著就在腦海裡產生了如中毒般的旋律'

Korean context, the principle of simplicity is, in some cases, compromised by the rhyme.[8] Moreover, the repetitive phrasing and the use of expletives also seem to favour sound rather than meaning. In the above comment, for example, it is the melody, rather than the meaning of the lyrics, that 'constantly appears in [my] brain.' Indeed, the lyrics in the song are relatively meaningless: sentences are broken into repetitive words to serve the function of rhyming. The constructive principle of the lyrics therefore reflects Carol Vernallis's view that lyrics in the music video 'most commonly play a subservient role' (137).

Although the lyrics contain relatively little meaning, 'Sorry Sorry' is nevertheless a Korean song, with a majority of the words in Korean. From a linguistic viewpoint, this might mean one of two things. First, the popularity of 'Sorry Sorry' might indicate an extent of linguistic comprehension at the level of the lyrics. In Taiwan, however, Korean as a language is much less studied than English or Japanese. Despite a recent surge due to the popularity of the Korean Wave, the language does not hold a dominant position (Liu, Liu and Liu). Second, the limited understanding of Korean in Taiwan may further strengthen Vernallis's view concerning the lack of function of music video lyrics. However, 'Sorry Sorry' seems to be an exception to Vernallis's rule, in that the largely incomprehensive Korean sounds have become the centre of attention among Chinese-speaking audiences in Taiwan, especially those involved in a youth subcultural trend called *kuso* (parody).

Kuso is an internet-based subculture moderated mainly through BBS (Bulletin Board System), a computer network system developed during the 1970s (Senft 45-8). Despite BBS's fading popularity in an Anglo-American context with the rise of the internet during the mid-1990s, it has remained extremely popular among Taiwanese youth groups. For example, *PTT*, a student-operated and college-affiliated BBS established in 1995, has more than 1.2 million registered users (Tsai). BBS produces, in many ways, different trends in youth culture, including one of the most (in)famous trends, kuso.

The word kuso comes originally from the Japanese word for 'shit' (糞), which is a minor swear word in a Japanese context. It has taken on the new meaning of 'parody' after being re-adopted into Taiwan through youth subculture. PTT has played an important role in becoming one of the key sites where kuso is

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[8] For example, the use of 'shawty,' an American slang word, little known in Taiwan, which means an attractive girl, to rhyme with 'sorry.'

practised. Kuso practitioners on BBS, commonly known as 'peasants,'[9] experiment with different forms and mediums with the aid of computer technology, and distribute their 'products' – ranging from re-made videos and political satires to nonsensical comics and senseless puns – online. Linguistic wordplay occupies a significant place at the heart of kuso. Hsi-Yao Su, for example, provides a detailed analysis of four major styles of BBS wordplay to argue that 'peasants' use the linguistic resources at their disposal to 'create innovative linguistic styles in response to a new medium' (83). It is important to point out that the monophonic principle of the Chinese writing system underpins the emergence of wordplay. The fact that each Chinese graph has a monophonic pronunciation in a given context creates 'a large number of homonyms,' which can lead to 'misunderstanding and confusion when spoken or read aloud without the aid of the graphs' ('Chinese Literature').

With regard to the above social, cultural, political and linguistic contexts, the intense commercial promotion of 'Sorry Sorry' through mainstream media has encouraged fans to make sense of the lyrics by phonetically subtitling the Korean in Mandarin Chinese. Linguistically, the act of subtitling involves a hybrid process of wordplay, which methodologically includes a mixture of phonetic 'transcription' and homophonic 'translation,' resulting in a new type of translation in which alternative meanings are generated. Through these linguistic activities, 'Sorry Sorry' has mutated nonsensically into 'That Banana': one of the best-known versions among a steadily growing number of online examples.

The linguistic activities involved are categorised in Taiwan under the title of 'mishearing' ('空耳,' pronounced 'kong-er,' literally meaning 'empty ear'), a term adopted from a Japanese phrase, *soramimi*, which denotes acts of mishearing or feigned deafness (Spahn and Hadamitzky 830). Mostly associated with kuso subculture, mishearing aims in most cases to achieve a parodic effect through punning. However, as the pun scholar Walter Redfern points out, one of the synonyms for puns is 'catches,' in that '[w]e are caught out, thrown, and, as on a switchback, the jolt can breed laughter, nervous or otherwise' (15). Mishearing causes annoyance for some audiences, and is regarded as hilarious by others. There are a few mishearing video producers

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[9] Originally a pejorative term to describe unsophisticated and gossiping online BBS users, the term has gradually become an appellation denoting BBS users in general (Tsai).

who state that their intentions are to serve an educational purpose (i.e. to teach the Chinese-speaking audience to sing a Korean song), rather than to produce parodies (Hangeng3939). I do not focus on the intention of these producers in this article, nor do I aim to locate their videos in the domain of parody and therefore argue an embedded subversiveness. Rather, following the insight of Redfern, who argues that pun 'is neither exclusively conservative nor subversive, but contestatory' (182), the following two sections delineate the contestatory quality of 'That Banana.' Through a textual analysis of the first forty-two seconds of the lyrics, this paper will analyse the linguistic mechanisms at play in order to contest theories from anthropology, literary theory and music video studies.

Subtitling as a Site of Contestation: An Analysis

'Sorry Sorry' begins with a long instrumental prelude 24 seconds long, composed of the rhythmical sounds of bass and synthesiser. The voices of the group emerge, riffing monotonous sounds for the next 14 seconds (0:24-0:38). The sound resembles 'dance, dance, dance, dance,' but, without subtitling, the meaning is difficult to authenticate. Officially, the first line of the lyrics begins at 0:35 for three seconds, while the second line lasts four seconds. Both lines are subtitled and are characterised by phrase repetition, carrying fragmental meanings that can be interpreted as 'sorry, it is I who have first fallen in love with you' in the following way: 'Sorry, Sorry, Sorry, Sorry, I, I, I, first/ For you, for you, for you, fell, fell, fell, fallen, baby.'

In 'That Banana,' the subtitling begins at the moment when the vocals start. Therefore, the section between 0:24-0:35 is forced to materialise through 'mishearing.' As Chinese characters are monophonic in principle, the sound of 'dance' is separated into '*dan-ce*' and then slides into '*dian-shi*' to suggest the Chinese noun phrase 'television' (see Fig. 1). The instrumental part is therefore subtitled as 'television, television, television, television, there, there, oh, oh, oh.' In the first line, the four-times repeated 'sorry' in English is pronounced with a Korean accent, where the consonant sound '*r*' slides to '*l*.' It becomes phonetically '*soli*,' which slips into the sound of '*shou-li*' through mishearing from a Chinese ear to mean 'on the hand.' Similarly, the nuance between the Korean pronunciations of '*naega*' ('I') and '*nege*' ('for you') is reduced into Chinese to '*na-gen*' which means 'that.' Conversely, '*meonjeo*' ('first') becomes '*ma-de*' ('shit'), while '*ppajeo*' ('fell') becomes '*ba-*

jiao' ('Japanese banana') and *'beoryeo*' ('fallen') *'bao-le*' ('has exploded'). The first two lines, through re-subtitling, therefore become 'On the hand, on the hand, on the hand, on the hand, that, that, that, shit / That, that, that, Japanese banana, Japanese banana, Japanese banana, has exploded, baby' (see Table 1 and 2).

En route from 'Sorry Sorry' to 'That Banana,' the song undergoes a constantly bifurcating process in which the sounds of Korean slide into Chinese vocabularies through 'mishearing.' This linguistic activity is foregrounded by the ambiguity of the sound in the translation process. Within the scope of one language, the sound resembles a homophone. A homophone is 'a word pronounced *alike* with another but different in spelling and meaning [author's emphasis]' (*Chambers English Dictionary*). The similarity of the pronunciation, the *alike*, allows a space into which different meanings can be tacitly smuggled. Indeed, the idea of 'room' is argued to be the key to the pun; as Redfern succinctly puts it, '[s]lippage, flexibility, overlap are at the very heart of wordplay: room to manoeuvre' (122). In other words, it is space that allows meaning to be bifurcated through sound. In the instance of a music video with a translingual and multimedia Table 1.

		Instrumental Opening (0:24-0:35)	First Line (0:35-0:38)		
'Sorry Sorry' (2009)	Official Korean Lyrics	-	Sorry x4	내가 x3	먼저 x1
	English translation of Korean lyrics	-	Sorry	I	First
	Korean Pronunciation	-	*soli*	*naega*	*meonjeo*
'That Banana' (2009)	'Mishearing'[10]	*dian-shi* x4, *na-bian* x3, **oh oh oh**	*shou-li*	*na-gen*	*ma-de*
	Chinese subtitles	電視, 那邊, 喔喔喔 (＾ω＾)	手裡	那根	媽的
	English translation of Chinese lyrics	Television, there, oh oh oh	On the hand	that	shit

Breakdown of Lyrics First Line (0:24-0:38)

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[10] All phonetic transcriptions of Chinese are in *Hanyu Pinyin* (Taiwan) .

'Sorry Sorry' (2009)	Official Korean Lyrics	네게 x3	빠져 x3	버려 x1	baby
	English translation of Korean lyrics	For you	fell	fallen	baby
	Korean Pronunciation	*nege*	*ppajeo*	*beoryeo*	*baby*
'That Banana' (2009)	'Mishearing'[11]	*na-gen*	*ba-jiao*	*bao-le*	*baby*
	Chinese subtitles	那根	芭蕉	爆了	Baby (*´Д`)[12]
	English translation of Chinese lyrics	That	Japanese banana[13]	has exploded	baby

Table 2. Breakdown of Lyrics Second Line (0:24-0:38)

background, in a context where online youth subculture prevails, this 'room' is be maximised. The difference of the intonations between speaking and singing and the multilingual context allows leeway and creates great flexibility for the words to be manipulated. For example, the pronunciation of 'sorry' by a native English speaker in everyday conversation would easily be distinguished from 'shou-li' (on the hand) in oral Chinese where the first sound is stressed. However, in a multilingual context where the Korean accent reduces the 'r' sound in English and the stress on the first syllable of 'shou-li' in Chinese is decreased owing to the modification to singing tone, the distance between the pronunciation of 'sorry' and 'shou-li' is truncated, producing a soundscape where the two sounds overlap to a great extent. This overlap underpins the process of bifurcation, enabling different meanings to travel through puns across the boundaries between media, language and nation.

The process of bifurcation is, in this lyrical part, characterised by four modes: materialisation, localisation, generalisation and re-routing. In the first mode, materialisation, 'That Banana' testifies to the materialisation of lyrics in the instrumental opening, when ambiguous vocal sounds are actualised in the subtitle. Moreover, typographical emotions are

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[11] All phonetic transcriptions of Chinese are in *Hanyu Pinyin* (Taiwan) .

[12] Emotion symbols commonly used in Taiwanese youth subculture on BBS, see Fig. 2 (PTT Emotions).

[13] The Chinese term refers to *musa basjoo*, a seeded banana species which is known more commonly as the Japanese banana ('Japanese Banana').

Fig 1. 'That Banana (0:26). The original un-subtitled scene in the instrumental opening materialises through mishearing into 'television, television, television, television.' Photo courtesy of Mr. Long Hair (YouTube, Wwwssps)

Fig 2. 'That Banana' (0:42). The originally absent emotions – (*´Д`) – are inserted. This emotion symbol is specific to Taiwanese youth subculture. Photo courtesy of Mr. Long Hair

inserted in the instrumental opening, as well as at the end of the second line,[14] adding an extra emotional property to the lyrics. In the second mode, localisation, the typographical emotions used in 'That Banana' do not belong to the set of commonly-used emotions used in the Anglo-European context[15] but, with specialised fonts and combinations, refer especially to the kuso subculture on BBS.[16]

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[14] Such as (^ ω ^), denoting a happy face, and (´Д`), expressing an angry mood. See Fig.2.

[15] Common typographical emotions in Anglo-American are composed of symbols such as colons, hyphens, equals signs, parentheses, brackets, and Roman letters. They are generally written from left to right and most commonly have the eyes on the left, followed by the nose and mouth. For example, :) denotes smiles; :D denotes a large grin; while :(denotes frowning faces. In the context of East Asia, typographical emotions are oriented in a vertical formation, and more symbols and Roman letters are introduced into the combination. For instance, (^_^) connotes a smile; \(^0^)/ connotes 'hurrah'; (T_T) expresses crying or sadness (Wenner).

[16] In the BBS subculture in Taiwan, typographical emotions include more symbols and linguistic sign systems such as Greek, Cyrillic, Chinese, etc. For example, 'ω' in (^ ω ^) comes from the lower case 'omega' in Greek; while 'Д' in (´Д`) derives from 'de' in Cyrillic. Other examples include <(￣︶￣)> for a smile, or (￣﹏￣) and (￣皿￣) for crying. The emotion can also be dramatised, such as (╯°□°)╯~ ┻━┻ means table-throwing

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This demonstrates a procedure of localisation in the process of bifurcation. This process therefore reflects Redfern's insight on the forms of the pun; puns 'take local variants, habitations and names' (155). In the third mode, generalisation, nuance at the level of both sound and meaning is generalised, reducing its inherent complexity. From the perspective of sound, 'naega' (I) and 'nege' (for you) are reduced in Chinese to 'na-gen' (that); while from the viewpoint of sense, the specificity of Japanese banana is diluted, requiring a new title for the song – 'That Banana' – which shares similar, if not greater, popularity to the title of 'That Japanese Banana.' In the final mode, re-routing, the route of cultural transmission is encoded in the transference of sound. As described in the previous paragraph, the Korean pronunciation of 'sorry' in English demonstrates that a cultural route can be as audible as the sound. Here 'sorry,' an English word, does not enter the Taiwanese linguistic landscape directly from the Anglophone world. Instead, it takes a detour through Korea to adopt a light accent. The 'mishearing' by the audience where the 'r' sound is dropped, therefore, accurately 'mishears' the nuance of the accent. It acknowledges not merely English but also Koreanised English. Taking Redfern's allegory that 'punners are often match-makers of shotgun-marriages' (57), the linguistic disjunctures presented in the translation process testify to an effort to constantly rearticulate sound and meaning in a local context. It reduces the nuance of the input and matches its demand by recycling local expressions to generate new senses, while at the same time recording the route of cultural transmission.

However, despite the fact that this process seems to facilitate the sound on a transnational and translingual journey, from the perspective of meaning it provides inconsistency. In the majority of cases, there is neither connection nor logic between the old and new meanings. To exacerbate this state of affairs, in most situations nonsense and rudeness are used intentionally to contradict the meaning of the original. On the way from 'Sorry Sorry' to 'That Banana,' the romantic profession of love mutates into minor swearing and the image of an exploded banana. According to Immanuel Kant, laughter is caused by 'the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing' (133); the transformation from the romantic profession of love to the image of an exploded banana provides a good example of the humorous

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with rage, and ▰▰▰▰崩 乀(〒皿〒)ノ 潰▰▰▰▰ denotes emotional breakdown ('PTT Emotions').

disenchantment that has made 'That Banana' so popular.[17] It may be argued that this popularity has been achieved through the humorous disillusionment discussed, as well as through the pornographic innuendo embedded in 'banana,'[18] and a punning potential that favours anti-Korean sentiment,[19] which reflects the socio-political milieux in contemporary Taiwan. The linguistic disjuncture of meaning presented in the process of translation is, in this sense, connotation in exile. It is a constant bifurcating process through which the sound in the original Korean lyrics is deterritorialised, yet fails to reterritorialise, at the level of sense, into Chinese. The numerous online versions of the music video testify to the indefinite segmenting process at the level of meaning that occurs with every viewer's attempt to make sense. The meaning of a language is, in this vein, always on the run from capture: the temporal replacement of the sincerity of love with triviality refers to no subject and upholds no representation. 'That Banana' therefore resembles certain characteristics of puns, which – to paraphrase Redfern – are 'bastards, immigrants, barbarians, extra-terrestrials: they intrude, they infiltrate' (4). It explores the space between the different sounds in a translingual and inter-media context to test its manipulative extreme, where – to use Deleuze and Guattari's words – language 'stops being representative' (23) in order to 'move toward its extremities or its limits' (23). Using a major language (Chinese) from a marginalised position (youth subculture), 'That Banana' deterritorialises the meaning from its border position to reveal a linguistic landscape that is non-subjective, non-representative and constantly escaping. These features characterise what Deleuze and Guattari term 'minor literature': a minority literature constructed 'within a major language' which is 'affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization' (16) in that everything is 'political' and takes

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[17] Compared with 'That Banana's' 1.6 million views on *YouTube*, 'Mahjong' (2009), the second most popular mishearing version of 'Sorry Sorry,' has a comparatively moderate 0.22 million views (*Mahjong*).

[18] Banana carries a pornographic subtext in both Anglo-European and Taiwanese contexts. Moreover, the Taiwanese slang for penis rhymes with the word banana. A *YouTube* comment under 'That Banana,' for example, makes a pun on the sentence of 'that banana has exploded, baby' by displacing a word, creating a new sentence which is sexually suggestive: 'that penis has exploded, baby.'

[19] Political anti-Korean sentiments can also materialise through punning. For instance, another commenter sarcastically says 'this is one of the most powerful moments in the whole of Korean history (!)'

on 'a collective value' (17). Created in a border position of youth subculture, the principle of sound bifurcation on which 'That Banana' is based enables meanings to be continuously fragmented, allowing audiences' conflicting feelings towards Korea to be enounced: their love to be expressed through laughing, their hatred to be displayed through sneering, and their ambiguous feelings to be demonstrated through a mixture of these things.

Theoretical contestations: Anthropology, Literary Theory, and the Economics of Lyrical Puns

The linguistic mechanism presented in 'That Banana' provides an excellent example through which to examine theories from anthropology, literary theory and music video studies. In the anthropological tradition, the encounter between anthropologists and the 'non-literate' often precedes an attempt on the part of the anthropologist to 'rescue' the 'others' through an act of textualisation. 'Salvage ethnography' is an early theoretical framework, developed by Franz Boas and others (Clifford 112-3), based on the assumption that lost Others can only be saved through the text. In this tradition, transcription provides the method of transforming an oral text from an unwritten language into a literary one. It is here, according to Brinkley Messick, that the process of transcription is distinctively different from translation: in transcription, the relations between the reported and reporting languages are 'revealed and even foregrounded' (180), exposing a text where movements are 'stalled or interrupted' (180); these relations are 'obscured' (180) in translation, presenting a text that has undergone 'total transformation' (180). In other words, there is an embedded lineal schedule between the concepts of transcription and translation in anthropology, so that transcription is understood to be the halfway stage leading towards translation and its interruptive quality has to be concealed to facilitate the transformation of translation. Messick analogises this process insightfully with the construction procedure of a building, so that transcription 'might be thought of analytically as *the* scaffolding for translation, which must drop away or be hidden in *the* finished product [author's emphasis]' (180).

In the case of 'That Banana,' however, there are constant semiotic disruptions among Super Junior's Chinese-speaking audiences in their every attempt to make sense. This results in a deterritorialisation of sound, where meanings are perpetually mutated, materialised, localised and generalised in the bifurcation

process. In Jenkins's conceptualisation, this is an act of poaching, which characterises 'fan culture.' Fan culture possesses the ability to create new meaning through the consumption of the mainstream. Fans are 'textual poachers,' who 'get to keep what they take and use their plundered goods as the foundations for the construction of an alternative cultural community' (223). 'That Banana' therefore demonstrates how 'Sorry Sorry,' as an iconic music video in Taiwanese popular culture, can be poached in the process of translation through punning, creating a sense of humour that allows 'That Banana' to be widely circulated and promoted among audiences. 'That Banana' thus becomes, in Taiwan, a semi-independent cultural landscape akin to 'Sorry Sorry.' In this sense, the linguistic activities in 'That Banana,' implode the anthropological division between transcription and translation by complicating the transcription to translation process. They point to an anarchic world where '*the* scaffolding' no longer leads to '*the* finished product' but is poached, rearranged and mutated to connote new meanings, which produces *a* finished product in its own right.

The issue of double-tonguing within one linguistic unit has been dealt with by Mikhail Bakhtin in his theory of hybridisation. Through a detailed analysis of discourse in the novel, Bakhtin argues that a language can represent another language while still retaining 'the capacity to sound simultaneously both outside it and within it' (358). For example, in a sentence in Charles Dickens' *Little Dorrit* describing the daily routine of a rich banker (whose wealth is subsequently revealed in the novel to be built upon a fraud), Bakhtin analyses how the tone tacitly switches in the construction of the sentence from the language of ceremonial speech[20] to a parodic stylisation (301). This lends itself to a theory of hybridisation, which denotes 'a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance' (358). It is, in other words, different from a pun. Double-tonguing denotes the existence of double or multiple meanings within one word; double-tonguing in Bakhtin's theory signifies double-styling to indicate the presence of different authorial tropes within the boundary of a sentence.

'That Banana' pushes Bakhtin's idea of hybridisation to an extreme. As the lyrical meaning is mutated according to the principle of sound, it picks up words as the sound goes along,

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[20] Bakhtin further explains that ceremonial speech denotes the language used on official occasions, such as parliamentary procedures and banquets (303).

forming random and volatile styles. For example, in the first line of 'That Banana,' an implication in the formation of a descriptive trope[21] is disrupted by a minor swear-word, presenting a vituperative style of exclamation. In this sense, within the boundary of one lyrical line, the sentence is hybridised. However, using Bakhtin's theory – where styles transit in a sentence which retains its grammatical structure and therefore present a relatively smooth contour – the vituperative style in this lyric strips the sentence of its object, thus interrupting the fulfilment of a grammatical rule. Moreover, hybridisation in 'That Banana' is not confined to the different authorial tropes of classical literature. Here there is a significant difference between the two genres with regard to the idea of authorship. According to Wendy Wall, authorship as a concept has changed over time (86) and the birth of modern literary authority can be traced to the sixteenth century when 'Spenser and Jonson used the book format to generate the author's laureate status' (86). Through the format of the book, 'classically authorized writers' are thought to serve 'as the origin and arbiter of a literary monument' (86). By contrast, 'fan videos' are considered to be inauthentic copies, whose 'producers' are considered to be closer to poachers than to authors, and, in this vein, meanings are constantly produced to be added to the construction of the original. Therefore, in 'That Banana,' hybridisation is not merely confined to different authorial tropes but appears at the level of sound in the translingual process, through a form of contemporary online Taiwanese minor literature. In other words, hybridisation materialises through the demands of audiences, who force the utterances to hybridise, and actively multiply, the meaning of the lyrics by deterritorialising the sound.

The fun involved in creating mishearing 'fan videos' is highly attractive to Super Junior audiences in Taiwan. The practice of using mishearing as a means to parody dominant texts in popular culture, originated most conspicuously in 2009, following the release of 'Sorry Sorry.' The number of different mishearing versions continues to grow. As a phenomenon this practice does not begin and end with Super Junior; it extends to include music videos from other stars of the Korean Wave, creating a new landscape in the popular culture of mishearing. This trend demonstrates Redfern's insightful argument that 'wordplay is a contagious phenomenon' (52). However, mishearing as a newly

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[21] 'On the hand, that…' signifies 'on the hand, there is…'

emergent cultural landscape also shares the quality of unevenness with Appadurai's five landscapes in the modern world: some versions (e.g. 'That Banana') are widely known and discussed, while others remain undistinguished, obscured in the landscape of mishearing. In this sense, the creativity presented in the process of sound bifurcation transforms laughter into a form of capital, which functions to facilitate the dissemination of the fan videos as a part of audiences' social lives. This differs from commercial promotion in the dominant mediascape where money, as the main form of capital, plays an important role; audiences' promotion operates through the internet according to the logic of laughter. It is a capital of laughter that is an alternative financescape.

