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Communities and Performance

Editorial for *Platform,* Volume 5 Issue 2, Spring 2011

In performance, communities are constantly constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through processes of surrogation, imagination, transformation or decline. This edition of *Platform* explores the ways in which theatre interacts with pre-existing communities, and also how it creates and is created by diverse groups. In particular, this issue focuses on issues of space, geography and globalization and how communities are created and problematised through performance and performative acts.

Three of our contributions offer divergent perspectives on the effects of globalization and globalized theatre practices on communities in Latin America. Taken together they present a thought-provoking dialogue about the positive and negative effects of globalization on disadvantaged communities: in particular, about how favela or inner-city communities can exploit or be exploited by global cultural structures.

Jorge Perez Falconi's article, 'Space and Festivalscapes,' provides analysis of the ways in which global festivals reshape local urban space, focusing on how the development of festivals disrupts and defines space and community. As an example, Perez Falconi uses the case of the *Festival de México* in Mexico City to show that festival organizers can be instrumental in negotiating with social organizations and city inhabitants to develop privately administered historic-cultural space. In this case, a globally inflected cultural project supported privatization and changed the lived reality of a city's communities.

Poppy Spowage's article 'An AfroReggae Explosion,' presents an optimistic and contentious perspective on the effects of globalization on community. Taking the example of Rio de Janeiro's globally renowned favela-based performance group AfroReggae, Spowage discusses the potentially empowering and economically enabling results of community engagement with global economic and cultural systems. Spowage uses the example of AfroReggae's weekend-long performance installation at London's Southbank Centre in 2010 to argue that such events can be understood as community theatre insofar as they prioritize community-focused practice.

Marina Henriques Coutinho's article 'The Brazilian Favela as Stage and Persona,' engages with the interaction between community and globalization in a more critical way. Henriques Coutinho recognizes the extent to which favela performances can be co-opted by hegemonic socio-economic forces and exploited. However, she makes the argument that alternative-narratives can and do arise from the cultural output of marginalized spaces.

The other contributions to this issue variously explore the role of performance in building or problematising communities. Andrew Ryder's article 'Here on the Edge' utilizes archival material to understand how the play *Tennessee Justice*, performed in 1945 by interred conscientious objectors (COs) in Waldport, Oregon, built a community through performance. Ryder's case study shows his theory of 'community-building theatre' in action. The COs at the Waldport Civilian Public

Service camp shared an identity off-stage. In focusing the COs' attention on their shared pacifist commitment, *Tennessee Justice* helped to unite various factions at the camp, effectively using the COs' shared identity to build community.

Beth Phillips's profile piece on the Irish performer Little John Nee and his play *The Derry Boat* offers a lively, engaging and personal insight into how Nee's work unites community in the present through theatrical interaction with a shared past. Dealing with issues of immigration, identity and homeland, Nee plays characters across generations and locations, conjuring up a nuanced, funny and sometimes poignant impression of community and home.

In Liam Jarvis's interview with Darren O'Donnell of the contemporary company Mammalian Diving Reflex, O'Donnell intimates that his work aims to connect people with each other and urban spaces. O'Donnell wants a deeper connection with the people in his immediate surroundings, and this impulse has lead to work that facilitates local face-to-face encounters, internationally, in urban contexts.

Where Mammalian Diving Reflex's reaction to the alienation of the modern urban subject is to facilitate interpersonal exchanges, Yelena Gluzman's performance practice responds differently to contemporary problems of community and individuality. Gluzman's *One Acts* are a series of projects in which the performance is reduced to a single action, and in which the spectator and performer are one and the same. Drawing on Jacques Rancière and Niklas Luhmann, Gluzman removes the operative structure of a performance from the discourse of performer and spectator, from discourses that prioritise conceptions of community, and focuses instead on the relationship between action and environment. Gluzman's work reflects contemporary subjectivity in a non-didactic and non-communitarian way.

Platform is grateful to the Royal Holloway Department of Drama and Theatre for its generous support, both financial and practical. We would like to express our thanks to our peer reviewers for their time and expertise, to our book reviewers for their thoughtful analyses of recent titles in the field of theatre and performance studies, and to Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge and Sussex Academic Press for sending us publications for review. We would like to acknowledge Eugénie Pastor's special efforts as a substitute head editor on this edition. Lastly, we would like to extend our warmest thanks to all our contributors for sharing their research, practice, and insights.

Mara Lockowandt and Emer O'Toole (Head Editors)
On behalf of the *Platform* editorial board
March 2011.

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Matt Fox completed a BA in English at Royal Holloway, University of London in 2004 and an MA in Professional Writing at University College Falmouth in 2005. Matt is currently researching his PhD, examining the relationship between queer theory and comedy in contemporary theatre. Matt is a playwright and producer for YAP Theatre Company; his most recent project is a reworked version of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.

Yelena Gluzman initially studied neuroscience under the Science Project initiative. She began to create theatre events in 1997, in pursuit of her interest in the mechanisms underlying human behavior and communication. She is the editor of the *Emergency Playscripts* series, which publishes scripts foregrounding issues of notation, and of the forthcoming *Emergency Index*, an annual document of performance works created world-wide. She teaches at Tokyo University and Yotsuya Art Stadium.

Andrew Ryder is Associate Professor of Theatre at Seattle Pacific University, where he teaches Theatre History, Dramatic Literature, Play Analysis, Directing, and Acting. His research on theatre in Oregon's CPS camps appears in *The Western States Theatre Review*, *Theatre Annual*, and *Performing Arts Resources*. His research interests include twentieth century American theatre, community-based theatre, and theatre education.

Marina Henriques Coutinho is a professor at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) Theatre School. Her research interest is community theatre in Rio's favelas. Since 1997, she has worked with young people as a drama facilitator in Rio. She received her PhD from the Postgraduate Programme of Theatre Arts-UNIRIO.

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Jorge Perez Faconi is a teacher, cultural promoter, and theatre director born in Mexico. He holds a BA in Theatre and Drama from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and an MA in Theatre Directing from Royal Holloway, University of London. He is currently studying for his PhD at Royal Holloway, focusing on Latin American festivals. Besides directing performances, his practical work includes nine years as organiser of the Festival Internacional de Teatro Carmen.

Poppy Spowage is currently studying for a Masters in Theatre and Performance at Queen Mary, University of London. As a practitioner in socially engaged performance, Poppy has worked with a wide range of people, aged from nine to ninety. Poppy's academic work challenges the boundaries of applied performance and theorises its intersection with other theatrical practises.

Space and Festivalscapes

BY JORGE PEREZ FALCONI

Abstract

In this paper I explore a number of ways in which space and festivals interact. My main concern is to describe the impact of festivals on their host cities and to develop a critical approach to the use of space by festival organisers. Using the ideas of Doreen Massey, Michel Foucault, Gay McAuley and Ric Knowles, this essay explores the relationships that are generated by the placement of festivals in relation to the space in their host communities. The text also questions the traditional conception of empty space, a place without ideologies, and argues for a more open notion which includes dynamic processes of both physical and mental spatial constructions, the burden of ideology implicit in each space, and the diverse ways in which people become attached to particular places. The conceptualisation of space has implications for the way we construct our social relations, and can have an impact on the shaping of festival structures. I consider festivals as meeting points where distinct trajectories coexist and multiple shapes and uses of space are possible. I argue that we have to consider, along with particular forms of interaction with specific spaces, the many possible ways of experiencing them.

Space and Festivalscapes

Festivals are permeated by conflicting ideologies, and these in turn generate diverse *Festivalscapes.* A Festivalscape is the constellation of contrasting trajectories and flows impelled by local, national, and transnational practices and discourses at a festival. Its constitution can vary radically from event to event due to the different ways the distinct trajectories can articulate in a specific festival. Drawing on Appadurai's definitions of *ideoscapes*, *ethnoscapes* and other terms with the suffix *scape* (indicating relations that are dependent on perspective, and which are inflected by varying socio-historical situations and actors), I argue that Festivalscapes help to delineate a festival's heterogeneity by

foregrounding the impossibility of an event being articulated or experienced in the same way by any two people or groups.[1]

It is important to consider space when investigating the interaction of local, national, and transnational flows present at festivals and the construction of multiple Festivalscapes. The conceptualisation of space has implications for the way we construct our social relations, and can have an impact on the shaping of festival structures. In this essay, I consider festivals as meeting points where distinct itineraries coexist and multiple shapes and uses of space are possible. By considering some theories behind the use of space, I explore the ways in which festivals and space interact to form different Festivalscapes.

Space conditions movement. It gives us dimensions to act upon: scales, textures, colours, and forms. It directs our bodies and shapes the distribution of people; it gives us patterns of movement, and even rhythms and trajectories. Although the way space alters or stimulates our responses is not always evident, all our actions, paraphrasing Gay McAuley, take place within a space (2-3). This notion of space as a container has perhaps led to some theatre practitioners, Peter Brook for example, to conceive of empty space as a vessel to receive the actors' actions. According to this notion, the development of actions is what gives sense and meaning to space, thus relegating it to a subsidiary plane.

The idea of space as a container relates to what Doreen Massey describes as the prioritisation of time over space, and the reduction of space to representation, concepts that she derives from theorists such as Bergson, Deleuze, Zeno, Laclau and de Certeau (*Space* 20-30). In this sense, space is considered to be divisible, static, where only the temporal is mobile. Movement is thus considered as passing from one point to another, traversing the immobile space (23). Actions have duration in opposition to space, which is fixed. Thus,

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[1] For more information see Appadurai, *Disjuncture* 27-47.

space, as something stationary and motionless, has the ability to seize the temporal, the action; it can freeze movement and the flow of life, transforming both into science, or, in other words, an object of study, a representation, a divisible space (25-28). According to Massey, the idea of space as something fixed has led us to see it as a free territory, as something that needs to be filled or conquered. This, in turn, has prompted some researchers to view the conquest of space as an implacable force of nature, a natural and unavoidable condition implicit in space (*Space* 4-5). For if space is a free territory, an expanse, then it remains empty and open to occupation. In other words, considered as an expanse, space cries out to be filled, and therefore, its fate is to be conquered.

For Massey, the idea of space as an expanse is an image that has been constructed to promote globalisation and its consequences (*Space* 5). Space is conceptualised as surface because it can be crossed without taking into account either the people that inhabit that place, or their trajectories. Countries such as Mozambique and Nicaragua are put into a historical queue: they are not recognised as having their own trajectories but instead as forming part of the trajectories of more 'advanced' countries (*Space* 5). These countries are seen as empty spaces, as recipients that need to be filled or conquered. This conception, according to Massey, 'reduces simultaneous coexistence to [a] place in the historical queue': the conquered countries are not only behind in time but also distant in space (*Space* 5). Consequently, the conception of space as an expanse has implications for the way we construct our relationships with different countries, social formations and human beings.

Massey identifies three points that need to be considered in order to engender a new conception of space: first, the recognition of 'space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions,' and the awareness that these interactions occur across the whole planet; second, the understanding of 'space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which

distinct trajectories coexist' (in this manner, heterogeneity and space implicate one another simultaneously); and third, the recognition of "space as always under construction ... as a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (*Space* 9). Therefore, identities are always changing, in the process of becoming, forging a future open to possibility. Hence, I delineate two main propositions in the theories of Massey discussed above. On the one hand, diversity can be seen as the separation of identities, existing simultaneously in different spaces. This is in line with Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation, imagining others sharing the same conditions and living together simultaneously in time, each individual playing his/her role in the construction of the whole within the same historical conditions, but without necessarily interacting (6-7). On the other hand, diversity considers a fusion, an interrelation between the distinct identities. In this sense, there is, according to Massey, a dynamic simultaneity (*Space* 23): everybody evolves in space and time simultaneously in a net of mutual relations. Consequently, a space is permanently in connection with other spaces and trajectories; space and time are articulated, they are 'places-moments' in evolution.[2] Identities are not isolated entities but processes constructed through numerous dynamics of interchange. Space is a structural part of these dynamics because it helps to build identities. In this conception, space is not static but an entity capable of affecting human trajectories.

Festivals can be seen from a similar perspective because they are not located in an empty space. We should abandon the idea of space as a container or as a site of emptiness, because space bestows our actions with meanings. According to David Wiles, 'Brook's ideal of an "empty space" was always philosophically untenable. In order to take a space and call it a bare stage, he (the unseen director) needs to frame that space, and separate it from the clutter

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[2] '*Lugares momentos*' in the original conception. The notion refers to the way Mexicans conceived space in opposition to Spanish people. That is, as a combined process, without the Western separation into two dimensions: time and space. The concept is taken from Soustelle, J: *La Vida Cotidiana de los Aztecas en Vísperas de la Conquista*. Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956.

round about. The shape and contour of the frame confers an identity on that which is framed' (243). Space provides schemes to receive and understand the actions performed in a designated spot. Space is never empty or absent of ideologies or meanings. Therefore, space design provides a way of seeing and at the same time a way of behaving. Doors, windows, seats, for example, influence the way we perform in space; colours, textures, and lights generate thoughts and feelings.

Festivals 'take place' within specific, local spaces, which already bear the burden of ideologies and memories. In this sense, there exists a correlation between the location of festivals and the host city's spaces. For example, the *Festival de México* (FMX), currently carried out across a number of venues and sites in Mexico City, was previously held in the town centre, a place with abundant historical and ideological implications. Within the town centre it is possible to find Aztec ruins, colonial Spanish churches, and modern buildings, all of them coexisting side by side. These constructions bear witness to the existence of differing ideological trajectories, interactions, and clashes that have helped shape the social landscapes of Mexico City. Therefore, the FMX has had to negotiate its 'placement' with the historical and ideological flows that run within and through the city. The organisers of the FMX have had to implement strategies and dynamics of space appropriation and distribution to deal with the inhabitants of the town centre. It is worth noting that the *Festival de México* started as a small event in the town centre of Mexico City. The former *Festival del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México* was part of a bigger project of redevelopment and economic growth implemented by private and public organisations such as the federal and local governments, and media entrepreneurs. By means of an advisory council, whose prominent head figure was the tycoon Carlos Slim, the project 'Rescate del Centro Histórico' aimed, among other things, to diversify the tourist industry by redefining traditional use of space in the historic centre (Mora 20-24). In this sense, the present-day FMX had to re-negotiate space with social

organisations that were suspicious of private corporations and with city inhabitants who were making the historic buildings their homes. The festival, through artistic events and with the aim of bringing about cultural development, supported the privatising project. In this way, the traditional use of city space space has been transformed: the FMX has contributed to the appropriation of old buildings in order to develop a historic-cultural space administered by the private sector.

Festivals can also establish nuanced relationships with the spaces of the host cities. Festivals frame and delimit spaces either by 'taking place' just in one venue or zone within the city, or spreading into the streets, parks and other spaces. In doing so, they activate spatial and temporal relationships with other places both within and outside the host city. On the one hand, festivals can be enclosed in a specific spot limiting their presence to a designated place in the city and going almost unnoticed by the community. On the other hand, festivals can try to conquer the host city, to penetrate its daily functioning, and thus exert their influence on the whole community. For instance, the FMX shows the evolution of a festival confined in its beginnings to a designated spot – the town centre – to a festival with activities scattered across different venues and sites in the city. With this expansion, the FMX has increased the diversity and type of activities it offers: the event now comprises not only classical music, as in its beginnings, but also theatre, workshops, concerts, exhibitions and street performances. These new activities have allowed the FMX to reach new audiences, including children and young people, and have created a new type of interaction with the festival community.

Moreover, festivals can scatter their influence to other places and other festivals: for example, advertising campaigns that state 'as seen in the Edinburgh Festival,' imply a connection, flow and resonance between different times and places. These connections between disparate geographical sites can also be observed in the similar kinds of performances and themes emphasised by distant festivals. Notably, FMX 2010 foregrounded

internationally renowned performances. Shows such as *Hey Girl!* by Socìetas Raffaello Sanzio, an Italian company that has presented work in the USA, Germany, Romania, Canada, Spain, France, Slovenia, and Italy, constitute a key component of the international festival circuit. This international circuit shares cultural products, creating nets of support and interchange. The inclusion of hit performances in this festival circuit also reflects the distribution of an aesthetics that gives prominence to the visual aspects of the performance. In order to appeal to an increasingly numerous and diverse audience, and to avoid the language barrier, these festivals rely on performances that emphasise the visual. Consequently, similar conceptual uses of space travel from country to country, from venue to venue, necessitating the same conceptual use of the set in distant spaces. For example, the type of venue in which the majority of these performances are staged is the so-called Italian design. In this sense, Ric Knowles considers spaces such as the proscenium stage to represent an ideology. For him, the proscenium design in a theatre implies the use of a perspective attributable to an aristocratic order that emerged in the seventeenth century: the seat with the best perspective, as well as 'the best seat for being seen by the rest of the audience,' was literally 'that of the king, prince, or duke' (63). Although the spatial design remains, to some extent, the same for each festival that forms part of the international circuit, this does not indicate that the performance's meaning remains the same for every community. However, the spatial design conveys a particular conception of the space, an aesthetics that travels from community to community, disseminating in each festival a particular (in this case Western) perspective of theatrical space. Accordingly, the international festival circuit can be considered a one-sided vision that distributes a particular conception or aesthetics of space.

However, it is not only place that conditions the meaning of a festival, nor only the festival´s activities that imprint meaning on the host city's space. Instead, meaning is found precisely in the mutual interaction between space and event. Therefore, space at festivals is

always under construction. For instance, an intervention of an event in a community can frame the space in a different way, creating or constructing a new sense of place.[3] Further, festivals can designate specific spots for particular performances, which contradict the normal functions of these places, establishing a dialogue between their historical and/or traditional meaning and the new relationships brought about by a different kind of use. For example, the *Festival de Teatro Container* is known for generating a huge urban intervention through the installation of equipped containers as small theatres in the hills and squares of Valparaíso, Chile. In this sense, there is a dialogue between the city's historical identities and those of the performances and containers, which refer to the production and transportation of goods around the globe. In this way, performances can reach remote places, where there is normally no theatre, and interact with inhabitants there. Festivals are not simply located against a background – an immobile context, a place lacking in agency – but rather enacted through spatial and temporal framings. They flow into the space and time of a city, propelling a trajectory, mobilising structures and conventions. Thus, the use of space becomes central to the negotiation of a festival's principles and the dissemination of its perspectives.

In one way festivals resemble heterotopias because they embrace both tensions and contradictions in relation to the use of the space. Foucault describes heterotopias as mirrors, a metaphors for the double meanings and contradictions contained in a space, or the reality and the unreality of spaces (that is, the inversion of relations that some spaces designate or reflect). Heterotopias are unreal places because the image that these spaces project, and that we perceive, does not exist. But they are also real, because the projected image or imagined space materially shapes the way we relate to the actual place. Foucault lists several possible types of heterotopias or spaces that have double meanings. For example, a garden is a

[3] For example, the 1996 Adelaide Festival was constructed trying to respond to the city's history and identity through the use of specific spaces within the city. See Hunter.

heterotopia because it is a real space intended, through its incorporation of plants from around the world, as a microcosm of different environments; it contains the world in one place, and, as such, is both particular and general at the same time. Museums constitute another kind of heterotopia because they are 'linked to slices in time' (26). They deconstruct traditional understandings of temporality, either by accumulating slices of time, or by putting together in one place objects from different times. They enclose in one place 'all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes' and styles (26). Thus, they exist simultaneously in and out of time (22-27).

Similarly, festivals are at once actual and fictional places. They bring into one space, the stage, many different times and places. It is precisely this double meaning that gives festivals a special recognition in societies: their capacity to appear as mirrors, as metaphors, as utopias for specific communities. Festivals construct dualities by accumulating performances from different regions or countries (as in the case of international festivals). They generate a fictional space and time within the real space-time of a community (for instance, the fictional space-time of a particular performance in opposition to the real space-time of the theatre with its curtains, lobby, and lights). They bring together invented stories and situations, and daily activities (for example workshops and performances). In some cases, they are oriented to remain in the collective memory of the target community, to preserve the memories of a specific local culture (as in the festivals to honour local figures or important dates/events that become a hallmark of the cultural development of a community); but they are also ephemeral acts, fictional spaces that disappear as soon as the activities finish. Moreover, they can 'create a space of illusion that exposes every real space [...] as still more illusory' (Foucault 27). For instance, when there is a gathering of people from many different countries, the festival can create the illusion of a place where disparate cultures coexist in harmony, and from there a festival utopia, a site where differences between cultures are dissolved. They can also transform a local city into a fantasy city (as tourist centres where the

whole city is festivalised), or provide the illusion of their functioning as 'a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, [as happy], as meticulous [and] as well arranged': in other words, contrary to the unhappy 'messy and ill constructed' world in which we live (Foucault 27). Thus, festivals contain double spaces: one and many places, real and unreal, normal and extraordinary, chaotic and ordered. Yet, these doubly meaningful spaces provided by festivals need to be constructed. Festivals frame reality – mark and symbolise places and actions. Their spaces embody metaphors through material references and actions, through analogies and parallels with reality. They express a system of preconceptions and assumptions particular to a given community; they reflect and locate the memories of a society.