Indeed, kuso is now a recognised marketing strategy in Taiwan. In 2006, for example, *Kuso Frighten Horse Awards (Kuso*驚馬獎*),*[22] a marketing project deploying kuso as its main marketing strategy, won the fifth e-Marketer Award in Taiwan (Wen). Proposed by a major mobile phone operator, Taiwan Mobile, this project has harnessed the internet as its main promotional medium. It recruits homemade videos with parodic themes to compete online. These are voted for by the public via mobile networks. This has resulted in more than 1,200 submissions. Official statistics state that this project has encouraged around 70,000 people – 30% of the total online participants – to read the promotional page for Taiwan Mobile's pay as you go product, resulting in a 20% increase in sales (Wen). Its success is explained by Li-Chin Chang, the customer communications manager with Taiwan Mobile, in terms of 'a focused market strategy' that 'complements television as a promotional medium'(Wen). [23] This success reflects what Jonathan Beller terms 'the attention theory of value' (4-8), which suggests that visual attention is now capital producing labour. The *Kuso Frighten Horse Awards* therefore demonstrate a direct link between kuso and commercialism, and between laughter and money.

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[22] The title of the awards is again a pun itself. *Kuso Frighten Horse Awards* (*Kuso* 驚馬獎), pronounced '*kuso-jing-ma-jiang,*' is a play on words of *Golden Horse Awards* (金馬獎), pronounced '*jīn-ma-jiang,*' a major film award held annually in Taiwan since 1962 ('Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival Executive Committee').

[23] Author's translation: '台灣大哥大品牌管理暨客戶溝通資深處長陳麗琴以 '*kuso* 驚馬獎' 為例表示, 網路精準媒體的特性, 可以和電視互補, 創造更精準 的行銷'.

With more than 1.6 million views on *YouTube* to date (approximately seven times more than the *Kuso Frighten Horse Awards* website), the intensive attention paid to 'That Banana' by its Chinese-speaking audiences demonstrates a latent, yet significant, commercial potential.[24] Going back to Vernallis's view that lyrics in music videos 'rarely take on a superordinate function' (137), it may be argued that 'That Banana' demonstrates a link between lyrics and commercialism: the fun within the wordplay popularises the 'fan video' itself, and the connection with 'Sorry Sorry' contributes to the promotion of the original version. Through the cooperation between conflicting cultural assumptions embedded in promotions at different levels and capital in different forms, 'That Banana,' as a parodic mutation deriving from 'Sorry Sorry,' feeds its popularity back to the original and, inevitably, to the economics of the music industry. Lyrics have therefore become one of the key sites where different forms of capital are generated, accumulated and exchanged.

Conclusion

Departing from the subtitling of 'That Banana,' this article delineates the embedded linguistic mechanism in the mutation of lyrics. Based on the principle of sound bifurcation, the linguistic mechanism denotes a process of language in exile. In this process, audiences assume an important role through which different possibilities are 'entertained.' Redfern argues that puns 'are all about entertaining possibilities – a pun itself, where "entertaining" is both an adjective and transitive present participle' (179). In other words, a pun considers the possibility of creating an amusing effect. In that sense, 'That Banana' entertains the extremity of linguistic possibilities in order to entertain its audience. In a translingual and multimedia context, the *double entendre* of 'entertainment' is integrated in the fan video, which provides a touchstone to challenge contemporary theories in anthropology, literary theory and music video studies. The fan video calls the idea of authorship in the age of the internet into question, pointing out how the grey area in-between anthropological definitions of

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[24] This phenomenon has also been noticed by some of the fans. A *YouTube* comment under 'That Banana,' states 'I think Super Junior will feel like crying should they know the content of this video. However, they become more popular precisely because of this clip!' Author's translation: 'SJ 如果看到這個版本會想哭吧~不過也是因為這樣就更紅了啊!'

translation and transcription becomes the arena for an utterance that extends beyond the limitation of authorial tropes. It engenders an anarchic world where meanings are allowed to be poached, negotiated and transformed. The linguistic process at play in Taiwanese kuso culture creates a version of minor literature with a quirky sense of humour, which in turn feeds back to the economics of the music industry.

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Real Beauty Doesn't Have To Try Like That: How I Got to Transform Cost into Value

BY STEPHEN ROBINS

Abstract

At the centre of my research is an investigation of beauty and ugliness and their operation within live art practice. As the basis of my PhD, I embarked on a piece of practical research to transform my body through going to the gym every day for a year. During this time I also kept a diary wherein I attempted to situate my changing physicality in relation to world events, in order to retain perspective and some degree of self-reflection. At the end of the project I had written 80,000 words and gained two stones of muscle. One year to the day after finishing, I presented an eleven hour long performance installation which placed a one penny value on every word I had written. This paper investigates the nature of cost and value in the gym project and its outcome in the performance. Referring to Amelia Jones' scholarship on performing subjectivities, I use the gym-practice as a way of investigating responsibility and the incongruity of a gym-fit body in an arts gallery setting.

Introduction

This paper investigates the role of practice in framing a philosophical enquiry into beauty, in particular reflecting upon the nature of my own responsibility in the moment of performance. Speaking about his own work, performance artist Andre Stitt writes that 'Ultimately […] responsibility is conferred upon us all; and if one is not being responsible one is not paying attention' (85). My mode of 'paying attention' within two projects is under discussion in this essay. Under the provisional title 'the trouble with male beauty' I went to the gym every day for a year (January

2006 to January 2007). One year into the project, I presented an eleven-hour performance entitled *Coinage* (Jan 2008), which was based on the gym-project, at The Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol. Thomas Aquinas' medieval (and sacred) definition of beauty, following on from the Greeks, is a three-point system: 'First, a certain wholeness or perfection, for whatever is incomplete is, so far, ugly; second a due proportion or harmony; and third, clarity, so that brightly coloured things are beautiful' (qtd. in Carritt, 51). The pursuit of a body that one finds daily on the front of fitness magazines might easily accord to this description: the body is balanced, not underdeveloped on one side, and, being stripped of hair, it possesses an even tonality. It promotes itself as beautiful and those that cannot attain the ideal are by implication ugly; these grinning models are the new sanctified icons. In 2006 I was far from the ideal promoted in fitness magazines. Starting at this distance from the ideal, my project aimed to engage with the visual politics of the ideal or aesthetic body. The gym project owed something of its enquiry to sports geography with its interest in spatial and temporal measures (gaining muscle mass over a one year period was my principal objective). In framing this paper, I acknowledge the work that goes before it regarding identity politics; in particular I draw on Peggy Phelan and Amelia Jones. Performances of long duration and of transformation often fall into the category of body art and in this respect practices by Marina Abramovic, Gina Pane, Vito Acconci and early work by Stelarc also inform my work.

Project Development

In its physical practice, the gym-project consisted of going to the gym every day for a year and engaging with muscle-building and fat-reducing exercise. Rather than a sports orientated goal I was engaged in an aesthetic proposal to develop my physique towards the popular shape of fitness magazines men. I wanted to engage with the drives and social phenomenon of going to the gym and a masculine preoccupation with beautifying the body as an art practice; I took inspiration (in the form of the project) from the performance artist Tehching (Sam) Hsieh, in particular his 1980-1981 *Time Clock* piece. In this one year performance Hsieh installed a time-clock in his studio and for one year, every hour, on the hour, he punched a card and shot one frame on a 16mm camera (he began with a shaved head to mark the passing of time). While I admired the commitment to the project I was most taken with his changing appearance over time, which became apparent from the

frames he had taken at measured intervals. The gym project felt more like a private matter, a kind of invisible performance. By adopting a dour and business-like attitude and wearing carefully selected clothes (tight fitting, technical material), as well as maintaining a regularity of attendance that helped register my seriousness amongst other frequent gym users, I was more easily able to inflict upon my body the casual brutality necessary for it to gain mass and fitness. I use the term 'invisibility' in the sense that Erving Goffman employs it in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, regarding the execution of socially performed roles (29), rather than Peggy Phelan's gendered reading of racially other, female or queer identities in *Unmarked*, these latter identities rendered invisible – and thus unrepresentable – by dint of their not being heterosexual male identities (5). It was important to me to record a starting and a finishing position, not so much as Hsieh's proof of authenticity but as a record of spatial and temporal development. This ended up being a multilayered account of 'before,' 'during' and 'after' the gym-project, comprising most significantly of a daily diary, but also featuring measurements, a photo-montage of my body, as well as the ephemera of completed exercise cards for the fitness plans which were programmed for me, together with photographs of the dozens of empty pill bottles and empty tubs of protein powder (see Fig. 1) that I consumed over the course of the project.

Fig. 1. Pill Bottles. Photo courtesy of Stephen Robins

The diary, which runs to 80,000 words, is written under two headings: 'Here and Now' and 'Elsewhere.' The first of these is an investigation into the transformations happening to me as a result of the gym practice. It is concerned primarily with domestic issues, but with a focus on reporting my gym activity (whether it be progress with a particular exercise, changes to my eating regime or the latest glucose 'power' drink). The 'Elsewhere' part looked at world news events (reported mainly through the BBC News website, Al Jazeera or Fox News). When I originally conceived of the diary, I had in my mind a mechanism for

recording the meaninglessness of the gym-project in the face of overwhelming world events. There is a tension between the rules of the project and taking an ethical stance regarding my own body. There were a few days when I was exhausted and needed to rest for fear of causing myself an injury. This anxiety about the value of the project is implied in the conjunction with world news. Could the fact that I could now bench-press 5kg more than three weeks previously be important when read in relation to reports of Shia reprisals against Sunni militia in Iraq? These two records (kept as one) speak to a passage of time as lived through repetitive activity. By framing the entries in this way I hoped to juxtapose them, allowing myself space to question the nature of responsibility and artistic practice. The selection of news stories is of course inextricably linked to my own blindspots and enthusiasms: there is an emphasis on the war in Iraq, which I had opposed; the Israeli bombing of Lebanon, which I was appalled by; stories of the empowerment of women's politics because of my long-standing support of gender equality; anything to do with Catholicism and queer politics, because I am a self-identifying gay ex-Catholic man. Whilst I imagined ironic juxtaposition between my gym work and world events at the beginning (my feeble bench pressing as an example), the dialogue between these things emerged in the moment of writing. The diary also records my increasingly complex relation, over time, to the project's original aims: I found it less easy to see myself as separate from the social environment of the gym – I became a 'regular' and came to be on nodding terms with several people who were also attending frequently. Whilst I might have started the performance of my part in the social scene of the gym a little cynically, not thinking myself a sincere gym-goer so much as a figure occupying a position simultaneously inside and outside the role, this gradually changed over time. To use Goffman's terms, it was through a process of immersion (fitness programmes, exercises, dietary advice and so on) that I became more convinced in the sincerity of my performance (29-31). The diary aspect was then critical to retain a degree of reflectivity throughout the process, even if the monthly measuring and photographing of my body became occasions for concern and shame at slow progress. Unlike a sportsman who would be concerned with increased strength, stamina or power, my tests aimed to visually measure an increase in muscle bulk.

As a student of theatre I was fascinated by the performance of the gym user, in valorous action (gasping, sweating and red in the face from exertion), performed in front of similarly intentioned

people. I saw grim faced concentration amongst users in front of the banks of television sets showing MTV or Soaps; there were young men working out together, each encouraging (bullying?) another repetition out of the other's exhausted muscles; young women plugged into iPods™ making up the large part of the cardio-vascular machines' demographic; and the erotically charged sight of the lycra-clad rowing teams pulling in unison. Even if I write about 'groups' I recall individuals clearly: the grandfather and grandson who worked out quietly, the woman in long Buddhist robes whose horizontal style of rowing made me smile, the extremely thin woman who would spend an hour and a half on the stepper and whose neck vertebrae I could count. Having purposefully not interviewed any other gym-goers, I can only speculate on the reasons for their attendance. Some certainly go to train (rugby players and rowers for example), but others (maybe most) go for reasons other than complementary sports training. However, it was the groups, specifically those who had organised their efforts, that caused me to wonder about the need to be *seen* working out, like performers need an audience. The audience in theatre has the role of witnessing, giving meaning to the performance of character and action, while gym users on the other hand witness each other coextensively. By this I mean that they are engaged in mutually affirming and validating not only the efforts taken but their relation to one another in both time and space. Put crudely: the space you take up is reflective of your commitment to gym-practice. Perhaps they are required to complete the action: it isn't enough for me to go there and do my exercise; I require them to witness my progress and value my attendance, as indeed I value theirs, and their performance of it.[1] This 'completion' happened in several ways, from my gym instructor asking if I had new kit ('no I just fit it better') to my awareness of other gym-users really *noticing* me for the first time. As Musetta Durkee writes (with reference to identity in dance):

> The task of causing appearance to appear is […] a political imperative as well as an aesthetic one: taking hold of, possessing and arresting the representations of bodies, of persons, is an authoritarian act of domination and oppression. (39)

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[1] I am grateful to my colleague Ruth Holdsworth for her thoughts on this matter

These sanctioned looks did indeed subtly shift the way I behaved as an object to be looked at, and in particular to be noticed as a man by other men. It was in fact profoundly unsettling (and surprising, since I have always prided myself on my capacity to disappear when I need to), making me feel like an actor on stage as the lights come on. By developing pectoral, abdominal and bicep muscles, I became aware that I was awakening a new role within the body that I inhabit, identifying no longer as invisible, but as masculine. 'The process of self-identity,' writes Phelan, 'is a leap into a narrative that employs seeing as a way of knowing' (5). In the gym environment, I became most visible to the serious users when I engaged most fully with the narrative of the gym. I understood, perhaps for the first time, the performance of masculinity by adopting (however disingenuously) some of its codes. Jones reads (male) body artist Vito Acconci's narcissism as inherently destabilizing to masculinity, although framed in a very different way:

> Acconci's body art works […] suggest that the very need for the continual performance of masculinity – the repetitious restaging of its boundaries to keep out that which is not *it* – testifies not to its durability and coherence but, rather, to its radical instability. (111)

Becoming visible in the social context of the gym is then taken as a tacit acceptance of game playing with the 'radical instability' of masculinity. Completion of the action, in the sense in which I used it earlier, does not mean that the process is over when this happens, but that its transactional quality is affirmed, which is repeated on the next visit. An important element of my reflection on the gym-project in the diaries is a building sense of dissatisfaction – mentioned a little earlier – with my progress. I might have become visible to some other serious gym users but I had yet to become visible to myself, or at least not consistently so. It is this lack of consistency in my own visibility which attests to the pernicious problem of male beauty: the masculine male in his febrile attempt to attain/maintain the aesthetic body makes manifest the anxieties of failure. I was not the only man to go to the gym every day.

Fig. 2. *Coinage*. Photo courtesy of Steve Robins

Making the Invisible Visible

Ending the year's project left a dilemma as to how to proceed with distilling the ephemera collected over one year's practice into a performance. My solution was to literally convert terms of engagements into matter: I took a one-penny coin for every word I wrote in the gym diaries, so the rule-based nature of the project informed the structure for the performance. *Coinage* was the result of my desire to make the invisible performance of the gym project manifest within a performance art context. What follows is from the 'copy' I wrote for The Arnolfini's brochure of programmed works to frame the performance, which was displayed in the centre's main installation space:

> The smallest denomination coin is one penny, the smallest part of language is the word. I wrote 80,000 words – that's £800. Here each word has an undifferentiated value. So for me it's a question now of taking some responsibility – to stand and say I weigh these things and maybe I can carry the mass of these words. To revalue them, perhaps.

There was here the hollow joke about words being cheap. In this performance installation, 'taking responsibility' for the words I had written involved literally carrying them for eleven hours: I actually felt the weight of them. *Coinage* roved over several sites in The Arnolfini. In the foyer space of The Arnolfini 80,000 pennies were installed in a grid of 365 piles. The action of the performance / installation was to clear the coins from the foyer to the light studio over eleven hours. Each pile had the same number of coins as the diary entry for that particular day. So, for example, on 12th September 2006 I wrote 514 words. In the white studio, two

floors above the foyer, there were three films showing on a continuous loop. Two showed films of my back as I held a large £20 bank-bag of pennies. In the first film, my back was naked, while in the second I was wearing a floral print dress (see Fig.2). Each of these films saw me holding the bag of pennies until my arm gave way and the bag began to drop, at which point the film would loop back to the beginning. The third film, projected from above onto the white floor, showed a life-size image of me lying facedown naked on the massed pile of pennies. In the film, the natural lighting causes a shifting in the coins' reflectivity. These were all silent films. I recorded myself speaking the 80,000 words from my diary and by placing a DVD player and speakers into a rucksack I carried in performance, I was able to listen to the diary in real time. The duration of the event was set by the length of time it took me to speak the words of the diary. As each day's text ended on the audio, I picked up the coins and put them into the rucksack. As the bag slowly filled (and became very heavy), I walked the two flights of stairs to the white studio and emptied the coins from the rucksack onto the lying-down projection, so that over time the real coins covered the site of projection, which became largely obliterated through refraction. The holding of the coins and their removal functioned as a symbolic holding of the weight of the words I had used to describe one year's worth of 'news,' both global and personal.

For me, the entire performance installation was a reflection upon the nature of responsibility, the war in Iraq and the trouble associated with striving for physical beauty, which I had been exploring in the gym-project. As Andre Stitt asserted in relation to the issue of responsibility in his own work: 'My works are about paying attention, about asking questions and trying in some small measure to address imbalances in this struggle [...] If you take care of this moment, you take care of all time' (85). I do not think Stitt is suggesting that performance is the answer to a question, but rather that performance is alertness, attentiveness, the raising of problems in tangible forms. Through *Coinage* I was paying attention to the work of the previous year, the diary and the huge effort recorded in my body. Moreover, I think it is also worth reflecting here on Stitt's idea of 'taking care of this moment' and its significance in my own work. In the main performance space there is a tension between the careful formal arrangements set up in the installation and the slow action of erasing the structure (that is, the sculptural form of the coins' grid-arrangement in the foyer). In the spoken text, the body's 'improvement' is read in relation to the real but

Fig. 3. *Coinage*. Courtesy of Steve Robins

remote events of invasion and military conflict contained within the text of the diary, the low-key nature of which is almost lost in the cathedral-like space of The Arnolfini's foyer in which it is presented.

Project Evaluation

The classical statues of the Greeks and Romans often celebrate the aesthetic body by placing it prominently on a pedestal in a gallery space – such as the one in which I performed. I aimed to speak to the unsuitability of the aesthetic body in the (performance) art environment, which so often speaks for the marginalized, the imperfect. In November 2007 I had been invited to join La Pocha Nostra in creating a performance for the Arnolfini called *The Barbarian Collection: Runaway Runway*, which staged hybrid identities on a giant catwalk against the backdrop of a life-sized cross for staged crucifixions of the artists involved. La Pocha Nostra are renowned for delivering complex, ambiguous and unsettling personas which vex matters of aesthetic beauty and demand that marginal identities are given attention. During the *Barbarian Collection* project I created a sexually titillating and ambiguous 'character' which I dubbed muscle Mary; this oiled and muscled persona in pigtails, high heels and a mini skirt was born out of my engagement with the gym project. Two months later, in gym vest and joggers, my body's implied idealism, or its apparent engagement with a decisive attempt towards a popular ideal of masculine beauty, felt incongruous in the art gallery context –

incongruous because presenting the attempt is tantamount to applauding the ossified, alienating mono-dimensional character that beauty in popular culture presents (if you are young, white, straight, able bodied, upper-middle class, Western, and so on). The text of my diaries speaks about the instabilities within the body visible and contradicts this monotonal symbolism, introducing plurality and ambivalence to the time-consuming, physically tiring action and spectacle in the foyer. I hoped that the text would gently attest to the unseen, or, in Phelan's terms the 'unmarked.'

I am not unmindful of the criticism levelled at male performance artists regarding heroic practices. According to Jones the inclination to pay for attention with discomfort amounts to a masochistic practice; she wonders whether 'masochism […] threaten[s] or reinforce[es] the male body,' writing:

> The prevalence of […] masochistic strategies in male body art suggests that […] attempts at transcendence continue […] to be fundamental motivating factors for male artists. The ambivalence of much of this work can be located in part as an effect of its obsession with the hegemonic [Jackson] Pollock myth […] that is both countered and in some ways reinforced by the riven, punctured, suffering body of the masochistic male body artist. (129)

Inevitably when one is presented with a sculpted body (in gym parlance 'ripped'), one knows, if only on a superficial level, that suffering has been endured to get there. However, in this case it was covered up, obscuring (I hope) the idealism that the male gym-fit body implies. However, this is only a part of what is read: it is principally desire, either repressed or activated, which responds. I chose the foyer space because I wanted this private, almost invisible performance of one year to become visible for a time: not the body it created but the person who carries the 'gym-body' (if such a mind body split could possibly stand: the ambivalence which Jones refers to is clear). In the incongruous body that I mentioned earlier, the pure presentation of it carries codes of action already performed, of choices already undertaken in the gym and in diet. Whereas the actions of other body artists often work to make the body present, I wanted this, my new, valorised body, to disappear, a desire that was reflected in the arduous action of removing all the coins from the gallery space over the course of the

day (as well as some of the night: hardly a mark was left by 11pm). There was nothing re-markable. Maybe that was beautiful.

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Minutiae, Mysteries and Magic: A Conversation with Little Bulb Theatre Company

BY EMER O'TOOLE

Introduction

Little Bulb is a fringe theatre company dedicated to illuminating the minute human details of life through movement, song, and storytelling. Founded in 2007, the company is currently comprised of Alex Scott, Clare Beresford, Shamira Turner, Eugénie Pastor and Dominic Conway. They started performing at the University of Kent with their first show, *Crocosmia*, a gently poignant and funny tale of three orphaned children, which went on to win an Edinburgh Fringe First and a Total Theatre Award in 2008. Eugénie joined Little Bulb in 2009. Since then, they have produced *Sporadical*, a fantastical folk opera performed to the 'aunties,' 'uncles' and 'cousins' assembled in the audience for an ostensible family reunion. Little Bulb also produce cabaret and scratch pieces, such as *Edible Mistakes*, which played at Shunt in 2009. They are currently working on *Operation Greenfield*, a musical piece about four teenagers in middle England striving for success at a local talent competition, which is due to premiere at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival. Little Bulb is an increasingly accomplished fringe theatre company who enjoy great critical success. In this interview they give an insight into their creative process and the thoughts, feelings and impulses which inform their work. Dominic and Shamira were unavailable on the day of the interview. Emer O'Toole met Alex, Clare and Eugénie in their dressing room at the Battersea Arts Centre.

EMER: On your website it says 'Little Bulb create theatre performances which explore the minute human details which, in a world so big, are easily swallowed up.' Could you talk to me about this concept, which it seems to me represents a kind of

transformation of the invisible into the visible, the irrelevant into the important?

ALEX: *Crocosmia* is very character based, involving lots of close observations of characters. When we were making it we were excited by little human moments. It is quite a funny show, hopefully, but not necessarily a comedy. It's to do with humorous situations that arise out of little human foibles. I think as a company we got into translating little truisms about people, finding what makes people tick. By putting those moments within a structure and connecting them you get an emotional look at people and how they operate.

CLARE: While I'm not necessarily anti-technology and commercialism, I am interested in the effort of real things – like writing a letter, or hand-making something. We really love theatre that concentrates on the things that are real in life. It's like - if you get out at any tube stop you find exactly the same shops. I love little hidden shops with individuality. Our theatre tries to concentrate on things that are a bit different. And I think people appreciate that, because so much that is individual can be glossed over.

EUGÉNIE: It's not a question of whether or not we paint a big picture or make a big statement, because in theatre there's always a statement. What we do in *Operation Greenfield*, for example, is focus on specific characters and what happens in their normal, average lives. Through focusing on the existence of one specific character and how his or her existence changes, you get an idea of what the work is trying say. The microscopic things in real life can be hilarious or heartbreaking, just as they are in any café or at any bus stop. That's why we pay such attention to detail.

ALEX: That's especially true for *Operation Greenfield*. While it cuts quite an epic shape, what gets discussed by the characters is very minute.

ClARE: All the characters are teenagers so the talk is a bit awkward anyway. But it's funny, if you listen to what people talk about sometimes, it *is* really mundane. Like, although it's a cliché, the weather. When I was in year nine in school my class was asked to write a biography. And everyone was trying to think of someone really interesting – Jamie Redknapp or Brian Harvey or whoever -

Fig. 1. *Sporadical* (2009). Photo courtesy of
Little Bulb Theatre Company

and I said to the teacher 'I thought I'd do my grandmother, but I don't know, maybe I should do someone with a more exciting life.' And the teacher said 'everyone's life is exciting; you've just got to research it.' I think that's true. It's more fascinating to learn about the life of someone who isn't famous. If you just watch any person and write about what he or she does, that can be amazing.