The relationship between festivals and the space of host cities also depends on the bonds and ties people have with specific places. These connections between places and people are created by the passing of events in a place, by the memories and history incorporated in particular places.[4] According to Ric Knowles, the meaning that a performance acquires in a particular context depends on the performance's 'ideological coded material conditions in production, circulation, use and reproduction' (16-17). For Knowles, 'the geography of performance is both produced by and produces the cultural landscape and the social organization of the space in which it "takes place", and to shift physical and/or social space is to shift meaning' (63). Hence, spaces are not only full of ideology but also inhabited by memories. Even though it is possible to suggest that a particular space has an order – that is, an implicitly biased preconception that conditions its use – this order can, in turn, be modified by the actions performed in such space as time goes by. In other words, the preconceptions

[4] According to Tacita Dean, place differs from space in that the former is history incorporated and is related to daily life, to the passing of events, while space is considered in a more expansive sense, as a tool to identify the position of things in relation to other things. In opposition to space, place is more related to belonging, something grounded in the particular. Dean considers place as a phenomenal reality that can be contemplated and experimented with, but also as a means to bring memories back. See Dean 11-26.

associated with a given place are both triggered and contested by the accumulation of memory in that designated place.

When a festival project does not consider people's attachments with places of memory, some participants can experience it as an eruption within the host community. The current *Festival de México* was created to save the city centre from deterioration. The developers, with the support of the government, appropriated spaces with the intention of rescuing and restoring historic sites. Behind this idea was the objective of making profit out of the spaces after their refurbishment. People inhabiting these places were then considered an obstacle. The festival, primarily rooted in the city centre, was promoted as bringing new life to this part of the city; this masked the deals and trade-offs being sealed. Consequently, the *Festival de México* can be conceived as an instrument that aided the gentrification of the city centre. In contrast, it can also be considered an incursion into the normal life of a community, a project that obviates the sense of belonging and attachments people have and looks to commoditise the memories and actions invested in a particular place for a community.

The ideology behind the use of space by festivals also relates to perspective in terms of the attitude festival organisers or participants have to the ideology implicit in a particular place. People can support the festival structure or confront it; they can consider the event a stratagem for the plundering of cultural artefacts, an instrument of domination, or an ally in the production and maintenance of locality. It is also possible to find different ideological standpoints in the use and arrangement of the space in a single festival. The position of the festival in relation to its background and context, the order of the events within the festival itself, the location of performances in specific sites or venues, the setting of artists and audience within a space, and the distribution of people in the space can drive festivals to multiple outcomes and prompt people to experience a variety of different Festivalscapes.

Festivalscapes can help to analyse the metaphors and ideologies propelled by diverse local, national or transnational trajectories at festivals, as well as the power relationships that these transactions imply. The concept can also shed light on the interaction and articulation of differing ideological standpoints and how they acquire form through cultural artefacts, spatial arrangements and participants' actions. An international festival does not mean the absence of local or global forces; on the contrary, these forces come together in one place and time, manifesting their ideologies through spatial arrangement and actions. The social, political, aesthetic or spatial arrangements can, in turn, help to frame the way people from different communities perceive and judge festivals. Festivals act as frameworks in which human actions are developed and imbued with meaning; they help to construct social life at the same time as they reflect it.

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'Here on the Edge': Community-Building Theatre During World War II

BY ANDREW RYDER

Abstract

Theatre at its best reminds us of our shared identity. What I call "community-building theatre" takes a specific group with a pre-existing identity and effectively "reminds" the individuals what they all share. Through this process, the group is strengthened to look together toward the future. Grounded in Victor Turner's concept of communitas and drawing on Phil Bartle's ideal of community empowerment, I develop this definition as a specialized and productive form of community-based theatre. This definition emphasizes the importance of communal context, blending the aesthetic and the political, and finding hope in challenging circumstances. Bartle's emphasis on common values, altruism, and skills point us toward effective interventions which may lead to increased community trust and unity. Such work must take on issues of meaning to the local community, engage its members as participants, and help them come once again "to consciousness of [themselves]," as John O'Neal has written. As an example I offer the story of the performance of a courtroom drama entitled *Tennessee Justice* by a group of pacifists in a Civilian Public Service camp in Oregon in 1945.

Here on the edge we look east to the West, west to the East, and cannot resolve them. We can only watch; watch and prepare; and bide on the time when what we are, and that for which we have taken this stand, can be tangent again to the world.
--William Everson, *The Untide* 1.10 (March 13, 1943)

[The liminal individual] has been divested of the outward attributes of structural position, set aside from the main arenas of social life in a seclusion lodge or camp, and reduced to an equality with his fellow initiands regardless of their preritual status […]
it is in liminality that communitas emerges.
--Victor Turner, 'Passages' 97.

Introduction: A Trial in Tennessee

An article in the May 1944 edition of the pacifist journal *Fellowship*[1] tells the story of the conscientious objection and imprisonment of ten pacifists during World War II. Nine drafted African-Americans applied for conscientious objector (hereafter CO) status, with the support

[1] *Fellowship* is the journal of a pacifist group by the name of The Fellowship of Reconciliation.

of their pastor, Reverend John Marshall of Jackson, Tennessee. Although the men's applications were approved, they refused their assignment to do 'work of national importance under civilian direction' (Roosevelt) and were promptly arrested. Accordingly, the church members were put on trial for resisting the draft, and the pastor for 'violating the Selective Service Act' by helping them. All ten were convicted in early 1944 and sentenced to three years in prison, along with a $1000 fine for Reverend Marshall (Fellowship of Reconciliation 92). The unnamed author of the *Fellowship* article references a report in the local paper, then offers additional details drawn from individuals who witnessed the trial, in the form of a two-page 'transcript' of the trial's key exchanges and speeches. In the writer's view, the transcript 'reveals vividly the sincerity of the defendants and the prejudice of the prosecution' (92).

Martin Ponch, a trained theatre artist who was himself an imprisoned CO, read this material. Incarcerated at Camp Waldport in Oregon, Ponch created a play based on the trial transcript for production as part of the camp's 'Fine Arts Group'. That play, which he called *Tennessee Justice*, was performed at two Oregon Civilian Public Service (hereafter CPS) camps and a Eugene church in early 1945. The audience was made up primarily of other COs. This production, by showing the experience of other COs, focused each man's attention on his own moment of pacifist commitment. As such, it brought a degree of unity to a camp splintered over ideology, religion, and daily living and working arrangements. That unity was built upon the shared choice of objection, and the shared vision of a future in which pacifists might be neither warehoused nor imprisoned during wartime. The play's social message and function make it an early example of community-based theatre.

In this paper, I will outline the ways in which *Tennessee Justice* helped tighten the community at Waldport by reminding individuals in the play and in the audience *not* of their differences but of all that they had in common. As I examine *Tennessee Justice*, I will

combine the basic definitions of community-based theatre with Victor Turner's concept of 'communitas,' arguing that most, if not all, community-based theatre reaches for this intense and effective form of community. What I call 'community-building theatre' comes about when audience and performers share an offstage identity which is reinforced in and through a production. This form of theatre can be particularly successful in establishing communitas. My definition also draws on 'community empowerment' strategies articulated by community development expert Phil Bartle. I will demonstrate that community-building performance events such as *Tennessee Justice* make use of several key 'elements of strength' found in growing communities. Contemporary theatre work which pursues this particular blend of aesthetic commitment and social engagement may find a useful model in the achievements—both realized and potential—of *Tennessee Justice* and its participants.

Defining Community-Building Theatre

Community-building theatre is a particular approach to community-based theatre. Like all community-based theatre, it 'closely allies itself with a particular community, develops performances about that community's concerns, and involves some level of participation by community members' (Weinberg 186). Put another way, such theatre emphasizes local issues, involves community members, and addresses material community needs. Community-based theatre also tends to focus on those with little or no political power, giving what Roadside Theatre's Ron Short calls 'public voice' (Kilkelly 176) to the voiceless. Often that voice intends to address the community's material needs by appealing to relevant authorities for better housing, fairer treatment, or equal opportunities, and its social and political goals are pursued by aesthetic means and the creation of art that is defined both by its beauty and by its purpose. Performances intend to create a human connection

founded in honesty and integrity and centered in the realities of the community's life together.

These basic features were all characteristics of *Tennessee Justice*. The play was created within Camp Waldport, a community united by conscientious objection and by daily forestry work in the woods near the Oregon coast. This play told a story which was central to the experience of each of these pacifists: the choice to object and the consequences of such objection. It involved approximately ten percent of the campers, onstage and off. And it attempted to give voice to a group of individuals with very limited opportunities to be heard in 1945: African-American pacifists. This production, like the best activist theatre, wanted its aesthetics to be tightly connected with social objectives, not just 'propaganda.' The Spring 1944 edition of *Compass*, a CPS journal edited by Martin Ponch and published from Waldport, featured a section on each of the Fine Arts programs. In that issue, the Waldport artists wrote:

> We are not propagandists. Art does not explain, it simply reveals. […] In so far as it does that the function of art is the truest application of the pacifist principle. Yet neither art nor pacifism are essentially programs….And we believe that in practice we respect each of them enough to preserve the essential dignity and worth they both possess. ('Fine Arts' 21-2)

Community-building theatre in particular takes place in situations where the participants and artists share a common experience. The work of art brings about a particular sense of unity and connection by reminding the audience of that connection. By focusing attention on ten African-American objectors who were imprisoned, *Tennessee Justice* brought each man back to his own moment of decision: a moment which he relived every day as he decided whether to stay in CPS, go into alternative military service, or 'walk out' of CPS and potentially be arrested and tried like the characters in the play. Because the

participants and audience were part of the same group, with a common experience as well as a common location, it was more likely that they would be emotionally affected by the story at hand, feeling empathy for the characters. More than that, they were encouraged and inspired to continue to make their individual decisions, knowing that every other man in the room had been and was doing the same.

Victor Turner refers to the relationships within effective communities as 'communitas,' which he describes in relation to rituals. In rituals we 'try out' concepts and relationships which then influence our lived political reality. Theatre and other arts are significant examples of these kinds of rituals, as they, through aesthetic distance, ask us to 'set aside' our current reality for a limited term, and to imagine a world which may be far different from our own. Communitas is a 'liminal' experience in which 'rules of law, politics and religion [...] are [...] suspended' (*From Ritual to Theatre* 48). Such experiences are more likely for people in what Turner calls a 'marginal' position. COs in CPS fit this definition, as individuals who were 'simultaneously members [...] of [...] groups whose social definitions and cultural norms [were] distinct from, and even opposed to, one another' (Turner, 'Passages' 97). Among Turner's examples of 'marginal' groups are 'migrant foreigners, second-generation Americans, [and] persons of mixed ethnic origin' (97).

As both Americans and pacifists, the COs' very geographical position illustrated their separation from mainstream American culture. The artists felt even more 'in-between' as they negotiated their position within CPS, within the Waldport community, and in the larger world. Turner writes that 'marginals [...] have no cultural assurance of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity' (97). COs initially expected to serve limited terms of service, but these were quickly extended to the length of the war and beyond.

The CO poem published in 1943 with which this paper opens aptly captures this sense of working 'on the edge':

> Here on the edge we look east to the West, west to the East, and cannot resolve them. We can only watch; watch and prepare; and bide on the time when what we are, and that for which we have taken this stand, can be tangent again to the world. (Everson 46)

This writer's description aptly captures Turner's sense of being marginal or liminal, while clearly articulating the COs' geographical and ideological position. Living together in such an exposed and uncertain situation may well have made these pacifists more susceptible to experiences of 'communitas,' and to finding ways to build community within their existing situation. One source of that community was theatre, and theatre which reminded them of 'the larger cause' could reinforce their shared pacifist identity.

Turner describes three elements or stages of communitas. In 'spontaneous communitas,' a group of individuals becomes bonded more or less randomly, becoming 'free from […] culturally defined encumbrances' (*From Ritual to Theatre* 48). Elsewhere, Turner calls this 'a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals' who 'confront one another rather in the manner of Martin Buber's 'I and Thou'' (*Ritual Process* 131). In theatrical terms, an audience becomes 'one' in the context of the play as the social divisions of the outside world melt away. But communitas for Turner is a step in a rite of passage. We step out of the structure of daily life into communitas, then step back into society, changed. Put another way, these 'subjunctive,' or affective and communal, experiences contrast with our 'indicative,' or rational and predictable, everyday experience, where our interactions are governed by roles and rules (St. John 4).

Turner suggests that the spontaneous form of communitas is always short-lived; structure will inevitably develop. When a group wants to hold on to a sense of shared identity which transcends real-life divisions, it develops 'normative communitas,' which blends the two. Here 'a subculture or group…attempts to foster and maintain […]

spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis' (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 49). This form applies the temporary bond created during a performance to the hard work of living together in community among and across differences. The experience of the aesthetic moment creates or reinforces a kind of unity which can encourage the collaboration and patience required in the material world. This is precisely the kind of community commitment required of the COs at Waldport, who had to continue living and working together following their performances.

The challenging work of keeping the group's needs foremost in their work together is deepened by paying careful attention to those techniques which may strengthen the group's bond and function. Community development activist Phil Bartle has identified sixteen elements of community strength. Nine elements deal with the resources for community growth and, as such, are 'indicative' considerations. Such elements are essential to 'normative' functioning, but were more or less out of the control of the COs. But seven elements are more 'subjunctive,' or individualized. These are: altruism, common values, confidence, intervention, skills, trust, and unity (Bartle 104-109). These connect most closely to community-building theatre because they were within the control of the artists and the other COs.

Bartle writes, 'as a community develops more altruism, it develops more capacity' (104). The more members of a group are willing to put others and the group first, the more that community will thrive. This is central to my ideal of community-building theatre, which requires: leaders who emphasize the group's goals and needs; participants who think about the larger group throughout the process; and 'performers' who consider and learn from the 'audience.' The whole group must take the feelings of bonding experienced in production and channel those into their work together day in and day out. Bartle also highlights the value of starting with a group that shares significant agreement or experience, 'especially the

idea that they belong to a common entity that supersedes the interest of members within it' (104). For the COs at Waldport, this bond was their shared pacifism. While they had not all resisted the draft for the same reasons, they shared that moment of saying 'No' to Selective Service and accepting assignment to CPS.

Bartle's idea of 'intervention' (106), of creating a break in the regular social order in the interest of improving conditions, can apply to aesthetic efforts: community-building theatre mobilizes all available resources in service of both the shared performance experience and the follow-up work. It also closely matches Turner's idea of spontaneous communitas as a liminal state. This relates directly to Bartle's next category, 'skills,' simply 'the ability […] to get things done' (108). Finally Bartle addresses 'trust' and 'unity'; believing that collaborators will work together with integrity is essential, and it is important that, no matter the differences, everyone is working for the same goals.

Next is what Bartle calls 'confidence,' a condition in which members of a community share 'a vision of what is possible' (105). This ability to look beyond the immediate experience to continuing relationships can build lasting community through theatre. *Tennessee Justice* provided that look into the future by reminding the COs that injustices were happening daily, and that doing nothing was not an option. Jill Dolan emphasizes that the emotions felt in response to a theatre production can help audience members 'realize that such a feeling is possible, even desirable, elsewhere' (15), encouraging them to *do* something in their real world. Rebecca Solnit writes, 'Every activist movement begins by uniting its participants in important ways, giving them a sense of purpose drawn from the wrongs they seek to right and the shared vision of a better world' (285). Solnit points to the reality that groups are often unified by what they are against. Bruce McConachie has written that 'grassroots theatres […] provide images for their audiences that help them do the symbolic work of including and excluding that constitutes community' (38). *Tennessee Justice*

presented the image of the relentless District Attorney (DA) as a symbol of that which the COs were against, creating an inclusive community in the process.

Tennessee Justice as Community-Building Theatre

My notion of 'community-building theatre' maintains a dual emphasis on the shared aesthetic moment in the theatre and day-to-day efforts toward advancing a sense of community, while specifically highlighting the value of working with a group with significant pre-existing identities or experiences. This is not to imply that this cannot happen in a theatre filled with strangers; in fact, a temporary bond may be more likely in this instance because the group exists as a group simply for that occasion, willingly ignoring the things which divide them. But I am most interested in those situations where a group of people who know each other well—and therefore have to go on living together when the 'moment' is over—are bonded across their differences, and choose to maintain that bond beyond the performance. Whether differences are essential or petty, this bond is created when group members are reminded of what they share, encouraging each to embrace that shared identity.

I do not know whether Martin Ponch and his collaborators created this production primarily for social-political reasons (though some of the other artists thought so, as we will see below). I do believe, however, that Ponch's definition of aesthetics required him to reach for activist goals. Fortunately, a number of resources capture Ponch's thoughts on aesthetics, theatre, and politics, including comments on his own motivations for wanting to create and produce this particular play. He was especially taken by the story and plight of these African-American COs because he was personally concerned about race relations and had lived in Tennessee, posted briefly at the CPS camp in Gatlinburg. He told an interviewer about an experience there in which 'the president of Knoxville College, who happened to be

black, and whom I had invited to visit the camp, was practically run out of the camp because of his color' (Interview).

Ponch already had been 'disappointed' to find 'this Friends [Quaker] camp adhering to regional requirements that blacks not be welcomed there' (ibid). Conversely, Ponch described a situation at Waldport where the 'few blacks at camp…were not apparently… mistreated' (ibid). At least two of these African-American COs at Waldport performed in *Tennessee Justice* as the pastor and as one of the accused parishioners. In this respect alone, Ponch's work was building a larger community within Waldport; he drew in participants who were not involved in other theatre events and he focused the camp's attention on the fact that the experience of pacifism was similar for men of all races. And his play gave voice to the experience of African-American COs, isolated from mainstream American society by both race and ideology.

Another group which Ponch actively sought out to participate in *Tennessee Justice* were the 'Holy Joes,' or the more traditionally religious campers, many of whom were members of the Brethren church, which sponsored and managed Camp Waldport (and many other CPS camps across the country). Ponch described his intentions this way:

> My hope was […] to also get the […] 'Joes' who were holier-minded to not only come and see this play and enjoy it, and appreciate it for what it said, but also to be involved in it. So—I brought into it something that was not in the article, namely a chorus, a church choir. And the cast naturally, of the choir, were going to be the Brethren people and I also had them double as jury people. (Interview)

To understand the dynamic at play here in recruiting Brethren campers as part of an arts project, some context may be helpful. While it would appear from the outside that these were camps filled with like-minded people, the reality was that there were strong distinctions

made over different approaches to religion, pacifism, and work. As a camp which operated on a model of consensus, Waldport can be seen as a kind of 'normative communitas,' to use Turner's concept. These individuals were committed to fairness, collaboration, and distributed leadership wherever possible. But within that system, there was a great deal of variation and conflict. In fact, it could be argued that it was the many differences which required a rational approach to making rules and keeping the peace.

Education programs were considered one possible solution to these conflicts. To use Bartle's terms, it was hoped that these might serve as a kind of 'intervention' which might emphasize 'common values,' thereby increasing 'trust' and 'unity.' Waldport Education director Glen Coffield proposed that some of these conflicts might be minimized 'by getting the members of the individual groups together as often as they have common interests to pursue' (Taylor 47). Coffield identified four conflicting subgroups in a June 1943 report. The groups were:

> (1) Overhead men, who […] are held in disrepute by the project men. In general they are conservative in outlook.[2] (2) Christian Service men […] (3) Jehovah's Witnesses […] (4) The non-religious and liberal religious men….These are intellectuals….These groups tend to scowl at each other and continually backbite. (Qtd. in Taylor 45)

Camp Director Richard Mills believed that religious background was the major divider. He identified the extreme positions as 'those most concerned with personal piety' and 'those that felt that religion is only for the unenlightened' (Mills 9). The pious members would be Ponch's 'Holy Joes;' the artists were more likely to be intellectual and nonreligious.