ALEX: That attention to small or seemingly unimportant things helps us to form environments – which we're really into. In pretty much all the shows there's the idea that the audience comes in and is immediately involved in some kind of environment that's radically different from what's outside.

CLARE: Like you're entering a world.

ALEX: You enter a different space. In *Crocosmia* you come in and there's the sound of rain and the lighting effects are all very blue. In *Sporadical* you're coming into a party.

CLARE: For productions like *Operation Greenfield* and *Crocosmia*, Alex forms a world, and then it's great for us, because we get to enter it. We start with little strands - say with *Crocosmia* there was a record player and toys, and with *Operation Greenfield*s we've started with musical instruments - and then more and more things are

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built into the world. We live in the world shown in the finished show from the get-go. By the time we get to performance, we've gotten so used to being in the world with all its subtleties that it's complete when the audience gets to enter into it. I think that's important – it's part of what makes the experience feel special.

EMER: Tell me more about that moment when the audience is introduced to the world you've created. It feels to me as a spectator that you put a lot of trust in your audience. There's an element of risk. In *Crocosmia* you're asking an audience to believe that you are all in fact children – you're bringing them through adult bodies into that child's world. Do you always trust your audience to come along with you, or are you ever afraid that it's not going to work – that your world will seem too alien?

CLARE: *Crocosmia* was first performed at the Central School of Speech and Drama a week before our show at university. We tried to open by showing the audience our toys when they came in. And it did *not* work. If it's too much too soon an audience can hate you from the get-go and they won't invest. But what I love about doing *Crocosmia* is just sticking to my guns. You have to stay in the world. If the audience saw that you didn't believe it, it would be terrible. Any hint of acknowledgement that we are in fact adults would shatter what we have created. It feels really lovely if, at the end of the hour, people have bought into it, because at the end of the day we *are* twenty-five year olds. It's a dangerous idea in ways, and yes there was a time when it didn't work.

ALEX: The opening is really tricky actually. We were doing a show here at the BAC recently, and the sound levels weren't right. For the opening montage the sound was too high. It sounded really loud and raucous and the audience took ages to settle into the show. *Crocosmia* has to have quite a gentle start, because the kids can be annoying. We even found that in rehearsal – the kids are so rambunctious that there actually needs to be quite a strict structure in the show to keep them in order. Otherwise they can be too much and the audience won't like them. So it starts really gently – it's late at night, you just get one of them. Then the other two come out and they're being a bit sheepish. They set up the space quietly; they're not really that chatty. There's just enough of that for the audience to get used to them.

CLARE: When we were rehearsing poor Alex really did have to deal with three children. It was helpful for us to stay in character constantly, and get any silliness out of our heads at lunchtime.

EUGÉNIE: I know how involved you are when you enter the world of *Crocosmia* because I suddenly become Marie-Clare the French au-pair! It can be quite unnerving because you're so into it. I don't see Clare anymore – I see a seven and three quarter year old kid. I think the reason the world you create is so inclusive is because of that absolute commitment. For *Sporadical* that kind of commitment was definitely a strategy too. I found it really reassuring as a performer. When an audience member entered the space, one of us might run up and say 'Hi Great-Uncle!' By the end of the awkward Great Uncle moment you had the audience member in your pocket. Some people are reluctant to enter the world, but most are on board by the time the show starts. I see *Sporadical* as an event rather than a show, and I think *Crocosmia* has a similar texture to it.

Fig. 2. *Operation Greenfield*. Photo courtesy of Little Bulb Theatre Company

CLARE: With *Sporadical*, even if the audience are a bit reluctant, you can 'wink-wink nudge-nudge' them. You can say 'don't be so grumpy cousin.' You can work with whatever someone brings to the table. If you just believe that everyone is family, you can handle any reaction. So if someone says 'I'm not your auntie,' you can say 'oh you always say that auntie Jane.' We are more ourselves in *Sporadical*, and it's a different show in that respect. But we're still creating an environment, a world.

EUGÉNIE: I think the environments of our shows make the audience and the performers feel quite safe. Obviously as a performer you are never completely safe. But still, I feel much more relaxed starting a show after getting to know the audience. Some

Fig. 3. *Operation Greenfield*. Photo courtesy of Little Bulb
Theatre Company

people tell you that they hate audience participation – but then
these are the ones you find screaming the sea shanty in *Sporadical*
with us. As a performer I feel like I'm at some sort of party. I'm
asking 'hey audience member, will you have fun with me?'
 Crocosmia does something similar in a different way. You're still
asking the audience to come on board.

EMER: Can I ask you a question Eugénie? The others inhabited a
world that you, as a new member, perhaps had to walk into. How
did you find the devising process in this already established
theatrical situation?

EUGÉNIE: Funnily enough, I met Alex in Kent when we were both
cast in a devised show. I knew how to devise a show, and loads of
the shows I had done in France were devised. But what I really like
about working with Little Bulb, and I felt this even with our
cabaret piece *Edible Mistakes*, is that you are entering a world in
which you are simultaneously creating. You have proactive
responsibility. You have creative space, but you have to take
opportunities. I never feel judged, so I can try out awful bits of
music or speech. I have a space where I can exist as a performer, as
an artist. I'm the kind of person who is terrified by the blank page.
But you can't be afraid in this process, because there's a pragmatics
to it. You either write a poem in the time allowed and it's included,
or you don't, and it's not. Working on *Operation Greenfield* is

strange, because everything I expected is happening in a way that I couldn't have foreseen. Everything is new and surprising, but at the same time I'm being led through the process by Alex in a really natural way.

ALEX: Well that's a relief.

EUGÉNIE: As a performer with Little Bulb you have a good idea of what the process is going to include. Very early in the process, you're given a box and there are objects in it with which you are asked to engage. So in building a character, the creativity is coming from you, but you have an already established space.

ALEX: There's kind of a valve system isn't there? I see it as the actors' jobs to come up with the characters. I maybe nudge them in certain directions, but they can work against the nudging. I gave Dom a whole load of football magazines recently, and he could have taken that and run with it, but he just rejected it. So there are no football references at all in *Operation Greenfield*. That's cool that you see it like that Eugénie. I suppose the actors have the space to do all the creation. And then what's really nice about what I do is I can just sit back and tie it together, think about how one bit can fit in with another, and that ultimately directs where the story's going. And because the actors don't know about the story, they're free to experiment.

CLARE: It's really nice, because Alex obviously has a grand design, but you don't see it as a performer. It's very clever.

ALEX: Sometimes *I* don't see it. It's a stalling technique.

CLARE: For instance, I might have forgotten a key factor about a character, and then Alex brings it up again in relation to something that happens later in the devising process, and I think: 'Of course! Of course that's what this character would do. Of course, that's what would happen.'

ALEX: I view a show as a kind of a mystery that's there to be solved. And it normally begins with a title. So with the current project, *Operation Greenfield* was the title, and I knew that it would involve religion. I thought maybe the characters would be a bit older. I knew there would be music. Everything else in the show has involved working backwards to find different layers. But

essentially it's like a mystery. How will the story end? What will happen to the characters after all the emotional ups and downs?

EMER: Was it a similar process with *Crocosmia* and *Sporadiacal*?

ALEX: Definitely with *Crocosmia*, but *Sporadical* didn't have a director. It had five minds just going at it. That was really fun. It's a different way of working, and it produces a different style of theatre. It's much more rough and ready. It has a structure, but the structure leans towards cabaret, improvisation, and bantering with audience. The story was just hammered out over, oh I don't know, drinking sessions. 'No thish is going to happen to the mermaid.' 'No thish is going to happen!'

EUGÉNIE: With *Sporadical* we had the material and we just needed to fit it into a story that could accommodate it.

CLARE: Devising where everyone is equal is a really good experience, but it means that, because five minds are different, every point is minutely discussed. It can go on for ages. At one point we were debating whether the dead mermaid was a mermaid ghost or a mermaid zombie. For ages! And no one watching *Sporadical* is ever going to care or know. But then that's one of the nice things about our theatre. We care about and debate the minute details. Words too. We're really particular about jokes, timing, which word is funnier. No one in the audience will be able to tell the difference between a strategically placed 'this' or 'that,' but all these tiny things come together. Our shows are comprised of everything added up.

ALEX: What's great with *Sporadical* is that, because there's no script and no endpoint, we see it as an ongoing choreography. It's like we're obsessively getting to the best choreography possible. Towards the end of *Sporadical* I felt we were getting closer to exactly the right things to say. We were being a lot more concise.

CLARE: We still change lines in *Crocosmia* too.

ALEX: We do. And there are still things that aren't right. For instance, there's a bit where Freya puts on a French record, and the line to introduce it is kind of filler, because we haven't found the right line yet. It's an ongoing mission. We'll find the line. We're still working backwards. We're at a much more tender stage of

Operation Greenfield, so all the big things rather than the little things are in play.

CLARE: The constant development of our shows keeps them alive.

EMER: In all your productions you maintain an attention to detail and a focus on little things. I've really enjoyed hearing you describe your process, because now I can recognise elements of it in the performances I've seen. It was interesting to hear Eugénie say that she was given a box of objects and had to interact with them. One of my favourite moments in *Crocosmia* was when the foster parents were suggested, or evoked, by a puffy perfume bottle and a runner shoe. It's a really interesting use of puppetry - simple objects are given life and become characters in your performances. Can you tell me more about how you transform everyday objects into complex human beings?

CLARE: Well first you should know that those were not the only foster parents. We interviewed a lot of potential foster parents for the Brakenburg children. The kids would sit down and we tried out different objects and characters. Again, it's this whole mystery thing: we didn't know what the foster parents would be like; we didn't know that we'd find Mick and Christine. We had lots of couples come to visit. We acted them out in real time, and then after rehearsal we discussed them and decided that Mick and Christine were the ones who would get it. But there were other candidates.

ALEX: The good thing about the unusual puppetry or poor puppetry is – and this also applies to *Sporadical* where we used bad, old fashioned two dimensional puppets as opposed to the objects in *Crocosmia* – it's more magical when you can see that a puppet is not quite what it should be, but you're convinced anyway. That's the ultimate magic. If you can see exactly how the trick is being done, but are still convinced by it on some level. We use a lot of objects when we're creating a show, so the puppetry is almost a natural extension of that. When pre-planning I'll go to charity shops and suss out what might be an interesting object to have in the show. That object has already been owned by someone. It already has a history that we don't know about. So if we just do a bit of mental ju-jitsu we can believe that it really belongs to a character in the show, and then it has a history to tell in the logic of the story. Hopefully that's helpful for the performers. There are all

these real objects, and real people did own them. Objects store up little messages that they communicate to us. The perfume bottle, however, suffered a misfortune.

CLARE: I killed her

ALEX: Foster parent one died, and we had to get a replacement. And they're actually quite difficult to find, those puffy perfume bottles.

CLARE: It was an awful moment

ALEX: And when you've done the show with a particular object, it seems really wrong to replace it with a different object. But then we just had increasing bad luck – all the foster mums started dying. So we've ended up with a plastic water sprayer now because it's really robust, which is a bit of a cheat really.

CLARE: I felt terrible about that. I'm the worst for this sort of thing because I hate change, and I'm a bit superstitious. But the more the show goes on the more you realise that it has to survive the same way humans survive – things break, things do change. So over the last two years we have had to get a new button, or a new candle, or replace things that get covered in cake. But, like in life, things don't change all at once.

EMER: We've talked throughout this conversation about finding the individuality in things. You don't want to come out of a tube stop and see all the same shops - you're more interested in the oddities of a little local shop. We've talked about the attention to detail that creates your environments or worlds. We've talked about your very simple yet effective puppets, and how object's histories create stories for you. There's also the simple yet effective visual effects that you use. In *Sporadical*, for example, Eugénie as the Bride swims across a dark stage supported by a bar stool at her belly, her white dress lit up by strobe lights, and it's very effective. Although you can see the bar stool and you're aware it's a simple strobe light, what you experience is a charming vignette of a bride swimming at night. Little Bulb is getting a good deal of critical attention at the moment. The critics love you; you've won awards.

ALEX: Just look at this dressing room Emer. We've made it.

EMER: The charm of your aesthetic comes from tiny details that you imbue with so much meaning, these suddenly gigantic little things. If you did get to the point where you had more resources, where you were offered a stage at The National, or a funding body threw a lot of money behind one of your shows, do you think that your aesthetic would survive it – or is Little Bulb by its very nature theatre for the fringe?

ALEX: It's tricky isn't it? I do think that's a problem. A lot of theatre companies get to a point where they're just too polished. It's a terrible cliché, but I think you have to stay true to yourself. Also, you have to stay true to the situation in which you're working. So if you're making a show for The National, you have to do something that's going to work for their audience.

CLARE: But then that's dangerous. If we were asked to do *Crocosmia* in the wrong space at the wrong time, and we made it bigger with loads of projection, that would destroy the show. It would be like selling out.

ALEX: Big shows work well in big spaces. We prefer being in smaller venues. We did have a really lovely one off in a big venue, but that was a venue we knew very well and there was a great atmosphere. I think you have to stick to your guns when it comes to the venues you choose.

CLARE: We make work that we're passionate about at the time. *Operation Greenfield* is a more technical show than the others. We usually control all the music and lights from onstage, but in *Operation Greenfield* we play teenagers and teenagers have gadgets, so the amount of tech doesn't affect our aesthetic. In fact it reflects our world, which is becoming more technical. I suppose if we wanted to make a show about, say, a massive rock gig, we could probably get speakers and tech and fancy lights. And if that were appropriate for that show, fine. But grafting that kind of stuff onto *Crocosmia* would be really wrong. There's lots of mixed reports on *Operation Greenfield*, but we can't think about whether they're right or wrong: we just have to make this piece of work, put it out there in the ether and see what happens. And I'd rather do that than something tailored to an audience - something overproduced, polished and commercial.

EUGÉNIE: I'm really inspired by Improbable's approach to 'big' staging. Say with *Satyagraha*, where they're on a massive Opera stage: they devised a show for opera-goers while sticking to their aesthetic. Everything looks like cardboard and they use huge puppets of Shiva. They use sellotape to create puppets and scenic images, when they could use all sorts of fancier materials. It's amazing. At the same time, they have people flying through the air, because they're in an opera hall, and they can do that. I found that really inspiring. It's in line with Clare and Alex's thoughts about adapting your work to where you perform it and to whom you perform it, while staying true to yourself.

ALEX: You're right. *Satyagraha*'s really appropriate for the stage it's on, yet it maintains Improbable's aesthetic. Perhaps that's got something to do with staying strong against outside pressures too. We certainly felt like people were expecting *Crocosmia 2*, another sweet show, when we made *Sporadical*, which is more adult and frivolous and moves away from tight structures. Now with *Operation Greenfield* we're moving back to a structured kind of show. I think it's a little kindness to the people who follow us, who come to see all our shows, to shake things up a little too. You wouldn't want the Little Bulb hit to wear thin.

CLARE: We're still finding out who we are as people and a company. What people know in terms of critical reviews are *Crocosmia* and *Sporadical*. But we've made so many shows over the past year - *Angel and Devil*, *Soul Funk*, *Edible Mistakes*, *Extraordinary Ordinary*. We do kids shows sometimes, like *Fran at University*. We've done some stuff that we've been commissioned to make, and we all have our individual projects as well. We're so eager to make and create. We're learning all the time – like for *Operation Greenfield* we're all re-learning instruments that we used to play as teenagers. It's so great to be making theatre, because it makes you do these things. It's exciting. It feels like you can do anything you want. It's like being a kid.

A Textual Analysis of Martin Crimp's Adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*: The Importance of Testimony and Relationship

BY CLARA ESCODA

Abstract

This paper argues that Crimp's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* (2006) transforms Nina's two key speeches into two urgent acts of testimony. The paper compares Crimp's adaptation to other, more canonical adaptations of *The Seagull* in the English language, such as Anne Dunnigan's (1964) and Michael Frayn's (1988), and concludes that, while previous translators have given Nina's speeches a metaphysical and spiritual emphasis, making her words reflect a cosmic struggle between good and evil and thereby inserting her words within a religious framework, Crimp produces a post-Holocaust play which aims to position spectators actively with regard to the inequality of contemporary world order. Crimp's version removes Chekhov's references to Russia and sets the play in a bourgeois context of deceit, which simultaneously reflects a larger political context of rivalry amongst world powers. Nina's language, in her testimonies, is both personal and political. In order to interpret the indeterminate, lyrical language of Nina's testimonies, and to complete the picture of an unequal world order, the audience are encouraged to draw on their own experiences of oppression and duplicity in interpersonal relationships. Crimp thus invites the audience to evoke a resistant type of memory and to oppose the inequality of the existing order, as they detect the need for ethics in their personal, everyday context.

Translations and Adaptations of *The Seagull*

On the face of it, Martin Crimp's 2006 adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1899) is consonant with the original play. It maintains Chekhov's structure, plot, and setting.[1] Both plays are about the difficulty a series of characters experience in connecting with one another while spending the summer at Piotr Sorin's country estate. In his 2006 adaptation, however, Crimp transforms these problems into clearly visible vignettes of contemporary social tensions and contradictions. In Crimp, the difficulty connecting, Nina's breakdown and Kostya's outrageousness, melancholia or acts of self-inflicted violence, are articulated as a consequence of the structural violence of contemporary society, increasingly dominated by market forces and the search for status. They are seen, therefore, as the result of the way in which late capitalist identities are constructed in the context of an unequal world order dominated by ambition and by the retention of benefits and profit by a few.

The difference in emphasis offered by Crimp's 2006 version of *The Seagull* in contrast to Chekhov's original is achieved in a number of ways, including, importantly, alterations to character and relationships.[2] However, it is Crimp's treatment of Nina's two key speeches in the play - one delivered in Act One as she performs the role of a war survivor for Kostya's play, the other delivered in Act Four, as she passes on to Kostya her testimony of Trigorin's violence - that is key to this discussion, particularly insofar as he transforms these speeches into urgent, direct acts of testimony.[3] Crimp gives Nina's speeches the fragmented and metaphorical

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[1] One exception in relation to setting exists: Chekhov's Act Two is set on a croquet lawn and Crimp's is transposed to a dining room.

[2] Trigorin and Kostya's fortunes as writers – the former being successful, the latter unsuccessful – are contrasted with their framing as good or bad men – the former being duplicitous, the latter ethical. By such means, Crimp seems to critique the society that permits, even facilitates, immoral action in the service of ambition and worldly success.

[3] In Crimp's version, Nina describes herself as being that 'steady heartbeat' (13), the 'slow pulse of the universal will' (13), and the 'blood moving under the skin' (13). Nina may thus also represent a more abstract principle, such as humanity's creative, vital impulse to adapt and survive, as opposed to its self-destructive tendencies. Given the fact that she is a witness, she may represent memory itself, in its potential to prevent violence from repeating itself.

character of a testimonial. Her language is not rational and referential, but lyrical and often highly symbolic. Haunted by the violence, both personal and political, she has witnessed, in her attempt to testify, Nina 'actively pursue[s] the [traumatic] accident […] through obscurity, through darkness and through fragmentation' (Felman and Laub 24), in a language which is often 'cognitively dissonant' (Felman and Laub 53). As well as functioning as a critique of contemporary society, Crimp's version of *The Seagull* is also, importantly, a post-Holocaust play, in that it seeks to make social contradictions transparent for the audience, and to elicit a resistant type of memory from spectators. By way of Nina's testimony of her experiences of suffering, which I shall explore shortly, Crimp seeks to make the audience engage with the duplicity of contemporary society and to recognise and critique the fractures violence has created in the twentieth century.

Comparing Crimp's version with Anne Dunnigan's 1964 translation and Michael Frayn's 1986 translation, this paper argues that whilst these versions make Nina's words in Act One express a metaphysical and religious problem, Crimp chooses to situate the play in an era of late capitalism and the war on terror. Late capitalism is the socio-economic system that characterises post-industrial societies, where the production of market goods is replaced by the production and distribution of information in a context dominated by new technologies of communication. The term designates an expansionist phase of capitalism. If industrial capitalism corresponded to a phase of accumulation, concentrating on industrial production and discipline, late capitalism works by controlling prices in a market that has become global. Gilles Deleuze captures the complexity of such a change:

> It is not simply a technological evolution, it is a profound mutation of capitalism. [...] 19th-century capitalism is a capitalism of concentration, both regarding production and property. [...] In the present situation, capitalism no longer concentrates on production, which is often relegated to the Third World periphery. [...] It is a capitalism of products, sales or markets. [...] A market can be conquered only when one acquires its control, not through the formation of discipline, only when one can

set the prices, not through lowering the costs of production.[4] (282-3)

This is further explored by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who assert that,

> to the extent that the sovereign authority of nation-states, even the most dominant nation states, is declining and there is instead emerging a new supranational form of sovereignty, a global Empire, the conditions and nature of war and political violence are necessarily changing. War is becoming a general phenomenon, global and interminable. (3)

Crimp's plays thus respond to a context in which Empire is still present.[5] Western countries, which possess infrastructure and technology, engage in constant, regulatory wars in order to control resources and set the market prices and policies. War thus becomes necessary in order to maintain the current world order. For Crimp, this radical search for profit which late capitalism allows is seen to create duplicitous, individualistic subjectivities. Crimp links a system that places no restrictions on market interests, and which leads to a context of global deceit and violence, to the introduction of these market interests and thus, of duplicity and violence, in interpersonal relationships.

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[4] Author's translation: 'No es solamente una evolución tecnológica, es una profunda mutación del capitalismo. […] El capitalismo del siglo XIX es un capitalismo de concentración, tanto en cuanto a al producción como en cuanto a la propiedad. […] En la actual situación el capitalismo ya no se concentra en la producción, a menudo relegada a la periferia tercermundista. […] Es un capitalismo de productos, es decir, de ventas o de mercados. […] Un mercado se conquista cuando se adquiere su control, no mediante la formación de una disciplina; se conquista cuando se pueden fijar los precios, no cuando se abaratan los costes de producción.'

[5] As Hardt and Negri argue, 'A "network power", a new form of sovereignty, is now emerging, and it includes as its primary elements, or nodes, the dominant nation-states along with supranational institutions, major capitalist corporations, and other powers' (xii). Even if this type of imperialism does not entail the 'sovereignty of the nation-state extended over foreign territory' (Hardt and Negri xii), as is the case with modern imperialism, it is perhaps a more effective and sophisticated form of control than the one modern colonialism entailed.

In Crimps' *The Seagull*, the deceit that permeates characters relations both informs and reflects a larger political milieu of rivalry amongst world powers, thus turning the multiple vignettes of emotional duplicity which permeate Chekhov's play into symptoms and causes of an unequal contemporary world order. Nina's speeches reflect the link between the micro- and the macropolitical. When Nina delivers the testimony of the war survivor in Act One, the language she uses to discuss world relations is strangely reminiscent of the language of interpersonal relationships. In Act One, Nina uses possessives, such as 'my' enemy (14) or 'my' white throat (14), and refers to the enemy as the 'violent Other – origin of material brutality' (14), thus deliberately personalising the political.

In Act Four, Nina, testifies to the violence of interpersonal relationships in which her experience blends with the lines of the war survivor she impersonated in Act One. She thus indirectly refers to Trigorin's violence and lies as being, like she claimed in Act One about international relations, 'COLD, BLANK [and] DISTANT' (64). Crimp thus frames the search for power and ambition in terms of conceptions of the self, in terms of whether the self can come face to face with its limitations and acknowledge the Other, or if it must contribute to oppression of the Other and to emotional – or terrorist – violence. In responding to violence in a post-Holocaust historical and dramatic context, I contend that Crimp is seeking appropriate ways of representing atrocity. How should or could barbarism be dramatized? According to Élizabeth Angel-Perez, the historical rupture which the Holocaust signified has caused British playwrights, and Crimp in particular, to seek to develop new forms, thus making visible 'the impossibility of recycling pre-existent dramatic categories and the need of a generic renovation of theatre' (200).[6] Indeed, I argue that, through Nina's testimony and its lyrical, indeterminate language, Crimp seeks to position spectators in such a way that they become aware of an unequal, contemporary world order, and to oppose the introduction of barbarism as they may detect it in their own daily context.

The language of testimony, made lyrical, urgent and indeterminate, is an important strategy in Crimp's efforts to

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[6] Author's translation: 'Martin Crimp […] met en place une dramaturgie de l'après-Auschwitz qui rend patente l'impossibilité de recycler les catégories dramatiques préexistantes et la nécessité d'une refonte générique du théâtre'.

relocate *The Seagull* as a response to contemporary society and violence and to personally and politically engage his audience. The lyrical testimony requires the collaboration of the audience; they are encouraged to evoke personal experiences of inequality, which are then turned into material for interpretation. This process requires the spectators to become aware of late capitalist inequality, and of the duplicitous subjectivities it creates. Crimp's use of testimony and lyricism in Nina's speeches reflects a post-Holocaust artistic response. It is perhaps an example of what Theodor W. Adorno, in writing about art as a form of resistance in the wake of Auschwitz, states: that for art to be resistant, social contradictions need to be 'experienced' by the receiver, and 'certain art holds open the possibility of that experience [...] In this way alone is aesthetic resistance possible' ('Autonomy' 240). According to Adorno, the experience of contradiction and crisis must be an essential component of any work of art that attempts to elicit resistance.

Crimp emphasises the potential for resistance of testimony through the mise-en-scène itself. The lyrical, poetic language of Nina's testimony in Act One is framed, in Chekhov, by a play-within-a-play, since Kostya's play is staged for both a fictive, bourgeois onstage audience and for a real audience. In Crimp's version, as indicated in the stage directions (3), spectators become the lake in front of which Kostya's play is staged. As she delivers her speech before the lake, Nina must turn her back to the real audience, refocusing the real spectators' attention on the fictive audience. The onstage audience for Kostya's play is made up of Piotr Sorin's guests, who are spending a summer vacation at his country estate. Nina's fictive audience is not responsive, they make fun of Nina's words and cannot understand the message she tries to deliver. Spinning the opening scene around like this invites the real audience to become responsible with respect to the violence spoken about, violence which has roots similar to the duplicity which led to the war on terror. In this way, Crimp encourages the real audience to cease to be mere voyeurs of the spectacle, and to position themselves actively with respect to contemporary structural inequality. The play's ultimate aim is that, out of their contact with oppression and suffering, the audience may develop a new, more personal sense of ethics, one not based on a series of 'commonsense,' prescriptive moral rules.

Testimony as Resistance: Crimp's and Chekhov's Play-Within-a-Play

Crimp contextualised *The Seagull* within a post-holocaust mileux by removing its references to Russia and by giving it urgency and directness of testimony. In her first speech, Nina speaks about the destruction of life on the planet. Her lyrical language evokes a world torn by violence – a dystopia brought about by competition between nations, greed and wars – and the ensuing loneliness of the subject who has witnessed violence:

> Everything human, everything animal, every plant,
> stem, green tendril, blade of grass –
> each living cell
> has divided and divided and divided
> and died.
> For millions of years
> Now this earth is ash, this lake thick like mercury.
> No boat lands on the empty shore.
> No wading bird stands in the shallows.
> And the moon – look – picks her way
> like a looter through the ruined houses of the dead
> slicing open her white fingers
> on the sheets of smashed glass –
> COLD
> BLANK
> DISTANT.
>
> *Pause*.
>
> The brutal material struggle of individuals
> has ended.
> Only the steady heartbeat of the world goes
> on.
> I am that heartbeat. (12-3)

In Crimp's barren, dystopian context, the moon is 'like a looter' (13) who drags herself 'through the ruined houses of the dead' (13), lamenting the lost potential of individuals. Refusing to take part in such a violent game, the moon disclaims her memories of humanity, and pours herself over the unacknowledged site of violence. What is crucial is that, unlike previous translators of Chekhov's play, Crimp foregrounds anxiety about a world saturated by violence through Nina, whose language appears haunted by contemporary conflicts. The shadow of genocide

hovers over Nina's words, since the war she talks about involves the whole of humanity.

In contrast, Dunnigan's 1964 translation features Nina's speech as an ontological or spiritual riddle. Dunnigan's version proposes that 'for thousands of years the earth has borne no living creature' (115), but there is no mention of a war having taken place. It is more reminiscent of a religious apocalypse than of a war between human beings. Life is no more, but there seems to be no explanation or cause:

> Men, lions, eagles, and partridges, horned deer, geese, spiders, silent fish that dwell in the deep, starfish, and all living things, having completed their sad cycle, are no more […] For thousands of years the earth has borne no living creature. And now in vain this poor moon lights her lamp. Cranes no longer wake and cry in meadows, May beetles are heard no more in linden groves. Cold, cold, cold. Empty, empty, empty. Awful, awful, awful. *Pause*. The bodies of all living creatures having turned to dust, eternal matter has transformed them into stones, water, clouds, and all their souls have merged into one […] I am all alone. (115)

Dunnigan's translation renders Nina's speech a metaphysical meditation, whereby the destruction of the multiplicity of life on earth is evoked only in order to convey a sense of chaos and materiality that will finally be resolved into a single universal spirit. Alternatively, Crimp evokes the lives of animals and blades of grass, humans and cells, in order to lament the fact that the efforts undertaken by past generations have been undermined by a war and made to disappear without a trace. In this context, both Nina and the moon become witnesses who recall the memory of violence so that such efforts will not be forgotten.

Frayn's translation, meanwhile, turns Nina's speech into a metaphysical or religious problem that dismisses the apparently random character of existence in the name of a better afterlife:

> For fear that life might appear to you, the Father of Eternal Matter, who is the Devil, effects in you, as he does in stones and water, a constant replacement of the atoms, and you are in a state of continual flux. One thing alone in the universe stays unchanging and constant – spirit itself (*Pause*). All I am allowed to know

> is that in this stubborn, bitter struggle with the Devil,
> marshal of all material forces, I am fated to be victor;
> and that matter and spirit will thereafter merge in
> wondrous harmony to usher in the reign of Universal
> Will. But that will come about only after long tens of
> thousands of years, when moon and bright Sirius and
> earth alike will gradually turn to dust […] And until
> that time, horror, horror, horror. (70)

By comparison, Crimp's version of *The Seagull* is definitively
located in material reality and it is here that the battle between
good and evil is waged. What Crimp portrays in terms of social
and psychological competition for the earth's resources, Frayn
portrays in terms of a struggle between God and the devil. In
contrast, in Crimp's adaptation, the fight between good and evil is
a result of the self-aggrandisement of a few at the expense of a
disenfranchised majority.

Crimp's adaptation, then, deliberately brings the barrenness
of the stage and of the earth into sharp political focus. Nina speaks
of the refusal to sacrifice herself for the sake of the Other. Nina
makes reference to how it is always the presence of the Other that
makes the self confront its own boundaries and abide by reason:

> And now my enemy approaches:
> The violent Other –
> Origin of material brutality.
>
> I can hear his body
>   churn the lake –
> smell his foul breath.
> I can see his terrifying
>   lidless eyes.
> The violent Other:
> hoping to wind the
>   steel wire of reason
> round my white throat
>
> HARD
> BITTER
> RESTLESS. (14)

The language works like a poetic riddle for the audience. World
relations have been undemocratic and savage because of the fear,

amongst Nina's contemporaries, of yielding to the demands of the 'violent Other' (14). Violence seems to have arisen because 'the Other – origin of material brutality' (14) always makes the self aware of its necessary boundaries. Thus, as Nina suggests, the Other is 'terrifying,' hoping to 'wind the steel wire of reason' (14) around the self, that is, hoping to restrain and restrict ambition.

Yet, at the same time, through the reference to the Other as having 'lidless eyes' (14) Crimp suggests that the enemy was also violent in its demands.[7] However, Crimp portrays this fear of the Other as exaggeratedly visceral – note the enemy is 'felt' as a presence that 'churn[s]' (14) the otherwise peaceful lake, and is detected by its 'foul breath' (14). Crimp sketches out a polarised situation which satirically evokes the political climate of the war on terror. In Crimp's version, as mentioned, Nina delivers her speech by turning her back to the real audience in order to address the fictive audience, thus making the real audience self-consciously aware of its ignored presence. The real audience, indeed, becomes the lake, while Nina speaks of a world torn by violence to an unreceptive fictive audience. These fictional spectators dismiss the play as experimental and make fun of Nina's words, increasing Kostya's frustration. Arkádina asks, 'Is this one of those experimental things?' (13) Or jokes, '(*laughs*) I can smell sulphur. Is that intentional? […] (*laughs*) Of course – it's a special effect!' (14) Polina finds Dorn's hat more interesting than Nina's lines, which prompts Arkádina's sarcastic comment that 'the doctor is doffing his hat to the violent Other, origin of / material brutality' (14). Kostya finally loses his nerve.

Nina's speech encounters bad witnesses on stage. Yet because her fictive audience fails to grasp the importance of her message, the real audience can potentially become positive witnesses. Indeed, by spinning the opening scene around by 180 degrees, Crimp explicitly interpellates the real audience. Nina's language, which is non-conventional and personal, lyrical and indeterminate, requires the audience's active interpretation. They

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[7] Note the intertextual echoes between *The Seagull* and *Cruel and Tender* (2004), a play which also dramatises the contemporary context of the war on terror, and which is also a re-writing of another play, Sophocles's *The Trachiniae* (c. 430 BC). In *Cruel and Tender* Amelia, the female protagonist, similarly refers to the terrorist as a face with 'no eyelids': 'my husband is sent out on one operation after another with the aim – the apparent aim – of eradicating terror: not understanding that the more he fights terror the more he creates terror and even invites terror – who has no eyelids – into his own bed' (Crimp, *Cruel* 2).

must attend to the Other. The Other, like a steel wire that winds around one's throat, signifies self-limitation and is a powerful reminder of insignificance of the self. Nina understands violence as the result of the self's inability to make sacrifices for the Other. The riddling quality of Nina's language produces a strangeness which captures the audience's attention. Indeed, the references to the Other belong to the context of academia, and appear de-contextualised. In this sense, they work very much like an *objet trouvé* or a linguistic ready-made (Zimmermann 117), which is offered to the audience as an object of interpretation. As Heiner Zimmermann has argued in relation to Crimp's *Attempts on her Life*, Crimp's linguistic ready-mades are de-contextualised, and thus opaque, fragments of language, which introduce signifiers 'whose signified is inaccessible or which do not represent anything, but simply "are"' (117). Crimp's verbal ready-mades, then, inspired by Marcel Duchamp's visual ready-mades from the early twentieth century, invite spectators to interpret de-contextualised fragments of language, to decode the riddles offered to them. Spectators are impelled to create new ethical codes as they seek to bring closure to the play.

According to Adorno, for art to be resistant it must defy the conventions of realism. Adorno theorised the potential of lyricism – and thus, of the literature of testimony – to act in a resistant manner for the reader/audience. As he puts it, 'what we mean by lyric [...] has within it [...] the quality of break or rupture' (215). He adds, 'The subjective being that makes itself heard in lyric poetry is one which defines and expresses itself as something opposed to the collective and the realm of objectivity. It has, so to speak, lost nature and seeks to recreate it through personification and through descent into the subjective being itself' (Adorno, 'Lyric' 215-16). The lyric poem, through its defamiliarisation, attempts to bring to light 'things undistorted [...] not yet subsumed' (Adorno, 'Lyric' 213) to dominant modes of perception, and to the reification of an exchange society.

If the audience wants to bring closure to the play, and understand the testimonial language Nina presents to them, they will have to fill out Nina's words with specific images. These images may be drawn from the audience's own experiences of inequality. In witnessing, indeed, spectators become 'double witnesses,' that is, both to the trauma and to themselves (Felman and Laub 58). As Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub put it, in witnessing the listener 'partakes of the struggle of the victim with the memories and residues of his or her traumatic past […] the

listener has to feel the victim's victories, defeats and silences, known to them from within, so that they can assume the form of testimony' (58). Through Nina's language, Crimp invites the audience to detect violence as it takes place in their own interpersonal contexts. Crimp asks spectators to resist violence, as well as barbarism within civilised relationships, by making them aware of its symptoms, that is, of how it first manifests in a micropolitical context.

'Cold, Blank, Distant': Breakdown as Resistance to the Contemporary World Order

In Act Four of Crimp's version, two years after the staging of Kostya's play, Nina comes back and testifies to Kostya of the failure of her relationship with Trigorin, who seduced her and 'juggled' her (52) with another woman even when he was expecting a child with her. Nina tells Kostya of her suffering in a barely coherent, deranged speech, in which she keeps jumping between her present as an actress to the time when she first met Trigorin at Sorin's house. Nina begins to merge her own life with the violent experiences of the survivor she impersonated in Act One, and thus inserts her tragedy within a larger contemporary context of violence:

> Oh well. Who cares. He said theatre was useless – kept making fun of me – kept chipping and chipping away till I felt useless myself – no confidence – second-rate – didn't know where to put my hands – couldn't act, couldn't stand right, couldn't control my voice. Horrible. I'm the seagull – is that right? – no. Remember? You shot one. 'Man turns up. Mindlessly destroys it. Idea for a story.' Is that right? No (*Rubs her forehead.*) What was I saying? Oh yes: chipping away. (63)

And later:

> I love him more than ever. I want him. I can't bear it. I'm completely obsessed. Remember how innocent we were? Mmm? How good it felt? 'For millions of years.' Remember?
> 'For millions of years
> Now this earth is ash, this lake thick like mercury.

> No boat lands on the empty shore.
> No wading bird stands in the shallows.
> And the moon – look – picks her way
> like a looter through the ruined houses of the dead
> slicing open her white fingers
> on the sheets of smashed glass –
> COLD
> BLANK
> DISTANT.'
> *She impulsively embraces Konstantin and goes out*. (63-4)

Testimony becomes the medium through which the subject attempts to convey her breakdown after experiencing 'barbarism' in a relationship. Thus, for the spectators, the 'coldness,' 'blankness' and 'distance' of the world after violence is juxtaposed with the coldness of interpersonal relationships. While Nina's reference to the 'violent Other' in Act One was personal, here Nina's language contains deliberately macropolitical echoes.

Nina's reaches that 'moment of self-forgetting in which the subject submerges into language and speaks not as something foreign to the subject but as his own voice' (Adorno, 'Lyric' 218). Nina attempts to separate herself from dominant modes of perception, and speak through her 'own voice,' urgently searching for images, and hovering between consciousness and unconsciousness. Nina's language makes free associations, and 'throw[s] new light on the familiar, thus meeting the objective need for a change in consciousness that might ultimately lead to a change of reality' (Adorno, 'Autonomy' 256). Nina's repeated reference to being 'chipped away' evokes the policies of Empire. It also conjures up the exploitation of the Third World by Western hegemony, which wields a type of power that keeps individuals docile. As Foucault says, the power exerted by liberal democratic societies to maintain the current world order is no longer based on taking life or letting live, as it typically was in pre-modern societies, but on the power to '*foster life* or *disallow* it to the point of death' (138). Liberal democratic societies are interested in the power of life, in the development of 'numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations' (Foucault 140). This has led Hardt and Negri to conclude that a characteristic of late capitalism is that power is becoming totalitarian 'through the production of docile subjects' (53). Through the language of collapse and testimony, then, Nina reveals the ways in which both her personal experiences and, by

implication, global political relations, make one docile. Nina's personal experience of deceit and dishonesty is seen as a consequence of the construction of late capitalist subjects. Crimp refuses to induce an experience of 'satisfaction and harmony' in the spectator, derived from seeing 'fictitious conflicts resolved' (Adorno, 'Industry' 231), and seeks to reveal 'the generality of things' (Adorno, 'Lyric' 211) by making social contradictions visible.

Both Nina – through her final testimony – and also Kostya – through the dissatisfied attitude he shows throughout the play – seek to articulate world inequality and the symbolic violence of Empire by directly pointing to Trigorin's dishonest subjectivity. Over and over in the play, be it in their acting and writing, through the riddling language of collapse or in overt denunciation, they refer to the individualistic, solipsistic nucleus of the late capitalist entrepreneur who refuses to acknowledge 'the steel wire of reason' (14) or the requirements and needs of the Other. Fragmented language, however, also reflects and denounces women's complicity with victimisation – 'I love him more than ever. I want him. I can't bear it. I'm completely obsessed' (63). Indeed, Nina participates and is complicit in the patriarchal system that oppresses her. As she puts it, once Trigorin ceased to love her or to consider her valuable, she 'felt useless […] – no confidence – second-rate' (63). Through Nina, Crimp also denounces what Pierre Bourdieu has called 'the paradoxical submission' (7) of the victims – in this case, female victims of violence – to the structures of domination, leading them to view themselves through these structures which have been imposed on them, thus re-enacting 'dominant modes of perception […] which lead them to acquire a negative representation of their own sex' (20).[8]

Crimp's 're-writing' of the character of Trigorin and the ethical riddles he is meant to awaken in the audience are intimately connected with the several, repeated crises of violence which have taken place during the twentieth century, of which the Holocaust is only the most extreme example, and to which Crimp's plays repetitively respond. Felman and Laub have asserted that, after the repeated twentieth-century crises of barbarism, 'testimony has become a crucial mode of our relation to events of our times – our relation to the traumas of contemporary history: the Second World

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[8] Author's translation: 'Cette soumission paradoxale [...] C'est ainsi que les femmes peuvent s'appuyer sur les schèmes de perception dominants [...] qui les conduisent à se faire une représentation très négative de leur propre sexe.'

War, the Holocaust, the nuclear bomb, and other war atrocities'
(5).[9]

In *A Theory of Parody*, Linda Hutcheon explains that
contemporary authors 'trans-contextualize' (11) previous works of
art and, in so doing, they parody them. The momentous historical
events which took place between both playwrights' – Chekhov's
and Crimp's – lifetimes, might account for the differences in the
treatment of the most crucial passages, of the main characters and,
in particular, of Trigorin. The Holocaust, indeed, was driven
forward by individuals who, in an educated, ostensibly civilised
society, committed acts of barbarism. In Hutcheon's words,
'parody is, in another formulation, repetition, with a critical
distance, which marks difference rather than similarity' (6). As she
puts it, such self-conscious reworking of old texts 'play[s] on the
tensions created by […] historical awareness' (6). They signal less
an acknowledgement of the 'inadequacy of the definable forms' of
the predecessors […] than their own desire to 're-function those
forms to their own needs' (Hutcheon 4).

In conclusion, Crimp transforms the failure of interpersonal
relationships as it is depicted in Chekhov into a very tangible,
political reality that responds to the world today. Breakdown and
testimony seek to reposition spectators as responsible with respect
to contemporary violence, by making them aware of the need to
resist it in micropolitical contexts. This awakens in the audience the
need for ethical consciousness, and the need to prevent the
introduction of 'barbarism' within civilised relations. Nina's two
key testimonies are offered to the audience as poetic riddles about
the transformation of a person into a vehicle for resilience and
ethical action, on the basis of his or her own contact with suffering
and oppression. Crimp's post-Holocaust version of Chekhov's *The
Seagull* suggests that ethical codes, in the contemporary context, are
not a pre-given set of moral precepts but the result of a process of
learning, through life, that suffering is an injustice. A new ethics
can thus only emerge out of the audience's realisation of the

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[9] The twentieth century is particularly linked to genocide because
technological advancements have made the means of killing more
effective. As Weitz comments in 'The Modernity of Genocides': 'In the
end Nazism is in fact the outcome of developments in the mechanisms of
power [and technology], newly developed since the eighteenth century,
that have been pushed to their high point' (54). Aware that technology
has, in the twentieth-century, been developed to its highest point of
sophistication, Crimp thus turns to influencing the spectators' psychology
as a means to resist the introduction of barbarism in the culture.

concrete, local, specific need for relationships to be redesigned. Through the indeterminate, lyrical language of breakdown and testimony, Crimp aims to make the audience evoke a resistant type of memory which makes them aware of the need to oppose the inequality of the existing order, and of the fact that they have the potential to become, like Nina, ethical and committed individuals.

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Eye-Height: A Project in Pictures

BY BEATRICE CANTINHO

Abstract

Eye-Height is a choreographic work that activates a scenographic/instrumental object. This object is a 'stage instrument' of six metres squared, made from nine wooden modules, with an undulated variable surface, forty to seventy-five centimetres thick. Dancers perform choreographed movement on the surface of the object, which behaves as a resonance box for sounds that are created by the friction and percussion of moving bodies on its surface. The vibration induced by the dancers activates nine sets of tuned piano strings inside the stage instrument. The structure of the device articulates conceptually the qualities present in the choreography. *Eye-Height* creates an extensive landscape of performers (dancers and musicians), audience, and space. As suggested by the title, the spectator's eye is at the same height as the stage-object. This position creates a specific relationship between the dancers and the audience. The landscape is perceived in layers, and thus creates a visual depth. The sound produced by the dancers also interacts with the live musicians; the performers share the same music/dance score.
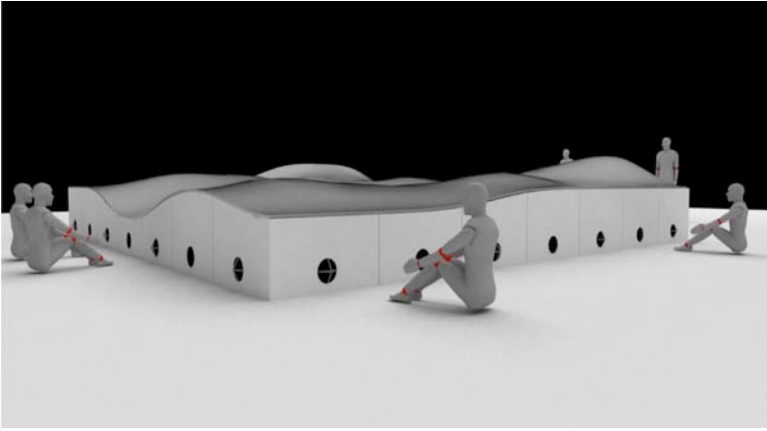
Fig. 1. 3D simulation of the construction of the stage.
Photo courtesy of Ricardo Jacinto.