[2] The 'overhead' are those who work in the logistics for the camp; those on 'project' are working in the woods.

Following the peak of arts group activity in October 1944, conflict over such issues as perceived special treatment of artists, criticism of the artists' lifestyle, and tensions between COs and both camp and Forest Service administrators over the work program had cut off new transfers to the group and minimized camp participation in arts events. In November a camp-wide vote was held to determine the group's future. The artists were supported by a vote of 46 to 13 (Wilson 108), indicating that over twenty percent of the campers who voted would have preferred that the artists just leave. The issues all related to the work that needed to be done: Wilson reported that good 'project' workers were transferring because they didn't want to deal with 'too many Bohemian-type men who are useless on project' (108). At the end of 1944, Camp Director Mills concluded that, while the work of the arts group had been 'entertaining and educational, the ideal of camp unity became somewhat weakened and unfortunately areas of discord appeared' (Mills 11-12). So, where Coffield and Mills had hoped that 'shared experiences' might minimize the conflicts between these contrasting groups, in fact the differences became even more intractable. This was precisely when *Tennessee Justice* was produced, both intentionally and coincidentally addressing many of these issues, at least temporarily.

Performances of *Tennessee Justice* at Waldport took place January 26 and February 3, 1945. Touring performances visited the Elkton, Oregon CPS camp on February 10, and a Methodist church in Eugene on Sunday, February 18 (Sheets, 'Spoken Word' 15). Printer, actor, and musician Adrian Wilson designed the set with fellow CO Kermit Sheets, and ran the lights (Wilson 121). He says there were twenty participants (125); the program names eighteen. Ponch's script for *Tennessee Justice*, which he described as 'lived, not written' (*Tennessee Justice* 1), draws nearly word-for-word from the *Fellowship* court transcript, blending it with a sermon and Biblical quotations. The main innovation is the center section,

in which quotations from the prosecutor alternate with a pacifist sermon from Reverend Marshall, played by African-American CO James Williams.

The other innovation was the choir, composed primarily of COs who otherwise had no involvement with the arts group. This happened because most of the experienced choral singers were what Coffield called 'Christian Service men' from the sponsoring Brethren church. Few of the artists were particularly religious; Ponch reached out to them, hoping 'to arouse some understanding for what the arts people could give to the world among those who didn't have much understanding of arts' (Interview). By involving non-artists in the production, Ponch was beginning the process of building community through his production, providing opportunities for participation by COs from across the camp. And at least some of the hymns were intended to be sung by the full assembly as part of Reverend Marshall's 'church,' thus involving the audience as well. At different points the audience represented Marshall's flock and the crowd in the courtroom, implicating them both as sympathizers and detached observers. Seeing themselves in the story was a first step to recognizing what they shared with the characters and with their fellow audience members.

The script divides roughly into five parts. In the first, District Attorney Mooney grills Reverend Marshall, attempting—unsuccessfully—to get him to admit his responsibility for his parishioners' pacifism. Next Mooney interrogates one of the men, Reaves (portrayed by African-American CO Glenn Evans), condescending to what Mooney sees as his naïve belief, and ridiculing his use and knowledge of language. The third section consists of alternating passages from Mooney and Marshall, now delivering their 'closing arguments': the DA in the courtroom and the pastor in his pulpit. This structure puts the audience in the position of jury, choosing whose summation is most compelling. Then defense attorney Harden, an African-American, addresses his own closing to the jury in a monologue about the brave stand these men are taking, and his own unwillingness to stick his neck out that far.

Harden's performance likely resonated with audiences of men who were, in contrast to the DA, willing to take such risks; this reminder would also have increased the bond between them. The climax of the play happens prior to the verdict, when the church members respond to Harden's speech with a 'vigorous Hallelujah!' and 'those in the church sing' (9). In other words, the high point of the play is the unsuccessful defense, the passion of which each CO hoped his own defense might echo get should he end up on trial. Though they knew the outcome for the ten defendants, the audience—it was hoped—were to be excited by their shared vision and hope that such decisions might be different in the future.[3] The play concludes with the reading of the guilty verdict and the pronouncing of sentences, followed by a stage direction for more music (10).

The response to *Tennessee Justice* was different for the different subgroups at Waldport. In his autobiography, Adrian Wilson—who himself referred to *Tennessee Justice* as 'a discouragingly bad play' (119)—reported on the reactions of three of Coffield's four subgroups. Wilson wrote, 'the Barbary Coast [Jehovah's Witnesses] thought it was the best thing ever done here; the Holy Joes said, 'Maybe the Fine Arts has got some good in it after all;' but the Fine Arts thought it stunk' (121). It is significant that both the Witnesses and the religious campers appreciated the play, because they rarely saw eye-to-eye. The 'gambling and swearing and carrying on' (Sheets, Interview) of the Witnesses offended the religious COs, while the artists were more often allied with the Witnesses, who shared their dormitory. Apparently Ponch's outreach to the religious campers had been successful, allowing Brethren audience members to sing along with hymns they knew and recognize their friends on stage in the choir / jury. For the Witnesses, it is likely that the subject matter, focusing on trials, struck the right note with their experiences; many of them chose to go to prison rather than

[3] For some of the Waldport COs who 'walked out,' and were ultimately tried, including Ponch, this was in fact the case. A judge in Portland argued that, because CPS was intended to be 'under civilian direction,' Selective Service had not had the authority to assign and transfer men; therefore, they were to be considered free and their cases thrown out (Barber 188).

participate at all in the government's war. In this respect, the production clearly seems to have built at least temporary community across differences, reminding the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Brethren campers what they had in common.

However, these two groups shared an experience of objection with the artists too; so what did the artists object to so vehemently in their response to this production? The central problem seems to have been a perception that Ponch's work privileged message over aesthetics. William Eshelman, a CO and arts group leader, wrote it was 'too political' (*NO SILENCE!* 31), and elsewhere referred to it as 'inferior production' ('Chronology' 14). Artistic quality, as they perceived it, was the primary standard by which most Fine Arts members evaluated their work. The theatre group said that they would choose plays 'because they are good plays, rather than […] any other single aspect' (Fine Arts at Waldport 2). On the surface, this appears to be an aesthetic philosophy in keeping with Ponch's own, advocating that social or political goals be connected with, if not subsumed within, artistic ones. But the artists apparently focused on difference rather than similarity in this case and did not experience the same kind of unity—temporary though it may have been—that others did.

One source which clarifies the artists' standards is a 'broadside' issued in May 1944. Entitled 'An Indelicate Commission,' it responds to a plan by the War Resisters' League to publish an 'anti-war anthology of verse.' The signers, 'devoted to the furtherance of pacifist creative expression,' included Fine Arts director William Everson, William Eshelman, Martin Ponch, and Glenn Evans. They cited three reasons for objecting. They were concerned that the proposed editor was not experienced enough for the task, and that the selections would be biased and limited. But their main objection was that 'it is strictly political in concept.' In a follow-up document entitled 'An Importunate Proposition' they offered their own alternative:

> At the termination of CPS we hope to be able to offer a body of work that will stand as a testament to the creativity, the imagination, the range of insight and interest, *and the particular integrity* of those who have made this answer to a world at war. (Eshelman et al; my italics)

While this document came from the 'Writers' Group' and spoke specifically about a proposed collection of CPS poetry, it is equally applicable to any of the arts group's efforts. They wanted to be faithful to their politics *and* their art, not one or the other. From the perspective of these artists, *Tennessee Justice* was too one-sided.

Given the artists' objections, was *Tennessee Justice* successful in bringing a new sense of communitas at Waldport, unifying campers around a shared idea, and pointing them to the future with new energy for their shared tasks? It appears that for some of the campers (excepting the artists) it did, and in some cases quite permanently. In keeping with the very personal and individual nature of conscientious objection, this effect varied from person to person. Ponch claimed that he had later met a Brethren CO at a reunion who 'had indeed had his horizons widened and […] had come to appreciate the fine arts program' (Interview). This was one of Ponch's goals, but it by no means indicates a camp-wide move to new unity and purpose following *Tennessee Justice*. However, the potential was there, and it was realized, at least in places, and certainly over the short term in larger groups.

Conclusion

The experience of creating *Tennessee Justice* bonded the participants through the paradox of reaching out to the lives of others and finding there their own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. In a camp where COs were divided by religion, ideology, and petty disputes, it reminded many audience members what they shared with the characters and with each other: a decision to refuse military service and embrace pacifism. As such, the

production was an excellent example of community-building theatre. It told a story each audience member could recognize, in forms, such as sermons and hymns, they were familiar with.

By ending with a negative outcome for the characters, the play encouraged the audience to do something about a significant injustice. Because of the close connection between the stage situation and that of the audience members, any action they might take would be on their own behalf rather than imprisoned African-Americans halfway across the country. Even though the Waldport COs had little political power, the play encouraged them to remember what they had in common, to defend one another, and to watch out for political and social injustices committed against others. It also may have made them more likely to see one another in human instead of functional terms in their daily work together.

The play built unity between participants and audience, through subject matter, physical arrangement, and singing. It also bonded them at the expense of a new 'enemy.' Tennessee Justice gave COs a clear set of heroes (Marshall and his flock) and a villain (DA Mooney). They were reminded that they were in CPS because they had taken a stand against war, and were being treated differently as a result. What they had in common was the 'enemy' of Selective Service. By focusing on what they shared, and by developing a sense of trust with one another, participants could get on with the business of 'imagining and constructing the relationships of an ethical community for the future' (McConachie 41).

For many of the COs who participated and attended, *Tennessee Justice* broke down stereotypes. By seeing the human side of people they disagreed with, individual COs could look beyond differences to common goals. Artistic activities like *Tennessee Justice* could accomplish this; discussions alone might not, because the discussions generally focused on differences of opinion whereas the play concentrated on common experiences. The ability of *Tennessee Justice* to make a connection with just one CO on a personal level meant more

than managing to convince a majority to vote a certain way in a camp meeting. While Ponch clearly advocated high standards for pacifist art, he was also pragmatic. In *Tennessee Justice*, he believed he had found a project that could both galvanize the COs of Waldport and speak beyond Waldport to a (slightly) larger world about the pacifist experience.

Ponch was pushing for an expanded definition of art; a 'grounded aesthetic' in which 'aesthetic considerations must go hand in hand with those of social activism' (Haedicke and Nellhaus 8). In Turner's language, he hoped to create 'spontaneous communitas' while pushing for the 'normative' form. Ponch's decision to involve a large cross-section of the camp reflects a kind of altruism, as does the COs' willingness to participate. Ponch and his collaborators did not construct specific follow-up activities to the show at Waldport, but they did take it on the road to the Elkton camp and a Methodist church in Eugene, where participant Charles Cooley reports it was well-received (Survey). Ponch, with his cast and crew, wanted to create interesting work their community would value and which would encourage COs at Waldport and beyond. Their efforts added 'strength' to the community in Bartle's terms, and prepared COs to collaborate more effectively day-by-day, in something like 'normative communitas.'

Tennessee Justice, with its local focus, involvement from all kinds of participants, and desire for a unifying experience, demonstrates the characteristics and potential of community-building theatre. The community was built by encouraging individuals within it, challenging them, and reminding them they were not alone. Waldport COs were more susceptible to this appeal, living in a 'marginal' state and questioning their ideals. *Tennessee Justice* gave them a renewed picture of their shared pacifist identity. While there was no magical renewal of camp unity, there may have been a move in that direction for some COs. Participating in *Tennessee Justice* provided an 'intervention' which gave Waldport COs a vision of their potential future and imagined life beyond CPS. That vision allowed them to look at

themselves and each other differently, and to think more carefully about the ways they might work together to better their daily situation.

Community-building theatre can be developed or observed in any number of situations, from Broadway musical productions to school plays. What is essential is a unifying factor or experience which can be recreated or reinforced. For audience members and participants, this can provide a reminder of common values and lead to a renewed commitment to one another. This concept has potential application to a range of engaged theatre practices in the contemporary world, encouraging us to look for unifying elements, to remind ourselves of what we share with the groups of which we are part, and to think in terms of effective connections between the emotional impact of a given production and the practical community work which needs to happen following the performance. The art and the ideology must always work together in the service of a compelling theatrical experience. Such moments, productions, or initiatives will yield greater social and artistic results by remaining true to both. Theatre can build sustainable community through authentic performance events which keep audiences 'on the edge' in many interesting and important ways.

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Abbreviations

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LC Faulconer	Tracy Faulconer Collection, *LC Spec Coll*.
LC Sheets	The Kermit Sheets Collections, OLPb006SHE, *LC Spec Coll*.

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One Acts: Reductive Performances Make a Difference

BY YELENA GLUZMAN

Abstract

Since the twentieth century, the dominant understanding of the operational basis of a performance has been located in the differentiation between the performer and the spectator. As Jacques Rancière points out in *The Emancipated Spectator*, this differentiation can posit spectators as active or passive, oppressive or oppressed, as long as difference remained. This ambiguous differentiation leads to a seeming impasse in the analysis of how a performance system operates. Four intentionally reductive performance works, conceived by the author as a series of *One Acts*, are introduced in the context of this audience/performer dilemma. *One Acts*, performances in which the content of the work consists of one performed action, are further characterized by the fact that the performances are enacted and received by the spectators themselves. Sociologist Niklas Luhmann adapted the notion of autopoieisis and applied it to various social systems, describing these systems as operationally closed, distinct from a larger environment which can interact with the system only by becoming part of the internal language of that system. Significantly, in Luhmann's paradigm, humans are always relegated to the environment, and are not constitutive elements of the system itself. Drawing on Luhmann's theory, this paper proposes locating a performance's operative structure in the difference between a performative action and its environment, rather than the difference between a performer and spectator. The four *One Acts* described here (*Give and Take*, *M.E.A.T.*, *Free Family Portraits*, and *The Emancipated Spectator*) are framed by this endeavor.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce four original performance works (*Give and Take*, *M.E.A.T.*, *Free Family Portraits,* and *The Emancipated Spectator*) and to position these works within a historical and theoretical framework focusing on the notion of differentiation as it has been used to describe theatre events.[1] To frame this

[1] Differentiating theatrical elements in an attempt to define or understand theatre has depended on dominant trends, which have shifted considerably over the past few hundred years. Whereas pre-twentieth century theatre practices were largely concerned with aesthetic issues (including questions of Spirit, pedagogy, and professional technique), twentieth century theatre (and overwhelmingly so post-1960) has been more concerned with political issues (centred around problems of community, agency, and power). So, though a good deal of theatre in 1920s-1940s was political in intent (including the works of Brecht and the Federal Theatre) it presupposed a stable relationship between the performers (whose actions within a symbolic – i.e. theatrical – structure agitated the spectators) and the spectators (who were agitated to later real –i.e. non-symbolic – action). By the 1960's, it was the differentiation

distinction within a broader discussion of differentiation, I will draw upon the writings of Jacques Rancière and Niklas Luhmann.

Rancière, in *The Emancipated Spectator*, analyzes the conditions underlying performance events, and delineates the power relationships inherent in the required differentiation of giving and receiving parties.[2] As in his earlier work 'The Ignorant Schoolmaster,' Rancière critiques a system which, ostensibly in order to emancipate or educate, must reinforce the stratification separating educator and student, active agent and passive agent. I use Rancière's analysis to illustrate the apparent impasse involved in locating the differentiation between performer and spectator as the operational basis of a performance system.

Luhmann, in *Art as a Social System*, positions art as a communication system, arguing that the operational form of the artwork is created through its differentiation from everything outside itself, both by the creator and receiver of the work. Luhmann has made similar claims about various social phenomena, including law, mass media, and love.[3] Informed largely by the concept of autopoietic systems, as developed by biologists Maturana and Varela to define life in lower-order organisms,[4] Luhmann's

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between the performers and spectators (and, correspondingly, between symbolic and actual behaviour) that would be located at the centre of the problem of power and agency in theatre, and by extension, in civic life. To put it another way, a performance situation after 1960 could be seen in terms of the problem of who holds (actual and symbolic) power, on whom power is imposed, and the consequences of these impositions. For a discussion of this twentieth century shift, see Hans-Thies Lehmann's book *Postdramatic Theatre*, especially pages 42-45, and 48-57; also Erika Fischer-Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance*, especially Chapter 3.

[2] Specifically, Rancière spoke of 'all those forms of spectacle – drama, dance, performance art, mime and so on – that place bodies in action before an assembled audience' (2).

[3] I am referring to Luhmann's texts *Law as a Social System*, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, and *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*.

[4] Maturana and Varela's theory of autopoiesis rejected the dominant paradigm of causal, open systems, in which an organism was seen as processing 'input' from the environment to create 'output' which would re-enter the environment. In an autopoietic description of a system, the teleological underpinnings of open systems could be avoided altogether, leaving the closed system of the organism as the primary mechanism which constitutes itself (instead of organisms being defined by their morphological properties or function in maintaining a larger environment). Among other things, this paradigm allows for an organism to undergo changes in form and yet retain its status as a discreet operational living system. See Maturana and Varela's texts in *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (1980).

social systems are closed and self-producing; they primarily differentiate themselves from a larger (more complex) environment and, through this differentiation, maintain their operation as a system.

Luhmann's adaptation of autopoiesis to social systems is focused on each being operationally distinct from a larger environment, which can interact with the system only by becoming part of the internal language of that system: 'It is possible…to treat society as a social system that consists solely of communications and therefore as a system that can only reproduce communication by means of communications' (*Love* 4). Significantly, Luhmann always relegated human beings to existence outside of the social system in question, part of the environment but not a constitutive part of the system. An example illustrating this idea is of two humans having a conversation. The conversing humans are not part of the communication system itself (which is comprised solely of language and signs) but are external to the system. This paradigm allows us to imagine a theatre which is not defined by the humans who (have traditionally been seen to) constitute it.

On its own, human behaviour is necessarily operational, yet it does not attain the status of what Luhmann called an operationally bounded communication (or social) system; to communicate, human behaviour must be apparent to an outside system capable of communication (*Art* 9). When the situation that structures this communicative act is a theatrical performance, the communicative act can be delineated by the roles of the performer and the audience, or the one who communicates and the one who receives communication. Theatre practice and scholarship have focused on the salient division between the spectator and the performer since the 1960s, and continue to do so. Contemporary examples include the popular performance works of groups like Improv Everywhere and Rotozaza, as well

as recent discussions by Erika Fischer-Lichte, who argues that performances occur in a liminal space created by the 'autopoietic feedback loop' of performers' and spectators' physical co-presence (38-40).

However, the implications of power in this division are complicated since, as stated simply by Rancière, 'reformers…have made theatre the place where the passive audience of spectators must be transformed into its opposite: the active body of a community enacting its living principle' (5). At the same time, the understanding of artist as active and spectator as passive can easily be swapped 'without altering the functioning of the opposition itself…The terms can change their meaning, and the positions can be reversed, but the main thing is that the structure counter-posing two categories – those who possess a capacity and those who do not – persists' (12-13).

Rancière and Luhmann each make the point that both roles (active/passive, or in Luhmann's terms, operational/observational) are enacted by both the artist and the spectator (Rancière 17; Luhmann, *Art*, 37-39; 117). If a performance event can be considered a communication system, it must therefore be differentiated from a greater environment. Following twentieth century theatre's concern with power and the performer-audience split, it is intuitive to locate the distinction, as Erika Fischer-Lichte does, at the semi-permeable boundary between the performer and the spectator, implying that either the performer or the spectator is the communicating system and the other a structurally coupled observing system. However, to draw on Luhmann's practice of excluding the human being from the social system in question,[5] perhaps it

[5] It should be noted that Luhmann never discusses this in the context of theatre or performance. His discussion of artworks in *Art as a Social System* is limited to static, object-based works, which have a clear distinction between the time in which they are made and the time in which they are viewed. Performance works are necessarily time-based and compress the act of making and viewing into one event. Applying autopoiesis or systems theory (necessarily based in static, instantaneous events) to an entire performance event encounters problems Luhmann's theory cannot resolve. For this reason, to focus on a single performative action rather than on the entire work (i.e. play or spectacle) may be more feasible in Luhmann's theoretical model.

is possible to circumvent the audience/performer impasse by describing the system of performance in which human actors are elements in the system's environment, without constituting the system itself.

The performance works I introduce are collectively called *One Acts*.[6] Based on my conviction that the basic, indivisible unit of theatre is human behaviour, I conceived *One Acts* as a series of performances in which the performance event can be reduced to one performed action. I relate the 'action' in a performance to what Luhmann has called a 'differentiation.' It may be that, as suggested by Luhmann's work on social systems, the differentiation necessary to create and continue the unlikely communication attempted in a performance event is not between the performer and the spectator but rather a distinction between an action and its environment.