Fig. 2. Movement tests on the prototype module.
Courtesy of Beatriz Cantinho

Fig. 3. Positioning the stage to place the piano strings
underneath it. Photo courtesy of Shiori Usui
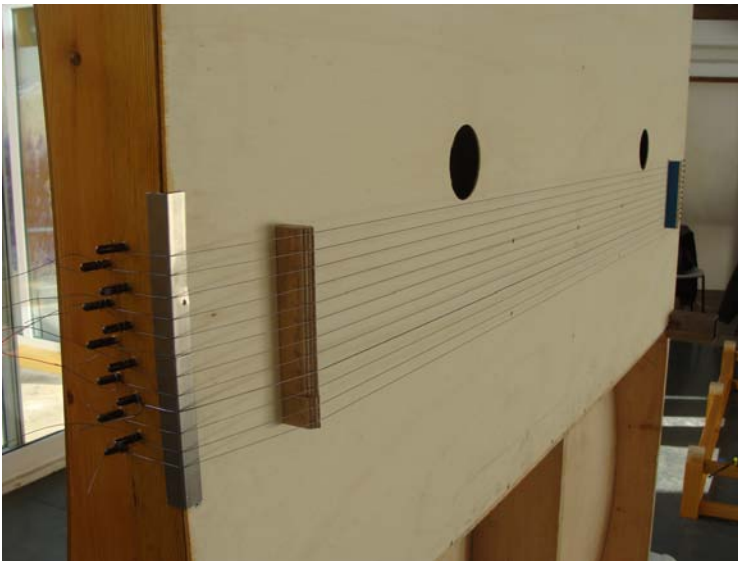
Fig. 4. Piano strings resonate with the movement on the
stage. Photo courtesy of Shiori Usui
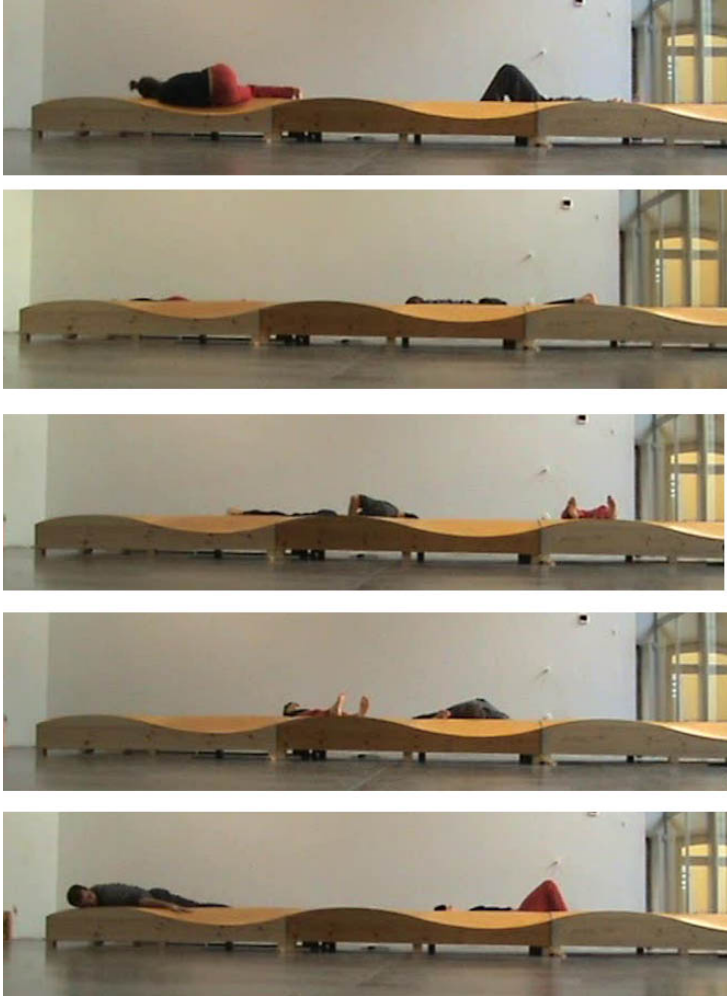
Fig. 5. Rehearsal: from the audience's eye-height
perspective. Photo courtesy of Beatriz Cantinho

Fig. 6. Aligning the surface. Photo courtesy of Beatriz Cantinho

Fig. 7. The stage surface and its sound potential: exploring
different possibilities of sound quality and texture, experimenting
with friction and impact. Photo courtesy of Shiori Usui

Fig. 8. The final varnish cover enhances the friction sound on the surface. Photo courtesy of Beatriz Cantinho

Fig. 9. For this performance the audience was positioned on one side of the stage. Photo courtesy of Daniel Malhão

Moving Uncertainties: Negotiating 'Theatre in Movement' and Field-work Research in the French Context

BY EUGÉNIE PASTOR

Abstract

Escale is a travelling physical theatre company based in France. For most of the past twenty years, its members have lived in caravans and performed in a marquee, bringing experimental performances to rural areas. Their itinerant lifestyle and artistic choices do not only situate them in the margins of the French theatrical landscape, but also in a terminological gap, as 'physical theatre' does not exist as a genre in France in the same way that it does in the UK. Therefore, to create and promote its work, Escale negotiates several disciplines and vocabularies. Such terminological uncertainty also influences my position as a researcher: it raises questions about the translation of a vocabulary developed in one context, and its adaptability to a similar practice in a different context. There does not yet exist in French an adequate lexicon for the kind of physical theatre that Escale practices. As a researcher, this has forced me to question the relationship I have with French, my mother tongue. The position of the researcher as an ethnographer, the influence of physical labour on my relationship with and approach to Escale, as well as the ethics of friendship and dialogue between researcher and artist are also issues generated by Escale's position in transitional zones, in-between disciplines, in-between identities.

Physical Theatres in the French context: Negotiating Marginalised Identities.

The stage is divided by three walls of plexiglass. On either side, a couple is dancing, each mirroring the other. From where the camera stands, the couples appear symmetrically on each side of

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the fine line created by the plexiglass walls. The women grab their partners by the chin, passing an arm around the back of their necks. In this position, looking at the men's faces, they direct their partners and walk toward the camera, in a line parallel to the walls. An instant later, the couples have returned to where they started. The women stand two metres away from the walls, their backs turned to the plexiglass. The men stand behind them. They pass an arm around the women's waists, and hold tightly so that their bodies touch their partners.' They push a leg backward, wrapping their free arm around the women's throats. Holding their partners, they turn and swing them slightly to face the wall. They hold a minute, as if looking at the reflection in a mirror, rather than at another couple. At this moment, an image of a brick wall is projected onto the stage, and onto the male performers' bodies. The contours of the bricks cover the surface of the men's bodies, which become moving prisons, as the bricks remain still on their dancing forms. (*Façades*, 2009)

Escale is a company that aims to produce 'total theatre,' 'pushing further the boundaries of theatre, mime, dance, circus and object theatre' (Escale 'Gestuel').[1] Formed at the beginning of the 1990s by Hugues Hollenstein and Grit Krausse, respectively French and German, the company became itinerant when the couple's children were born. In order to deal with the constraints of intensive touring without being separated from their progeny, Hollenstein and Krausse decided that life on the road was the best option. After a dramatic car accident that destroyed all their material, the company was hosted by the new circus collective Les Oiseaux Fous. It is in this context that Escale discovered the use of marquees, and eventually purchased two. After a few years of collaboration, Escale started touring more on its own, and in 1998 it became fully itinerant, not settling down again until 2004. The work Escale produces might be labelled 'physical theatre' if it were performed in the UK. The French language, however, has no linguistic equivalent to the term 'physical theatre.' Instead, to translate the expression, it proposes a multiplicity of approximate terms such as 'théâtre gestuel,' 'théâtre corporel, or 'théâtre visual.'[2] I argue that if there are no terms in French, however

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[1] Author's translation : 'un théâtre total, 'nous jouons à repousser les frontières du théâtre, du mime, de la danse, du cirque et du théâtre d'objet.'

[2] 'Gestural theatre,' 'corporeal theatre,' or 'visual theatre.'

general, that provide an equivalent to 'physical theatre,' it is likely because such work is far from being dominant in the French theatrical tradition. On the other hand, this terminological lacuna complicates the ways in which physical practices can be presented in France.

The term 'physical theatre' is highly unsatisfying, and I agree with Simon Murray and John Keefe who propose that speaking about 'physical theatres' instead would allow an acknowledgement of these practices' inherent multiplicity.[3] Critical discourse on 'physical theatres' is therefore problematised by the divergent plurality of practices categorised as such. More, many commentators rely on vocabularies borrowed from dance studies to analyse movement in performance. The equation is, in the case of Escale, more complicated, as the company develop their work in a context where theatre studies is still heavily informed by literary criticism and much less academic attention is focused on dance. In this context, Escale's shows inhabit a liminal space, drawing on a multiplicity of disciplines and terminologies. Its situation therefore inflects and influences my position as a researcher who wishes to study the company's work from the perspective of 'physical theatres.' Both Hollenstein and Krausse consider the work they create and perform to be inseparable from their choice for *itinérance*. The one is at the same time cause and consequence of the other: it is because they are a 'theatre *of* movement' that they also are 'theatre *in* movement'[4] (Personal Interview). Putting a great emphasis on physicality in their shows, Escale locate their work on the margins of the theatrical landscape.

Contemporary theatre practice in France often places considerable importance on the text, and on language.[5] Several critics have noted that this tendency consists of 'putting the character in brackets,[6] and with them all practices that relate to

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[3] There is indeed no exhaustive definition of 'physical theatre': as Murray and Keefe suggest, '[it] is […] about intersections, cross-over and spillages' (1). Physical theatres are composite, made from a multiplicity of techniques.

[4] Author's translation: 'théâtre en mouvement' and 'théâtre du mouvement.'

[5] Consider for example the experimental playwriting of Valère Novarina, Hubert Colas or Nadège Prugnard, or the work of director Claude Régy, whose latest production *Ode Maritime* (2009) consists of an actor standing still on stage and delivering a text by Fernando Pessoa.

[6] The fact that this expression uses a metaphor borrowed from writing ('brackets') strikes me as an illuminating example of this tendency.

psychological interpretation, in order to give the text the most important place' (Didong 7).[7] The centrality of the text in many contemporary productions is echoed by the prevalence of a language borrowed from literary studies for artists to speak about their work, and for academics to analyse performance. In interviews conducted with French actors who worked with director Claude Régy, Paola Didong noted that the expressions used by these artists compared their work on stage with the labour of the writer (138). The centrality of a literary referent is also characteristic of theatre studies in France, as one can see in recent work that explores the voice in the text, or the legacy of the Aristotelian concept of mimesis in contemporary performance.[8]

　　Criticism that focuses on physical practices is rare, and often influenced by a strong literary tradition also. The situation of dance studies in France is particularly illuminating in this respect. Gore, Louppe and Piollet note that although dance in France is highly respected on stage, 'it has not been granted any theoretical importance, and it is still considered as minor in that aspect' (Gore, Louppe and Piollet 36). This is still the case, as one can see when researching the courses offered in dance studies by French universities: only four institutions propose a dance studies course at Masters level, against twenty-one in the UK; among them, just three offer PhD programs, as opposed to ten for the UK (Centre National de la Danse; Postgraduateresearch.com). The position of the Jacques Lecoq school, still considered by many student actors to occupy a limited niche in actor training, is another significant example of the way physical practices are perceived in France. David Bradby suggests that the marginalisation of the school is caused by its absence of any written protocol or treatise, a feature he sees as 'unusual in a theatre culture which […] still values new developments in theatre practice partly by the extent to which they give rise to […] theoretical discourses' (Bradby 89).[9] This is even

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[7] Author's translation: '…mettre entre parenthèses le personnage et avec lui toutes les pratiques relevant d'une interprétation psychologique, afin de donner au texte la première place.'

[8] Several studies in France do indeed focus on questions such as the disappearance of the character, the importance of the voice, and of dialogical structures, such as the actual plot of contemporary theatre. See for example Jean-Pierre Ryngaert and Julie Sermon, Denis Guénoun, and Arnaud Rykner.

[9] And indeed, as Bradby notes further in his analysis, Antonin Artaud's 'total theatre,' although calling for a distanciation from texts, has been defined by Artaud in several different writings (Bradby 90).

more surprising when considering the fame and respect accorded to the school abroad, especially in the UK.

A similar paradox can be observed in the practice of mime. In fact, although several of the most influential mime masters are French – Marcel Marceau, or Étienne Decroux, with whom Hollenstein trained – the genre is under-represented, often considered outdated by a public which still often associates it with Marceau's iconic white-faced character Pip. Several artists also regret the lack of a terminology capable of accurately reflecting their practice, a concern voiced by members of Schlémil Théâtre in a survey initiated by the Centre National du Mime: 'it is difficult to put a name on the artistic form we defend, which is neither theatre or dance, and not only mime' (qtd. in CNM 24). In this survey, several companies expressed their regret at the absence of funding, networks and touring opportunities in France.[10] Artists whose work focuses on physicality were – and still are – debating the legitimacy of their practice and aesthetic.

Escale's work is, in light of these problems, very hard to classify. Lacking a better term, the company's work is usually described as either 'théâtre gestuel' or 'théâtre corporel,' or sometimes 'théâtre visual.'[11] It shares a professional network with practices such as mime, new circus, puppetry and street theatre. Indeed, Escale's work shares some key features with each of these art forms: *Est ou Ouest* (2009) is, for example, constructed around Grit Krausse's aerial acts on the silk. *Aucun Poisson Ne Rit des Souvenirs* (1992), Escale's first show, bears the marks of Hollenstein's training in corporeal mime with Decroux; *Façades* borrowed movement vocabularies from contemporary dance. However, Escale practitioners are most often associated with these networks because of their itinerant lifestyle rather than their actual work. They belong to marginal street theatre cultures, and to the

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[10] The Centre National du Mime is a structure created and run by Etienne Bonduelle, whose efforts are directed toward institutional and public recognition of practices currently regarded as mime. The CNM has an acute lack of funding, and its breadth and impact have dramatically regressed over the past five years.

[11] It is worth noting that none of these expressions are clearly defined, and sometimes can appear to have contradictory meanings: for example, however vague and tautological 'visual theatre' may sound, the term is often associated with what might in the UK be described as physical theatre practices or contemporary mime, but on the other hand it is sometimes used to differentiate physical theatre practice from 'mime corporel' (author's translation: 'corporeal mime') (Martinez 18).

travelling theatre network, but they do not consider either their productions or their lifestyle to be characteristic of any specific community (Hollenstein and Krausse, E-mail).

The interdisciplinarity inherent to Escale's work and the generic in-between space that it inhabits in France are mirrored in the physical, geographical position induced by the company's life choices. In fact, there is a close relation between Escale's physicality and mobility. Being able to travel means that its members can perform in geographically remote areas, in villages deserted by cultural life. It also means that the company is out of the usual commercial circuit, something voiced by Escale as a political decision. In a conversation on nomadism published in the street performance journal *Stradda*, Hollenstein insists on the necessity for itinerant companies to 'organise travels that are more personal, and not influenced by opportunities of being programmed in festivals' (qtd. in Voisin 26).[12] Escale map out their touring trajectories by establishing strong contacts with local communities, a feature that allows them to perform in marginal areas but that also excludes them from much of the theatrical landscape of the country. Escale is well-known and respected among mime and itinerant theatre networks;[13] it also receives 'aide à l'itinérance' from the state, as part of a scheme designed to help circus companies fund the costs of itinérance. But because its members very rarely appear in mainstream theatre festivals, and never perform in traditional theatre buildings or in big towns, Escale remains invisible to most theatre-goers. Although there is a deliberate and conscious choice on Escale's part to avoid mainstream networks, the company also regrets the lack of public visibility it is afforded twenty years after its creation. Hollenstein recognises his own responsibility in dealing badly with promoters, acknowledging his feelings of suspicion toward them (Informal

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[12] Author's translation: 'Il faut [re]prendre des voyages plus personnels qui ne s'appuient pas sur des trajets de programmation établis.'
[13] Escale was, for example, invited in 2008 to a national round-table on mime practices in France, at Le Vieux-Colombier, along with high-profile personalities such as Lucile Bodson, director of the International Institute for Puppetry of Charleville-Mézières, and Jean-Claude Cotillard, director of École Supérieure d'Art Dramatique de Paris. It also often appears in articles about itinérance, and occupies a significant place in the itinerant community, an achievement emphasised by Hollenstein's position as a director of the CITI (International Centre of Itinerant Theatre) between 2000 and 2007.

Interview).[14] I argue that Escale's difficulty in performing outside the networks to which it is usually relegated – circus, mime, street theatre – also has to do with the nature of the work it produces, namely performances that do not fit within the boundaries of pre-established categories because they fuse together many techniques that are not often discussed in critical terms.

Being itinerant, Escale engenders a unique overlap of living, rehearsal and performance space. Its camp and marquee blur the boundaries between different kinds of theatre space, naturally raising questions about the notions of openness and enclosure. When Escale sets up its camp, it builds an inside from an outside: the tent, for example, has to be mounted from poles and plastic to create the final marquee. The marquee, built on the ground of whichever town the group settles in and surrounded by Escale's caravans, is a way to 'invite people into our home, into their home'[15] (Hollenstein and Krausse, Personal Interview). The camp and the marquee simultaneously constitute what Gay McAuley defines as performance spaces, rehearsal spaces, public spaces and private spaces (94). During the time when Escale was a full-time itinerant company, the box-office and the lavatories were situated in old-fashioned caravans, open to the public on performance nights. These private spaces – the company's bathroom, in a bright green caravan, and offices, in a deep aubergine one – were then transformed into public spaces. On these occasions, Escale's settlement was the place where the show was happening, but also where the company's atypical lifestyle was put on display. The whole settlement would become 'presentational space' constituted of 'both the architectural features of the stage as it exists in any given theatre […] and the organization of this space for the production in question' (McAuley 79). The marquee constitutes the stage on which the show is performed, but it also occupies a central position in the whole settlement: the caravans are organised around it, it attracts attention by its size and colour, and it epitomizes both itinérance and the prospect of entertainment. Therefore, the marquee and the spaces that exist 'outside' it but within the boundaries of the camp – the caravans, the truck that can be turned into a kitchen – become spaces for the performance of itinérance.

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[14] This attitude seems to be influenced by a general feeling of defiance and suspicion from Escale toward the establishment. One wonders whether this suspicion is only one-sided.

[15] Author's translation: 'on invite les gens chez nous, chez eux.'

Escale's members live an alternative life, producing their work on the geographical and cultural margins of the country, and they are above all else concerned with leading an existence that is politically coherent. Their everyday life is built on an alternative understanding of the collective, and physical tasks are shared independently of gender considerations. Indeed, over the years, their artistic work has become increasingly radical. Their latest show for example, *Est ou Ouest*, might be considered as agit-prop, pamphleteering for a reconsideration of socialism. The action of bringing experimental performances to culturally excluded rural areas, and of organising workshops in high schools located in the countryside of the *Région Centre*, is completely dependent on this extreme-left political ideal. Using Baz Kershaw's analysis of the radical in theatre, I argue that what makes Escale an activist company also lies in its rooting in physical theatre. Due to its context of production, in which there is an important connection between literacy and performance, the company's work situates it on the fringes of alternative art because it does not necessarily need to relyon a literary referent: its physical theatre becomes one of the 'alternative underground "genres" […] that established [it] […] beyond the cultural mainstream' (Kershaw 59). Moreover, Kershaw, drawing on Lefebvre's concept of the theatre building being 'shaped by the ruling ideologies' argues that performances happening inside theatre buildings are 'deeply embedded in theatre as a *disciplinary system*' (Lefebvre qtd. in Kershaw 31). By performing in different spaces – that is, in spaces used for the performance of itinérance – Escale literally performs its politics, displaying alternative ways of living and doing performance. To borrow once again from Kershaw, Escale's performance is radical because:

> the freedom [it] invokes is not just freedom *from* oppression, repression, exploitation – the resistant sense of the radical – but also freedom *to reach beyond* existing systems of formalised power, freedom to create currently unimaginable forms of association and action… (18)

This freedom of action, association, and creation is what commentators are keen to read from the outside: the 'true spirit of

a troupe, of a family' (Ballista), a theatre 'far from the comfortable temples of art' (Y.C.).[16]

Dialogue as a Methodological Tool, and the Researcher's Positioning in Escale's Settlement

It is 7pm, late October. Inside the marquee everything is dark, apart from the stage: a circle of wood, which is brightly lit. A broad tube blows hot air inside the tent, in an attempt to warm the space up. A long piece of red fabric hangs centre stage, sustained by three poles. A few colourful chairs have been installed, close to the opening in the tent from where the machine blows. I am sitting in the borders of the light. It is cold. The group of non-professional actors arrive; I am introduced to them; the rehearsal can start. It smells of wet countryside and gasoline. I arrived two hours ago.

Escale's position in-between disciplines, and across geographical spaces, means that one cannot approach them as one might approach a more formal company. Because they have such a unique lifestyle, and because this lifestyle shapes their work, meeting Escale became for me an experience close to conducting fieldwork in an ethnographical context. I wish here to use a frame of analysis informed by ethnography, and will take as an example the approach used by Sarah Gorman when attending rehearsals of the New York City Players. I am aware that many critics have written on the use of a methodology informed by ethnography when analysing dance and movement, and that several have called for the phenomenological involvement of the viewer to be taken into account (Martin 112; Novack 115). However, another dimension of fieldwork is at play here considering the immersive nature of my stay with the company. I did not only attend rehearsals and work on their archives but also shared Escale's way of living for a few days.

My relationship with Escale has been shaped by an interplay of constant status shifts. One dimension of this status play consisted of a dialogical relationship between Escale and I, and between each one of the company's members and I. Hollenstein,

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[16] Author's translation: 'un esprit de troupe, de famille' (Ballista, 2000); 'loin des temples de l'art confortable' (Y.C.). The conceptualisation of Escale as an alternative miniature society often appears in press articles, and the artists are aware of the ideal they bring along with them when settling down in a town. Ballista speaks of Escale's 'mini village,' another journalist describes them as 'minstrels' (*saltimbanques*) (Y.C.).

for example, proved to be more than happy to share the company's archives, and allowed me a great deal of freedom when looking through their video recordings and press archives. The question of dialogue was absolutely central, and, as such, I felt that a dialogical research structure would be the most effective way forward in my approach to the company's large archives, particularly as Hollenstein often sat next to me, commenting on the footage.[17] This seemed to be a way for him to retrospectively make sense of Escale's work, and he expressed a concern that this may not have been achieved if I had not been there to watch this material. It was also a privileged way for me to see Escale's work contextualised, explained and deciphered by one of its principal figures.

My presence in Escale's everyday life essentially worked in a way not dissimilar to what Quetzil E. Castañeda has called the 'trigger' of ethnographical fieldwork. Castañeda identifies the 'trigger' as a phenomenon opposed to the ethnographic method of 'elicitation': 'conceived as a minimalist presence and nearly non-interference in the life … of the subjects of research' (Castañeda 90). This conception supposes that 'data pre-exists independently of research problems and methodologies developed to find it' (90). In fact, Hollenstein's confession that my presence had shed light on work he had not seen in years, and my awareness of how much my knowledge of Escale's work was dependent on my presence at Le Grand Bourreau, made clear that the

> responses and reactions that research subjects have to researchers are always and can only be a response to the individual and particular fieldworker. It is a response in-situ in relation to the researcher's questions, attitudes and presentations of self in the actual socio-historical situation of the interaction. (90)

This feature has led to the need I now feel to include myself in the writings that resulted from the fieldwork, to allow myself to find a

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[17] Several of the conversations I had on theoretical, aesthetic or philosophical matters were with Hollenstein himself, who was usually sitting next to me when I watched recordings of their work. The reason for Hollenstein's continuous presence, as opposed to Krausse's apparently more restrained participation in the debate, was partly due to his position as director of most of the company's shows, but also partially because he was also, at the time we met, writing up a Masters thesis on applied theatre, and thus seemed keen to share theoretical debates with me.

voice. I follow here the example of Sarah Gorman who relied on ethnography in order to accurately express the ambivalence she felt had been at the core of her 'fieldwork' (Gorman). Gorman wanted to acknowledge how much she felt her presence affected the whole rehearsal process, and how her position was more one of a 'participant-observer' than a passive observer gathering data. This positioning allows the argument to become dialogical by acknowledging the researcher's biases while situating the subject of observation on an equal level, making clear his/her influence on the researcher's understanding of their practices.

One major shift in this status dialogue happened on the morning of the third day of my stay, when I joined forces with everybody present in the camp to help unload one of the company's lorries. I felt that along with thankfulness for my early morning efforts came a sort of trust, as if I had gained my full status by showing that I was not taking distance from the more laborious aspects of Escale's life. On the other hand, physical labour became a way for me to truly grasp some of the features of Escale's everyday life. Through my physical participation, the fieldwork became 'field-work':[18] I was gathering information on the company's everyday life and achieving a bodily understanding of their situation. I could compare this work to the numerous 'get-ins' and 'get-outs' I have myself taken part in with the company I work with, listing and comparing different grades of fatigue or muscular pain. A 'bodily intertextuality' in Lena Hammergren's words, was at this point possible. Taking as an example the position of the historian, sensitive to the bodily inscription of other bodies in documents recording a specific event, Hammergren argues that these processes of recollection 'call up memory associations' that 'activate a bodily memory, in order to come closer to the reality of these disappeared bodies' (53-55). Unloading a truck is just one moment of the company's installation procedures. I realised that this highly demanding physical labour came before *any* performance, and was therefore able to grasp (at least to an extent) the level of sacrifice that Escale's independence engendered. Through my position as a working body I was given the chance to understand, with reference to my own physical history, a part of how Escale's everyday life not only looked, but also how it felt.

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[18] I am grateful to Lise Uytterhoeven for suggesting the hyphenation to place emphasis on the importance of labour and physical participation in my research.

To the material I have gathered on Escale, I have added another kind of archive, born of my spoken and enacted dialogue with its members. In this regard, I situate myself at the point of encounter between an ethnographical approach and a phenomenological approach, a positioning that Cynthia Novack, in *Sharing the Dance*, has called for as a way of helping researchers to fully grasp the sociological, physiological and emotional impacts of movement in performance. Movement being at the core of Escale's artistic and everyday lives, such an approach seems completely relevant. Escale's very idiosyncratic way of living and of producing work did not just shape our relationship, but also shaped the discourse I was engaging in with the company, turning the object-subject relationship into an open dialogue.

The fact that Escale function in a distinctly French context also played an acute part in shaping both my relationship with them and my positioning as a researcher. It is not only a question of negotiating performance across disciplines (and for me, across critical methodologies): Escale are, in France, unnameable; as we have seen earlier in this paper, there is no clear, distinct vocabulary to think about their work.[19] On the company's website, Escale describes its work through metaphors such as 'actors inebriated with movement.'[20] The press, in order to describe the company's work, is forced to refer to a multiplicity of different art forms: 'techniques that oscillate between mime, acting, contemporary dance, clown, circus, mask or object theatre' (Y.C.).[21] The challenge is then, for the company, to find adequate terminologies to describe its objectives, its work and its shows. I also argue that the absence

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[19] Of course, one can describe in minute detail one of Escale's shows, borrowing vocabularies and using metaphors. However, there are no general terms to evoke or classify their actual style. The technical languages developed by Etienne Decroux of Jacques Lecoq for example, could be useful to describe Escale's work. However, each of these terminologies has aesthetical connotations. Strong divisions have marked the history of mime throughout the 20th century, in France, each school claims its superiority over the others. Choosing one vocabulary over another could lead to a potential confusion of meanings. More, if such vocabularies are useful tools to describe mime and corporeal theatre, they do not seem completely appropriate to describe dance or circus techniques. French critical language on these matters still has to take distance from literary concepts: see for example the work of Rykner and Martinez.

[20] 'actors inebriated with movement.'

[21] Author's translation: 'techniques qui oscillent entre le mime, l'acteur, la danse contemporaine, le clown, le cirque, le masque ou le theatre d'objet.'

of precise words to describe 'physical theatre' in French not only affects the way the genre is perceived by French audiences, but also the way the work is thought of and created. I think, in line with Toni D'Amelio, that languages shape different conceptions of the body, and that 'ways of thinking become attitudes that predispose the dancing body to move in certain ways; ways of thinking also have an immediate currency and influence as they construct discourse on dance' (90). The fact the French language lacks words when confronted with physicality induces a specific relationship with the moving body. D'Amelio compares the two French and English *faux-amis* words *premise* and *prémisse*. English is her mother tongue but, having spent a large part of her life in Paris, she considers herself to be in a good position to give an insight into the ways in which both language and culture operate. I wish to adopt a similar – albeit inverted – positioning, being a French native but living in the UK and researching in English.

D'Amelio comments on Tim Etchells' interpretation of the work of two French choreographers: Jérome Bel and Loïc Touzé. She argues that Etchells' misunderstanding is rooted in fundamental differences in the perception and interpretation of dance between the two cultures. Building on the idea that the French *prémisse* has a predominantly philosophical register, while the English 'premise' is more pragmatic, she then draws a comparison between this semantic difference between the two languages, and a similar trend that she sees in the two dance cultures. Her analysis of French dance is thus drawn from a substantial amount of theoretical work: 'as the word "premise" oscillates back and forth between its physical and conceptual facets, it encapsulates my larger argument that thought and action mutually engender one another' (90). The French taste for abstract concepts, along with a texto-centric tradition in scholarly culture, not only shaped perceptions of dance, but also the way in which physical theatres are created and executed. It is also significant that in a debate about physical theatres I am forced to rely on dance criticism when discussing such productions in English, in much the same way as D'Amelio illustrates. The task is further complicated in French due to the fact that French criticism is informed to such a great extent by literary studies. This vocabulary can prove useful when analysing how physical performances take distance from linear narrative structures, becoming a 'hors-texte' (something outside of the text), as discussed by Arnaud Rykner or Ariane Martinez. I argue, however, that lacking a satisfactory vocabulary for describing the nature of their work to the general public, these

artists are effectively forced to see their work relegated to a broad and homogenous underground category. This marginalisation has surely contributed in no small part to the radicalisation of many of these companies' political attitudes, as in the case of Escale.

Escale's work is impossible to classify in the country in which it is produced, due in large part to a lack of words to describe it. This positions Escale at a point of encounter between a number of different disciplines and terminologies, and therefore requires from the researcher a constant positioning in-between methodologies, definitions, languages and labellings. In this case, the adoption of a dialogic structure for criticism was most appropriate, placing both researcher and artist on the same level, allowing each of them a voice. Mixing an ethnographic and a literary approach, such a structure will also prove valuable in future analyses of movement in performance that draw on both the French and UK academic traditions. This will allow both the researcher's and artists' biases and subjectivities to be acknowledged, and, in the case of Escale, it will contribute to the production of a discourse on an invisible discipline, words on a work that cannot be spoken about.

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When the Body Becomes Too Much: Writing on *Becoming-locust* and the Spectacle of Theory

BY PAUL HURLEY

Abstract

This paper is a critical reflection upon my performance, *Becoming-locust*, a performance which took place at New Dance Horizons, Regina, Canada, as part of the Queer City Cinema Festival in June 2008. *Becoming-locust* was the last of some fifteen becoming-animal performances I created between 2002 and 2007 and as such was presented as something of an epilogue, a finale to the series that I had decided was coming to an end. The piece began as a performance lecture, quoting from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and Rosi Bradiotti, and was followed by an intense - and to some provocative - physical action of smashing iceberg lettuces with my head, whilst dressed in a jockstrap, stiletto heels and ostrich plumes, to a loop of Shirley Bassey's 'Where Do I Begin (Love Story).' This paper contextualises the piece within a framework that zigzags between Deleuze and Guattari, Braidotti, Guy Debord, Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva. It argues that works such as *Becoming-locust* can be productive of subjectivities that reference existing practices and modalities, but depart from them in a way that is critical, performative and ethical.

Becoming-Locust

Almost the entire floor of the performance space is covered with a diagonal grid of 45 iceberg lettuces, approximately 6 feet apart from each other. I am already in the space, dressed in a smart casual shirt, jeans and boots, and invite the audience to come and sit around the three edges. I read a couple of short texts – extracts from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and

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Fig. 1. Becoming. Photo courtesy of Gary Varro

Rosi Braidotti's 'The Ethics of Becoming-imperceptible' – about becoming-animal, sexuality and the human. I then place a large brown paper shopping bag in front of me, take off and place in it my glasses, wristwatch and the printed texts that I have been reading. I remove my boots and socks and place them at the back of the space. I take off the rest of my clothes, tossing them casually to the back of the space, and stand wearing only a white jockstrap. Out of the bag I take a pair of wings constructed out of coat hangers and silver stockings, two wrapped rolls of bandage, a small pair of scissors, a cardboard poster tube and a pair of silver glitter and diamanté-studded stilettos, and place them all in front of me. I put on the stilettos (Fig. 1) and wrap one roll of bandage around my torso, under my arms and behind my neck, before hooking the coat-hanger wings onto it. I wrap the other roll of bandage around my head, tie it at the back and cut the excess off with the scissors. I then crouch down in the centre of the space and take from the cardboard tube a pair of white, two-foot long ostrich feathers. I toss the tube to the back of the space and slide the ostrich feathers into the bandage on my head, as antennae. I position myself in the centre of the space, surrounded by the iceberg lettuces, and ask the technician to start the music – Shirley Bassey's '(Where Do I Begin) Love Story' – which plays very loudly

Fig. 2. Spitting Out Leaves. Photo courtesy of Gary Varro

on repeat for the rest of the performance. After standing poised for the first few bars of the song, I step back and drop to my hands and knees in front of one of the lettuce heads and begin to energetically bite, chew and spit out the leaves (Fig. 2). Hopping around the space on my knees - and inadvertently exposing my bare anus to the audience - I do this to all of the lettuces, smashing some of them violently and frenziedly with my forehead to destroy them, emitting grunts and groans as I do so. When all the lettuces are thus annihilated and the floor of the space covered in smashed salad, I stand, thank the audience and leave.

     Becoming-locust was commissioned for The Animal Love Project, a year-long *Becoming-locust* was commissioned for The Animal Love Project, a year-long research group of five interdisciplinary artists from Wales, Luxembourg, Peru and Japan. The piece was performed as part of the project's presentation in October 2007 at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, and at the Centre for Performance Research, Aberystwyth. It has also been performed independently at venues in the UK, Switzerland and Québec, but it is the piece's final incarnation as part of Queer City Cinema, at New Dance Horizons, Regina, Canada, June 2008, on which this essay will focus. *Becoming-locust* was the last in a series of some fifteen becoming-animal solo performance art works: *Becoming-dog, -sparrow, -rabbit x 2, -snail, -cockroach, -fly, -spider, -marine sponge, -earthworm x 3, -slug, -goat,* and *-locust*. Created between 2002 and 2007, these pieces investigated, embodied and literalised the idea of

becoming-animal as taken from French poststructuralist theorists Deleuze and Guattari. The concept of becoming-animal is one of a number of becomings that Deleuze and Guattari propose as 'deterritorialisations' of the classic human subject – a subject that has been critically theorised as white, European, male, heterosexual, and middle-class. My own becoming-animal, in particular a series of becomings-invertebrates, explored these conceptual and theoretical possibilities through the creation of performances that sought to heighten the relationship of otherness between the audience and myself and to perform physical actions framed by abjection and transformation. In these works, animality became the territory of the other, the realm in which energies and actions – specifically sexuality – could be articulated and explored beyond identity and representation, beyond the limits of 'human-being.' As Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *A Thousand Plateaus*,

> Becomings-animal are basically of another power, since their reality resides not in an animal one imitates or to which one corresponds, but in themselves, in that which suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become. (279)

The impulse behind my becoming-animal performances, like that behind much of my work, was political and emancipatory, performing – like feminist and queer theorists before me – a critique of, and resistance to, phallocentric power structures on both a wider discursive level and on the localised level of the institutions of art and academia.

The performance of *Becoming-locust* contains elements of a performance lecture as well as intense – and to some provocative – physical action. And whilst there is a certain solemnity to the read and spoken prologue, the action that follows seems to play with itself much more openly in the realm of kitsch and the erotic, presenting a becoming that speaks more of the human than of the animal and that exists knowingly – in the realm of the theatrical, of play and signification. I wish in this essay to reflect upon *Becoming-locust* in the context of identity, sexuality and the politics of representation, as well as the relation of text to action, language to body, and performance to theory. I will also be positing the performance in light of aspects of the carnivalesque – in particular the centrality of the grotesque body and subversive laughter – and making links between this, camp, and Deleuzo-Guattarian performances and productions of subjectivity.

We have, in performance studies, come to deal with performance as an expanded subject, restricted neither by the spatial or temporal boundaries of 'the performance,' nor by the limits of its localised discipline. My own conception of performance has been greatly influenced by the theoretical work of Deleuze and Guattari – the former a philosopher, the latter a radical psychoanalyst considered part of the larger theoretical and political project that came to be known as poststructuralism. Part of Deleuze and Guattari's project aimed at the dismantling of the representational thinking and unified subject of Western metaphysics, through a theoretical reconfiguration of the subject through (and in spite of) philosophy and psychoanalysis, for essentially emancipatory ends. In a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, – that is to say one that disprivileges linear spatio-temporality and the idea of a unitary subject – the performed action of performance art can be seen as only an element in the assemblage of what we see as the event. *Becoming-locust* is no different: the performance space itself is constructed as an installation, making the boundaries of artwork / performance / audience space unclear; my presence in the space before the audience's arrival signifies something already-begun; the readings from texts that signify another beginning are both part of the performance and a preamble; the lettuce-smashing action of becoming-locust is a different type of performance (*the* performance?); after the locust action and my exit, the space remains as an installation, transformed from the installation it was 30 minutes previously. Although each of these elements (and my delineation of them is in no way exhaustive) can be viewed alone, their significance is co-dependent on their relation to other aspects of the piece.

The spoken word in the prologue suggests the primacy of language, but the texts that are read speak of becomings and sexualities 'of another power' (Deleuze and Guattari 279), of life that is 'not only, not even human' (Braidotti, qtd. in Boundas 138). The rationality of theory and the didactic convention of the lecture / sermon form that are implied are somewhat in contradiction to the philosophical subject (of becoming-animal, of nomadic subjectivity) about which they speak. They instead construct the subject that speaks about them: a rooted, erect, speaking subject that identifies as one (as 'I') and is legitimised as, and through, an academic and institutional authority. In *Becoming-locust*, my autonomy and authority as 'the artist' (and a particular type of theoretically engaged artist at that), are emphasised by my dress, my manner, my address to the audience and the nature of the texts

that I am reading. The structure and rationality of language is reflected in the installation of the space with a geometric and linear arrangement of lettuces as the sole objects in the white walled performance space. The visual reference to minimalism and the foregrounding of concept (in the content of the texts that I present) is not incidental, intimating a deconstruction of visual as well as linguistic meaning.

In his study of installation art, Nicholas de Oliveira suggests that '[relevant] to the parameters defining contemporary installation is the notion of *détournement*, the appropriation of previously existing aesthetic artefacts in order to divert their meaning or intent' (27). Détournement is a term borrowed from Situationist International, a loose association of European artists and poets formed in 1957, who 'offered a sustained critique of imperialism, colonialism, and all forms of domination, the political division and control of urban space, and the general poverty of intellectual life' (Stiles and Selz 681). I refer to the Situationists not only because of the significance of their idea of détournement, but also for the relevance of Guy Debord's 1967 manifesto *The Society of the Spectacle*. In a proposition that seems as relevant today as it would have forty years ago, Debord suggests that spectacle 'is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images' (12). As such a social relationship, spectacle would seem key to an understanding of *Becoming-locust.* But whilst there is an elevation of persona and an employment of theatrical apparatus – the use of scenographic elements, recorded sound and costume – that are suggestive of spectacle and immersion in it, there is at the same time a performance of ironical distance from it. The framing of the performance with the theoretical prologue and the taking on of an ambiguous position that is simultaneously elevated and debased resonates with Anthony Kubiak's notion of the 'pharmakeic.' Drawing on Plato and Derrida's accounts of the pharmakoi, the sacrificial human victims of an ancient Greek purification ritual who held the anomalous position of being both highly sacred and accursed, Kubiak writes of a particular 'critical performative mode' (83) of unlocability that we can relate to certain (ritualistic, endurance or shamanic) performance art practices. Such a mode could be identified not only in my relation to spectacle and my role as *the* artist, but in the détournement of minimalist installation – in the geometric layout and subsequent destruction of vegetable readymades as mentioned above – and of the aesthetics of body art and practices of self-representation that accompany it.

Fig. 3. Photo courtesy of Gary Varro

Debord's analysis could be said to apply in part: the star (in this case myself as the artist) being 'the opposite of an individual, and as clearly the enemy of the individual in himself as of the individual in others' (39). In relation to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a nomadic subject – that is to say a subject conceived of as on a trajectory that is open, indefinite, and mobile – the performance of becoming(-animal) could indeed be seen to be in opposition to 'the individual.' By embracing and entering into a

relation with the other (in this case the animal other of the locust and the vegetal other of the lettuces) in a way that renounces the autonomous and unitary subject of 'I' and the civilised upright functionality of human being, such becomings instead actuate subjectivities through temporary experiences of empathy, sensation and affect. For Deleuze therefore, as for Braidotti, who argues for a 'dispersed form of affectivity, a flowing type of coherence and for the necessity of reconfiguring the subject' (*Metamorphoses* 268), such a conception of the subject is desirable and sustainable: a depersonalised subject that 'however much in process and in becoming, is still there' (268). And as importantly, whereas Debord's individual renounces autonomy in order to 'identify with the general law of obedience to the course of things' something in the conscious transposition to a nomadic subjectivity of becoming – one that resists a fixed image and subject relation – which Braidotti proposes is in opposition to this law.

In the challenge that they pose to the unitary subject, there is a sense – both in Deleuze and Guattari's and Braidotti's formulations – in which such reconfigurations are productive of a

subjectivity that is necessarily enfleshed and constituted through the body. The explicit body of my *Becoming-locust* action is one produced within a specifically queer strategic paradigm framed by ideas of the carnivalesque and the grotesque body, as developed in both theory and in body based performance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The wave of body art that developed in the late 1960s coincided with a particular cultural moment in political philosophy: the mobilisation of protest and liberation movements and what Amelia Jones calls the 'sex-celebratory, drug-inflected Euro-American counterculture' of the time (27). 1965 saw the publication in French (the English edition appeared in 1968) of Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, widely considered one of the most significant and influential texts on the subject of carnival and the grotesque. A treatise on the popular and folk culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance through the writings of François Rabelais, the book has been influential in the fields of cultural theory as well as in literary studies, exploring revolutionary possibility through the material body of the people in celebratory opposition to the official forces of the church and the state. Central to Bakhtin's ideas about folk culture is the phenomenon of carnival as 'an embodiment of the liberated communality of the people in perennially renewed rebellion against the social and spiritual restrictions of the official order' (Lindley 17). Although Rabelais' writings evoke the carnival traditions of his own time, Bakhtin, and those after him, are more concerned with the carnivalesque – a concept of literary theory rather than social history (Lindley 22). As Lindley points out, 'whatever the historicity of carnival, the carnivalesque is undoubtedly real' (24), abstracting elements of the phenomenon of collective rebellion into a theoretical notion that can be applied usefully to the discussion of body art and its resistant performative relation to the status quo.

Links have been made, particularly in feminism, queer and gender studies, between the Bakhtinian carnivalesque and the grotesque body, a body that is both very much aware and celebratory of its own materiality. Bakhtin writes about the body of 'grotesque realism' and the 'material bodily lower stratum,' through which the body is imagined (to the point of exaggeration) in all its carnality of sex, death, consumption and excretion. Caryl Flinn, in an essay entitled 'The Deaths of Camp' writes of the grotesque body as the site of contestation of signification and subjectivity:

> the grotesque body is also constructed as flying in the face of the unified, singular, classical body and its subtending humanist ideology, namely, the concept of uncontradictory, autonomous, 'individual' subjectivity. In fact, the contrast between grotesque and classical is usually articulated on or by the body itself. (447)

For, whilst the carnivalesque refers to social transformation through collective participation, grotesque realism presents a subversive potential that is played out on the localised site of the body. This is an idea that has been appropriated in theory, in art and in activism that resists normative conceptions of the gendered body, and explores otherness and difference as potentially empowering political territories. Braidotti, citing Mary Russo's *The Female Grotesque*, writes:

> this is how the freak or the monstrous comes to overlap with the grotesque in the political imaginary today. The nineties' re-appropriation of these categories is a deconstructivist turn that 'parallels the powerful, historic detours of words like 'black' or, more recently 'queer,' away from their stigmatizing function in the hands of dominant culture.' (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 181)

Such strategies of re-appropriation have informed and been incorporated into a lot of my own work, in its queer political and aesthetic trajectory, and focus on the body and explorations of (queer) subjectivity. This is crystallised in *Becoming-locust* in the performance of a body on which the contrast between the classical body of signification (which articulates through language and through visual codes of masculinity and gayness) and its grotesque other (where meaning collapses in semiotic ambiguity and in the holes of the spitting mouth, exposed anus and perspiring glands) is played out. The ambiguous self-spectacle of my own body in carnivalesque abandon – a body at once celebratory and debased, submissive and defiant, present in all its fleshiness but transcendent in its desire, in the reality of what Deleuze and Guattari say 'suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become' (279) – detours the prime significance of self-image and unity. As such, it explores a manifestation of the carnivalesque in which the structure against which it is played out is not the hierarchical society of Rabelais' time, but the internalised phallogocentric

systems of identity and signification that constitute contemporary subjectivity. It is resistance to, and emancipation from, these systems – which, as we have touched upon above, privilege certain types of subjectivity – that are the impetus for the micropolitical thrust of *Becoming-locust*, that is to say one that operates on the level of the localised and individualised situation.

Fabio Cleto writes of a convergence between the Bakhtinian carnivalesque and the camp scene, suggesting that the two share 'a complex and multilayered power relationship between the dominant and subordinate (or deviant)' (32). The multilayered power relationship is contextualised on the wider political level of the construction of identity (in the enacted sham of gender performance through gay clichés of camp, drag and homoeroticism) but articulated on the localised level of my own body and performed in the depersonalised affective relationship created between myself and the audience (a relationship in which there is both critical subjective distance and a connective empathy). This relationship is intentionally ambiguous and shifting, and is appropriative in a way that reminds us of Sontag's claim that '[c]amp sees everything in quotation marks' (517). The sincerity of the formal and theoretical address of the prologue is at once 'ironic' and 'not-ironic': a theoretical framing of the action whose purpose it is to both demonstrate and subvert it. The physical action of crawling, hopping and repetitive lettuce-smashing involves a physical intensity and struggle that one could consider comparable to the intellectual intensity of Deleuze and Guattari's, and Braidotti's, political and philosophical revolutionary call to arms. It also alludes, and to some extent corresponds, to the (excessive) masochistic actions of performance artists like Abramovic, Burden and Acconci, with whom the audience would be largely familiar.

Becoming-locust involves an element of humour that is not always present in poststructuralist theory or in masochistic body art practices, and in its intertextual juxtaposition and reference to these other forms, it produces a laughter that Bakhtin calls carnival laughter, which 'degrades and materializes', 'bring[s] down to earth, turn[s] its subject into flesh' (20). It is a humour that is not only that of the carnival, but is a queer humour that one can identify, as Caryl Flinn does, with the grotesque body and the 'unruly bodies of camp,' which

> are associated with laughter and the sadistic, exuberant, seditious power emerging from this laughter. […] [T]here is a laughter emitting *from* these

> unbridled bodies; there is also the laughter that such
> 'irregular', un'whole-some' flesh actually provokes. In
> other words, the grotesque body in camp is a wild arid
> laughing body, but it is also one laughed at. (448)

Such humour we can see not only in the détournement of theory
and performance history and in the ridiculous excess of the lettuce-
smashing action, but in the incongruous jockstrap and stilettos,
chosen partly for their associations with macho sports culture and
drag (respectively), but also for the former's allusion to the
aesthetics of gay pornography. The jockstrap further functioned, in
its exposure and visual framing of my anus for the audience, as a
reference to (and literalisation of) Deleuze and Guattari's
description of the 'goat's anus' that 'stands opposite the face of the
despot or god' (116) and as a celebration of Bakhtin's 'lower bodily
stratum' (368-437). Whilst these references may have been obscure
to an audience, it is the figurative ideas (of defiant, base, or
transgressive corporeality) to which Deleuze and Guattari and
Bakhtin refer that the actions attempt to evoke. The action was also
partly inspired (like other performances of mine) by Leo Bersani's
1987 essay 'Is the Rectum a Grave?' written in response to Simon
Watney's cry that 'AIDS offers a new sign for the symbolic
machinery of repression, making the rectum a grave' (Bersani 222).
Whilst Bersani and Watney's essays were written during the
particular historical moment of the AIDS crisis (a context that
warrants more consideration than I can give it here) they also make
interesting and vital theorisations about gay male sexuality that I
believe are still relevant today. Bersani suggests that,

> if the rectum is a grave in which the masculine ideal (an
> ideal shared – differently – by men *and* women) of
> proud subjectivity is buried, then it should be
> celebrated for its very potential of death. […] It may,
> finally, be in the gay man's rectum that he demolishes
> his perhaps otherwise uncontrollable identification
> with a murderous judgement against him. (222)

This celebration of death refers not only to the symbolic death of a
repressive ideal, but to its death in the *petite mort* of orgasm –
specifically, in the context of Bersani's essay and my own
sexualised performance in *Becoming-locust*, the gay male anal
orgasm – the ecstasy of going *outside of oneself*.