In this sense, the structure of *One Acts* is created to both eliminate difference (namely, that between the performer and spectator) and simultaneously point to the difference that cannot be eliminated without also eliminating the performance itself (namely, the difference between a performative or theatrical action and its environment). The four works comprising *One Acts* each consist of one action. This reduction allows us to relate the operation of each work to the proposal that the defining systemic feature of a theatre work is a performative action. When the action can no longer be distinguished as performative (i.e. can no longer be distinguished from its environment), the performance ceases to exist.[7]

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[6] Of the four *One Acts* mentioned here, *Free Family Portraits* was performed in 2009. *The Emancipated Spectator* was performed in 2010, while *Give and Take* and *M.E.A.T* have not yet been performed.

[7] I realize that making this distinction between a performative act and a non-performative one threatens to slip back into the mucky pool of subjecthood, in that it necessitates an external observer (or describer) to ascertain the end of the performance. It is relevant that autopoiesis itself was posited to incorporate the problem of the external observer by treating her as a structurally coupled describing system (i.e. a system which functions autopoietically by describing). Though a satisfactory discussion

The first work in this series is *Give and Take* (Figure 1). In it, the audience and performers comprises thirty parents, their respective thirty infants (aged 0-9 months) and thirty strangers (unknown to parents and infants). The performance itself entails all thirty parents simultaneously handing their thirty infants to the thirty strangers for a duration of one minute. At the end of one minute, the strangers give the babies back to their respective parent. The duration of one minute must be determined/perceived by the baby-holders without the aid of a time-keeping instrument.

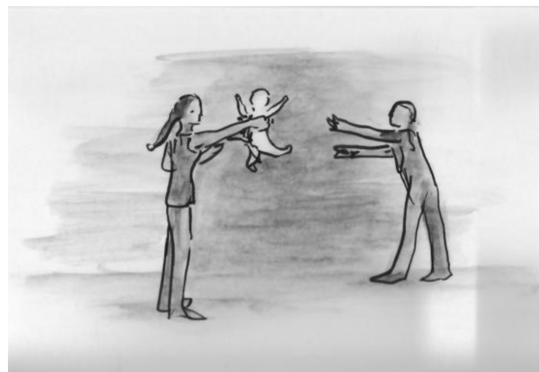

Figure 1. A planning sketch of *Give and Take,* by Yelena Gluzman.

Figure 2. A planning sketch of M.E.A.T., by Yelena Gluzman.

Figure 2 shows a sketch of the second work in the series, titled *M.E.A.T. (More Experiments in Art and Technology)*. Here the notion of technology is invoked as

of this crucial issue is beyond the scope of this essay, see Maturana's seminal essay 'Biology of Cognition' in *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*.

referring to the 'body of knowledge available to society' used to 'extract materials.' In this work, two lactating mothers, sitting within sight of the other, breast-feed each other's child. This continues for as long as each child and woman chooses.

The third work in the series of *One Acts* is *Free Family Portraits* (2009). This piece was performed at an outdoor festival in Shibuya, Tokyo, at the invitation of the Japanese performance unit Potalive. In this piece, passing families are offered free family portraits. Posing for the photographer, the family is asked if a stranger can replace one of the family members. If the family agrees, one family member steps out, a stranger steps in (into a similar pose) and the 'family portrait' is taken. These photos are displayed at the site (with no indication that the families depicted are not authentic).

Figure 3. A planning sketch for *Free Family Portraits*, by Yelena Gluzman.

On the following January 1st, the family receives a Christmas or New Year's greeting card, showing the 'free family' into which the stranger was inserted. The family continues to receive holiday greeting cards, always picturing their own momentary free family, in designs/images which change yearly, until they or I die. The posted cards are the property of each family, who become not only performers and audience, but also collectors of this work, and the only original material artworks that remain of the piece. Some of the cards are pictured in Figure 4.

In all the works in *One Acts*, the performer of the action is the same individual as the spectator of the work, and indeed, on some level, the only person to possess the entire body of that work. The content of the performed action, in other words, the material used as the subject of acting, is behaviour already embedded within the life

Figure 4. Images of 2010 and 2011 *Free Family Portraits* New Year greeting cards, each one picturing a free family photographed months earlier. Photos by Ayana Katayama and Koji Takaguchi, August 2009. Highway image (on 2011 card) by Dima Dubson.

of the performer/spectator. The requirement to perform is primarily an act of consent.

Though the action, the situation, and the respective roles of performers/spectators are determined in these works, in all of them the content of what is communicated is intentionally left undetermined. So, for example, in *M.E.A.T.*, though the action (to breastfeed another woman's child) is prescribed, the communication network (between the two women, between one woman and one child, between all four performers) is left as a distinguished but unmarked space.[8] In this way, the roles of actor/audience criticized by Rancière are conflated and relegated to a movement that only that particular actor/spectator can determine and observe.

It is true that the three works above all function within the semantic field of *family*, by displacing relationships that could be considered essential. Though this was of semantic interest to me when I made the pieces, it is not necessary to the

[8] See Luhmann's discussion of unmarked space as a requisite to the incompleteness that allows an artwork to operate (*Art* 30-31).

functioning of the *One Acts* structure. A performance work structured as a *One Act* need only be performable by its audience, and be performable by the enactment of one definable action.

The fourth *One Act* I will discuss is called (after Ranciere's text) *The Emancipated Spectator* (2010). It was commissioned by the British performance group Stoke Newington National Airport for one of their signature *Live Art Speed Date* events in Tokyo. A *Live Art Speed Date* is a multi-artist event in which each artist creates a performance work of four-minute duration, to be performed repeatedly for one audience member at a time. Audiences are given 'date cards' listing the artists they are to visit, and in what order. After each four-minute slot, a loud buzzer indicates the end of that period and audiences have two minutes to find their next performance.

Figure 5. A spectator/performer in *The Emancipated Spectator*, by Yelena Gluzman. Photo by Jim O'Connell.

In *The Emancipated Spectator*, I asked each spectator if they would like me to tie them up. If they said yes, I would bind their wrists and their mouth, and bring them into a small room with a few chairs facing each other. The spectator and I would sit down and wait. I neither spoke nor signalled to the spectators in any way. After four minutes passed, the loud buzzer sounded, indicating the end of the performance time. At that moment, I did not move, but continued to sit impassively facing the spectator. This created a crisis; caught between the rules of the greater event (namely that each performance lasts four minutes) and the rules of the performance they were in (where

they may have expected to be released or in some way acted upon by the performer), the spectators found themselves in a double-bind. Though literally bound, they could easily stand up and leave the room. By being compelled to make the choice to stay or go, the spectators became the performers who allowed the piece to function. It should be noted that this piece could be enacted without me (except for actually tying up the spectator at the beginning) and retain its structure, though could not exist without the action of the performer/spectators and the rules structuring the contextual Speed Date event.

The four works described here are not intended as examples of an autopoietic system or as illustrations of Luhmann's theory applied to the performing arts. They are, rather, performance works created to eliminate the division of the spectator and performer in order to focus the performed event on the single action that constitutes the performance. Therefore, whether the performative action is giving a baby, taking a family portrait with a stranger, breastfeeding another person's child, or being (and remaining) tied up, these actions perform because they are both actual and symbolic. In Erika Fischer-Lichte's terms, the performances invoke the materiality or semiocity of their elements (17). Even in the absence of a spectator other than themselves, the performers' actions function in this double capacity.

Luhmann explains, 'In my approach to systems theory, you will see that I try to leave this subject-object distinction behind and replace it with the distinction between, on the one hand, the operation that a system actually performs when it performs it, and, on the other hand, the observation of this operation, be it by this system or be it by another system' ('Self-Organization' 146). Through focusing the operation of a performance system upon a single action, I engage with the possibility, suggested by Luhmann, that a performance can be analyzed or experienced through

the operation of this single action. A performance can be analyzed without the paradigm of actor and spectator, or the position of stage and auditorium, in the autonomous and self-creating operations of the performed action. What remains is to understand, as Luhmann suggests, the operation that this system actually performs when it performs it .

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An AfroReggae Explosion: Reimagining the Value of Quality, Profit, and the Global Market in the Development of Applied Performance

BY POPPY SPOWAGE

Abstract

Despite being widely used around the globe for social and political purposes, applied performance still lies on the edge of theatrical practice and scholarship, often largely unacknowledged and struggling to be taken seriously by the general public, major arts institutions, and state agencies. This marginal position restricts applied performance's access to economic backing, hindering its development and ability to reach wider audiences. This paper draws on the example of the Brazilian organisation Grupo Cultural AfroReggae to demonstrate how aiming for high production values, engaging deliberately in the commercial global market, and seeking profit potentially offer applied performance opportunities for development. Without undermining its social and political integrity, AfroReggae has created profitable community-based art work in mainstream venues, generating substantial economic revenue to feed back into its local community. AfroReggae's negotiated, planned, and focused practice offers new possibilities to other applied performance organisations, practitioners, and participants worldwide, demonstrating how local communities can benefit from producing applied theatre in mainstream venues for profit on a global stage.

Applied performance prioritises using 'the process of theatre in the service of social and community change' (Prentki and Preston 9). In *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre,* Helen Nicholson foregrounds Judith Ackroyd's argument that applied performance is distinguished from other theatrical practices by its intentionality, its specific aspiration 'to use drama to improve the lives of individuals and create better societies' (2). This common understanding of applied performance is often seen to be in direct opposition to the creation of a product with a high economic value in a commercially driven global market: instead of being for, with or by a community, mainstream performance is understood to be driven by its potential to create profit for producers.

In debates at London's Southbank Centre (SBC) in July 2010,[1] the Theatre Applications Conference held at Central School of Speech and Drama in April 2010, and in publications such as *Research in Drama Education*, applied performance practitioners have emphasised the necessity of raising the status of applied performance in order to sustain the practice and enable it to affect more people. In comparison to the majority of applied performance organisations – which are often small-scale, locally orientated, charitable, and run on vulnerable project-to-project funding – AfroReggae has an ambitious strategic business plan, which entails high profile national and international tours that financially support their local practice. AfroReggae's founder and executive co-ordinator José Junior describes the company as a social organisation that works on 'the logic of quality and profit' (Neate and Platt 53). In its bid for self-sufficiency, AfroReggae's controversial business model is raising the profile of applied performance by bringing it to mainstream stages. AfroReggae's ability to generate revenue enables its practice to have an effect on a larger number of individuals and communities. This paper argues that 'in the service of social and community change,' there is room for some applied performance practice to engage with and exploit the benefits and profits of the global market (Prentki and Preston 9). It will illustrate that creating community-based performance with economic value does not necessarily undermine – and might, indeed, enhance – its social potential.

AfroReggae is based in Brazil but its work in the UK is produced and facilitated by People's Palace Projects (PPP), an arts organisation based at Queen Mary, University of London, in East London. The research for this paper is informed by conversations, debates and interviews with Rachel Sanger, projects manager of

[1] 'The Point of Culture,' 'The Edge of the Future' and 'The Drama of Violence' were three talks held in London in July 2010 as part of the Southbank Centre's *Brazil Festival*.

PPP, and Sylvan Baker, associate director of PPP's Cultural Warriors programme (2009 - 2012), as well as my work with AfroReggae as a production assistant for PPP in July 2010. Initially this paper will outline AfroReggae's approach to local practice and community. I will then illustrate how AfroReggae have embraced the ethics of consumerism and, as stated on its website, developed 'institutional products' to sustain its local practice. AfroReggae's social and political work is integral to these institutional products, or shows, which hold the same high production values as other commercial performance practices, negotiate a global market with large-scale international tours, and thus generate an economic profit. Drawing on *The AfroReggae Explosion Weekend*, which took place in July 2010 at the SBC in London, I will demonstrate the social and political relevance AfroReggae's commercial performances hold for international audiences. I offer AfroReggae as an inspiring model – in which the company's social and political integrity is not compromised – to other community engaged arts organisations worldwide.

AfroReggae

In 1993 AfroReggae emerged from Vigário Geral, one of the most violent *favelas* (a Brazilian shanty town) in Rio de Janeiro. The favela is limited in infrastructure and employment opportunities – especially for young black men – except for a corrupt drug trade, which for years has bred violent conflict between police, gangs, and local communities. Since the massacre of twenty-one civilians by police in a drug war in 1993, and in the absence of any state welfare, AfroReggae has sought to use art to enable social change within their local community. Their aims are: 'to offer cultural and artistic background for slum teenagers, to provide opportunity for them to build

their citizenship, keeping them away from drug dealing and irregular work so these teenagers can give a hand to other young people' (AfroReggae, 'We are AfroReggae'). AfroReggae works artistically with many members of the local community, offering professional training, workshops, and performance in a range of disciplines, from circus skills to classical violin. In addition, AfroReggae run many educational programmes in local schools. Acknowledging that not everyone wants to be an artist, AfroReggae also carries out work that is considered more pragmatic: running employment schemes, training individuals for professions such as motor-mechanics and hairdressing, and helping members of their communities enter or re-enter employment. AfroReggae now works in five favelas and boast a twenty-four hour cultural centre, which offers space for workshops, rehearsals and performance, and a safe environment away from the dominant drug factions.

In *Culture Is Our Weapon*, Patrick Neate and Damien Platt explain that 'in the frequent absence of social, educational, employment or familial networks [in the favelas], the [drug] factions are often the closest thing a person can find to a secure, structured environment' (144). For many of AfroReggae's artists, who were initially local participants that engaged with workshops, classes and/or training, the company offers a long-term creative 'family' life as an alternative to a short career in drug trafficking. AfroReggae does not offer a singular workshop and expect participants to change their lives. AfroReggae believes that it must offer a sustainable, competitive and legitimate alternative. As a result many of its artists have been involved with AfroReggae for a long period of time. The company not only provides opportunities for employment, the hope of international success, the prospect of a secure salary, and structural support, but are also a 'gang' that everyone wants to be a part of. AfroReggae has a similar social status to the drug factions, which is visibly indicated

by the designer clothes and trainers that its artists wear. As in the case of the drug factions, the company members' appearance and visibly elevated social status allows AfroReggae to attract and retain participants. Much of AfroReggae's community-focused work is enabled by the income of the company's twelve groups that tour internationally and function like any other commercial performance company.

The Logic of Commercial Value

Like any other popular international group, AfroReggae has produced large-scale concerts, which have sold out renowned venues such as Carnegie Hall in New York (2007), and The Barbican in London (2008). In addition to Banda AfroReggae, there are twelve 'sub'-groups, which include AfroLata, AfroSamba and AfroCirco, which also tour productions worldwide. The company's self-sufficiency on these stages and its ability to make profit and attract fans with the sale of CDs released from its own record label, Mr Bongo, demonstrates AfroReggae's commitment to producing work with a high commercial value. I employ the term 'high commercial value' in relation to the set of production priorities that underpin and facilitate a group's ability to make a profit. These production values include a foolproof, formulaic, well-packaged product that is literally 'on the money,' guaranteeing large audiences, the sale of associated merchandise and a committed fan-base. Profit is prioritised and a system of volatile capitalism and social elitism facilitates this. Thus, this is a controversial approach for a community-focused organisation, which prioritises using 'the process of theatre in the service of social and community change' (Prentki and Preston 9). In a bid to disassociate itself from potentially detrimental profit-driven ethics, applied performance usually situates itself in alternative contexts, for example in schools, prisons, and community halls with participants from different communities, often

defined as minority groups. However, in addition to facilitating community-engaged work in its local environment, AfroReggae manages to produce mainstream artistic practice with high commercial value.

In terms of production value, AfroReggae's main groups are indistinguishable from other mainstream bands, such as The Rolling Stones who they supported on Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro in 2006. Yet the social element of AfroReggae's work is integral to its product: its artists, who are from Vigário Geral, have often been trained and involved with AfroReggae from a young age. Richard Ings acknowledges the risk attached to producing this type of work, stating that it is easy to overlook the fact 'that the professionalism and energy of a show is not the product of a *fame*-style academy […but] carved out of the most unlikely material' (35). I would add that the concept of producing a 'star' threatens the fundamental aims of a community-orientated project or organisation. However, rather than being paid varying wages depending on their star profile like many commercial artists, all members of AfroReggae's bands receive a basic wage. The profits from the high profile events, rather than elevating the prospects of individuals, are fed back into AfroReggae's local community. In addition, AfroReggae ensures that the same artists rarely lead workshops internationally. It advocates that one member can do the job as well as any other and Sylvan Baker – who has worked extensively with AfroReggae in the UK – confirms this in an interview, maintaining that every member he has met has been briefed with the same degree of knowledge and can speak with the same eloquence about the organisation. This inclusive philosophy not only removes the elitist element of producing superstars, but it also extends real opportunities of travel, performance and cultural exchange to a larger number of the company's members.

'The Edge of the Future: Renegotiating Power' was a debate held at the SBC in July 2010, which discussed the opportunities that art can offer to young people. Jodie Mancell, a past curator for the Koestler Trust – an organisation that states it has 'been awarding, exhibiting and selling artworks by offenders, detainees and secure patients for 47 years' – reiterated that the creation of a marketable product can have a positive effect on an individual's self-esteem. Work that operates outside mainstream production is often narrow in its reach, attracting audiences limited not only in number but also in diversity. Artists, participants and spectators of much applied performance – which is small-scale and locally orientated – are often confined to speaking and performing within the marginalised group they have been identified with. As a result, artists and participants are acknowledged for their origins rather than the work that they produce. During the debate, Jane Caldwell, creative director of Kids Company, noted that 'the other side of recognition [other than self worth] is having a witness.' AfroReggae's artists gain recognition from a local, national, and international audience. AfroReggae are recognised not for the negative conditions in the favela that they come from, but for the positive achievements that they have realised as artists.

Negotiating a Global Market

Applied performance is a term used to encompass a broad set of community performance practices that are predominantly localised: operating in specific places, with specific groups of people and interrogating specific issues. Affective developments for individuals and communities – such as education, social transformation or political empowerment, are prioritised and seen to enable effective social and community change. However, AfroReggae would argue that in order to

realise these changes within its community, affective shifts must be accompanied by an improvement to the community's material reality. Individual economic development is offered by the drug factions; AfroReggae continually compete against this.

It is generally recognised that the competitive global market is intrinsically exploitative. As Doreen Massey explains: 'some are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it' (3). Massey describes the residents of favelas in Rio as a group who are huge contributors to globalization, illustrating their input to global football and global music but also suggesting that on another level they are imprisoned: never, or hardly ever, able to leave their ghetto (3-4). AfroReggae's negotiation of the global market contributes to the alteration of this relationship. AfroReggae initiates flows of social and economic movement in and out of the favela: not only do certain members of the group travel but also AfroReggae gets a large amount of media coverage which attracts corporate sponsorship to the favela. In generating economic revenue through the brand of AfroRoggae, employment opportunities are created and developments in infrastructure, such as banks, instigated. AfroReggae legitimises the favela and secures a degree of autonomy for a community previously imprisoned by globalisation.

Osita Okagbu highlights that 'the main danger with the product-orientated approach [to community performance, is the fact that it is] born out of a consumerist and capitalist ethics – an ethics in which there is always the necessity to differentiate between the producer and the consumer, the have and the have not'(32). For Okagbu, this type of work restricts the empowering effect of applied performance. However, José Junior says: 'I have to carry on in the real world. If I start raising the flag and

saying I don't accept money from the English or the Americans or big business, I'll just be stuck in my ghetto and I won't speak to anyone' (Neate and Platt 153). For Junior, it is the ability to change material realities, through training, prospects and employment, that will make significant changes within the local community (Neate and Platt 153).

During the debate 'The Edge of the Future,' Junior claimed that AfroReggae is selective when it comes to working with other businesses, and prioritises 'corporations with good working practices and a social responsibility.' However, the social responsibility of corporations such as AfroReggae sponsor Santander is often bred out of the benefits it has on profit margins. For example, as Brazil is one of the 'fastest growing' economies of the twenty-first century, it is not surprising that Santander, one of the world's largest banks, wants a stake in a potentially large new consumer base (Wheatley). As a result it could be argued that AfroReggae has 'sold out,' turning its brand into a form of exotica to be exploited by a corporation that prioritises profit over the empowerment of AfroReggae's community.