Julia Kristeva, in a text written the year after *Rabelais and His World* was published, warns against reducing the carnivalesque to parody, reminding us of 'carnival's *dramatic* (murderous, cynical and revolutionary in the sense of *dialectical transformation*) aspects, which Bakhtin emphasized' (50). Kristeva suggests that the laughter of carnival,

> is no more comic than tragic; it is both at once, one might say that it is *serious*. This is the only way that it can avoid becoming either the scene of law or the scene of its parody, in order to become the scene of its *other*. Modern writing offers several striking examples of this omnified scene that is both *law* and *others* – where *laughter* is silenced because it is not parody but *murder* and *revolution*. (50)

As the space for a revolutionary, murderous, othering of the law, and not simply its reproduction or parody, carnival laughter presents serious and radical possibilities for the subversion of law and the intersubjective relations that it presupposes. We could consider the carnival laughter of *Becoming-locust* – a laughter that is both *at* and *with* the self – as contributing to a (consensual) internalised rebellion of the subject. At the same time, a real murderous and revolutionary rebellion against the self is being enacted upon the body by my repeated act of physical self-violence in the destruction of the lettuces (whose similarity to the shape and size of the human head is not incidental). The physicalised performance of this combative becoming demonstrates the possibility – to use Ted Hiebert's words – to 'think the self carnivally' (113). In a call for a recontextualisation of the carnivalesque in the twenty-first century, Hiebert proposes that we

> chart [the self's] transformation from a static state of identity (constructed or otherwise) to a fluctuating state of its perpetual becomings. *The carnival, not as a license to be free, but rather now as a free licence to become.* (113)

Becoming-locust performs its own carnivalesque transformation of the self both with reference to its theoretical precedents, to my own experiences of becoming (in art as well as in life), and to the ancestry of performance and action art. It presents itself as a self-reflexive (some might say self-indulgent) act of 'radical narcissism' (Jones 151-95) in which my own processes of subjectification are

performed to ironical (and in Deleuzian terms, masochistic) excess. Such excess – along with excesses of signifiers, flesh, energy, waste – is integral to *Becoming-locust* as an uncontained, and uncontainable performance of becoming. Whilst there is a sense in which in its excess and immediacy, the intensity of the performed action transgresses the frameworks (philosophical, discursive, autobiographical) to which it refers, it also extends to affect (to borrow a term from Braidotti) *transpositions* of these frameworks. Braidotti, in her book *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, writes about

> reversing the subject to face the outside: a sensory and spiritual stretching of our boundaries […] framing, sustaining and continuing these processes by pushing them to the limit of endurance. (262)

Such limits of endurance include, of course, those undergone not only by myself but also by the audience during the piece. The performance plays on boundaries with a critical and performative modality that transforms and intensifies the audience's expected engagement with the piece, with material (political, theoretical and aesthetic), and with the other. Their relation to me is one that is problematised and shifting, that is manifoldly transposed through experiences of cognition, amusement, embarrassment, otherness and empathy. Marking the 'death of the self to any notion of identity' (Braidotti, *Transposition* 262), the literalised performance of becoming as *Becoming-locust* effects a destabilisation of the relationship between self and other and as such offers an enfleshed example of an alternative and experimental subjectivity. It aims not only towards aesthetic ends, but (micro)political ones too, in an empowering and playful exploration of queer subjectivity and a celebratory act of defiance to phallogocentric systems of representation. Such a reconsideration of the boundaries of performance, sexuality and subjectivity I believe to be not only productive, but vital.

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The Strokes
A Verse Play in One Act

BY CHRISTOPHER O'SHAUGHNESSY

Introduction

This play is about two people trying to reclaim a common language of understanding. The use of verse – with its rhythms, assonance and capacity for metaphor – seemed a natural choice for its expression. It is written in a customised pentameter: fractured, idiomatic. The theatre theory of Jacques Lecoq regarding the embodiment of text and the literary theory of Pierre Bourdieu regarding habitus, field and symbolic capital has informed the writing of the play. The MOTHER is located in her own broken habitus, profoundly transformed because of the strokes. The SON, rooted in *his* habitus, can no longer share his symbolic capital with the MOTHER, but she is still aware he has it: 'This is my son. This is my son.' They repeatedly try to cross a bridge of understanding, reclaiming in language an old customary relationship as they try to enter each other's field of experience through memory and affection. The power/knowledge theory of Michel Foucault, particularly regarding the behaviour of the NURSE, the ORDERLY and the DOCTOR is indicated in the professional relationships with MOTHER and the SON. The panopticon aspect of the hospital is conveyed through the ever-present sound effects of buzzers, pagers and footsteps.

A hospital room. A bed, two chairs. A clipboard on the bed. A small table. A large full-length mirror covered over with paper.
MOTHER, SON.
MOTHER sitting in one chair, the SON in the other.
Stillness.
A tap drips.

MOTHER:

When did you arrive?

SON:

When did I -? I told –
I arrived yesterday.

MOTHER:

Yesterday?

SON:

Late.

MOTHER:

You arrived yesterday?

SON:

Came down by train.
It was late, very late; dark, so very dark.

MOTHER:

Dark?

SON:

Dark. And wet. That's why I came today.

MOTHER:

Today?

SON:

Yes. That's why I'm here. Here today.
He gets up and turns off the dripping tap. He sits down.

MOTHER:
Here today. And gone tomorrow.

SON:
No, no.
I'm staying the weekend.
Pause. A buzzer sounds

MOTHER:
What – what was that?

SON:
An alarm. Nurse wanted, doctor on call.

MOTHER:
It isn't nice here but what can I do?
Another buzzer.
The bab-wabs. The days are full of bab-wabs.

SON:
I know.

MOTHER:
Why did you come today?

SON:
To see –
To see you. I arrived late, needed sleep.

MOTHER:
They found you a bed? They – they put you up?

SON:
No, no. Not here. The hotel.

MOTHER:
Where?

SON:
Nearby.
A pause. Footsteps in the corridor.

                                    MOTHER:

                                    SON:
The mirror. They've covered the mirror. Why?

                                    MOTHER:
How strange.

                                    SON:
               The nurses seem nice.
                                    MOTHER smiles.

                                    MOTHER:
                              Do, don't they?
                              Pause.

                                    SON:
Why have they covered over the mirror?

                                    MOTHER:
Went out to fetch the goose-bumps, didn't she?

                                    SON:
Why the mirror?

                                    MOTHER:
                    She did go, didn't she?

                                    SON:
The mirror...

                                    MOTHER:
               Mirror? She went out, she did.
                                    Pause.
Eh, eh, eh; eh, eh, eh; eh; oo, oo, oo.
Eh, eh, eh; eh, eh, eh; eh; oo, oo, oo.
                                    Pause.
                                    A distant clock strikes eleven.

                                    MOTHER:

Is it finished?

SON:
The eleventh hour.

MOTHER:
When -

When did you arrive?

SON:
I – Last night.

MOTHER:
Last night?

You arrived last night?

SON:
I arrived last night.

MOTHER:
They gave you a bed – here?

SON:
Not here, no. No.

MOTHER:
Where?

SON:
In the hotel.

MOTHER:
In the hotel?

SON:
Yes.

MOTHER:
You're staying in the hotel?

SON:
Yes, that's right.

MOTHER:

Not here?

SON:

No, not here. I could not stay here.
A buzzer sounds.

MOTHER:

The bab-wabs.

SON:

Bab-wabs?

The MOTHER laughs.

MOTHER:

Wab-babs.

She laughs again.

SON:

Wab – wab-babs?

MOTHER:

Bab-wabs.

They laugh together.

SON:

Bab-wabs. Wab-babs.

MOTHER:

Wab-babs.

SON:

Bab-wabs.
Pause.
An ORDERLY looks in.

ORDERLY:

Everybody OK?

*The SON and the MOTHER
turn to look.*

MOTHER:

This is my son.

ORDERLY:
Yes, we've met. Would you like a cup of tea?

MOTHER:
Would you like a cup of tea?

SON:
Yes. Yes please.

ORDERLY:
Two cups of tea.

SON:
The doctor is around?

ORDERLY:
Up the corridor. Be here shortly.

SON:
Right.
Why – why is the mirror covered over?

ORDERLY:
Why is the mirror covered over?

SON:
Yes.

ORDERLY:
Well – Why is the mirror covered over?

SON:
Please enlighten me.

ORDERLY:
You see - well you see...
Why is - ? There are *people* in the mirror.

SON:
There are people in the mirror?

ORDERLY:
People in the mirror.

SON:

Is that a problem?

ORDERLY:
The medical staff
 Think it is.

SON:
What if – what if they're people
She *knows*?

ORDERLY:
Suppose that might make a difference.

SON:

What harm can it do?

ORDERLY:
What - ? Two cups of tea.
He goes out.

SON:

Bab-wabs.

The MOTHER laughs.

MOTHER:
Bab-wabs. So many of them.

SON:
Yes.

MOTHER:

Last week I went in the bath.

SON:
In the bath?

MOTHER:

I went in the bath.

SON:
You went in the bath?

MOTHER:
I went in the bath to Marks and Spencer's.
He laughs. She laughs with him.
Funny, isn't it? The nurse went with me.
They laugh again.

SON:
You mean a taxi?

MOTHER:
Yes. The bath, the bath.
Pause.
I don't like it here but what can I do?
Pause.

SON:
Where's the tea?

MOTHER:
When did you arrive?

SON:
The –

MOTHER:
The nurses are scoop. Croop boop and a doop.

SON:
I had my first sexual intercourse
With a nurse.
Pause.

MOTHER:
They're very good.

SON:

Pause.

SON:

I've murdered the Prime Minister.

> *Pause.*
> *The MOTHER laughs. And*
> *laughs.*

MOTHER:

Good. Good.

> *They laugh together.*

SON:

You remember the nurse, remember her?

MOTHER:

Eh, eh, eh; oo, oo, oo; eh, eh, eh; oo.

SON:

What is a mother?

MOTHER:

SON:

Too late, too late, too late.

MOTHER:

It is too late.

SON:

No it isn't. Yes it is. No it isn't.

> *A tear falls.*

What is a mother ? Someone always there
In time of need; a comforting presence
As we ascend the stairs; that kindly voice
First in the darkness; making all things safe
With a firm tone and a spell smile;
Someone who takes us where we need to be;
Eager in sacrifice, full of all love
As the hours strike. That is a mother.

> *Pause.*

MOTHER:

Eh, eh, eh; oo, oo, oo; eh, eh, eh; oo.

> *Pause.*

SON:
You look better. What's that tied to your leg?

MOTHER:
How long are you staying? How long, how long?
> *Pause.*
> *Sound of a trolley wheeled along a corridor.*
> *The **ORDERLY** enters with two mugs of tea. He gives one mug to the SON, placing the other on a table near the MOTHER.*

This is my son. (*Slight pause.*) This is my son.

ORDERLY:
We've met.

The doctor will be here soon. Well, enjoy.
> *The ORDERLY goes out.*

MOTHER:
When did you arrive?

> *Pause.*
> *The SON drinks his tea. The MOTHER drinks her tea. They drink in silence.*

SON:
Do you remember - ?

MOTHER:
Yes, I do.

> *Pause.*

SON:
Do you remember that time –

MOTHER:
Yes, I do.

SON:
Do you remember that time
When we –

> *Pause. He stares at her, then*
> *recomposes himself.*

MOTHER:

Eh, eh, eh; oo, oo, oo.

SON:
What's the - ?
Pause. The MOTHER begins to
sing.

MOTHER:

'Away in a manger, no boo for a day
The little kabuki asleep in the hay.
The bob-wabs are bleating, the boo-boo awakes
But little kabuki no bob-wabs he........ takes.'
> *Pause.*

I love to sing.

SON:

You always loved to sing.

MOTHER:

My father loved to sing. The piano –
Do – do you remember the piano?
I was just a girl. We girls loved to sing.
He bought a sing-song for a piano.
Wheeled it down the hill, down the hill a wheel
But – it ran away –

SON:

Chased it down the hill
Shouting 'Piano, piano!'
> *They laugh.*

MOTHER:

Piano, piano, piano!

SON:

Yes.

They continue to laugh.
Pause.

MOTHER:

Christmas. How we used to sing. Didn't we?
>*She sings.*

'Way down upon the Swanee River...'

>SON:
>>Yes.

Yes. Yes, I believe there was some singing.
>>*Pause.*
>>*A distant clock strikes the*
>>*quarter hour.*
>>*They listen.*
>>MOTHER:

The strokes.

>SON:
>Relentless. Have you thought about –

>MOTHER:

Yes, I have.

>SON:
>>- you thought about the future...?

You can't go home. What is that on your leg?
The house will have to be sold. Very soon.
You can't live alone in the house.

>MOTHER:
>House? House?

>SON:

Do you remember the house? Your address?
Where you lived? Do you remember your house?
>>*Pause.*

Do you remember anything?

>MOTHER:
>The house...

There was a long, long, long, long garden.

>SON:

Garden of memories…

>MOTHER:

<div align="center">
We should walk
</div>

There, walk there – go back to that green garden.

<div align="center">
SON:
</div>

It should fetch a good price, fetch a good price.
<div align="right">
Pause.
</div>
You remember the woods, remember Stoke woods?
You walked with us, knee-deep in bluebells.
Deep in the woods, you laddered your stockings,
Broke your heel, knee-deep in blue-bells –

<div align="center">
MOTHER:
</div>
<div align="right" style="margin-right: 30%">
Bluebells.
</div>

<div align="center">
SON:
</div>

We ran ahead, my – my – my friend and I,
Ran ahead, always a little ahead,
'Wait for me', you cried, 'wait for me' –

<div align="center">
MOTHER:
</div>
<div align="center">
Bluebells.
</div>

<div align="center">
SON:
</div>

We ran ahead, into that green darkness,
Into that green womb alive with stardust –
Time surged backward – then we came to a stream –

<div align="center">
MOTHER:
</div>

We did, didn't we?

<div align="center">
SON:
</div>
<div align="center">
You tripped and fell – You -
</div>
You tripped and fell and - and laughed - at the smell –
<div align="right">
They laugh together.
</div>

<div align="center">
MOTHER:
</div>

Will you do the necessary?

<div align="center">
SON:
</div>
<div align="center">
Bluebells...
</div>
<div align="right">
She sings.
</div>

                              MOTHER:
'The bluebirds of Scotland
I hear they are smiling
Just like the old zoo-zoos
Who call back to me – '
                              Pause.

                              SON:
You walked with us, into that green darkness –
                              Pause.
                              *A **NURSE** enters.*

                              NURSE:
We're looking chipper.

                              MOTHER:
            This is my son.

                              NURSE:
                               Yes.
And sounding chipper. Yes, I've met your son.
                              She walks to the clip-board on the
                              bed.
                              She picks up the clip-board and
                              looks at it.
Now what are you going to have for dinner?
You should have filled this in, it's overdue
You naughty girl. What are you going to have?
                              The MOTHER looks blank.
For lunch there is either ravioli
Or steamed fish with creamy mashed potato
With rice pudding or sorbet for dessert
And for dinner there is prawn sandwich
Or spicy cauliflower cheese and chips
Then raspberry jelly or yogurt punch.
                              Pause.

                              SON:
What's yogurt punch?

                              The NURSE flicks through the
                    menu sheets.

NURSE:
Yogurt punch? It - it's off.

SON:
Off?

NURSE:
Off. Well, lover, what – what do you choose?
What do you select from the menu?
                    Pause.
                    What?
                    Pause.

SON:
Mum –

NURSE:
Lunch and dinner.

SON:
Mum: you've got to *choose.*
                    Long pause.
                    The MOTHER looks from one to
                    the other.
                    The NURSE becomes slightly
                    exasperated.

NURSE:
Ravioli or steamed fish for the lunch
With rice pudding or sorbet for dessert
And for dinner there's the prawn sandwich
Or spicy cauliflower cheese and chips
Then raspberry jelly or yogurt punch.
What'll you have?

SON:
Mum – yes?

                    Pause.
                    The MOTHER looks in a state of
                    controlled panic from one to the
                    other.

MOTHER:
The usual.
> *The NURSE ticks several boxes,*
> *detaches the menu, puts down*
> *the clip-board on the bed, smiles*
> *at the SON and walks out.*
> *A distant clock strikes the*
> *quarter hour.*

SON:
There must be two clocks.

MOTHER:
Strange, isn't it! Mm.

SON:
Or maybe there's *one...* repeating itself.
> *Pause.*

MOTHER:
How long are you staying?

SON:
How long am I –
We need to know how long *you* are staying.
We need to know what happens next, what plans
The hospital have for you, if any.
What does the doctor think, what is the prognosis?

MOTHER:
Prognobis?

SON:
Prognosis.

MOTHER:
I don't know that one.

SON:
 We need to know how long you are staying.
> *A buzzer sounds. Voices in the*
> *corridor.*
The doctor. The doctor is on his way.

MOTHER:

And we are on *our* way.

SON:

Are on our way.
What is that hanging there on your leg?

MOTHER:
Eh?
She lifts her skirt. We see a
bulging plastic catheter bag
strapped to her leg.

It's a choo-choo.

Loud voices in the corridor.
MOTHER and SON sit and look
at each other.
Silence.
*The **DOCTOR** enters.*
He stands looking at both of
them. The SON stands up.

DOCTOR:

Sit down, sit down. Please, please.
Pause. The SON sits down.

SON:

My mother-

MOTHER:

This is my son, this is my son.
The DOCTOR smiles.

DOCTOR:

I *know* it is your son.
Pause.

SON:

What happens now?

Pause.
DOCTOR:

That's up to you.

SON:

Up to me?

DOCTOR:

It's your choice.
Your mother can stay in the hospital
Until such time as, until such time as –

SON:

Yes?

DOCTOR:

You decide what to do with her.

SON:

What *should* I do? What would you recommend?

DOCTOR:

What would I recommend? You're asking *me*?
With vascular dementia, vascular
Dementia, occasioned by the five strokes,
I would recommend residential care.
Strongly recommend residential care.
She needs round the clock care and attention.
                                    Pause.

SON:

I will have to sell the family home.

DOCTOR:

Yes.
                                    Pause.

SON:

Will she – will things – improve – will they improve?
                        The DOCTOR shakes his head.

MOTHER:

Good morning, doctor.

DOCTOR:

Good morning.

SON:
No, no?
The DOCTOR shakes his head.
Silence.
He turns to go.

DOCTOR:
Let me know what you decide.
The DOCTOR smiles.
Let me know.
He goes out.
Silence.

SON:
Mum, what do you – what do you want to do?
MOTHER:

SON:
The doctor wants to know our decision.

MOTHER:
You – you do – you do the necessary.

SON:
Sell the house?

MOTHER:
You take care of it all. Yes.

SON:
You want me to sell the house?

MOTHER:
Sell the house.
It's all gone now. Isn't it? It's all gone.
Pause.
I'm old, what can I do? What can I do?
Pause.

SON:

He – he's recommended residential care.

                    MOTHER:
I'm old, what can I do?

                    SON:
                The place you chose
Last year – when you felt a bit wobbly,
When you had blurred vision, felt a bit funny –

                    MOTHER:
I know the place. I've been there many times.

                    SON:
You should have told us. You *could* have told us –

                    MOTHER:

What has happened to me?

                    Pause.
                    What has happened?
                    Pause.

                    SON:
There was a path –

                    MOTHER:
            What has happened to me?

                    SON:
There was a path – we once followed a path –

                    MOTHER:
Followed a path –

                    SON:
            - followed a path through it –
Knee-deep in bluebells, to a brown branched bank
Among celandine and primrose, wild fern
And snowdrop, the woods flooded with bluebells –

                    MOTHER:
Flooded?

SON:
Flooded through and through. It became
An undulating sea of blue and green
In that dark wood – a secret lake –

MOTHER:
Secret.

Yes. I remember.

A buzzer sounds.
We heard the bob-wabs.

SON:
There was a path – through that green darkness,
Through that green womb alive with stardust;
Night had fallen, we had ignored the night,
And had walked onwards, you, you came with us –

MOTHER:
I came with you.

SON:
We walked on through the trees.
Walked through the trees, toward - toward that light
Not knowing if it were stars or moon. Do –
Do you remember?

Another buzzer.
MOTHER:
Did I come with you?

Pause.

Did I come with you?

Pause.

SON:
I must go soon. Go.
Must let the doctor know our decision.

MOTHER:
We are not out of the woods yet.

SON:
No, no.
I can't look after you, Mum. I can't do it.

Pause.

<div align="center">MOTHER:</div>

When did you arrive?

<div align="center">SON:</div>
<div align="center">I arrived last night.</div>

<div align="center">MOTHER:</div>

Last night? You arrived last night?

<div align="center">SON:</div>
<div align="center">Yes, last night.</div>

<div align="center">MOTHER:</div>

How long are you staying? How long? How long?

<div align="center">SON:</div>

I can't look after you.

<div align="right">*The MOTHER smiles.*</div>

<div align="center">MOTHER:</div>
<div align="center">There are *people* here.</div>

<div align="center">SON:</div>

I know. You have your visitors, don't you?
Who visits? Who *are* these people you see?

<div align="right">*The MOTHER smiles. She looks
towards the mirror.*</div>

Anyone I know? Anyone *we* know?

<div align="center">MOTHER:</div>

I don't know why they've done that. I don't know.

<div align="center">SON:</div>

Strange, isn't it?

<div align="right">*Pause.*</div>

<div align="center">MOTHER:</div>
<div align="center">You do what is needed.</div>

<div align="right">*Pause.*</div>

Do you remember the music?

<div align="right">*Pause.*</div>

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                              SON:
                            Music?

                            MOTHER:
He bought a sing-song for a piano.
You should always remember the music.
You should always remember the music.
I would play for my father, and sing, sing.
I would sing the piano in the room.
Sing the piano in the room.

                              SON:
                           Piano.

                            MOTHER:
I would sing the piano in the room.

                                   Pause.
                                   The ORDERLY enters.

                           ORDERLY:
The mugs.

                                   He walks over and collects the
                         mugs.

                            MOTHER:
           That's us.

                           ORDERLY:
                 Still able to make jokes.
That's a *good* sign.

                                   He stands to attention and
                                   salutes the MOTHER.
                                   Then he goes out.

                              SON:
                 I can't look after you –
But I - but – I *can* follow the same path.
Follow the path.

                            MOTHER:
           That's a very good sign.
                                   A distant bleeping Pager goes off
                                   followed by a scream.

> *The MOTHER shakes her head*
> *and shrugs her shoulders.*

I don't like it here, but what can I do?

> *Pause.*

When did you arrive? When did you arrive?

SON:

You *will* like it in the new place.

MOTHER:

Like it?

SON:

You will like it in the new place.

MOTHER:

New place?

SON:

You know it well.

MOTHER:

I know it well, do I?

SON:

You've been there.

MOTHER:

I've been there. Have I?

SON:

You'll recognize it at once when you see.

> *The MOTHER bursts into song.*

MOTHER:

'Way down upon the Swanee River,
Way, way, way down.
That's where my boo and goo are waiting,
Far from the old folks at home.'

> *The SON gets up and stands*
> *before the mirror. He stands*
> *looking at it.*

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A distant clock strikes the half hour.
SON:

Do you know what this is, Mum?

MOTHER:
A mirror.
Pause.
He slowly begins to tear strips of paper from the papered-over mirror. She watches.

SON:

Do you see anyone in there?

Pause.

MOTHER:
Yes.

Pause.
They look at each other.
Me.
Blackout.

Book Reviews

Crossroads: Performance Studies and Irish Culture ed. by Sara Brady and Fintan Walsh.
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 255 pp. (hardback)

SHONAGH HILL

Crossroads: Performance Studies and Irish Culture offers a compelling argument for the application of performance paradigms to Irish culture. Not only is it an interesting and engaging volume but it marks an important contribution to both theatre and cultural studies in Ireland as it stands at the crossroads of several disciplines: a metaphor invoked in the introduction by the editors who propose 'taking up unmarked roads with no predetermined direction or obvious destination' (2). The 'unmarked roads' productively travelled in this collection of eighteen essays broaden the scope of 'Irishness' by interrogating its construction and perpetuation through a breadth of performances, including Gaelic Athletic Association sports, storytelling, pageants, parades, and more 'traditional' theatre.

Irish theatre, and in turn Irish theatre studies, has traditionally focused on text: the legacy of a national literary theatre. This collection indicates the shift in more recent academic discourse to performance practice and _Crossroads'_ key contribution is its discussion of performance through both text and the body. In 1996, as quoted in the introduction, Anna McMullan noted the emerging emphasis on 'the visual, kinesic and the corporeal as major means of expression and signification' (3) and this approach is fruitfully appropriated in this collection. Tellingly, Joseph Roach's concept of 'genealogies of performance' from _Cities of the Dead_ is referenced in several of the essays. Genealogies of performance highlight repeated or reperformed behaviour which is remembered through the body as living memory, drawing 'on the idea of expressive movements of mnemonic reserves' (Roach 26).