However, as Reginald de Lima – AfroReggae's coordinator of government partnerships – asserted during the debate: 'what AfroReggae produce people want. Big corporations want. Governments want.' The prolific profile of the AfroReggae brand places the company in a position to negotiate with the global market. As part of their sponsorship deal with Santander, AfroReggae arranged for the first bank to be opened in a favela (Downie). In addition, AfroReggae runs an Employment Project that utilizes its government and corporate sponsors to get members of its local community into legitimate employment. According to AfroReggae's website, after running the project for two years, August 2010 saw a total of 1,125 people employed with formal contracts and labour rights, 685 of them former prisoners or individuals

previously involved with criminality. Through its negotiation of the global market, AfroReggae empowers its community socially, culturally and politically, provides infrastructure, and changes the material reality of the favela environment.

Baz Kershaw argues that 'in embracing the disciplines of new consumerism the theatre and its performance succumb to the commodification that stifles radicalism' (23). In embracing consumerist markets it could be argued that AfroReggae has stifled its radical social and political intentions for its performances. Hip-hop provides a simple illustration of the global market's potential to suffocate revolutionary movements. Hip-hop emerged from New York's Afro-American community in the 1970s as a radical movement from the ghetto challenging the status quo of the oppressive American establishment. However, this movement was commandeered by the oppressive and dominant political, economic and cultural forces that it opposed. By catering to an expansive audience – in terms of race, age and culture – the global market neutralised hip-hop's radical origins. Hip-hop's political nature was replaced with an emphasis on violence, moneymaking and misogyny, which many people today see as the driving force of the genre.

Yet, in *Where You're At: Notes from the Frontline of a Hip-Hop Planet*, Neate uses AfroReggae as an example of a radical contemporary hip-hop band. Unlike many hip-hop artists who end up on popular TV shows (such as MTV's Cribs) AfroReggae has stayed firmly rooted in the favela, where its members live and work, an environment that continues to fuel its artistic output. At first glance the radical nature of its professional shows might be overlooked; however, the artists, the injustices highlighted in their lyrics, and the community work that the products facilitate ensure the work's radicalism. Despite Kershaw's concerns, AfroReggae continues to participate 'in the most vital cultural, social and political tensions of [its] time,'

(Kershaw 7) remaining innovative and socially and politically progressive, sustaining its radical nature.

The Logic of Quality & Profit

In the UK, funding bodies demand constant justification and evidence, in terms of the success, impact and effect of practice, from the applied performance organisations they support. In fulfilling funder's objectives, it has been argued that theatre practice 'may sometimes subordinate the artistic aspects [...] or even eradicate them altogether' (Jackson 2). In addition to struggling to gain economic backing, cultural organisations in the UK have seen dramatic cuts to limited arts funding. For example, the Arts Council is to be cut by £349.4 million by 2015, which is 29.6% of their current budget (Arts Council England). Junior argues that 'either we [AfroReggae] can work like any other NGO, depending on continued outside funding, or we can create products of high artistic and cultural quality for commercial consumption and develop partnerships with companies, foundations and government for mutual benefit' (Neate and Platt 151). AfroReggae's monetary value internationally is so high that one third of their practice is self-sufficient (Ings 24). For an institutional presentation to potential sponsors, AfroReggae assessed the value of its media coverage in 2009 at approximately sixty-seven million British pounds (AfroReggae, 'Institutional Presentation'). This puts AfroReggae in a strong position to negotiate sponsorship deals on its own terms.

An AfroReggae Explosion

From 23 to 25 July 2010, the SBC, in collaboration with AfroReggae and People's Palace Projects, produced a weekend of events. Nineteen members of AfroReggae,

with the help of some young people, filled the SBC with elements of Brazilian culture for three days. *The AfroReggae Explosion Weekend* was part of the SBC's summer long *Festival Brazil*, which included – to mention but a few – singer songwriter Gilberto Gil, Samba Classes, and the Southbank's own miniature favela, Project Morrinho: all in celebration of Brazil's rich social and cultural heritage. *The AfroReggae Explosion Weekend* illustrates the social and political potential that AfroReggae's main band performances hold not only for the organisation, but for national and international audiences.

AfroReggae manages to secure a local community within its global practice. Its social and political critique manages to span peoples, nations, and cultures. As Junior asserts:

> AfroReggae is talking of a war in which thousands of people have suffered […] we tour the world and we see the same war in many different countries. We represent the favela and always come back here. But [...] we are also truly global. You can say we are a positive effect of globalisation. (Neate 200)

Drawing on Jan Cohen-Cruz, Dan Rebellato argues that 'real community theatre [is] made *in* the community, *by* the community, and *for* the community' (53). *The AfroReggae Explosion Weekend*, even with its high production values, negotiation of the global market, and profitability, can still satisfy specific ideas of 'local' and 'community.'

The performance events took place *in* the community: the SBC, in a prominent spot on the River Thames attracts a community of tourists and passing Londoners every day of the year. The SBC has also built up a local community through free events and outreach educational projects. As all AfroReggae performances were free they attracted a wider range of audience members – from families, to homeless

people, to groups of teenagers looking for fun. This enabled the formation of a diverse community, all with different interests in the 'Brazilian' atmosphere *in* which the AfroReggae Weekend took place. *The AfroReggae Explosion* was *for* this diverse community: the SBC provided free workshops, performance and events for anyone who wished to get involved. This event was *by* the community: workshops in dance, circus skills and drumming saw all participants performing. This held particular resonance during the 'Mass-Jam,' where AfroReggae members filtered throughout the crowd and the artists, participants, and members of the public came together to play music.

AfroReggae's UK performances are supported by People's Palace Projects, who ensure that community-focused practice is prioritised, negotiated and planned to accompany AfroReggae's international performances. For example, in the UK AfroReggae has run regular workshops with community performance groups such as Tomorrow's Warriors, Bigga Fish, The Sage Gateshead and Kinetika. During the weekend at the SBC there were collaborative flash-performances by these groups and AfroReggae. Contrary to other professional gigs, which hold a high commercial value, AfroReggae's main performances were supported artistically *by* the community groups they have worked with in the UK.

AfroReggae's high profile, commercial performances not only have a positive effect on its artists and their local environments, but are also engaging for the many young people involved in its international workshops, projects or performances. In a discussion I had, rather than emphasising their own social and political development, participants from Kinetika highlighted their artistic success and high profile feats – in terms of awards, carnival performances and previous work with AfroReggae. AfroReggae is a positive role model with street

credibility for the young people they work with worldwide. This street credibility is enhanced by their high commercial value and international success, which puts them on par with famous artists, who may not hold the same degree of positive social and political integrity. Rachel Sanger said she would be surprised if the first three rows of an AfroReggae gig were not filled with young people it had been working with, whichever country it was performing in (Sanger). Supporting this statement, the Clore Ballroom of the Royal Festival Hall was filled with AfroReggae's participants this July. In mainstream venues from which they can often feel excluded, young people reap rewards from 'seeing their teachers on stage, becoming their idols, and giving them a smile,' (Sanger).

Reimagining the Potential of Applied Performance

AfroReggae's approach is not the only way for applied performance to develop its audiences and contribute to long-term outlooks in the globalized world. My intention is not to encourage duplication of its artistic practice: AfroReggae, regardless of being offered millions by a major international funder, refuse to duplicate its work in the next favela, let alone internationally; one community may want capoeira, another the violin (Baker). AfroReggae is a unique company; however, in demonstrating the potential social value of commercialising community practice, I offer AfroReggae's strategic business model as inspiration for applied practitioners worldwide.

This paper has sought to question the common assumption that applied performance must be not-for-profit, locally orientated and small-scale. AfroReggae's practice verifies that if work is 'negotiated, planned and focused according to different contexts and situations'(Nicholson 40), it can be effective, pragmatically and artistically for both a local and a global community. In a keynote address to the

Theatre Applications Conference, Rustom Bharucha said that the field of applied theatre needs 'new alliances, which will have to be made with those state agencies, government officials and bureaucrats who do not share our language of theatre practice.' He argued: 'in our failure to strategise these alliances we run up against walls and retreat into the comforts of fictional oppositionality.' AfroReggae is not engaged in a fictional or rehearsed revolution, instead it embraces approaches undertaken by commercially orientated performance: 'AfroReggae will continue because we're on a road and there's no turning back. This is a capitalist road and we have to survive. Who knows? Maybe this is a quiet revolution, the revolution of the socialist capitalist movement' (Neate and Platt 153).

AfroReggae's approach and ability to produce profit enables a long-term outlook and brings them closer to self-sufficiency: they are being taken seriously, not only by their participants, but also by non-theatre-goers, state agencies, governments and corporations. AfroReggae reimagines the potential of commercial value, profit and the global market in the development of applied performance, putting community-focused performance practice on a global stage under a global spotlight.

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'The Work is the Fix': An Email Conversation with Darren O'Donnell, Artistic Director of Mammalian Diving Reflex

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY LIAM JARVIS

Introduction

Mammalian Diving Reflex (MDR) is an internationally renowned research-art atelier based in Toronto, Canada. Formed in 1993, the company's mandate outlines a dedication to investigating the social sphere, producing one-off events, theatre-based performance, theoretical texts and community happenings. The company is led by Artistic Director Darren O'Donnell, and comprised of Producer Natalie De Vito, Associate Producer Eva Verity and a number of other collaborators who are invited to contribute their skills towards the creation of different projects. Over the last 17 years, the company have generated a series of events that induce interactions between strangers in public, dismantling barriers between individuals and fostering a dialogue between audience members. The company's performances have occurred in diverse configurations and contexts all over the world, including live art and contemporary performance festivals in the UK and Ireland; MDR have performed at events which include Wunderbar, the LIFT Festival (London International Festival of Theatre), Cork Midsummer and the Norwich and Norfolk Festival. Recently in the UK, *Haircuts by Children* was performed in July 2010 as part of LIFT. This work gave children from the neighbouring communities of Canning Town the unique opportunity to work with the company to develop their hairdressing skills, before offering free haircuts to members of the public at a local hair salon in Hoxton, East London. The advertising copy described the event as playfully engaging with 'the empowerment of children, with trust in the younger generation and with the thrills and chills of vanity.' In this interview, conducted via email between 12th August and 14th September 2010, the company's Artistic Director, Darren O'Donnell, kindly took time out of his commitments to respond to some questions.

Interview

LIAM: Firstly, I wanted to ask about the internal community of the company; how did you meet? How do you work together? Does the formation of a new project come through process of discussion, an initial writing-led process or some other means of developing ideas?

DARREN: I started the company in 1993 to produce my own scripts. In 1998 Naomi Campbell joined to produce a show, *White Mice*, and stayed on until 2007, building the company from a project-based entity to one with an operating budget and multi-year funding. Natalie De Vito, who used to run Mercer Union, a gallery that I spent a lot of time at, stepped in when Naomi left. We have two more administrative co-ordinators and a bunch of project managers who can realize a few of the projects without my, or Nat's, involvement. We also have a bunch of collaborators who we engage on a case-by-case basis, depending on what we need: sound, video, graphics, editing, etc. At this point, most of the creative content comes from me, with plenty of input and contribution from everyone else. But since the devil is in the details, whoever is realizing something on the ground lays in the most important layer of artistry. An art project, like *Haircuts by Children*, occurs in the producing - it's not like the producer develops the context, raises the funds and then the artists lock themselves in a rehearsal hall and come up with the goods.The producing is the art.

LIAM: On the company website, your *Social Acupuncture* series of work is described as an exploration into ‘an aesthetic of civic engagement: the artistic use of the institutions of civil society - of community centres, schools, seniors’ centres, sports clubs, the media and public spaces.’ Could you tell me a bit about the impulse behind this series of work involving consensual participation within communities?

DARREN: It was very personal; I wanted to have a deeper connection with the people in my immediate surroundings. I felt I was living on the surface of the city and I wanted to change that.

LIAM: I was very fortunate to experience *Haircuts by Children* at LIFT 2010 this summer. I know that this event (amongst others of your work) has toured extensively around the world. It is

fascinating that despite the international reach of these events, they exist at the level of local face-to-face encounters. Why do you choose to work in this way (when, for example, some companies choose to explore the live possibilities of digital modes of communication)?

DARREN: Because it's the most radical, and I mean the word literally: it's at the root. Material, same space/same time encounters are what it's all about. I mean, to be extreme about it, without them, it's all over; a face-to-face encounter is the only domain that belongs exclusively to theatre/performance. It's what makes the work special, so maximizing that attribute seems like a worthwhile and interesting project.

LIAM: What kinds of challenges does producing these events bring?

DARREN: Mostly what you would expect; permission forms from parents, paranoia, background checks, some questioning of the utility of the work, the very occasional accusation that we're somehow unethical. But the problems are usually standard personality problems. We often collaborate with organizations that have never worked with an artist before, which, for the most part is completely fine, but occasionally can result in small turf wars. We have a few requirements that are very unusual and can be challenging for a host organization, the primary one being that we like to work with a diverse group of kids. How that gets translated and realized can look very different from locale to locale, and it is a site of constant negotiation.

LIAM: You mentioned that your work was a personal response to feeling like you were living on the surface of the city, and wanting to change this. Could you tell me a bit about the local community of Toronto that gave rise to both these feelings and your unique practice?

DARREN: I often call Toronto a teenager - it's a big city with a big inferiority complex. It's big enough to want to party with the adults but still feels it's a bit too young: that exciting stuff is

always happening elsewhere. So part of the impetus behind some of the stuff I've been doing is to develop and share a sense of civic pride that could be considered particular to Toronto. Whether or not I'll be successful is probably not something that I'll ever be able to quantify; it's just fun to try. Tied in with this is the fact that, for the most part, people who live in Toronto were not born here so there's very little feeling of a shared history or shared identity, therefore even small casual social connections are difficult. It's difficult not to feel like a guest in Toronto, even after having lived here for so long. The thing about a guest is that you're never sure if what you're doing is correct, if you fit in. My work tried to directly engage with that by providing situations where people can develop their social intelligence, tackle some nervousness and experience contact with people who they may not ordinarily.

LIAM: So were there specific local problems (or globalised problems) that suggested the need for work that has an active social function?

DARREN: There are a lot of people from a lot of different places and considering how important ones city can be in ones self-identity what we have here is a lot of people who are looking to make things happen, but are deeply suspicious that they may be in the wrong place at the wrong time: that there are other more exciting places to be. This sort of calls for an intervention that attempts to take the focus off certain indexes (wealth, fame, influence), and onto some others (modesty, friendship, acceptance). But that's just a starting point; the desire to create socially engaged work stems, primarily, from the belief that in terms of artistic material, people and relationships, are great and exciting to work with.

LIAM: Would you say that the socially engaged work that you create is a response that is particular to city life and urban spaces?

DARREN: Socially engaged work always works better if there are people around and cities certainly have that, but social practice, in general, can happen anywhere, any how. The particulars of some of my concerns - racial diversity, for example - are probably a result of my exposure to the city but, on the other hand, that's a big reason why I came here, so it's a bit of a chicken/egg. Cities as places to encounter the magical complexity of other people is something that has always attracted me, something I trace back to my pre-school encounter with *Sesame Street.*

LIAM: In what particular ways do the local community engage with what you do, both in terms of participation in performance and beyond?

DARREN: They get involved in a variety of ways from passive audience to active participant: attending dinners, award ceremonies or just getting involved in a conversation. We are also studied by a lot of different students: theatre, performance, visual art, geography, children's studies, urban planning. I'm currently launching a pilot project with a bunch of 14 year-olds in my neighbourhood - the idea being that I involve them in as many of the local requests for performance I received, and I will try to turn the event to their advantage. For example, I've been asked to do a performance on a bus that will be taking people to a remote gallery at York University, one hour north of downtown. So I'm bringing along a few kids and asking the passengers on the bus (who are expecting a performance from me) to divide themselves into those who think they have something to offer 14 year-olds, and those who don't. Then I will facilitate a networking session between the kids and those who feel they have something to offer.

LIAM: Has the company's relationship to the local community in Toronto evolved over the years?

DARREN: We used to present scripts that I wrote, now we organize night markets, get 80 year olds onstage to talk about their orgasms - it's a complete shift. And it happened quite suddenly, with the series of projects we call *Social Acupuncture* back in 2003 and after years of banging my head against the conventions of theatre. Turning to the visual arts and, in particular, all the buzz around relational aesthetics and social practice, led to the breakthrough that really moved the work in this new direction.

LIAM: What sort of local responses have you had to the company's work?

DARREN: Most people really appreciate it and find it to be a refreshing, and sometimes confusing departure from theatre, but generally the response to us has been very positive. The company and I have been profiled in most of the major news outlets, occasionally making the "Best Of" lists for various things. Some people are suspicious and feel that we may be opportunistically using the kids we work with, but their analysis is usually silly, for example one critic suggesting that if we "really" cared about the kids, we would do something really meaningful like find their parents jobs. We're artists, not social workers, for goodness sake. We make whimsical, hopeful, utopian projects and we'd love to make the world a better place, but we're in no position to find people employment and nor should anyone expect us to. We also break a few classic community arts rules, which can upset people - classics like the artist should not take credit for work that is intended to provide some social benefit.

LIAM: The modality of your work is highly diverse, with performances occurring in theatre spaces, various public spaces, each creating entirely different kinds of interactions with different sectors of communities. Do you take a very different approach to the process of creating a particular event, and are there any commonalities?

DARREN: Each event has its own demands but, for all of them, we want to bring people together in unusual ways, generating social generosity and an exciting encounter. Diversity is very important, not out of some sense of do-gooderism, but simply because heterogeneous encounters are more enriching for everyone.

LIAM: Although I didn't get the opportunity to attend, I was struck by stories I'd overheard of the process of research that lead to *The Best Sex I Ever Had*; a performance which focused on the taboo of sex and old age, for which you interviewed people aged over 65 about their sexual encounters (a work-in-progress of this show was performed earlier this year at the Pazz Festival, Oldenburg, Germany). Could you tell us a bit about the process that lead to this performance? Where do you begin when entering into a community to facilitate discussion over potentially complex and sensitive subject matter?

DARREN: This project begins with a bunch ads stuck up on poles all around the city. This, much to our surprise, turned into a performance in and of itself, getting people talking. We worked alongside a variety of organizations, senior groups, health organizations, etc. Then we have meetings that move along very slowly and gently.

LIAM: You mentioned that the process of gathering information for *The Best Sex I Ever Had* became its own performance. I was interested to ask what the transition was like from internal discussion with participants to public exhibition of the personal stories that were shared. How did the work change at that point?

DARREN: Since all the participants were required to tell their stories to each other - strangers - they were immediately in performance mode. We just coached, encouraged, dramaturged and invited in an audience. So the public moment was not such a big deal. The only thing that was

significant was that the participant are always doubtful about the interest an audience might have in their stories and they're always really surprised when it goes really well. They sometimes seem to view me as a bit of a magician. But it's nothing magical - people are interesting.

LIAM: In brochure copy for your company's work you have been described as 'lending a voice to those who are not normally heard, in particular children, youngsters and the elderly.' The social responsibility of the arts is something recognised in the company's mission statement also. How do you currently see the role of the artist, and are there any particular ways in which your practice has changed over the 17 years you have been creating work?

DARREN: I don't think artists have any more responsibility than anyone else, in fact, I would say that artists are also obliged to explore things like lack of responsibility but, personally, as someone who is interested in exploring how my day to day activities can contribute toward making life on earth a more pleasant experience, artistic endeavours can participate in shaping the day-to-day in exciting ways, because of the licence we have to do strange, useless things. A change in my attitude has been a shift from thinking I can make work about my concerns to thinking I can make work that resolves my concerns. The work is the fix.

Further information on MDR's *Social Acupuncture* series of work can be found both on the company's website (www.mammalian.ca) and in Darren O'Donnell's book, *Social Acupuncture: A Guide to Suicide, Performance and Utopia,* published by Coach House Books. This publication includes the full text of *A Suicide-Site Guide to the City*, a show which plays with autobiography to explore life as a performance, and an extensive essay on the notion of civic engagement and social interaction as an aesthetic.

The Brazilian Favela as Stage and Persona, and the Challenge of an Alternative-Narrative

BY MARINA HERNRIQUES COUTINHO (TRANS. DAVID HERMAN)

Abstract

This article discusses the present reality of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro within the context of a new world order and the effects of globalization, and suggests that the current socio-economic model does not ensure the welfare of the world's poorest populations. It looks at the capacity for struggle within poor communities as a stimulus in the search for solutions to the difficulties of everyday life. The article presents an optimistic view which envisions the emergence of 'alternative-narratives' capable of offering communities the right to a voice, and suggests that theatre practice can be a means of creating an alternative discourse. The social and artistic projects at work in Rio de Janeiro's favelas are placed within the context of today's socio-economic reality, relationships between theatre and community are interwoven, and the community stage is considered as a space for the expression of alternative-narratives capable of resisting the 'dominant idea.'

We have an obligation to invent another world because we know that another world is possible. It is up to us to construct it with our bare hands, just like going on stage to create a play.[1]
Augusto Boal

Rio de Janeiro, like many large cities in developing countries, is the stage on which the flaws and contradictions of the globalized, capitalist world are displayed. The process of growth and impoverishment in the world's large cities is the focus of Mike Davis' *Planet of Slums*,[2] in which the author diagnoses the worldwide phenomenon of slum growth accentuated by neoliberal globalization. In large areas of the developing world, global forces have steered rural populations towards the cities. Accelerated processes of urbanization, together with a lack of growth in employment opportunities, have created a ready-made prescription for the mass production of slums.

[1] Augusto Boal died on the 2nd of May, 2009. One month before, he had been nominated World Theatre Ambassador by UNESCO. This citation is from his acceptance speech which reaffirms his belief in the transforming power of theatre.
[2] Read in translation as *Planeta Favela.*

'The Challenge of Slums,' a report published in October 2003 by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), is recognized by Davis as the 'first truly global audit of urban poverty' (31). Davis, who used the report as the basis for his study, states that at present more than one billion people live in slums scattered throughout the cities of the southern hemisphere.[3] The study describes the history and maps the global process of slum building, from the 1970s up until the appearance of the 'mega slums' that mark many contemporary cities.

Although the picture is not promising, there are those who believe that possibilities for transformation exist. One such thinker is Brazilian geographer, Milton Santos, who suggests that we should perceive the world in relation to three alternative models: the first, 'globalization as fable'; the second, 'perverse globalization'; and the third, 'for an alternative globalization'(18). The first, the most fanciful, presents 'the world as they would wish us to see it'; the second, a more realistic view, presents 'the world as it is'; and the third, more optimistically, envisions the possibility of a more humane world (18). From the viewpoint of 'globalization as fable,' misguided concepts lead us to believe in ideas such as 'the global village' and 'global unity,' as if the world were now within the reach of all. We are led to believe that the world market has fulfilled the dream of a united world, when we can perceive that in reality the world is now more divided than ever, especially with regard to the distribution of wealth.

For Joseph Stiglitz, the process of globalization has not benefited as many people as it should have. The economist maintains that globalizing forces could have worked better for the world's poorer populations if affluent countries had created economic and political programmes based on values and principles designed to promote development in poorer countries. Instead, the

[3] The author observes that the classic definition of 'slum' adopted officially at a meeting of UNO in Nairobi in October 2002 is adhered to in the UN-Habitat report. According to that definition, a slum is characterized by 'an excess of population, poor or informal dwellings, inadequate access to drinking water and basic sanitation, and insecurity in ownership of habitation' (33).

richer nations have created a regime 'of global commerce in benefit of their own commercial and financial interests' (43). Stiglitz is categorical in affirming that: 'Globalization has the potential to bring enormous benefits to people from developed and developing nations alike. But there are overwhelming signs that it has not fulfilled its potential' (63). Many countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia live on the margins of international society. For Oswaldo de Rivero, Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru are among those Latin American countries most affected by a lack of food security. He warns that countries whose food provision is threatened by the rapid growth of urban populations 'will not be able to import increasing quantities of food products with the reduced income from the exportation of raw materials and low technology manufacture' (190).[4] This situation, he states, will lead to an increased dependence on foreign aid and national indigence. These conditions as described by Stiglitz and Rivero help us to understand the 'perverse globalization' viewpoint of Santos, who affirms:

> From whatever angle we examine the characteristic situations of the current age; the reality can be seen as a manufactory of perversity. […] We live in a world of exclusion exacerbated by social vulnerability, the harvest of the neoliberal model. (Santos 59)

According to Santos, among the constituent factors of a perverse globalization we find the 'way in which information is offered to humanity and the emergence of money in its pure state as the generator of economic and social life' (38). Santos calls these two factors of money and information a 'double tyranny.' He proposes that these factors represent 'two central aggressions,

[4] All translation from Stiglitz, Rivero and Santos by David Herman.

pillars of the ideological system […] a basis for new totalitarianisms – that is to say, the new globalitarisms that we are witnessing' (38). For the geographer, the pernicious combination of the tyranny of information, conditioned by the interests of a specific group of global actors – a few countries and commercial enterprises – and the omnipresence of money,[5] constitute the basis of the 'idea' which he calls 'dominant' and regards as a threat to our daily lives.

In spite of this, Santos' third proposed reading of the world, 'for an alternative globalization,' is quite optimistic. He believes that the limits of the current perverse globalization indicate the possibility of a new period, that of another kind of globalization. For him, it is the poor, live actors in this social drama where survival depends on a daily struggle, who will take on a determining role in the creation of the present and the future: 'Poverty is a situation of need, but also of struggle, an active state in which the forming of awareness is possible' (132). Even though the major cities are areas in which global capitalism can spread the contagion of poverty, it is here where alternatives to global capitalism can come to light. Urban social life creates an atmosphere that is favourable to the condition of struggle, which can generate a positive result in the creation of a political life that belongs to the poor. This new politics, which Santos calls 'the politics of the underclass,' is nothing like institutional politics founded on the ideology of growth and globalization, but is based on 'the daily existence lived by all, poor and non-poor, and fed by the simple necessity of existing' (133). The mixture of classes and populations characteristic of large cities motivates people to compare themselves to others and ask why there are differences. This questioning is of a political nature and even though people might not fully understand the systems that regulate their lives, a desire is created in poorer citizens to surmount their situation.

[5] Santos believes that not only economic systems but each one of us individually is compelled to adapt to the 'omnipresence of money.' 'Ideologically based, this money without restriction becomes the measure of all things, giving impetus to the vocation of accumulating wealth for its own sake' (56).

> In cities – above all in large cities – the effects of proximity seem to allow for a greater identification of the situation. […] In this way, the identification of material and intellectual abandonment to which populations are relegated creates recognition of the condition of need together with new possibilities for awareness. (Santos 166)

Even though hegemonic socioeconomic forces operate with most intensity in the urban environment, it is here, also, that we encounter the possibility of the emergence of a new order and a new discourse.

If history unfolds today in consequence of the domination of, in Santos' words, 'vectors from above,' the hopeful geographer envisions the possibility of another history that will be the expression of 'vectors from below.' The agglomeration of people in slums can create a dynamic in which the appetite for consumerism, 'a limited and directionless situation,' does not always prevail. This appetite can be substituted by the pursuit of citizenship: 'the formation of inclusive and systematic standpoints' (166). Lack of employment and low wages can inspire inventive solutions in the sphere of work, portending a time in which popular culture will gain more influence and communications media will cease to be a mere representation of a common sense imposed by the 'dominant idea.' It is here that we can corroborate the possibility of the creation of a new discourse.

The reflections of Professor Tim Prentki are in tune with those of Santos. Prentki disagrees with the post-modern view that grand narratives were dissolved in the global conflicts of the 20th century and argues that, on the contrary, these conflicts gave way to 'the dominance of a single, totalising super-narrative of capitalism in its current form: the neoliberal model of globalization' (1). This control is not only evident in the financial markets but also in the global media, whereby a small number of actors dictate the knowledge allowed to the majority, deciding what

we should know and think, how we should behave, what we should consume, even what we should feel. According to Prentki:

> While the neoliberal model of globalization operates primarily as an economic model that thrives on deregulated financial markets that enable speculators and transnational corporations to move billions of dollars in and out of national economies at the flick of a keyboard, it is also manifested in the global media operations of a few big players. The speed and sophistication with which broadcast media organizations operate today means, in effect, that a small group […] tell the rest of us what is happening in the world. (Prentki 15)

In his last publication, Augusto Boal also considers the dominance of the capitalist neoliberal regime not only in economic transactions 'where the speculators have free rein and money prevails over the stomach' (20), but also in the manipulation of the minds of individuals. Boal emphasises the need for art and culture in the struggle against what he calls the 'Invasion of Minds' (15). He believes that the dominant classes control and use the word, the image, and sound, monopolizing these channels and producing an 'anesthetic aesthetic […] taking over the minds of citizens in order to sterilize them and programme them for obedience, imitation, and lack of creativity' (18). For Boal, the ruling aesthetic channels of the word, the image and the sound serve as territory for the action of oppressors and he advocates the search for societies without oppressors or oppressed (15).

Prentki turns to another Brazilian, educator Paulo Freire, and proposes that what is at stake is the possibility of our 'naming the world,' since others are already doing this for us. According

to Prentki, the recovery of the capability to 'name the world'[6] should not be conditioned by the production of 'counter-narratives' but by the creation of 'alternative-narratives' capable of unsettling the reigning super-narrative. Prentki questions the notion of counter-narrative which, he maintains, would be the direct result caused by the action of the dominant narrative, 'as a mirror image of resistance' (16), and whose motivation, like that of its mirror original, would be the desire for power or the gaining of 'power over.' He argues that 'the presence of the counter force is a key ingredient in the process of justifying the use of violence in the maintenance of economic domination through the control of resources' (17).

Following this line of thought, the counter-narrative of Bin Laden's terrorists gave incentive to the discourse and practice of the 'war against terror,' authorising actions of equal violence, convenience and benefit to the 'dominant discourse.' For Prentki, narrative and counter-narrative represent notions of 'power over.' The author maintains that, within the context of alternative-narratives, relationships are based not on wealth but on dignity, and the notion of power gains a new meaning – the 'power to.' Rather than follow the logic of 'power over,' the alternative-narrative thrives on socially creative actions and the 'self-determination of groupings formed by horizontal and not vertical relations' (20). So, in spite of perverse forces at work in the world, other narratives reveal the power to provoke change.

It seems true that the transformations suffered by the world in the last decades of the 20th century and more recently have created a wave of conformism and even a kind of anaesthesia which characterises our times. According to Santos, 'the idea that the process and current form of globalization is irreversible has been disseminated […] leading people to believe that there is no alternative to the current state of thing' (160). Nevertheless, he challenges the dominant idea,

[6] Freire believes that to name the world means to change it: 'human existence cannot be mute, silent, nor can it nourish itself with false words. It is with true words that man can transform the world.' (Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* 78)

affirming the possibility of change. One of the signs of the imminence of a new period is, in the opinion of Santos, the way in which popular culture is regenerating. Cultural life does not escape the influence that globalization exerts on our lives. If on the one hand mass culture endeavors to impose itself on popular culture, on the other hand it is worth noticing the way popular culture reacts to this imposition. This reaction, which Santos calls 'evening the score,' is evident, for example, in the expressive manifestations of the communities of Rio de Janeiro which reinvent music, movement and speech. These manifestations exercise their quality of local narratives and have brought into relief, as Santos observes 'the day-to-day life of the poor, minorities and the excluded by means of the celebration of everyday life' (144). The defects of the present world, in those places where they are most visible, allow the possibility of creating another story whose narrators are not of the super-ideology. It is in such places as the favelas of Rio, where the appearance of alternative-narratives is possible, that culture and art have increasingly aided citizen artists in cultivating a state of struggle capable of responding to the force of the dominant powers and the dominant idea.

In Rio de Janeiro, the history of samba brought to the fore composers who sang of the favela with the voice of an insider. At present, the vigour of the lyrics and political attitudes of 'rappers,' the action of community broadcasting, and the work of theatre groups from 'inside' the favela, are strategies for 'evening the score' developed by communities in their day-to-day life. The artistic manifestations emerging from the favela territory express a movement of daily struggle, and demonstrate that life in the condition of poverty permits reflection, definition and action concerning one's place in the world. It is clear that, beyond the hegemonic discourse which has traditionally sought to depict the favela in negative terms, there exists the possibility of creating a new discourse based on insider points of view. Innumerable initiatives originating from popular settings in Rio de Janeiro are now bringing to light local narratives that portray the

daily life of these communities. Far from being subjected to a reading from the outside-in, it is now the favela is finding ways to present its own discourse from the inside-out.

This new insurgent discourse is reinforced by the activity of organisations that came into being as a result of community mobilization, such as the theatre group Nós do Morro,[7] the Grupo Cultural AfroReggae, the Central Union of Slums, and Observatório das Favelas. These organisations head a movement that erupted in the 1990s. Today, a complex social network made up of initiatives from both the communities themselves and external bodies has enlarged the territory for various forms of artistic expression, such as theatre, music, dance and audiovisual technology. Since the 1990s, when there occurred a veritable boom of the 'third sector' which reinforced the activities of non-governmental agencies (NGOs)[8] within Rio's poor communities, the theatrical stage gained an almost miraculous significance. In this area, the pioneer group, Nós do Morro,[9] became an inspiration for many social projects that have discovered in the theatre an attractive and exciting activity for children and youths. It is difficult to find a poor community in Rio today that does not have at least one theatre project. In almost all of Rio's favelas, far from the spotlights of the most sophisticated conventional theatres, community theatre is at work.

The surge of projects implemented in popular communities attests to the fact that many believe in the theatre as an alternative, capable of improving the quality of life of children and youths. The positive results achieved by some of these projects, together with increasing coverage by the communications media, confirm the idea that artistic activities exercise a

[7] 'Morro' is a term synonymous with 'favela' or 'poor community' in Rio de Janeiro, since the majority of early favelas were built on the steep slopes of the morros or mountains which are a marked characteristic of the Rio landscape.
[8] The NGOs at work in Brazil include grassroots organizations and Brazilian and international aid organizations.
[9] Founded in 1986 within the favela of Vidigal, the group Nós do Morro is a significant example of theatre groups developed by dwellers of disadvantaged communities in Brazil. The pioneering nature of their work and its longevity as well as the repercussions within and outside of the Vidigal favela (the group has performed twice in the UK at the invitation of The Royal Shakespeare Company) awakened my interest in making them a subject of research.

powerful influence over children and youths, representing a counterpoint or a strategic element to respond to the violence all too present in the daily lives of these communities. These projects arise out of a concern to offer creative activities as an alternative to situations of danger or social risk. Even though some organisations, like Nós do Morro, came into existence before the 1990s when the favelas had not yet been taken over by drug trafficking factions, the omission of the state in providing basic services necessitated the intervention of popular projects. Groups such as Nós do Morro did more than just promote 'the community stage'; they also furthered a tendency that can be observed in other popular artistic manifestations whereby the favela itself is designated the protagonist of the work. Whether in the central theme of a stage play, the lyrics of a rap, or in the short films produced by the cinema of the 'periphery,' what we observe is an explosion of voices that need, by means of multiple possibilities and expressions, to talk about the favela, to tell their own story, but this time their own version.

The favela has always produced art but never with such force and diversity. Social/artistic activities from the favela are frequently cited in the pages of the principal daily newspapers. By means of different artistic languages, these activities are altering the hegemonic view which imprisons the image of the favela within negative connotations. These are voices that speak for themselves, that seek to make the favela the author of its own story. Little by little, they are forcing a change in the discourse of the mass media which would sometimes rather construct the favela youth as a 'needy' individual, or a person highly susceptible to cooption by criminal factions.

The favela is a place where the tension between vectors from above and vectors from below are locked in a daily battle. It is a territory assailed by a perverse neoliberal globalization, which deprives the indigent population of the right to public goods such as education, healthcare, security and leisure, but also a territory where creative actions and responses to the condition of

deprivation are possible. The favela has been part of Rio de Janeiro's landscape for more than a century, and during most of this time it has been regarded as a territory apart. In recent years, an ample social network has formed which includes community groups and agencies from all sectors of society. As a result, there is now an attempt to confront the historical culture of exclusion and to see the city as less segmented and more unified.

The dynamic of this new city plan allows for encounters between different social and territorial groups and authorizes the transit of artistic and cultural production from the favela to all other circuits. In this new panorama, media celebrities make affiliations with youths from the periphery, faces from the favela gain the front covers of magazines, 'socially responsible' entrepreneurs use 'good deeds' as marketing tools, and the favela is portrayed in a telenovela. Nonetheless, in the light of this complex net of social, political, and economic transactions, it is pertinent to question the extent to which the community is author (favela by favela), or merely an instrument of groups representing 'vectors from above.'

The dominant narrative creates the disease of exclusion, but at the same time prepares sweetened, palliative remedies. Sometimes hidden interests and illusory objectives create a simulacrum of transformation. As a result, the emotionally moving television charity campaigns or the favela faces in the media threaten to exonerate a flawed and unequal society from its greater responsibility: real structural change and a real democratisation of opportunity. This does not mean we should not recognize the necessity of dialogue between the varied social actors, such as government agencies, international cooperation agencies, universities and schools, companies, politicians, artists, intellectuals, community organisations and residents' associations; instead, we should evaluate the extent to which the favela/community is being treated as an autonomous entity or as an instrument to achieve the objectives of others.

Dialogue, when amplified to include diverse sectors of society, necessitates a constant negotiation between parties which maintain different positions of power. This is an inevitable negotiation, part of the tension of communication between vectors from above and from below. What is at stake in this negotiation is summed up in the following questions: for which party is the project more important? To what degree is the participation and autonomy of the favela/community assured? What are the circumstances that guarantee the favela/community the right to, in the words of Freire, 'name the world'?

Without a doubt, the coming together of diverse social actors has contributed to the creation of new social networks and stimulated the appearance of innovative initiatives inside and outside of popular communities. These initiatives exemplify the potential to promote the emergence of genuine 'alternative-narratives.' In times of uncertainty and alienation, art, especially theatre art, has the power to create opportunities in which alternative-narratives can find a voice and a representation. There we can re-encounter community spirit and the feeling of belonging. The theatrical stage erected in a favela can become an arena in which citizens become more critical, less passive spectators, and the authors of their destiny. The 'favela as stage and persona' can signify the legitimate expression of a community in search of its own development. Bertolt Brecht conferred on theatre the task of changing the world. With the same confidence the favela stage can assume the role of active agent and transformer. It is necessary, however, to assess in what circumstances theatre can assume this function.

Freire alerts us to the danger of a fatalist and immobilizing ideology which, stimulated by neoliberal discourse, permeates the world, taking on 'post-modern airs' (*Autonomia* 19). For Freire, this system of ideas 'insists on convincing us there is nothing we can do about the social reality which historically and culturally turned into something almost natural' (19). As Zigmunt Bauman affirms: 'We live in merciless times: times of competition and lack of respect for the

weakest, when the people around us are devious and not much interested in helping us' (8). Even so, the persistence of many creative and courageous actions challenges the authority of the dominant narrative. The dynamic of a new global order, that elicits feelings of insecurity, loneliness and fear of the future, is challenged when community agency is activated.

At present in Rio de Janeiro, community theatre groups are confronting 'immobilising' ideology and demonstrating that, even in these times of alienation, art, and above all the collective art of theatre, is capable of recreating the community and engaging groups in projects inspired by a culture of change. Even in those places where the action of perverse globalization takes on more violent dimensions, as in favelas dominated by armed drug-trafficking factions, it is possible to find groups mobilised by a desire to regain a community spirit, a new notion of community. The merit of these groups resides not only in their nonconformity with a reality that presents itself as 'almost natural,' but also in their pursuit of an ideal: the community stage as a place for the expression of alternative-narratives with the 'power to' resist the dominant idea. Theatre's challenge is to allow the channels of word, image and sound to speak with autonomy, free of the 'aesthetic castration' promoted by the dominant narrative which, Augusto Boal reminds us, renders citizenship vulnerable, compelling it to 'obey the dictates of the mass media, the cathedra and the political platform, the pulpit and all the sergeants' (15). It is also an indispensable task of theatre to provide a means for the revelation of hidden stories: those stories which have never had the chance to be told with the body and voice of their true authors and which can alter our way of seeing and understanding the world. The theatre, in the face of an implacable world possesses the potential to provoke change, the capability to overcome apathy and hopelessness, and the belief that the invention of another world is possible.