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Roach suggests that these genealogies focus on 'counter-memories' and highlight 'the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences' (26). Attendance to these counter memories is evident in essays on the embodied experience of roads as movement and memory (J'Aime Morrison), fictional, theatrical and televisual revisions of the story of Bridget Cleary who was burnt to death in 1895 on suspicion of being possessed by a fairy spirit (Charlotte McIvor), and in the enactment of Irish cultural identity in the annual Dublin St Patrick's Day Festival Parade (Holly Maples). Examination of the ways in which cultural memory is enacted on and through bodies enables the book to offer fresh critical interventions into the study of Irish culture and performance.

Until recently, Irish cultural and theatre studies have largely focused on post-colonial constructions of national identity to the detriment of discourses such as gender. This collection is particularly strong in its offerings on gender and queer performance and I would like to highlight two essays: the aforementioned Charlotte McIvor's 'Ghosting *Bridgie Cleary*: Tom Mac Intyre and Staging this Woman's Death' and Fintan Walsh's 'Homelysexuality and the "Beauty" Pageant.' McIvor's essay examines the memorialization of Cleary's death through re-enactments which fuse myth and history as well as interrogating Ireland's post-colonial status and gender politics. McIvor argues that following fictional and televisual interrogations of Bridget's story, Tom Mac Intyre's 2005 play *What Happened Bridgie Cleary*, returns Bridget's voice and body to the centre of these critical discourses. Bridgie's ghostly resurrection engages in contemporary critical discourses concerning her death and her dialogic intervention grants her authority. The cultural memory of an Irish 'homelysexuality,' as perpetuated and disrupted through beauty pageants, is the focus of Fintan Walsh's essay. Walsh outlines the performative construction of Irish women's sexuality in the *Rose of Tralee*, *Calor Housewife of the Year* and *Miss Ireland* pageants which domesticated and idealized femininity to reaffirm nostalgic tropes of Irish cultural identity. The normative performances of female sexuality marked woman's body as passive and Walsh traces the move towards the expression of an *unheimlich* sexuality in the *Alternative Miss Ireland* pageant. Though these pageants queer the homelysexuality of traditional gender identities, Walsh warns of 'the risk of commodifying homosexuality or playing it as cosmopolitan affect' (206). Walsh points to the role of global

economics in his consideration of the regulation of sexuality through the pageant: a discourse which enables him to reflect on the ways in which the pageant's appropriation of gender does not simply repress but can also be manipulated and exploited. As Walsh's conclusion highlights, invigoration of the discussion of identity politics depends upon a move from post-colonial constructions of 'Irishness' to consideration of discourses of globalization.

In addition to the section on 'Gender, Feminism and Queer Performance,' *Crossroads* offers absorbing sections on 'Tradition, Ritual, and Play,' 'Place, Landscape, and Commemoration,' 'Political Performances,' and 'Diaspora, Migration, and Globalization.' In the spirit of expanding the scope of Irish theatre and performance studies, the collection presents a rewarding range of essays, from Bernadette Sweeney's discussion of the traditions of mumming, waking, and Wrenboys and Strawboys in 'Performing Tradition' to consideration of contemporary performance art: Carmen Szabó's 'Between the Living and the Dead: Performative "In-betweens" in the Work of Alastair MacLennan,' and Gabriella Calchi Novati's 'Challenging Patriarchal Imagery: Amanda Coogan's Performance Art.' Aptly, the collection closes with two considerations of the changing face of national identity: Eric Weitz's 'Who's Laughing Now? Comic Currents for a New Irish Audience,' and Holly Maples's 'Parading Multicultural Ireland: Identity Politics and National Agendas in the 2007 St Patrick's Festival,' which speak to emerging communities who perform a 'new Ireland.' My only quibble with what is an otherwise wide-ranging collection which opens up the parameters of identity politics is the neglect of any engagement with class politics. This aside, *Crossroads* is a gratifying collection of essays which will reward those engaged in any aspect of Irish studies and indeed those with a passing interest. The crossroads evoked by this collection certainly offer interesting new directions which open out to enriching possibilities through the intersection of performance studies and culture.

Works Cited

Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance.*
       New York: Columbia U P, 1996.

Fictional Thinking: A Poetics and Rhetoric of Fictional Creativity in Theatre by Eli Rozik
Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009, 323 pp. (paperback)
KAREN QUIGLEY

As university applications in the UK this year increase by 20% from 2009 figures, in a manner indirectly proportional to Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) cuts, it seems inevitable that there will be a significant number of applicants who will not receive university places for the academic year 2010-2011 (Guardian). With this in mind, it can be surmised that the need for accessible books dealing with abstract theoretical topics that can be difficult to understand without face-to-face explanation mounts, potentially increasing the chance that genuine interest in a subject will combine with the reading of such books to provoke thought and discussion, whether fuelled by the universities or not.

Eli Rozik's 2009 monograph, *Fictional Thinking: A Poetics and Rhetoric of Fictional Creativity in Theatre*, can be examined in this light as a timely contribution to the ever-growing quantity of theatre studies literature that deals with the analysis of the creation, production and consumption of dramatic works. Its structure, tone and content contribute to my speculation here. Situating himself firmly in the realm of the instructive and the pedagogical, Rozik aims 'to create a reliable methodology of fictional analysis,' claiming that, in identifying commonalities in the structures of fictional worlds as created by playwrights, it will be possible 'to understand the generative rules underlying fictional thinking' (4). For Rozik, the 'fictional thinking' of his title supports this claim, indicating that it refers to the manner in which manufacturers of fiction utilise the fictional worlds that they create, inhabited as these worlds (usually) are by fictional characters who perform fictional actions, in order to express themselves and their psyches. This assertion, borrowing heavily from the writings of Northrop Frye, leads Rozik to the notion of fictional creativity as not only the invention of the fictional world, but also its reception by the reader/spectator.

It is, of course, clear that this methodology of analysing fiction could be applied to almost any artform that involves the creation of fictional worlds. Rozik here defends his use of theatre and theatrical fictional worlds for the purpose, specifically in

relation to the experience of going to the theatre. He turns our attention to the undeniable fact that theatre so often requires 'that the imagination of a heterogeneous group of spectators be captured at once and that their response be in unison' (5), showing his choice of primary example to be one that tests his theories with more rigour than, say, an examination of the structures of novels or poems would. With this in mind, Rozik proceeds to combine the dramatic text and its performance into 'the genuine and unique theatre text' (5), exploring over 100 examples of playtexts drawn from the length and breadth of recorded theatre history, and supporting his own thoughts on theatrical fictional worlds and their creation with reference to the work of a plethora of theorists including Aristotle, Freud, Jung, Hegel and Nietzsche.

In Part One, Rozik works from a primarily Aristotelian emphasis on the notion of set principles of dramatic structure, defining six separate strata or 'layers' that, for him, underlie the organised construction or 'poetic deep structure' of any fictional world (24). For example, these layers begin with 'the mythical layer', which Rozik sees as the initial metaphorical description of the audience's psyche, identifiable by a removal of all unnecessary characterization or action until only the mythical core remains. The major example employed here is Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, in which almost every detail of Oedipus' character, from his status as a king to the scar that identifies him may be eliminated without changing the essential myth, as long as the fact that he is the son of his parents remains. Building from this, Rozik identifies the praxical, naïve, ironic, modal and aesthetic layers in a similar way, exploring both a psychoanalytic and Aristotelian approach to each layer, as well as a description of how to detect each layer, and, interestingly, how each layer can also operate as a 'fallacy.' The remainder of Part One deals with other elements of fictional creation such as characterisation, intertextuality, and the function of Aristotle's unities as laid out in *Poetics*, with clear definitions and pertinent examples in use throughout.

Parts Two and Three of *Fictional Thinking* are devoted to an exploration of different elements of dramatic structures, from allegoric to absurdist, with an emphasis in Part Two on audience reception of the fictional world being presented, and an emphasis in Part Three on types of 'surface structures' as distinct from the 'deep structure' discussed in Part One. For Rozik, surface structures emerge from the deep structure, with each surface structure following specific rules in order to engender a certain response in the spectator, usually as a result of presupposing their

archetypal expectations and then fulfilling or frustrating these in some way. For example, he discusses absurdist structure in terms of its attempt to shock the spectators and avoid the possibility of their catharsis. This third section in particular provides some penetrating analysis of plays including *Antigone* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, as well as including a generous examination of the notion of an anti-Aristotelian viewpoint, despite a frank acknowledgment of its ambiguous function in the context of a discussion examining fictionality.

Part Four of Rozik's book explores specific case studies of fictional worlds in order to test his theory that fictional creativity can be explained formulaically. He looks at the Hippolytus/Phaedra myth; he shows how Calderón could have written *Life is a Dream* as an adaptation of *Oedipus the King*; he examines Jungian archetypal characterization in *Medea* and *The Seagull*; he analyses an Israeli production of Ionesco's *The Chairs* in order to compare the different fictional worlds set up by the playtext and the specific production. This fourth and final section provides a useful illustration of Rozik's thoughts so far, and, as with the rest of *Fictional Thinking*, the positive and assured tone of his prose leaves us in no doubt as to his command of this subject.

However, it is clear here that, despite Rozik's clarity of structure and evident desire to comprehensively explain his theory of fictional worlds, he occasionally expects too much of his readers, while simultaneously using techniques such as short, subdivided chapters, and chapter summaries in order to allow the reader to gradually accumulate the information he is imparting. These expectations, comparable to his own observation that the spectators' expectations on entering the theatre mingle the wishful and the fearful, the hope 'that something desired will succeed' and the fear 'that something undesired will prevail' (21), mostly centre around an assumption of prior knowledge of his work, both in this area of 'fictional thinking,' and in theatre studies more generally. There are many points in the writing where Rozik directs us to another of his books or articles, which allows him to avoid a number of potentially knotty questions. For example, because of his assertion that he is acknowledging the combination of the written and performed text as 'theatre' here, the obvious absorption in the verbal and the textual while paying very little attention to the visual jars somewhat. The book is replete with images of various productions of the playtexts to which Rozik continually refers (*Hamlet, Yerma, Waiting for Godot, The Chairs*) but he does not discuss the specific productions shown in many cases,

except the chapter (one of 27) devoted to a production of *The Chairs* as outlined above. While it cannot be denied that the original creator of the fictional world is (usually) the playwright, the role of the theatre director and designers cannot be underestimated, particularly as Rozik constantly returns to the notion of going to the theatre, and the theatre audience's response to the fictional world presented to them, which would seem to indicate the necessity of an augmented discussion of individual productions rather than just the playtexts.

That said, the value of *Fictional Thinking: A Poetics and Rhetoric of Fictional Creativity in Theatre* lies, as mentioned above, in its pedagogical impulse. Rozik clearly loves to teach, and the helpful structure and tone of this book confidently leads the expert and uninitiated alike through the potentially difficult terrain of the ways in which fictional worlds are created and presented to the spectator, and how a variety of theoretical approaches can enhance understanding and analysis of the oft-contested questions of dramatic structure and audience response.

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Theatre & the Body **by Colette Conroy**
London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 86pp. (paperback)

NICHOLAS HAMILTON

Theatre & the Body is part of a series of short studies exploring the relationship between theatre and a variety of other disciplines, including politics, human rights and globalization. The book is designed to be read in one sitting and will be of interest to academics, students, theatre professionals and curious amateurs. Despite its brevity, *Theatre & the Body* is impressive in its scope, charting key ideas within its subject area from Descartes to Auslander.

Conroy begins with an account of French actress Sarah Bernhardt's opinions on the suitability of certain types of bodies for the theatre. In an acting manual from the 1920s, Bernhardt warned admissions staff at drama schools to turn down applicants with

unusually proportioned bodies – 'little women with big heads or lads with long bodies supported by short and bandy legs' (1). Bernhardt believed that only those with perfectly proportioned, 'normal' bodies could ever be described as actors. Her logic was that all performers should begin from a common starting point, so as to help the audience judge their ability to adopt a new guise. Of those performers with unusually proportioned bodies who achieve success, Bernhardt wrote, 'I refuse the title of artist to those who owe their reputations to a physical deformity. I regard them as buffoons' (1).

However, despite these strong views, Bernhardt did not live by her own rules. Instead, she continued to act after having her leg amputated. As Conroy points out, Bernhardt 'was a disabled performer when she wrote her acting manual' (2). Following her amputation, Bernhardt was able to continue earning a living as an actress because the public was morbidly fascinated by her as an amputee and happy to pay to see what she looked like. By her own standards, Bernhardt was no longer an actress but a 'buffoon.' This well-chosen example demonstrates the complexity involved in putting bodies on stage. It flags a number of key issues, which Conroy develops throughout the book. These include the relationship between actor and character, approaches to judging artistry and skill, and the body as an abstract ideal versus the body as real, physical object.

In the first chapter 'Bodies and Meaning,' Conroy observes that '[t]he different uses of the term "body" are absolutely crucial, because they carry with them assumptions and theories' (9-10). She points out a number of revealing anomalies in the way that people use the term 'body.' Conroy cites Wittgenstein, who suggested that the most effective way to communicate a concept to somebody is by showing them a series of objects with a single common property. For example, in order to explain what blue means, one might point to the ink from a pen, the sky and the sea, all of which are blue. However, when the same approach is used to explain the term 'body,' it reveals that people think about their bodies in a different way. For example, it sounds strange to point at another person and say 'That is a body.' It also sounds strange to point at oneself and say 'This is a body.' These examples suggest that people see a distinction between themselves and their bodies. Conroy writes: 'I can talk about "my body" in such a way that it sounds as though I own it, and as if there is such a thing as "I" without the body' (17).

What is particularly impressive about this book is Conroy's use of illuminating cases studies from both theatre and avant-garde performance. Conroy develops the idea that there is a difference between the body and the self by using the example of the performance artist Orlan, who underwent plastic surgery in order to reconfigure her face as a hybrid of representations of classical goddesses. Orlan's project supports the idea that the self and the body are separate. However, whereas others may claim to undergo plastic surgery in order to bring their external body in line with the ideas of their internal self, the model for Orlan's surgery is external culture. Conroy cites Susan Bordo who believes 'that the body is a medium of culture – a text to be read and also written through action, clothing, dress – but also a direct locus of social control' (51). Orlan's project questions the relationship between mind, body and culture, and the way in which this social control operates.

Conroy takes her subject up to the present, outlining some fascinating recent ideas. She summarises an essay by Philip Auslander from 2006, in which he discusses the question of whether we can say that robots perform. Auslander says that spectators may be disappointed if they realise that the performers in a show are robots because robots may not appear to fulfil the criteria on which we usually judge performers – namely, 'intention, artistry, originality, self-expression and liveness' (35/6). However, Auslander argues that spectators' expectations can be satisfied if they consider the process involved in making the performance: 'the creativity of the programmer or the originality of the artist, for example' (36). Even if all of the criteria which usually define performance are not present at once in 'a single spectatorial experience' (36), this does not that mean that it is not a performance.

Theatre & the Body fulfils its objective of making drama theory accessible to a wide readership. Conroy should be commended for the clarity and precision of her writing, and for managing to include so many interesting ideas in a very short book.

Naming Theatre: Demonstrative Diagnosis in Performance Studies
by James Frieze
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 224 pp. (hardback)

STELLA KERAMIDA

In *Naming Theatre: Demonstrative Diagnosis in Performance Studies*, James Frieze begins his study with what he perceives to be 'an obsession with naming in recent theatrical performances and texts' (1). Frieze's specific theoretical stance is that the naming of characters, places, events, and phenomena is particularly distinctive and constitutive of the meaning of a play. Frieze illustrates how naming – of characters, space, geography, time and of events and phenomena (for example, the breakdown of communist regimes, the impact of AIDS, or globalization) – reflect on and intervene with the identity-formation of a play and its generic taxonomy (for example 'AIDS play,' 'Hispanic-American,' 'verbatim,' or 'gay and lesbian').

A particular strength of the book is its clear articulation of complex ideas, such as subjectivity, the effect of metaphor, the strategy of demonstrating irony, the link between medical diagnosis and theatre criticism, the authority of historical lineage (121-124), procedural methods in defining documentary theatre (docudocs), and the balance between the factual and the phatic. Other strengths include the use of unconventional examples (plays performed by experimental theatre artists that are not well known to popular audiences) and the book's comparative, almost dialogic, approach. Frieze focuses on close readings of particular theatre-makers, such as the work of Ping Chong, Anne Bogart, Suzan-Lori Parks, Theodora Skipitares, Paula Vogel, Coco Fusco, Bobby Baker, Forced Entertainment, Lightwork, Ridiculusmus and Riot Group, to provide his own firm conceptual grasp of critical naming in terms of authorship, assimilation, demonstration, diagnosis, programming, disclosure, monstrosity, and 'graphting' (i.e. when history functions as a host onto which the play grafts (161)). In that respect the contribution of the author to this area of scholarship is significant.

Frieze's main argument is that theatre can be an important factor in stabilizing grounding concepts (conceptualization) and, therefore, the process of naming fulfils an important role in the stabilization of identity. Frieze appropriately acknowledges that 'while analyses of naming have much to contribute to the study of theatre, theatre has much to contribute to the analysis of naming' (2), setting the tone for a specific homage to the value of theatre practice. But how does a thing relate to its name? Frieze suggests that 'names hide some things (objects, rules, laws) and reveal others' (1). He interestingly points out that 'the dynamics of naming are gestaltic: they entail interplay of figure and ground.'

So, the process of naming establishes something 'as a figure against a ground that may not be visible before the act of naming occurs, but which is thrown into relief *by* the act of naming' (2). For example, to show how the deployment of language (linguistics) contributes to the process of naming by performing meaning, he draws on theorists such as Julia Kristeva, in particular her definition of the semiotic trace 'as that memory to which the music of the body brings testimony' (8), and Hans-Thies Lehmann, with a focus on his notion of paratactic theatre or textscapes in which 'the "sonic" that carries the meaning and language is free to exert itself in all its sensory force' (8). After a systematic account of a range of theoretical approaches and detailed play analyses Frieze is able to convey a firm understanding of systems of naming.

The section entitled 'Supplement: Naming Critical Acts' (167) in Chapter Ten offers a thought-provoking discussion on the naming that critical readings perform. This clear and concise section will be of real value to students and academics alike, providing an inside view into the mechanisms of theatre and performance studies criticism. In this section the reader is able to see how a scholar reflects upon his own academic work. Criticism of theatre often relies on gender, style, and identity descriptors. Consequently, according to Frieze, critical discourse is constituted to a significant extent by 'naming conventions' or 'rituals' (177). 'The citation of sources and examples to endow analysis with cogency; those catalogues of previous works that often accompany academic articles about theatre companies; and the bibliographical notes on contributors or curriculum vitae that record the work of the critic. All these naming rituals are like a passport that the critic or artist must brandish' (178). Frieze further interrogates the sustained attempts by criticism to define the paradigm of postmodernism and how artists' work can be assimilated under that label. The author examines a range of academic paradigms, such as those outlined in Johannes Willem Bertens and Joseph P. Natoli's *Postmodernism: The Key Figures*, a collection of essays on postmodern artists and thinkers, to show how encompassing or otherwise a label/naming can be in academia.

In conclusion, *Naming Theatre* offers readers a comprehensive understanding of how names populate theatre and how they structure knowledge about a play. This book is an important contribution to the field, as it promotes the application of theory to theatre and performance while avoiding the usual imposition of verbalism that the reader very often finds in this type of academic writing. Furthermore, it prompts theatre scholars to

expand the discourse related to their work (something which is frequently ignored) by establishing ways of questioning it.

Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice **by Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton**
Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2009, 224 pp. (paperback)

<small>SOFIA APOSPORI</small>

Macro studies on applied theatre are not published frequently. The shortage in surveys that are wider in scope is not surprising, since applied theatre is regularly re-defined by the social settings that call for the employment of theatre as praxis. Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton have produced a book that not only defies the challenge of presenting an overview of applied theatre, but also functions as a provocation of practice for its readers. As the promotional information on the book suggests, *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice* is 'the first collection to assist practitioners and students in developing critical frameworks for their own theatrical projects.' With the usability of *Applied Theatre* as their main objective, Prendergast and Saxton explore the indeterminate relationship between the theories and practices of applied theatre in a resourceful manner, functioning as facilitators of information, rather than authoritative specialists in the field. Along these lines, the survey is an accessible academic source that calls for the critical engagement of its readers.

Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston have recently proposed in *The Applied Theatre Reader* that 'the (applied theatre) categories that have emerged are […] an interlocking set of practices based upon some common principles which can, to a degree, operate across the contexts in which these processes are applied' (11). In Part One of *Applied Theatre* Prendergast and Saxton embark upon the challenging task of identifying these 'common principles' (Prentki 11) and manage to contextualise the material that follows. While Chapter One historicises and detects the boundaries of the field, Chapter Two engages with crucial practical issues that serve as a stimulating starting point for the reader. The concise arrangement of the first part of the book is indicative of the way in which the relationship between theory and practice is regarded throughout the survey. According to Prendergast and Saxton 'the most contemporary theatre strategies and techniques you will read

about in the case studies are based on the experiences of people whose own practice served as the playing space from which their understanding grew' (13). The focus is placed on the actual *application* of the theatrical form on social contexts and, consequently, the theories that constitute Part One seem to be the result of scholarly observations on a range of practices, rather than the product of meticulous academic discourse.

Parts Two and Three of *Applied Theatre* have a different format, disclosing an impressive selection of thirty case studies. In Part Two, the editors have focused on what they regard as the three underlying traditions in the field of applied theatre: Theatre in Education (31), Popular Theatre (51) and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (69). The subject matter of Part Three is a range of (established) modes of contemporary practice: Theatre in Health Education (87), Theatre for Development (105), Prison Theatre (119), Community-based Theatre (135), Museum Theatre (153) and Reminiscence Theatre (169). Each of the nine modes is illuminated by three – in some cases four – case studies, which reveal the importance of context in the shaping and development of the creative processes adopted in the field.

One interesting aspect of *Applied Theatre* is the fact that the case studies function rather independently within the book. The brief discussion provided by Prendergast and Saxton at the beginning of each of the nine chapters aims at *introducing* each mode of practice, instead of imparting definite answers about its nature. This reinforces the polyphonic character of the collection in terms of not only the 'nationality' of the work presented, but also the personal style of practice that each of the thirty case studies endorses. Along these lines, the reader of *Applied Theatre* is given the opportunity to process Parts Two and Three quite autonomously, locate points of agreement and disagreement and, as a result, be guided towards the 'development' ('Applied') of her/his own 'critical frameworks' (Intellect).

In Part Four, Prendergast and Saxton add a number of critical provocations to their collection, as they engage with some of the most debated issues in the field: the boundaries of participation (189), the role of aesthetics (191), the relevance of ethics (193), and the significance of assessment/evaluation (195). The discussion on the centrality of participation in the process of distinguishing applied theatre from mainstream practices justifies the legitimacy of the field. The examination of aesthetics in relation to the social momentum of the work produced through applied theatre methods operates as a triumphant reminder of the

interdisciplinary nature of the expressive form. The account on ethics – possibly the *most* debatable issue in the field – links ethical behaviour to the practice of continuous reflection and, accordingly, stresses the importance of process over product. The final section recognises assessment/evaluation as an inherent part of practice, since it is the one definite phase that concretely allows for the systematic development of applied theatre as a field. The above have been – and still are – the most genuine areas of concern for both researchers and practitioners.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of *Applied Theatre* is its accessible and interactive structure. True to one of the key elements that distinguish applied theatre from mainstream practices, namely participation, the format of the book provides the reader with the space within which to examine both the theoretical and the practical proposals presented. The questions, suggested activities and lists for further reading at the end of each chapter, establish a dialogic relationship between the authors, the editors and the reader of the collection. More importantly, they clearly define the nature of the survey as an introductory course-book that not only serves as a concise induction to the field of applied theatre, but also invites the reader to define her/himself as an emerging practitioner. Along these lines, even though this macro survey aims at quite a specific target group, it is an interesting and welcome addition to the corpus of academic works that focus on applied theatre.

Works Cited
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