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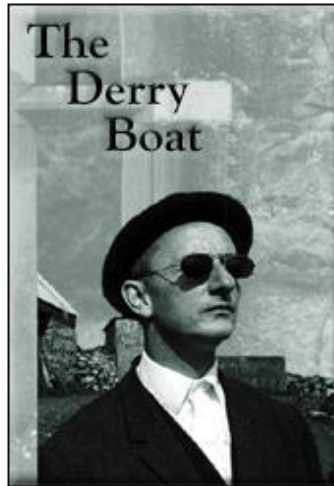
Keeping Memory Afloat: Little John Nee's *The Derry Boat*

BY BETH PHILLIPS



Remember your kin.
Early mornings and cold fingers
Stooped here with heads full of memories,
of fields from Arranmore to Ayrshire.
(Nee, *The Mental* 20)

Keeping Memory Afloat: Little John Nee's *The Derry Boat*

The personal history of Little John Nee closely reflects the tribulations of migratory labourers in Ireland's northernmost county of Donegal. To discuss his work without profiling the artist would be specious. Glasgow-born but no Glaswegian, Nee is a playwright, songwriter and musician whose cultural nexus is Donegal-entrenched. Though currently residing in Tuam, County Galway, Nee considers Letterkenny, Donegal's cultural centre, his hometown. His family relocated from Glasgow to Letterkenny when he was twelve. The northwestern Irish county provides the setting for the majority of his plays, several of which straddle the North Channel. His multi-charactered solo performances based on local lore foster an audience identification process, promoting a deeper sense of Irish heritage.

Though he is moored in the past, Nee's conversation percolates with ideas for new work. Professionally he is peripetetic, preferring to tour rather than adopt a permanent venue. As a young man Nee left Donegal to explore London, squatting in abandoned buildings. Construction work, poetry, punk rock, Rastafarian culture and Krishna Consciousness vied for his time (Delap; Nee 'C.V.'). He developed an eclectic metropolitan sensibility balanced by a profound connection with rural Donegal, cultivated as a child when he spent summer holidays with relatives. Nee is a self-made, modern-day *seanchaí*:[1] he fosters the oral tradition of Ireland's itinerant storytellers who taught and entertained with hearthside performances based on history and legend. His unique performance style utilises drama, song and physical comedy, and is exemplified by his critically lauded and best-known work, *The Derry Boat* (1999) (Spiers; Fotheringham; *Scotsman*).

I was fortunate to attend a revival of *Derry Boat* in October 2010 at An Grianán Theatre in Letterkenny, where Nee was serving a six-month appointment as artist-in-residence. The play casts a wide referential net while particularising an erstwhile migratory situation familiar to many Donegal families. It redefines shifting communal borders in and between the Irish communities of Donegal and Glasgow. *Derry Boat* was inspired by the conditions of Irish migrant labourers described by Donegal writer Patrick MacGill in *Children of the Dead End* (1914). MacGill's novel memorializes the 19th- and early 20th-century's Donegal tatie hokers and navvies[2] squeezed among cattle on the boat from Derry to Glasgow in search of seasonal work. Nee's play stokes the local collective memory of these times. The playwright speaks of how 'older people in their eighties and nineties … come up to [me] afterwards and

[1] The *seanchaí* were mostly itinerant storytellers who helped preserve the ancient Irish oral tradition. The *seanchaí* served a crucial communal function at a time when formal schooling was reserved for clergy.
[2] 'Tatie hokers' are potato pickers. 'Navvies' are unskilled labourers.

tell their stories[,] … validating their experiences … this particular information is dying with these people' (qtd. in Delap). *Derry Boat* thus reactivates and preserves a cultural memory on the brink of annihilation. The piece revivifies the indivisible histories of the Glasgow Irish and Donegal communities, embodied by Nee himself.

Nee draws from his own recollections of the Donegal summer holidays he enjoyed while his family still lived in Glasgow. Early in the play, Nee re-enacts a rough crossing on the boat from Derry to Glasgow. The scene echoes the Glasgow to Derry trip he experienced with his mother when he was five: sailing down the Clyde from Glasgow to Donegal, the cows on deck, the sense of confinement, the lapping sea, early morning arrival into Derry Port ('Personal Interview'). Nee's childhood memories meld with and transform collective reminiscences of the Donegal community. Thus *Derry Boat* acquires its own credible discursive veracity, with '… various elements spark[ing] acts of recollection and preserv[ing] memory' (Ó Crualaoich 13). Stories told by familial ancestors coalesce into communal history aided by the theatrical experience provided by Nee.

The play relates the saga of four generations of O'Donnells, a surname endemic to the region. Nee embodies all twenty characters, emphasising the physical connection between generations. With music hall timing and sight gags, he supplies both the comic relief sought by tragedy and the tragic support on which comedy relies. In Scene One, the top half of the front door abruptly swings open, revealing the upper torso of Shughie O'Donnell, who then kicks open the door's bottom half.

Figure 2: Photo by, and courtesy of, Little John Nee.

He proceeds cautiously, wearing sunglasses, an ill-fitting black suit, and a pork-pie hat. Carrying a pistol and a battered suitcase, he could be an IRA operative or a common thug contemplating the rubble of his 'ancestral home' (*Derry Boat* 1). Brandishing the pistol Shughie yells, 'Freeze Motherfuckers–legs in the air!' He is threatening the resident woodlice. But he quickly subverts the audience's expectations. Referring to the pistol, he confesses, 'I don't know how this thing works. I have been trying to figure it out all morning.' Then, 'there is some people around these parts and they say the only good Woodlice is a dead Woodlice, but not me. Not Cosmic Hugh, the Ghandi of the Gorbals. I used to be a woodlice once myself' (1). This passage illustrates a device typically employed by Nee. In contemporary dress, at the ruins of his great-grandparents' Ulster cottage, the Glaswegian Shughie mentions woodlice, the cosmos, and Ghandi, whose Hinduism implied belief in reincarnation. This time/space warp is a set-up for time travel: Nee effectively 'reincarnates' twenty people across generations.

'Cosmic Hugh' then launches into an irreverent parody of Dominic Behan's incendiary anthem, 'The Patriot Game,' which memorialises an IRA border incident.[3] Nee's version begins, 'Come all ye young Woodlice and listen to me …' (1). 'Woodlice' can be inferred as a reference to tenement dwellers, an analogy drawn out

[3] Behan's song begins, 'Come all ye young rebels, and list while I sing …'

later in the show. The ballad is expertly sung in traditional *sean-nós*,[4] reflecting the O'Donnell family's ancient roots. Nee's delivery fluctuates between deadpan and satirical. By song's end the audience is in rustic Donegal circa 1910. A blackout punctuates the transition, then a spotlight comes up on a doll-size house in the midst of a shower produced by a watering can. Nee recites: 'Once upon a long time ago in the land of Tir Connell,[5] there was a lovely wee house … full of O'Donnells' (2). A fairy tale mode is thereby introduced with the simplest of devices. In describing 'the widow O'Donnell and her thirteen assorted … children' (2), Nee, as Shughie, explains: 'They lived on a boggy piece of ground. It was worth nothing and cost them everything' (2). This dark moment is undercut by a visual joke: Nee lifts the tiny cottage and pours the 'rainwater' off its underlying, sodden brown doormat representing 'the boggy piece of ground' (2). Illusion and sentiment are instantly dispelled with laughter. Nee's next character, a British officer, has the benefit of entering a transitional space that allows the character to make his own singular impact.

This rapid-change, music hall approach enables Nee to slip out of the stage world and address the audience directly, much as a *seanchaí* would engage a group gathered around a communal hearth. Throughout, Nee utilizes mundane props in unexpected ways. A piece of frayed rope metamorphoses into a cow and a ship's deck; a bottomless oil drum becomes a mineshaft. At times the audience is invited to participate. During the crossing scene, Nee invites the audience to imitate the cows:

> Well, the cows all sing on the Derry Boat …
>
> All together now, the bit everybody is waiting for – chance of a lifetime.

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[4] *Sean-nós* literally means 'old style.'
[5] Tir Connell was formed into Donegal during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

> After me everybody:
>
> ‘*Moooo, Moooooo*, the Derry Boat.’
>
> God, you people have no shame whatsoever! (5).

The playfulness of such communal exchanges can serve to encourage the emotional engagement of younger generations with experiences of their forbears, both in the past time of the narrative and within the present performance.

But Nee’s flippancy in darker moments risks trivialising the subject matter, and his preference for playing to the Donegal sensibility puts his work in danger of parochialisation. For example, there is a momentary allusion to the Famine in the play. Nee, as the widow O’Donnell, moans for food for her starving children. Nee reflects,

> … that’s a thing [an Irish audience] know I’m doing, about the Famine … a really touchy subject … because *we’ve had it up to here* with the Famine.… in a sense I’m making light of it, but the funny thing is that *we* [emphasis added] can laugh at it, but [an outsider] *can’t* [emphasis added] – we’re in a place where we can make fun of it, but we don’t disown it, either. (‘Personal Interview’)

Rugged treatment of tender material suggests an internalisation of the Donegal terrain. Regardless, as an American, I was dismayed that the mention of an historic event arguably tantamount to genocide invited and provoked laughter. Targeting a specific regional audience risks deflection of broader, more universal identification.

Common to many nations, however, is the experience of emigration. Like many emigrants, *Derry Boat*'s principal characters are rarely where they feel they need or ought to be. Grandad as a young man is forced to emigrate to Glasgow to make a living. Later he becomes delusional, believing he and Shughie are headed for the promised land while walking around the block. Shughie's expected girlfriend never arrives, and Shughie is continually thwarted in gaining various destinations by vagaries of plot. While the situations are essentially comic, they have tragic potential. Circularity and closure are finally achieved when Shughie arrives back at the O'Donnell shack, which, in fact, he has never left. He has been carried along by shades of his cultural past. Shughie's memory becomes the connective element; he completes his own immigration cycle by reclaiming his ancestral roots, as has the playwright himself.

On the other hand, Grandad, the first O'Donnell in Glasgow, is deracinated, his sense of identity permanently shattered: 'You couldn't mention Donegal to Grandad, it's all Israel with him. He never left the house, just sat there reading the bible with his one good hand' (18). Grandad, too, craves

deliverance from the Gorbals, but his Donegal childhood had no resemblance to Shughie's bucolic idyll. Grandad is isolated, stranded in past events, cut off from both the Glasgow immigrant community and his origins. Scars of destitution, eviction, migration, the death of a child, his wife's madness, and World War I are still raw. Grandad has, as Shughie puts it, '…finally gone chop suey. They are going to stick him in the mental hospital' (19). Thus Donegal and the Irish community represent health and authenticity, whereas Glasgow is the 'Sledgehammer of the Sovereign' (6).

But Nee spills no Republican venom in *Derry Boat*; he strives to reflect the perspective of an increasingly non-sectarian community. By the early 1960s, the social effects of tenements levelled to give way to non-Irish newcomers in Glasgow's predominantly Irish Gorbals district were both negative and positive. The Catholic community, mostly from Donegal, were now scattered. Sectarian lines were blurred, and the community became more integrated (Gallagher 234). Nee recalls, 'We … would get involved in chases with the nearby Protestant schools, some of [which] our friends would attend' ('Email'). *Derry Boat* redefines shifting communal borders in and between two locales.

In *Derry Boat*, Nee presents historical fact in a fictive, dramatic construct through the lens of personal memory. Neither his intentions nor his methods are academic; he seeks to entertain. While comic exuberance and abundance of detail occasionally undermine the narrative thrust, Nee involves the audience dramatically in an exploratory journey of a fraught political past. The commonality of a divided and diasporic community is thus rewoven into the fabric of the collective memory. With the storytelling tools of a *seanchaí* and a busker's spontaneity, Nee offers

audiences resolution in the present moment by means of a multi-layered theatrical experience.

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Book Reviews

***Theatre & Sexuality* by Jill Dolan**

London:Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 107, (softback)

REVIEWED BY MATT FOX

Theatre & Sexuality offers a series of signposts for the scholar to begin a journey into the fields of gender and performance. Jill Dolan brings an encyclopaedic knowledge to the book, making it a highly informative starting point for research. She skirts across reams of history and theory, and the most disappointing aspect of this short volume, and perhaps the *Theatre&* series as a whole, is that it leaves the reader wishing the erudite author had the scope to cover her material in more depth.

Acclaimed performance artist and self proclaimed Queer performer Tim Miller provides the foreword to the book. He grounds queer theory and gender studies within his own experience, and sets up the practice-based nature of the rest of the book. Dolan takes over from Miller and details the development of theatre and sexuality as a field in conjunction with changes in the field of sexuality itself, both politically and theoretically. She moves from the homophile movements of the 50s and 60s, through to the Stonewall Riot of 1969, into the gay liberation movement, lesbian feminism, and finally to the development of queer.

Theatre is often perceived as something of a ‘safe haven’ for alternative sexualities, but the struggles faced by communities within theatre have been no less difficult than elsewhere in society. As Dolan notes in the chapter ‘Gay and Lesbian Lives and Ideas in the Twentieth Century,’ heteronormativity is rigidly embedded both inside and outside the theatre (5-6). LGBTQ communities have been seen, and in many cases are still seen as, ‘the

Other.' No amount of political campaigning and acceptance has yet changed this, and even the term 'alternative sexualities,' suggests a fringe to the mainstream. Despite these issues and continuing struggles within the LGBTQ movements, Dolan fully realises the importance of theatre in developments in the sphere of sexuality over the last half century (13). Whether theatre is utilised for direct action, social satire, fringe or mainstream production, sexuality is never far from the spotlight. As Dolan notes: 'Community or social movement-orientated theatre continues to sustain a diverse LGBTQ population, but lesbian, gay, trans, and queer drama, whether assimilationist, or more radical, whether queer in content, intent, or form, more frequently disperses into the cultural mainstream' (82). She goes on to highlight a number of key figures, companies and performances who have made significant headway in this regard and done crucial work.

A strength of the book is Dolan's wide variety of queer theatre case studies. These include the lesbian performance troupe, The Split Britches, who developed in the United States performing in gay venues like the WOW café in New York's East Village and Tim Miller himself, who famously uses his own nudity for comic but political means, playing with the comfort/discomfort of his audience through his one man shows. The limit, however, of these and other openly gay performers/performances is that in many cases they are preaching to the converted. As such, they can have a limited political effect on those most in need of being challenged in their attitudes to sexuality.

This situation is, however, slowly changing. As Dolan notes in her final chapter, 'New Audiences: No Longer Preaching to the Choir,' '[b]y the twenty-first century, the criterion of "authenticity," which once demanded that gay, lesbian, or queer experience be represented only by those who had lived it, gradually relaxed into a more open standard in which alternative sexual identity onstage or onscreen could be addressed, performed, and received by anyone' (81). One of the most interesting areas that Dolan explores, therefore, is

the crossing over of gay theatre figures between the fringe and mainstream. Terrance McNally for example, one of the first out gay white men to be accepted into mainstream theatre, 'writes plays about gay men, but also plays and librettos that have nothing to do with sexual identity' (48). This initial crossing over, although not directly bringing queer issues into the mainstream, laid the foundation for mainstream queer work later on. Dolan sees the importance of this, and rightly acknowledges the limits of queer theatre makers remaining in a purely fringe capacity. She goes on to demonstrate how, once commercially established, queer writers can more easily raise queer issues for a more politically advantageous audience. The highly commercial, Broadway musical *La Cage Aux Folles*, which ran for 1,761 performances is one of Dolan's key examples of this phenomenon (22).

The most interesting aspect of *Theatre and Sexuality* is Dolan's extended examination of *Belle Reprieve*, performed by a cast comprising Lois Weaver and Peggy Shaw, formerly of the American company Split Britches, and Bette Bourne and Paul Shaw, of the UK based group Bloolips. The piece, a reworking of Tennessee William's classic play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, acts as a detailed case study of queer theatre. Dolan's choice to dedicate so much space to the discussion of one piece of theatre does at first glance appear somewhat limiting. However, *Belle Reprieve* in many ways exemplifies queer theatre as a genre and gives insight into the development of a relationship between theatre and sexuality. Dolan describes the original play in detail, as well as the iconic actors who have become part of its history (Marlon Brandon/Vivien Leigh). She also touches on the much debated relationship between the play and Williams' own identification within the homosexual sphere. *Belle Reprieve* can be seen, therefore, as both a queering of Williams' piece and an illustration identity challenging function of queer theatre. The piece has a Brechtian self awareness and a clear agenda, based both on the rigid gender and sexual identities of the original characters and the problematic nature of these rigid sexualities for Williams as a gay figure. Whether it

is butch lesbian actor Peggy Shaw playing archetypal masculine brute Stanley Kawalski or drag queen Bette Bourne as fem victim Blanche Dubois, the very casting of the piece, before an actor has even stepped onto the stage, is a challenge to any preconceptions of gender and sexual identity within the playtext.

Theatre & Sexuality is an accomplished introduction to a complex and politically charged subject. Dolan's insights into the gradual infiltration of alternative sexualities from the early, solely gay venues of the mid twentieth century, through to the widespread presence of gay lives within commercial theatre and film are well documented and shed much light on the historical context of queer theatre. The book is optimistic, while being fully aware of the wealth of challenges still affecting LGBTQ communities. It strongly makes the case that theatre's engagement with gender and sexuality issues is as important as ever.

On Directing and Dramaturgy: Burning the House by Eugenio Barba (Trans. by Judy Barba)

London and New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 218, (softback)

REVIEWED BY STELLA KERAMIDA

In his new book *On Directing and Dramaturgy: Burning the House* the director-teacher and theorist-researcher Eugenio Barba provides insight into his main directorial principles: organic, narrative and evocative dramaturgy as levels of organization. The reader is offered an experience of Barba's endoscopic journey in relation to the value of his art.

Barba's book is full of details not only about his actor training techniques, but also about the materials he uses (physical-vocal actions, costumes, objects, space, sound, light), as well as about key examples from his performances. It includes confessions of the difficulties he has encountered during actor training process and illuminations of the ideology and ethos

of his work. Barba states: 'My way is personal, and as such it can be shared or not. But it is objectively verifiable, and as such it can be explained or at least described' (90). In this book the director does not refer exclusively to his famous multicultural theatrical heritage; rather, he shares the directorial logistics that are the foundation of his distinctive aesthetic style.

In the first part of *On Directing and Dramaturgy*, Barba focuses on the notion of organic dramaturgy as a level of organization. He argues: 'My work as a director was not guided by meanings, but by the actor's real actions and the synchronization of their relationships - their organic dramaturgy' (114). Organic dramaturgy constitutes 'precision, oppositions, rhythm, colours of energy, organic effect of each action, the quality of [the actors'] form, introvert or extrovert features, the dynamic action-reaction, accelerations and pauses, simultaneous and divergent rhythms of actions: their flow' (98). What is exciting about this approach is the emphasis Barba places on actor's materials as a state of dramaturgy, extending prevalent conceptions of the term.

In the second part of the book Barba discusses narrative dramaturgy as a level of organization. This type of dramaturgy differs from 'what is meant by narrative dramaturgy in the theatre which starts out from a text' (88). Consequently, he admits that: 'What I call narrative dramaturgy was only my particular way to narrate' (88). In other words, narrative dramaturgy is the unique dramaturgy that identifies each director. Barba's is, I believe, one of the few clear and concise published texts offering an insight into a director's creative logistics. It is not over-intellectualized by an academic scholar, but examined and analysed by the artist himself. It will, therefore, be of real value to many students interested in directing or to aspirant directors.

Barba's distinctive narrative dramaturgy consists in a narration-through-actions or a narration-behind-actions. The first of these creative methods is wide-spread today among theatre practitioners. It concerns the creation of stage action that conveys the fiction/narration

with clarity. The second takes place entirely on private terms and it includes the constellation of meanings and orientations which are concealed or revealed behind-actions. An exploration of the relationship between these two levels of organization is the Barba's main object of interest.

According to Barba, narrative dramaturgy 'is engraved itself on the organic one' and the two are 'inseparable' (98). Thus, these two paths - organic and narrative organization - are 'simultaneously present, each with its own logic' and collaborate 'in an unplanned way, combining precision (necessity) and chance (unpredictability)' (98). Prevalent ways of making and understanding theatre directing are based on the idea that the director's role is to take full control and carefully pre-plan all the steps/phases throughout the creative process. Barba shatters the foundations of this broadly conceived assumptions. For him, the director has to be brave enough to take risks without fear of failure by effectively using the component of chance-unpredictability to organize his/her dramaturgy.

The ways to establish bonds between the organic level and the narrative one are numerous: for example, one can lay emphasis on real actions and the actor's energy or presence; or one can start from developing an action, image or idea contrary to the obvious one (99). This encourages paradoxical thinking, which results in a paradoxical effectiveness in directing. Therefore, for Barba, the main value of this directorial strategy is revealed when he manages 'to collaborate with chance' and, thus, escape from his 'mental inclinations' (100).

One of the most inspiring contributions of this book comes when Barba shares conceptualisations of the phases of his directorial process. This helps us to grasp the essence of his dynamics. For example, 'actor's actions with their detailed and precise tensions' provoke 'mental patterns in the spectator' meaning 'produced predictability, comprehensibility, connections and dynamics of cause and effect' (91). However, according

to Barba, the director can challenge and provoke this system of thought by deceiving the kinaesthetic expectation of the spectator. Specifically, in his directing he encourages the spectators 'to project a justification on the actions of a scene, which, in the end, would have a value and a sense other than the ones shown by the actions' (92). This means that when the action starts arousing in the spectator 'the sensation of foreseeing its progress,' he drastically alters its tonic quality (its dynamism and intention) 'provoking a stinging effect on the spectator's attention.' He calls this stinging effect 'the experience of not seeing,' which sharpens theatrical reality, since it creates 'an experience of uneasiness' (92). What is inspiring about the above process is that the actor, the director and the audience, by embracing discomfort, resist mannerist performative conveniences. In this way, their energy and alertness remain at continuously high levels.

In the third and final section on evocative dramaturgy as a level of organization, Barba focuses on the spectator and exposes a very personal vision of what is broadly referred to as theatricality. This section offers an important contribution to the work of the renowned director, introducing notions such as 'the torrid zone of memory,' 'the leap of consciousnesses' (or 'change of state' in the spectator), the 'spectators-fetishes' and 'the elusive order' giving food for thought to theatre/performance students and scholars. This vision of theatricality emphasises the demand for a disordering of the audience's unity and a focus on individual reactions – on the mental behaviours and different associations that will emerge for each spectator. These ideas clearly draw on the beliefs of Barba's great teacher, Jerzy Grotowski.

With *Directing and Dramaturgy* Barba illustrates the functionality of his directing, critically reflecting on his own methods, while offering a vista of his rehearsals, actors' improvisations, field trips, and material sources - such as plays, poems, and religious texts. The book also contains a personal biography, political views, and notes from workshops. The

book has four wonderfully written intermezzos, with letters from Barba's friends, members of the audience and scholars. The intermezzos provide personal thoughts, quotations, notes, anecdotes, jokes, imagined facts, stories, and myths, which not only reveal Barba's virtue as a writer but also engage a gestaltic aesthetic sensibility. In Barba's book students, scholars and practitioners can find a sustained interpretation of a celebrated actor-based directorial practice and also of an intriguing account of a distinctive staging philosophy

***The Charismatic Chameleon: The Actor As Creative Artist* by Leslie O'Dell**

Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2010, pp. 309 (paperback)

REVIEWED BY EUGÉNIE PASTOR

In *The Charismatic Chameleon*, O'Dell provides tools for actors and acting teachers to understand and master the processes through which outstanding acting is achieved. The author argues that while most actors are excellent 'chameleons,[1]' outstanding ones combine charismatic properties with these chameleon skills. The chameleon work O'Dell refers to consists in transforming 'in whatever way is necessary so that what is presented to the audience works, in whatever way it is supposed to' (9). In other words: 'the actor has to avoid getting in the way of the audience's experience' (9). Such properties are attainable through the acknowledgment and mastery of one's 'Creative Temperament.' The author thus offers techniques for actors to diagnose their Creative Temperament, and to use it to unlock their creative energy. The aim is to allow actors to feel constantly inspired and to overcome

[1] The 'chameleon work' O'Dell refers to consists in 'to transform in whatever way is necessary so that what is presented to the audience works, in whatever way it is supposed to'. In other terms: 'the actor has to avoid getting in the way of the audience's experience' (9).

creative blocks by knowing how best to use their creative processes, or all their skills in any situation required by the industry.

After a short preface in which the author explains the processes that led her to develop these tools for acting, the book opens with an 'Introduction to Creative Temperament' (2). In this section, O'Dell introduces the key concepts of her argument before they are developed the practical examples of Part 2. The author distinguishes six different Creative Personal Temperaments (xii), each composed of two different 'conduits' – 'points of access through which the charismatic energy can be tapped' (15). The conduits are 'Action,' 'Perception,' 'Power,' and 'Relationship.' The two latter conduits belong to the 'cultural realm' (16): the socio-historical specificities of a particular culture. 'Action' and 'Perception' belong to the 'genetic realm,' which O'Dell defines as 'those aspects of the actor's work that are most directly linked to what we inherit as members of the species' (9). The combination of the Action and Power conduits creates a Dynamic Creative Temperament; the blending of Action and Relationship generates a Personal one; Relationship and Perception makes a Psychic one; Perception and Power, Visionary; the blending of Action and Perception creates an Innovative Creative Temperament and finally, Relationship and Power makes a Magnetic Temperament (19). In a colloquial and pragmatic tone, O'Dell clearly defines her terminology, making an effort to render it accessible.

Drawing on workshops led by O'Dell in North America with acting students over the course of five years, Part Two is presented as a 'composite, made up of excerpts' (23) from workshop sessions. This part, the main body of the book, is composed of dialogues between six participants, including the author herself, each embodying one of the six different creative types. The workshops are intersected by 'digressions' during which the author expands on a specific point raised during the workshop. The aim of the workshops is to provide examples of the ways each Temperament works, to determine which vocabulary is the most appropriate

depending on one's preferred conduits, to train one's acting skills in any situation, including situations of 'mismatches' (166), and to learn how to warm up and 'de-brief' (134) after rehearsal and performance. Apart from the digressions, the tone of which remains close to that used in Part 1, the Workshops read as scripts: the 'characters'' names, each of which represents a 'type,' are inscribed on the right hand side of the page, followed by each character's dialogue. A few sentences appear in italics, very much like stage directions, allowing the reader to become omniscient and providing a sense of liveness to the scenes.

The third part of the book is presented as an annotated bibliography, and aims to provide 'Development of the Theory' (219). It is divided into thematic sections in which the author includes theoretical references. Each one of these sections is heavy with endnotes, which point the reader to a very extensive body of works and to some more detailed explorations of topics that span different acting methodologies and techniques, from Method and Stanislavsky-based approaches to 'pre-modern performance styles' (221). The bibliography explores themes such as the psychology and phenomenology of acting (222), or sociology and anthropology, especially the concept of 'participant-observer' (226) - albeit in a superficial manner - as a useful tool for the teaching of acting. This third section gives a thorough and complete account of the theory that nurtured the author's argumentation, and provides very useful references, although not hierarchically organised. Such a partition of information allows different readers to fins different amounts and levels of theory.

The main flaw of the book is its underlying statement of an opposition between theory and practice. While it is true that an insight into the pragmatic aspects of performance is needed in academic writing, and that O'Dell's book, being mainly directed at practitioners, does not aim to be a theoretical exploration, expressions such as '(l)ike many practitioners, I avoided the jargon-filled musings of theorists like the plague' (221), or the evocation of 'hair splitting' in reference to theatre scholarship (258) seem pejorative and binary. O'Dell's

laudable effort towards clarity and offering practical applications of theory does not need this artificial opposition to stand out as successful.

O'Dell's book provides a fresh and insightful perspective on the practice of acting. One of the main characteristics of her approach is to challenge the hegemonic position of Method acting and Stanislavsky-derived techniques that still very much prevail in the North American and British performance industries. She acknowledges the influence of approaches that are not Stanislavsky-inspired, mentioning the influence of Eugenio Barba, Tadashi Suzuki, and Rudolf Laban (Jaques Lecoq is notably absent). Her aim is not to dismiss or praise specific approaches, but to challenge dogmatic applications of them. O'Dell praises and acknowledges Stanislavsky's legacy and heritage, but emphasises the need for a toolbox approach to acting as opposed to a dogmatic one. She therefore provides a tailor-made approach, which she hopes is suitable for a significant number of actors, focusing on individuality rather than forcefully applying one method to all. This goal is achieved in part through the positioning of the author in a horizontal relationship with the reader rather than on a hierarchical one: for example, acknowledging her own limitations in the annotated bibliography (225) O'Dell places herself as an initiator rather than a master. These characteristics, combined with the performative dimension of the book, will prove an insightful resource for those interested in furthering their acting skills.

***Drama as Therapy: Clinical Work and Research into Practice (Volume 2)* Edited by Phil Jones**

Hove: Routledge, 2010, pp. 296, (hardback)

REVIEWED PEGGY SHANNON

Drama as Therapy: Clinical Work and Research into Practice (Volume 2) is a compilation of articles by drama therapists who over the past 25 years have found value in using drama as an alternative therapeutic medium. The volume shows that the variety of possibilities for dramatherapy is notable and that the evolving discipline is impressive in its breadth of application. Settings for the practice range from prisons and detention centres to neuro-rehabilitation centres, to more traditional clinical offices. While dramatherapy has been used with clients across a wide range of demographics, including those with learning disabilities, dementia, HIV and cancer, as well as with families, youth and senior groups, there does not appear to be one guiding theoretical approach to its application. Each chapter begins with a set of questions and answers about an individual practitioner's work, his or her research perspective, and a brief analysis of client perspective samples. Through this structure, the reader gains an immediate context for the models and theories discussed within each chapter, and an outward understanding of the range of therapeutic and assessment tools employed.

In this second volume of *Drama as Therapy,* Phil Jones includes interviews with some of the most pivotal theorists in the field, including Sue Jennings, Robert Landy, Dorothy Langley, Adam Blatner, David Read Johnson, and Helen Payne. He also includes a younger generation of researchers such as French Ph.D. candidate Athena Madden. While Volume I of *Drama as Therapy* was intended as an introduction to the insightful use of drama in therapeutic contexts, Volume 2 explores the burgeoning growth of the field, providing a clearer view of dramatherapy as a sophisticated therapeutic tool. The creation of new applied therapeutic techniques through collaboration across artistic, historical, and social science sectors is striking. As dramatherapy has engaged with multiple academic and artistic disciplines, it has also inspired a rapid growth of professional associations to regulate practice and quality of care (Jones xix).

As a theatre director who has incorporated dramatherapy techniques into my professional stage work since the 1970s (following a workshop on the then nascent practice with Sue Jennings in England), I am fascinated by the extent to which *Drama As Therapy: Clinical Work and Research into Practice* reveals the evolution of the field over the last four decades. I was pleased to learn that the discipline has become a practice with such wide-ranging applicability. To fully engage with the theoretical models offered in this compilation, it is helpful if the reader has some background in Western theatre practice, traditional therapeutic tools, or both. While it is not essential to have an in-depth understanding of psychoanalytic processes, some knowledge of specific methodology and assessment tools may be helpful in deciphering practitioner effectiveness within the various demographics discussed.

The book is organized into two parts: Part 1 offers interviews with key theorists that provide context for the chapters, while Part 2 speaks to the broad range of dramatherapy practice through an analysis of case studies written by the individual practitioners. In Part 1, clinical practice is discussed in three ways: context, research, and dialogue. The reader is reminded that research into dramatherapy theory and practice has been 'one of discovery within its own emergent methods and ideas, alongside dialogue and engagement with related disciplines' (Jones 3) ranging from neuroscience to psychotherapy to dance and Forum Theatre. In dramatherapy, the overriding emphasis is on problem solving for the individual patient through the use of theatrical, creative tools in tandem with more traditional forms of psychoanalysis. In this volume, Jones sets the stage for a discussion of how, when, why and where dramatherapy is practiced, beginning with a reminder of origin of the term itself ('dramatherapy' began as practitioners found out about each other's work occurring within a variety of settings, from hospitals to prisons to private practice (3))

In Part 2, the reader is introduced to a wide-ranging discussion of how dramatherapy practitioners create relationships between overall processes, theoretical models and their specific practices. For example, in Chapter 9 Naomi Gardner-Hynd, a senior dramatherapist working with clients with learning disabilities and mental health problems within the National Health Service, discusses her use of key psychotherapy principles such as establishing trust through safe and contained boundaried space. She explains that she implements a four-pronged cycle of therapy and creativity: Preparation, warm-up games and relaxation; Incubation, which is the main activity of role play, mask work, etc; Illumination, reflective exercices; and Verification, the conscious and subconscious processing of information and revelation (172-188). She articulates clearly her synthesis of drama activities and traditional forms of therapy. In Chapter 4, Christine Novy notes how certain core processes such as 'dramatic projection' inform her practice with female offenders, and how she has combined techniques that enable her clients to act out their personal issues in order to witness externally issues that had only been experienced internally up until that point (65-83). This 'Narrative of Change' draws on the work of narrative therapists J. Freedman and G. Combs as well as Western theatre techniques. A third noteworthy example is the practice of Lindsay Chipman , who bases her methodology and theoretical framework on the work of psychotherapists Cosden and Reynolds, two psychotherapists who have used photographs as tools in the therapeutic relationship. Chipman describes how she follows suit with her 'Photo Theatre of the Self' activity, and reflects on her resulting assessment tools, specifically 'role therapy' which utilises self-portrait photography (105-124). All of the aforementioned practitioners discuss their reliance on core processes for examining and articulating client transformation and evaluating effectiveness of treatment methodologies.

In summary, the interviews with key theorists in Part 1 coupled with the description of practice by the therapists themselves in Part 2 make this book engaging reading for anyone

interested in drama as a therapeutic tool. Yet, while each practitioner cites theoretical models of influence, core psychoanalytic and dramatic processes, and methodology germane to his or her individual practice, it might be challenging for a lay person to fully appreciate or evaluate effectiveness of the described models. With so many dramatherapists included in this volume, it leaves the reader longing for more detailed descriptions of each practice. Perhaps the next volume will offer just that.

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***Movement Training for the Modern Actor* by Mark Evans**

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REVIEWED BY KONSTANTINOS THOMAIDIS

Mark Evans' *Movement Training for the Modern Actor* is not another manual to be added to the expanding corpus of movement books for actors. Therefore I can imagine hasty readers surprised by the lack of descriptions of specific training sequences or the absence of diagrams and photos from rehearsal rooms. Likewise, one can easily picture connoisseurs questioning the non-existence of sections dedicated to Grotowski, Barba or Bogart's work. However, the purpose of Evans' book, published in the Routledge Advances in Theatre and Performance Studies series, is different – and, for a plethora of reasons, groundbreaking.

Movement Training for the Modern Actor is a reworking of Evans' doctoral research (2003), part of which consisted of extensive interviews with students and movement tutors from major UK drama schools (Central School of Speech and Drama, Guildhall, Manchester Metropolitan University, Rose Bruford) The interview sample is already indicative of the book's scope: the principles underpinning the teaching of expressive physicality in leading, conservatory-type institutions. This is quite an unusual choice, as scholarly publications seem more at ease when putting under the analytical microscope alternative or avant-garde approaches to the performer's body (see, for example, Allain, Rudlin, Zarrilli, as well as the entire 'Routledge Performance Practitioners' series). Stemming from the body's rise to (philosophical) prominence over the last century, this is the first large-scale attempt to evaluate the dialogue between this discursive turn of twentieth-century and the 'mainstream' movement training for actors, dialogue which is described in the book as an 'osmotic process' (2).

Evans' is not a discourse on the body in performance, but a dissection of the making of this body, of its training—and, even more importantly, of the *makings* of this making. The author sheds light on the surrounding ideologies and cultural norms which are simultaneously evoked and validated (and/or hopefully resisted) in the movement training offered to the modern actor. Particularly focusing on the context of the British theatre industry, this is a rigorous account of the historical processes through which specific understandings of the body have become embedded in the broader cultural context of the UK. It is precisely within this well-defined framework that three systematic approaches to physicality make the backbone of Evans' work: the methods by Matthias Alexander, Rudolf Laban and Jacques Lecoq, widely applied in the UK.

The first chapter unfolds in two parts. The first is, to employ Foucauldian terminology, an *archaeology* of modern British theatre training as it lucidly presents 'the play of analogies

and differences as they appear at the level of rules of formation' (Foucault 178). Evans unearths the circumstances under which particular conceptualisations of the body and subsequent studies of movement were shaped, recognising as his central hypothesis that 'systems of movement training for actors are discursively constructed around accepted knowledges of "how movements are *best* done," and around particular forms of biomechanical and psychophysical efficiency' (14; emphasis added). In this light, Evans is right to assert that the notion of efficiency is not, although it may sometimes appear so, a universal. He establishes that efficiency is a direct product of the scientific examination of bodily mechanics and the search for a coherent set of principles ruling, explaining and predicting its physiological manifestations. Evans looks at mid-nineteenth century European gymnastics (16-18), the military training attached to the rise of nationhood (29-32) and the photographic revolution which allowed for the body to be scrutinised frame by frame (18-20), in order to argue that the concept of efficiency, linked to practices of measurement and classification, bears heavy capitalist overtones. The body is discursively articulated as a machine the constituent parts of which can be examined in isolation and are later re-assembled in the most effective manner. Immersed in this tradition, Laban's and Alexander's systems have nonetheless realised a radical shift towards an expressive physicality and a process of self-improvement through movement (32-36).

The second part moves along the lines of Foucauldian *genealogy*. Links and interconnections are traced between the aforementioned nexus of bodily practices and discourses (ranging from de-urbanised imaginings, such as nudist practices, to advances in therapeutical approaches) and the genesis and original formulation of keystones of British movement training. Evans takes us on a well-informed journey from the marginalised physicality of the itinerant players to the centrality of integrative/holistic movement in the here-and-now. His brief historiography also revisits the 'Greek revival' of the early twentieth

century (44-50) and the subsequent struggles against upper-class social dance or fencing routines and the prioritisation of the voice which predominated in the post-war drama school environment. All case studies and documentation are used to support the author's claim that '[t]he movement training of actors offers a complex but resonant paradigm for the late capitalist human condition' (68).

The second chapter delves into a probing of the infamous common thread of movement pedagogy, the concept of the 'neutral body.' Evans acknowledges that in the post-Foucault and post-Butler era this 'can no longer be treated as simple material entit[y], but should also be recognized as ideological construc[t]' (70). On these grounds, he brilliantly showcases the direct links between the body's 'neutrality' and the rethinking of the 'natural' through the project of Enlightenment and he combines multiple perspectives to demarcate the characteristics of the 'neutral/natural' in pedagogy. Training in efficiency, integration and responsiveness is regarded as a process of eradication of social inscriptions, involuntary tensions and blocks, as well as of the artifice with which traditional modes of performance and training bequeathed the actor. Meanwhile, Evans draws our attention to the fact that the above-mentioned, seemingly pre-cultural bodily states, inspired by the paradigms of the animal, the savage, the child, or the noble ancient Greek, are centered around (phal)logocentric ideals, and function as an implicit discarding of other bodies as professionally unacceptable: the feminine (106-12), the lower-class (114-17), the ethnic (112-14), the dis/abled (104-06).

Chapters three and four further extend the process of giving voice to, of making audible the cultural and professional dictates ingrained in the making of the actor's body. The first regards this silent, not-much-talked-about process, as one that tacitly turns the body into a site of docility, into a malleable *tabula rasa*. As showcased in the variety of interview extracts, of the utmost importance in the process of disciplining is the assimilation by the student of the

key terminology of the doctrine (123-25). Neutrality can lead to vulnerability, uniformity and commodification of the actor's body. However, the fourth chapter moves further than (intentional) signification and makes the case for a body that, beyond subjectification, on the interstices or margins of disciplining, employs the powerful tools of playfulness, *jouissance*, excess and expressivity to contest and challenge socially approved norms, therefore becoming a site for resistance (164-170).

Besides the convincing overarching argument, the book is also interspersed with several other little gems for the reader. For example, mid-century male international innovators are revealed as promoting themselves as authors, whereas mostly female tutors disseminated and merged the ideas with the needs of the industry on a more pragmatic level (7-9). Or, alternative movement trainings (Odin, Gardzienice, Grotowski), with their opposition to urban influences, can be seen as embodying a discourse on non-efficiency. Also, Evans' comments can/should necessitate radical reevaluation of the practices employed by movement trainers as

> The political ownership that students might seek to regain over their bodies is, and can only ever be, partial and contingent. It is created and sustained within the context of a desire to succeed in an industry that requires specific commercial uses of their bodies. (136)

Evans rightly presents movement training as a balancing act between rigorous cultural inscription and undecidedness, unruliness, or the 'corporeal unpredictability' (144) emerging through exhaustion and risk-taking. This book, certainly more interested in the context/contours of movement pedagogy rather than its content, and with a meticulously compiled list of bibliographical sources, is a most welcome addition to the blossoming field of critical engagement with body praxis.

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